

WOLFGANG RIEBE

THE BEST TIPS OF

&

2011

2012



The 6 most popular tips and observations shared in Wolfgang's monthly 'Useletter' during 2011/12.



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FOREWORD

I thought it would be apt to share the stories and personal messages that had the biggest impact on my readers during the time I sent out my monthly newsletter, which I called a 'Useletter' - because it's newsletter you actually use!

These days with social media, anyone can get any info they want within a few clicks, and many people are inundated with emails and spam, so I stopped it a few years ago.

The auto responder company I used gave me all the stats I needed, i.e. how many people opened the 'Useletter', and how many people clicked on links, etc. Thus I could see exactly which topics were the most effective. Hence I have taken the 6 highest stats over 2011 - 12 and put together this short e-book for you?

HAPPINESS VERSUS MATERIALISM!

Before I begin – please understand that I am not against nice things if you can afford them. However, if you judge the quality of your life through materialism and fall into the credit trap to buy items, that's when I believe you need help.

The more I travel and speak at events, the more people I meet. The more people I meet, the more individuals seeking answers to personal problems and issues approach me. More and more, I see unhappiness out there due to materialism taking control of individuals' and businesses' lives. Hence I am going to be a bit more personal than usual, sharing some opinions you may not quite agree with. However, I need to remind you that at times, inspiration is not just about nice words; it's about realising what is really happening out there and having your eyes opened. One cannot solve a problem if one doesn't know

what the root cause of it is – hence I would like to open your eyes, pose some questions to you, and make you see life and the world we live in from a slightly different perspective – with the ultimate goal of making you more positive.

No matter what you currently believe and how clued up you are on the topic, the bottom line is - we cause our own unhappiness. You, and only you, are responsible for the state of mind that you are in right now! You may not know how you got to this point, but I am here to show you. Once you understand this and what has caused the mind shift to the negative, only then will you be in the position to do something about it. Yes, you and only you will then have the power to change for the positive.

Firstly, it is vital that you understand and accept that we (myself included) have all been influenced and conditioned by the society we live in – our value systems and our beliefs are all the result of influences by our family, friends, peers, the media, TV, and everything else in the society we live in! As the world has changed in the last 20 years, materialism has become increasingly important. Sadly, many people live in a bubble and believe their current situation is as good as it gets! However, we can all improve our lives exponentially – and the first step in doing this is to let go of materialism!

I have learnt to keep a balance and realise that certain items I can live without. I have also learnt that I do not always need to impress those around me with brand names and the latest gadgets. In fact, most of the time, those I am trying to impress don't even realise what I am doing. Just look at everyone around you. What drives them? Money and possessions! Anyone that judges me by my possessions is DEFINITELY not worth having as a friend – that's just shallow!

Think back to the last time a cool new gadget was released (I won't mention specific items). People slept in front of the stores overnight and queued by the thousands to be the first to have this new gadget... ooo! Isn't that more than just a little messed up? Have we become so sad a people that we sleep in front of stores in freezing snow so that we can be the first to have a new gadget? Why? Do these people believe it makes them better than those that don't have it? Does it make them superior in any way? In my opinion, it makes them total nincompoops! Will this gadget lead them to a new level of enlightenment? No... it will lead them to a new low in the level of brainwashed stupidity and increase their level of debt! Talk about a new low in the conditioned level of 'instant gratification.'

It's just clever marketing and brainwashing. How much better a quality picture are we going to get than HD? Already they are planning on new gadgets to sell us. VHS tapes didn't last long before DVDs came out. It's like there is a new system every few months, and everyone has to start from scratch again. Now it's Blu-ray, next it's all digital files on hard drives, and then? I have to smile when I think about all the people who started building up huge DVD collections. Hey - you better start converting them to MPEG4, as that's the new video format. And by the way, have you tried selling your DVD collection? I have friends with old 33 LP vinyl records - they can't give them away. In fact, one friend decorated a whole wall in his family room with them - that's all they are good for.

Imagine you had put that same money into Maple Leaf or Krugerrand gold coins? What do you think they would be worth today, compared to the worthless and outdated gadgets you still have lying around the house?

I remember in the eighties working on cruise liners and docking in St Petersburg in Russia, before the wall came down.

Yes, the poverty was terrible, and the control of the communist regime was shameful. However, the people at the time had an incredibly deep relationship with each other. They had nothing else! Thus they spent time together, socialising, chatting, playing games with their children, etc. This stood out like a sore thumb for me, even though they had nothing materialistic, they had a spiritual wealth and connectivity with each other, which was severely lacking in the West.

After the wall came down, this connection between the people disappeared within months! It's the first thing I noticed! Hey, don't get me wrong, I was really happy they now had the same opportunities as the rest of us... but at what cost? Walking down the main street in Prague recently, I stood in one of the top 10 most expensive 'name-brand' streets in the world. All the name brand stores are here, with Bentleys, Porsches, and S-class Mercedes parked outside. 99% of the people walking along this street cannot even afford a cup of coffee in these stores – yet they all desire to have these brands – believing this will 'buy' them happiness. Isn't this just so sad?

Why couldn't they have kept that deep social connectivity? Instead, again in my opinion, they lost that spiritual connection and now reverted to typical western materialism. Will they ever find happiness? They went from one corrupt system into another. Please don't misunderstand me; I am not saying that capitalism is bad, but what happened to understanding the concept of keeping a balance in life?

