



A Little Treat, but a Big Difference

By Noraziah Mohd Amin



Iris Murdoch, the writer of the novel, “The Sea, The Sea” says, “One of the secrets of a happy life is continuous small treats” while the author of the book, “Better Than Before”, Gretchen Rubin says, “When we give ourselves treats, we feel energised, cared for, and contented, which boosts our self-command and self-command helps us

maintain our healthy habits. Gretchen Rubin explains that a “treat” is a tiny pleasure or indulgence that we give to ourselves just because we want it, as opposed to a “reward”, which must be earned or justified. This means we don’t have to be “good” in order to receive a treat; we don’t have to earn or justify it.

Rewarding oneself with something is a way for a person to value oneself especially after successfully achieving a self-set goal. Rewarding ourselves does not mean we are lonely and incapable of making others see us as someone who needs to be appreciated and rewarded. However, this actually opens up a space for ourselves to evaluate our own selves at the very basic level that even a small accomplishment can be considered worthy of a reward. People around us will not be able to see our success and efforts in cleaning the storeroom for example, as something that deserves a reward but we know ourselves better and know how important it is for us to cultivate the habit of cleaning the storeroom by rewarding ourselves for a start.

These small rewards awarded for our actions will make us more disciplined in completing something especially if we are determined that as long as something is not complete, the reward will not be given to ourselves. This ruling cannot be arbitrarily revoked simply because of the very tip that determines the rule. We need to first instill a belief in ourselves that we can be trusted and will stick to our principle. This can be a challenge for us to complete something that we had planned to finish at a certain time for the reward that is waiting after the completion of a

task.

Rewarding ourselves is also a way for us to thank ourselves and celebrate our own small accomplishments without involving others who may only pay attention to our bigger and more meaningful accomplishments. In certain circumstances, the concept of “two heads are better than one” may not necessarily be practical. Sometimes a small thing that we are able to do well will be underestimated by others and in this case, people’s opinions are not important to take into account. No one understands us better than ourselves and therefore, a treat in exchange for our good behavior, a newly practised habit, a new change or simply an ordinary daily task is a form of complimenting ourselves with more than just the sentence, “You’ve done a good job!”

There are many ways we can treat ourselves. A bar of chocolate or a slice of scrumptious cake is not always the choice and truly, a treat does not have to be always sweet. Iris Murdoch mentions that surprisingly, there are people who enjoy untreatlike treats to please themselves such as ironing, writing code, and doing Latin translation. Thus, the daily activities like tidying one’s bedroom, doing the dishes, clearing clutter on a table can be treats for some people. Clearly, treats do not necessarily have to be something soothing, fun, and entertaining. It just has to be something that one finds pleasure and enjoyment in doing. Even doing a pile of dishes can be satisfying for someone.

However, some treats that need us to spend some time to realise such as having a staycation in another town that involves proper planning and research and therefore, a quicker treat can be a better trick for rewarding ourselves. No matter how simple or wonderful the treat is for us to give ourselves, it has to be one that we enjoy. For example, a one-hour nap after a revision for an exam is enough to be a little satisfying indulgence for a recharge. Obviously, a small treat can make a big difference and the saying, “Size doesn’t matter” really applies here!

