



THE INSIDE RUNNING

The mind is a funny thing. It's amazing how much our life is affected by the way we think. I recall hearing David Riddell say something like, you have to make your mind your friend before you can be a friend to others.

When things go against us, it can be hard to stay balanced in our thinking. Tiredness, stress and difficult circumstances can derail the best intentions.

Aaron Ironside states that "people become thin-skinned because they're well bruised." We know as Christians that God has good plans for our life and a higher purpose. We need to constantly battle negative thinking and rejection by focusing on our relationship with God and reflecting Him by maintaining good relationships with others wherever possible. I know that I can trust God but I can't always trust my feelings.

As the Delirious song goes:

*When it's all crashing down on you
When there's nothing you can do
There is someone who can carry you
Every little thing's gonna be alright*

That song has carried me through some dark hours, so that I can enjoy life with others and God.

Are there any changes you need to make to enjoy healthy thinking?

Blessings



John
John Subritzky

Healthy Thinking

Taking Things Personally

by Aaron Ironside

Imagine that you are floating in a canoe on a slow-moving river on a sunny afternoon. Suddenly there is a loud thump on the side of the canoe, and it rolls over. You come up sputtering, and what do you see? Somebody has snuck up on your canoe, flipped it over for a joke and is laughing at you. How do you feel?

Now imagine the exact same situation again: in a canoe, the loud thump, being dumped into the river, coming up sputtering, and what do you see? A large submerged log has drifted downstream and bumped into your canoe. This time, how do you feel?

The facts are the same in each case: you're cold and wet, and your picnic is ruined. But when you feel personally picked on, everything feels worse. The thing is, most of what bumps into us in life - including emotional reactions from others, traffic jams, illness or mistreatment at work - is like an impersonal log put in motion by 10,000 causes upstream.

Sam's boss told him to be certain his project report was free of mistakes. Sam's internal response to that statement was to get angry and think, "Why on earth did she tell me that? Does she think I'm stupid?"

Sarah's husband said he wanted to make sure they did something special for their son's birthday. Sarah found that comment to be insulting and thought to herself, "What kind of mother does he think I am?!"

How do you behave when

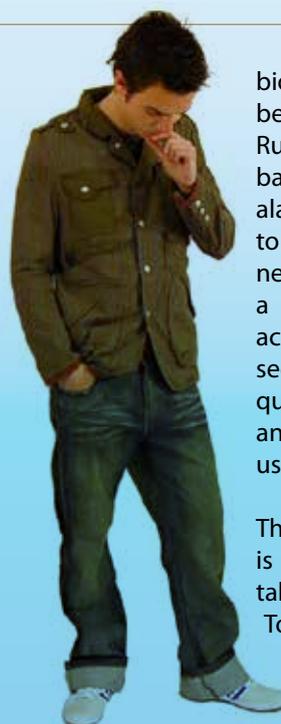
someone, deliberately or not, seems to belittle, humiliate or reject you? Do you become resentful? Do you issue a counterattack? Do you curl into the foetal position?

Or do you shrug it off as "their problem"?

If it's the latter, then you'll be in on this secret: ***Life is far more pleasant if you don't take things personally.***

However, most of us can think of too many times when we took others' words the wrong way. How did we get so prickly?

Life is far more pleasant if you don't take things personally.



Firstly, it is a biological response our brain has been developing since childhood. Running subconsciously in the background, our brain has an alarm system alert for threats to physical and psychological needs. At the instant we register a threat, our body prepares for action. Cortisol and adrenalin are secreted. Breathing and heart rate quicken, sending increased blood and oxygen to our limbs to ready us for fight or flight.

The function of anxiety and anger is to warn of danger so that we take self-protective measures. To succeed at this task, we overestimate threat. The only sure-fire guarantee that >



actual risks are never missed is to give ambiguous threats the same credence as definite ones. Better to be safe than sorry.

Whilst that might be helpful when we see a fin in the water when swimming at Piha beach, it can be a lousy indicator of emotional danger. We can too easily read the emotion itself as proof that a bona fide peril exists. "If I feel upset with my wife, she must have done something."

But that's not necessarily the case. While the experience of anxiety or anger is indisputably real, the cause we attribute it to may or may not be. We're fully capable of feeling anxious even when the other person's actions do not signal danger. Once we're anxious and hyper-vigilant, it's difficult to distinguish small slights from larger ones; they all seem substantial. Should we notice a downturned lip or hear impatience? We become convinced that

we're being abandoned or demeaned.

Emotion-driven misinterpretations spell trouble for relationships. They lead to escalating accusations, disappearing trust and constricting hearts. Secondly, our childhood experiences may not have fully prepared us for the adult world. The degree to which an adult takes things too personally is a very reliable guide or indicator of a person's emotional health, and of how far they have progressed out of childhood.

For people who take things too personally, everything's about them. They take offense where none was intended. They're very thin-skinned. People become thin-skinned because they're well bruised.

If you take things personally, you make yourself a victim of anything that others say or do. This is like riding bumper cars and feeling outraged that others are colliding

into you! Some may hit you because they are being careless or they have no control over their car. Others may crash into you deliberately. It would be quite silly to feel upset about this because we know that when we ride bumper cars, we are going to get hit.

In life you will inevitably be struck by the criticisms and oversights of others. Will you be disturbed and flustered by what other people do? Realise that it makes no sense to give people such power over you.

If you decide to no longer take things personally, you will avoid a tremendous amount of suffering. Even if someone directly antagonizes you, there is no need to be bothered because that person is certainly struggling with his or her own problems. You can choose to become involved with the trouble of someone else or you can rise above it, confidently and peacefully walking away.

Every Little Thing

Everything must change
There's a mirror showing me the ugly truth
These bones they ache with holy fire
But I've got nothing to give, just a life to live
If your world is without colour
I will carry you, if you carry me

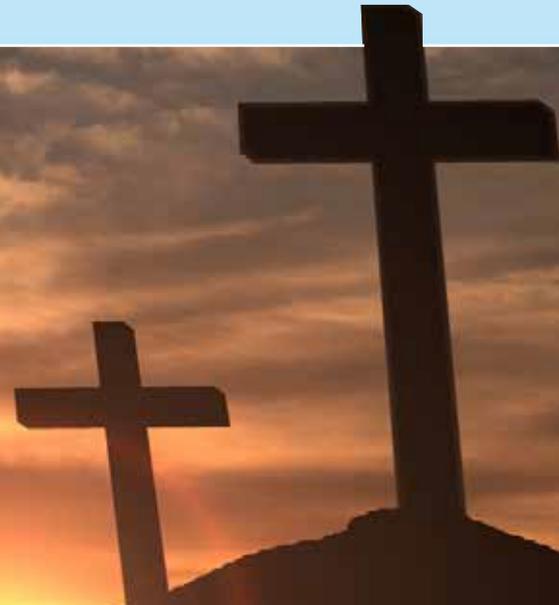
Every little thing's gonna be alright
Every little thing's gonna be alright

There's no-one else to blame
I live my life between the fire and the flame
I've built my house where the ocean meets the land
It's time to live again, pull my dreams out of the sand
Let your world be full of colour
I will carry you, if you carry me

When it's all falling down on you
You're crying out but you're breaking in two
When it's all crashing down on you

When there's nothing you can do
There is someone who can carry you

Written by Martin Smith/Stuart Garrard ©2003 Curious? Music UK
Delirious World Service album



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