



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

# Meaningful Living Newsletter

Issue 14, January 2015

## *What is your 'best time'? By Karina Stell*

Walking through the shops on the days before Xmas, I was struck by happy faces, wearied faces, excited children and frantic mothers. It made me smile as this is I'm sure how it has always been. It really just depends on who we are in that hotchpotch of people whether we see Xmas as a glorious, magical time, a stressful, frantic time or anything in between.

For those children from homes that are comfortable enough to celebrate with all the trimmings, I'm sure there is no glory like it! The excitement and the anticipation, just a joyful wonderful time.

Walking through, watching all the faces, I noticed a young man talking on his phone happily to his friend about having had 'the best time'. His face grinning from ear to ear, prompted me to think, I wonder what that means in his terms? In fact, what does it mean for me? What would my Xmas 'best time' celebration look like?

The word **rest** came first to my mind. After a year of hard work, I was tired. The people I love, yes definitely they would have to be part of my 'best time'. Good food, laughter, a peaceful heart, a chance to express what matters to me, to share myself and to share what matters to others in joy and warmth. Yes, this would be my 'best time'.

Of course, this would differ for every soul on the planet, but this was just a moment in which I wanted to be mindful of what it meant for me. Values living. These reflections always put me in touch with who I am. At 57 you would think I knew myself. But I keep on learning about myself and it pleases me a lot to go deeper into who I really am.

My 'best time' reflection helped me notice whether my Xmas held these things I enjoy and value. In great measure it did.

Rest I'm sure will come in the remaining days before I will be back at work, but for the most part, this Xmas, I really did have 'the best time'!

Maybe take a moment to reflect on your own 'best time'.

Notice. Be mindful. Cup what you discover in your hand because it puts you in touch with yourself in a meaningful way. It is part of what makes you who you are.



**Be yourself.  
No one can say  
you're doing it  
wrong.**

Charles M. Schulz

**Happy New Year everyone and we wish  
you many best times in the year to  
come!**

## What I noticed....

By Michael Cohn



### That Sneaky Ego Part 1

I'm going to write 2 posts about the sneaky ego which creeps up into our lives. Often we might have a vague idea that it is showing up, but often we are completely oblivious to the little so-and-so.

Now, most people do have an idea of what an intrusive ego is. It typically shows up in our attempts to having our needs met - I want to go to this movie and not that one. Or this restaurant, or this holiday destination. I want, I want, I need, my needs are more important than yours.

It typically also comes up in our attempts to present ourselves as more accomplished, more intelligent, more ... sophisticated, skilled, wealthy, worthy blah de blah de blah. So we buy expensive clothes, cars, homes, jewellery, gadgets mostly in order to puff ourselves up, whether to the outside world or merely to ourselves.

In these two instances of our intruding ego, we usually can be quite adept at spotting the little bugger (if we have been attuned to what is going on), and can desist from our barely hidden narcissistic show, or at least try

to present it as something sweeter or purer than it really is.

And this is the first glimpse of The Sneaky Ego. This ego pops up in a way it imagines is less obvious and intrusive but, deep down, it's about me, me, me.

Ego is closely linked to narcissism and the fact is that most people exhibit mild traits of narcissism. Bearing in mind that some degree of self-interest is actually a sign of healthy self-interest and psychological attunement. - Freud believed that a certain degree of narcissism is vital for survival and normal self-development. Infants are born totally self-absorbed - in the process of survival and that without this drive, infants would die. a certain degree of self-interest is healthy and demonstrates good psychological health. Freud wrote that healthy narcissism is an essential part of normal development. We all start out life as narcissistic infants, completely self-absorbed and ruled by impulses. Infants, obviously, are incapable of anything more. Hopefully, as you gain a sense of others, you outgrow your narcissism.

But many people are trapped by their egos and this can be seen in many ways of behaviour.

There is a pervasive need to be right, a nagging feeling of having to prove oneself. An ego driven person is easily offended and takes many things personally. There is an overriding need to show others 'achievements', to feel 'better than', to take umbrage at the smallest event, and to complain. There is a constant need to stand up for 'my rights' and to ensure that nobody gets the better of them.

Living with an ego drive person is tiring, unrewarding, lonely, both for the partner of the ego driven person and the person themselves.

Next month we will chat about more sneaky variations of this theme.

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



By Jonathan Back

### Q. I have the feeling my partner is passive aggressive; can you tell me more about this?

A. Passive aggressive behaviour is the expression of anger in an indirect manner. It is often prevalent in the workplace and romantic relationships, and causes added frustration and conflict.

