

Thinking Things Through by Clare Lauren Kelly

There are pros and cons to everything in life and depending on what you are doing, they can have a bigger impact on you and your life than the people around you, or the other way around. It all depends on what the pros and cons are for. So I normally get confused as to which is which when saying pro and con, I don't know why but telling the two of them apart never clicks instantly in my head, it always takes me a moment to remember which is which. Again I have no idea why, I guess for whatever reason my head doesn't like to remember that easily and makes me struggle awkwardly for a moment before remembering. So in order to not confuse myself even more while writing this essay and figuring out what I am trying to say and how I should say it, I'll just say the good side effects and the bad side effects. Hopefully that makes it a little easier for me to keep things straight and sorted in my head, so it'll be easier for you all reading this to understand.

For the record, I do know which is which. My head just likes to play tricks on me and make things more difficult sometimes with things that should normally be simple. Okay, back to thinking things through. It is really important that before you take a big step in life, or before you do anything really, no matter how big or small, that you take a moment to think. Whatever it is you are doing is going to cause some ripples down the line, and how you do it will also play a part in what the ripples are and how far they travel. Even a decision as simple as which pants I'm going to put on for work that day will have good and bad side effects that I might be able to predict partially, but never fully.

One pair of my pants could have more pockets or pockets in different places that allow me to carry more things than another pair of pants do. At the start of my day it might not seem like a big deal with what I am wearing and what I have in my pockets, but things can happen during the day that are affected by that decision. Maybe I wore the pants that have pockets on the outside of each leg a little above the knee that allow me to carry two of my little notebooks with me, one in each pocket. Those are good for carrying a lot of things and are better fitted at my waist, but they are not the best for if I have to spend a lot of time in one of the fridges or freezers at work. Those pants are a bit more baggy in the legs, they don't stick to me and have some slits in the lower leg that let air in. Not something you really want when the air coming up through the

bottom and lower part is freezing. Unless of course you are moving around like crazy in there and getting a good workout, there are times that I have overheated in the fridge no matter which pants I had on, because I was working hard trying to get a lot done.

So that is a smaller example that some of the people reading this might be able to understand or have been in a similar position, I mean what you put on in the morning will change things about your day. If you live in a warmer area, most likely you won't be wearing clothing that is heavier and meant to keep you warm and protected from rain, snow or wind. But I am not writing this to tell you to be more thoughtful when getting dressed in the morning since it should not really matter what I think about your clothing choices in the first place.

You wear what you want to wear, what makes you feel comfortable and what you like for whatever reason makes you like it. I mean, do keep in mind that certain situations will require certain clothing and that there are clothes you should think more about wearing to some places, but do what you want I guess. I might not be a girly girl but I will still wear a dress when the situation calls for it no matter how much I dislike dresses, and I will try to make the best of it by wearing a dress I feel comfortable in if I can and something underneath so I am not as worried about wind blowing my skirt up. The last thing I want to happen while wearing a dress is having the wind blow up my skirt, not something I am interested in happening, but if it does I would feel better if I had some kind of shorts underneath the dress.

I have the tendency to think things through a bit more than I need to most of the time and it can get me into some trouble, though the trouble is mainly with myself not me getting in trouble with others, and it can cause me to struggle with some things. I am not good at taking compliments or other positive feedback and stuff like that, I am not always able to just accept that someone is being nice to me because they want to be. No matter the fact that I am normally nice to other people simply because I want to be, or because it is the right thing to do with no ulterior motive in mind. This is something that I know, I am aware that not everyone has some ulterior motive when they are interacting with me, they are not always trying to be nice to me because they want to use me. I do know that. But knowing that does not stop me from thinking of all the possible reasons for why the person is being nice to me, thinking about all the things that they might be trying to use me for.

I am not able to stop myself from thinking that, and most of the time I am able to keep it from influencing how I interact with others, but there are things that I am not able to control no matter how much I try. No matter how aware I am of my own faults, there is no guarantee that I am able to control them or change them. There are things I can do to try and counter that way of thinking or faults I have, but stopping them altogether is not an easy feat. Some might say that it is an impossible one and I am not really sure if I agree with that or not, but no matter if I agree or not I know that overcoming your faults can be very difficult whether you know what they are or not. You might overcome one by accident which might sound a bit far-fetched, but what I mean is that I think you can overcome something without setting out to overcome it. That it might happen as a result of some other problem you were trying to solve or something like that.

Now there are times that thinking things through a lot can be a good thing, it can help me prepare for my day or for some event that I might necessarily not want to be at. Thinking through some of the possible things that could happen in my day helps me be prepared at least a little for when they do happen. Making some sort of game plan of how I am going to act or what I will do during some event I don't want to go to can help me feel a little more in control in a situation where I normally feel like I have very little control. Makes me think about a quote from a book I like talking about how you should always expect all possible outcomes, especially bad ones. That way if one happens it will still be unpleasant but at least it won't be a surprise.

