

What Crap Do You Create For Yourself?

The clearest indicator of our own limiting patterns of behaviour are those that arise when we are in a good space. It is always interesting when life serves up a plate that enables us to see our own deficiencies with clarity. I had a great experience of this recently. The summary is 'When everything in life is excellent and turmoil arises from within me, I created that turmoil'.

I have had periods of my life where I experienced everything as a problem. At one particularly dark stage I trusted no one, including myself, was permanently anxious to the point of severe physical pain in my body, had no concept of what I could or ought to do, and carried a bag of blame, guilt and shame with me. If I could have photographed my inner world, it would have been dark, tumultuous and ugly. I experienced everything that happened around me or to me a serious threat. I sought certainty and control, and found surprises deeply unsettling. I was highly reactive and self-esteem was at an all-time low. I was unable to respond positively to opportunities and was quite miserable.

In such a state it is particularly difficult to extricate oneself from the crap. It is also very easy, and symptomatic of the state, to believe 'lots of crap is happening to me'. Beginning to believe you can make a positive difference, and finding support from others can be a significant aid and is a key to reclaiming yourself from the darkness.

Life has changed for me since those days, and while the past couple of years have had some challenges in ways I have never experienced, I have been largely able to act



A pile of crap

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Abstract

While we get confronted with struggles and challenges, it is our attitudes, beliefs and patterned behaviours that determine how much we suffer. Awareness and acknowledgement of these habitual responses to challenge can assist in undoing and transforming one's experience of life.

Keywords

Behaviours, fear, negative messages, patterned behaviour, reclaiming personal power, survive (fear-based) reactions

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with congruence to my belief that I get to choose how I respond and behave in a situation, and that I can create a better outcome as a consequence. Now I find myself in a space where most everything is improving over where I was a year ago, and I have plenty of reasons to be happy, full of joy, content, pleased to be alive.

In this setting it has been interesting to see the negative patterns that I still have. In fact in this space it is easier to see them. For example, my relationship with my wife is better than I have ever experienced a relationship before in my life. Recently I awoke with a feeling of anxiety that some accident might happen that would end my happiness. Wow! What a moment that was. I could immediately identify it as a thought pattern I have had before, such as in the early, black period of my life mentioned above. I also knew that if I allowed the sensation to fester within me I could get consumed by negativity, a little like an alcoholic having a drink might re-engage with a pattern they are attempting to leave behind. On this occasion, I shared the fear directly with

my wife, expressed that as happy as I am some part of me fears the happiness being taken from me, me losing her. I was entirely clear that I was the source of that piece of negativity. I was able to treat the scared, hurting part of me that surfaced this pain with respect and love, and without judgement place a light on it, and let it be seen. In this way I was able to fully own my negative pattern and clear it, and reclaim my capacity to live more fully. It became a self-healing moment that strengthened

my capacity to receive whatever I create for myself and work with it for a lasting, positive outcome. I had generated my own crap, and I had also been able to resolve it positively.

How do you treat yourself when you notice something you are doing that doesn't really work for you? Are you able to love yourself through the moment, or do you add judgement and criticism to it and make the situation even worse?

For more information related to themes in this article, refer to chapter 8 (Befriending Pain) of:
Harrison, S. G. (2012). *Appreciate the Fog: Embrace Change with Power and Purpose*. Auckland, New Zealand: Xlibris Corporation.

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