

LET GO

Criticism drains all inner power

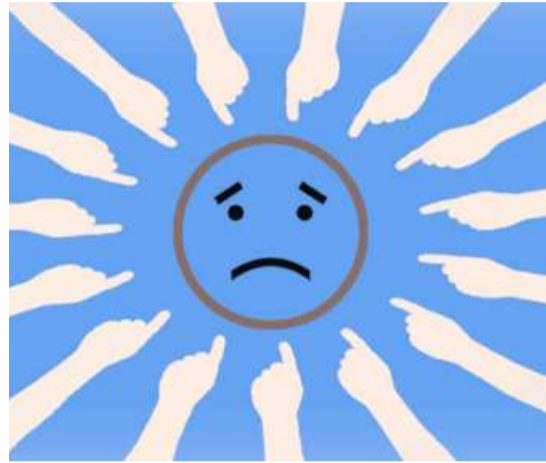


B.K. JAYANTI

"If there are teachings, instructions or corrections to be given, always give them with a lot of love, and no trace of anger."

Wisdom needs an inner space—a field—in order for its seed and its saplings to flourish. Put poison onto the earth in that field and the seed will be destroyed, but supplement the ground with all the good things that nourish a little seed of wisdom and you give it a good chance of grow-

ing healthy, strong and fast—the tree it grows into will be far more beautiful than if the seed were neglected. This is a reality. If we poison the field of our mind, then whatever wisdom was beginning to grow is gone; it is killed. Which poison most destroys the human mind? Criticism. How do we overcome the all-too-common human urge to criticise? One of the best ways is to develop another skill, or human power—the ability to let go. Each day of our lives carries a thousand different experiences. Perhaps even a million different experiences! We have to find a way of keeping hold of the experiences that are useful—the things that help us learn and grow—and of letting go of those that are damaging for our minds. We



have to learn to sort out and separate, pack up and keep together those skills we will need for tomorrow, but also how to settle, end and dispense with things that are no longer useful. We can access the ability to let go and also to carry forward qualities and thoughts we are going to need tomorrow through our own spiritual power. If we lack this spiritual

power, we will not be able to decide what is going to be of value—what will help those little seeds to grow—and what is not so useful; what is simply going to be a burden or even poison the soil that those seeds are rooted in. When we realise how precious the space inside our head is, then we have to make a choice. Do we want to fill it with good things or dead, negative

things? Any action based on giving—on concern for others, compassion, generosity and charity fills us with strength. When we start looking at the weaknesses of others, our strength, our innate wisdom, is reduced. Every time our energy focuses on the weakness of another it drains that inner power. If that focus is then translated into actual critical words or gossip, then that is another huge drop in energy for the soul. Negative criticism of the self, the past, or others, creates a massive energy loss. We can turn all this around. We can create good thoughts, noble thoughts, elevated thoughts, and thoughts of goodness, compassion and love. If these thoughts are translated into words, words of inspiration, encourage-

ment, and support to help others, then there comes a wonderful influx of energy into the soul. If as a result we are able to express this new-found energy in action and actually do good things in life, the power of good action is such that good things not only happen externally, but strength grows within. We regain our inner spiritual power with the combination of good thoughts, good words, good actions, and deeply focussed meditation. When we have that inner spiritual power again within our being, we are able to consistently do good things in our lives; existing not only for the self as a human individual, but to serve a higher purpose. B.K. Jayanti is Additional Administrative Head of the Brahma Kumaris.

TRANQUILITY

HOW TO CREATE PEACE



DADI JANKI

There is something that you can do to help create peace in the world and that is to make yourself peaceful.

The first step in this is doing some real soul-searching to find out what has made you peaceful in the first place. Turning your mind within allows you to discover, underneath the many surface emotions of everyday life, a deep, undisturbed pool of spiritual well-being. You need to

explore that part of the self, not just to understand it but to experience it, again and again.

This is a very satisfying experience, one that refreshes the soul and fills it with peace. From this vantage point, it becomes easy to recognise the kind of thoughts and feelings which are self-destructive. The power of self-realisation will work wonders in transforming these destructive mental habits. You will stop blaming others for your peacelessness, and get on with the work of cultivating your truth.

Peace is made up of many things: love, patience, wisdom. You should not be content with just a little of it but fill yourself completely. As you practise putting these into your interactions with others, your very nature will become peaceful. This proves to be of benefit not only to yourself but to all those around you as well.

COMPLETE FAITH

THE WAY TO BECOME CAREFREE



B.K. GEETA

Is it possible to lead a care-free life in today's world? What does one need to be carefree? Most people would say that one must have enough money for financial security, without which it is well-nigh impossible to be free from worry. In a world of economic uncertainties, providing for oneself and one's family is the prime concern of nearly everyone. There are countless people who do not know how or from where, they will get their next meal. Grinding poverty is a fact of their life. The fate of those who live from hand to mouth is little better, as the fear of an unexpected ad-

versity always lurks at the back of their minds.