People don't understand the difference between 'nice to have' and 'need to have' items. We need food, we need a roof over our heads, we need love, and we need heat in the cold, etc. Anything more than the basic needs is a 'nice to have.'

Recently, they had a mobile phone survey at my daughter's school where they asked the children what their average

spend per month was on their mobile phones. US\$75 - 150 was normal. In fact, the kids laughed at those who spent less. Huh? Where do the children, or the parents, get the money to allow their children to spend so much on a phone? No wonder debt is getting out of hand and everyone lives on credit. No wonder the phone companies are amongst the biggest earners in the world today.

Yes, my daughters each have a phone, but for emergencies only! If they are at sport and something happens, they need to contact me. They are not on a contract, and they use their pocket money to buy their own airtime. I have taught them to understand the cost of these gadgets. And no, they do not have the latest mobile phone with all the bells and whistles.

Today we blame society, crime, and corruption for children being lured by paedophiles via SMS, chat rooms, and the internet. How often must I say this... it's always easier to blame someone else! Who gave them the phone? YOU! It's your fault if you didn't teach them how to manage the thing or warn them of the potential dangers of chat rooms. Stop blaming everyone else and stop being a slave to materialism. Don't blame your child if they spend huge amounts of money on eBay if you gave them access and your credit card details. Learn to take some responsibility yourself - and start by teaching your children to be responsible! It's no use saying that today's modern gadgets are corrupting the youth. It's how we use and see the application of these gadgets.

We complain of our children getting bored so quickly. Of course they will if you buy them every conceivable gadget and they have never learnt to use their own imaginations. Obviously, if you put them in front of the TV set where everything is designed in short bite-sized bursts, 'sheeples' (sheep + people) with a short attention span will be created.

Since when will a PlayStation 3 make you happier than building your own go-kart and playing outside with your friends?

No, I am not being old-fashioned and boring when I speak about the past and my youth. But... we were able to create fun out of any situation. Whether it was building a drum kit with our mum's pots and pans or playing games with the neighbour's children. I clearly remember creating cardboard targets and shooting them with a rubber band pulled taut along the length of a ruler. Suggest that to a child today, and they will laugh at you. We learnt to use our imagination back then. Today, this doesn't happen anymore. You actually need to force your child to go back to those creative trends. How else will they learn to use their imagination?

We never had mobile phones and the internet. We had time for ourselves. Put that phone off. Limit the time others can get hold of you. Guess what? The world won't come to an end! Use that time to build a puzzle with your family. What happened to family discussions where you passed the stick around the table? The one with the stick can speak about whatever they want. Families connected – people understood and cared about each other. Makes you think, huh? The problem is that our minds don't stop. We need to shut down and do simple things with those close to us.

Just try for the next week to make do without one of your gadgets every day. Try not watching the box when you get home – just for one night! Instead, spend time with the family.

Today's modern society demands that parents also have a social life after work, or even their own gadgets. Children get in the way – hence the easiest solution is to put them in front of a gadget too! Think about it, it's way easier to put the 3-year-old in front of Barney on TV than actually teach your child those lessons yourself. Time, time, time! You just don't have the time anymore. This conditioning has even reached our children on a

deeper level as well - they no longer ask for things with, "I want" - they actually say, "I need!" Hello... what do you 'really' need in life?

Of course, the younger readers may disagree with me. But think hard, did we have all the psychological problems people have today back in the 60s, 70s, and 80s? Psychiatrists were definitely not making the money they are today! I have always found that when I let my mind roam free - all the good ideas pop up from nowhere. It's when I don't have to worry about paying off the credit card because I bought so many 'nice to have' things that I am calmer and more relaxed. - And strangely enough, I enjoy life more.

I really don't want to bring politics, sex, or religion into this 'Useletter' and least of all want to offend anyone. But just look at the bigger picture from another perspective. No matter how much they deny this, governments need you to have debt! Why? If you didn't have debt, you wouldn't have to work to pay off all your credit cards and loans. That, in turn, means you wouldn't have a salary that can be taxed.

Governments exist because of your taxes – so don't you think it is in their interest to control the media and press and advocate the buying of the newest and latest gadgets? They need to keep you in debt so you can pay taxes. If you had no debt, would you still stress over money so much? I doubt it. You would lead a quieter life, be more content, and generally be a happier person spending more time with those close to you. Why do you think governments and big corporations work so closely together?

Once you understand this and the fact that you are manipulated into being materialistic by various powers that be, only then can you do something about it. Hence you need to honestly decide between 'nice to have' and 'need to have'

items in life. If you focus on the need to have and stop believing that 'brand names' are better than 'non-brand names,' you may well have far less stress in life and start enjoying life so much more. It's just something to think about!

COPING WITH NEGATIVE NASTY PEOPLE

I received a mail from a subscriber seeking advice on how to cope with people that are nasty or negative towards you. It does happen that you get friends, family or colleagues that put you down when you suggest something, or make snotty comments when you say something. Often the person on the receiving end broods over this for the rest of the day and feels really hurt.

Has it ever happened to you that someone has said something that really bothered you? You smile and act as if it's all a joke, but when alone your thoughts are bitter and hurtful, and you constantly go over the conversation trying to figure out what you did wrong?

Someone once told me that you could always tell who the pioneers are because they have arrows in their back and are lying face down in the dirt. It is they that change the world. It is only when people criticise you that you are doing something right and taking others out of their comfort zone!

