

Notes From Dr. Teena Cahill

"Within adversity lies opportunity" Albert Einstein

I cannot stop change from happening, but I *can* make a choice as to how I respond.

I cannot control all of the events that happen in the world...but I *can* make a choice to be defined, not by all of life's events, but rather by my positive and creative response to those events.

I know that my thoughts (how I look at things) affect how I feel about things. And I know that how I feel, often affects what I do.

When they told me my husband had no chance to live, I felt horrible and was doing nothing. Finally, I decided to change my thinking and plan on him living. When I changed those thoughts, I suddenly felt hopeful, and was energized to take some action to see if there was anything I could do to try to tip the balance of life in his favor. I would not say that this change in thinking alone is why he lived, but I would say we were both helped by seeing what was possible, rather than what was impossible.

In time I had to change both thoughts and expectations. My husband's disabled status has taught me that success is a moving target, rules are made to be broken, goals may need to be readjusted, and there are many ways to have a happy life.

A change in thinking is called a cognitive reframe. Sometimes it is referred to as mindfulness...but the important point is that in all of life, both our personal life and our work life, we can make *choices* as to how we respond to events.

Mental health experts used to believe that human beings were driven by emotion, but now, we have empirical data that shows us that our thoughts "drive" our feelings and that by being mindful of our thinking we may better understand or change our emotions.

Ultimately, with any changing situation, we need to set goals and make decisions, and sometimes this is hard to do. But I have found that often there is no such thing as a right decision or a wrong decision. **Sometimes I just make a decision and work to make it right. And sometimes I have found that part of my growth**

includes choosing to "re-decide," setting new goals and re-defining success.

Like everyone else in the world, the only thing I can actually control is me; my reactions, my creativity and my determination. But, like everyone else in the world, this unique innate strength which is embedded within me, is where my power lies, is my greatest asset, is what will enhance my resilience and is what keeps me going in the tough times.

Do not tell me you are not a leader...what does a life not led look like, anyway?!

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