



**MEANINGFUL LIVING**  
PSYCHOLOGY, LIFE COACHING & TRAINING

# Meaningful Living Newsletter

Issue November, 2015

## *The Blame Game!* By Karina Stell



It's been a tough couple of weeks for me! I've been wrestling with something that riles me. It's an issue that always riles me and its substance is really not the issue. What is though is what happens for me when it comes up. I've had many years of learning about being curious about feelings. I really get it! It's actually the only way that gives me a satisfying existence but sometimes in the knee jerk moment of being utterly irritated, I so want to label, blame; and then want to rationalise that the only reason I'm doing it, is that the other person is so damn difficult/

selfish/thoughtless/immature.....  
I really could go on for days.

And what is even more alarming, is that my brain tells me how good it would feel to just go for it, 'let it all fly and you will feel better'. They are the 'bad' and you are the 'victim/unjustly treated/martyr' and here we go all over again. More judgments and this time indulging my Mother Theresa complex☺.

The truth is, we all get irritated. And no-one we know, including ourselves, is a saint. Sometimes people and/or circumstances aren't just, kind, thoughtful or caring. This goes for ourselves as well as others. The discomfort this knowledge creates in us culminating in rage, pain or detachment is always our place to go to. The feeling leads us to the real meaning underneath. What changes do we need to make in our relationships? What boundaries haven't we put in? What lies do we tell ourselves or others, to be seen as a certain type of person – and not our authentic selves? This is our

work to do. I get scratched a lot in a certain area of my life. I struggle with it.

To be authentic has costs attached to it that challenge my courage some days and yet not being authentic costs me elsewhere. This is what it is to be human – for you and for me. It can be difficult, but resisting the blame game is something I know is useful in getting to know and understand myself and my needs. When my behaviour is not congruent with my values it then leaves me sitting very sorely with my uncomfortable feelings and that is why blaming is so much easier and a go-to place when we don't know better.

Just because we know what is useful, doesn't mean it is easy. Working on becoming my best self is hard work and denying the traps that are so enticing - and instead doing the work - is the first step toward living an authentic life, toward examining what really is scratching and resisting the urge to blame!

## What I noticed.... By Michael Cohn



I'm still noticing ... that I'm noticing.

At first sight, the above might sound like an impressive observation. But on further reflection, it could feel like a trite bit of pseudo-philosophy, a bit like the many responses to Donald Rumsfeld's quote of 'known knowns', which many people derided and disparaged as epistemic nonsense. The full quote is as follows:

"Reports that say that something hasn't happened are always interesting to me, because as we know, there are known knowns; there are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns; that is to say we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns – the ones we don't know we don't know. And if one looks throughout the history of our country and other free countries, it is the latter category that tend to be the difficult one."

Without becoming embroiled politically – Donald Rumsfeld is loathed by many people – the quote indicates a high degree of intellectual awareness. And it is this meta-process of mindful reflection on our internal process which is the subject of today's few words.

What is the importance of noticing that one notices? Noticing that one notices is the essence of being Mindful.

Mindfulness is all the rage these days – quoted everywhere and offered therapeutically and spiritually in all areas of life including psychology, coaching, sports medicine etc. etc.

So, what is so important about being Mindful?

The reality is that everyone spends a huge amount of time ruminating about the past, speculating about and planning the future, judging both past and future, judging themselves and others, all the while being driven by the incessant chatter of the monkey-mind, which comments on, judges, suggests, advises,

scorns, evaluates at every moment. It is the relentless inner critic which robs us of our lives, moment by moment, and we don't even realize it.

Life has become so ingrained with this kind of living, that we spend our lives on this psychic treadmill, unaware of just how much we are missing and not enjoying what life offers.

It's quite difficult giving people some idea of just how iniquitous this mindlessness is in our lives.

Imagine the possibility of learning to be more mindful, so that more and more moments of life can be experienced blissfully as opposed to being experienced from a judgmental space. Imagine being able to sit with a partner and just feel blessed to have some moments with a person you love, without the intrusion of tax matters, business problems, or thoughts of the f\*\*\*ing noisy neighbour next door or the shitty and spiteful work colleague you have to sit with day in and day out.

