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**The Marathon Mind Psychologist**

**Louize Carroll**

**EPISODE FOUR – PSYCHOLOGY SESSION PLAN**

**Dear Marathon Mind Listener,**

Welcome back to the ‘Mind’ section of Marathon Mind!

**Monthly Letter to all Runners:**

**Hello Runners!**

**It’s that time again, back to the monthly review and back to our collective reflection. Marathon Mind Runners, you are trotting into month four. There are only 5 months left the other side of this. I don’t say this to scare you or to worry you about your progress, I say it to remind all of us involved in this programme that time passes. Everything eventually passes. The good things and the bad. Something that may have seemed so unattainable and intimidating at the start, gradually shows glimpses of becoming attainable, month by month, week by week, day by day, and step by step.**

**I hope by now that you are beginning to notice that your mind might have a tendency to look at a challenge, particularly one as mammoth as a marathon, and see it as a trigger for dispensing a truck load of self-doubt on your doorstep. The mind often thrives off using a lack of experience or a lack of previous training as a reason to deny our capacity. (You know this if you’ve met your inner critic head on by now!)**

**But runners, if you narrow your field of vision, if you reduce your wide angle lens to a focused fish eye lens and pay attention to what you can do right now, what is on front of you today, what tools and resources you have to hand in the present, and take each day with its own unique beauty and opportunity, you will be hopefully starting to see that most things are attainable, if you are willing to put the work in, month by month, day by day, step by step.**

**“I Can’t Find The Time…”**

**I’ve had some contact from many of you, some of you who have loved the mindful and psychological work, and some of you who have found it difficult to sit with. One of the most common things I heard was that some of you were finding it difficult to make time for it. I’m going to candidly name this as resistance, a topic we covered in Month 3, and I encourage those of you who have not yet visited the content for that month, to pop back into that month, and take some time to review it.**

**The Inner World - Take The Plunge**

**Sure, it’s scary to drop into your inner world, I get it! What are we going to find? What might I have to admit to myself, and what might I have to change as a result? But here’s the thing, I can assure you, NOT making a habit of dropping into your inner world is what likely leads to a disconnect. A disconnect between our behaviours and our personas, as in, what we present to the outer world, and our inner emotional, practical and relational needs. This can cause anxiety, mood problems and a feeling of being ‘lost’ and unsure of our purpose in the world.**

**The more you connect to what is happening in your inner world, the more awareness you will have about what in your life is bringing you joy, what is bringing you discontent and what is it that you might actually want to change, curate or create for yourself and for your future. By connecting to your inner world, you turn yourself into an active participant in your own life, rather than a passive reactor to everything that happens around you and to you.**

**One of the reasons we resist ‘doing the work’ or dropping into a mindful silence, is because of our fear of difficult emotions. And one of the biggest parts of the Marathon MIND journey, is about diving into the world of how we relate to our own emotions.**

**Next month we will dig a little deeper into the process for how to begin changing your relationships with your thoughts and feelings.**

**But for now, I want to help you all to get refocused on why you are doing something as wonderful and wild as Marathon Mind, and give you a tool to help you to stay on track on those days that hijack your best laid intentions.**

**PSYCHOLOGY EXERCISE**

**THE WOLF YOU FEED©**

**This month your task will be to incorporate my decision-making guide, also known as a ‘dilemma guide’ called THE WOLF YOU FEED© into your daily life.**

**Let me introduce this guide with an old story:**

*An old Cherokee is teaching his grandson about life. “A fight is going on inside me,” he said to the boy.*

*“It is a terrible fight and it is between two wolves. One is evil – he is anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego.” He continued, “The other is good – he is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith. The same fight is going on inside you – and inside every other person, too.”*

*The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather, “Which wolf will win?”*

*The old Cherokee simply replied, “The one you feed.”*

**For the purposes of THE WOLF YOU FEED©[[1]](#footnote-1) guide, I want you to begin to file your behaviours in terms of two different wolves.**

**The bad wolf is the wolf that represents the decisions, choices and behaviours that take you away from what matters to you, and from the kind of person you want to be in your life, e.g. losing patience with family, snapping at the kids, withdrawing from friends.**

**The good wolf represents the decisions, choices and behaviours that take you closer to the person you want to be in your life and closer to what matters to you, e.g. treating other people with patience and understanding, sharing what is on your mind, rather than withdrawing to self-protect etc.**

**The purpose of THE WOLF YOU FEED© is to help you review what your values and your goals are, to understand what kinds of situations and triggers knock you off track, and to understand that always and forever, you have a choice in what you DO next – despite whatever difficult thoughts and feelings might pop up.**

**Dear runners, you have a choice with regard to which wolf you feed inside of you. You can choose to feed the one who takes you away from what’s important to you, or the one who helps you reach your goals and keeps you in line with your values.**

**Here are some instructions for how use the THE WOLF YOU FEED©.**

**1. WHAT MATTERS TO ME IS… – At the very top of the page, I want you to list all the things that are important to you and all the ways in which you want to live your life, and the goals you’d like to work towards. How do you want to treat your friends, your family? What kind of parent, friend or lover do you want to be? What kind of person do you want to be? What do you want to stand for? What qualities do you value and do you want to represent? Write it all down. What you write here, will be your guiding principles.**

**2. SITUATIONS/TRIGGERS - here I want you to write down the situations or types of incidents that 'trigger' or ‘HOOK’ you. These are the things that tip you into becoming upset, stressed, anxious or angry (or anything else you feel is undesirable!)**

**3. THOUGHTS & FEELINGS – I want you to start noticing the types of thoughts and feelings that pop up for you once you get ‘HOOKED’ by certain challenging situations or triggers. Take note of what your mind is saying. Write them down.**

**4. HOW I CHOOSE TO BEHAVE –**

**a) HOOKED: When you get ‘HOOKED’ by certain situations or triggers, and by ‘HOOKED’ I mean, when you get all caught up in your thoughts and feelings and they influence and maybe even derail you, what do you do next? How do you behave?**

**FOR EXAMPLE:**

**The HOOKED thought is: there's no point in me training today, I only have 30 minutes and that's not enough so there's no point in doing it at all..." or "if I can't be the best, I won't do it at all..."**

**So the behaviour is: I did not run today.**

**b) UNHOOKED: And what are the kinds of thoughts that ‘UNHOOK’ you – i.e. what thoughts help you to UNHOOK from difficult feelings so that you can move TOWARDS the person you want to be?**

**FOR EXAMPLE:**

**The UNHOOKING thought is: even though it's only 30 minutes - that will give me 30 minutes of body training more than I have right now, and that's progress.**

**And the behaviour is: I completed my S&C session**

**I want you to begin noticing if the ways in which you behave are either:**

1. **taking you towards what matters to you (good wolf)**

***or***

1. **away from what matters to you (bad wolf)**

**Remember, this is not so much about the validity of the thoughts you have, it doesn't really matter if the thoughts you have are true or not - all that matters is if the thought is taking you towards doing what matters to you in your life. You can choose to act in your own favour despite what your mind tells you.**

GOOD LUCK, UNTIL NEXT TIME.

Louize



1. *THE WOLF YOU FEED is the copyright and property of Louize Carroll and is based on The Choice Point by Russ Harris. It must not be reproduced without permission.* [↑](#footnote-ref-1)