

# How You View the Bees Matters More Than the Bees

The other day, I was out with friends on a beautiful, sunny, weekend morning. We were on an outdoor patio drinking coffee and eating deliciously sweet cinnamon buns from a local bakery. It was a perfect way to spend a morning, knowing summer is over and cooler, fall temperatures will soon be upon us. I noticed some wasps flying



around nearby were becoming very curious about the cinnamon buns and I decided in that moment to allow them to do whatever they wanted and that I wouldn't interfere with them unless they became a bigger nuisance or a danger.

So, I became curious and decided to just observe them flying about, even when that meant allowing them to land on my food and my hand, and to fly close to my face. That decision, to be curious about them instead of automatically and thoughtlessly assuming they were "DANGEROUS!" enabled me to limit any fears I had about being stung and remain calm. Being calm allowed me to continue enjoying the moment and the company I was with. By contrast, one of the other people there kept inching forward uncomfortably on her seat, reaching out, again and again, to swat at the wasps because I wasn't, and another person couldn't even participate in the conversation because she kept leaping away from the table, frantically flailing her arms every time the wasps came near. She became so upset that, after just a few minutes, she abruptly left for home, complaining about how those "STUPID WASPS" ruined her time with friends. In the end, no one was stung and the rest of us finished our snacks without incident.

The key here is that the wasps were really just a couple of insects looking for an easy meal and the decisions all three of us made about whether they were GOOD or BAD, DANGEROUS or SAFE were in that moment. We can all cope more effectively with stress, sadness, fear, anxiety, interpersonal conflict, and whatever else we experience in a day by remembering to tune-in to those labels and judgements we make about things, because it's those labels that determine how we feel right then. In any given moment, we can feel positively when we label something as "Oh good!", negatively when we label it with "Oh no!", or neutrally when we just say "Oh."

Let us help you learn to remain calm and deal better with the challenges in your life.

Dr. Ian Shulman      Shift Cognitive Therapy + Assessment  
www.shiftct.com      www.afraidtofly.ca  
466 Speers Road, Suite 220      Oakville, Ontario      905-849-1288