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Setting Yourself Free to Find Internal Freedom

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Abstract

All human beings experience the challenge to liberate themselves from their conditioned mind in order to find internal harmony. Many people feel hopeless and useless in a world that seems to be insensitive or detached to physical violence and internal aggression. Consequently, this feeling of hopelessness leads many to hate, destroy, harm, and detach themselves from humanity and the true source of all living things. This article intends to inspire people to discover that they can liberate themselves from their minds and the rules society has created for them in order to find internal peace and true appreciation for others.

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Every time I suffer it is because I am identifying with an inner voice that tells me what I need, and this inner voice suggests temporary gratification, not peace.

I have always admired those people who walk freedom, and those whose spirits seem untouchable by any obstacle, because they use the energy from the universe to empower themselves to love and enjoy life. What an incredible discovery that has been for me! Opening my heart to the experiences and challenges that life has presented me with has awakened the need to find freedom in my heart. I have learned to live life internally happy by welcoming, not resisting, the nature of events that have purposefully occurred throughout my life. I am well aware that I can modify the way I encounter my challenges to make the outside world a more pleasant place for me and others. I have learned that walking freedom is allowing circumstances to happen in my life, and that by allowing them to be, they seem to cooperate with my intentions.

Freedom must be the foundation of a person because it provides a consistent peaceful state of mind and heart. It authorizes the person to explore and discover the deep secrets of his/her soul. It is also a spiritual journey that allows us to appreciate life for what it is. However, freedom requires detachment, not escape, from the unknown, anxiety, pain, frustration, envy, destruction, competition, desperation or any other value that impairs us from being true to ourselves. All of these unbalanced states of mind are a product of a conditioned brain.

For the most part, it takes people becoming old or being close to death, a tragedy or a shock to realize that life is simple and that human beings find happiness only through internal liberation. It seems people eventually become exhausted with suffering and fighting for ideals to recognize that they have no control over events or their loved ones. What they realize is that they can welcome a new response to those events and people. This realization arouses the need

to release themselves from any judgment or taught value. They are aware that these values are constantly triggered and controlled by the mind. Once this realization takes place, they will experience awareness, acceptance, and an immediate internal liberation. When a person is aware, peace is a natural state of being.

Why is the mind conditioned? Most people live by and respond to the patterns that have been given to them over time by society. These patterns and conditions are the main obstacle to experiencing internal freedom. We should observe ourselves when we become mechanical trying to meet the expectations of society. As Krishnamurti states it, “we are satisfied with the descriptions of others, which means that we live on words and our life is shallow and empty. We are second-hand people.” (Krishnamurti, 1969, p. 10).

As a result, we experience conflict because others live by a different set of values and do not seem to understand ours. This may sound over-simplified, but this resistance is the root driver of internal and external conflict. Unfortunately, many people in pain justify judging others because it gives them a temporary illusion that they are right. That is, by judging others, they feel in power, but that is only a false sense of supremacy. They judge what they do not personally identify with: other religious beliefs, cultures, ideas, thoughts or political views. They judge other views and ideas because they need to feel better about themselves or escape feeling inferior or intimidated.

This conflict driven by judgment from conditioning often leads to emotional turmoil that leads many people to search for answers in an ideology with the hope that an institution will offer them peace or a solution to their problems because most ideologies, by definition, provide the path to salvation through sacrifice and tolerance. Therefore, once more, they commit to a set of value systems or groups of people that tell them the ideal way to live their life. Nevertheless,

the internal spiritual torment continues to live in their hearts because the new set of rules brings additional conflict. Why is that? No system has liberated human beings 100% from their internal anxiety. All systems fail to recognize that each being is a unique entity and is not meant to follow a standard set of rules. Consequently, people experience frustration and conflict, and live in pain because they are struggling to be true to themselves and to cope or accept what society expects them to do at the same time.

We can infer from this internal discrepancy that we live in limbo between two worlds: one that promises us eternal liberation if we sacrifice, and the other, that requires detachment from any set value in order to find internal liberation. When confronting these two worlds, we tend to limit ourselves to the first option because we are afraid of being judged. This is the story of every human being on earth. We all seek an end to the pain and conflict that we experience at the present moment regardless of the method or ideology chosen to help us accomplish this task. Even those that do not follow a particular religion, political party or any other entity or institution still live with internal confusion if they do not liberate themselves from their programmed mind with its opinions and judgments. As a result, we question and condemn the external wars, but fail to recognize how they are linked to our internal war that we create for ourselves and, ultimately, those around us. We contribute to building or destroying humanity with our own energy, our own state of being.

The mind perpetuates destructive energy by constantly craving temporary satisfaction. It is addicted to a cycle of pleasure which cannot lead to long lasting inner harmony because the cycle of pleasure is always accompanied with a cycle of pain and endless desire for more pleasure. The resulting lack of long lasting fulfillment and satisfaction allows people to justify using violence as a response to their disappointment and frustration because they have

experienced the pattern of violence in their upbringing and unconsciously resort to using it themselves. For example, some abused children become abusers of other children because that is the pattern of behavior they were taught. The anger and pain they carry get expressed externally as violence and destruction.

