

SPIRITUAL PATH

Learning to live without regret



CHARLIE HOGG

Regrets are part of the human condition. Regret means 'I think I would be happier or better if things were different in the past'. Things are recorded in our memory tracks. So many stories swirl around in the mind; things that are unresolved, unfinished business, things we wish we had not done or said, things we wish we had done or said. Some of these things go quickly away, some fade with time, but some linger and are as vivid as when they happened.

Part of a spiritual journey is to begin to resolve the feelings of regret inside. We can first of all understand how things can be learned from these experiences; they can help me to

do things differently in the future. However, we also start to dismantle the effects and impact of these regrets. There are two effects of having such deep regrets. One is that I do not feel happy in the present, because this regret is hanging over me like a shadow, and the other is that it damages the relationship with myself.

There is a cycle of regret. First there is denial; it did not happen — it has to go away. Then there is bewilderment; 'how could I have done/said that?'. Then follows self-punishment; 'I could kick myself for doing that!', and, finally, a reinforcement. By playing it out over and over again, I continue to reinforce a negative attitude towards myself. This is very damaging.

At the heart of a quality life, I need to reinforce love, respect and value for myself. It is impossible to do that if I constantly reinforce a negative view of myself; it weakens me. If I do not respect myself, I will have no respect for others, society or the



environment.

I have to make friends with my conscience. I have to learn as I go along the spiritual path to only do and say that which is in tune with my deepest held beliefs and resist the pressure from others, and any kind of temptation, to behave against those beliefs.

To do this I need to understand who I really am. I am not the physical identity; that

sense of self taken from my body, my gender, culture or education — all that is temporary and leads me to feel arrogant and superior at one moment and at the next moment, be filled with lack of self-respect and feelings of inferiority.

I have to understand that I am a soul. A spiritual, eternal, immortal being of light — the atma; the living dweller in the costume.

The soul exists. A point — no breadth or width or length. It is full of power and light.

Once I begin to understand and experience this truth, I feel so sweet and easy about who I am. A natural state of peace begins to emerge. I can understand that in the past, I was under the influence of the temporary state of thinking I was a body, and therefore under the influence of

many things. Now I can receive the power to do nothing I would regret.

This spiritual path and the practice of meditation begins to heal the past and the effect it has had on me, and a different relationship begins to grow with my conscience. I become my own best friend and not my worst enemy.

Charlie Hogg, based in Sydney, has been a daily meditator with the Brahma Kumaris for 45 years.

DISCOURSE

WHAT IS TRUE LOVE?



DADI JANKI

Modern love has come out of the heart and gone into the head. This is why we have headaches, because the head instead of the heart has started to look for love. The poor heart has lost love and is unhappy.

Whatever the age, young or old — even small children — everybody is looking for love. If we go inside ourselves, it is there we will discover what love is. If we look for it externally, we will need to keep on looking because we will find only deception and sorrow. We have to go inside to look for love.

People have lost faith in love. First there was the search to experience the unconditional love of God. When this was unsuccessful, faith in God was lost. As people then searched for love from each other, still without success, faith in love was lost.

There is a lot of misunderstanding about love. True love is not selfish love. The sign of selfish love is that a relationship will finish if we do not receive what we desire. Today there is selfishness within every kind of relationship, of mother and child or husband and wife. Selfish love always appears as one thing on the outside but is completely different on the inside. Deception like this has made the heart very unhappy. Whatever love was there has turned to hate.

When we end up feeling threatened by a relationship, unsure of where it is going to take us, our love will turn to hate. Many believe they have found true love, only to discover later that they have been deceived. Because there is no more honesty in the heart, the heart is broken.

SOUL POWER

HOW TO TRAVEL LIGHTLY THROUGH LIFE



GOPI PATEL

As we move forward in life, we all want to move forward lightly, with freedom. Freedom is an original experience of the soul. If we were to move to a new house, we would be wise to sort out what to take, what to leave and what to throw away. If we were to pack a suitcase for a holiday or to move on, we would be wise to make sure we only carried the essentials or most beneficial items with us. Yet, we often forget that it is also deep wisdom to do the same kind of decluttering of our mind. We need to sort out what our dearest values, and most deeply held beliefs are, and they are the ones to keep

with us as treasures, as we travel forward. In that way we can keep moving on, holding the bigger picture in mind, which keeps us light and easy.