Clever sayings aside, all I can say is that it is a normal reaction to get cranky when someone makes snotty comments. I have put a lot of videos on YouTube - a few people I don't know make such vulgar and rude comments and initially this really upset me - even all the good comments never made up for it. When I had my TV series I had tons of good reviews, but the one or two that were nasty would be the ones I remembered.

So personally, I can really relate to what many people go through.

I would like to share 13 tips with you on how to cope with this. Even if you only use one tip - at least it's a step in the right direction.

1.) Smile

A friend of mine shared a well-known saying with me, "Some people grin and bear it. Others smile and change it." The power of a smile... now that's something! When these people approach you, are you smiling or do you have a long face? I firmly believe that the odds are way more in your favour of receiving good comments when you are smiling. In fact, a genuine smile is difficult to criticise. Even if you are in the wrong and deserve a sarcastic remark, it will be way more toned down if you are smiling. Think about it! I have learnt in life that everyone you meet deserves to be greeted with a smile... it makes his or her day, and mine too!

2.) Be happy within yourself

Let's be realistic... way more people have good things to say than bad things - so I take it I am on a winning streak - that means I should remain positive. How things look on the outside of us depends on how things are on the inside of us. If I am content with who I am and know that most people don't have an issue with me, why should I let the few negative ones depress me?

3.) Be tolerant

Be tolerant of the human race. Your whole family belongs to it - and some of your spouse's family does too! 99% of the times the people saying the bad things have their own issues to sort

out, and they are the problem. So why should I waste my time thinking about them and their negativity? The reality of the situation is that you cannot kindle a fire in any other heart until it is burning in your own. If there is a fire in your heart, you will only radiate positive energy and it is highly unlikely then that you will attract the negative people to you.

4.) Don't Criticise

Before you criticise someone, you should walk a mile in his or her shoes. That way when you criticise them, you are a mile away from them and you have their shoes! We constantly like to criticise others who don't agree with us. But we must never forget that they could be right, and you could be the one in the wrong. Also, learn to look at their circumstances; maybe their negativity is the result of problems and issues in their life. If you made an effort to find out what the problem is and helped them solve it, you would turn everything around to a win-win situation.

5.) Understand that people do get jealous

Jealousy plays a HUGE role - if you are doing something good or are successful, for some or other reason the 'negative' people out there hate you for it and will always try and bring you down. If you have tried to find out what is causing the negativity and found no answers, then learn to ignore them. If anything, you should feel sorry for that person! There are certain things in life you cannot change and unfortunately some people fall into this category. Remember that those who look for them find opportunities. The bee has a sting, but honey too... so take every negative and try making a positive out of it.

6.) Choose to be the better person

If you cannot help worrying, remember that worrying cannot help you. Everything in life is a choice - I choose not to associate myself with nasty, negative people. In fact, I don't listen to the news or read the first few pages of a newspaper - because it's all about corrupt politicians, sensationalism and negativity. By avoiding this I find it easier to remain positive.

7.) See the lighter side of life

If I am forced, i.e. in a work situation, to be in contact with a negative person, and cannot get out of having contact with them, I purposely wind them up when they start with me. In fact, I agree with them on all the negative things they say. Kind of takes them off their guard and they stop. They are looking for a fight and argument - so if you just take it in your stride with humour - you throw them off balance. Thus they have no reason for carrying on with you.

8.) Stand up for yourself

You have to learn to stand up for yourself and confront them. Not in an aggressive way though! Simply be firm and inform them that you will not have any dealings with them until they change their attitude towards you. Sometimes people need a reality check. If you think you are too small to be effective, think of the last time you were in the dark with a mosquito! Catch my drift?

9.) Be honest with yourself

If you have messed up or are in the wrong - then you must also be man/woman enough to admit and accept it. Remember, we need to take responsibility of our own lives. It reminds me of a great saying, "When arguing with an idiot, make sure you

are not the idiot!" Then again, it may be that your sole purpose in life is simply to serve as a warning to others! Also, are you happy with yourself and who you are? I have learnt to be comfortable with myself and accept criticism. At the end of the day, no matter what anybody says, are you happy with the actions and decisions you made in your day? If you are, then there is no reason to let others annoy you over this. Unfortunately, today more and more people bow down to peer pressure and doing what is 'popular'. Hello! You will never find inner happiness if your behaviour reflects the current 'flavour' of the month. Learn to be you and be happy in accepting who you are. Guess what, then other people will also be happy to accept you for who you are.

10.) Attitude

A healthy attitude is contagious, but don't wait to catch it from others. Be a carrier. Always strive to be part of the cure, and not remain part of the problem. Also, ALWAYS keep your words soft and sweet, and then they won't be as hard to swallow if you have to eat them! Think of someone that has said hurtful things to you. If you stood up for yourself and put that person in their place - would their words be hard to swallow for them? Most probably! Maybe that's why these people won't accept that they are in the wrong - it's too difficult to swallow their own words. Bottom line... brush it off!

11.) Time

Time invested in improving ourselves cuts down on time wasted in disapproving of others. I rather use my time on more positive things and improve myself. Never forget, most people get ahead during the time that others waste. The most precious asset you have is TIME. None of us know how long we are going to live. By giving your thoughts to those that irritate you, you are giving them the most precious thing you have,

your life's time - are they really worth it? A wise man will make haste to forgive, because he knows the full value of time and will not suffer it to pass away in unnecessary pain.

