



THINKING
ANOTHERWAY



Some brief reflections
inspired by our work

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IN PRAISE OF THE GENTLE WAY

The GENTLE way. Okay, it might sound like a phrase from a skin care commercial. But bear with us. Because when we talk about the gentle way, we mean something pretty important.

We see the gentle way as an alternative to the harsh, hot way that seems to be the norm in our world today. At least, the norm in the fast-paced, competitive, abrasive world that you and we inhabit.

So, let's start with that last phrase. What do we mean by the harsh, hot way?

Well, consider the hard-edged, driven lives so many of us lead these days. Lives of striving, lives of consuming, lives of competing. Lives where there's less opportunity for ease, relationship, spacious reflection and savouring and more concern for action - often, quite frenzied action. Lives in which, if we are not careful, we forget the profound importance of exercising kindness and care in our relationships as we focus instead on getting things done - on being, in other words, 'transactional' rather than 'relational'.

This mode of living, this style of being in the world, is what we call the harsh, hot way. Harsh, to describe the kind of impact it has on all of us - to describe the way it feels to be experiencing this kind of life. Hot, to describe the effect of too much nervy energy, too much stress in the system.

You might not recognise this description. In which case, wonderful. You are blessed, a lucky one. More likely, though, you understand in your waters, in the very marrow of your being, precisely what we mean. If you allow yourself long enough to pause, long enough to drop into yourself and reflect on it, you connect with an essential truth. You feel depleted, under-nourished, at times unhealthily stressed and run ragged because this

harsh, hot way of being in the world has, to at least some degree, become your reality.

Your reality is that you sometimes, or even most of the time, get too focused on things, and on getting things done, rather than on the well-being of people (yourself included).

Your reality is that sometimes, or even most of the time, you use needing to compete, to survive, to counter the dangers of a hostile environment, as an excuse for riding roughshod over the best interests of people (yourself included).

Your reality is that sometimes, or even most of the time, you believe you live in a threatening, pain-filled world. A world in which you have to become hard-edged, tough – even perhaps a little close-hearted and uncaring – to survive. A world in which you have to adopt, as your own, the harsh, hot way.

We suggest that this is neither a healthy nor a happy way to live. And the evidence to support our view is all around us. You see it in the statistics on rates of alcoholism, depression and other psychological illnesses in our society. You see it in the statistics on stress-related physical illnesses in our society. And you see it in your own face, maybe, on those occasions when you catch sight of yourself, without your "game face" on, in your bathroom mirror.

So what about the alternative to the harsh, hot way that we started with? What about that gentle way? Is it realistic? Is it viable?

To answer, let's try to define what we mean by the gentle way.

The gentle way is ...

... yes, you guessed it. Gentle. It's a way of being in the world that's the exact opposite of pushy and hard-edged. You know this gentle way. It's the way you experience yourself as being in your happiest, most nourishing moments. At such times you're not driving, you're not pushing, you're not defending, you're not aggressive. You're simply open, softened, able to give and receive with kindness, tenderness and love. You're able to appreciate and accept life in the moment more easily, because you've stopped grasping and striving just long enough to relax and unfurl into the experience of reality as it is, not as you want it to be. You are no longer like a blacksmith with a hammer, beating furiously on the strong, molten stuff of life – your complex, extraordinary life, filled with events you can never ever expect to fully control and fully understand – in your furious attempt to bludgeon it into shape and force it to be the way you demand. You are more like the elegant boat on the river: easy, graceful, piloted by a master wise enough to understand the futility of attempting to resist, to bully down, the irresistible.

Perhaps you think you cannot live your life in this kind of way – in the gentle way. After all, you have a mortgage to pay. You have to stay hard-edged to compete at work, to please your boss – to survive. But is this true? Really, would adopting this style of gentleness as we've defined it actually handicap you? Or might it not in fact allow you to bring a distinctive, positive difference to your life, and to that of others, and to all the arenas you show up in – at home, and at work?

Also, who wants only to survive? Don't you want to be nourished and fulfilled by life? And, if you're honest with yourself, which of these two ways feels more nourishing and fulfilling – more deeply satisfying and enriching? The harsh, hot way ... or the gentle way?

