



Feed the Good Wolf

## Feed the Good Wolf

You may have heard this story before, but it serves my purpose to tell it now.

One evening, an elderly Cherokee brave told his grandson about a battle that goes on inside people. He said,

“My son, the battle is between two ‘wolves’ inside us all. One is evil and negative. It is anger, envy, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, and ego. The other is good and positive. It is love, hope, compassion, humility, and kindness.”

The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather, “Which wolf wins?”

The old Cherokee simply replied, “The one that you feed.”

Whilst reflecting on the story recently, I asked myself what behaviours can we adopt to feed the good wolf and what strategies do we have to quieten the bad wolf down?

Martin Seligman, a promoter of positive psychology, provides part of the answer. He identified five core elements of psychological well-being and happiness which, if you adopt them, will help you work towards a positive mindset. They are:

- Positive emotion - Feeling good, optimism, pleasure and enjoyment.
- Engagement - Fulfilling work, interesting hobbies, “flow.”
- Positive Relationships - Social connections, love, intimacy, emotional and physical interaction.
- Meaning - Having a purpose, finding a meaning in life.
- Accomplishment / Achievement - Ambition, realistic goals, important achievements, pride in yourself.

The mindset of the core elements will transition into day-to-day behaviours. Next are listed some typical behaviours:

- Express gratitude
- Savour the good things and the good feelings that go with them
- Get into the flow of doing something where nothing else seems to matter
- Play to your strengths [& strengthen your weaknesses]
- Know your ‘why’ in life and why you do what you do
- Get good at something [or better at what you’re already good at]
- Science says happiness is in three words “other people matter”, so appreciate the relationships and the other people in your life

The second part of the answer is to deal with quietening down the bad wolf. There are several strategies available. They are:

- Ignore it.
- Use a mindfulness technique to capture the negative thought and cast it aside onto a vehicle of some kind, e.g. a boat floating down a river, which will take it away.
- Distract yourself from the bad wolf and focus on something else.

- Visualise what you want to happen. The bad wolf will engage with you when something happens, an event of some kind, so if you can recognise the event that engages the bad wolf, you can visualise how you want to behave, therefore engaging the good wolf instead.

Finally, I leave you with the following thought about remaining positive.

Everyday, so that you remain positive, do something to feed the good wolf:

- An internal thought
- An external action

My offer to give two free 40-minute coaching sessions is open until the end of May. If you feel that a coaching session will benefit you, then contact me [here](#), I will arrange a time with you, and I'll send you a zoom meeting invite. It is as simple as that.

All the best and stay safe,

John



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