

## Lesson 114: The Desire to be Better or More

People often strive to be better or more than they perceive themselves, which corresponds to what they think, feel or believe is most true about themselves at any given interval or cross point in their lives. This inner self-evaluation is in response to self-assessed realistic or unrealistic expectations of themselves or is in response to the expectations of others, which sometimes tends to be more unrealistic than realistic, given the sway of erroneous beliefs and distorted perceptions. Because the desire to be better or more is motivated by your own internal impulses, as well as by external influences, these inner and outer driving forces can evoke negative self-criticism in response to criticism from others and even from yourself. Regardless of its source, criticism can be more of a hindrance than it is a motivator because it tends toward a self-defeating attitude. Whether or not criticism is self-created or is imposed on you by external sources, there is a tendency to put far more emphasis on your shortcomings, real or perceived, which in turn allows less emphasis to be placed on your strengths, talents, skills and abilities. Being aware of your shortcomings, real or perceived, without knowing where they originated from can make the task of getting them in perspective a futile effort and can even skew or distort your strengths. Over emphasizing perceived or actual shortcomings is just as bad as denying or avoiding them. It is a self-destructive mindset that opens the door wide to feeling, believing or perceiving yourself as a failure or as having failed in your attempts to live up to your desire to be better or more, whether by your own standards or in accordance with the standards of others who think they know what's best for you. The mindset of failure is self-defeating because it weighs you down, holds you back and does absolutely nothing to help you get from where you are to where you would like to be, that is, if there is anything wrong with where you are in the first place, which of course, is always wide open to subjective interpretations. The mindset of failure also raises issues of self-worth and the need for self-validation, usually sought in all the wrong places and typically, in the company of the wrong people, which does far more harm than good. The discussion in this lesson focuses on both sides of this very important coin. The short and long-term effects from placing too little emphasis on realistic expectations or too much emphasis on unrealistic expectations has a direct impact on the desire to be better or more than you currently are and perhaps have the potential to be. But as this is a two-sided coin, both sides of the coin must be examined in order to discern if you are really falling short in your desire to be better or more. It is possible that you may be exactly where you need to be, just as you are, in spite of what you believe is true about yourself or in spite of what anyone else thinks or says is true about you.

The first order of business is to discern if where you are at this moment and time is or is not where you should be before pushing yourself to become better or more than what you think you really need to be. The desire to be better or more arises from a perceived state of being less than, as compared to someone or something that you are not. Thus,

the inner drive to become better or more than you already are may actually be an illusion, based on an unrealistic expectation, which stems from a dysfunctional thought pattern, a false belief or a distorted perception. Such an uncertain mindset hinders you from determining what really is and is not necessary to be or not be at any particular stage of your life, and in accordance with whose standards, which makes discernment difficult at best. The effort to operate from both sides of the coin is not without its challenges and built-in resistance. The push-pull effect from these opposing internal and external forces can cause mental and emotional stress, anxiety and can even cause bouts of depression. You cannot hope to win the fight against your inner self until you examine your real shortcomings, discard your perceived shortcomings and discern between realistic and unrealistic expectations of yourself. Those who expect something more of you are not always the most qualified judge of character when it comes to discerning who or what you should or should not be, given their own subjective interpretations, which is in accordance with their own standards and is questionable at best. Thus, they can fall short at being experts in their objective ability to discern fact from fiction and illusion from delusion, depending on how jaded or biased they are as the result of their own experiences.

Clearing the path of perceived distortions and any mental or emotional debris attached to an internal disorder, shifts the desire to be better or more into a realistic and attainable probability. An accurate evaluation of your true self is essential in determining if the desire to be better or more is necessary to the extent that you perceive it is. Discerning where you think you are failing and why is a necessary journey of self-investigation that is worthy of the time and effort exerted, as nothing worthwhile is gained from berating yourself unnecessarily or allowing others to berate you. Thus, peeling back the internal layers is a sure way of revealing the distortions that lie at the core. Doing so is essential to getting a grip on under or overstated expectations, which is the antidote to feeling like a failure. Refraining from the need to focus on shortcomings that do not really exist, except in the mind of others or those fabricated in your own mind, where they operate in your reality as if they truly exist, is also essential to not feeling like a failure.