The gentle way is not for wimps. The gentle way requires wisdom, awareness, and the courage to quietly yet resolutely stand apart from the pushy, hard-edged herd barreling on in their driven, frenzied way to Heaven knows where, at Heaven knows what cost.

Which way will you choose? Because, remember, it is a choice. It's your life. It's up to you.

WORDS – THE MOST POWERFUL TOOLS OF ALL

We all know words matter. If you disagree, just take a moment, right now, to write a list of all the words you'd never say out loud in a business meeting.

Makes you blush, doesn't it? And it's extraordinary, isn't it, how potent - how incendiary - words can be? And it's not just individual words. Equally potent - in fact, significantly more potent - are the metaphors and similes we build with them.

As we all learned in our English Literature classes, in the moment before we nodded off, a metaphor - just like its close relative, the simile - is a device for describing one thing in terms of something else. As in, "The boss was a monster. He chomped his way through fresh-faced execs without so much as a flicker of compassion." We love metaphors because they help us to convey our meaning in a powerful, dramatic and sometimes downright provocative way. Metaphors can also be fun. For example, "The six little elephants stomped across the stage in front of him. Good grief, what bright spark had ever thought that ballet classes for pre-schools was a good idea?"

And, even though we probably first learned about them there, metaphors aren't just for Eng. Lit. lessons. They're for life. Why? Because we all use metaphors all the time, to describe and make sense of the world - for ourselves and for others.

To illustrate the point, let's take a look at just one metaphor that pops up a lot in business - the metaphor of war. How often have you heard talk in your organisation about the need to 'capture' market share ... or to 'beat' the competition ... or to 'deploy' resources effectively? Indeed, have you ever found yourself using those kinds of expressions yourself? These are all figures of speech springing from the central metaphor of war.

And here's the thing. Every time we use this metaphor of war, or some variation on it, we are building and shaping and then reinforcing a certain set of assumptions about the business of doing business.

The truth is, business isn't war. When we come into work in the morning, we aren't entering a battleground. We're not going to be killing anyone today. We don't risk taking headshots or body wounds. We won't be called upon to drag our fallen, bleeding colleagues out of the line of fire.

In other words, the metaphor is, in some very important respects, not accurate. It is not, by any means, the most appropriate and helpful description of commercial life. Yet ... notice how potent it's become, how widely it's used. And notice how, over time, it's tricked us into buying a certain view - a questionable view - of what it means to be in business.

This is the thing about metaphor. It starts as a comparison, a kind of labelling system we apply - a convenient tool we use, collectively, to describe reality in an interesting, enjoyable way that others can relate to. And then, surprisingly quickly, we forget it's just a metaphor - a made-up comparison - and we start thinking it is reality. In a sense the metaphor starts to shape us. It starts influencing our ideas, our thinking, in a very deep and unconscious way.

Does this matter? Well, it can. Again, take that military metaphor. Once we've all drunk the Kool-Aid, and at least at some level bought into the idea that, yes, business is a battle and we're all active combatants, certain things follow.

For a start, we all know that real battles demand huge sacrifice. (Quite right, given the high stakes - life and death.) So, if we accept the battleground metaphor for business, it's maybe not long before we also find ourselves

accepting the need for massive personal sacrifice in our daily working lives. We too, trooping into our offices and workstations, become 'good soldiers' - unflinching, stiff-backed, feeling a very real obligation to pay a high personal price in pursuit of the bigger cause. And we perhaps judge not only ourselves, but our colleagues against this inappropriate measure. You're not prepared to put in all hours at the office? You want a personal life? You don't see your work as the be-all and end-all? Then you need to be a better soldier. You need to make like a real soldier on a real battlefield. You need to toughen up.

Except, remember, business isn't war. The office isn't a war zone. It's just the metaphor we use that's seducing us into thinking that in some way it is.

And here's another implication of the "business as battle" metaphor. In our culture, which gender do we tend to think of as the more appropriate soldiers? That's right, men. So, if our thinking around business has been shaped, over time, by the military metaphor, guess what? Again, that's right. We'll have an unconscious bias telling us that, when you get right down to it, the most fit-for-purpose, the most effective people to have in business - are men.

