

BETTER THAN EVER!

by
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When anyone asks me how I am, I often respond with "*I am better than ever!*" I don't do it every time, and when I do, whether or not, at that moment, I'm *feeling* "better than ever" doesn't matter. In fact, when I'm *not* feeling my best, and I make that statement, I instantly feel a little better.

When I say I'm "better than ever" I get quite a variety of reactions. Everything from smiles to anger, from curiosity to a comment my sister once made when she responded with "you make me sick." It was said lovingly, of course. Some people tell me it brightens their day to hear it, someone once told me "what right have you to be better than ever with all the misery in the world?"

Being better than ever is not just about how we feel, it's about who we are, and where we are on our life journey right now. How far have we've come? ... What have we overcome? ... How much have we grown? ... What have we learned? ... Count these are among the rewards of our life's experiences.

THE POWER OF WORDS

Words are extremely powerful. Negative thoughts and words can have a destructive effect on our feeling of well-being. Positive thoughts and words, by the same token, can have an uplifting effect. Positively affirming the phrase "*I'm better than ever,*" even if we don't *feel* it at that moment, always has the power to lift our spirits, and make us feel better, if even only for the moment.

What I'd like to explore is the possibility that being "better than ever" may already be a true statement for every one of us. To those of you who already know this, perhaps the points I'm going to cover will serve to re-affirm this. To those who are open to this concept, perhaps you would like to use this opportunity to explore it further. To those of you who may have resistance to the concept, I ask only that you allow your mind to open up to the possibility that there may be something of value being offered. If and when you encounter resistance, try, at least, to remain open.

THE "WHAT IF" QUESTION:

What if ... you actually are better than ever ... right now?

What if ... being *better than ever* is a fundamental truth for all of us? ...

What if, as children, we were told we were *better than ever*, rather than being told we were bad, or wrong, or stupid ... or worse? ...

The fact is we have *always been* better than ever, and as long as we live we will *always be* better than ever. This has nothing to do with our current financial situation or health condition, it has to do with who and where we are on our life journey ... right here, right now ... in this very moment!

Being *better than ever* is being able to see, with absolute clarity that everything ... every experience, ... every person, ... every event, ... that has ever impacted our life has, in some large or small way positively contributed to who and where we are right here, right now.

In the last 25 years I have done a fair amount of writing. Most of what I wrote, until about 8 years ago, was poetry and prose, which was published a few of years ago in a book entitled, "*In The Moment.*" One of the pieces of prose that appears in the book is called "*Truths About Life.*" It has formed the basis for this concept which has now been modified into the following 7 "what if" perspectives, and entitled "**Better Than Ever.**"

THE 7 "WHAT IF" PERSPECTIVES

1. What if ... there are no mistakes or failures?

William Shakespeare said:

"Nothing is either good or bad, but thinking makes it so."

If we live our lives with the belief that we have made mistakes or failed, we may fall victim to those beliefs and become enslaved by them. Every mistake is actually a growth opportunity and every failure a learning experience. Some of the experiences of the past may be quite painful. However, the facts of the past cannot be changed. The only thing that can be changed is whether we choose to be enslaved by how we view the past or we choose to be master of it.

How we view the events of the past is a choice. If we can view the past as a series of lessons and blessings, we are better able to reflect on those events for the positive gifts that they are.

When we can embrace this perspective, we are one step closer to being better than ever.

2. What if ... everything happens for a reason ... and there are no bad reasons?

Everything we experience has within it some good and some not-so-good things, just as every garden has in it some flowers and some weeds. The good we might call blessings, the not-so-good we might call lessons, or AFGO's (*Another Fabulous Growth Opportunity*). We can choose to seek out and focus on the good, just as we can choose to focus on the flowers in the garden. The weeds are still there, they just are part of the garden. Trying to figure out the reason why a certain event happened in our lives is like asking for the reason our garden has weeds. Happiness comes from focusing on the flowers. We may end up frustrating ourselves when we try to understand why there are weeds!

Our intellect is not equipped to understand the reason *why* most things happen, but we can spend a lifetime trying to figure out the reasons why they did. Later in life, when we still haven't figured them out, we can reflect on how much time and energy has been invested

trying to understand why. By accepting the knowledge that there is good in every experience, especially when that good is a growth lesson, we are better equipped to release attachment to needing to know the reason why and we are better able to see the positive in the experience.

When we can see the inherent good in everything, we are another step closer to being better than ever.

3. What if ... we live in the present moment?

13th Century, German Mystic, Meister Eckhart:

"There exists only the present instant... a Now which always and without end is itself new. There is no yesterday nor any tomorrow, but only Now, as it was a thousand years ago and as it will be a thousand years hence."

