

New Beginnings

By William Peterson

I am sure you must have heard it said many times before that your thoughts create your reality. You may have found yourself in situations where you just knew that your moods were driving your actions or decisions. These moods may have been happy ones, sad ones, glad ones or bad ones. Moods can definitely influence the way you feel about yourself and others. They can even influence the possibility of you achieving a particular outcome.

There are days you feel in control of your moods and you can successfully direct your energy and attention toward desired outcomes or approaching challenges. Then there are days when you might feel “who cares”, I don't have the energy; let's just go with the flow. All of this shows that moods or feelings play a pivotal role in how you interpret your success, sense of well-being or ability to cope with many of life's challenges. However, if our lives are exclusively driven by our feelings then we are in danger. Our thoughts create the situations we often find ourselves in, resulting in feelings/emotions (good or bad). Therefore with different thoughts we can create new moods or feelings. As was once said, it takes the same amount of energy to create negative thoughts as it takes to create positive ones, so why not create positive ones.

It might be hard to admit but certain circumstances, relationships, individuals, challenges or habits may not be easy to overcome. You may have become the creator of your habits, settling yourself into predictable ways of thinking, feeling and behaving. This may present a big hurdle to overcome because it may be impacting your life in a significant way. This impact may be felt at the level of your career,

important relationships, financial well-being, psychological well-being, etc.

You can stick your head in the sand like the proverbial ostrich and hope it goes away, but you know it won't. You can try to eat it away, gamble it away, spiritualise it away, sex it away, sleep it away, etc. but it will keep coming back like a bad odour.

There is a popular story told about an individual who keeps walking down the same street and keeps falling down the same man-hole on his way home from work. Totally frustrated and perplexed at this repeated and painful occurrence he sets out to ask a wise, practical and compassionate friend for advice. After explaining the dilemma to his friend, the friend responds, “have you ever tried taking a different route home, so as to avoid the open man-hole?”

I guess that this individual may not have thought about a new route because the current one was comfortable, familiar, and predictable. He may even have perceived the painful man-hole experience to be less painful than the idea of encountering the “dreaded” adventure of the new route. Put simply, he felt warm and ensconced in his comfort zone and as a result was prepared to suck up the pain, discomfort and humiliation of his current set of circumstances. He lived a limited life based on the mantra “better the devil I know”.

I'm sure that your experience has taught you that you cannot walk around a problem, you cannot fly over it nor can you go under it because it will follow you like a shadow. To solve it you must go through it. (Yes, confront it!). I know that this is often easier said than done.

The best place to begin is with you.

It's easy to imagine that the entire problem is with “them”, the organisation, the team,

the committee, the politicians, the economy and so on and so forth. This projection of the entire blame just delays you having to take real action. I'm not suggesting that you may not be right or justified in saying that others have contributed to the problem. But what I do know is that when you get your act together, get your focus right and become resolved to play your part in creating a positive solution then that problem's burden is halved. Then the problem is no longer a mountain but a kopjé, okay!! Slightly bigger than a kopjé but certainly not Everest!

I guess it is like that inspirational quote I've once heard, "when you change the way you look at things, then the things you look at change." Of course you know that this is not entirely true. I mean the thing/situation does not literally always change. That difficult customer, boss, colleague, wife, husband, child, significant other etc...they might still be the same.

What has actually happened is that you may have changed your mindset, your attitude, your approach, your feelings, thoughts and your behaviours? As a result you have more patience, compassion, tolerance, love and understanding. If your difficult customer, boss, colleague, wife, husband, etc. indeed does change it may be in part because you have shifted in the way you related, approached or made them feel. Your personal transformation can influence their transformation. In other words your private change can have a positive social impact. To quote the great Anthropologist Margaret Mead, "A small group of thoughtful people could change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." The magic starts with you!!!

This means that we all do participate in creating our own realities and directly or

vicariously contribute to the reality of others. So, like a painter, you can decide to focus on different scenery (experience /vision) and act upon it. This of course will take desire, planning, discipline, persistency and new habits. You actually have a lot more power at your disposal to transform than you may want to give yourself credit. Sometimes it's easier not to acknowledge that reality because then, perhaps, you can escape accountability and responsibility and continue to blame others for your situation.

You and I both know that this kind of existence is fraudulent, empty, and a denial of our birthright: - to live a life of peace, joy, purpose, authenticity and overflowing abundance. Of course no one can make you choose the kind of existence you wish to live. That choice is entirely in your hands.

So how do you begin painting your new scenery/reality...?

Become Self-aware:

Know yourself, desire nothing more than to get to know the real you. Become a lifelong true explorer unto yourself. Get to know your strengths, untapped qualities and infinite potential. Do not be afraid to embrace your shadow. It is also part of you. It may be disconnected, split off but nonetheless still part of you. Your shadow is like that shameful part of your family history you don't want others to get to know about. As long as you resist it, it will persist and you may begin to project your shadow side onto others consciously or unconsciously. You may display this projection in subtle or exaggerated ways by being intolerant of others' shortcomings, easily finding fault, being judgemental or critical without compassion.

Hold the mirror regularly up to yourself first, to affirm the good that is in you and acknowledge that you still require more loving and self-acceptance. When you embrace this the “other” will appear less disgusting, evil, intolerable or threatening, after all it is the enemy within and not the enemy out there that first needs subduing and changing.

To quote Teresa of Avila *“Let nothing disturb thee; Let nothing dismay thee; All things pass; God never changes. Patience attains all that it strives for. He who has God finds he lacks nothing; God alone suffices.”*

Yearn and Dream

Dream and desire the best for yourself believing that your life matters, it has purpose and that you are in this world to do something meaningful and significant. Don't panic if you can't see it clearly or immediately. Whether you are being called to be someone in the public domain doing great things of service or for example, fathers or mothers who live to fulfil their promises to their families, it is all significant. Just bloom where you are planted.

Don't pay attention to the many dead-ends, premature starts and attempts that may have ended in disaster. What you have learnt is that they did not work for you or were not meant for you. If you allow those failures to influence your quest to dream again then perhaps you have failed. Thomas Edison had 10 000 failed attempts before he succeeded at inventing the light bulb. Imagine if he stopped at failed attempt number 3759! We may all still be without light!

If you are once again prepared to cross the drawbridge of your protecting castle and

move beyond the walls of despair, humiliation and fear then your past failures will become for you only an invaluable lesson and teacher. Not your tormentor.

Don't just dream big, but dream with faith knowing that your life matters. Don't dream out of desperation but in peace, knowing that a direction will be given to your life, your situation. Knowing that a greater infinite Wisdom and Source guards over all your best intentions and knows what you need even before you ask for it. If you truly ask for your gift it will be given to you.

PS. Just adjust your timing and your idea of how the gift should come packaged.

Don't just dream to get yourself out of poverty, debt, drink, self-doubt, lust, etc. Rather dream to get into something, focusing firstly on your deepest spiritual and psychological needs and the rest will come as you pursue it. When they arrive you will see it with a new heart. To hold a line from one of T.S. Eliot's poem:

– Little Gidding (No.4 of 'Four Quartets')

*“We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.”*

T.S. Eliot

Talk to you next time as we reflect on creating the dream...

Peace and Love