

Forget Positive Thinking – Watch Television Instead

Every negative emotion (i.e., flavors of fear, anger, sadness, regret, jealousy, resentment, etc.) we experience as an adult is sourced by unresolved childhood experiences (between pre-birth up to about the age of seven). While adult life events and circumstances may change, our negative beliefs about life and emotional child-ish reactivity to life remains constant. Positive thinking, affirmations and the like hardly ever create a "new reality" that is sustainable or consistent, (i.e., lasting through a minute, an hour, a day, a week, a month or a year) or actually overcomes or replaces these negative beliefs, assumptions, and associations. Why?

It's not only that unfortunate and unpleasant events happen to us in childhood; it's that we become "fused" with these experiences and the feelings, emotions, physiological responses, beliefs and associations we create around them, i.e., our "stuff." We "futurize our past," carrying our past "stuff" into the present moment. An example might be experiencing betrayal or abandonment as a child and bringing this "stuff" into our adult relationships – at work, at home and at play – where we continually feel vigilant, suspicious and guarded. When we're "fused" with our past, it's well-nigh impossible to create a "new reality" because most of us are "unconscious" of the dynamic that's taking place.

Why affirmations and positive thinking seldom work

Reflect for a moment on positive thoughts or affirmations you might be using to create your new, "positive" reality. I am/have (state your affirmations/thoughts here.) Now, when you express your thought or affirm yourself, there has to be a conscious or unconscious "compared to what?" state that you're seeking to eliminate. The reality is that we cannot simply dislodge negative thoughts or beliefs by replacing them with positive ones – neuroscience, brain plasticity, and the like notwithstanding. You might change the "brain" but you won't change your "consciousness."

By affirming over and over again, for example, "I am capable," won't change the "I feel deficient" thought in your consciousness. They both will continue to exist in your consciousness and the affirming just becomes more of a struggle, effort and exhausting "Sisyphus-like" exercise. You'll seldom "erase" the negative thought/feeling/emotion and for most folks it's always there, just underneath the surface, like a low-grade fever.

The initial negative belief that causes all our negative, emotional reactivity is our reference point. All our positive thinking and affirmations are a "compared to what" exercise that continually points to this initial, negative reference point. Why is it that we continually tell ourselves we are smart, keep studying, acquire new knowledge, skills, degrees, certificates, over-achieve and yet still feel "deep-down" we are still not smart (or "smart enough")? We're continually comparing ourselves to our initial feeling of inadequacy because we are fused with the original negative belief as a reference point.

Once we see that we existed *before* we created our negative thoughts and beliefs by becoming the observer of the one who is filtering life through self-limiting beliefs we can then "step out" of ourselves into a new consciousness and release the filters that create our negative, emotional reactivity.

The antidote to positive thinking? Watch television

So, here's an exercise. Sit in front of your TV. But, don't turn it on. Look at your reflection on the screen. See this reflection as just that, your reflection. Know that it's not "you."

Stare at it without judgment. Now close your eyes and see your reflection. Do this a number of times. Then, with eyes closed, see your reflection and also visualize yourself as a 3-4-5 year-old sitting next to your adult self. Be intentional about this. Focus and concentrate on the two images the reflection of your adult self and your child self.

Now, recall an unpleasant experience to which you reacted negatively, where you felt angry, hateful, resentful, or fearful, etc. Sit with this experience and allow yourself to feel the feelings and experience the emotions in your body, not just "think" about it. Be in it. Sense the little child next to you who is also afraid, angry, etc. Feel his/her anger as well.

After a few minutes, take some deep breaths, open your eyes and look at your reflection. Then, close your eyes and now "unzip" a zipper that is on your back and "step out" of your self, and sense yourself sitting in your chair opposite the TV. Sitting there, visualize your adult self and your child self on the TV screen.

Observe, non-judgmentally, your adult self and your child self. Watch as they think "their" thoughts and experience "their" emotions and feelings. Watch their mental, emotional and physical upset. Just watch and observe. See them as "separate from me, not me." In this place you are neutral. "They" have their emotions and their stuff. Not "you."

Now, sense into your body and allow any physical sensations you may be experiencing. Separate from any story around the sensations. Just witness and observe the sensations, the energy, and see what they want to do. Remember, no stories. Just physical sensations, energy. In time, with eyes closed, as you witness and observe your adult self and child self on the screen noticing them having their experiences, your negative energy will begin to dissipate and you'll actually feel "separate from" your adult self and the little child on the screen.

What "you" will begin to experience is your True Self, your Essential and authentic self, the "you" who existed long before you "created" the "child" and "adult" self on the screen.

In this place, you have no "compared to what" negative reference point. You have no old associations, memories, or conflicting beliefs; there are no beliefs. "They (your reflections on the screen) do," but "you" don't.

In this state of presence, you may experience "space," and a sense of freedom to "be me," no longer attached to past associations, memories, and reactivity. Right here and right now you're coming from a heart and soul-driven place not a mental, ego-driven, past-reference place.

In this place, you can access your soul's capacities and essential qualities that support you to be who you are, not "who you have (unconsciously) taken yourself to be." You have no sense of "history" here. There's only now.

In this place you can be positive and create a new reality based on your True and Real Self. How so? Space.

When sitting in a movie theatre, focused intently on the screen, you are fused with the story. When you "step back" and notice the screen, the walls on either side, the ceiling, and the lights, the seats and the audience, you create "space" and see the "story" for what it is. The space reduces the "significance" of the story, making it more "insignificant" than "real."

With this exercise and practice, you are adding space to your life's portrait stepping back,

not "identifying" with past thoughts, emotions, or associations, etc. There's no "stuff" going on. The negative thoughts, beliefs and associations you thought were "real" no longer are. There's just you with no history, no reference points.

Here, you can take a deep breath and honestly, sincerely, self-responsibly and effortlessly affirm, "Now, this is me!"

So, some questions for self-reflection are:

- Do you ever think about how you've created your self?
- Do you ever wonder how you came to be attached to, and identified by, your associations, beliefs, worldviews, assumptions, etc?
- If you stare intently at a picture of yourself, and then step back and focus on the space around the photo, do you see the self in the picture differently in any way?
- Stare at yourself in a mirror for five minutes. What is that experience like for you? Do you believe that you're looking at "you"? If no, how do the two of you differ?
- Are there people, places, things you are fused with ("evoking" some type of "natural" reactivity) and you aren't sure why?
- Do you ever consider there are "parts" of your personality self that aren't your True and Real Self?

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