

Two Lists

..... from The Power of Positive Thinking by Dr. Norman Vincent Peale
(adapted by Amy Fox)

One day, during his therapy session, a man told his therapist that he had nothing to live for anymore.

"Everything is gone, hopeless," the man told him. "I'm living in deepest darkness. In fact, I've lost heart for living altogether."

The therapist smiled sympathetically at the distraught man sitting before him.

"Let's take a look at your situation," he said.

He took out a sheet of paper and drew a line down the middle of the paper. He told the man that on the left side they would list the things he'd lost in his life, and on the right side, the things he had remaining.

"You won't need that column on the right side," said the man sadly, "I have nothing left."

So, the therapist started asking him questions: "When did your wife leave you?"

"What do you mean? She hasn't left me. My wife loves me!"

"That's great!" said the therapist enthusiastically. "Then that will be number one in the right-hand column...Wife hasn't left."

Now, when were your children jailed?"

"My children aren't in jail!" exclaimed the man.

"Good! That's number two in the right-hand column....Children not in jail," said the therapist jotting it down.

After a few more questions in the same vein, the man finally got the point and smiled in spite of himself, "Funny, how things change when you think of them that way."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS & PROMPTS

OPENING CLASS

As you begin to arrive on your mat, start to mentally create a list in your mind of any challenges you're up against, any worries you walked in with, anything that is bothering you. No right or wrong. Just a few moments to explore what's present for you.

Good, now take a full breath in...sigh it out and set that list aside.

Mentally create one last list, this time of all the things you love, things and people you are grateful for, the blessings you already have in your life.

Good, now take a full breath in...sigh it out...a few more deep exhales, releasing and letting go and then begin to seal off your lips, activating your Ujjayi pranayama.

You might add or take away from these mental lists as you go throughout class and discover things for yourself...

DURING CLASS

Before Telling the Story

The lists you made in the beginning of class might change over your practice. And that's OK. Add or subtract from your lists. See where perhaps something you identified as bothersome can be reframed, worked through or felt so that it can be moved to other side.

Notice where your mind is in this moment. What is holding your attention? Is what's holding your attention worth your energy? If not, where can you shift your focus?

A simple perspective change, can change everything.

After Telling the Story

Sometimes life can be relentless and all we will see is our problems and challenges. But, if like the man in the story, we can take a step back and reframe our challenges, we'll find that a simple change in perspective, changes everything.

CLOSING CLASS

Our perception is how we see and understand what occurs around us – and what we decide those events mean to us. And our perception can either be a source of strength or one that holds us captive to our circumstances. How our perception affects our reality is all within our choosing.

This week, where can you reframe a challenge you're up against? Where can you undress a worry or fear you have? And where can you celebrate and appreciate what you already have in your life?

A NEW WAY TO THEME

Sometimes a really powerful way to tell a story is to start with a prompt to prime our students brains and then to jump into telling the story later in class before driving the point home.

Obviously, you can tell the story at the start, but you can also use the Opening Class prompts to start class. From there go into your Sun A, B and C movements. During this time you can use the During Class prompts. After your Sun C movements, while your students are holding a static posture of effort, you can tell the story. Not only does it help hold your students attention but it can also drive home the lesson of reframing our challenges and seeing what we can take off our "negative list" and put onto our "positive list".