Wow. See how it works? We start with a metaphor – an engaging, evocative way to share some ideas about business, and we end with that metaphor taking root in our discourse and colouring our thinking (and even our behaviour) to an extraordinary degree. Okay, it's not the whole reason. But does the pervasive influence of that "business as battle" metaphor play at least some part in explaining the unequal treatment of men and women in the commercial arena?

And, remember, this is just one example of metaphor at work. An example of the way metaphor becomes - to employ, guess what, a metaphor! - a cup we

share among us. A cup containing a whole set of beliefs, values and attitudes that, regardless of their limitations and inaccuracy, we all drink in.

We love metaphor and appreciate its power - along with the fact that we couldn't even begin to communicate without it. But, as with any powerful force, we need to use it with care. And we need to stay alert so that we can spot when, as individuals, as groups - as an organisation, sometimes perhaps as an entire society - we're at risk of letting metaphor trick us into buying a version of reality that is, in fact, not real.



STING - WHAT A GUY!

That Sting, what a guy. 63 years old, and still the lean physique and stage presence of a bona fide rock star. Indeed, still every inch a bona fide rock star.

There can't be many performers who outshine Sting on a stage. But one of them was up there beside him last night - Paul Simon.

That Paul Simon, what a guy. Never did have the lean physique of a rock star. But always has had all the hallmarks of a bona fide musical genius.

Watching the two of them up there last night, blowing away the Manchester Arena, you had to wonder. Neither one of them has anything left to prove professionally. Neither one of them has a hole in his bank balance that still needs filling. So what fuels them? What drives them to give of their magnificent all, for three-and-a-half full-throated, lung-busting hours straight, on nights like last night?

If asked, my guess is that they'd say they do it because they love it. And they love it because being singers, being performers, is what they feel they've been put on earth for. It's what lights up their circuitry. It's what gives them their sense of purpose.

We can't all know what it's like to be Sting or Paul Simon (sorry, all that singing into a hairbrush in front of a mirror doesn't quite cut it). But maybe we can all know what it feels like to have, to be inspired by, a sense of purpose.

Take us, at Anotherway. What we do is training and people development. How we do it is by applying our experience and fancy learning and human intuition and listening skills in an appropriate, even creative, way. Okay, so far as it goes. Yet telling you that - telling you the what and the how - doesn't

get to the heart of the matter. It doesn't tell you why we do what we do. The 'why' is what lights our circuitry. The 'why' is what gets us out of bed in the morning - not just one morning, but day after day. The 'why' is what gives us our animating sense of purpose.

But, never mind us. What about you? When did you last think hard about and truly connect with your sense of purpose - your particular 'why'? Moreover, when did you last share your sense of purpose with those whom you work with and lead?

If you haven't done these things in a while, it's worth giving a little time to doing them now. It might re-animate you - reconnect you with the kind of energy I saw last night in Paul Simon and Sting. Also, it might re-animate your staff, should that be needed - and it might inspire them to work even harder to work with you.

Make no mistake, though. If they do start to work even better and harder for you it won't be because they're mindless idiots who suddenly decide their only mission in life is to help you achieve your purpose. Oh no, not at all. Rather, it will be because your very clear expression of your 'why', your purpose, will enable at least some of them to recognise that your purpose, your 'why', also happens to match the deep inner purpose and 'why' that they embrace within themselves.

From what we've seen, that's how people work. They're not lit up by another's purpose. They're lit up by their own inner purpose - the 'why' within.

And that's the reason great teams look like they do. In our experience, a great, truly optimal team is not a group of people just adopting - or pretending

to adopt! - the leader's purpose. Instead, it's a group of people each firmly connected to, and animated by, their own strongly felt inner purpose - but a purpose that just happens to match, in some key respects, that of every other member of the team. There's some very interesting work been done on this very subject, work which ... but, no, we digress. This, the complementarity of individual purposes, is a subject for another day.