12.) Watch your thoughts

Watch your thoughts; they become words. Watch your words; they become actions. Watch your actions; they become habits. Watch your habits; they become character. Watch your character; it becomes your destiny. If you constantly brood over all the negative things people say, your body will manifest that negativity outwardly and you will draw it towards you from others! It is imperative that you learn to stop brooding and redirect your thoughts to positive things - then you will draw the positive people towards you. And finally, if you ever find yourself in the situation where you have something negative to say, think of the foolish man who simply tells a woman to stop talking, whereas a wise man tells her that her mouth is extremely beautiful when her lips are closed.

13.) The Plunkey

In December 2012 I found another way to cope with these people. I discovered the 'Plunkey'! It's crazy... but it makes sense. Watch the video on YouTube by clicking [here](#).



SURVIVAL & FEAR

Most people are a product of society, a materialistic, mind-controlled 'sheeple' that merely acts on learned impulses and habits, rather than insightful deductions of each unique situation.

Add to this technology and instant access to information that is making me more informed than ever before. Couple this with the corruption of governments, corporations, and various other institutions that have a direct clash with our conditioned upbringing, and people are starting to ask questions about the inequality in the world today and are becoming weary of the double standards and hypocrites. This is resulting in much frustration within daily life, even if it is only subconscious for many.

People just aren't excited about life anymore. Just sit on the London underground and look at everyone's faces. No one smiles. If you do smile at someone, odds are you will get arrested for being a public nuisance. It's the same in the traffic in any city in the mornings - just look at the faces of the people in the cars next to you - no one smiles! It's as if the majority of people today have lost the will to live and have fun in life.

Many years back, I actually met someone who was having fun. I was sitting in the peak hour morning traffic on the M25 around London, when the man in the car next to me suddenly held up a board that read, "Hi, great morning, isn't it?" In fact, he had a whole conversation with everyone around him using these boards. He had found a way to make the traffic fun!

On top of that, there is just too little free time and life goes by too fast. I am constantly reminded of a saying by an unknown author: ***Life is like a roll of toilet paper. The closer it gets to the end, the faster it goes.***

Isn't that so true? The older we get, the faster time seems to go by? Even the children of today are commenting that their days fly by. Surely then, if this is the case, why doesn't humanity make the most of every moment they have, seeing that it all goes by so fast? Why don't we all let go of fear and stop only focusing on survival, but rather on living life to the fullest?

Expectations are the root cause of all problems!

We live in a society of instant gratification and expectations. What do I mean? Think about it... no one does anything today without expecting something in return. I work because I expect a salary. I make an appointment with a potential client because I want/expect them to buy my product. I will pick up your children from school because I expect you to do the same for me next week. I'll do the dishes for you tonight, honey, because I expect some action in the bedroom later. Get the point? No one does anything anymore because they want to do it out of the kindness of their heart. It's all about, "What's in it for me?"

Don't get me wrong, there are many people who don't follow the above example - those are the passionate ones! Those are the people that are enjoying their life and living every moment to the fullest. Unfortunately, they are very much in the minority!

We have been brought up and conditioned in a society where 'expectation' is the norm. As a child, you were conditioned to behave. If you behaved, you got things. In school, we were taught to learn and pass our grades. In return, we received our diploma. Then we had to study at university to get a degree, so that we could get a good job, etc. Expectations, expectations, expectations!

We have been intrinsically conditioned to expect. But, and it's a big BUT, in reality things do not always work out the way we expect! That's when disappointment takes over and we start losing the zest and passion for life, and start questioning the purpose of it all. If you really think about it logically, it's a system that is bound to fail!

Plus, of course, the media via big business and governments have conditioned us to fear. You need the newest car - it will protect you in an accident. You need life insurance in case you die! You need a job and must earn money to support your family. These are all fear-based mind control mechanisms to make you conform to what 'big brother' wants you to do. This results in people going into 'survival' mode based on the induced conditioned false fear reality out there!

If it is in the media, it must be the truth! This is what most people believe! This brings me to my 'all time' favourite saying:

It is easier to believe a lie that one has heard a thousand times than to believe the truth that you only hear once!

We have been so conditioned to accept everything around us as the norm, that we are too afraid to look within ourselves. We simply don't know any better. We forget that through inner reflection and honesty with yourself and who you really want to be is, in fact, the start of finding a solution to leading a more fulfilled existence. Yet we have been conditioned to fear this! It's easier to follow the masses and be accepted than to stand out!

You need to realise that the first step is... becoming aware of all the control mechanisms in society today and realising that they affect each and every one of us. We also need to understand that we cannot change this overnight, but we can change it! In fact, it starts with just one person deciding to do something about it and make others around them aware.

People who wait for changes to occur on the outside before they commit to making changes on the inside will never make any changes at all.

Just knowing how we are controlled suddenly makes you think twice before buying a product, or becoming annoyed at a negative newspaper headline. This awareness, in turn, makes you react differently and suddenly you find yourself not following the 'sheeples' out there anymore, and hence you start changing from within.

