



# **Coaching to Evolve**

## Feed the Good Wolf

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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.

### SELF REFLECTION:

Whilst reading through the 5 core elements of a positive mindset, identify which one resonated with you the most and which you would like to strengthen.

The mindset of the core elements will transition into day-to-day behaviours. Next are listed some typical behaviours that will strengthen our well-being and happiness feelings:

1. Be grateful - Feeling a sense of wonder, thankfulness and appreciation for life. Gratitude isn't only counting blessings. It's training the mind to tune in and notice the positives
2. Savour the good things - Savouring is “the capacity to attend to, appreciate and enhance the positive experiences in life.
3. Get into the flow - the state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter.
4. Play to your strengths - strengths are the individual at their best. Strengths hold the greatest potential for growth. Playing to strengths increases well-being, resilience and performance.

5. Get good at something [or better at what you're already good at]
6. Control what you can control - control responses to whatever is seen, heard or felt
7. Be resilient - view failure or setback as an opportunity to learn, and move on
8. Science says happiness is in 3 words - other people matter - Appreciate the relationships in your life
9. Know your Ikigai (pronounced ee-key-guy) - It is a Japanese concept that essentially means "a reason for being." It's made from two Japanese words: iki, meaning "life" and kai, meaning "effect, result, worth or benefit." What is the reason for getting up in the morning?

#### SELF REFLECTION:

Which of the above behaviours can you use to strengthen the core element that resonated with you most? Identify an action you can take.

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

All the best and stay safe,

John



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