

The Thinking Room

Life Coaching

A different way of seeing

The topic that I am about to cover is a huge one and I can only touch the surface but the ideas here will be a good starting block.

I was inspired to write about this theme after a recent conversation with a client. In one of our meetings, he said to me that *'I always feel negative; about everything.'* There were many deep issues in there but what struck me was his profound sense of dislike for himself.

Many people, due to their low self-esteem and discontentment in themselves and their lives, project this out to the world in the form of negative behaviour towards others. This in turn results in feeling miserable and guilty about this behaviour. Due to the fact that we are not happy in our self can result in a distorted and negative way of *seeing* the world, our life and others.

The way in which we see or interpret our world has a massive impact on how we feel. Emotions do not arise from thin air; Albert Ellis, an eminent therapist, developed his theories based on the idea that negative emotions arise *not* from events in our lives, but rather from people's irrational interpretations of the events; the way in which we see or think about things results in a particular emotion.

For example, if I get up in the morning and think, "I can't face work; I hate my job and those people just annoy me!", then the chances are that I am going to feel miserable and project this feeling out to others in the form of being abrupt or bad tempered and not easy to work with. It may well be that you dislike your job and want to somehow improve your work situation. In the medium/long-term, looking for another job will help but in the *short term*, it will not help your state of mind.

Making a deliberate effort to see things differently will impact on how you feel and how you behave. So, in the above example, if you do get up feeling a little negative about your work situation, the most important thing to do is to be aware that you are!

Many of us live our lives not being self aware; we get into negative patterns of behaviour that result in us feeling miserable but not knowing why. The next step is to make a conscious effort to disrupt this thinking by giving yourself a command such as 'Stop!' and then making yourself think about some of the positive aspects of your job. There may be some tasks you do really enjoy, some people you do get along with.

"The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new lands, but in seeing with new eyes." *Marcel Proust*

Many of us seek out things to make us happy; in Western society it is usually materialistic goods. Instead of searching constantly for things to wrap around us to make us happy or secure, we should try something different. Just *observe* all of the great things we have in our life and in our surroundings. When you are standing in a traffic jam, instead of focusing on the traffic ahead, look up at the clouds or look around at any countryside, notice the blueness of the sky.

Taking stock of your life and where you are going is important from time to time; we can do that if we make an effort to stop rushing around and deliberately take time out of our lives in order that we can *look at it* more objectively.

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Use the following model to help you understand how you see/interpret the events/situations in your life. Use step *D* to re-think your beliefs.

A activating event

B belief or thought

C consequences – emotional and behavioural

D dispute inappropriate/irrational beliefs

Ask yourself to look at your belief about the event differently—ask

“Is there another way I can see this situation?”

E effect – new emotional state