'Two Eagles,' a Native American Indian, was asked by a white government official, "You have observed the white man for 90 years. You've seen his wars and his technological advances. You've seen his progress, and the damage he's done." The Chief nodded in agreement. The official continued, "Considering all these events, in your opinion, where did the white man go wrong?" The Chief stared at the government official for over a minute and then calmly replied. "When white man find land, Indians running it, no taxes, no debt, plenty buffalo, plenty beaver, clean water. Women did all the work, Medicine man free. Indian man spends all day hunting and fishing; all night having sex." Then the chief leaned back and smiled. "Only white man dumb enough to think he could improve system like that!"

For one moment just think about what you think about during your day. Spend 10 minutes going over your day and your thoughts. You will be surprised at the number of negative thoughts you had. Become aware of these and start eliminating them from your daily routine. This alone will make a huge difference. Remember that we are all energy and we create reality with our thoughts. This means that your inner thoughts control the energy vibration of your outward behaviour. Thus you need to focus on 'real' issues in your life, rather than all the negativity out there. Redirect your thoughts

to the things that bring joy into your life - focus on living in the moment and appreciating the little things in life.

Start learning to do things from the heart. Stop doing 'what is expected', but rather focus on doing 'what is pure and good' and makes you happy. Suddenly you realise that you are doing it without expectations - but from a purity of heart perspective. Now you can no longer be controlled and be disappointed - as there are no expectations. Instead, the law of the universe (the energy) will now reward you with unexpected blessings (as like energy attracts like energy) and your life becomes one of purity and giving, rather than fear and survival.

If you really think about it, what does a human being really need to be happy? Health, food, family and friends, and a roof over their head! Look around you and objectively analyse what is making you unhappy, and you may well realise it's all the conditioned non-important fear-based issues. When you start focusing on the 'real' simple stuff and truly live in the moment, your reality changes and you start living life as it should be.

COPING MECHANISMS FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

I recently read about a question that was posed to the Dalai Lama that had me thinking seriously about what is important in life.

He was asked, "What thing about humanity surprises you the most?"

His answer was as follows, "Man!" Because he sacrifices his health in order to make money. Then he sacrifices his money to recuperate his health. And then he is so anxious about the future that he doesn't enjoy the present. As a result, he doesn't live in the present or the future but lives as if he's never going to die, and then he dies having never really lived!"

Wow! That literally says it all. Hence, when you look back on a year, do you think to yourself, "Hey, I really lived this year," or do you question where the time went or are basically unsatisfied with your achievements?

In lieu of this, I would like to add a few 'Rules' to follow at the beginning of each year in order to assist you in leading a more fulfilled life.

1. Keep it simple

If you have seen me speak live, you know I am a KISS man (Keep It Simple, Stupid). I cannot believe how many people over-complicate their lives, believing complex issues and solutions must be better than simple ones, just because they are complex! Huh? If you are run-down and overstressed, slow down! No pill or psychologist is going to change that hectic pace – it's up to you to slow down. If you want a different year this year to last year, then do things differently this year. You cannot behave the same as last year and expect different results!

2. Take responsibility

Accept that everything in your life happens because of you! Stop blaming your parents, the government, your dog, and anyone else you can find. You will never be fulfilled or happy if you do this. Realise right now that YOU and YOU ALONE are responsible for your own happiness.

3. Be satisfied with what you have!

Count your blessings! What is it with the whole materialism issue? Are you really that gullible to believe everything the media tells you on television? Do you really think that a bigger car, the latest computer, or the newest moisturiser is going to

make your problems go away? Wake up and be happy with who you are and what you have. It's simply a mindset. Follow this rule and suddenly you become a different person! Don't knock it until you have tried it. Think about this... have you met those people at work that are always happy and always joking? They are not particularly rich or better off than anyone else, yet they seem to be content. Don't they just annoy you? Why? Because they appear to be content and happy with their lot in life! You can become like them too, but only if you take a deeper look within yourself and realise that beauty really does come from inside. Part of beauty is contentment. If you are content, you radiate a different energy and attract different things.

4. Laugh at yourself

One of the greatest lessons in life I have learnt is to laugh at myself. If mates catch me out with a joke – I will laugh louder than them, because I was gullible enough to fall for it. We all make mistakes, we all get caught out every now and then – that's life. Learn to accept this and take yourself a little less seriously. Life does start becoming fun then... really!

5. Welcome everything that comes your way

What makes us disapprove of something? It's our preconceptions and our expectations in life due to conditioning. So how about trying to dispel all your preconceived ideas and not judge anything that comes your way? Instead, welcome it and try looking for the deeper meaning. In other words, keep an open mind in everything you do and stay away from expectations and other agendas. It calms you down and makes you appreciate many different and new aspects of life.

6. Stop being judgmental and learn to practice objectivity

Imagine everyone in this world would give every person they met a clean slate and not judge them at all? We would be living in paradise! No matter what you think of a person of another culture, race, or creed – stop pre-judging and being prejudiced. Give each person the same chance in life – and you might be very surprised. Never make decisions based on emotions, instead look at all the facts – your life will flow much smoother.

7. Open your whole self up to every experience

Many people have been hurt in love, and they never want to love again. They become weary and withdrawn in future relationships. This is so sad as this person misses out on experiencing love and life in the fullest, simply because of one bad experience. By opening yourself up to every experience, and giving of yourself 100% every time, you live a complete life in the moment.

