


**The Seed of Equivalent Benefit**

In this video I'm going to talk about what to do with the list you've made as a result of completing the first exercise.

In my previous video I talked about Brené Brown's research which including 'numbing'. I see numbing as those things that we do to avoid the stuff or feelings we don't want to face up to. At the time I didn't want to face up to the reasons why I was depressed. I had been to see my Pastor and he felt that I should start by dealing with my feelings about Andy leaving home.

Around this time I came across a book called 'Just Believe' a piece of Christian fiction by Jim Stovall & Tracy J Trost. To be honest I only downloaded it because it was a free Kindle download. The story is also told in the film The Lamp (2011). The ideas in the book are based on the work of Napoleon Hill (naphill.org).

One idea stood out from the book.
'Every adversity, every failure, and every heartache carries with it the seed of an equivalent or greater benefit.'

Basically this means looking at a situation from a different perspective. Instead of concentrating on the bad things or the uncomfortable changes that have occurred you look for the positive things that have come from the changes. To do this we need to have a positive mental attitude. One of the characters in 'Just Believe' says:
'To have a positive mental attitude, you need to learn to start each day by expressing gratitude for all the adversities, defeats and failures that you have experienced in the past. Then give thanks for the equivalent seeds of benefit that have come to you through the passing of time. Also give thanks for the blessing you plan to receive during the day. You will find that you see what you are focused on. If you decide to focus on the good that comes out of bad, you will see it. If you focus on just the bad, that is all you will see and all you will have.'

I see this as part of what Paul speaks about in Romans about the renewing of the mind. What we think about is what we see. Have you ever found when you are thinking of buying a certain kind of car that as you drive around you keep seeing that type of car? Years ago I was thinking of getting a Golden Cocker Spaniel and everywhere I went for the next few weeks I saw Golden Cocker Spaniels. I'm sure there must have been other dogs about but the only ones I registered were the spaniels. So if that works for something as trivial as getting a dog just think of the power there must be in thinking of the positive things in your life.

Ann Kidd Taylor, in the book 'Traveling With Pomegranates: A Mother-Daughter Story' says
'I wonder: instead of retreating and hiding, instead of pining for the way it was, what if I accept the way it is? This strikes me as both the most obvious thing in the world and the most profound.'

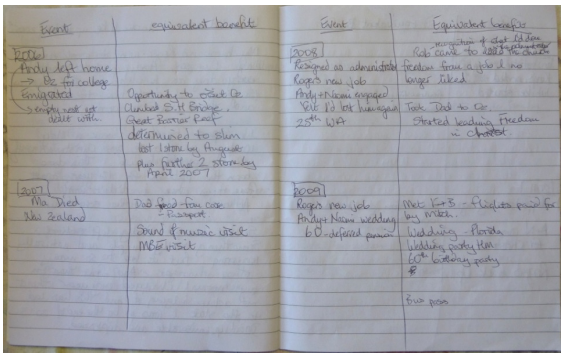
And we can. We can accept what happened and get on with life. But maybe just accepting something is like stuffing more things into an already over full cupboard. Eventually it will spill out and need to be dealt with. I feel that I stuffed away everything that happened since January 2006 until it all fell out.

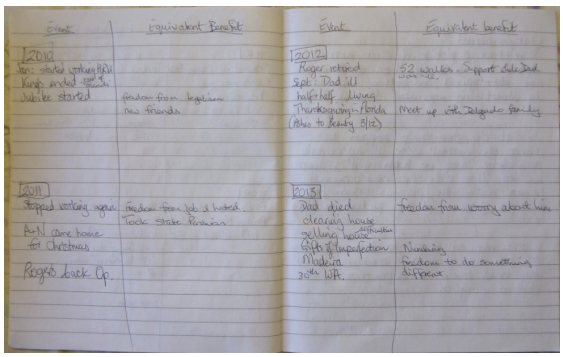
One of the problems with not dealing with stuff is that it becomes a mountain in our thinking and so we don't deal with it because the mountain is so big that we don't know where to start. And the mountain starts to have power over us. Proverbs 23: 7 says 'For as he thinks within himself, so he is.' (NASB) So as we hold tightly to our thinking about the issues that have arisen we are brought down by our negative thinking. Do we make ourselves a victim of our own thoughts?

Let's renew our minds. Let's release those negative thoughts so they no longer have a hold on us. I have found that if I write things down or speak out my thoughts they are no longer trapped inside my head and they no longer have so much power. Have you felt any different since you wrote your list of things that have happened?

Let's go back to the idea of the seed of equivalent benefit. Take out your list of things that happened – the good, the bad and the ugly! Get a piece of paper and draw a line down the middle.

In the left hand column write down the event. In the right hand column write down all the good things that have occurred because of what happened. This may take time and is possibly not done in one sitting. I wrote out my events and then kept mulling over the things that had happened since each event and wrote them down as they occurred to me until I felt I had completed my list. Different events will have different amounts of equivalent benefits. And don't worry if you can't think of many things to start with.




Finding the positive things does not negate the seriousness of what happened, the event or adversity remains in the past, but the way you think about it changes.

I am still sad that Andy left the country but I am not distraught as I was before I started this activity. I used to be sad and miserable because he had left and I don't get to see him very often. But let's look at the positive that came from it. Because he went to Hillsong College we visited Australia and New Zealand which weren't on our to-visit list. Andy met and married Naomi and as a result we have some wonderful friends in her parents who I visit quite frequently. Naomi's parents are big on family and we have been adopted into their very large Latino family which can be quite overwhelming for Roger & I as only children but we have such a great time with them including sitting down with 42 other family members for Thanksgiving dinner.

When you've made your two column list, read through each event. Take your time. Look at how different things look if you view that past event through the eyes of the benefits you've received since. We can't change the past but we can change our attitude and our perception.

I called the class Redefining Normal and you may be wondering whether I've forgotten about that. What I'm hoping is that as we look at the things that happened in the past and acknowledge the changes that happened to our normal that when the next changes come, which they inevitably will, that we will be in a stronger place and have strategies to help us deal with the new version of normal that we will be living.

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you find scriptures that can help you through this journey. They may be Scriptures that confirm what you already know, they may be Scriptures that you can hang on to until you have renewed your mind or they may be Scriptures that have a prophetic edge and point towards what is to come.

Now we will go on to how to make a zigzag book and the embellishments to put in it. You can start making the book whilst you're still thinking about the benefits and your Scriptures. You may choose to find a different way to work through this class creatively. Go with whatever your heart is telling you to do.