

## Stirring the Pot

I was chatting with my wife Juanita after she returned from a psychodrama training session. She had enjoyed playing the role of a dog. The dog loved their owner, but felt peaceful as it stayed outside the dramas occurring around it. I remember when I learned for myself that I habitually took an idea and stirred it up in my own mind. This had the effect of making my mind very busy, gave the false impression I was doing something useful, and it destroyed any possibility of peace. I realised that even when I could be peaceful I would habitually stir things up to keep my mind busy. Sometimes it felt like I was being dragged by a herd of wild horses, and they were in charge of my life.

This is the mechanism used when you worry, the endless and repetitive process of pouring over “what if” scenarios in a mind numbingly unproductive manner. The mind is busy but no new information is introduced.

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### Abstract

*Ways to step out of mental and emotional processes and introduce peace and clarity to your mind.*

### Keywords

Attend / presence, patterned behaviour, worry

### First Published

10 February 2013

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*Wild and untamed horses*

It eases when the mind gets bored with the process, though in true worry the mind moves on to a different topic, even if only subtly so. It is colloquial to say “I feel worried”. However, worry is a state of mind, a mental process, not a feeling. Feelings that underpin worry include scared, anxious, petrified and any number of other expressions of fear. And beneath all of that is a question the mind is attempting to answer. Similar processes occur with grief as the mind seeks to locate meaning from amidst the hurt. An element of relief occurs when some new and satisfying way of framing the pain is identified.

I learned I could step out of those processes, worry and grief, and bring myself some space and peace. The mind will still want to find its way out of the state, but introducing space, and watching the process from the outside, can provide a powerful way for reigning in the untamed mental energy. It can help if the question the mind seeks to answer can be identified. Often the driving question has absolutely no merit. Or from the sideline, and in a loving way, you make the observation to your mind that it is caught in a another fruitless pattern, and invite it to stop. Meditation is a useful tool for developing the capacity to observe the mind without buying into its story.

Another side to this is being able to recognise when someone else is working from a place of worry, grief

or other form of mental drama, and making your own conscious choice to not participate. That does not mean you cannot support and assist them. In such moments you are able to retain your peace and objectivity, and often introduce a clarity that flees from the scene if you engage and join in with the other person’s process. As a project manager I have had a number of occasions where team members have told me that my calmness enabled them to feel calm, otherwise they would have been panicking and unable to work with the significant issue that needed resolution.

Find your way out of the places of fruitless ruminating. Tame your mind and learn to create more spaciousness and peace for yourself. Master the ability to not join others in their unproductive urgency. Learn to truly be the master navigator of your life. Become the loving, non-judgemental dog that loves and accepts without contributing to or joining the unnecessary drama. Allow your mind to settle, and peace to distil. Tame the wild horses that run wild through your mental space. It is a fantastic leadership capacity because from such a place you’re better placed to gather facts and objectively assess the situation and what it needs, and hold the space against unnecessary and often manufactured urgency. Someone else may be playing a drama. Someone else may be anxious and worked up. You choose what you engage with as an autonomous and self-responsible being!

***For more information related to themes in this article, refer to chapter 6 (Deciphering Your Internal State) of:*** Harrison, S. G. (2012). [\*Appreciate the Fog: Embrace Change with Power and Purpose\*](#). Auckland, New Zealand: Xlibris Corporation.

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