The desire to be better or more than you already are may be no more than a deception based on non-factual opinions you or others hold as being true of yourself. Tracing the origin of such a damaging perspective to a specific person, place, event or time is essential to uncovering its root cause because these opinions suggest that you are not valid or worthy just as you are, that you need to be someone or something you probably do not really need to be. The result is often a forced cognitive effort towards the pursuit of a vocation, career or profession for the sake of living up to an accomplishment expected of you, though it may not be what you really want, need or truly desire. You may succeed in attaining the sought-after goal; however, you may find yourself plagued with an underlying sense of dissatisfaction and possibly even

experience an underlying resentment that surfaces in your reality, typically cloaked in indiscernible manifestations appearing to be unrelated, when in fact they are very related. You may get a sense that something is bothering you underneath the surface. You can feel the unrest within you, but you cannot seem to put your finger on it. Many people fall into this trap and end up blaming it on someone or something other than what it really is which accounts for many failed relationships only because they just don't know what the "it" really is and don't know how to find out. Sorting through the layers is not common practice in the day-to-day affairs of people until the situation worsens sufficient to send them in the direction of psychotherapy or some other external means of helping them sort through the plaguing sense of dissatisfaction and internal unrest, which often wreaks havoc in their relationships. It is after all, quite disturbing to perceive yourself as a failure, that you have failed to live up to an expectation, whether it was self-imposed or was imposed on you by someone else.

As personal development should be a genuine internal urge or impulse to better oneself, in accordance with the natural progression of individuation, it is not always so in everyone's case. For many people, these urges often have roots buried under layers of false or misleading assumptions, misconceptions and distorted perceptions that over time act on already well-embedded dysfunctional thought patterns and false or limiting belief structures supported by strong feelings and emotions, repeatedly generated by a remembered or forgotten past event, whether perceived or real. The tendency is to overcompensate or under achieve, which of course, creates a psychological imbalance. Discovering that the cause of feeling inadequate or feeling like a failure has its basis in a derogatory statement someone declared was true about you are common occurrences. These experiences typically occur in childhood, but can occur at any time along the path of life. Nonetheless, it is no less damaging unless you have a strong constitution and can let such things roll off your shoulders, as opposed to taking derogatory things said or actions taken against you personally. Not taking these things personally follows along the principle of not allowing others to rent space in your head, which for many people is much easier said than done. It is very difficult not to feel the sting from demeaning acts against you or derogatory things said about you, especially when such experiences occur in childhood. The memory of these experiences do not just vanish into thin air, but rather they live on in the confines of your psyche and will manifest in your reality in ways that make it difficult to connect all the dots to the initial cause. Once the psyche records the event, real or perceived, it sets the psychological wheels in motion, most often manifesting as undesirable experiences. Unfortunately, the psyche does not discern between fact and fiction anymore than it discerns between illusion and delusion, all are equal, thus the mental and emotional damage can have lifelong effects.

Unfortunately, people are not always aware of the initial cause, simply because they are not consciously aware of it or because they have lost sight of it over the course of time, even though the initial cause is contributing to a host of personal dysfunctions in their

reality. Even if you are aware of the initial cause, you can still have a tendency to over compensate or under achieve, no different from those who are totally unaware of the initial cause, but who are nonetheless still reacting to it. Because an event is not always recalled exactly as it occurred, there is a tendency to distort objective facts by a subjective interpretation of the event, which in reality did not occur in the same context in which it is later recalled. On the other side of this same coin, is an equally subjective interpretation of an event that did not occur at all, but is no less objectively distorted because the mind has recorded the event as if it really did occur, when in fact it did not. Both scenarios are just as damaging, as each is governed by a subjective interpretation. The adverse affects are often far reaching in terms of time and how they are manifested. Either way, there is a tendency to overreact to an actual or perceived as an actual event, which inevitably leads to overreacting to most everything else related to the event or anything that closely approximates the actual or perceived event. The difference between a real event and a perceived event is gauged by how real it feels to the perceiver. The fact that something is felt and, therefore, believed even if it is a subjective interpretation is no less real to the perceiver than if the event was an actual objective experience.

Chasing down the desire to be better or more under false assumptions or false pretenses will lead you straight down the road of hard knocks when left unchecked. It is one thing to want to be better or more than what you already are is perfectly natural tendency, but it's another thing to want to be better or more than you are in response to an unrealistic expectation or thinking you actually are better or more than you really are. Honesty is the best antidote to clearing away discrepancies of what really is and is not true about you or your reality. Putting on airs is not being better or more, it is an illusion founded on a self-formed delusion, often based on insecurities, compensated for by putting yourself on a pedestal or allowing someone else to put you on a pedestal, thus, evoking the principle of what goes up must come down. In all cases, a good dose of sincere honesty rids you of self-fabricated illusions or delusions, which clears the path for a more grounded and realistic version of your truer self.

