

Being Good in the Moment **by Nick Arnette**

What's bugging you? Who's getting on your nerves? Too much to do, too little time? Your stressful commute to work? All the bad drivers on the road?

I live in Los Angeles, where traffic is so bad it would probably be more efficient to put my car in neutral and let the earth rotate than actually try to "drive" on the freeways.

Here's a chance to let out a little frustration. Draw a circle on a piece of paper. Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to put one dot inside the circle for everything that's bugging you. Take your time; really think about it. Only you know what the dots represent, so have some fun with it!

How did that feel? Good, I hope. Now, take a close look at the circle. What else is inside the circle besides the dots? It's not a trick question. If your answer is "space," then you're a winner! If there's a lot more space than dots, then you're a double winner!! Actually, I've not yet met the person who has more dots than space.

If the dots represent what's bugging you, then the space represents what's not bugging you. It's all in the way we look at it. Yeah, I know, it's pretty basic, but most things in life are pretty basic.

Most people fail when they forget to use the "basics." Think about it: In golf, one of the fundamentals is to keep your head down. Still, even though I know that, I have a tendency to look up to see where the ball is going before I even hit it. The result is a bad shot and sometimes a lost golf ball. Keeping your eye on the ball is a must in every sport that has a ball in it. Still, from dropped passes to missed catches, many sports errors are made because we forget the basics. If you're in sales, maybe you didn't close the deal because you didn't ask for it. Or maybe you were talking so much that the client never had an opportunity to gather the information he or she needed. Again, it's the basics; we cannot stray from them if we want to succeed in our endeavors. The same goes for our daily lives. Many of us have read about ways to reduce stress, to keep from getting angry, to manage our time better, etc. We may even have attended a seminar or two about it. Yet, when we blow it, it's because we forgot the basics.

Our biggest blunders usually occur “in the moment.” Most of the time we do just fine. But let’s add a little pressure to a situation. Someone says something offensive, or someone you were counting on doesn’t come through, or someone repeats that annoying habit for the hundredth time—and we lose it. We might end up saying or doing something that we quickly regret, and we can’t take it back. The damage is done.

One of my biggest annoyances is people who talk loudly on their cell phones in public. After one particularly tough gig, I boarded my flight home. Before we took off, the guy next to me was talking so loudly on his cell phone that I couldn’t even hear the music I was listening to on my iPod. I couldn’t wait for the plane to take off so he’d have to turn his phone off. When that time came, I turned to him and said, “Dude, way too loud on your cell phone.” It was surreal. Was it me talking to him like that? I call myself “The Feel- Good Funny Guy,” but in that moment, I was “The Make- You-Feel-Bad Knucklehead”! I offered my apologies for my errant comment, but the damage was already done.

He was crushed. He apologized and told me he hated his job, his phone was not working properly, and he was having a really bad day. I certainly did nothing to make it better. I acted like a jerk, and I knew it—and so did everyone else sitting near me on the plane.

I can honestly say I’ve never said anything brilliant when I was angry, nor have I done anything praiseworthy in a moment of anger. Have you?

Our prisons are full of people who have failed in the moment—people who have committed crimes of passion. They are average people who allowed their emotions get the best of them and did something that was out of character for them. They literally ruined their lives and possibly those of others because they failed in the moment. Fortunately, you can’t go to prison for telling someone he was talking too loudly on his cell phone!

When someone or something upsets you, ask yourself these three questions:

1. What part of this can I do nothing about?

Like it or not, some things are completely out of your control. You can’t control the weather, you can’t stop time, and you can’t control other people’s attitudes and actions.

2. What part of this can I do something about?

You can control—and are responsible for—your own attitudes and actions. How sad that many people have wrecked their careers or even their lives in an instance of uncontrolled anger. Again, they failed to remember the basics. They knew the proper way to handle their situation; they just didn’t do it.

3. How can I keep these thoughts going and get myself even more upset?

This sounds crazy, but it may be a good idea to think of all the ways you shouldn't react in a given situation, even though you might "feel" like it. For example, someone cuts you off in traffic. You might "feel" like responding by honking your horn incessantly and giving them the one-finger salute! You might even want to get ahead of the guy and cut him off, too, followed by driving well under the speed limit, just to make him angry and punish him some more.

What good can come out of this situation? Nothing. Two people are now angry, and more potential for mayhem exists. Even worse, have you ever honked at some- one in traffic and they end up going to the same place you're going? How awkward is that?

Once you go through all the scenarios of what you shouldn't do (even though you might like to), you have a really good idea of how not to react to the particular circumstances.

Put those three questions into practice, and you'll be good in any "moment"!

The preceding article is an excerpt from *Me, We and Glee: How to have a great attitude, work as a team and keep your sense of humor*, by Nick Arnette. Known as *The Feel Good Funny Guy*, Arnette is a popular keynote speaker at business meetings throughout the United States and Canada. You can contact Nick Arnette at www.NickArnette.com, email: nick@nickarnette.com

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