Who we are in this precise moment is a manifestation of our thoughts and behaviors of the past. Who we choose to be tomorrow will be a manifestation of our thoughts and behaviors today. In this very moment we have the power to change who we want to be today and in the future.

Although we have no power to change who we have been in the past, we can accept fully who we are right now. When we access and invoke the power of this present moment we can make whatever changes in our behavior or habitual thinking that we choose to make. Otherwise we continue to do what we've done, repeat the same behaviors that we promised ourselves we would change, and once again find ourselves wondering "why."

Being better than ever is a present moment state of being.

4. What if ... we do what needs to be done ... and do the right thing?

General Norman Schwartzkopf:

*"The truth of the matter is that you always know the right thing to do.
The hard part is doing it."*

When we get up in the morning, we intuitively know what needs to be done. In the same way, when faced with a challenge, we know the right thing to do. When asked "*what needs to be done?*" most of us think about work or job issues. Perhaps it's running errands or household activities. Sometimes it involves a doctor's or dentist's appointment.

While doing what needs to be done may certainly be about all these things, it is also about knowing when we need rest, acknowledging loved ones, spending time in nature or simply taking a ten minute "mindful" break from our routine, during the course of the day. When we lay down to sleep at night, we rest well knowing that we did what needed to be done and that we did the right thing. When we do not do what needs to be done or we forget to do the right thing, we may find our sleep restless, awakening with anxiety, and we are left again asking ourselves "why."

Knowing that we are doing (and have done) what needs to be done, helps make us feel better than ever.

5. What if ... we have no regrets?

Ingrid Bergman:
*"I have no regrets.
I wouldn't have lived my life the way I did
if I was going to worry about what people were going to say."*

Every action we have ever taken, every word uttered, every thought entertained is in the past and cannot be changed. We have all said or done things which we may have rather not said or done. If we knew then what we know now, we would probably have done things differently. But we cannot turn back the clock and we cannot erase the past. We can, however, forgive ourselves. After all, who are we punishing the most with our shame, guilt or negative self talk? ... Who suffers the most from our disappointments? ... And when will we ever allow ourselves to let it go?

Acknowledging our past behaviors, accepting our human frailties, vowing to learn from our lessons, forgiving ourselves and others, and promising to make the necessary changes in our behaviors all serve to contribute to who we choose to be, rather than beating ourselves up for who we think we have been or should have been.

So, having no regrets, is well on the way to being better than ever.

6. What if ... we want what we have?

The philosopher, Epictetus, (50 - 120 AD) said:
*"A wise man is he who does not grieve for the things which he has not,
but rejoices for those which he has."*

So many of our thoughts and much of our energy is invested in having what we want. How much thought is given to enjoying, embracing and appreciating what we have? When we take the time to reflect on all that we now have, the people, the things, the achievements and express gratitude for them it is likely that we will rediscover the happiness that each has brought to our lives and still does.

Expressing gratitude each day for the things that you have contributes greatly to a feeling of being better than ever.

7. What if ... we love ourselves completely, just the way we are?

Humanistic Psychologist, Clarke Moustakas:
*Accept everything about yourself -- I mean everything.
You are you and that is the beginning and the end -- no apologies, no regrets.*

Self-love is not about self-absorption, being self-centered or selfishness. It's about self-acceptance. With all our frailties, weaknesses, faults, insecurities, bad habits, physical

differences, negative behaviors of the past, we are nonetheless perfect, just the way we are right here, right now. That doesn't mean we don't want to make changes. It does mean that we have discovered the place of total acceptance, of self-love.

We live in a culture where we are constantly bombarded with media images that tell us we are not perfect. We are told that "a certain look" or "this car" or "that body" is what perfect health, wealth, fitness or physical appearance looks like. So many images, so many messages have hit us that we actually begin to believe the illusions that are being presented to us incessantly. Once we are able to ignore the illusions, once we can demonstrate that self-acceptance, that self-love, we are better able to demonstrate acceptance and love to those who are important in our lives.

By demonstrating self-love with our children and loved ones, what better lesson can we teach that will be passed on their children? What better gift can we give? What better memory can we leave with them?

There's only one thing better than being "better than ever" ... being remembered as better than ever!

That's the 7 what if perspectives! Now, there is just one more what if ...

What if even one of these "what ifs" hits home and resonates with you today? How might it serve you now and in the future?

Finally, let me extend an invitation ... the next time someone asks you how you are, try telling them you're "better than ever," not because you've been asked to ... but because it's true!

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*For more information about this topic, The GROW Principle™, or the author, please visit [www.thegrowprinciple.com](http://www.thegrowprinciple.com) or contact Robert Silverstone at [robert@thegrowprinciple.com](mailto:robert@thegrowprinciple.com)*