



Shaking up Habits

I don't know about you but I have come to realise just how many of my daily practices are bound by habit. Take the very simple example of where I sit at the table for the family dinner. I sit next to my daughter and opposite my husband and my son sits next to his dad and opposite his sister.

And we are all perfectly happy.

Until, that is, my daughter decides out of the blue that she wants to sit next to her brother and that John and I should sit beside each other. My first reaction in my head was "What is she doing that for?" although I quickly recovered and said, "OK, let's do that".

Even this slight change in the normal pattern of the day was slightly unsettling and I discovered some things about my children's table manners that need to be addressed. Simply changing my position at the table, altered my perceptions and allowed me to see new things. (my daughter chews with her mouth open and my son balances his chair on two legs)

When we take exercise it can easily become a routine and we end up following the same pattern every time. Now any fitness instructor will tell you that there is considerable benefit in changing the routine every 6-8 weeks. By changing things around we get greater benefit from the work that we put in. The benefits are mental as well as physical as the change in format helps to keep us motivated.

When we change the perspective from which we view things, be it physical or mental we can gain new insights. I am reminded of the comment in Carol Vorderman's book *Superbrain - 101 Easy Ways to a More Agile Mind* that although it may sound daft, simply changing the seat you sit in or moving furniture in a room can bring about the change in perspective that can make all the difference. Some of the most successful commercial ideas have been born out of a simple change in perspective. – Just think about the origins of Google

And so my challenge to you this week is to shake up your normal patterns and habits. Make some changes and see how it makes you feel. Does it help you to concentrate? Does it work for you?

At work, if you normally check your email first thing when you sit at your desk, how about taking one task off your to-do list first and then check your email. If you can sit at a different desk to work why not do so.

If you regularly take a walk/run along the same route then change the route. If you haven't changed your exercise routine in a long time then change it. Introduce something new or even just change the order in which you do the exercises.

The idea is to unsettle things just a bit and see what happens. Have fun.

Warm Wishes

Mary