Don’t Relieve the Pressure

Examining our mind and how it operates is something very, very few people ever do. Until discovering life-changing facts of self-study, most people believe they are their minds, and that they must accept and live with the thoughts that pass through them.

That’s a strong and startling statement, but it’s true. If you want to change your life and rise above the cause of all lack and limitation, you must do the inner work and discover its truth for yourself. Let’s start with a true story.

A Lesson From Walt Disney

Walt Disney’s brother Roy called Walt into his office with a worried look on his face. He explained that the studio was teetering on the brink. It had 1,500 people on the payroll. Snow White profits were all spent. The studio had $4.5 million of debt, with no way to pay it.

Walt began to laugh.

“What are you laughing at?” asked a surprised Roy. “I was just thinking back,” Walt said, “to when we couldn’t borrow a thousand dollars.” [From THE MAN BEHIND THE MAGIC, the eye-opening Walt Disney biography by Richard Greene.]

Just now, as you read this story, wasn’t your first reaction similar to Roy Disney’s — one of perplexity: How could Walt laugh in the face of such adversity?

On the practical level, he and his company did the right thing — they took the best steps they knew to handle the situation wisely and pay what they owed.

The more important level we’re looking at here is the inner — psychological — aspect, however.

Psychologically, we must learn to do exactly what Walt Disney did: Laugh in the face of adversity. It has no power over us except what we, ourselves, give it. At first, this feels irresponsible because our typical reaction has always been to get upset and excited.

But consider this famous quote from the ancient philosopher Epictetus: “It is not what happens to you, but how you react to it that matters.”
Give This a Try!

So the next time a “startling” event occurs, which will surely be within the next 24 hours, give this a try: Do nothing, except watch.

Watch how you want to react and how you want to do something to fix the situation. Watch how your mind tells you that to react to this event is the responsible thing to do. And still, do nothing. Watch the pressure of your thoughts building. And still, refuse to react to them.

If other people around you are involved — like Roy Disney was in our story — they may request or even demand a response and a reaction from you, just like your thoughts demanded a response. But again, refuse to go along. Do nothing. And then watch what happens.

A reward awaits you — just beyond all the pressure . . . .