

In the story, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, Snow White's beautiful and evil step-mother (the Queen) asked a mirror *Who is the fairest of us all?* The mirror responded *You are the fairest.* But as years went by Snow White became more and more beautiful. On the princess's fifteenth birthday the Queen asked the mirror, *Who is the fairest of us all?* And the mirror answered *Snow White is the fairest of them all!* The wicked queen was very angry and jealous of Snow White. She ordered her huntsman to take Snow White to the forest and kill her. *I want you to bring back her heart,* the Queen ordered.

The Queen in this story makes a mountain out of a molehill. We too can sometimes magnify situations, resulting in unnecessary anxiety, sadness, anger and emotional upset that can negatively affect us and others. If we could pause for a moment and recognize that the current situation is frustrating, annoying, or merely irritating we could reframe the situation and respond in a more responsible, loving and productive manner. As we learn to respond appropriately we create less drama and more happiness in our lives and in the lives of others.

To experience more happiness, *Adjust Your Emotional Thermostat.* A thermostat is a device that automatically adjusts the temperature in a room to the desired level. We have an *emotional thermostat* built within us. We can adjust our *emotional thermostat* to respond to situations in wise, loving and reasonable ways.

Before adjusting our emotional thermostat, we need to check our *emotional temperature.* To do so imagine a scale from 0 degrees to 10. Check in with yourself to see what your emotional temperature is. If your temperature is zero, then you are relaxed, calm, peaceful and at ease. If your temperature is 9 or above, you might be upset and angry and feel like you want to express your anger in a destructive way.

How many degrees did the Queen's response to the mirror warrant? Probably no more than 1 or 2 degrees. However, the Queen's response was probably a 9 or a 10. If she had been able to check her *emotional temperature,* she could have adjusted her thermostat down to reflect the actual severity of the situation. Wanting to kill her stepdaughter for being more beautiful than her is not a reasonable desire. If the Queen could have adjusted her emotional thermostat she could have realized that her true emotional temperature could have been adjusted to a 1 or 2. This adjustment would have given her more joy and peace. However, this fairy tale would not have been the same.

We too can check our emotional temperature at any time to see if it matches our responses to a particular situation. If our emotional temperature is too high we can make adjustments in our thermostat which will accurately reflect our current circumstance.

The story continues with the huntsman showing compassion to Snow White by letting her go. He took an animal's heart back to the Queen as proof that she was dead. Snow White wandered to the house of the seven dwarfs and found safety and friendship there. The Queen again asked the mirror, *Who was most fair?* The mirror told her that Snow White was, and that she was living with the seven dwarfs. The Queen disguised herself as an old peasant woman and walked to the seven dwarfs' home. She gave Snow White a poisoned apple which put her into a deep sleep. Snow White was awakened by the kiss of Prince Charming, and they lived happily ever after.

Here are some additional activities that you can use to *Adjust Your Thermostat:*

- Get some exercise. Exercise is one of the best ways to reduce stress.
- Meditate or just sit quietly for a short time.
- Spend time with a nurturing friend or animal.
- Practice deep breathing.

*Affirmation: I breathe in, I breathe out, and I am at peace.*