

Blackboard Bits

RANDOM NOTES
from MY DESKTOP

Thom Rutledge

THREE WEEKLY FEATURES

EMOTIONAL SOBRIETY IN A NUTSHELL

Weekly E-minders for the Therapeutically Forgetful
A weekly email feature.

EMOTIONAL SOBRIETY ZOOM WORKSHOP

With DR. ALLEN BERGER No Fee

Every Thursday evening @ 6:00 pm Pacific Time
9:00 pm Eastern Time

Log In: 330149513 Passcode: 375986

EMOTIONAL SOBRIETY PODCAST

with Thom Rutledge & Dr. Allen Berger
Subscribe on Apple Podcasts or Spotify

BOOKS by Thom Rutledge

Simple Truth
If I Were They
The Self-Forgiveness Handbook
Earning Your Own Respect
Nutshell Essays
Embracing Fear
Life Without Ed (co-author with Jenni Schaefer)
The Greater Possibilities
What Love Is

AUDIO

Practice Makes Practice
ON SPOTIFY

E-BOOKS

The Antidote
Sit Down & Shut Up
Therapy for Politics

BOOKS IN THE WORKS

The Recovery Decision
Emotional Sobriety One Day at a Time
(with Allen Berger, PhD)

PLEASE HELP ME SHARE THIS

I have put Blackboard Bits together simply to share. It may have promotional value which I welcome but the pdf itself is simply here to spread around. If you know others - individuals or groups - who might benefit, identify and/or enjoy any of what follows, please feel free to duplicate the pdf and share it with my blessing and my gratitude.



Blackboard Bits

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Actual copyright dates on these bits are anybody's guess. These are things I have been saying to people over the past few decades. Eventually I write some down and they show up in a book or a social media post. One time a fellow sent me a piece called "What Strength Is" that I thought was brilliant. I wrote him back, asked if he was the author and if I could share the piece. He responded by telling me that I was the author. Well, how about that? The good news was that even knowing who wrote it, I still liked it a lot. Personal growth progress... ✓check. I'll include the piece at the end of this little collection.

If you have not read my books, I hope that you will consider doing so if you like what you find here. But whether or not you read the books, I hope that you find something here and/or from the free download page on my website that is useful. I'm a fan of free samples, be it writing or cupcakes.

And if you are interested in a particular book and legitimately cannot afford it, let me know (thomrutledgeauthor@gmail.com) and I'll get the book to you. One of my favorite compliments (not intended as a compliment) was when an editor told me that I was a horrible book salesman because my approach was, "You had better buy this book or else I'll give it to you."

Another favorite compliment (totally unrelated to this project) was when a radio producer, following a 3 hour late night call-in show, said, "Rut, you handled 2 suicidal callers and kept it entertaining the entire time." I do like to add to this one that I was not aware of keeping anything entertaining while I was talking with the callers. But I do love the compliment.

Enough about me, here's some other stuff I wrote. **TR**

COMMUNICATION 101

We are afraid of anger, other people's & our own. Or we automatically feel guilty when someone else is angry. Or we feel guilty for having our own anger.

When anger is part of what needs communicating, conversation becomes a mine field. And we mistakingly think anger is the problem.

We can talk about feeling sad, hurt, confused or guilty. And we can listen.

What is so different about anger?

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COMMUNICATION 101

You absolutely WILL NOT be able to find resolution if you are trying to solve 2 different problems simultaneously. Before you dig in too deep, pause long enough to agree on a problem definition.

"You are not listening to me," & "Oh yeah, well, you don't respect me," are not the same problem.

- Thom Rutledge

COMMUNICATION 101

Anger is not a problem; it is an emotion, like any other emotion that we need to experience & express.

The problem is when we don't know how to communicate anger in healthy & effective ways. We either overpower others with it, water it down or stuff deep down inside.

Here's a real problem: anger is the emotion that fuels boundaries & we are very uncomfortable with it.

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COMMUNICATION 101

Practice conversations **TO CONVEY**
rather than **TO CONVINC**.

Most conversations are not about
winning, or even making, a point.
When there are different perspectives,
getting to agreement is seldom
necessary.

See how many conversations you can
have that are **NOT ABOUT BEING**
RIGHT.

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COMMUNICATION 101

Curiosity is the primary ingredient in respect.

Curiosity is the opposite of assumption.

Curiosity is a product of humility.

Communication without genuine curiosity is significantly flawed.

© Thom Rutledge
Author of What Love Is



COMMUNICATION 101

Keeping defenses
down long enough
to clarify meaning
may be the most valuable
communication skill.

Know what I mean?

- Thom Rutledge

COMMUNICATION 101

RESPECT is not necessarily expressed through agreement.

We can listen and understand different perspectives and still disagree in part or whole.

Respectful conversation is especially important when we disagree.

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COMMUNICATION 101

If every time you argue, you only do more damage, try being pen pals. Communicate about difficult topics by email, text or be even more radical & use a notebook & pen.

This helps to slow us down, gives us an opportunity to be less impulsive & more thoughtful. Helps us to be our best selves. — Thom Rutledge

Writing also activates different parts of our brains, beyond just our taking-cells.

Do you think of COVID19 as an
interruption to your life?

Are you waiting for normal
to return?

Be careful.

Life is always, and only, NOW.
And what is normal is not
always good.

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What are you most likely to forget when COVID19 is no longer a danger?

What do you hope you have learned that you will never forget?

What can you add to your daily practice to ensure you remember?

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5 INGREDIENTS of MOTIVATION

1. Dissatisfaction
2. Desire to change
3. Belief that change is possible
4. Belief that change is deserved
5. Willingness to do whatever it takes

- Thom Rutledge

If you're stuck, check to see
what's missing...

