

## THE ART OF ACCEPTANCE

“Accept the things you cannot change and change the things you can” - this timeless truth is one of the primary principles for creating enlightenment, peace of mind and life-long contentment. When we practise applying this principle to our lives, we can walk with greater ease along the path of learning, healing and integrity. Every experience offers us the opportunity to grow, but without the virtue of acceptance many of those opportunities slip through our fingers.

Acceptance is not about giving up our beliefs and values and surrendering to someone else's view, nor is it about compliance and the subjugation of our feelings out of some sense of fear, guilt, doubt or misplaced loyalty. Acceptance is about freeing the mind from inner conflict, self destructive patterns and enslaving views of ourselves and the world. Acceptance is also the state in which we realise that we can only influence and change ‘something’ when we acknowledge that it is in fact having an impact on our world. Until we own what is negatively affecting our reality, we cannot disown it and move on. Once we have defined and named the forces affecting us, the next step is to decide how best to respond, because without adequate contemplation and reflection we are likely to act impulsively or surrender to old self-limiting habits; neither response being helpful to our cause.

Once we have decided whether what stands before us requires acceptance, or needs acting upon in some other way, it is then crucial that we act swiftly in accordance with our decision, because procrastination disempowers the choice we have made, making a positive outcome less likely. Actions are like seeds, they have an optimum time (a season) in which they are best planted to reap the best fruit, and if that season is missed it is unlikely that they will deliver their full potential. This metaphor helps us to understand that our actions are subject to the natural laws, and so the laws of action and reaction, as well as the various principles relating to energy, apply to us as well as to the rest of nature. Our thoughts, feelings, moods, ideas etc... are all forms of energy and how they are utilised will have an effect on others, our environment and ultimately on us.

Acceptance is one of the most steep, rocky and challenging paths that life will invite us to take, and it should never be mistaken for an easy way out. It takes great humility, courage, discrimination and strength to truly accept, especially something that instinctively invites some other response. And yet when we can respond in an accepting way to life's pressures, the gate of opportunity and self improvement opens offering us a way out of the circumstance(s) we feel bound by. Think of something that holds you to ransom in some way, then clearly define it in your mind. Do not call it one thing when in fact it is something else. Be honest with yourself. Then consider what you need to do to change your predicament (you may need help with this). The kind of questions you need to ask yourself are: do I need to act differently to change these circumstances? Is there anything I need to do that I'm not doing? If the answer is yes, then do what needs to be done. If there is nothing more you can do, then exercise your other option... acceptance. Embrace your fear, pain or whatever it is that ails you and watch what happens. It is amazing how ‘appearing’ to do nothing is in fact a very powerful way of doing so much, because within the act of acceptance change begins to take place in lots of subtle ways. Try it and see for yourself.