



The Vacation Always Looks Nicer on the Other Side of the Screen

Intro: Perhaps the title of this exercise sounds somewhat familiar. It is a modern-day “social media-based” adaptation of the age-old wise adage “The grass is greener on the other side of the fence” This concept often resonates deeply with many of us. It’s a phrase that speaks to our innate tendency to compare ourselves to others and yearn for what we perceive as better or more desirable. Nowadays instead of looking at greener grass, people often view others lives either in person or on social media to make comparisons.

In the realm of mental health and substance use recovery and change, this concept takes on a profound significance. For all of us on this journey, whether it’s managing our mental well-being or overcoming the challenges of addiction, the allure of “greener pastures” or “more desirable social media feed” can be particularly powerful.

Think about it for a moment. How many times have you found yourself longing for something different, whether it’s a different job, a different relationship, or a different state of mind? How often have you scrolled through social media, comparing your life to the carefully curated highlight reels of others, only to later feel a boomerang return with feelings of stinging with discontent, regret, guilt, or even jealousy?

The truth is that this mindset can be a double-edged sword. On one hand, it can serve as a driving force for growth and change, motivating us to strive for something better. But on the other hand, it can also lead to a dangerous state of dissatisfaction, robbing us of the joy and fulfillment that can be found right here, right now. Ultimately, the grass may seem greener on the other side of the fence, or the “life” on the other social media feed can seem so much more luxurious and glamorous, but true fulfillment lies in tending to the garden of our own lives, as well as the reality within our own homes rather than the mirage often displayed online by so many. Together, we can discover that sometimes, rather than looking over the fence at the neighbor’s grass or scrolling through the pages of our high school classmates our time is much better spent making the real life we have right in front of us better each day through our own persistent effort and rewarding personal growth and positive life changes.

10 Key Points for Introspection and Discussion:

1. Understanding Comparison:

- Comparison is a natural human tendency, rooted in our innate desire to understand our place in the world. However, it can also become a slippery slope, leading us down a path of constant dissatisfaction. Someone always has it better. This can seem quite evident while we may at times forget to consider that many have it much worse than us. ***Do you find yourself comparing and if so, when and how does that come about?***

2. The Thief of Joy:

- Theodore Roosevelt once said, "Comparison is the thief of joy." When we constantly measure ourselves against others, we rob ourselves of the ability to appreciate our own unique journey and accomplishments. ***How has comparison stolen moments of joy from your life?***

3. The Dangers of Jealousy:

- Jealousy, fueled by comparison, can poison our relationships and corrode our sense of self-worth. It blinds us to the blessings that surround us and drives a wedge between ourselves and others. ***Have you ever experienced the corrosive effects of jealousy in your life? How do you prevent yourself from feeling the hurtfulness of jealousy?***



4. Navigating Regret:

- Regret often stems from comparing our current circumstances to an idealized version of the past or an imagined future. It can weigh heavily on our hearts, trapping us in a cycle of "what ifs" and "should haves." ***Has regret ever hindered your ability to embrace the positives of the present?***

5. Cultivating Gratitude:

- Gratitude is the antidote to comparison, jealousy, and regret. It allows us to shift our focus from what we lack to what we have, from what's missing to what's present. ***What are some things you try to stay grateful for in your life, no matter how small?***

6. Practicing Acceptance:

- Acceptance doesn't mean resignation or complacency. It's about acknowledging reality as it is, without judgment or resistance. It's about embracing our imperfections and finding peace in spite of life's challenges, disappointments and uncertainties. ***How can you practice greater acceptance in your daily life?***

7. Embracing the Journey:

- Your journey is uniquely yours, with its own twists and turns, triumphs and setbacks. It's not a competition or a race against others; it's a personal odyssey of growth and self-discovery. ***How can you honor and celebrate your journey, just as it is?***

8. The Power of Perspective:

- Perspective is a powerful lens through which we view the world. By shifting our perspective from what we don't have to what we have, to what we have lost to what we have gained, and from comparison to gratitude, we can transform how we experience life. ***How can you cultivate a perspective that fosters contentment and fulfillment?***

9. Moving Forward with Purpose:

- As we reflect on the pitfalls of comparison, jealousy, and regret, let's also look ahead with hope and determination. Let's commit to nurturing gratitude, embracing acceptance, and living each day with intention and purpose. ***What steps can you take today to move forward on your journey with gratitude, appreciation, joy, and acceptance?***

10. Conclusion:

- In closing, let's remember that while the grass may seem greener on the other side of the fence, and your friends carefully selected social media pictures may appear "happier" than yours, true fulfillment lies in tending to own lives and what we have at hand rather than a social media world of unreality and fantasy. Let's choose gratitude over comparison, acceptance over regret, and embrace the beauty of our unique journey, one step at a time. ***What are you going to take away from today's discussion?***