For now, let's get back to the central question. What's your galvanising sense of purpose? What's your personal 'why' for what you do? What's the thing that enables you - or could enable you - to perform in your arena with the same passion and energy and impact as a Paul Simon or a Sting?

It's an important question. Because, as someone much, much wiser than us once said, there are two massively important days in our life: the day we are born ... and the day we find out why we were born. So, do yourself a favour. If you haven't answered that question already, do your best to answer it soon.

Note: these thoughts penned on 14th April 2015 by the UK's - no, by the world's - no, by THE ENTIRE KNOWN UNIVERSE'S biggest Paul Simon fan.

(Oh, and that Sting geezer's really not half bad too.)

DO YOU THINK OF YOURSELF AS AN EXPERT?

And, does it ever get in your way?

Does thinking I'm an expert ever get in my way? You may see this as a strange question. But we ask it because, in our work as trainers and facilitators, we notice something important. We notice that people who define themselves as experts can sometimes seem a little lacking in that essential agent of development and growth: curiosity.

Think about it, and it's not too hard to see why. Experts think they know it - whatever the 'it' might be. And if you know it, job done. Why should you be curious to know more? There's nothing more you need to know.

The problem is, when you stop being curious you close down the possibility of new learning. And the moment you stop learning is the moment you stop developing and progressing. This is true whether we're talking about an individual, a group, or even a whole organisation.

As any teacher will tell you, the only good learner is a curious learner. The learner who approaches the world, and the subject at hand, in a spirit of curiosity. Why? Because this student's mind is open, wide open, to new information, new perspectives, new possibilities. This student's natural style is to ask questions. This student is not afraid to acknowledge his or her uncertainty. This student appreciates that - no matter how uncomfortable it may sometimes feel - the experience of feeling uncertain, of not knowing everything, is actually perfectly natural for us humans. And so this student will develop and grow stronger, in stark contrast to the know-all, the self-proclaimed expert in the corner, who, rather than using questions and curiosity as instruments of growth, views them as an unacceptable sign of uncertainty and weakness.



As it is with students, so it is with us - no matter how elevated our job title or position. Unless we're careful, we lose our talent for open enquiry. So, what goes wrong? What causes so many of us to stop questioning and being curious and to instead fall into the growth-inhibiting trap of believing we're beyond all that - believing we're experts?

Well, there's that mistaken idea we've just touched on - the idea that asking questions and exhibiting uncertainty are signs of weakness. What nonsense! This is an extraordinarily complex, inherently uncertain and fiendishly unpredictable world. The only way to survive in it - let alone flourish in it - is to stay wide awake and alert, all channels open to whatever new data and possibilities are coming your way. And how do you stay open and alert? Not by turning inwards, relying on what you already know, but by asking questions and staying curious.

But, we'd argue, it's not just the fear of looking uncertain that drives us. Even more unsettling, for most of us, is the fear of being uncertain.

To repeat, this is an extraordinarily complex, fiendishly unpredictable world. And, let's be honest. At times, that makes it a frightening world. We want to master it, so we can feel safe in it. But we can't - at least, not completely. It's just a whole lot bigger than us - far too complex, far too unpredictable.

It doesn't matter whether you're a small child or whether you're a big and ultra-successful CEO. This is the stark in-yer-face reality we have to deal with every day. The world is capricious and potentially dangerous and therefore, at least some of the time, quite buttock-clenchingly scary. So, what do we do? Simple. We look for a way to comfort and soothe ourselves. We replace the reality of uncertainty and unpredictability ... with the illusion of certainty.

That illusion of certainty really does matter to us. Because we need to feel certain, to feel that we know what's what, in order to feel we're in control. And we need to feel we're in control in order to meet our very understandable human need to feel safe.

Look around you, and you'll see this happening all the time. Look at government ministers speechifying with apparently iron belief about the fiscal targets they're sure to hit in 18 months time. (Yeah, sure, just like the rest of us are going to sprout wings and fly to the moon.) Look at speculators staking huge sums with total conviction - as though they really can accurately call the global money markets. Look at business executives, talking with huge assurance about how their marketplace will develop - and conveniently ignoring the fact that, in truth, they haven't got a clue about what's really going to happen.

