

Start asking yourself ...

What went well?



If you're anything like me, you're super self-critical. 'I should've done this', 'why didn't I do that?', 'How could I be so silly?', 'Why didn't I do that better?' And so it goes as we beat ourselves into a pulp time and time and time again. The problem with this approach is that it puts us and keeps us in a negative state, stimulating negative emotions, producing negative actions which result in undesirable outcomes in life. I've got a new suggestion ... when reflecting on things you've done, why not start asking yourself, 'What went well?'

I had a skype call this morning with a lovely young lady in the Canada. She started writing a fiction book about two years ago and has hit a roadblock about halfway through ... in fact she hasn't written a word for the last 6 months. I asked her what had stopped her. She replied that she'd read through it numerous times and it was boring. She said she was lost with the story, it was confusing and she didn't know how to continue. She said she was worried that no-one would like it.

Let's stop here for a moment and reflect on her review of the manuscript so far. If I said the same things to myself, I'm sure I would have stopped writing too. If I summarised that my book was boring, confusing and was sure no-one would like it, would I honestly be motivated to keep writing? I doubt it ... would you?

Then I asked her, 'what went well in your manuscript so far?' She started to tell me that she actually really enjoyed most of it, that is was quite entertaining and that she liked the characters she'd developed. As she was telling me what worked well, I could see on her face and hear in her voice that she was getting more excited and more motivated to get back into writing. At the end of the session she was set to go again ... feeling positive and ready to commit to writing a little bit every day. Why the change? She focussed on **what went well!**



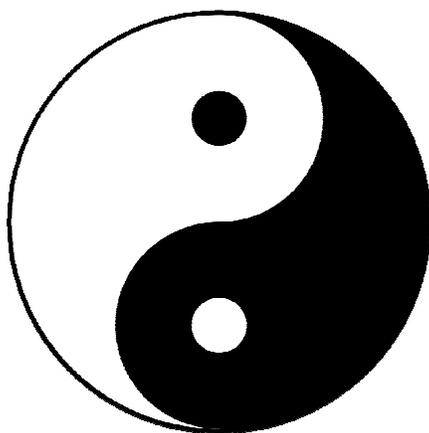
It's a life-changing question ...

Often in conversation, people ask about my professional football career at the St Kilda Football Club. They say something like, 'wow, that must have been an exciting part of your life.' I used to respond with, 'Oh, I didn't do that well. I only played 24 games in 7 years. I wasn't really that good and I got sacked, and found out about it after reading it in the newspaper.'

After this motivating and empowering speech – not – I always felt flat, deflated and de-motivated. I then started to ask myself, regarding my football career ... 'what went well?' This question prompted a very different response and an incredibly different outcome. When I thought about it, 'I did actually play 24 games at the highest level in Australia ... a fantastic achievement. I'm proud of what I did to get to that place. I met some amazing people and I learned some valuable lessons in life. It was an incredibly positive time of my life.' The result of this thinking totally changed my emotional state and my level of self-belief, optimism and focus.

Asking the question, 'what went well?' and honestly answering will do many positive things for you as it leads you to a state of positive emotion. People who ask this question about the stages, events and pursuits in their life feel better about themselves. They tap into their creativity and innovation. They are more willing to take risks, challenge the status quo and devise new and better ways to do things. They achieve more. Now doesn't that sound like a better way to live?

Okay, so you tried to lose weight and get into shape and didn't achieve exactly what you wanted, but tell me ... what went well? Maybe you presented that proposal to your boss or a prospective client and it was not accepted, so what ... what went well? You may have made many sales calls and got depressingly more rejections than appointments set. It happens to all of us ... what went well? Perhaps that romantic date you planned with your partner ended poorly. Believe me, it happens to all of us ... what went well?



In every situation in life there is good and bad. In every attempt you make to achieve something important, certain aspects will go well and others poorly. Life is a balance of yin and yang, good and bad, positive and negative and success and failure. Which way the scales tip depends on what you choose to focus on. Focus on the yang, the bad, the negative and failure and you can expect more of the same. However, focus on the yin, the good, the positive and success and guess what will happen?

It all comes down to the question you ask yourself as you reflect on the things that are happening and have happened in your life. Start asking, 'what went well?' ... answer it honestly and then watch what happens to you and your life as a result.

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