

EXPLAINED

How can I regain true self-respect?



NEVILLE HODGKINSON

It is quite a revelation when we begin to notice that other people tend to put the same value on us, as we put on ourselves. When we have self-respect, that conveys itself to others through our body language, words and actions, and others will respect us in return.

When we feel good inside, it is as if the sun shines on us from outside as well. People smile more readily. Even nature looks more beautiful. When we feel on top of the world, our faces and actions speak to others of that and they receive a lift from our happiness. Their happiness then feeds back into our own sense of well-being, increasing it further. In contrast, when we feel worthless, others tend to react towards us in ways that confirm we really are not good to know. Changes in our mental states

alter the way we interpret what is going on around us, including how we respond to other people. The world will of course look different, when we see it through different lenses. But does it really change, depending on the way we see it?

Modern physics tells us that there is an informational component to the entire physical world. What we call matter is really energy, wrapped up into particles and objects according to a kind of matrix of instructions that give material form to the world. Physicists do not yet know how that matrix comes into being, or where the instructions come from. But they are certain it is there.

It seems that nature has a mind of her own, a kind of universal consciousness. This has within it laws that give constancy to the world we experience in time and space, but there is also continuous change. Ups and downs, light and dark, tragedies and triumphs, are all part of the show put on by this universal mind. All living things have individual parts within this overall scheme.

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Religious-minded people have often felt that God is love, and that when our own actions are loving, happiness follows and self-respect stays strong. It is true that a divine law of benevolence is at work. When we follow that law with our thoughts and actions, the universe subtly supports us, bringing lasting success.

love, and that when our own actions are loving, happiness follows and self-respect stays strong. It is true that a divine law of benevolence is at work. When we follow that law with our thoughts and actions, the universe subtly supports us, bringing lasting success. When we go against that law, our con-

science bites and self-respect tumbles down. For example, when we criticise others, we are going against the law of universal love and our happiness diminishes.

Sometimes, through creating a false sense of self-worth, we find it hard to distinguish right from wrong. We fool ourselves into thinking we are ok because we have lots of money, or a high position, or power over other people. Such ego-based self-aggrandisements are dangerous and illusory because they are never fulfilling. We know perfectly well, consciously or subconsciously, that they are delusional and therefore we always need more and more accolades to prop up our self-respect. The result is to further blunt the conscience, depleting our humanity and leading to a vicious circle of decline.

We cannot just fake self-respect, and expect to receive true regard in return. To the extent that our actions are mean and selfish, others will see that, no matter how much we may try to think well of ourselves.

What then can be done if we have lost our sense of true self-respect, how can we reclaim it? This is where God comes to the rescue. As

a Supreme Being who always remains a reservoir of truth, God not only recognises the innate dignity in each one, but His light enables us to see that our real, original, nature, underneath the mistakes, is eternally good.

This holds true for all humans. And because the core of goodness is always there, in every one of us, there is always the possibility of regaining it.

The method of doing so that I have learned is called Rajyoga. It entails withdrawing my sense of who I am from the brain and body, which may carry many needy tendencies, and considering myself instead to be a soul or spirit. In that non-physical, internal awareness, I become better able to access my original, pure consciousness—my original goodness. I become better aligned with God's energy of truth, and gain the strength to overcome my insufficiencies and act from my higher nature.

It is then that true self-respect gradually returns and everywhere I go and whatever I do, the world starts to respect me too!

Neville Hodgkinson is a UK-based author and journalist, and a long-time student of Rajyoga.

POWER OF THOUGHTS

OUR THOUGHTS CREATE OUR ENVIRONMENT



CHIRYA YVONNE RISELY

We now realise how the quality and power of our thoughts impact us at every moment and create our world. Thought affects not only our health and every cell of our body, but also animals, plants, trees, the environment and atmosphere. For example, research for several years on yogic farm-

ing in India is proving that when seeds and seedlings are planted with peaceful and loving thoughts, and nourished with meditation, the quality continues to improve and the harvest yield increases.

The amazing discovery by Japanese professor, Dr. Masaru Emoto, opened this deeper understanding of the power of thoughts and words. One of his books "The Miracle of Water", describes his experiments. Emoto visibly proved that 'our thoughts create the quality of our world.' His photographs show how water forms crystals, either beautiful or ugly, according to whatever positive or negative words and



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thoughts they have been exposed to. Positive thoughts that are life-affirming, such as love, appreciation and hope, created beautifully-shaped snowflake crystals. Negative thoughts, anger or words such as hate and hopelessness formed ugly, disfigured-looking forms. Since our bodies are 70 per cent water, imagine what the

water crystals in our bodies would look like when exposed to negative thoughts and words instead of positive ones.