And look at the rest of us, looking on. We're just the same. We too crave the illusion of certainty in a fundamentally uncertain world. So we want our politicians and leaders to sound confident. We want them to appear to have the answers. We want them to speak and act as though they genuinely know what's going on - as if we lived, not in a world of nuance, unpredictability and constant change, but in a world of boiled-down, simple choices, plodding regularity and predictable outcomes.

But, you may ask, is this delusional thinking - that we live in a world of certainty, a world we can control - really so bad for us? If it helps us feel safe, and to sleep more soundly in our beds at night, why not?

Well, as trainers and facilitators concerned with growth and development we'll have to come off the fence on this one and say it straight out. Yes, we

believe this kind of delusional thinking - this strong attachment to the nice, comforting notions of certainty and control - is bad.

It's bad because it means we sometimes end up making decisions and taking actions based on the world we want, rather than the world as it actually is.

It's bad because clinging to the delusion that life is certain and controllable puts unfair and unhelpful pressure on our leaders. It forces them to think and look and act as though they are experts who are certain and in control - even when, due to the very nature and complexity of events down here on good old Planet Earth, they can't be.

And, to return to where we started, clinging to the delusion that life is certain and controllable is bad because it turns us into experts who think we've already got the answers. Which, as we've seen, is the very thing that shuts down curiosity and the chance to see new possibilities, and to develop and grow.

Of course, we get it. The only alternative to feeling certain and enjoying the comforting delusion that you're in control is to accept the discomfort of uncertainty - the discomfort of admitting you don't know all the answers and that you're not in control. This takes honesty - and courage.

But, aren't honesty and courage two of the things that we need now more than ever? Especially in our leaders, facing the challenge of fast change, followed by yet more - and possibly even faster - change?

We need leaders in these circumstances who are brave enough to withstand the pressures on them to pose as experts - as 'people who know'. We need leaders who are brave enough to state the honest truth that, actually folks,

we don't have all the answers all the time - in a world this complex, this volatile, it's just not possible.

Above all, we need leaders who are brave enough to lean into their own discomfort around uncertainty and not knowing, and not feeling totally in control. So that they - and everyone around them - can stay curious and alert and flexible and open-minded, and continue to grow.

MASCULINE AND FEMININE

Please, folks, it's not the same as male and female.

We sometimes talk in our work about the masculine and feminine energies. Not because we're New Agers - we're not. But because, as students of the human condition, we can't fail to see these two energies - or 'modalities', if you prefer a more academic-sounding word - at play in the world.

It's important to say, though, that we see masculine and feminine as having nothing to do with the state of being male or female. Male and female are about chromosomes and genitalia. Whereas masculine and feminine are about different ways of approaching, and interacting with, the world.

It's important to say this - that male does not equal masculine, and female does not equal feminine - because these two things are so commonly viewed as interchangeable, one and the same. In fact, even now, you might be shaking your head at the foregoing couple of sentences. Male and masculine not the same, female and feminine not the same - what is the idiot talking about?

But they're not the same, they're really not. Male is no more the same as masculine, female is no more the same as feminine, than a mouse is the same as a piece of cheese.

If you think long enough about it, it becomes obvious. And a good way to think about it is to do a quick exercise. It's really simple.

1. Draw two columns, then head one column Masculine, and the other column Feminine, like so:

Masculine	Feminine

2. Then, on your own or with anyone who happens to be close to hand, make a list of the attributes you'd place in each column. We can all do this, quite effortlessly. You don't need to be an expert with fancy degrees in psychology or anthropology. You're qualified because you're a human being with a brain in your head and emotional intelligence. You can make this list instinctively.

Oh, and another important point: avoid value judgements. There is no 'better' or 'worse' here, no 'stronger' or 'weaker'. Just jot down your ideas cleanly, as best as you can without any personal or cultural bias.

So, what did you come up with?

When we do this work with groups, under 'Masculine', participants typically come up with words and phrases like assertive, taking action, disciplined, structured, rational, head-based, rigid. And, under 'Feminine', they put down words like gentle, receptive, heart-based, yielding, intuitive, nurturing, conciliatory.

