

Being Imperfect Together – 08-27-15

Patience Now! Part 2

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Last week we touched on the special place patience has in virtually all of the world's religions and philosophies. We also defined patience as the ability to endure under difficult circumstances such as delay, provocation, and irritation without succumbing to negativity and outbursts. We considered the intimate connection between patience and expectations.

Now we turn our attention to the "how" of being patient, which in the field of counseling and psychotherapy refers to "frustration tolerance." How can we become more patient with others and ourselves?

First, take a few moments to ponder your patterns of patience and impatience. When are you capable of more patience? Conversely, what are your impatience triggers? If you choose it, everything is a chance to grow, to learn more about yourself and how you view the world. Most of the time you have the power to modify or eliminate the sources of unease and impatience in your world.

Next, reflect on your current life and expectations. A lifestyle that's filled with too many activities in too short a time span, or a mindset full of unattainable expectations is fertile ground for the weeds of impatience to take root. How can you simplify your life to live in greater peace?

A more active way to cultivate patience is by deliberately putting yourself in mildly uncomfortable situations. Try picking the longest line at the grocery store. Talk to the person who loves to go on and on. Then, pay attention to the chatter in your mind. It often goes something like this:

- "This is terrible! I can't stand it!"
- "I've got to get out of here!"
- "This is unfair!"
- "They're stupid/wrong/crazy"

Notice also what happens in your body. You'll probably feel tense, nervous, angry, or a combination of all that and more.

Then, loosen any tightness in your body and soothe your mind and emotions with thoughts centered on your ability to handle discomfort. Expect the unexpected, and meet it with humor if at all possible. If a person is the trigger for your impatience, this is the time to draw on your

wellspring of compassion. Many people find a deep breathing practice can be helpful here, too. Prayer is another big help, especially a prayer to be a peaceful presence in the situation at hand.

Fostering a sense of patience with yourself and others is a pathway to deeper knowledge, maturity, and wisdom. It's not always easy, but the outcome is serenity and wellbeing. You, our community, and the world deserve it.

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