Typically my plan involves me kind of I guess you could say attaching myself to a person that I know who I am somewhat comfortable with. They are the people I will stay next to and just follow as they make their way through the event, maybe I will position myself near the table of food so I can get a little plate and then sit or stand somewhere looking like I have a purpose. Not socializing at an event is very obvious, but if you are holding a plate of food and eating then there is a reason you are not talking, you are eating and are being polite by not talking while your mouth is full. Or if I am at some sort of family event and my younger brother is there as well, we will normally just stick together and find somewhere to sit while eating some snack or other bit of food available. Two awkward birds of a feather sticking together. And since we are together, we can just talk with each other and it seems a little less awkward than if it was just one of us sitting on our own.

Thinking things through is good when you are like me and enjoy books, television shows and films because in my opinion it helps me enjoy whatever I am reading or watching more. I am able to pick up on a lot of foreshadowing and hints of things to come when I think through the different bits of what I am watching or reading. Little details that on their own don't mean much but if added to something later could have a big impact on the way the story ends up going which is always fun. Piecing things together and then watching it happen can always be cool, to me it kind of feels like in some way I am being validated for being able to predict something that might have been a bit harder to see coming for some. That sounds a little weird but I don't know how else to put it.

Don't let your overthinking get the best of you, be careful and aware. Overthinking is not a bad thing on its own for the most part, thinking things through is a good thing but only if you don't let it completely take over your life. Don't let thinking things through influence you so much that every little thing you do is thought out in extreme detail, or that every interaction is overanalyzed. There are no hidden intentions in every conversation or interaction you have. Think things through, but know when to just let things happen naturally and without any sort of interference from yourself when you try to find hidden meaning in everything. Sometimes people are nice just because they are nice people and that is the way they were raised.

Good side effects are always welcome, but that does not mean that bad side effects can only be bad. Yes, in the way I have decided to separate them to not confuse myself I have literally labeled one of them as being bad, but a bad thing can lead to a good thing. There are some good friends I have now that I would not have had if not for my overthinking causing some bad side effects that led to me meeting them because of the situation the bad side effects put me in. So from the bad came some good and I know that that is not the only time some good came from something bad. I am not going to share any other examples since there are some personal things I am going to keep to myself, that is my right I think, but if you look back through your memories I am sure you will find some as well. They might not stand out right away and you might really have to think about it, but I am sure that in your life there are different times that some bad led to some good.

Thinking things through is a part of life that no one can really escape completely, just like no one can escape the fact that we do judge people when we first meet them by how they look or act. There are judgments you make after seeing and meeting someone for the first time and I do not think that it is possible not to judge someone after you meet them. But listen to me carefully. Well, read this carefully and then stick to the theme of the essay and think what I am going to write here through. Just because you make a judgement about someone, does not mean that it is automatically going to make you treat them in a certain way or that whatever you think you know about the person is always going to be negative.

I might look at a customer approaching me in the store and think “oh great here comes another older person who is about to ask me where something is that is actually right behind them if they cared to look just a little more.” Probably not the nicest thing to be thinking, but when you are at work trying to get your tasks done and get interrupted multiple times by a customer asking where an item is they are literally right next to, they walked right past, or that is around the corner, that can get really annoying pretty fast. But that is not always what happens, your judgments are not always right and people can and will surprise you more often than you might think. Sometimes it is an older lady that just wants to tell me that they think my hair just looks darling or something else like that. I've even had older people come up to me and very awkwardly ask me if I can help them understand pronouns or other things like that because of some grandchild or niece or nephew that is trans or something else like that and they don't want to call them by the wrong thing.

I guess looking like I could be a guy or a girl depending on your thoughts of how a guy or girl should look makes certain types of people feel more comfortable asking me if I would be willing to explain pronouns. Which I am totally fine with, I know that it can be confusing for some people to remember and understand the differences between transgender, non-binary, gender fluid and all that. To be honest there are times that I get confused, and that is okay since I do try, I'm always willing to learn more, and that is what matters. So don't let thinking things through control you, do not let anyone tell you that it is not okay to judge people, to have your own opinions or anything else like that.

Think things through and enjoy what comes from it, even the bad side effects can be fun and enjoyable or funny. Normally not in the moment they are happening of course, since falling down or something like that is not usually fun or funny as you are falling, but after it can be a story to tell your friends. Make lemonade out of lemons and all that. Think things through, accept that there are going to be good and bad side effects that happen because of it, and just keep on moving through your life ready for whatever comes next.