Chances are, you will have come up with similar things. Because, to repeat the point, our ability to grasp the essential difference between these two kinds of energies, the Masculine and Feminine, seems largely instinctive.

So, now we get to the truly important bit. If you look at your list, and reflect on it for a minute or so, you'll recognise something very interesting.

You'll recognise that you possess the capacity to exhibit all those attributes - all the attributes, from both columns - inside yourself.

This is not a male/female thing. This is a *human* thing. As a human being, regardless of your physical gender, you have all the energies - or modalities - within you.

In other words, just because you're a man, it doesn't mean you don't have it within you to be gentle, intuitive, or nurturing.

In other words, just because you're a woman, it doesn't mean you don't have it within you to be assertive, disciplined, or rational.

Stated like this, it's obvious. There are these different ways of responding to and interacting with the world that we can broadly describe as masculine and feminine - and these ways of being are available to all of us. Again, they have absolutely nothing to do with whether we happen to possess a penis or a vagina.

Stated here, it's a truth we clearly recognise. Yet, look around you at the culture we inhabit. The business culture - and the wider culture. Look around you at the evidence of how quickly we forget it. At the evidence

showing up in the form of the lazy stereotyping we so quickly go in for. "Oh, men are more assertive and that's why they make better leaders." "Oh, this needs a woman's touch." And look at how those same lazy, wrong-headed stereotypes show up in our language - often in an ugly, harmful way. "Man up." "Grow a pair." "Don't be such a girl."

This confusing of masculine and feminine energy with male and female gender - with our genitalia! - is sad, unhelpful, and so unintelligent. It sells every one of us short by failing to recognise that, simply by virtue of being human, we each contain the full spectrum of attributes and possibilities and behavioural choices within us.

Really - wouldn't it be great if, from now on, we could each commit to recognising and drawing upon the entire range of human qualities and potentialities we possess? Regardless - entirely regardless - of the physical differences that exist beneath our waists!

RESENTMENT - YUCK!

Resentment - we've all experienced it. And, we can all agree: however you look at it, it's a thoroughly nasty thing.

It's a nasty thing to get gripped by. Experiencing the full fire of resentment can leave us feeling, well, thoroughly torched.

And then, for good measure, it gives us a nasty extra kick. This is the stinging shame we then feel for feeling resentful. After all, resentment seems like such a childish emotion. Really, as proper grown-ups, shouldn't we be way beyond that?

And because there seems such shame around resentment as a nasty, childish emotion, we've noticed that in adult circles it doesn't always get talked about. Even though, let's be candid, we can all still fall prey to it, whatever our age, a great deal more often than we'd like. (Well, not perfect you and perfect me, obviously; but, definitely, some of the people we know.)

So, given the secret shame that surrounds resentment, we thought we ought to spend just a few moments dragging it into the light.

The following is a little Resentment fact sheet we originally created for a particular group of people. The more we thought about it, though, the more we realised its relevance for us all.

What is resentment?

Put plainly, it's what we experience as the result of thinking "*Poor me, bad you.*" You believe someone has done you wrong, treated you unfairly, been mean to you.

When you believe this, you think hurt and angry thoughts like "*How dare you do this to me?*" ... or "*I don't deserve to be treated like this!*" ... or "*You deserve all you get for treating me this way!*"

And when you think these hurt and angry thoughts you will, of course, feel hurt and angry feelings. You may feel aggressive. You may feel upset. You may feel powerless and vulnerable. You may feel lonely. You may feel embarrassed.

The problem with resentment is that the thoughts and feelings it triggers in you are *always* unpleasant and destructive and unhelpful. Resentment makes you feel tense and angry and unhappy. It's like you've taken poison.

And your resentment will also, always, make the people around you unhappy. Why? Because your resentment will make you seem sulky, angry, tense and spiteful.

Depending on how you show your anger, it might also make you seem quite frightening.

Here's what keeps you in the grip of resentment - and here's what will help you get rid of it.