Some examples of passive aggression include:

- Ambiguity: Being unclear and cryptic when responding during conflicts.
- Silence: Not saying anything when there is clearly something wrong.
- Chronic lateness: A way to put yourself in control of others and their expectations.
- Calling a partner 'sweetey' or 'honey' after saying something aggressive or mean-spirited.
- Insulting someone and pretending not to know you have insulted them.
- The passive aggressive emoticon: The strategically placed smile at the end of a sentence that would be considered terse.

Some workplace examples include:

- Deliberately aggravating a colleague, but pretending that you didn't know that it would bother them.
- Agreeing to help someone, but then doing an average job because you didn't want to help in the first place.
- Triangulation: This occurs when we have a disagreement or difficulty with a colleague, and we gossip or share this problem with another. We want to vent, and feel 'justified'.
- Denying a colleague information – leaving them out of emails, invites and notifications.

I hope that this sheds some light on passive aggressive behaviour. Stay tuned for next month's newsletter where I'll look at some ways to avoid it!

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

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## Group News

### \*Expressions of Interest for Two New Groups\*

Please Register with Michael or Karina

1. **New Couples Groups** – On **Tuesday evenings from 8.30 – 6.30pm**, we are offering a new Couples Group. Evidence has shown that this innovative new type of group has proven extremely dynamic and helpful with couples experiencing support from, and insights into, other couples' interactions. Please let Michael or Karina know if you would like to register. We are limited to *four couples only*. Group attendance is recommended for a 12-week rotation but not mandatory. Fee: \$190/couple/session

2. **Discovering You Groups** - From **Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> January** between 2.30- 4pm we will be offering a new group based on the full Acceptance and Commitment Therapy model as well as mindfulness-based practice.

This should be an exciting Group for those who wish to understand and practice how their commitment to their life values can bring about change.

- Connect with your values
- Notice what happens inside you that presents stumbling blocks away from your values
- Take committed small steps to bring about change

**Please remember!**

**Wednesday Evening Group will now be on Thursday Evening!**

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Evening groups will still be at the same time of 6.30pm-8.30pm.

Also just a reminder, *all Group fees from January, 2016 will be \$50/session. (apart from Couples Groups)*

### **Group Discounts**

- People who attend more than one Group per week earn a discount of \$20/group from the second group onwards.
- People who attend a private session with Karina and/or Michael can attend all Groups that week for \$20/session apart from Couples Groups.
- People who attend a private couple's session and then attend a Couples Group that same week, will receive a \$40 discount/Couples Group session.

## Last month's puzzle solution:

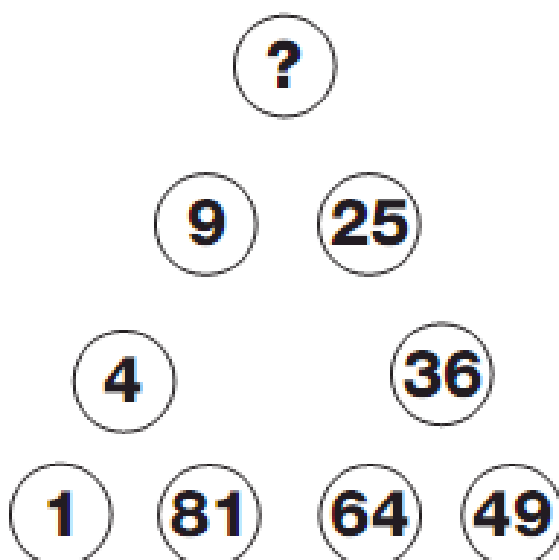
Happy Break from Michael and Karina

# Welcome to this month's puzzles!

## Questions:

1. Which statement is true out of the following?  
One statement here is false.  
Two statements here are false.  
Three statements here are false.
2. Is it illegal to marry your widow's sister?
3. What question can never be answered, "Yes?"
4. A murderer is condemned to death. He has to choose among three rooms. The first is full of raging fires, the second is full of assassins with loaded guns, and the third is full of lions that haven't eaten in 3 years. Which room is safest for him?

Which number replaces the question mark?



## Carols by the Sea!

We had a great time as the major sponsors of Waverley Council's Xmas Event, Carols by the Sea, on 9<sup>th</sup> December.

The event was attended by many families, singing, picnicking, playing and enjoying the Xmas atmosphere.

The Mayor, Sally Betts, spoke about the work we do in glowing terms and it was a really gratifying experience. We were sad we didn't see more of you there, but are very happy to have had the opportunity to get out into the community and to share the work we do.

Watching Michael singing Xmas carols enthusiastically was a treat to behold! 😊