The resulting destruction is completely justified as the fault of other entities or circumstances that are to blame. Once the suggestion of what is to blame is internally accepted, all manner of violent and destructive behavior becomes justified. This behavior is not only a way to discharge negative energy but also a form of communication. They are communicating that they have been neglected, misunderstood, discriminated against, let down, abused, unaccepted, or imposed upon. Unfortunately, violent behavior and anger usually attracts aggression or violence in return because unknowingly one tends to react to another's energy with the same energy frequency. Often anger or violence (the means) justify the result (the ideal people are trying to impose). It is a vicious cycle that creates more violence and destruction in the end. Unfortunately, the aggression which often turns into physical violence at the individual level also contributes to aggression and violence at the macro level resulting in the large scale wars we have encountered throughout history. Until we are responsible for our own contribution to the global conflict and violence taking place, the by products of war and abuse will continue to be part of our reality.

So, what do we do with this conditioned mind with aggression and violent patterns? How do we end the vicious cycle of suffering? Even if you think your particular religion or your cultural systems are ideal, you still have to deal with everyday challenges which can include a cranky boss, an inconsiderate neighbor, a demanding job, a person from a different country who challenges you culturally, etc. Regardless of the form in which conflict in your life surfaces,

only a free mind will allow us to welcome and accept those challenges without experiencing conflict. Freedom allows us the option not to suffer because a free mind does not label situations, but rather accepts them the way they are without condemning or justifying them. This unconditional acceptance allows freedom to experience the reality of the moment without the mental noise of analysis, conflicting opinions and suffering. Freedom is like a new born baby's soul that is presented with a new world with no preconceived opinions about how things should be.

Then, how do we free the mind with all its opinions and resistance to the way things are? First, one must bring into awareness the painful memories of one's past. One can recognize the association that emotions have with unpleasant experiences and see that the mind continually relives those experiences with their pain. The mind essentially acts as though now is when to perpetuate the psychological suffering over and over. The child that was abused 20 years ago continues to feel the pain of abuse today. Understand that the mind will store these experiences and emotional associations as a point of reference that interprets current circumstances. Every time anger surfaces, ask yourself what the anger reminds you of. Observe these past associations that one is reliving and the resulting past pain being expressed over and over again. This is a form of slavery that one can free oneself from by recognizing the pattern.

Also, keep in mind that when an actual situation is interpreted as less gratifying than the expected one, negative emotions, like anger, surface. The mind justifies controlling, insulting, taking revenge, putting people down, abusing children, calling people names, or simply experiencing an internal rage that ultimately damages the spiritual and physical health of the person. Anger is a form of complaining that emerges because the person no longer has control and wants things to be different. Additionally, the person may still see themselves as a victim of

past abuses or circumstances and express a much more amplified negative behavior than the current situation would justify.

If the cycle continues, the anger could be passed on to other generations. Therefore, aggression and violence will continue to be part of the human experience, if they are not modified. Within a single lifetime, the intensity of the pain continues to grow in the person unaware that he is caught in this cycle because he has been nurturing and feeding the internal anger and pain. One can easily recognize this increased intensity in older people that live with unresolved emotional pain.

Someday, people will become exhausted with their suffering and aggression over time which will make them surrender to a more peaceful existence. Hopefully, they will realize that the energy of a person can empower or stifle the potential of other human beings. Observe how people and animals react to your energy and the effect it has on them. People are attracted to the energy they carry, and they attract others without even being aware of it. For example, complainers often gather together to complain in order to find comfort and sympathy in others. Getting others to agree that they are a victim allows them to justify the energy they live in and validates their sense of victimization. These are typical cases where the mind runs the life of the person. Consequently, the person finds temporary comfort and satisfaction being surrounded by others who share similar victimization. As a result, the addictive pattern of behavior becomes a normal way of life for them. Be aware that any human being has the potential to fall into this addictive cycle in which case one's energy would become toxic to oneself and other human beings.

However, there are and there will be people who live in peace and harmony. Therefore, they can offer freedom to other human beings who internally have decided to live life without conditions, without a conditioned mind. Often these free-spirit people are part of a minority

group that has experienced severe pressure to conform to society's expectations. The resulting intense conflict between being themselves and conforming to society torments them to the point that they finally surrender to being totally true to themselves regardless of social consequences. This "choiceless" surrender and acceptance of circumstances ultimately lead to complete internal liberation. In this case, conflict is absolutely necessary for them to realize that the only way to internal liberation is ending the need for approval or the permission of others. By doing so, they do not feel the need to convince anybody of their ideals.

