



Not Taking Things Personally, by Mark Manson

An unfortunate side effect of our consciousness residing in our brains is that _everything_ we experience in our lives involves us somehow. The car in traffic today cut _you_ off. The cable news show you saw last night ticked _you_ off. Your company's massive growth this year gave _you_ more money.

As a result, we tend to have an inherent bias towards assuming that pretty much everything that happens to us _is actually about us_.

But here's a newsflash: Just because you experience something, just because something causes you to feel a certain way, just because you care about something, doesn't mean it's about you.

I know you've got this amazing sunset and sweet cliffs all around you, but seriously, it's not all about you.

This is hard to remember. And not just because we're so embedded in our brains and our own bodies. But because making everything about us, in certain ways, feels good for short periods of time.

It feels good to think that everything that's good that happens in your life happens to you because you're this good, amazing person. But the price you pay for making those good experiences about you is that you must also make the bad experiences about you -- you must interpret all of the bad things in your life to be about you as well.

And as a result, you place yourself onto a self-esteem roller coaster, where your self-worth bobs up and down, experiencing dizzying highs and crashing lows with the merciless tides of whatever craziness happens to be going on at the time.

When things are good, you are the gods' gift to the earth, who deserves to be recognized and applauded at every turn. When things are bad, you are the self-righteous victim, who has been wronged and deserves better.

What is constant is this sense of _deserving_. And it's this constant sense of _deserving_ that turns you into an emotional vampire, an anti-social black hole that only consumes the energy and love of those around you without ever offering anything in return.

OK, maybe that was a bit dramatic. But you get the point.

When people criticize you or reject you, it likely has way more to do with them --Â their values, their priorities, their life situation --Â than it does with you. I hate to break it to you, but other people simply donâ€™t think about you that much (after all, theyâ€™re too busy trying to believe everything is _about them_).

When something you do fails, it doesnâ€™t mean you are a failure as a person, it simply means you _areÂ _a person who happens to fail sometimes.

When something tragic happens and you become horribly hurt, as much as your pain has you absolutely convinced that this _must be about you_, remember that hardship is part of choosing to live, that the tragedy of death is what gives meaning to life, and that pain has no prejudice --Â it afflicts us all. Deserving or not deserving isnâ€™t part of the equation.