We've listed, below, the four mistakes that keep resentment alive in you. And for each one we've also given you a solution. You can use that solution to dissolve away the resentment in you. And that can only be a good thing. Because, when you dissolve away your resentment, you free yourself and other people from its horrible effects.

Mistake number 1 – Unrealistic or unfair expectations.

You may suffer resentment if you have expectations of another person that are unfair or unrealistic. For example, you may feel entitled to certain things that it is simply unreasonable to expect. Like a business colleague who can read your mind. Like a partner who sees their only job as being there to look after you. Like a subordinate who never makes mistakes. Like someone with the ability to make you feel happy and satisfy your every requirement on every occasion.

Think about it. If you do have such unrealistic expectations of another person, and if you then expect the other person to meet them, those unrealistic expectations will always trip you up. They will always set you up for painful disappointment.

If you don't wake up to your unrealistic expectations, and if you don't challenge them, you will end up experiencing resentment. You will end up thinking *"Poor me, bad you."*

The solution:

Wake up! Challenge yourself. Ask yourself: is it really reasonable and fair of me to expect another person to meet these expectations? Be brave and do a reality check. It may take courage for you to admit you were wrong. But if you want to be free of resentment – if you want to be happy, and if you want the people around you to be happy – it will be worth it.

Mistake number 2 – Denying responsibility.

You may suffer resentment if you don't take responsibility for situations you find yourself in. This is being a victim. And the trouble with being a victim? You always need someone to resent and blame.

The solution:

Stop seeing yourself as a victim and start taking responsibility. Again, think about it. Whatever the situation, you always have the power to take responsibility for the way you react to it. *Always.*

Even if you truly believe you didn't cause the original situation, you do still have the power to choose how to respond to it.

You do still have the power to choose to let go of your feelings of hurt, or anger, or injustice.

You do still have the power to stop blaming other people and start taking adult control of your own thoughts and emotional responses.

When you do, it's like getting out of jail. For you, and for all those around you.

Mistake number 3 – Avoiding vulnerability.

You may suffer resentment if you try to protect yourself from difficult feelings like disappointment, or grief, or guilt and shame, or fear and anxiety. The thing about all these feelings is that they can make us feel vulnerable. And, if we don't find it easy to feel vulnerable, this can be uncomfortable. So, rather than face up to these feelings inside us, we distract ourselves by looking outside and focusing our anger on other people. We blame them for what's gone wrong and what we don't like. Again, we see ourselves as victims. Again, we experience resentment.

The solution:

Accept your vulnerable feelings. They are part of being human. We all have

them. In fact, these vulnerable feelings are what make us human and what help us to be genuinely loving and genuinely loveable.

The strongest, most courageous people in the world are those who accept their vulnerable feelings rather than running away from them. When you find the courage to feel your own vulnerable feelings you will no longer need to focus your attention on blaming and resenting others.

And when that happens, you will stop suffering from the poisonous effects of your resentment. You will start to feel it dissolving away.

Mistake number 4 – Always needing to be right.

Here's the big newsflash: You can't always be right about everything, all the time. So stop kidding yourself and start being honest with yourself. Ask yourself the tough questions. *Do I sometimes find it easier to see myself as right and others as wrong just so that I can feel superior? Or just so I can justify blaming other people for things rather than take full responsibility for my own thoughts and feelings and choices and behavior?*

If your answer is "Yes," don't worry. This just makes you human. But can you see where always needing to be right has got you? Of course you can. Because, if you're always right, that means others are always in the wrong. And that takes you straight back into the arms of resentment, and those truly unhelpful thoughts we started with, like "Poor me, bad you."

The solution:

Stop acting like you're Mr or Ms Perfect. None of us are. It takes a big person to recognize their own imperfections and mistakes, just as it takes a big person to recognize and forgive the imperfections and mistakes of others.

If you truly want to heal yourself of resentment - if you truly want to stop taking the poison - be a big person. It will do wonders for your emotional and physical health and it will do wonders for your relationship with others. Try it.

And trust us: it will work!





READY TO EXPLORE ANOTHERWAY?

Having another way is good.
Get in touch, and we'll help you find it.

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