However, mankind's mental pollution and its effect on the physical world are increasing every year and place us all at risk, rich and poor alike. As the quality of our thoughts continues to deteriorate, just as the rust accumulated on iron can destroy it, our own mindset can destroy us and the planet. However, to stop fretting about things beyond our immediate control, we need to pause, unplug our mind from everything and everyone for a few minutes. Slow down. Allocate time

each day for spaces of stillness and meditation. Check within. Quieten the mind and then change the quality of our thoughts. Nurturing the inner being like this, helps us continue to enjoy our responsibilities and to be giving, without depleting ourselves. When we focus on creating optimistic and kind thoughts, others feel safe and supported. Positive thinking, resilience and compassion create our feelings and reach the person we are thinking about.

Connect and communicate with the Supreme Being, who is only a thought away. God, the Father, always sees us at our best. This pure love recharges and refreshes the

soul, and creates newness by removing waste and negative thoughts, tiredness, and heaviness of desires. When our minds and hearts are clean and unpolluted, the air, water and elements would again become clean, free from pollution and disease. Because when I change, the world changes. We remember our original brotherly love and the respect we had for each other, and our relationships, and nature will once again become beautiful, peaceful, happy, abundant and heavenly.

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COMPARISON

ACCEPTANCE IS BETTER THAN TOLERANCE



B.K. GEETA

Tolerance is defined as the ability or willingness to allow the existence, occurrence, or practice of something that one dislikes or disagrees with, without interfering or being judgmental.

It implies the exercise of patient self-control, restraint and endurance. It is considered one of the marks of a civilized society where people can express varying opinions and practise different beliefs without fear of discrimination, violence or persecution.

But when we tolerate something, there is a subtle undercurrent of resistance or rejection, mixed with a feeling of dislike. We feel under pressure because we are having to

do something we do not really like but feel compelled to do in order to conform to social norms, live up to our behavioural or moral standards, or be politically correct.

Because of this we do not feel at ease when we have to tolerate a situation or a person's behaviour, and wish that they would end or go away.

In such a situation, our state of mind is not positive. We make a show of tolerance but are unhappy inside, and our feelings are negative. Consequently, such tolerance does not foster harmonious relationships, or provide the best solution to difficult situations.

If a person has to tolerate something for long and feels that there is no escape from such a fate, or thinks that others do not understand what they are going through, they are likely to become angry or resentful. They may even turn aggressive and refuse to put up with the situation anymore. In either case they are not going to be happy.

Some resignedly tell themselves that they are doomed



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to tolerate someone or something all their life. Others turn to dark humour and try to laugh away the blues. None of these attitudes will bring lasting peace or joy.

Faced with anything that we do not like or approve of, it is much better to practice acceptance. When we accept a person or situation, we are at peace with them and they do not disturb our mind.

But to be able to accept something that is not to our liking we need to have some understanding of why it is that way.

It is easy to get angry with someone who is habitually rude or careless, but if I talk to the person to get to know them better, and find out that they are that way because of their present or past circumstances, or because no one has

ever pointed out their faults to them, I will find it easier to accept them.

I also need to understand that almost everyone faces challenges in life, goes through tough times, and we all have our faults. When I focus on others' weaknesses, I may lose sight of my own; while I may not have the same faults as others, I might have other defects that people around me

have to put up with.

Acceptance does not mean acquiescing to something wrong, but understanding why it is happening, and not getting upset by it, even as we take steps to protect ourselves from harm, or to remedy the situation if we can.

Acceptance is also necessary if we want to help others. If I just tolerate someone, it will show in my behaviour and language, and the other person will sense the subtle vibrations of rejection or dislike emanating from me. But when I accept them, it puts them at ease and brings them closer to me, enabling a frank yet friendly exchange of views. Friendly advice is more likely to help others than a critical comment or a stern lecture.

Thus, a little introspection, compassion, broad-mindedness and common sense can help me live in peace with different and difficult people and circumstances and even change things for the better. *B.K. Geeta is a Rajyoga teacher at the Brahma Kumaris headquarters in Abu Road, Rajasthan.*

A THOUGHT FOR TODAY

There is no sense to the senses. The senses detect that which is physical. Sense, on the other hand, is based on understanding and wisdom. The senses don't make sense of a situation, they bring data in from the outside world to be processed by the subtle, metaphysical soul. Today let me use my senses for the physical world and my subtle spiritual awareness to make sense of my experiences.