SELF-TALK 101

Dear Self-Haters,

To recover, we do not have to fall madly in love with ourselves. Thank goodness. Our recovery is about practical, evidence-based self respect, about recovering and maintaining our own sense of personal integrity.

Nothing easy about it, but it is doable. The belief that we are beyond hope is a message directly from the self-hatred. It's bullshit, it's a lie. I promise.

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Thom

IF YOU HAVE a self-sabotaging inner bully who speaks with authority and in extremes – you're the worst ever, the biggest failure, a role model for losers, etc – consider beginning to separate with just some reasonable doubt.

Maybe what you are hearing is not entirely true. Maybe some of it is not true at all. Maybe that inner bully is not the ultimate authority on who you are, what you can do and what you are all about. Reasonable doubt.

Just maybe that's a place to start.

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Recovery from
SELF HATRED
is not self love.
It's SELF RESPECT.

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SELF-TALK 101

Most of the time we think in dialogue, not monologue, with at least 2 voices.

If you hear only one voice in self-criticism, you are probably not sticking up for yourself.

- Thom Rutledge

Try this: Don't let the inner bully have the last word.

SELF-TALK 101

A moment of $50 \text{ N}\cdot\text{m}$ is applied at pt
expressed as $2x$. Find the reaction at pt
 B , given that the length of the beam is
 5 m .



We cannot get rid of the inner-
saboteurs. Waste of energy to try.
Instead change how you are
responding to them. Practice
disagreement, disobedience &
defiance.

Consumer surplus is the sum of the
difference between the equilibrium
price and what a consumer is willing
to pay.

Recover from INTRAPersonal
codependency. Take your power back.

- Thom Rutledge



is a free-body diagram.

Math Assignment

SELF-TALK 101

Beware of the deeply imbedded Myth of Singularity, the belief that sanity is having only one opinion or one feeling about something.

The nature of consciousness is multiple, not singular.

Open mindedness is multiple mindedness.

And singularity blocks empathy.

- Thom Rutledge

SELF-TALK 101

Change rhetorical questions from insults to valuable self exploration. When you ask, "Why am I such an idiot?", see if there might be something to learn.

Maybe ask, "How can I be a bit less of an idiot tomorrow?"

- Thom Rutledge

progress is any forward movement

POLITICAL SAVVY 101

#03

When politics is played as winner take all, we have either a stalled system or one-party rule. Ideologues are important for inspiration & commentary but generally suck at governing.

Our elected representatives should be proven problem solvers, experts in compromise & collaboration.

We don't need the candidate who can shut everyone else down, but instead the person who speaks with clear, sound reason in the midst of fear, anger, confusion & chaos. We need leaders who can keep inclusive conversation going in the darkest of times.

- Thom Rutledge

Important

POLITICAL SAVVY 101 _____ #04

- We need to teach our children HOW to think, not WHAT to think.
- Quality education should be an ANTIDOTE for naive ignorance & a THREAT to willful ignorance.
- In a democracy, there is no need to fear independent thinkers.

Think!

@thomrutledge

What Is Strength?

Strength is not the absence of need.

Strength is resourcefulness in getting needs met.

Strength is not the absence of vulnerability.

Strength and vulnerability need to co-exist.

Strength is not the absence of feeling.

Strength is the willingness to face feelings directly.

Strength is not the ability to do everything yourself.

The strong know when, how and to whom to reach for help.

Strength is not perfection.

The strong understand that perfection is not an option.

Strength exist within us all but does not develop automatically or easily.

Strength comes from decision, dedication and practice.

I recently asked a client for her definition of strength and she said,
“Strength is not having weakness.” Then she thought a moment longer and
added, “Strength is not having problems.”

“Well, that pretty much disqualifies the entire human race,” I told her.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Thom Rutledge has been in the people-helping business since 1976. He intended to be wildly successful novelist, poet or magician but when he woke up in his adult life, he was a psychotherapist - a fact that he now calls "the happy accident."

A best-selling author, he has been a practicing psychotherapist for 40 years. His work has been featured on NBC's Today Show, CNN's Anderson Cooper 360, Australia's Channel 10, and he has consulted with the Dr. Phil Show.



He is currently at work on a book to help people recovering from eating disorders and is co-host (with Allen Berger, Ph.D) of a weekly podcast called Start Right HERE.

He lives with his wife, the innovative Equine Therapist, Dede Beasley, and their many critters on a small farm just outside of Nashville, Tennessee.

If you would like to consult with Thom individually or have him speak to your organization or group, you can reach him directly at thomrutledgeauthor@gmail.com. To learn more about Thom, visit <http://www.thomrutledge.com/>.

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40 Episode PODCAST

Available at Apple Podcasts

Start Right

HERE

w/ Thom Rutledge & Dr. Allen Berger
CONVERSATIONS ABOUT WHAT MATTERS MOST

WEEKLY PODCAST

The podcast cover features a collage of black and white portraits of Thom Rutledge and Dr. Allen Berger. The title 'emotional sobriety' is written in a lowercase, sans-serif font, with 'THE PODCAST' in a smaller, uppercase font below it. A small box identifies Thom Rutledge as LCSW, and another identifies Allen Berger as PhD. At the bottom, there is text about where to subscribe and contact information for support groups.

emotional sobriety
THE PODCAST

Thom Rutledge, LCSW

Allen Berger, PhD

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Emotional Sobriety Support Group: Thursday, 7:00 pm Pacific Meeting # 330149513 Passcode: 375986
Facebook Group: Emotional Sobriety & Recovery Instagram: thomrutledge2

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