8. Live in the moment

Yes, there is the need to make calculated decisions on occasion – but to hold back and wait for a better or different opportunity, or to hold back because of fear and ignorance, denies you experiencing life to the nth degree. I mentioned this last year and someone retaliated on YouTube saying that this is the dumbest thing they had heard. He mentioned that if he blew all his money tonight and drank himself to a stupor, he wouldn't be happier tomorrow. On that note let me say that I fully understand that some of us don't see the meaning of my messages in the same vein as others do. Thus let me clarify 'living in the moment.' By this, I mean experiencing the moment you are in now to the fullest, as in 100%. Be there in totality with your body, mind, and spirit. Stop being distracted

and thinking of other things while talking to your children or your spouse – that's not living in the moment. When you are in a park – don't just look at the monument in front of you, but look at everything else around you, the trees, the people, the children playing, the roses, etc. That's living in the moment!

9. Practice 'ME' time

You need to relax on your own. You need to have a place where you can be quiet with yourself and by yourself. The mad rush of today's world is not good for you. You need a place to recharge your batteries. Whether it is a calmly decorated room in your home, or sitting on the side of a riverbed in the park, you need to allocate at least 10 minutes a day for yourself.

10. Be happy

If you are down, go stand in front of a mirror and smile at yourself – but from within! Guess what, it does cheer you up, even if it is only a little. Now practice this more and more until cheerfulness becomes part of who you are. Smile at people around you and feel the warmth returned.

11. Stop interfering!

Why is it that people always interfere in somebody else's business? They stick their noses into things that don't concern them. Yes, obviously, if there is some criminal or cruel behaviour going on, then something has to be done. But most of the problems arise from people who simply stick their noses into other people's private business. Who are you to judge others for their interests that are different to yours? You are not above anybody else, so then why should you dictate how he or she must live? Rather accept that person for who they are and learn to live as friends and colleagues. Rather find out what makes them tick and learn to respect the differences between you. That's what makes us all unique.

12. Don't just forgive others, but yourself too!

Besides learning to forgive others, learn to forgive yourself. Granted, there is nothing more annoying than making a stupid mistake. But that's life, accept it and learn to laugh at yourself, it will make it much easier to get over it. Just remember, everyone makes mistakes, just try not to make the same mistake twice!

Your spouse, your children, your family, and friends – that's where true wealth lies. Make a promise this year to spend more quality time with family. Plan dates a few months ahead for socials with good friends and stick to them. If you don't, the year will just run away with you.

I trust that these 12 tips give you some ideas on making the year ahead a lot more fun and allowing you to make it the best year ever.

COPING WITH A DOWNTURN IN THE ECONOMY

As the year progresses, I look around and see people back in 'survival' mode. I speak to friends and colleagues, and everyone keeps commenting on the fact that they are extremely busy, yet have nothing to show for it and are basically only surviving. Sound familiar? Everyone is running around trying to keep their heads 'above the water' and, in the meantime, they are not living their lives to the fullest. Of course, the pessimists among them say that the current economic turmoil and uncertainty in the world is a justifiable cause to behave like this... no one knows what's coming! Huh?

That's the problem: people are trying to justify their insane behaviour and not taking time to stop and actually think about what they are doing. Whatever shape the world is in, good or

bad, none of us knows what's going to happen tomorrow. So why let it affect you negatively? Yes, times may be tougher, and spending habits are changing, and yes, this is causing more stress for a lot of people. However, there are ways of dealing with this in a simple manner.

First of all, YOU have to realise that you have value, and that you are important to many people out there. Here's a nice example I like to use in my lectures which puts the 'Importance of 'You' into perspective...

I hold up a €50 note and ask my delegates, "Who would like this note?" Hands pop up immediately. Then I follow up by saying, "I am going to give this €50 to one of you, but first, let me do this." I now crumple up the €50 note, roll it in my hands and basically also try and age the note. Now I again ask, "Who still wants it?" Still, the hands go up in the air. "What if I do this?" And now I drop the note on the ground and start to grind it into the floor with my shoe. When I pick it up, it's crumpled and dirty. "Who still wants it now?" Strangely enough, hands still go into the air.

A very valuable lesson is shared and learnt by the delegates through this visual example. No matter what I did to the money, the audience still wanted it. Nothing I did to the note decreased its value. It was still worth €50, no matter what I did to it. No matter how old and dirty I tried to make it look.

Isn't this what our lives are all about? How many times are we dropped, crumpled, and ground into the dirt by the decisions we make and the circumstances that come our way? We feel as though we are worthless. But no matter what has happened, or what will happen, you will never lose your value. Dirty or clean, crumpled or finely creased, you are still priceless to those who love you. The worth of our lives comes not in what we do or whom we know, but by whom we are. You are special. Don't ever forget it. Count your blessings, not your problems.

Yes, the world is tougher, and it has changed; yet your worth remains. Understand this, and the rest becomes a bit easier. Here now are a few practical tips on coping with the current economic situation in the world today:

- 1. It goes without saying that you should try to save money rather than spend it. But many people don't know where to start and don't want to drop their quality of life. The reality is that you can save a lot by working smart.
- 2. Create a daily budget so that you can avoid those unnecessary impulse spends, such as the coffees, snacks, etc.
- 3. Pay your bills on time to avoid penalties and interest. And at the same time, don't make new debt.
- 4. Anything you don't use in the house, sell it. Then use that money to cover debt... and not to buy a new TV!
- 5. Get rid of unnecessary 'like to have' things and focus on the 'need to have' items. If you have two mobile phones and a landline, don't you think you can get rid of one and save some money? What about shopping around for a smaller cable package, or an all-inclusive one which includes your phone line, Internet, etc.?
- 6. Yes, it's cool to eat out and be seen, but it's a lot healthier and way less expensive to prepare your own meals and eat at home. Invite friends over and have a picnic in the living room. It's fun, cheap and an unforgettable experience... and cheaper than inviting everyone to the latest sushi bar!

