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Ronnie Amsler

An Interview with Richard Bandler

'Treating nonsense with nonsense' – Strategies for a better life

Richard: So much of my work changed over the years. I discovered it wasn't good enough to teach people how to do good things. I had to teach them how to make good choices to start with, 'coz it all boils down in the end to making good things so that the decisions that you make will be better in the future.

The inverse is also true: if you feel bad, you start to make decisions. People break up their marriage, they are depressed and so they go: 'Who am I gonna be with now?' And when they are propelled by a bad feeling they're gonna make bad decisions. So this makes it so important to feel good before you start deciding what to decide. Otherwise your decisions will not be good decisions. This is why you have to be so careful that, when things are really going bad, you stop and put yourself into a good state before you make decisions about what you're going to do about it. And people go: 'Well that is not very realistic!' And I go: 'Yeah, but it works!'

They tell me it is realistic to dredge around in people's childhood to try to figure out how to make them happy adults. To me it sounds absolutely absurd – the idea that because your parents didn't love you enough as a child. . . . You know, I had a crappy childhood, but you know what? I just don't think about it much because I've had a wonderful life as an adult and I made sure it stayed that way. And people say: 'Well, if you repress this stuff it will come out somewhere else.' Well, it will. It will come out in *their* childhood!

The Dalai Lama summed it up quite well: 'Sometimes bad things happen – you just don't dwell on them.' If you throw a pebble into a pond it makes ripples for a while but eventually it smoothes out. When people

The interview took place in London on 7 and 8 April 1999. Those present were Ronnie Amsler, Inger Haut, Lars Haut, Paula Bandler and Richard Bandler. The full, unedited transcription can be downloaded from www.nlp-institut.ch