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**When the Smoke Clears, Then What?**

At first, I thought I'd write about smoking and the ban on smoking in many restaurants, bars, and other public buildings. Perhaps some of this will be about that, but the title is also a great metaphor for events that happen in our lives that are far more serious than a smoking ban.

For a smoker, to be faced with not being "able" to smoke without having dealt with the habit can seem quite daunting, unless you know a good hypnotist. In actuality, not being able to or allowed to smoke is a blessing. Take other situations in our lives: when a painful situation occurs, we seldom think about the blessing we are going to get by going through all that pain. Yet, what might happen if that is exactly what we did? What if we looked at every event in our lives as a blessing, no matter how painful or awful it seemed at the time?

In my profession, I help people do this, what we call "reframing," all the time. We take a situation that seems on the surface to be negative and we reframe it in such a way that it becomes positive. An inspirational example of this comes from Dr. Edith Eva Eger, who as a very young Jewish woman during World War II, was held at Auschwitz. She experienced many horrors of the camp, including the murder of her mother. Toward the end of the war, the Nazis took her blood twice a week, and when she asked why, they said she was helping the wounded Nazi soldiers. She reframed that by telling herself that since she was a pacifist, the blood that they were taking from her and giving to the soldiers could only help to end the war. Though this is just one example of reframing, it is a powerful illustration of using the powers of one's mind to, not only survive, but to also thrive to live another day.

You can see more about Dr. Edie's amazing story in the movie by Debbie Ford called, *The Shadow Effect*. Dr. Edie is a sought-after clinical psychologist and lecturer who is, "helping individuals discard their limitations, discover their powers of self-renewal, and achieve things they previous thought unattainable."

What things are happening in your world that might be blessings in disguise? How might you reframe an event or situation so that you can deal with it more positively, more hopefully, more joyfully? Remember that it isn't what happens to us that defines who we are but how we deal with what happens to us. Remember that we teach our children by our actions, not by our words. And remember that when the smoke clears, what happens next is a choice, your choice. You can decide to stare at all that has changed and wish it hadn't, or you can see what has changed as a blessing that opens up a world of new possibilities. How cool is that?

About: Karl R. Zimmer III is a clinical hypnotist, licensed and certified by the State of Indiana. His practice, Zimmer Success Group (<http://Z-Success.com>), is in Plainfield.