

A
Deeper
Look
 by Delisa Renideo

What's NOT Wrong?

As we head into the holidays, and then the new year, many of us want to focus on creating a better life for ourselves and others. One way to do this is by shifting our perspective, and one quick way to do that is by asking, "What's NOT wrong?"

We are used to two kinds of conversations. The first, and most typical, goes like this: "Hi! How are you doing?" "Fine, thanks. How are you?" Whether you just found out you had terminal cancer or that you won the lottery, the answer is still, "Just fine. How about you?"

The second kind of conversation goes more like this, "I'm really tired. I didn't get much sleep last night." "Oh? What's wrong?" "Well, I'm worried about my daughter, who broke up with her boyfriend." "That's too bad. I haven't been sleeping too well myself. That wind just keeps howling and keeps me awake."

Neither of these conversations leaves us feeling uplifted. So what might be a better option?

Focusing on what's NOT wrong takes some shifting of perspective, but leaves us feeling much more positive and still provides a genuine basis for conversation. I'm not suggesting being phony; we all have things in our lives that aren't quite the way we would like them to be, but with any thought at all, we also have things that are actually going very well.

A friend of mine impressed me with this story: "I was driving to Anchorage with my two daughters to catch a plane to visit my mother for

Christmas. It was snowing hard and the roads were really slick. We ended up going off the road and got stuck in the deep snow in the median. The girls were really scared. I gathered my thoughts for a moment, then said to them. 'Look -- we're okay. Nobody got hurt. Our car is still running so we can stay warm, and I've got my cell phone to call for help. I'll also call my mother to let her know we won't be making it right now, but we'll come later to visit.' When I started focusing on what wasn't wrong, the girls both felt better, and so did I. After we got pulled out of the snow, we went out for breakfast and had a great time."



Notice how different it feels to focus on what's not wrong, even while recognizing that something is currently very wrong.

We are living at a time when we see many problems in our world. It can be daunting to maintain a positive attitude in the midst of the truly serious challenges facing our world. One of these is health. With 2/3 of Americans now overweight or obese, and the rate of obesity rising even higher among our children, we have a serious problem. Diabetes is increasing tremendously, and heart disease and cancer continue to be a scourge in our western culture. It's not hard to see what's wrong. But what can we find to answer the question, What's not wrong?

In this example, we can answer that these health issues are all preventable and mostly reversible with a healthy, plant-based diet, and that we can each take charge of our health with no need for a prescription. We can help ourselves and our families be healthy by simply

buying and preparing different food, which is easily accessible in our local grocery stores. We can also recognize that more and more people are starting to learn about this, as more classes are offered, books are written, and documentaries are made.

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It takes practice to focus on what's not wrong, to recognize the silver lining in every dark cloud, and to actually choose to share that with others. But when we do, it helps create a much more positive, loving, and hopeful world.

Here are a few examples I've heard from people who found something that wasn't wrong after something did go wrong:

- enjoying a night of candlelight when the power went off
- discovering how much time there is for more rewarding activities after the TV broke
- after having work hours cut, discovering life was much more manageable and enjoyable as a result of the necessary downsizing and simplifying.
- feeling grateful about making positive diet and lifestyle changes after a diagnosis of cancer
- after money got tight, feeling good about enjoying healthy meals at home rather than eating out frequently

Eating a whole-foods, plant-based diet contributes to a healthy body. Asking, and answering, the question, "What's not wrong?" can contribute to a healthy attitude -- personally, socially, nationally, and even globally.

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