



Spiritual Warrior Training 101 ~ Lesson 2

Reclaiming the Power of Choice

A Native American grandfather was talking to his grandson about how he felt. He said, "I feel as if I have two wolves fighting in my heart. One wolf is the vengeful, angry, violent one. The other wolf is the loving, compassionate one."

The grandson asked him, "Which wolf will win the fight in your heart?"

The grandfather answered, "The one I feed."

~ Native American Wisdom

We learned in the first article that because life happens the way life happens, none of us has the capability to choose exactly how our lives will turn out. It is a fact of life that we are all impacted by external events beyond our control. This article offers perhaps the most powerful method of dealing with the chaos and uncertainty of our lives. We, as human beings, have been gifted with a higher level of consciousness that provides us with the possibility of maintaining a peaceful life even amidst chaos. This power is that of free will, the power to consciously choose our own attitude in any circumstance in each moment.

Even in times of pain and confusion we are capable of choosing an attitude of forgiveness and love. Viktor Frankl, a psychiatrist and prisoner at the Auschwitz concentration camp during World War II, wrote "Man's Search for Meaning," a classic work of his discoveries in the face of death. Here he describes his intriguing conclusion:

"In the concentration camp every circumstance conspires to make the prisoner lose his hold. All the familiar goals in life are snatched away. What alone remains is 'the last of human freedoms'—the ability 'to choose one's attitude in a given set of circumstances.' The prisoners were only average men, but some, at least, by choosing to be 'worthy of their suffering' proved man's capacity to rise above his outward fate."

Granted, choosing an attitude of acceptance in the midst of horror is not an easy task; however, the deeper our connection with our inner light, the stronger we will be during difficult times. No matter what life presents us with or what conditions we find ourselves in, we can choose to respond with an attitude of love.

I am reminded of a story I once heard about a woman who called herself the Peace Pilgrim. She dedicated her life to sharing messages of peace by traveling the world accepting only whatever basic necessities she was offered. One day she accepted a ride from a stranger. As she climbed into the truck, she knew intuitively that this man meant to harm her. Instead of reacting with fear, the way most of us would automatically react, she chose a loving response. She leaned over, touched his hand and in her most loving voice said, "You are such a kind man to give me a ride. I know that I can trust you and you'll keep me safe. I'm so tired; I

think I'll just go to sleep for a while." From that moment on, that man, who admittedly had harmful intentions, instead became her protector, following her around to make sure she was safe. A few kind words and a gentle touch were all he needed to melt his heart and shift his motivation. Her choice could very well have saved her life and that simple act of trust moved another soul to transform his life.

Yet, so often, feeling broken and entrapped in the details of our confusing lives, we forget we have this choice. So why do we so easily give up this tremendous opportunity? The answer is that our lives have largely become unconscious. We have become creatures of habitual thinking and behaving with our egos locking us into automatic, negative modes of thinking. Recognizing that we are fully capable of choosing a new response in each moment of our lives provides us with the ability to shift our attitude and resulting behavior. The next time you find yourself in a trying situation, take hold of your mind and consciously say no to fear, choosing instead a loving and compassionate response. You too can be the peaceful warrior. It's your choice.

Dancing Lesson For Your Soul ~ Affirmation Meditation

This is a Buddhist meditation practice which is easy to practice anywhere and anytime. It is particularly helpful in times of stress. Set aside a certain time each morning to affirm your attitude.

- ⑥ Set a time limit for this meditation, such as 10 or 20 minutes and set a timer if that helps you in letting go.
- ⑥ Sit comfortably with your back straight.
- ⑥ Close your eyes.
- ⑥ Relax your body.
- ⑥ Breathe in deeply a few times as you relax even deeper.
- ⑥ Repeat again and again, the phrase, "May I be joyful, kind, loving, and peaceful."
- ⑥ After a few minutes offer this prayer to all beings, "May all beings be joyful, kind, loving and peaceful."
- ⑥ Whenever your mind strays, and it will, gently bring your attention back to repeating these phrases.
- ⑥ After your time is up, congratulate yourself for having taken these moments to shift your perceptions. Practice this daily for a week and journal your experiences.

Developing this simple practice is easy and rewarding. It will center you for the day ahead. You can use a different mantra each day, week or month. Using affirmations is a positive first step in working with the old tapes playing in your mind. Take charge now and begin by shifting all negative thoughts into positive affirmations that your heart can accept. With practice you will eventually discover that the positive outweighs the negative and life will begin to flow.

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