



The Lies We Tell Ourselves & The Mistakes We All Make!

The American writer and Theologian **Frederick Buechner** wrote, *“Purpose is the place where your deep gladness meets the world’s needs”*

Do you think when Frederick penned those words, he could have imagined a global crisis of the current magnitude?

At the time of writing there have been over **5 million** confirmed cases of Coronavirus, & in excess of **320,000** deaths recorded globally. Whilst around **1/3** of the world’s population have experienced some degree of lockdown?

A Bigger More Connected World?

We live in an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world, but on one level that connectedness has exacerbated the current crisis.

On another level though this is still primarily a world of strangers.

A world in which we can be more responsive to the plight of an adorable dog than the fate of our fellow human beings—And in such a world I believe **kindness counts for a great deal**.

I believe there will be some nett benefits from this crisis – And one of these is that **we are going to stop lying to ourselves**.

We are going to stop saying we are kind and caring, and instead **become** more kind and caring.

We are also going to **become** more communitarian. Thinking big but acting local. Caring for our neighbour, our friends, our family, and ourselves.

Time Poor

We will stop using the excuse that we are so time poor that acts of kindness, however simple, are an almost impossibly big ask?

Pablo Picasso reminds us that, *“The meaning of life is to find your gift—The purpose of life is to give it away”*—Well...

It is true we live in an *age of great acceleration*.

The past **60** years have seen the most profound transformation in the human relationship with the natural world.

Whilst over the past **10** years, everything has just got faster and faster—transport, communication, the exchange of ideas, opinions & news, and economic change, to name just a few things.

And then COVID_19 came, and we'll just have to see how things work out now, **but another lie we must stop falling for** is that we don't have a choice.

Yes. We are all different. Each one of us can see things in radically different ways, colours, textures and shapes. It doesn't mean though that we are all Van Gough – Just selfish!

We don't know how our choices will affect the outcome, but the thing about the future is that it can be predictably unpredictable.

And change isn't linear. Change is pouring milk or cream into a cup of black coffee and watching the colours and the surface patina change, from now to *the new*.

A newnow – A newnormal, or newdifferent – Where things can't go back to what they were.

They can never be as before, although **we tell ourselves one of the biggest lies of all** – Everything must change in order to remain the same.

Which is rather like saying there are three sides to every story – Your side – My Side – And the truth!

Three Mistakes

There are **3 Mistakes** we can make as Adults, and one of those is **not giving as much as we can** or loving as hard as we can.

The 13th-century Persian Sunni Muslim poet **Rumi** hit the nail on the head when he wrote:

“Love makes bittersweet, copper gold, shadows vanish, death into life, leaders into slaves. From understanding comes love”

So, I think on that basis we've all got to try to understand that we need to stop holding back – Give as much and love as hard as we can and **do it now!**

Of course, the purist might say that **Not giving as much as we can** is not the same as not loving as hard as we can.

The need to protect our self from loss though – The physical as well as emotional pain – To not feel vulnerable or too exposed – These are all part and parcel of our lived experience, and what it is to be human.

We can't hide from it because **loss is inevitable**—That's the kicker – God's great irony!

And if we spend too long in hiding, we will be left asking, *“Is that all it was?”*

Did I ever truly feel or experience anything? Have I ever really lived?

Famine or Feast

Put it this way—without fasting i.e. direct, tangible experience, can there ever be true feasting?

I think these words by **Hunter S Thompson** provide a pretty cool solution for how we might address this all too common predicament, when social distancing measures allow, of course:

“Life should not be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a pretty and well-preserved body, but rather to skid in broadside in a cloud of smoke, thoroughly used up, totally worn out, and loudly proclaiming “Wow! What a Ride!”

So, just be ready to let go and **Buy the ticket, take the ride**, as Mr Thompson also said!

Another mistake we make is to dwell in the past.

To dwell, or be anchored in the past prevents us **being, doing, or becoming** in the present, &, the present moment experience is all we really have, as I explain in my book, [‘Uncovering Mindfulness: In Search of a Life More Meaningful’](#).

Rumination, as defined by the late **Susan Nolen-Hoeksema**, Yale Professor of Psychology, is the compulsion to focus on what’s wrong, rather than what’s right—To focus on one’s distress and its causes, rather than its solutions.

It’s being stuck, continuously experiencing the negative stuff and it’s just so debilitating.

Do you know, from the brain’s point of view there’s no difference emotionally between experiencing the negative event and thinking about it and as **William Shakespeare** so aptly put it in Hamlet:

“...there is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so. To me it is a prison. Well, then it isn’t one to you, since nothing is really good or bad in itself—it’s all what a person thinks about it”

So, take heed and pay due attention to the present moment experience.

Be Mindful too, as you are being present, and imagine all your thoughts whether to your mind good or bad, **simply as coloured balloons—and let them fly, up up & away!**

Acts Of Kindness

And finally, **another mistake** is to not be as kind as we can be and we don’t always realise this until it is too late to do anything about it.

I believe what makes life truly worth living are **Acts of Kindness—Acts of Compassion**, to oneself and to others, because quite simply —

“The purpose of life is not just to be happy. It is to be useful, to be honorable, to be compassionate, and to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well”

So, stop lying to yourself today!

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