

OCTOBER 2008 NEWSLETTER

THEME: Does Your Past Define You?

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SELF TRANSFORMATION
THERAPY

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'Thought of the Month': Does Your Past Define You?



The more we focus on our past while feeling stuck, hopeless and powerless, the more we will adopt roles and behaviours of our past. The influence of our past needs to be identified and let go of. Excessive negative focus on it will re-create our past in a repeating cycle, where things never change.

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Thought of the Month Article: Does Your Past Define You?

All that exists is the present – that is where happiness lies. Conversely, holding onto the past maintains any negative construction of ourselves. What follows from this is that things will only be better in the future – never in the present – making happiness elusive.

One way that our emotional pain is made more tolerable to cope with, is by the perception of placing it in the past. If we were hurt in the past, we have an opportunity to keep this pain repressed from awareness in the present, however we risk forever avoiding it or running away from it.

If we excessively or negatively dwell on the past, we risk being defined by it. This is because we don't only repress past emotional pain. We also construct a sense of self that is aligned with past hurts or traumas. This occurs as the experience of childhood pain leads to three reactions:

- 1) Emotional - emotional pain is repressed from conscious awareness.
- 2) Mental - as a child we maintain the mental image that our parents are perfect and take responsibility when things go wrong. This is the basis of taking blame and developing a negative self image.
- 3) Behavioural - we then adopt certain behaviours and roles that worked in our family as a compromise between avoiding hurts on the one hand, while trying to obtain love and attention as best we could.

If we excessively or negatively dwell on the past, we are reinforcing our negative self-image and associated behaviours. We will continue to be the one who was neglected, hurt, abandoned, criticised, abused and so on. What then follows is that this will promote related behaviours, such as expecting to be hurt or be the victim. Never expecting to feel better or failing to embrace life. Always fearing being rejected, hurt and feeling inadequate to love.

‘What we fear we create’. If we live in these fear-based ways from dwelling on our past, we will continue to re-create our past. If we excessively dwell on any negative self-image and fear of past hurts, we will be unable to alter our behaviour – we will fall into past patterns, aligned with past experience. We will then choose partners who reinforce this reality and the cycle continues - where healing love may remain out of reach.

What we need to do is strengthen ourselves and send the message internally to our psyche that we are strong enough to have knowledge of our past emotional hurts. This invites the hidden past to become known in the present. Through having present-centred experience of our past hurts, we begin to heal and let go of any negative self-image and behaviours. We then will create a very different image of our future, and can attract the elements to draw it into our present reality.

In summary, acknowledge that the past has shaped you by challenging your limitations, which has required you to develop who you truly are. Don't let your past define who you are – you are not your experiences. They have shaped you, but they are not you. You are so much more than that.

An Offer of Thanks:

If you refer your friends, family, work colleagues or acquaintances for counselling to me, you will receive 50% discount off your next counselling session. This is redeemable once the person you referred has attended their first session. It is my way of expressing my gratitude for thinking of me and the work that I do.

Or you may wish to redeem the equivalent of ‘50% off a session’ from the cost of any workshop you attend. This may be of benefit if you are no longer attending therapy yourself.

As an alternative to the discount, you may wish to receive one of my books free. These are ongoing offers. Only one method of discount offer is redeemable per one new referral.

Disclaimer: The content of this newsletter is for information purposes only. It does not represent advice for individuals. For individual advice, please see a suitably qualified mental health practitioner.

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