However, many of us keep looking back. We keep picking up the past, ruminating, reminiscing, wishing things were different, or wishing things were as they were before. All of this makes us heavy. We get stuck and then we lose perspective. We need to learn to let go of and pack up the past. Time, in its wisdom, moves forward, not backwards.

So, first of all, in two words, sort and short! Take time to be in solitude, and, in the peace of solitude, see what our realisations and inspirations are in essence, and take them forward. Leave behind the guilt, shame, fear and worry. If we also remember to stay in the essence in the



present, we will create fewer things to sort through in the future. We all talk far too much. We need to learn to keep our speaking to the essence, and not use ten words when two will do.

Secondly, there is a mantra worth remembering: Don't think! So many events are beyond our control and yet the tendency is to constantly react. It is important to remember that there is always a little space before we react, and that little space is where the conscience has a moment to speak. If we listen to that and stop ourselves from reacting, we are saved from the negative thoughts and emotional turmoil that often follow

knee-jerk reactions. Take a deep breath and extend that little space and give the self time to observe and choose the right things to say.

Thirdly, learn how to apply the brake, to put a full stop from time to time. Take a break during the day, to go inside and be at peace. Stay light, laugh a little at the self, do not take the self too seriously. I, the soul, am part of a much bigger dynamic of events and relationships in the world and I am not responsible for everything in it — I am responsible for how I feel about what is happening. I am responsible for what I carry with me, and some things are just not useful anymore. Let me learn the art of packing up and taking with me the valuable things I hold most dear, for myself and for others.

Gopi Patel is a spiritual educator and senior Rajyogi meditator with the Brahma Kumaris, specialising in spiritual pragmatism in all areas of life.

GOOD LIFE

To live better, manage your thoughts



DR GIRISH PATEL

A relatively new field of medicine, called psychoneuroimmunology, has evolved over the last few decades to study the relationship between immunity, the endocrine system, and the central and peripheral nervous systems.

Earlier, medical science held that the mind could affect the body only when there was a neural, chemical, or hormonal connection

between them. Neurotransmitters, hormones, and neuropeptides have been found to regulate immune cells, and these in turn are capable of communicating with nerve tissue through the secretion of a wide variety of chemicals.

But now it has been proved that no such connection is needed. The cells in our body have tremendous plasticity, and we can influence them with our thoughts. How?

Like all matter, the cells in the body are made up of atoms, and quantum physics has shown that the sub-atomic particles that make up atoms produce vibrations. We also produce vibrations, which vary

according to the quality of our thoughts, and it is through these that the mind affects the body.

The kind of thoughts we create has a bearing on our mental and physical health. As someone has said, human thoughts lead to the secretion of natural chemicals. Drugs are just synthetic chemicals, so thoughts are like natural drugs, and good thoughts would make great medicine.

Toxic thoughts, such as of anger, irritation and anxiety, trigger the release of toxic chemicals in the brain and the body. Degrading thoughts, of hurt or revenge, persist longer in the mind and do greater damage by causing



the release of harmful chemicals over an extended period of time.

Automatic thoughts, which are usually negative, and lead to disorders such as obsessive-compulsive disorder, also harm us. Then there are waste thoughts, which are unproductive and consume our time and mental energy.

Necessary thoughts, about essential activities such as eating, sleeping, going to work, need to be created, but it is best to minimize them, as each thought we create expends our mental energy.

Negative thoughts are typically about the darker side of people and events, and the direct

or indirect harm they might cause. Similarly, positive thoughts are about the brighter side of people and events, and the benefit they offer.

Then there is right thinking, which is to see people and things as they are, rationally, without magnifying or denying the existence

of problems, jumping to conclusions, or catastrophising.

A step above is elevated thinking, which involves high-energy thoughts, of wisdom, based on spiritual truths, that empower the mind and rid it of negativity.

But our ultimate aim should be to have no thoughts, which means observing life in a detached, benevolent, non-judgmental manner, without thinking needlessly or commenting on all that we see and hear. The less we think, the stronger our mind will be.

Dr Girish Patel is a well-known psychiatrist based in Mumbai, and a student of Rajyoga with the Brahma Kumaris.

A THOUGHT FOR TODAY

Newness begins in the mind. With a single thought, I can rearrange my entire view of the world. When my view is rearranged, my feelings change, and I begin to see new angles in old relationships and situations. Then my interactions are renewed. Today let me create a new view.