

FORGIVENESS AND GRATITUDE

A common complaint, often uttered by those walking the path of self-progress is about the time it takes to see the fruits of one's endeavours. This concern is often a block to progress as the individual becomes consumed by his expectations and unrealistic time scales. This is further compounded by the fact that the individual often expects the fruits of her endeavours without having successfully planted the seeds. Knowledge is not enough to succeed on this path. It is knowledge plus application and courage that breeds wisdom, and it is in the area of application that so many of us fall short. This handout explains how one's personal progress can be speeded up whilst emphasising that we cannot cheat the natural process. Positive change takes time. The seasonal model of change helps us to understand the timescale involved. Although we are accumulating from the very day that we start to make effort, experiencing small rewards along the way, the sizeable, substantial rewards will generally be experienced about every 3 months (a season).

Once we understand that change obeys certain laws and operates within certain parameters, how do we accelerate our efforts and with that our attainments? The first thing is to rid our lives of complaint. We are severely burdened by the culture of complaining. It is necessary to express our feelings, but we need to do that in appropriate and constructive ways. To mindlessly spill our thoughts and feelings out into every situation and every relationship simply creates a negative affirmation, which pollutes the atmosphere. So, when we get caught up in habitual complaining, we literally poison and suffocate our minds. We are then unable to exploit the opportunity for positive change and rapid growth. One of the quickest ways to free oneself from the limitation of complaint is to practice the art of gratitude. The more you immerse yourself in giving thanks, especially for the things you most take for granted, the more the culture of complaint naturally falls away and with it that feeling of helplessness. Complaining keeps you nailed to the very spot you are trying to leave behind. Gratitude gives you the wings to transcend all your personal limitations.

The other powerful catalyst that definitely speeds up the rate of your endeavour is forgiveness. Forgiveness is arguably the most powerful antidote to anger and pain of all complexions. Many of us remain stunted by unresolved issues where anger remains simmering beneath the surface, seeking any excuse to erupt. Our lack of resolution also allows the crippling pain of anxiety, depression and fear to thrive, denying us balance and inner peace. When we pour the cool water of forgiveness onto the fiery inferno of anger, anger is eventually extinguished. When we apply the soothing balm of forgiveness to anxiety, depression and fear, pain evaporates leaving nothing more than a faint impression of where it once was. Forgiveness has to start with the self. You have to forgive yourself for your mistakes and hypocrisies before you can truly find the capacity to forgive others. The moment you can apply forgiveness to that which is unresolved as well as to those who have trespassed against you, in that instant a lightness of spirit is conceived in the heart and mind. A generosity is born enabling you to embrace what you need to embrace and let the rest fall away.

The biggest obstacle to your progress is you. The things you repeatedly complain about and the things you have not been able to let go of, occupy valuable space, energy, and time in your life. It is when you give thanks rather than complain and offer mercy rather than be consumed by anger and pain, that your inner space, time, and energy are imbued with new meaning. Exercise your wings of forgiveness and gratitude and see how quickly you reach your destination.