

A fight within us

To introduce this week's topic, let me borrow a recent "Thought for the Day" from Dan Galvin's daily mailing:

An Old Cherokee describes an experience going on inside himself....

"It is a terrible fight and it is between two wolves.
One is evil - he is anger, envy, sorrow, regret,
greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment,
inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego.

The other is good - he is joy, peace, love, hope,
serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy,
generosity, truth, compassion, and faith. This same
fight is going on inside you - and inside every other person, too."

The grandson thought about it for a minute and then
asked his grandfather, "Which wolf will win?"

The old Cherokee simply replied, "The one you feed."
(Submitted to Dan Galvin by Willie Weiss)

We could add much to this story -- the "good wolf" would include enthusiasm,
vision, excitement, happiness, and positive thoughts, words and deeds.

This little story easily illustrates the battle that many of us fight every day -- the
internal battle for our very souls.

On one side, wearing the "white hat" (the "good" cowboy always wears a white
hat) we've got our good side: positive, caring, growing, always working toward
the future.

On the other side, there's our "black hat." This side of us sees the cloud, not the
sky and the difficulty, not the opportunity. This is the side that sees the weeds,
not the wildflowers.

How successful we are in life depends greatly on which side of our soul takes
control, most of the time.

Earl Nightingale's famous "strangest secret" deals with this: we become what we
think about. The person who thinks in a positive, caring, enlightened manner
becomes a positive, caring, enlightened individual. His neighbor, who continually

sees the darker side of the world, finding the shadow in every sunny day, is the person who takes on all the darker sides of life -- and misses the great joys that lie within.

I hate to use Star Wars metaphors, but it's particularly useful here. As Yoda said, "Once you start down the dark side, forever will it control your thoughts" (or something like that).

Once people get into the habit of looking at life from its negative angles, they soon find that life has lost its joy, meaning, and excitement. While the positive neighbors are greeting each day with excitement and joy, those on the dark side regret each day's worth of life -- they do not "greet" the day, because the day has no promise for them.

We all know people like this -- in fact sometimes we **are** people like this. Frankly, we all have bad days from time to time -- it's a fact of life that few people are constantly "up." But if you're seeing more "down" days than "up" ones, it's time to take a look at which side of the street you're habitually walking down.

Aside from chocolate (did you see that news item that talks about the wonders of dark chocolate?), one of the best ways to stay on track is to develop positive habits. Habits can be our master or our slave; we can choose to be driven by bad habits, or choose to develop and use good habits to keep us on track.

If you're having difficulty staying on the brighter side of the street -- if you're losing the fight within your soul between the dark side and the light side, now's the time to make some changes in your daily life. Leave the TV set off, and start your day with something new: a good book, a talk with your spouse, a morning walk, an early drive to the office (before all the scary drivers wake up), or a leisurely breakfast. Habitually choose to temporarily set aside those things that would move you from your positive path.

I know nobody can exist in a vacuum -- there are bills to be paid, laundry to be done, clothes to be mended, kids to be fed, and lawns to be mowed. All the everyday minutia that invades on our positive state can wait. Set aside a schedule early each evening after work to address the bills; get up a little bit earlier to undertake your morning chores; schedule a time on the weekend where you take care of items that need your attention -- and then only depart from that schedule when emergencies arise. It's odd, but true -- when we schedule a time to take on the more distasteful things we need to accomplish (things such as paying bills, cleaning the bathroom, washing the clothes, or cleaning the yard), it not only makes the task seem easier, but it gives us our lost time back.

When we set up a "positive schedule" to our lives, we soon find that we align our thoughts along with our time. By spinning a positive slant to challenging activities,

we soon find we see "chores" as "activities." As an example, a friend of mine looks at cleaning the house as a fun challenge -- each time she does it, she attempts to do it faster and better. (For those who wish to be infected with such a disease, I recommend Don Aslett's books teaching professional house cleaning techniques to make everyday residential cleaning faster and more efficient).

Face it -- you're much happier when your "light side" is in control; I know I am. With that in mind, why would any of us choose to let our dark side rule? Why would anybody give extra control to the side of us that would choose to destroy us?

It's a fight -- that's for sure -- a fight for our soul.

It is, however, a fight that we can win.

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