Does this mean that the wealthy are carefree? That is hardly the case. They may not have financial worries but unhappy relationships, social pressures, and discontent and stress from trying to keep up with more 'successful' peers can drive them to misery, even suicide.

Almost everyone has one form of worry or another—from the moment they wake up, they worry about themselves, their family, their job or business, their friends, and relatives. Even children, who are supposedly in the happiest period of their life, complain of stress from their studies.

A major factor behind such anxiety is the thought, 'I have to do this, that, and the other....' We pit ourselves against circumstances, which we see as somehow stacked against us. This sows the seeds of stress in all our efforts to "overcome" and "cope with" situations and peo-



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ple. Life seems like a struggle or a burden. The result is despondence, tiredness, anger, and in some cases, a willingness to stray from the straight and narrow in order to get what one con-

siders one's due.

Acceptance and faith can change all of this. Why not accept situations, learn from them, and move on? If we see life as a struggle, we are likely to end up struggling all the time. Instead, if we see it as a game, we enjoy the experiences it offers. This difference in perspective is the reason some people laugh off their problems while others get upset.

Having the faith that things will eventually turn out good save us from unnecessary worry. Creating positive thoughts is the first step towards achieving a good outcome.

Such thoughts create the right attitude, leading to the right actions, which in turn produce favourable results.

To be truly carefree, it helps to have faith in a benevolent higher power. Have you ever noticed how babies sleep soundly in the arms of their parents? They have complete faith that they will be loved, protected, and cared for.

Similarly, the Supreme

Soul, the Father of all souls, offers to relieve His children of all their burdens. But doubt, fear, and cynicism fostered by the hurt caused by other people stops us from believing Him.

The Father says that when we take responsibilities upon ourselves, we become heavy. So, think of yourself as an instrument, a trustee, a server. We are just playing our role in the world.

Other people are not our rivals, but fellow travellers in the journey of life. Our fulfilment will come not from outwitting or outdoing anyone, but from being the best that we can be. When we maintain an elevated awareness, we function on the basis of our best qualities, of peace, love, and truth. That can only bring joy and contentment. This is the key to becoming care-free.

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QUIETUDE

INNER SILENCE, THE ANTIDOTE TO STRESS



B.K. MARIA

All of us have experienced stress at some point in our lives. Actually, stress visits everyone, independent of their age, gender, environment, nationality or religious background.

When we understand the ways in which stress manifests, we can boost and protect ourselves from it in the same way that we protect our physical health from different diseases.

Stress is merely a sign of pain, a symptom to notice right from the beginning if we wish to progress spiritually. We can cultivate spiritual antibodies and remove the seeds of

stress as long as we maintain the understanding that stress is not something natural or normal.

We have come to consider it as normal, simply because as time passed by, we became exposed to more and more pain and so trained the self to accept the presence of stress and thus compromise our original peace. And now, we spend time wishing it away and planning how to remove it. We try to relax, go on holiday or as this usually does not take the pain away for long, we try ever more complicated means of reducing the stress. By thinking that the solution lies somewhere outside of us, and finding that whatever we try does not work, the soul becomes disoriented and dispirited.

When we deal with our physical health, we acquire knowledge for an effective treatment or solution, and then apply it. It is vital to understand what is causing the problem, to be able prescribe the proper medicine. In the same way, internally, we need to acquire knowledge of our true



identity, how the self operates and find the way back to optimum spiritual health.

The soul works on thoughts. If we

have negative, critical thoughts of the self or others, we must find a way to change them, or we will continue to feel distressed. Or worse, we will try

to justify our negativity and not recognise what our unhelpful thought patterns are causing. We will consider our worry to be just caring, or our anxiety as only enquiry, our doubt as though it were simply exploration, or that the stress we are feeling is necessary in order to succeed in the world.

However, when we understand that the soul is intrinsically peaceful, full of love and joy, we can, by meditation and changing our attitude towards the self and others, begin to reduce and eliminate stress in a radical way. When we give instead of taking, and when we build up a reservoir of powerful mental energy, we become focused and filled with clarity about what to say and what to do. The time we spend in silence is a valuable investment which pays dividends in so many untold and unimagined ways. For a life well lived, free of stress and anxiety, it is an essential prerequisite. BK Maria is an Olympian, and works as an architect. She is a member of the National Coordinating Team of the Brahma Kumaris in Greece.

A THOUGHT FOR TODAY

I can live life as if it is fixed in my favour. I can choose to think that my future will turn out well. A positive attitude opens doorways and creates possibilities. I still need to make effort to move in a positive direction. With the consistent practice of a positive attitude, and doing the 'work' required, life opens its arms and welcomes me. Today let me choose an attitude of hope and optimism.