

Worrier or Warrior?

The idea for the above title occurred during a conversation with my supervisor, when discussing a patient, who was on the cusp of engaging with personal therapy. His main preoccupation was worrying about various and numerous issues in his life, which resulted in him being a spectator rather than a participant in life. The outcome being that he felt that there was something missing in his life, even though from the outside, you would have thought that he was successful, i.e. good job, house, family etc. In response, my supervisor said that this person had a choice. He had to choose between whether he wanted to be warrior or continue to be a worrier. In this context it would mean him either taking the warrior path of engaging in personal therapy with all the emotional battles and conflicts that this triggers or the well trodden path of worrying.

As I reflected on the above dilemma, it brought to mind other patients who were struggling with the same difficulty of moving from worriers to warriors. The common denominator that linked all of them was their inability to harness what can be called **ordinary potency**. I see this as the ability to be true and free in any given situation. This way of being is not rooted in fear or insecurity. Instead the underlying belief or assumption about the world, is an expectation that there will be a positive outcome. Whereas, from my experience people who have difficulties with harnessing their potency or warrior spirit they have instead a implicit assumption/belief that there will be a negative outcome. Thus, they are ruled by fear and inaction and in turn are overwhelmed by the worrier spirit.

A good analogy to describe the above dynamic is a mobile phone. For instance, when using a mobile phone we have access to a variety of different apps. Unless we swipe away these apps they will continue to stay active in the background consuming our battery life. Well, for some people who battle with being potent they have a negative background app that is active. However, this app not only consumes our energy but it amplifies negativity, self criticism, worry, insecurity, anxiety and passivity, which then leads to being impotent in different areas of their lives. Below is a list of possible scenarios that I have encountered.

- Reluctance to deal with conflict situations, with family, friends, and work colleagues.
- Trying to be perfect.
- Difficulty in being yourself due to fear of what others will think of you.
- Always trying to seek approval or be on the same page as the other person.
- Indecisive and not able to make a decision or face new challenges.
- Ruled by fear and insecurity.
- The default position of always thinking you are in the wrong or bad.
- Opting for the safe but miserable option, which results in being too rigid to routines and rituals.

Ironically, the negative app that appears to be running in the background with people who have potency difficulties leads to an actual negative outcome in external reality, which we might then define as a self-fulfilling prophecy. Negativity attracts negativity! I come across quite a few people who have this negative app operating at an unconscious level, which ultimately then influences the way they think about themselves , others, situations, relationships and the choices they make or don't make!

The origins of this negative app is rooted in our very earliest experiences. For example, when a baby is born there is an expectation for a positive outcome, i.e. a good feeding experience. During my training we were shown a video of a baby who had just been born and was placed on the tummy of the mother. Amazingly, without any help from its mother the baby was able to crawl up and latch onto his/her mother's nipple. Therefore, this illustrates the baby's natural, instinctual,

ordinary potency to find a good experience/breast. The baby wasn't indecisive or doubtful about whether it was going to find a good experience, or become paranoid that someone might take it away. The point I am trying to make is that people are not born impotent, quite the contrary they are naturally and instinctually born potent and with a warrior spirit.

So what happens to our potency or warrior spirit you might ask? Well put simply instead of our needs being met by a positive response, as explained in the above example. The opposite occurs, where the baby does not have a good experience at the breast/bottle, for all manner of reasons and then is left with a negative internal experience. If this negative experience is repeated more frequently than a positive experience, this leads to the forming of a insecurity about life, relationships, self and others. In the mobile phone analogy the positive app which we were born with gets replaced with a negative app and the warrior spirit gets transformed to being a worrier.

As a way of coping with this negative app, some people overcompensate by becoming omnipotent. In a previous paper entitled 'Omnipotence: The Hidden Danger' I wrote about some of the manifestations of this way of being in the world. Put simply it's a distorted way of being potent. Instead of being a human warrior they become a god. So a person might think they are being potent (warrior) when in fact they are being omnipotent (god like). The general rule from my observations is the more a person is impotent (worrier) the more they swing to the other extreme and become omnipotent (god). This idea is based on a psychological defence mechanism called **compensation**, which is as a way of concealing a psychological difficulty by developing in another direction. The ideal or good enough position is somewhere in the middle, which is ordinarily being potent or competent.

My experience has taught me that when an individual can get to grips with becoming ordinarily potent the less omnipotent they act in the world. For this to happen the first step is for the person to recognise that they have a negative, worrier app in operation. The second step is to swipe the negative worrier app or in analytical terms to integrate the app into the main frame/psyche. This means fighting for your self in any given situation, in which you would usually turn away from, due to fear or insecurity. The third and final step is to be kind and compassionate to your self as this background app has been open and active for a very long time. For a new positive/warrior app to be created takes time and needs to endure various battles and hardships for it to become rightfully reinstated.