

## OUT OF SORTS – SORT IT OUT!

I wonder if it's okay to use one's column to have a jolly good old moan session after you have had a revolting day, week or month and you want the whole world to know and care? Are you allowed to publicly lament the fact and blame everyone who has contributed or is that abusing the privilege of being a weekly columnist? Are there guidelines somewhere that lay out what you can and cannot write about in a column? What is the protocol?

Anyway I've decided to go ahead and use the space for a group therapy session because it seems I wasn't the only one having a bad week. I asked colleagues and contacts at work was it just me or were they also feeling negative - they all were. That can't be just coincidence. Maybe it's something in the air or maybe we are wired to be collectively negative at times? Perhaps negativity is ubiquitous, possibly even contagious? And think of how potentially damaging such a general depression could be. Maybe when economies slump, countries lose their competitiveness, or nations go to war with one another it's a result of mass negativity and it's a naturally-occurring result of shared pessimism?

There can be a number of different reasons for my feelings of angst. Biorhythms are one possible cause. I don't really buy into that idea of a predictable cyclical recurrence regulated by outside forces somehow, although I do think there is a natural pattern that the body goes through that makes you feel good sometimes and less so in other instances, part of which we can control to a certain extent. . We know, for example, that the endorphins released when exercising contribute to our overall feel-good factor and at the opposite end that our diet can seriously make us depressed – apparently low fat diets, for example – God, just the idea of it is enough to make you lose the will to live! Alternatively turkey and chicken contain a good source of mood-enhancing tryptophan, an essential amino acid that is converted into serotonin, another feel-good, naturally-occurring chemical which is known to be low in people suffering from depression. To test that theory I had turkey sandwiches twice last week but I am still not feeling good so clearly that's not enough on its own.

Of course it could be the time of year. Everyone gets frantic trying to finish things off as we race towards the end of the year where regardless if it's work or pleasure we feel the need to tick off our accomplishments so that we are not riddled with guilt when we laze over the festive season. Someone even suggested it was the weather – all of a sudden there is too much rain. I know we're not supposed to say that here but the overcast skies makes me think of the motherland and it is less than jolly. It's actually a well-documented form of depression with the acronym SAD (seasonally-affected syndrome), when a continual vista of dreary grey skies and lack of sunlight makes you feel chronically down.

Whatever it is I can't seem to put my finger on it. All of a sudden I am not in flow. There is me and then there is the rest of it all. Unaligned. It's like my spirit has wandered off (probably to the coast already) When the spirit is not energised and inspired, the body responds in a negative way and is then reflected in our emotional, physical and spiritual aspects.

And maybe there's another less ethereal cause of my negativity which is that control over external factors seemed lost and this made me feel helpless. Everything has freaked me this week and it's why I suddenly understand the need for social order. I can't even believe I am saying this! I pride myself in being liberal – anti restrictive rules and regulations, anything that prevents free expression. Yet the lack of rules and mores in Botswana has seriously irked me this week. There's free and then there's just a free-for-all.

I was nearly in 3 accidents by taxis running red robots, creating three lanes in a two-way road and skipping stop signs. I have lived with this for many years and I have never seen it improve. And that criminality is catching. Eventually the blatant disregard for the law reduces you to the same behaviour, on the grounds that it 'they' can do it, so can I. Add to that two nights of fireworks with big bangs protracted for 2 hours right in the middle of my neighbourhood that stressed my dogs out for hours – it was horribly frustrating watching them reduced to terror because there are no laws that prevent stupid rituals. And yet more domestic stress – I live opposite a block of flats that has no remote on the gate, just a security guard who keeps the gate closed and opens on command – the command of hooting. It goes on all night. I have begged, pleaded for some respect yet I can do nothing about it. And yet another bugbear - I can't stand litter and when I see someone throwing stuff out of a car window it's all I can do to stop myself from chasing after them to give them a piece of my mind.

Most of us have days or weeks like this: times when we are spiralling around out of sync, frustrated, irritated angry. Blame it on the biorhythms, diet, weather, social or physical factors. Why is it all getting to me? Is it the end of the year, the end of my tether or the end of my sanity? I don't know. I just want people to drive safely, stop cruelty to animals and make sure the environment is looked after. I want to see the sun and I want to get all my domestic and corporate ducks in a row before Christmas. Next week I probably won't care as much or at least I won't let it all get to me as much. But it's been one of those weeks. And I do feel slightly better now I've put it into print. I think the exercise on the keyboard has raised my endorphin level so maybe I've discovered a new form of therapy. In a nutshell, if you wanna de-stress, use the power of de Press!

