

## **Actions, Reactions and Over-reactions.....**

The words we say and think have a powerful biochemical effect on our bodies. There's some pretty interesting science behind all this. Our everyday thoughts and feelings create biochemical reactions to mental and emotional stimuli. These reactions occur not just in the brain, but also in virtually every system of our body. We know that the brain, nerves, immune and digestive systems are all capable of releasing and receiving many of the same peptides. All these systems are chemically linked to our central nervous system.

What a difference it makes saying "maybe you're mistaken" to someone, instead of loudly declaring "You're wrong!" Or genuinely enquiring... "Are you sure?" as opposed to blurting out, "You're lying!" How we speak to others influences how we all experience our external life.

How we speak to ourselves influences how we experience things in our internal life. Imagine if we could total up all the emotions we have felt in the past week. What would be really interesting would be the words we attach to each event that created those emotions.

What tends to happen is: **EVENT > WORDS > EMOTIONS.**

An event gives stimulus to words and thoughts that we use to describe that event. These words lead to the feelings we experience from that event. Personally, what I have found so important are the words we attach to the experience. The words we use to describe the event become our experience.

Too often we 'catastrophize' events by using 'habitual vocabulary', repetitive words that we lazily use instead of thinking and defining situations before speaking. We're like a tradie with a dozen tools in his toolbox who lazily continues to grab the hammer to try and fix everything. He ends up doing more damage than fixing. We do the same with the words we use.

So often we overreact and yell out "I'm devastated!", when in fact we're really just a bit disappointed..." We boldly declare "This is a disaster!" when, with a little bit of effort, we can fix this situation pretty quick.

We all know that putting things in 'perspective' is a powerful process. My three children are now all adults but getting them through their teenage years, I would often say to myself when dealing with a 'so-called' disaster: "If this is the worst thing that happens this year... It's a pretty good year". It's a quick and useful way of putting things into perspective.

Another tool I've learnt for my toolbox is "Don't give a \$100 responses to 50c problems." Naturally I'm an 'over-reactor'. I wasn't born that way but it is a learnt behaviour. In fact, I come from a long line of over-reactors.

When a stimulus happens, an event, an accident, something that looks like a problem or a 'disaster', I now try to evaluate the situation quickly and not over-react to something simple or easy to navigate through. I learnt this lesson well when my son was young and accidentally broke the TV remote. I 'spent' a lot of negative emotion overreacting. It ended up costing me \$5 to fix the remote. I realised my son's feelings are worth a lot more to me than \$5.

"Don't give a \$100 responses to 50c problems." It sometimes helps to put a dollar value on the perceived problem as we learn to evaluate situations and circumstances that are just 'not worth' the negative emotional energy and damaged relationships that come from over-reacting.

In the Bible Proverbs 16:32 it says: "Those who are slow to anger are better than the mighty. Whoever can rule their spirit mightier than the one who captures a city".

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