

Change YOUR Past Into A Present

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Your hand reaches into the cookie jar and feels the crunchy goodness between your fingers.

The arm then raises up to remove what you have been thinking about since mom made the batch of cookies just hours ago.

Just as the cookie is out of the jar, you hear footsteps coming from the next room.

Quickly (and silently) the lid is put back on the jar.

With cookie in hand, a quick escape is made to your bedroom, where you can enjoy the fruits (sugar) of your labor.

"Ahh, still warm and soft." - you whisper to yourself.

"She will never miss one cookie out of the dozens in that jar" - comes another whisper and a devilish grin of success.

Each bite is heaven. The chocolate chips never tasted so good.



Soon, the cookie is gone, the sugary chip flavour disappears from your tongue and you lay on your bed, alone in the room, staring up at the ceiling.

It is at that moment that you begin to reflect on the conquest. The process at which a prize was in sight, the thoughts of how to get it, the well acted upon plan, and the final enjoyment.

But, unforeseen thoughts creep into your mind...

"What if mom asks if I want a cookie?"

"What if she had caught me with my hand in the jar?"



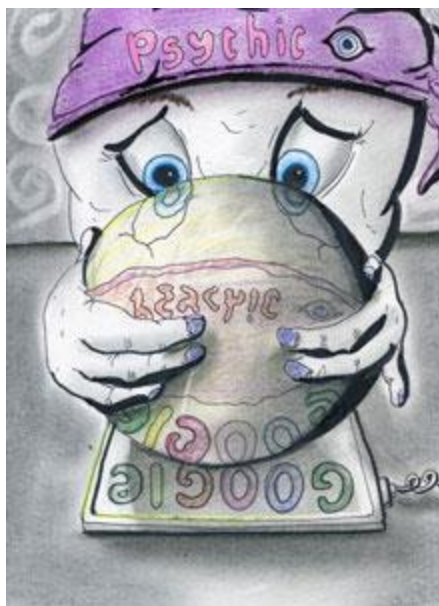
Guilt starts to overshadow the satisfaction. The moment of pleasure is now melting away, being replaced with feelings you don't like. Are you a bad person for breaking your mom's trust? Was it fair that you got a cookie and the others didn't? Should you tell mom and take the punishment, along with the dreaded disappointing look from her eyes?

We ALL are faced with the 'cookie jar' scenarios in our travels through life.

Like the time when others talked bad about someone behind their back. You could have stuck up for that person, or join in the crowd to get those momentary 'group' feelings (chocolate chips).

Maybe you found yourself at work and saw an object (*bling bling*) that you wanted and so took it home. Or more serious moments that you actually hurt someone physically or emotionally.

In each of these situations, you went through the process of seeing something you wanted or wanted to do, thinking about how you could get/do it without getting caught, and in some cases going through with it, ending up with the 'thing' or damage to another.



Later, you ended up somewhere by yourself, and had to face your actions. No matter how slick we are with others, nothing we do is hidden from ourselves. When we focus inside and look in our mirror, we don't see the 'masks' that we show others, but, the real person behind the mask.

It is during those reflecting moments that we then create personal baggage (guilt) to carry around with us. For it is not the flavor of the cookie we remember later, but, the act of getting the cookie and those we may have affected by our actions.

As you walk around others, you'll notice some of them show the weight of this baggage in their eyes and actions. They feel bad about themselves, do not believe their previous actions make them a good person and so live in a state of revolving guilt. They allow their mistakes to control what/how they act today and so remake the same type of bad actions. Adding more luggage, weight and reasons to *snap* at themselves/others, as that is who they believe they are.

But, there are others. Ones who seem to be smiling a lot, opening the doors for strangers, doing things that are positive and good for themselves/others.

They are not immune to the temptations and have also allowed themselves to grab the *bling*, say something wrong, or hurt someone.

So, why the difference? Why do some show the luggage, while others do not seem as affected?



It is because they have learned the secret of
Balloons.

For the same reason that a bad thought/action creates a new piece of heavy luggage chained to your soul, a good thought/action creates a balloon that is tied to those same chains. Each balloon making the weight less.

Stole a pen from your office? Said something bad about another person? Learn from the mistake and the way it made you feel later. Look at the new weight it created and tied to you as you look inside at yourself in the mirror.

Then do what the smiling people do, create some balloons to make YOUR life better, which in turn makes the lives better for others.



Give some money to the person on the corner with that sign.

Tell the cashier at the store to "Have a nice day" and truly smile at them. When you hear a group saying bad things about another, stand up for them and tell the group that 'bad talking' others is not making a good place to work/live. Then watch the balloons stack up and LIFT your spirits.

It is true, even after you learn your lessons, that you will still (sometimes) make the wrong choices, do the wrong things during your life. But, you'll find that as you learn to look for ways to create balloons (good thoughts/deeds), that when situations happen where a new 'bad' piece of luggage (could) be added by your thought/action, the balloons will start to float in front of your mirror and remind you which way is the right way.

No one has the ability to remove any luggage they have created, but, EVERYONE has the ability to take 'today' as a new opportunity to remove some more weight from their burdens and help themselves to become less weighted down by who they WERE.