There is a way to train oneself to become more appreciative of the moments of life, a way of being which is so much more rewarding than the current rote 'getting by'.

Can you imagine your tombstone being inscribed with the words: "I wish I had spent less quiet time with my partner/child and more time thinking about the shitty noisy neighbor/work colleague/lousy government/idiot Centre-Link bureaucrat"?

Next month I'll talk about some of the other benefits to Mindfulness and how much life can be expanded by being more aware, by noticing that one notices.



## Questions I've been asked ....

By Jonathan Back

**Q. What do you mean by humour being a 'defence mechanism'? Isn't it useful to put a positive spin on something painful?**

A sense of humour is commonly associated with not taking ourselves too seriously, and the ability to laugh at our own foibles and weaknesses. However in therapy, laughing can be a way to defuse a tense or sad situation – sometimes a wise crack and some giggles can stop us from feeling overwhelmed by difficult emotions.

So when is humour useful, and when is it not?

Humour and other defence mechanisms are critical in protecting us from feelings that are too painful to explore

at the time. However, their overuse can make us disconnected from ourselves and can prevent others from really getting to know us.

Defence mechanisms tend to distort or falsify our reality. They change how we perceive events and thus how we feel about things. They are the forces that attempt to keep painful thoughts, memories and feelings out of our conscious mind. They are deceptions that we use to avoid facing issues.

Humour is wonderful. It brings people together and makes us smile as we connect over social commentary and stories. However, when we use humour to deflect

the attention away from our true feelings, or because we are uncomfortable being with someone else's pain, we are avoiding intimacy. Sometimes, it's a way that we skirt around difficult conversations and topics. And, that's not a joke.

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You can submit questions to Jonathan via [Jonathan@meaningful-living.com.au](mailto:Jonathan@meaningful-living.com.au)

### Last month's solutions:

1. The lake was frozen. 2. He is the local vicar. 3. If you take the front letter and place it at the back, it is the same word backwards. 4. All Over Again 5. Half-hearted 6. Split Personality

## Welcome to this month Word Search – Have Fun!

### Word list

AGGRESSIVE

AWED

AWKWARD

BEFUDDLED

CONFIDENT

CONSCIENTIOUS

DELECTABLE

DETACHED

ENERGETIC

EXHILARATED

FRANTIC

FRENETIC

FRUSTRATED

HUNGOVER

IRRITATED

MAUDLIN

MISCHIEVOUS

MISERABLE

MOODY

OVERT

PERPLEXED

RAMBUNCTIOUS

RIDICULOUS

TWO-TIMED

UNCOMFORTABLE

VENGEFUL

# Feelings or Not?

D I O Y O U K N C F T P D O W T H E D I  
 F F R E R E N I R C R E E E Q G A M R O  
 B V R R V P T U J R E R L C L L E V V Q  
 P W F K I E S W J S V P D T K I K D D Y  
 L Q Y O N T M P P J O L D T Y B K O S S  
 D Z Q E R F A I I F T E U V Z C A U U H  
 O K R A C H X T S Y W X F D I D O O G U  
 E F T X J W U S E C I E E X X I I X M N  
 W E H I W X L Z F D H D B A T T K J U G  
 D E T A R A L I H X E I E N C J F E P O  
 U N C O M F O R T A B L E N K E Z V R V  
 C O N F I D E N T M B I U V L R Y I I E  
 V M D Q E G K O F A C B A B O D Y S D R  
 E A H E I Z U L R S M A A W O U J S I I  
 N U W Z T D K E N A K T I O E S S E C E  
 G D A K E A S O R G C K M V L D R R U X  
 E L Q M W I C I T E G R E N E H S G L G  
 F I T P M A X H L T W O T I M E D G O O  
 U N I R L V R E E F R A N T I C D A U J  
 L E K E H N D D I D Y M T Q I X E M S M

Solution

\_\_\_\_\_ ?