

Acceptance, Appreciation and Abundance

Part 2

Appreciation is different than gratitude, although there are times when gratitude can be a part of the experience. Too often, however, when we express gratitude it is due to being given something by an outside source. You're feeling hungry and someone gives you some food. You need money and your boss gives you your pay. Your child is sick and you pray to a "greater power" to save her. When she recovers you feel gratitude to that power outside.

The two keys to appreciation that illustrate its difference from gratitude are: 1) acceptance for what is, exactly as it is; and 2) acknowledging YOURSELF as the source. (**Note:** I realise that unless I have a direct experience of these two aspects, I am simply spouting a philosophy that you have probably heard before. As I write this article, I am having a direct experience of both those factors.)

Acceptance was another word that I really didn't understand, believing it to carry the connotation of resignation, rather than the peaceful and joyous feelings it actually produces. It began for me with the realisation that I spent most of my time rejecting where I was, what I was doing, and what was happening to or around me. I did not see it as rejection immediately; I thought it was simply that my preferences were different from what was going on at the time. When I was in my car I wanted to be at my destination, say, a restaurant. When I was at the restaurant I wanted to be served right away. When I was eating, I was often thinking about how much better the meal could be, or ignoring the taste altogether as I thought about where I was going to be later, or where I was before. When I got the bill I questioned whether the money requested equalled the value of my dining experience and whether the service merited a fifteen percent tip, which I resented anyway, because I felt that I *had* to give it. I spent most of my life rejecting almost every moment without even realising that I was doing it.

The fact is, if you don't accept whatever is before you, you are rejecting it. Strangely, the only times I was probably not rejecting the moment was when I was really enjoying myself, but even then it was a conditional satisfaction, followed by a sense of gratitude to the outside force that brought it about. People resist acceptance because we have conditioned ourselves to believe that if we accept what we do not like, it will always be there. Only by rejecting what is before us, we believe, will we ever be able to change it. Slogans such as

“Don’t settle for less than the best!”; “You deserve more!”; “You can have it all!” and “Conquer your fears and weaknesses!” are reflections of our beliefs that: 1) we have the power to change - if not everything, then at least a percentage of - what we decide is wrong, and 2) we should *not* accept what we do not like or we’ll be stuck with it. I have discovered that the opposite is true. Your self-concept (or ego) has no power to change what it doesn’t like; and accepting what is, exactly as it is, creates the experience of true freedom from what you don’t like. More than that, you are free from the experience of “not liking”.

End of Part 2

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