

# Reframing

Reframing is a technique for helping people look at issues in a way that is empowering and helps them move forward. People can get stuck in a negative and limiting way of thinking if they always use the same 'frame'. By moving the issue and placing it in a different frame, people can gain new insights and energy.

A classic 're-frame' is from '*This glass is half-empty*' to '*This glass is half-full.*' Re-frames can be done by simply changing words, for example from *difficulty* to *challenge*. A wonderful question that immediately re-frames any problem is: '*What's good about this problem?*'

This Taoist parable illustrates how all events can be re-framed:

An old man and his son lived together, scraping a living in poor conditions. Their only valuable possession was a horse. One night the horse ran away. Next day the neighbours came and offered their sympathy, telling the old man how unlucky he was.

*Maybe it's bad and maybe it's good, said the old man. In the fullness of time, we shall know.*

The following day the horse returned, bringing with it several wild horses, which the old man and his son locked inside their gate. The neighbours hurried round to congratulate the old man on his good fortune.

*Maybe it's good and maybe it's bad, said the old man. In the fullness of time, we shall know.*

The next thing that happened was that the son tried to tame one of the wild horses, but fell off and broke his leg. As the old man was dependent on his son's labour, the neighbours were quick to point out the disastrous turn that events had taken.

*Maybe it's bad and maybe it's good, said the old man. In the fullness of time, we shall know.*

Soon after, a warlord's army came to the village, press-ganging young men into their ranks to fight in a battle far away. All the village's young men were taken – except for the old man's son, left behind because of his broken leg....