



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

# Meaningful Living Newsletter

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## *Noticing Co-existence and the Wisdom it Brings by Karina Stell*

One very difficult aspect of our emotional journey is when we feel flooded by emotions that feel louder than the rest when we are going through intense situations. Panic, depression, excitement, anticipation, anger, embarrassment. These, and many others can all overwhelm. These experiences can feel euphoric when they are emotions we embrace and seek or dark and unwanted when they are feelings we reject. This intensity has a perfectly useful purpose when we are confronted with danger. But today I'm wanting us to explore emotional experiences outside these, when the body is heightened by expectation or perception.

The main thing to notice is these extreme emotions can take our attention away from what else is going on that isn't quite as loud but is still present.

I know in my personal journey; cancer and all its unwanted companions can overwhelm me to the point that I feel that nothing else is going on in my life but the constant threat of illness and even death. I've worked hard to try and notice what else is going on throughout my 8-year journey with this disease and sometimes I succeed and other times I do not. This does not discourage me as

I'm a human being and some days are easier than others. Even accepting that today I can't seem to see more than what scares me, does not mean that tomorrow cannot be different. This is what coexistence gives us. The opportunity to notice we are not ALL of anything. Whilst we grieve, we can find joy. The Irish wake is a wonderful example of celebrating those we have loved and lost. Crying one minute and laughing and feeling warmth at our interactions with them during their lives the next.

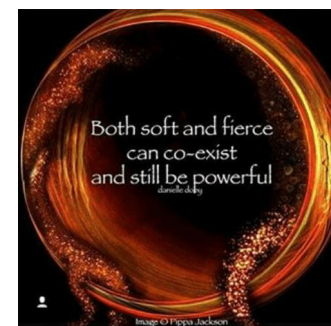
Many clients present as depressives, anxiety sufferers and other ways that describe only one part of them. These parts feel all consuming and at times disable normal daily function. Sometimes medications are required, and this is a matter for clients and their doctors. But when we can recognise those moments when we are **not** our label, these are the moments we can feel hope that coexistence is possible and in fact a gateway to noticing more and more often that we CAN manage sometimes, we HAVEN'T felt sad all day. Hugging a family member in the midst of feeling lonely, reading something that touches us when we feel emotionless or managing to complete something because a personal value drives us to, even whilst feeling

useless. These are all examples of co-existence in action.

Emotional struggles are real. But it would be sad to think that whilst we are struggling with one part of our lives, we miss out on a gift elsewhere. We often manage coexistence daily but fail to notice. But I can vouch for the fact that learning to notice even a moment of co-existence can be life changing. A moment of understanding, a kiss on a forehead, a hug from a friend - all gifts that can reside alongside any boisterous emotion of the moment. It's all about the gift of noticing.

Why not try noticing in your life? Can I be sad and happy at the same time? Scared and excited? Loving and angry? All are possible because feelings just are. Coexistence is a real gift and learning to notice it can deepen our life experience.

Have a great three months!  
Karina



*Michael is taking a well-earned rest this newsletter, so I have included one of his lovely pieces on being human!*



## I, too, get stuck ... by Michael Cohn

... and frightened to get down to things, waiting for the perfect idea to form itself, pausing for the brilliant insights to become apparent, anticipating the warm glow of success, awaiting my fairy godmother to wave her creative wand and get me out of my stupor and torpor.

All the sitting and waiting and waiting for ideas and waiting for inspiration and the 'something' which will ... (not sure what it will but I'm sure it will – I think – I hope) is in vain. It is all misguided if it is endured with gritted teeth and impatience.

If the waiting is borne with the intention of creating something, then all the creative impulses are corralled in the waiting pen, the holding pen, and everything gets choked off while the thinking mind thinks about how effective the 'waiting' actually is, whether the wretched creative 'stuff'

will finally show itself, damn it.

The trick is to really welcome the state of frozenness, to allow it with grace and interest. Feel the discomfort and experience it as would an inquisitive scientist, utterly immersed in the experience of the experience, utterly curious.

Mindfulness, the buzzword of 30 years ago, the refrain of today's coaches, therapists and mentors, is one of the most useful notions with which to approach areas fraught with difficulty and uncertainty and pain and discomfort. It is one thing to talk about mindfulness, quite another to be mindful.

The seeds of procrastination lie in fear of failure, of not completing the task or of completing it poorly. There is fear of a final 'verdict', for at the end of the task lie the judgment of others and the judgment, too, of self. At the end of the day, it is, of course, self-judgment.

What to do?

There is a wonderful new anti-procrastination treatment, but it has not been approved for use in Australia. It involves putting a firecracker up your rear end but it a dangerous form of motivation, which often causes injury and ignites fires and so on. Also, firecrackers are illegal in NSW, so I strongly suggest you take this paragraph with a grain of salty salt and give it a miss.

Given that the firecracker-in-bum is not a workable solution, there is, in fact a way forward that involves, paradoxically, doing nothing at all apart from observing. It is in the willingness to just observe the process, which allows for the opening of what Tara Brach calls the 'sacred space', the moment known to many great writers, philosophers and psychologists as the moment between stimulus and response, which is the key. The practice of mindfulness develops the ability to be sufficiently mindful of the sacred space, to ... just hold still in awareness. It is this moment, which ... I'll reveal more in following newsletters.

*For those of you who don't follow us on Facebook – a treasure:*



For those of you who would like specific issues addressed in the quarterly newsletter, please email [info@meaningful-living.com.au](mailto:info@meaningful-living.com.au) and we will do our best to answer your questions

Happy three months – Michael and Karina

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