

Focus on What You Can Influence Meditation

Spinning wheels is the sound you hear when your efforts toward a goal can't be reached. How often do you find yourself spending mental and emotional energy on something over which you have no control or influence? Not often? Well, do you feel guilt over your past actions? Do you try to figure out why that person acts in a certain way? How about struggling with another person's bad habits? All of these focal points are based on areas over which you have no ability to change, control or influence.

Avoid indulging in guilt!

Rather, wouldn't resolving to learn from the experience and not repeat the regretful actions be more productive? How about worrying about the future? When your focus on the future is through the haze of worry, what do you think is the likelihood of the future turning out just as you fear? Answer: really high. Remember, what you focus on is what you attract.

Finally, when you focus on the inappropriate behavior of another person, you are definitely not using your energy wisely or compassionately. Whether you realize it or not, when you find yourself frustrated with your friend's behavior might ask or when you agonize over the things your boyfriend, husband, wife, girlfriend, boss or fellow worker said or the way they acted, you are in the midst of judging them based on your world view. And this is a bad thing? First, judging another for any reason is non-productive and accomplishes nothing but a waste of energy on your part. Second, it is arrogant to think that your way is the only way to move through life. We all know what appropriate behavior is to a certain extent based on social mores. But until you walk in the skin of another, you have no idea what motivates them and, therefore, you can never presume to understand why they do what they do.

This week's meditation is focusing on those areas where you do have influence; that is, on yourself. One of my favorite quotes is from Mahatma Gandhi: We must be the change we wish to see in the world. This follows the premise mentioned so often in this series: you attract that which you focus upon. So if the behavior of another is disturbing to you, you have two recourses. You can remove yourself from the situation or you can explore within yourself why that person acts the way they do around you. This can be a frustrating position to take because we think we know what is right and why don't others know this, too?

It may be difficult for you to accept that the bad behavior of another could be partly your problem. But in order to accept that you are the magnet of all things that present in your life, you have to take this viewpoint. Additionally, you have to accept that you cannot change another person. The only one who can change another person is that person. By finding something to appreciate in that person and focusing on that trait alone, ignoring the negative. By being the one who accepts the resolution of the problem as their sole responsibility. By not expecting anything from the other or judging when what you want from the other does not occur. The truth is, when you change your viewpoint of the problem, the problem changes.

Be sure that it is not more appropriate for you to take the first option in the situation we are going to focus upon. That is, should you remove yourself from the situation or is it worth seeking an understanding that will allow a better connection to the situation or relationship? If you choose to stay in a situation that can be distressing but for which you find value, then this meditation may help. For this exercise, we are going to focus upon a specific individual with whom you are having a difficult time. Later, you can also do this meditation using a situation rather than a person. Just make the translation as needed.

Begin with the 4-4-8 breath, relaxation and finally sitting with your back straight and your shoulders relaxed. Once you are in a position to meditate, begin to bring into your mind's view the face of that person who is giving you a difficult time. Clearly see their face emerge from a foggy atmosphere. Now look into their eyes. Can you see the color of their eyes, their eyelashes and eyebrows? Look at the cheeks and forehead and nose and chin and finally, look at the set of their mouth. You probably know this face when it is smiling and when it is stern. Which face do you see now? If you see the smiling face, relax into it. If you see a stern face, stay separate from the feelings that arise.

As you watch this face, imagine that you are separate from the focus of those eyes. You are invisible to the sightline of these eyes. But you can imagine that you are on that person's mind. They are thinking of you and you are watching their face as they are thinking of you. Do not get your emotions involved in judging what they think of you (or what you think they think of you).

Imagine you are closing your eyes and can no longer see their face. Begin breathing deeply into your body their essence. This may feel difficult to do if you view their attitude toward you as being angry or frustrated. But breathe their essence into your body and feel what they feel toward you. Don't struggle to claim your rightful position as being innocent. Don't let your mind begin chattering to prove your innocence or your point of view. Just breathe in their nature, their energy. Continue this melding of their being into yours for at least five minutes. You are easier with their energy; it is not as jolting as it was at first.

Now open your eyes and see yourself from inside this person's mind. You are looking at you, but you are seeing you from their viewpoint. And begin to explore the feelings that surround the heart of this person toward you. Don't rehash the conversations you have had, but try to identify the feelings that this person has toward you and try to see you from their position. You don't have to agree with their position, but you should at least try to walk in their tight little moccasins for a few moments.

Can you feel their pain, their conviction, their joy and their frustration at the problems in your relationship? Can you begin to see the issues between you as being two sides of the same coin? If not, simply let the positive feelings that this person has toward you filter into your awareness. There would not be a relationship if there were no positive aspects at all. So open your mind to their positive, loving feelings toward you, deflecting any negative energies you might expect. Appreciate that they see the good in you as you begin to feel the good in them.

When you are ready, imagine your eyes closing again and feel yourself withdrawing from the person you have merged with for the past several moments. On the way out of their being, leave behind a distinct feeling of your appreciation for them. Don't commit this appreciation on the condition that you will get back in kind. Begin your deep breathing again as you bring yourself back into your body. Now imagine opening your eyes to see this person smiling broadly, openly and without negativity at you.

Bring yourself to an awareness of your body and the room and end your meditation with thoughts and feelings of positive intentions toward this relationship. As you want it, expect it to be and it will be. The beauty of this meditation is that you can see actual proof of change in your relationship because of your positive thinking and purposeful intentions. This is where you have influence and power in your life. Through understanding yourself and expanding your awareness of the views of others, relationships grow and improve.

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