

Enhancing vs. Diminishing Meditation

Often we find ourselves faced with life events that create tension, struggle and challenges that make us feel trapped. Usually this happens because we are faced with decisions that are like a double-edged sword. For instance, I can choose A, but then . . . or I can choose B, but then . . . And the “but then” prevents us making either choice.

When faced with decisions that create a push-pull of emotions and potential outcomes, why do we flounder? Usually this is because we don't clearly know what we want. How can you possibly make decisions without knowing what the goals are?

This week's meditation will require you to focus on a challenge you might be facing at this time. If your life seems pretty balanced and smooth right now, then look back into your recent personal past and review a situation where you felt pulled in too many directions – I want / I should / I wish / I can't. We're going to use this situation to navigate our way out of confusion into clarity.

As usual, begin with the 4-4-8 deep breathing technique, using the steady awareness of the breath to release tension and become focused. As you let go of the tension and your body awareness leaves, you are left with a sense of inner focus and quiet, calm alertness.

See the situation you have chosen in a clear, non-emotional, observing way. See yourself and see the other party (or parties) involved. As you continue, pull back and view the situation from above and imagine your desired outcome. Given this perspective, what do you think is a good goal? Is it harmony, advancement, peaceful relations, financial stability, healthful energy?

Take the time to “know what you want.” In this circumstance, this is not a Life Decision but rather a Now Decision. You are simply trying to find clarity on what you want in this situation. However, do not imagine that the other person will change their mind and agree with you but rather see the outcome of the situation as feeling a certain perfect way to you.

What do you want? What are your intentions? Can you see and feel your expectations leading to your goals in this situation? This is all about feelings, not actions. How do you want to feel? Explore the details of how to reach these perfect feelings. Work on classifying each incident within this circumstance as being either Enhancing or Diminishing. The components and players in this situation will either enhance your path to your goal or they will diminish your ability to reach your goals.

Think about this: does the main character in this play enhance your ability to reach your goal? Do you want them standing beside you at the end of the road? Maybe you would want that to be the case but you don't want the attitude or the demands along with the individual.

Look at each individual and their actions or position in this situation. Now take each position as compared to your position and determine whether the struggle with them over the disagreement enhances or diminishes your ability to reach your goal. Go through each point of the disagreement or difficulty and ask yourself whether it is enhancing or diminishing. By knowing which aspects of the situation are enhancing and which are diminishing, you can make your decisions based on the enhancing parts that will get you to your goal. It will also make it easier to release those aspects of the situation that you tend to cling to that are diminishing. How often do we find ourselves going along because we are torn between what we want and what someone else wants us to do? This go-along attitude definitely detains or prevents us from reaching that place we seek.

Certainly it is often not easy to either go along or go against. But at least when you know what you want you can make a decision for your best personal outcome. When we get to the point in life that our first goal is personal happiness and well-being without harming others, we truly find that happiness. Ah, but you say, “Well, it’s the second part that’s hard.” This is true. But only if we have decided that who and what we are is the basis for another’s happiness. Surely if you have been exploring, seeking, meditating, you realize that no one makes us happy except ourselves.

If in your Enhancing vs. Diminishing meditation you discover that a change is necessary – a new job, letting go of a partner, changing the way you relate to finances – then more than ever you need to clearly define your goals and find the courage to seek the happiness that self-determination will bring. This is not a free license to hurt another person or break important commitments, but it is a means of helping you change what doesn’t work. And that change always begins and ends with you. Only you can know what you are willing to give up and where you are willing to adapt.

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