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CLEAR THINKING

from Uncommon Knowledge

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Psychology for success, health and happiness
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In this month's Clear Thinking...

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- 2: Review: The Gift of Fear
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Dear Subscriber

What's worrying you? What troubles have you got? What rouses your fear instincts?

Worries, troubles and fear! A great line up for this month's Clear Thinking, just what you need for your summer reading. Before you set off on your summer holiday, let what you read here sink deep into your mind. As you're waiting endlessly at the airport to get through the security checks, ponder on how much good it really does to worry about the flight delay and begin to follow the good advice in our Top Tip.

While you're scanning the crowds of fellow holidaymakers all stressed out in the airport lounge, see if you can identify the tell-tale signs that show someone is about to blow (make sure you remove yourself from harm's way!). Check yourself. Are YOU prone to sudden blow-ups? What can you do to lessen the risk?

And when you hear over the PA system that your flight has been delayed another hour and will depart from a different gate a considerable distance away... take a deep breath. How bad is that, exactly?

Enjoy Clear Thinking!

Roger Elliott & Mark Tyrrell
Uncommon Knowledge Ltd

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1: Top Tip: Why Worry?

You only worry about things because you convince yourself through the power of your imagination that they are possible.

If we imagine anything strongly enough, it starts to feel not just possible, but probable. And then in short order we believe it is impossible for it not to happen! It's much better to use your imagination constructively – this is why we use therapeutic hypnosis.

Next time you find yourself worrying, practise 'switching off' the worry by making yourself imagine the situation working out well. This will 'trick' your emotional brain that the worry is 'impossible'.

So for example if you needlessly worry that you will miss your train, then strongly imagine how it feels when you've just got on the train and are busy choosing a seat. When you do this, you are using a strong self-assuring strategy. After all, if you really are going to miss the train there's no use worrying anyway. If you latch the imagination of the happy conclusion onto the end of your worrying, then what you experience is relief.

If a mother needlessly worries that her son has been in a road traffic accident because he's five minutes late, then she could strongly imagine him arriving home well and safe. Again, in the (extremely unlikely) event that he had been in some kind of collision, worrying wouldn't help anyway.

Try this next time you catch yourself worrying when you'd rather not be!

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2: Review: The Gift of Fear

The Gift of Fear: Survival signals that protect us from violence
Gavin de Becker
Bloomsbury (2000); ISBN 0747538352

A central message of de Becker's thought provoking and engrossing book is that in just about every case of seemingly 'random' extreme violence, whether it be attack from a co-worker or a spouse, the violence could have been predicted hours, days, months and even years in advance.

Violence is predictable, says de Becker, when we learn to trust the fear instinct and read the signals of incipient aggression. Fear is not the same as anxiety or neurosis. It is an instinct of the mind, not a distortion, and de Becker claims you can develop your instinct for fear.

Although the book is heavily weighted towards American culture, the themes of dangerous obsession and violence are universal and timeless. The spread of gun and knife culture in the UK means that a read of this book is recommended to just about everyone who lives in our modern unpredictable world.

Gavin de Becker says victims of violent behavior have often felt a sense of fear before any threat of or actual violence even took place. They may distrust the fear or rationalize it away, or it may get them to take action to avoid harm and save their own and other people's lives.

De Becker is an internationally recognized authority on picking up the signals and signs that someone will become violent. A person may 'explode', but the fuse is lit long before actual harm occurs. This is especially so for those who murder.

The book is full of case histories of stalkers who turned violent and co-workers who went berserk. He convincingly highlights how these tragedies could have been averted had the signs (which clearly were there) been picked up and then acted upon.

The book explains how to identify warning signs of potential attack. There are strategies for dealing with those may become violent.

De Becker says: "People don't just 'snap' and become violent. There is a process as observable, and often as predictable, as water coming to a boil." Gaining the knowledge to predict violence is the best way, of course, of preventing and avoiding it.

Essentially, according to de Becker, people become violent (especially people not usually prone to violence) when they feel they have run out of all other options and are being ignored or belittled.

Like all good books, this one is enlightening about the human condition in general and touches upon the basic needs all humans share – although if it were updated more could be made of the Human Givens perspective.

De Becker advises governments, federal organizations and high profile celebrities on predicting, preventing and dealing with violence. The Gift of Fear has been translated into thirteen languages and its author is respected around the globe.

Read this review online at:

http://www.uncommon-knowledge.co.uk/book_review/gift-of-fear.html

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3: Inspiring Quote: Troubles

“If you break your neck, if you have nothing to eat, if your house is on fire, then you got a problem. Everything else is inconvenience.”
Robert Fulghum, US author and Unitarian clergyman, b1937

“If you want to forget all your other troubles, wear too tight shoes.”
From The Houghton Line, 1965, US’s oldest industrial house journal.

Problems are relative. Although they may well be far more than mere inconvenience, they are unlikely to be as bad as having your house catch fire or breaking your neck.

There’s nothing like an immediate problem for making you forget your other troubles!

How about you?

How do you cope with your own troubles?

Do you tend to over-exaggerate their importance, or are you able to see them more as the inevitable inconveniences of living?

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That's all for this month -

we hope you enjoyed it and we'll see you next month!

Roger Elliott & Mark Tyrrell
Uncommon Knowledge

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