There Is A Battle Of Two Wolves Inside Us All

Heard the story of the Two Wolves? Its one of my favourite stories to share with anyone struggling with negative feelings. It goes like this - a Cherokee grandfather shares his internal strife with his grandson

"A fight is going on inside me," he said to the boy.

"It is a terrible fight and it is between two wolves. One is evil – he is anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego." He continued, "The other is good – he is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith. The same fight is going on inside you – and inside every other person, too."

The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather, "Which wolf will win?"

The old Cherokee simply replied, "The one you feed."

This story teaches us that we have the power to manage our own emotions by feeding the positive ones, that by growing them the more negative become weaker and less dominant. It's an empowering story and gives strength to us all when we appreciate that we are all having the same fight and that negative emotions are part of us all, and part of being human. We learn we cannot dismiss the negative wolf, neither can we kill it, we cannot almost control it. We know it's there and just don't pay it attention.

BUT

No matter how much I feed the positive wolf and how much I've tried to ignore the negative wolf most of my life I find I see it at my feet, bothering me every now and then and sometimes just appearing and jumping and possessing me even without any notice. I starve it and yet it still lives and is bothersome.

So, there's another lesser known version of this story, which ends differently and perhaps more reflective of human realities which allows for this BUT. That goes like this...

'If you feed them both they both win'.

Really? We want this? If you starve your 'negative' wolf it will hound you for food, it will be at your door, kick at your feet, bother you for attention and feeding. If you take note of it, give it attention, feed it right - a little like - 'I notice I'm feeling angry, I notice I'm feeling jealous etc, etc' then it will not bother you so. The idea being that we all have these human emotions positive and negative; and ignoring or denying negative feelings will only mean that they will pile up and without any warning overwhelm you and make you act in a way you may regret. Once negative emotions are acknowledged they can be manoeuvred, developed...anger can become assertion, worry can become drive, jealousy - inspiration.

Know your negative feelings, acknowledge them, feed them that little bit and tame that wolf to do what you want it to do.