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A personal message from Tim & Sue

As work commitments abound, it is sometimes worth taking a step back to re-evaluate what is *actually* important and how are we focusing our energies. We encourage you to take some time out for yourself and to take a step back and look at your own priorities as the year is already unfolding.

What will make the difference to you this year?

What are you doing that is making a difference to others?

Featured Article **Stuck in a jam!**

A couple of weeks ago I was stuck in (yet another!) traffic jam...and on this occasion my phone had run out of charge so I was unable to contact my clients to alert them that I was going to be late. Generally, being on time is very important to me and I could feel my hackles rising as I imagined the clients would be muttering about my lateness, unreliability and everything else my stressed mind could manufacture under the circumstances!

I then stopped and reflected that I suddenly had some unexpected time...no phone, no paperwork, just me and my mind (and several hundred stationary cars!).

Once I began to see the time as a gift – time I had not expected to have (and there was absolutely nothing I could do about the

traffic...accident on the M25!), I realised that I was actually very fortunate. I needed time to plan a surprise for husband's birthday, I needed time to practise some breathing techniques and I wanted some time for me...to sing along to the radio without irritating everyone else in the house...and all at 7.30 on the M25!

So I was able to reframe a traffic jam as an opportunity, some 'free' time, a chance to reflect, plan and be me... and that's reframing – it is the art of choosing what to give greatest significance to in a given situation.

Reframing

As we learn how to reframe, we recognise that we have a choice in how we respond to any given reality. We can choose to feel hassled, stressed and out of control or we can choose to focus on what is positive about a situation and make an affirmative intention to search for what is positive in this situation for us.

Tip of the month

Free up your thinking

In every eventuality we can choose how we respond and how we are affected by events. It is not the events themselves that affect us emotionally, but how we respond to them.

The skill of actively choosing a response, rather than letting events dictate our response is the art of reframing...every cloud has a silver lining...sometimes it is hard to find the silver lining, but there is generally one just waiting around the corner...easy to say...not always easy to put into practice, so definitely worth practising.

It reminds me of the children's film *Pollyanna*. Pollyanna plays something she calls the 'glad game' and is particularly skilled in searching for a positive outcome in every situation. This is a great way of starting to reflect and reframe your experiences.

Once you get into the reframing habit you will find it can be very liberating - free up your thinking and choose your response. Look for alternatives, choices - look at things from a different perspective and choose a different response.

Quotations to reflect on

"Whatever we focus on is bound to expand. Where we see the negative, we call forth more negative. And where we see the positive, we call forth more positive. Having loved and lost, I now love more passionately. Having won and lost, I now win more soberly. Having tasted the bitter, I now savour the sweet."

Marianne Williamson

"As for the terms good and bad, they indicate no positive quality in things regarded in themselves, but are merely modes of thinking, or notions which we form from the comparison of things with one another. Thus one and the same thing can be at the same time good, bad, and indifferent. For instance music is good for him that is melancholy, bad for him who mourns; for him who is deaf, it is neither good nor bad."

Baruch (Benedict) Spinoza (1623–1677)

Until next time,

Tim Maude & Sue Beckett

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