

Imagine something happening in your life, right now, something that you could never ever have imagined would ever happen. It could be good or bad, just imagine something beyond your wildest dreams.

Now pretend that your imagined event became a reality. It's amazing how powerful our minds are, that we have the ability to create wild scenarios that include feelings and emotions, even our senses play along.

Can you imagine all this just happening around you, all the time, automatically, without your intervention and without your permission?

Of course you can. That's the definition of life, isn't it?

I remember a week before the madness of being hidden at home, a friend of mine hinted that this was the way our country was going.

'Never!', I said. I created my reality in that moment, by not coming into agreement with something that I didn't want, not to mention, it was something that I didn't even completely understand. Yet, all I knew was that I didn't want this shutting down of life-as-I-know-it, and so I said 'never', no thank you. Done deal, it won't happen.

A week later our president announced a nationwide lockdown.

I think I must have murmured to myself, 'oh'...

Now that's wild!! Totally unexpected and a major disappointment. I started feeling absolutely everything, every emotion under the sun, and especially the feeling of mild claustrophobia was starting to set in because social visits were already starting to dry up.

I realized now – in this time – more than I ever have before in my life, that as much as I am a dispenser of God's joy and freedom, I am also like one massive sponge, sucking up all the emotions of what others are feeling, and let's be honest, you don't have to be Freud to know that's not healthy.

Yet, on the flipside, taking other people's plight into consideration, actually helped to ease the void of other areas of my life that had been placed on hold and yes, it forced me to not be so self-centric, but to rather understand that others were going through a whole host of emotions that I knew nothing about, and that was actually fine.



To help someone else, to love someone else, to care for someone else doesn't always mean that you have to have an answer, and so I think when someone says, 'I understand', I don't think it's so much that they know your situation from start to end, it's more just a comfort hearing that someone is there for you, and that they are making an effort to try and see life from your point of view.

Perspective is a game changer. It was the thing that sort of saved me, when I allowed myself to be challenged and changed by the perspectives of others. You see, when we retracted into 'hibernation', it wasn't to be just hibernation it seems. Rather I felt that what we were doing was to produce a virtual reality, to replace what we used to know in our normal, and it seemed like it just had to get done. Time waits for no man and that putting normal life on hold, was not an option.

But, what I needed to do was to give myself time to process the emotional reality of what we were creating, and also just my emotional reality as a whole. Was I going to allow lockdown to shape me, or was I going to allow God's truth and love – about me and for me – to define me?

The perspectives of others was the catalyst that made me realize that I needed to stop, but it was ultimately God's perspective that made me see where I was seated, and when you're that high up, all you can really do is gasp for breath due to the immense beauty and the profound realization that His reality, is my reality, and that's virtually, all that that we need.

We have to decide to do great things, with whatever we have in our hands, at any given moment.

Forming new routines actually helped quite a lot. Repetition is the starting point to building great habits. I found that just doing some sort of exercise, and rostering it, really helped me to start looking forward to something. But this realization, as with everything else written before, didn't come without some sort of stressed event.

It was less than 24hours into our lockdown when I started to feel that I was cracking already. Thankfully I saw that there was a nationwide challenge to run a marathon (42.2km), spread out over these first twenty-one days, which would equate to running about 2km per day, the only catch was that you would have to run this in your own yard. Done. I set off on my first 2km garden loop, which was multiple loops, and at the end of day 1's run, I felt accomplished.



You see, it's okay to crack. Think of cracking open an egg. The possibilities are endless, you want scrambled, fried, poached...raw, dare I say, you get to choose.

We always have a choice, no matter how difficult the situation, the question or the decision, you always have a choice, so choose in the direction of joy.

In A.A. Milne's fictional child story, Winne-the-Pooh, there are two characters that stand out to me, although each one of the characters in the story carries their very own merits and deserves to be mentioned here, yet I will focus on Pooh Bear and Piglet.

Pooh Bear is mighty brave and his purpose in life is clear – honey! Piglet on the other hand is the epitome of anxiety and nervousness. But somehow this friendship pair works.

During all that has gone on for the last couple of weeks, there have been mornings that I have jumped out of bed, full of beans and ready to tackle the day, looking for my honey, and yep, I've found it, but obviously there have been those days when I realized that my honey was delayed, and that is a hard pill to swallow.

On the other hand, some days I started off like Piglet, a bit unsure of what would lie ahead, but I would just get on with whatever needed to happen anyways, because there's this sure hope that always lies ahead of us - one that gives us purpose, and it's found in the sweet spot where Pooh Bear and Piglet meet and it simply is defined as 'friendship'.

Whether the honey is flowing or not, or the day simply seems too much to stomach, there's always a resting place that we can fall back into, where I fell back into on many occasions, where we can gain perspective and get our purpose-fire stoked, and it's found in God, and so graciously extended to us through each other. So, love one another. Love Ryan.

