

Greetings to family, friends, and colleagues around the world!

I must begin by telling you that writing and sharing these messages throughout the year brings me great joy and peace. Thank you for being faithful, thoughtful readers.

This semiannual inspiration message has taken longer for me to craft than others – many of you are used to receiving the second one of a calendar year in the spring. The reason is that I have been helping others close to me work through some difficult struggles in which their thought processes were getting the best of them. One negative thought often led to another, and before they knew it, they were caught in a mental loop of doom and gloom.

Since all of us who suffer from time to time, I offer one of my favorite stories below. Perhaps it will help you if you find yourself in a doom loop right now or the next time you suffer?

THE STORY OF THE CHINESE FARMER

A man named Sei Weng owned a beautiful horse which was praised far and wide. One day this beautiful horse disappeared. The people of his village offered sympathy to Sei Weng for his great misfortune. Sei Weng said simply, "That's the way it is."

A few days later the lost mare returned, followed by a beautiful wild stallion. The village congratulated Sei Weng for his good fortune. He said, "That's the way it is."

Some time later, Sei Weng's only son, while riding the stallion, fell off and broke his leg. The village people once again expressed their sympathy at Sei Weng's misfortune. Sei Weng again said, "That's the way it is."

Soon thereafter, war broke out and all the young men of the village except Sei Weng's lame son were drafted and were killed in battle. The village people were amazed as Sei Weng's good luck. His son was the only young man left alive in the village.

But Sei Weng kept his same attitude: despite all the turmoil, gains and losses, he gave the same reply, "That's the way it is."

REFLECTION

I actually prefer to sum that story up using slightly different words, "There is no good or bad; only thinking makes it so." That's a pretty powerful message, isn't it?

Think about a recent event or interaction that you thought was good or bad and ask yourself these questions:

- If you thought it was bad, is there any way it could have been good, or vice-versa?
- What made you think it was good or bad? What role did you thinking play in your analysis?

CONCLUSION

Do I think it will be easy for you to turn off your thinking? Am I telling you to stop thinking things are good or bad? No. I just want you to pause from time to time and ask yourself if your thinking is "making it so."

So, this lesson, "There is no good or bad; only thinking makes it so", is my gift to you on my birthday. Yes, this year I have decided to give a gift on my birthday. If you're curious (and I know some of you are), my birthday is June 16, and I turn 36 this year.

Whether this note finds you in the US, Canada, South Korea, or somewhere else, I wish you a peaceful summer (or winter if you're in the Southern Hemisphere!). As always, I am here if you need me – reach out anytime via email, LinkedIn, or my blog.

Cheers from Philadelphia, PA USA,

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*Have you invested in your community today?
The world only spins forward - the great work begins!*

PS – You receive a semiannual inspiration message from me approximately 3-4 times per year. If you would like to forward my message to others, please feel free to do so. If they would like to be added to the distribution list, please have them email me at BFish@aol.com. And if you ever decide you'd like to be removed from the list, please email me at BFish@aol.com.

PPS – Previous semiannual inspirational messages dating back to June 2008 can be found at <http://brianfishbone.typepad.com/becoming-the-blog/semiannual-inspirational-messages.html>.