

BAD DAY

Inevitably, every healing journey will have its share of bad days. These are the tough days when you can't seem to get a reprieve from the weight of sadness. They're the days when your anger has snagged you so firmly you can't shake it off. They're the days when your fear and confusion are so overpowering you just sit and do nothing all day. These are the days you have a really hard time envisioning any other kind of day.

Bad days happen. Much as we don't want them to, they do.

A key word in the world today is success. It's a driving force at the root of human nature. In our North American culture we learn a certain definition of success that's based on our cultural values and traditions. We all want a successful life, and a successful life is a happy life. We don't like bad days. Bad days and a happy life don't go together. We so dislike the bad day that having one is almost the same as committing a crime.

If a person is obviously irritable, how often is the response "What's wrong with you? Are you having a bad day or something?" How often do we hear instead, "Having a hard time? Anything I can do to help?" The first response is accusatory. The second is compassionate. Compassion delivers recognition that all human beings have bad days.

I'm not an advocate of the bad day. But I am an advocate of allowing yourself to have a bad day. Sometimes we can make the decision to shift our attitude but it just doesn't work no matter how hard we try. The resolve to have a good day fizzles out as fast as a sparkler on a cake.

If we keep on trying, our effort often turns into a fight against the bad day. We start getting mad at it and resenting it. At least we think that's what we're mad at. But really we're mad at ourselves and we resent ourselves. We are really fighting against ourselves for having a bad day.

And that makes it an even worse day.

If you can't change your attitude and switch on a cheery day, it's because there is something you need to do for your healing. It's a natural and necessary part of your process.



Perhaps you need to sift through your confusion because that is where the clues are to a new sense of identity that is trying to emerge. Perhaps you need to feel the sadness of a loss because it brings you one step closer to acknowledging that something you had is gone. Without that acknowledgement, how can you ever let go of the past? How can there ever be room for something new?

If you stop fighting and allow yourself to have a bad day, a wonderful thing happens. You start to have a better day. Maybe not a good day, but a better day. This happens because you are honouring yourself. You are honouring your process. Instead of using your energy to fight, you are devoting it to healing. That makes for a better day.

Fear of getting swallowed up in a depression if we "give in" to the bad day keeps us fighting. Shift your perspective just the tiniest little bit. Don't think of it as a "bad" day. "Bad" has connotations of wrong. Think of it as a difficult day. Difficult has connotations of challenge, and thus, possibility.

Difficult days are to be expected on the healing journey. No road is perfectly smooth and straight. The trick is to work with the hard days instead of fighting against them. That's how you move ahead. That's how you can once again decide to turn the "bad" day into a good one, and end up having exactly that.



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