

Renewing the Mind

Max Jacobsen

I have made judgements based on an already established set of expectations, rules, beliefs and values. A type of journal **full** of expectations, rules, beliefs and values which I **always** referred to, to help **interpret** my experiences in life. These interpretations in turn helped to confirmed and reinforce the rules etc in this 'journal'.

'Journal' examples

So and so is asleep while I'm speaking. Refer to the section about people asleep when someone is speaking. Ah, yes. Speaker is boring. I MUST BE BORING. Underline that.

*So and so is wearing different laces in their shoes. Refer to footwear section. Ah, yes. Trendy people wear un-matching laces. **So and so must be trendy.***

I used **my** trustee 'journal' to help me interpret the library experience. Somewhere I had previously experienced similar events, with associated feelings. I may have seen someone else being laughed at or even laughed at someone else's question myself. At the time I had probably felt a level of embarrassment for them.

Over time I had scribbled notes in my 'journal' about such experiences and when I saw the laughter I, at supercomputer speed, found the section in my 'journal' relating to such experiences, and used the information to INTERPRET **this** experience.

And the emotional effect associated with the interpretation was so big and horrible that I inscribed in my 'journal', in big black letters, something like - "If you ask someone a question they may laugh at you because they think you are dumb. **So don't ask anybody a question again 'cause you never want to feel like that ever again!**" And so I didn't.

Every time I needed help I referred to my trustee 'journal'. It interpreted my situation and with a loud hailer reminded me of the rule I had made. And so I wouldn't ask anyone for help!

This is also true of the yacht experience. Here the inscription was something like - "If you get your expectations up too high you are likely to be terribly disappointed. **So if you are getting close to success you had better find a way of getting yourself out of it because success will be snatched from you anyway and then you'll be disappointed and you don't want that feeling ever again!**". And so I did.

Every time I got close to success I would refer to my trustee 'journal'. It interpreted the situation and with a 'helpful hint' encouraged me to sabotage the situation.

I used my trustee 'journal' to interpret every event in my life - good or bad. It was so reliable. I could trust it every time!

It directed my life in every way. My exam results, my friends, my career, my talents... Sometimes the direction was positive other times not so.

Of course, **I am not unique**. Everyone of us in this room has their own trustee 'journal'. Constructed in exactly the same way. Each with their **own** record and interpretations of events and experiences. Each with their inscriptions in bold black letters, directing and guiding.

This is just the way it is, right?

Everyone's 'journal' is created the same way, right?

Well yes and no!

Some of us in the room have found a better way; leading to a better life.

Romans 12:1-3 (*Ephesians 4:17*)

Therefore, I urge you, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, set apart and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you.

The pattern of this world, that we tend to conform to, is for us to create **our own** 'journal entries' to help interpret our world. That is the approach for this world. Man-made expectations, beliefs and values that we use to interpret the world.

God's pattern is for us to trust Him and to allow Him to give us the 'journal entries' so that we can renew **ours** with His. We need to humble ourselves; not thinking that our 'entries' are the best but coming to trust that the 'entries' he gives us are higher and better than ours.

As we replace our expectations, rules, values and beliefs with His, our interpretation of our experiences is radically changed. We begin to see the world as He sees it and we are guided and directed by His good, pleasing and perfect will.

God doesn't give us a new 'journal'. Our 'journals' remain our trustee journals. It is still the thing we refer to and helps us interpret our world. But He offers us new, custom made 'entries' if we place ourselves in submission to His mercy and grace.

Because of His mercy and grace He gives us both the **freedom of time** to rewrite the 'entries' and the **actual entries** to write. We have to be willing to start testing these God given 'entries', so that over time our 'trustee journal' interprets our world as He sees it.

Of course, the very first 'entry' we need to renew, the very first expectation, rule, or value and belief, is the approach itself. Where we have a 'journal entry' that says this world's way is best we need to renew that entry with God's way.

Using God's approach the experiences we have may be exactly as they would have been under this world's approach but the interpretation of them will be completely different.

And better still, over time, this renewal will more than likely take us right away from the place we were heading under **this** world's approach; to a far better place. That's the fantastic news!

How does God give us His will or inscription for our 'journals'?

A number of ways which are probably obvious. Through His Bible, through those speaking about His Bible, through experiences themselves and often directly through His Spirit.

God provided me with a new entry for my 'trustee journal'! I have been gathering more 'entries' that support this one. I have been renewing my 'journal' with God's entries. The new entry has provided a different way of interpreting my experiences and I am on a better path now than I was on four years ago.

Over the years, 'entries' like this, coupled with many others God has given through His Bible, and directly through His Spirit, have replaced the 'entries' that were made in that library and on the beach, many years ago.

These are only two examples from my complex life. Most of you here won't or have never had issues like my examples. But of this I am sure, everyone of us has had experiences in our lives that have been interpreted through our man-made 'truth' and that these 'truths' need to be renewed with God's truth.

Is life always easy? No. But I know I am in God's will.

Have I reverted to this world's approach at times? Absolutely. But I am **renewing** my 'journal' in His mercy and through His approach. My interpretation of my world is changing to be in line with His, with every passing day.

So how does renewal take place?

As with this world's pattern the renewal can and usually does take time. Remember it is **over time** that we add to and reinforce the 'entries' into our 'journal'. Likewise God will reveal to us His will but we must be disciplined in making that revelation a habit.

Never the less, sometimes God chooses to give us experiences that are so emotionally charged that they inscribe themselves into our 'journal'. But on the most part we need to use our wills to outwork the renewal process.

So here is a simple technique that may assist you in the renewal of your 'journal'.

Forgive

1. Ask for God's forgiveness (MERCY)
2. Forgive yourself

Reference

1. Refer to God and ask Him for a new 'entry' or
2. Refer to the journal entry God has already provided for this situation.

Choose

Make a conscious effort to weigh up your 'old entry' and God's 'entry'
Decide on which one you want.

Reconnect

Think about a time when you have interpreted a situation with God's entry.
Reconnect, especially, with the emotion attached to it.

Meditate

Imagine situations where you can interpret the situation with God's entry.
(Over time you will feel emotion with this)

Practice

Actually put God's will into practice.
Repeat the steps until it becomes the norm.

This approach may seem rather 'human' or unspiritual. But just as we go to a doctor for treatment God has provided knowledge like this to bring about His will.

Approach 2

Experience such an encounter with God that the experience itself writes an entry into your 'trustee journal' that it causes a quick renewal of a man-made one.

As you've been listening God may have brought to your attention an area of your 'journal' that needs His inscription. You are under the control of expectation, rules, or beliefs and values that are causing you to interpret your world in a negative way and may have lead you down the wrong path.

Tonight I want to provide an opportunity for God to start or totally complete that rewriting of that 'journal entry' into your life so that you can interpret your world through God's eyes and live in His power.