- 7. Put your ego in your pocket. Keeping up with the Joneses will not and never has brought happiness to anyone. Learn to be practical. That new Mercedes may be a nice car, but so is the new Hyundai, and it most probably has more features and better after-sales, for half the price. Stop being a slave to status marketing - I repeat - this will never bring you happiness.
- 8. The most important thing in life is your physical and mental health. Without this, you cannot make good decisions in life. Take the time to look after your own body and mind. Without health and a positive attitude in life, you will not cope.
- 9. Never give up! No matter what people say or where the world economy ends up - you and only you can decide what to make of any given situation. By not giving up and remaining a fighter, you have a reason to live.
- 10. Stop being a 'sheeple'. Educate yourself as to what is going on in the world. Don't believe everything you hear and read from one source. Instead, get your information from as many different sources as possible so that you can formulate your own objective opinions.

You also need the support of a loving partner to stand by your side during these times. Rather than let the economy and tough times cause a rift between you and your partner, you need to learn to be there for each other. Here's a nice story that puts this in place.

It was the coldest winter ever. Many animals died because of the cold. The porcupines, realising the situation, decided to group together to keep warm. This way, they covered and protected themselves; but the quills of each one wounded their closest companions. After a while, they decided to

distance themselves from one another, and they began to die, alone and frozen. So they had to make a choice: either accept the quills of their companions or disappear from the Earth. Wisely, they decided to go back to being together. They learned to live with the little wounds caused by the close relationship with their companions in order to receive the warmth that came from the others. This way, they were able to survive.

Moral of the story: The best relationship is not the one that brings together perfect people, but when each individual learns to live with the imperfections of others and can admire the other person's good qualities. Learn to live with your partner, rather than fight the whole time. Today we need to stick together more than ever, from your partner to your friends. Let go of the judgemental behaviour and learn to accept the little faults that we all have.

And on a lighter note, I need to share this cute story with you...

A guy is 87 years old and loves to fish. He was sitting in his boat when he heard a voice say, "Pick me up." He looked around and couldn't see anyone. He thought he was dreaming when he heard the voice say again, "Pick me up." He looked in the water and there, floating on the top, was a frog. The man asked, "Are you talking to me?" The frog replied, "Yes, I'm talking to you. Pick me up, then kiss me, and I'll turn into the most beautiful woman you have ever seen. I'll make sure that all your friends are envious and jealous because I will be your bride!" The man looked at the frog for a short time, reached over, picked it up carefully, and placed it in his front pocket. The frog queried, "Are you crazy? Didn't you hear what I said? I said kiss me, and I will be your beautiful bride." He opened his pocket, looked at the frog and said, "Nah, at my age, I'd rather have a talking frog."

GRATITUDE

How has your month been? Mine has been hectic in the sense that life continually throws emotional events at me that steer me back into being consciously thankful for every day. I don't know if it's just me, or if you experience the same, but it truly has been a few months of serious emotional roller coaster rides for me.

There are two scenarios I want to share, with similar lessons.

Right now, I am sitting at the airport with my oldest daughter, and the two of us are going to spend some quality time together, also visiting my dad. As you know, I have two daughters, and they are everything in my life. A few months ago, I made a decision that whenever I do long-distance flights, I will take one of them with me and alternate between them. Obviously, we have our family time as well, but when it comes to longer business trips, I figured that rather than flying business class, I fly coach class, but take one daughter with me every time. In that way, they get to see the world, and I have quality time with them.

I need some serious time with my daughter! Why? She is a gymnast and a national champion at that. She does artistic gymnastics; that is the one where they do somersaults on the wooden beam and lots of physically difficult and challenging routines. I suppose because it isn't a mainstream sport like football or tennis, the parents of the gymnasts tend to know each other better. About two weeks ago, one of the teenage boys that trains with my daughter came over to visit. What a nice young man and a youngster who showed an interest in what I did professionally and connected with me. Clever youngster to get the dad to like him first! Nevertheless, jokes aside, not two days later at practice, this young man slipped, fell, and broke his neck!

Shock! In fact, I am still speechless. He couldn't feel his legs or arms and was paralysed on the spot. This all happened within a split second while everyone was watching him. Have you ever been in a situation where you just wanted to be able to take back the last 5 seconds of your life? Oh man, this was hectic. On top of it all, the other gymnasts experienced this as it happened. Their young minds are so impressionable – the shock for them was incredibly stressful. No matter how old you are, you are never prepared for something this tragic, especially as a youngster.

I cannot begin to imagine what his parents must have gone through on receiving the news. In fact, they arranged a room at the hospital next to their son. My daughter and all the gymnasts were visiting daily and communicating over the phone more than ever. If you have teenagers, you know they live on their mobiles!

I kept on asking myself over and over what the lesson could possibly be for anyone to learn from this? As a family, we sat and discussed the turn of events, more in shock than anything else, and more as a comfort to each other. In the end, the same message came out that I keep on writing about. We ALL need to be thankful for every day!

