

♥ Snippets of Encouragement #247

Hello darlings

It is day 247 of Snippets of Encouragement, and I have a question for you, darling. What would happen if you awoke tomorrow to discover that every prejudice you held about yourself, others and the world were not true? Who would you be or even better yet, who would you become?

That's a terrifyingly delicious question, don't you think?

To be sure, that we're both on the same page regarding our understanding of what prejudice is the dictionary defines it as being a preconceived opinion that is not based on reason or experience.

We start acquiring prejudices from a young age, and for many, these become life long beliefs. They form our view of ourselves, others and the world and create a form of blindness or filter that hinders us from seeing the world differently.

Imagine just for a moment that your prejudices were gone...

Who would you become?

Many years ago, I was living in a furnished apartment in a relatively beautiful area of Johannesburg. The apartment was a garden flat that was attached to my landlord's house.

I was new to the area and did not intend to live there very long as it was between training sessions in Germany, but nevertheless, I wanted to familiarise myself with my surroundings and live happily there.

My landlord gave me a rundown of the area and told me that the Chinese were taking over the extended neighbourhood. "Well OK," I thought, I didn't have any thoughts or opinions about what that meant or could mean for me.

One day I was sitting in my car at a large intersection in that area, and I looked to the left and saw a home along the road flying a Chinese flag and advertising a business. Directly opposite the intersection was a corner convenience store that I'd popped into once or twice on my way home.

I caught my thoughts, and that was a life-defining moment for me as I sat at that intersection. As I looked at the convenience store, I was thinking, "Mmm, I wonder how long that Pora is going to own that store until the Chinese take it over."



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I realised that my thinking was racist and that I had never been aware of this until that moment.

Traditionally in South Africa, many Portuguese and Greek immigrants owned convenient stores, especially in previous white areas. In the South African context, people of Portuguese heritage are often referred to as Pora's, and while I never questioned my use of this term on that day, I understood that I was being prejudiced in my thinking.

I did not know if a so-called Pora owned that shop; in fact, I didn't even know if a man owned that store. I found myself wondering why I frame my thoughts and words through specific filters. For example, if I were sharing an experience with someone I would say, I met this black (interchange Indian, Asian, Scottish, Pora) guy on the street... and I would build my story from there.

The choice of words I shared would also frame my story for the listener. Whatever experiences they had previously had with Indian, Asian, Scottish, Pora people would then become an immediate part of my story. The fact that I was sharing the gender with my listener also influenced how they heard the story.

Sitting at that intersection, I realised how I would share my prejudices with others only by the details I chose to share in my story. I didn't consider myself a highly prejudiced person to that point, but at that moment I realised how I projected my previous life experiences into current experiences and lived them through a filter that was neither true nor real.

I know this is something that the majority of people do, through the language we use we propagate our prejudices, often not pausing for one second to consider what we truly feel or believe about others, the world, and ourselves.

If we want to have a fraction of peace and harmony in our lives, we need to challenge our prejudices. I don't encourage you to start immediately challenging the preconceptions that lay outside of yourself, start with those prejudices you have about yourself.

You may think you don't have any, well don't you for one second believe that! We all carry prejudicial ideas about ourselves that we've adopted from those closest to us in our lives. We can never be free until we free ourselves from the bondage we hold ourselves in.

Ask yourself today how you're thinking and speaking to and about yourself. Is it in an edifying manner, as you would talk to a beloved? What prejudices are keeping you stuck in a holding pattern that you can't escape? The good news is you can start with one little prejudicial thought that you're willing to release. Let it go today and continue to live in loving awareness with yourself.

This is how we change our world by changing ourselves one small step at a time each day.



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