

Is self-help helping?

Who among us has not been on some type of self-help journey at one point or another? Who among us bemoans the fact we're honestly not experiencing true and real inner peace, balance or harmony in our lives - or the change and transformation we're seeking?

Why self-help doesn't help

Rather, are you consistently experiencing some sort of internal agitation which says, "Heck, the more I read, attend lectures, seminars and workshops, meditate and chant, pray and say affirmations, the less I seem to be getting anywhere."? What's operating here?

Much of what you consider "self-help" actually does not result in true and real change or transformation - the type of change and transformation wherein you can honestly say, "I'm really not the person I used to be. People I knew and know would not recognize how and who I am now. The 'old me' has truly died and re-birthed."

Thinking positively, saying affirmations, using willpower, engaging in chants and rituals, reading voraciously, praying and meditating day and night seldom leads to true, real and lasting change or transformation. Why?

True change and transformation requires a conscious connection with your deeper soul consciousness, above your mind or intellect. Most of what passes for self-help today goes no deeper than engaging your mind, intellect and (in this case, your spiritual) ego.

True change and transformation cannot be realized by thinking and doing alone. True change and transformation comes with be-ing, but not the superficial be-ing that has the appearance of change, but be-ing that reflects the deep work, struggle, and challenge you experience when dealing with your unconscious, darker forces within.

Folks who tend to take a "rational-thinking" approach to self-awareness are good examples of folks who are deluded about the notion of self-help.

Self-awareness is the key

Self-awareness and a conscious understanding of "who I am" and "how I am" in your core, is the basis of becoming "conscious" - the foundation of true change and transformation. Becoming conscious is not about having an "idea" of who you are, or "rationally" exploring who you are. Rather, it's about "not knowing" who you are. It's about turning inward and exploring yourself from the deeper recesses and dimensions of your being i.e., your unconscious self.

Self-awareness, the building block of true change and transformation, can arise only from an exploration of "what I don't know" and "what I don't know I don't know" about "me." The truth is you're more often influenced by what you are unaware of (in yourself) than what you are aware of. True change and transformation cannot evolve from "playing it safe" dealing only with the parts of yourself that you know, or feel safe or comfortable with.

Deeper questions lead to self-awareness

Do you ever dream about folks you dislike or with whom you have a contentious relationship? Do you ever wonder why you take an immediate dislike to folks you've never met? Do you ever think about rash judgments you make about people, places, events or circumstances? Do you ever wonder why people trigger your control, recognition or security buttons - at work, at home, at play or in relationships? The "rational" person, of course, has all the answers and reasons why. The rational person also has the most difficulty when it comes to true change and transformation.

When you become curious about "who I am" and "how I am" and about "what's going on in me?" (from a curious, non-judgmental place of "not knowing,") you allow parts of your unconscious self to come into awareness. Rather than be reactive, or "rational," if you are curious, for example, about why you automatically like or dislike someone, or automatically move into a power and control stance, or automatically judge something as "good" or "bad, you can begin to appreciate what's operating in your unconscious - qualities, elements, emotions, and feelings, which can support you to better understand why you are the way you are. Most often what's operating on the unconscious level are uncomfortable, fearful, resistant or angry parts of yourself – parts that both need to be explored, and worked with, (not suppressed, repressed or denied) if you choose to truly change and transform.

Curiosity

If you become curious, for example, about why you need to soothe your anxieties by shopping, eating, drinking, or controlling, you may discover that part of you, that insecure child within who feels abandoned, lost, or unseen and is searching for mother/holding/safety/security in materialism. "Rationally," many will agree (based on the "self-help" stuff they've read or heard), that materialism represents "comfort food" when deeper love, appreciation, or acknowledgement is lacking. But many of these same folks are reluctant to go deeper to explore "why?". They can't or won't tolerate exploring the unconscious addictions that drive them to behave in ways that bring them a false sense of comfort and security or ways that help them avoid or deny their feelings.

It's all about the truth

True self-help is not about tap-dancing around the truth of who you are, our fears, or the discordant music playing within. It's about trusting your Innate Intelligence, self-love and compassion to deal with what's really "up" with you. That means being open to, aware of and reflective about your subconscious self when your behaviors, thoughts, words, feelings and emotions are triggered in your interactions with your life at work, at home, at play and in relationship (also, in your dreams.)

When you approach your life with curiosity, without judgment, and welcome the truth of your deeper self, your unconscious, to bubble up, you embark on the journey to wholeness, and discover "who I am" and "how I am" in the greater context of healing yourself. This is the true and real self-help journey of change and transformation.

So, some questions for self-reflection are :

Do you consider yourself a "self-help junkie?" If so, how is this working for you vis-a-vis genuine change and transformation? Are you behaving differently at work, at home, at play, in your relationships? What would your friends, co-workers, children, spouse or partner say? Honestly.

Do you explore and work with your feelings, emotions and your darker side consistently? If not, why not?

To whom or what are you strongly attracted? What aspects of your subconscious might account for the attraction?

Do you feel a strong prejudice, repulsion or hatred towards someone or something? What in your subconscious might account for your reactivity?

Do you ever explore your dreams?

Is your experience with self-help more about "information" than "be-ing" and behaving differently?

How much do you spend on "self-help" a year?

How often do you engage in deep self-reflection (not "thinking"), or journaling i.e., consciously, honestly, sincerely, and self-responsibly exploring **not** "the way I am" but "*why* am I the way I am?"

What was "self-help" like for you/your family when you were growing up?

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