Do you wake up and give thanks that you are still alive and healthy? Whether you believe in your creator or just give thanks to the universe out there – do you do it? Or do you take the world for granted and let events such as this shake up your entire life, only to be back in the rut a week later?

When last have you taken your child in your arms, looked them in the eyes, and told them how special they are and how much you love them? In fact, when last have you done this with ANYONE that is important in your life? Man, from heart attacks,

deaths, sick parents to I don't know what next – someone is telling me something here... and YES, I have been listening for many months now! Are you? Are you just skimming over this newsletter and deleting it? Or are you really taking note of the messages and changing your life for the better and living in the moment?

I am going to spend two very special weeks with my daughter and my dad now and creating magic memories. Why don't you make it your goal this month to do the same with those that are special in your life?

Why did I have a heart attack 9 months ago and survive? Could it have been to learn a lesson and be given the chance to change my life and live in the moment? Why did this young gymnast fall and break his neck? Maybe the bigger lesson was for me to write about it and shock you into changing your life! I know his parents; they are wonderful loving people, and I am still trying to figure out the lesson they had to learn. Nevertheless, the good news is that he has started regaining feeling throughout his body, except his legs. But he is responding well to treatment after an extensive operation. We all know that he will be able to walk again. His accident has been a warning to all of us out there – don't take life and health for granted. Hopefully, I will be able to welcome this young man into my home again soon and spend some time learning from him and the emotions he went through over this period.

My wife is my pillar of strength in times of weakness. Yes, I am a mind shift guru and inspirational speaker and spend my life inspiring others. But hey, I am human too and also have my ups and downs. I have a huge issue with high-profile people who are hypocrites and who only care for themselves – hence one of the reasons that I refuse to watch the news or read newspapers. Believe it or not, it helps me tremendously and keeps me positive 80% of the time. However, there are certain

times one cannot avoid seeing a newspaper banner or headline on a pole as one drives to work or walks through an airport and sees all the TV screens everywhere.

My wife already has this routine of steering me back on the right positive road every time I get back from a flight – as she knows that this affects me. Maybe it's age, but the older I get, the more I become upset with corruption, corporate greed, and religious double standards. The more I get upset with people who don't take a stand and who don't practice what they preach. Maybe that's why I spend time writing my 'Useletters' and creating different courses and doing my Quick Tips. Maybe I am just trying to bring about a change for the better. I do believe it all starts with one person. You also have no idea how much I want to mention specific names and comment on the double standards of certain individual figureheads 'out there.' But then I sit back, calm down, and realise that it is only through positive words and clarity of mind that I could possibly hope to bring about a change.

And on that note, I tackle my second lesson. Last week I was in a big city and heard the story of a fire in a shantytown where a 7-year-old youngster watched his parents and sister burn to death. The entire media was full of this shocking story, and as per usual, the 'powers-that-be' had the same old comments, "Tragic, shocking, disgraceful, etc." Yet these are the same comments they say every time something bad happens! They still don't do anything about, nor improve the circumstances for the poor. Sorry, they do... at lavish conferences where they spend taxpayers' money and stay in luxury hotels and then argue who is to blame, but never accept the blame themselves! Does this sound familiar? Worst of all, within a week there is another tragedy and everyone has forgotten about the 7-year-old youngster and the emotional scarring he has suffered.

What kind of a world are we living in today? Sadly, my above example pertains to ANY country on this globe. Why are people not standing up and making their voices heard? Why are people accepting this behaviour from our leaders? Just look at the circus in the world right now? Dare I question whether we have all become greedy and don't care for our fellow human beings anymore!

STOP!

Stop being immune to the atrocities happening in the world every day. Stand up and make yourself heard! You are part of the change. It starts with the little things! Stand up and say your say when you see an injustice. Don't be an impartial bystander. Become a pillar in your society. Become someone that people look up to and respect. Only then can we all start making a positive difference to the world we live in.

That's it, I trust you enjoyed these few articles and that I manage to inspire you with my words. I will make a point of bring out 'The Best of' booklets for the next few years as well.

Warmest regards
Wolfgang

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:



Wolfgang Riebe is a globally acclaimed magical keynote speaker who has inspired millions with his mesmerising performances and motivational speeches. A towering figure in both the magic and speaking industries, he is a best-selling author of over 60 books on magic, business, and inspiration. With over 30 years of experience, Wolfgang has captivated audiences in more than 165 countries, from Hollywood to Singapore, and has starred in over 200 television shows, including his own prime-time series.

Wolfgang's journey began in South Africa, and he has since lived in the UK, Germany, and Switzerland. In 2012, he earned his Certified Speaking Professional (CSP) designation from the National Speakers Association in America, a prestigious honour held by fewer than 750 speakers worldwide at the time. He made history as the first two-term national president of the Speakers Association for Africa and has shared his insights as a TEDx speaker. His groundbreaking research culminated in his acclaimed book, "Complexity Simplified," which has been cited by over 300 doctoral students.

Wolfgang's adventures are as diverse as his achievements. From walking with penguins in Antarctica to exploring the Arctic icecap and surviving force 12 hurricanes, he has lived a life that most can only dream of. His books reflect his passion for sharing his wisdom and helping others find meaning in their lives. Wolfgang embodies the KISS principle, believes in the magic of life, celebrates milestones, and charts paths to future success. He is a rare speaker who practices what he preaches and truly walks his talk, making him a world leader in his field.

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