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Hello! From Your School Counsellor

In Southern India, people use coconut as a monkey trap. They drill a hole large enough for the monkey to put its hand through and they place some rice inside the hollowed-out coconut. To get the food inside the coconut, the monkey needs to wriggle its hand through the hole. Once it grabs the food, its clenched fist becomes too big to withdraw from the hole.

Unwilling to release the food, the monkey screeches and struggles to free itself from the overweight coconut not realizing that it just has to let go of the content in its hand and be free.

The monkey has the choice to hold its clenched fist or to let go and be free.



In the process of learning and growth, we encounter various pleasant and unpleasant experiences. Often, we tend to discount our pleasant experiences, leaving the unpleasant ones to frequently plague our memory as flashbacks and negative conversations. You start believing that you are not good enough, that you are not capable or not needed, and so on.

These bring about self-doubt and self-opinion. You adopt ineffective strategies to cope with your inner-critics, and over time, these strategies become unhelpful habits. You attach rigidly to those ideas, opinions, habits even though they are no longer helpful, or even hurt you. The unwillingness to let go has held you in your mental trap.

Like the metaphorical story of the monkey's trap, the monkey has to release its clenched fist, and it will be free. You too can set yourself free from the debilitating mental trap; though it may not be easy, you certainly can do so by resuming control. You can do this by:



- first, acknowledging the feeling and accepting it without judging it; accept that it is OK to be not OK. Detach yourself from the emotions and be in the present moment.
- second, ask who and what is important to you. Has this feeling been helpful? If not, what are you going to do about it? What are your values and goals? How can you move towards your values and goals?
- third, make a SMART plan and take committed action to move towards your goals along with your values. Accept the feeling you are feeling without attaching to it. Free yourself from the mental trap.

Gessians, the experience of pleasant and unpleasant feelings are a part of learning and growth. Taking charge of learning to deal with them is where wisdom gains and flourishes. Onward!

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