



## ***A Monthly Newsletter Featuring Bryan Dodge***

---

January 2023 Edition

---

### **PERSONAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT**

#### **Promise Number 4 of “The Promise of 7”**

##### **Promise Not to Take Things Personally**

Really? Is that even possible? The answer to that is a resounding “Yes”, if you can be proactive in changing your point of view. Perhaps that’s why Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these” (Matthew 19:14). Children learn quickly, mainly because they don’t have preconceived ideas and are hungry to learn from life.

Are you Teachable?

(Having a Mary Heart in a Martha World by Joanna Weaver)

Consider the following statements to give you an idea of your teaching ability quotient. Answer (U) for Usually; (S) Sometimes; (R) for Rarely.

- 1) I feel comfortable asking for advice.
- 2) I easily admit when I’m wrong.
- 3) I enjoy reading for information rather than escape.
- 4) I’m able to receive criticism without being hurt.
- 5) I enjoy listening to other people’s thoughts without adding mine.
- 6) I’m able to disagree without being disagreeable.
- 7) I’m willing to look at all sides before forming an opinion.
- 8) I’d rather be righteous than always have to be right.
- 9) I feel confident to confront conflict early.
- 10) I understand that the relationship is more important than the issues.

Give yourself 3 points for each U, 2 points for each S, and 0 points for every R. Then add the numbers. If you scored 24 -30 points, you are well on your way to a teachable heart. If you score 15-23, keep at it. If you scored 0-14, you may need to make your teaching ability a matter of prayer and clear focus moving forward. With a teachable heart all things are possible.

Be teachable in essence, involves three things.

- 1) Being willing to listen
- 2) Acting on what we hear
- 3) Responding to discipline

We often hear that we shouldn't take things so personally. But what does this actually mean? If someone we've allowed into our heart, or really close says something shaming or hurtful, such as "You only think about yourself" or "How can you be so stupid?" we're likely to feel the pain of being judged and criticized. It hurts to be viewed as an object with horrible traits rather than be seen for our gifts that we bring into life. It's not realistic to think we should not be personally affected when someone close to us says things out of anger or jealousy or just mean comments. As human beings, we affect each other. We have little control over how others view us and relate to us. We have more control over how we view ourselves and the situation, and how we respond to it. If we take time to look clearly at things, we can gain some distance from the situation rather than be so personally close to it that we react quickly and mindlessly. If a loved one is angry or critical toward us, we're likely to have an immediate fight, flight, freeze response. But instead of attacking back or getting defensive, which adds fuel to the fire, we can gain some perspective if we pause rather than react. We can take at least three deep breaths and look up for a moment, and then ask yourself the following: What just created this response? I want to be sensitive to their feelings, whether or not I did or said something hurtful. If I did, I'll take responsibility for that and explore and share what was happening inside me that led me to being hurtful. This can take some time, but it might lead to an apology: "I'm sorry I was critical of you, but deep down I was feeling hurt and it came out as anger. I didn't want to feel vulnerable, so I got defensive."

Maybe they responded to something I said that has little or nothing to do with me. Maybe old hurts, not being so quick to accept blame gives us some space from a situation. We remain engaged, listening openly, but not taking it so personally. This allows us to maintain our personal lanes. We hold the situation, our own feelings, and the other's feelings with more spaciousness. We can explore together what just happened without instinctually denying or accepting responsibility.

### **Seeing Things Through Our Own Eyes**

Oftentimes we take things personally in the sense of feeling responsible for everything that doesn't go just right. We immediately think we did something wrong. We lose our sense of self.

It's a bit easier to not take things personally with people we don't know well—or at all. Perhaps we're temporarily distracted and tailgating the car ahead of us. Upon passing them, they don't do nice things.

They may be having a hard day.

They may be having a hard life.

They may have been traumatized by a past traffic accident.

We may have triggered their survival fear, which led to their fight/flight response.

These considerations can give us pause and perspective. We're not bad; they're not bad. We had no ill-intentions, yet nevertheless, we were a bit careless in our driving.

Whether we are triggered by a loved one or by people we don't know, we're inclined to respond personally because we're a person—a vulnerable human being who thrives on kindness and recoils when someone pokes our sensitive spots.

The good news is that we can regain our footing by pausing before reacting. We can bring gentleness to our sensitive spots and a spacious awareness to the situation so that we see it in perspective.

Not taking things personally may sometimes be an overly ambitious goal. But as we work toward seeing things with greater clarity, we're more able to respond rather than react. We have greater inner resources to bring to situations. We realize that not everything is about us, but when it is, we can own up to it and repair broken trust and be more mindful. Gradually, we can live with more compassion for ourselves and others.

We all suffer from one of two pains: The pain of discipline or the pain of regret. The difference is discipline weighs less, than regret. Be more disciplined in managing your emotions when it comes to taking things personally. And you will find a better you.

**Improving your soul starts by  
choosing more self control.**



Please forward to anybody you feel might enjoy this newsletter!

Dodge Development | 800-473-1698 | [contactus@bryandodge.com](mailto:contactus@bryandodge.com) | [www.dodgedevelopment.com](http://www.dodgedevelopment.com)

