

## THE CHALLENGE OF DOING MORE AND WORRYING LESS

We all tend to worry about things. Many of the things we worry about are things we can't really change – like wishing things in the past didn't happen or turned out differently. Worrying about these things is like picking at a wound – the wound never heals and just ends up getting more and more infected. We might have an urge to pick it – but it is not really in our best interests. True healing involves figuring out what really works for us and what doesn't and then having the courage to persevere with what is really in our best interests and let go of what is not.

The biggest hurdle is to let go of the preoccupations which are preventing you from healing.

### **The journey to healing involves three important steps:**

1. Accept the things that bother you that you can't change.
2. Change the things you can to make your life happier and more fulfilling.
3. Become aware of the processes in your life so that you know what things you can change and what things you cannot.

*As you apply these steps you will find yourself automatically going to the first question – This is the most important step – this is wisdom (or insight). This wisdom offers relief in that you no longer agonize over the things that are unchangeable, which frees up energy to focus on what you can change. Thus, you become more efficient and powerful in changing your life.*

“Acceptance” might sound easy, but it is an art and one that is hard won. It is the ability to “let go”. Habitual patterns of our mind often make it hard for us to even acknowledge what it is we are dealing with. Acknowledgement is the first step, followed by investigation and then we look at it without clinging on to it and obsessively picking at it.

The courage to change essentially involves the ability to put up with pain to overcome habitual patterns so that you can engage in behaviours that you have decided will be productive for you and to stop engaging in behaviours (or indulging in thoughts) that you know will lead to more pain. The key is to be able to put up with a bit of short term pain for a meaningful long term gain. Of course to do this you need to have a clear idea of what is and what is not in your long term interests. For this you need to continually review your values, look into your heart and see whether what you are doing and how you are feeling really fits into how you want things to be. Questions like “am I becoming the person I want to be?” can be useful here.

Once you have a clear compass of which direction you want to go in you still need to be tough enough to tolerate short term pains. A key thing to remember here is not to be too influenced by transitory experiences of pleasure and pain. One can do something very meaningful and noble without enjoying the experience. You don't have to like it – it just has to be meaningful. It's a bit like exercise: It hurts, but we tolerate it because:

- (a) We know how good it is for us
- (b) We know how much better we will feel when we get through it
- (c) We know that the more we do, the easier it will be for us to do more in the future

**You're wise to the extent that you can:**  
**Do what you don't like doing but that you know will result in happiness,**  
**&**  
**not do what you like doing but that you**  
**know will result in pain and harm**

*“Anyone can stay the same. It takes courage to change”*

- John Assaraf

*“I have not ceased being fearful, but I have ceased to let that fear control me”*

- Erica Jong

*“You can choose courage, or you can choose comfort, but you can't choose both”*

- Brené Brown