Often times, people put a lot of energy into seeking approval and admiration from others. Why? Because it is the easiest way to feel better about oneself by creating a false sense of superiority. However, this sense of self is really only a suggestion from the mind, and not one's true self. Therefore, it requires constant maintenance and external confirmations of approval which, if not provided frequently enough, can lead to deep suffering from the feeling that one is not good enough or appreciated enough. When one sees this situation, one can neutralize the negative emotions by not buying into the suggestion that one's identity comes from others' approval in the first place. Detecting these suggestions that one can dis-identify from may take some time and practice, but there are some key states of being that will serve as an alert or direct feedback that one has bought into and identified with a suggestion. These states of being include the following:

- **Anger:** Anger is blaming the system because we fail to realize that we actually have other options.
- **Jealousy:** Jealousy takes place when we cannot accept that others have more, better or different. The thought that somebody else succeeds, provokes jealousy that turns into destruction.

- **Rivalry:** Rivalry stems from the need to feel that we are superior, and will continue to be superior. This entails that others must be inferior human beings.
- **Low self-esteem:** Low self-esteem takes place when emotions tell the mind that one is a victim. The resulting feeling is that one is not good enough.
- **Worry:** Worry is a form of insecurity that one often tries to avoid by eliminating circumstances that expose us.
- **Misery:** Misery occurs when we cannot accept our reality. We resist to embrace what is.

It is easy to lose awareness on a day to day basis of these transitory states of being because they distract us when challenges arise. In other words, we seem to have peace in our hearts as long as things flow our way. But the minute life takes a different turn the mind tells us that we are being disturbed. This cycle begins with our false expectations. We become frustrated because things should naturally unfold the way we envision them to. However, life has its own natural way of manifesting which often does not match our sense of what seems logical to us. Those who fail to recognize this fact, will find themselves caught in an endless cycle of suffering because there will always be events and occurrences that will have no rational explanation.

Hopefully, human beings over time will realize that the only path to internal freedom is allowing experiences to present themselves in their own way regardless of premeditated expectations. The only way to eliminate disappointment is to detach yourself from your conditioned mind and its expectations. Eventually, it will become clear that reacting to situations and experiencing rage for small and big things alike do not change the reality of the present moment. The negative reaction just makes things worse.

One of the most prevalent and unnoticed expectations is that of daily inconveniences that seem to arise out of nowhere. Human beings do not tolerate inconveniences because they do not like to be disturbed or changed. What is interesting is that we, supposedly being aware that there are a myriad of possibilities for things to unfold, continue to resist unexpected outcomes and even the most trifling obstructions. It is no coincidence that comedies often depict the main character reacting to one inconvenience after another in a completely predictable pattern. It is really the story of each of us in real everyday life, but we rarely find the humor when it is personalized. As an exercise, look at your own patterns of reaction. You may even find the humor in it.

Another practical exercise is to give up or detach yourself from a precious comfort or product that you enjoy everyday for a month. It could be something simple, but that you treasure a lot. For example, if you have a cup of coffee every morning, give it up for some time. Train yourself to let go of belongings that you think are basic in your life. Observe your reactions and the string of feelings that you experience. Witness the process of accommodation and adjustment to your new life without that cup of coffee that you used to have every morning. This will teach you about the process and the courage that it entails to set yourself free when you need it. This will also teach you that your wonderful cup of coffee is a true gift from life and not a right that you thought you deserved as a human being.

When you find yourself resisting a situation, allow yourself to embrace it. It will require detachment from the emotions that distract you or suggest entering a negative state of being. Internal peace will require allowing yourself the freedom to see your limitations and be free to not follow them, and to recognize the beautiful intention of the various institutions that hope to help you, but fail to bring a permanent harmony to your life. At the most, they can bring you

temporary emotional peace and happiness.

As you detach yourself from suggestions that arise in the mind, you will identify many ideas, opinions, or past conclusions that govern your behavior and interpretation of situations which you have not been aware of. This detachment allows a different type of intelligence to surface that has been blocked by the current programming of the mind with its constant flow of past thoughts and associations. There has been no room for new and creative activity because the mind has been limited to past thought activity. It has created its own tight cage. De-programming the mind is like opening the cage to discover a constantly changing and dynamic existence with infinite perspectives.

We can conclude that freedom comes from within. Do not identify with the mind because you will delay the process of evolution within you since human beings tend to create a vicious cycle of feeding off of the same things: money, alcohol, material possessions, recognition, etc. The problem with these commodities is that the human being always wants more because these things lose their effect over time. The more people acquire, the more they want because the hole becomes bigger and bigger since it is not physical, but spiritual. You cannot feed the intangible with matter. Once people become aware of this fact, they will recognize that only internal freedom will lead them to the discovery that one, as a human being, has a responsibility to contribute to peace in the world. As Robert Gibson states,

One must die before one can be born again. Die to the world that one has existed in. The earth world one is born into is a world based on ideals of sensation, which brings about conflict, struggle, resistance, problems, of every kind. When one has died to this conditioned world, one is born into the world of peace.” (Gibson, 1993, p. 21)

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