

Reserve judgment on the present until it becomes the past.

TOMORROWS OFTEN LOOK VERY DIFFERENT WHEN THEY BECOME OUR YESTERDAYS.

Maybe the situation you're experiencing now feels undesirable and difficult. And maybe you expect it to damage your future. But one of these days you're likely to see all this in a very different light.

Human beings actually aren't very good at forecasting how they'll feel about things later on. As Harvard psychologist Daniel Gilbert puts it in his book, *Stumbling on Happiness*, "Our imagination has a hard time telling us how we will *think* about the future when we get there." And why do we predict so poorly? It's because our predictions about how we'll feel in the future are heavily influenced by our current emotions

and state of mind. So if you're feeling bad about what's happening now, that will give you a negative bias about things to come.

It's just our nature to try to do things or create conditions that we're convinced can make us happy. Likewise, we try hard to avoid situations which we believe would be painful or difficult to endure. Meanwhile, research proves over and over that people mispredict how they'll eventually feel. Good things commonly fail to gratify as we expected, and misfortune often ends up being deemed a blessing in disguise. Dr. Gilbert adds, "We seem to know so little about the hearts and minds of the people we're about to become. Our ability to imagine our future emotions is flawed."

The lesson here is that so much of our current worry will surely turn out to be wasted effort. We have a marvelous ability to adapt, but a surprising inability to foresee what will prove to be the richest, most fulfilling aspects of our lives. Might today's challenges merely be the rites of passage to something better still?

The most important aspect of any situation is how you react to it. In fact, a person might react poorly to good things, or constructively to bad things, actually reversing the nature of circumstances. Such is the power we have within.

The Unfolding

You see proof of this all the time. Faced with the very same turn of events — whether good, bad, or uncertain — some people shape the situation to their benefit, while others end up disadvantaged. Dealing with identical circumstances, they produce completely different outcomes. This is not to say that we can always make things turn out the way we want. But we can devote ourselves, totally, to making the best of whatever comes our way. That commitment positions us to wield the most positive influence over how our lives unfold.

Often the potential good that's incubating during difficult or uncertain periods will reveal itself only with the passing of time. Our charge for now is to have faith in this latent promise, and do our personal best to bring it forth.

“I’m glad I’m not as unhappy
as I once thought I was.”

— Scott LaVesque, of the band *Wheat*