Many people fear facing a reflection of what they think is their true selves reflected in the mirror because there is the risk that they might not like what they see. However, it is important to remember that this reflection does not necessarily represent the Real you, but rather it is the perceived or conditioned version of you that is reflected in the mirror, which are as different as day is to night. Such personal discoveries may or may not be a welcomed event, as it does leave you with the task of discovering your true self or as close to your true self as you can possibly get, that is, if you have the courage to dare to go there. Discovering your true self often involves peeling away layers of negative internal influences, such as addressing issues of self-worth, self-esteem and self-validation. Of course, there is always the possibility of straight up denial, thus avoiding

exploring the real you at all cost, which is not recommended as an alternative to getting to know the real you.

The truth about knowing your true self is that it is a life-long journey of discovery, given that the true self undergoes all sorts of conditioning right from birth. The traits that seem to define you from early on are not always your real traits. Some of them may be learned traits in response to the prevailing conditions in your personal, cultural, religious and social environment. Many a child has been hushed up when it comes to expressing a trait that represents the nature of their true selves, even at the most subtle level of expression. Instead of feeling the freedom to express their true selves, they suppress potential traits because they are deemed unacceptable by adults who are supposed to know better, i.e., parents and/or caregivers or those of authoritative positions, such as teachers, ultimately suppressing the proper and just development of potentialities due to a lack of understanding and encouragement. Unfortunately, the suppressed trait does not fully develop and in some cases, it can actually hinder the process of normal individuation, which often causes a person to act out inappropriately or to seek ways of fulfilling unrecognized innate needs in harmful ways. Suppressed traits do not vanish into thin air; they remain in the psyche where they continue to seek an outlet as a means of satisfactory expression, though not always in the most appropriate ways. Inappropriate behaviors, such as emotional outburst of anger and frustration, as well as a nagging sense of dissatisfaction are signs of suppressed potentials. These potentials do not arise into conscious awareness by accident. They exist for the purpose of intentional expression and, therefore, should not be suppressed or repressed. They are accumulated carryovers from prior life experiences and are no less intended for development in the current life experience as they were in past life experiences, just as they will carry over into a future life experience, if necessary, where they will continue to be developed, as this is the natural progression of personal evolution.

Sometimes latent character traits spring up seemingly out of nowhere, manifesting as a formerly undetected talent, skill or ability. These characteristics are not newly formed traits; they were lying in wait for a more conducive time to manifest. There is no telling how many other undeveloped traits are lying in wait for the right time and place to manifest as well. When these traits suddenly show up, as they are prone to doing at certain intervals or stages of life, it is necessary to integrate them into the fabric of your reality; otherwise, they can feel like a fifth wheel. While you may become aware of the presence of a latent trait, you may not know exactly what to do with a trait you were not previously acquainted with and, consequently, have no experience with its presence in your reality at this time. Sometimes the sudden arrival of a latent trait can be misinterpreted and utilized in a very derogatory way, believing that it is serving a useful purpose, when in fact it is not. Thus, the appearance of a latent trait can be more of a curse than an actual blessing when not recognized for what it truly is. For example,

when the latent trait of tenacity arises into your conscious awareness, its presence can do more harm than good, such as when it is used as a means of standing your ground to the point of controlling or overpowering others. This is not the same as being tenacious for the sake of seeing a goal through to its completion, which promotes your own individuality and is a tangible or intangible benefit to yourself, as well as being a service to others. The only exception is a valid, not a perceived need to protect yourself from the threat of harm. The desire to be better or more than what you really are becomes a reality when a latent trait is put to good use and causes no harm to yourself or others.

Suppressed traits are not the same as latent traits; they are traits that for one reason or another were suppressed, which does not imply that they never existed. They always existed within you, they just needed conditions conducive to manifest and develop. Sometimes it takes a little unraveling to discover that the trait has been there all along, it's just that you were not aware of it previously and, of course, had not developed the trait accordingly. But when allowed to develop properly, that is, if you so choose, the ongoing process of individuation is indeed enhanced. Developing a suppressed trait may or may not take extended time; it just depends on how well you integrate the trait into the fabric of your reality. Of course, the conditions you are attempting to integrate the trait in should be favorable.

The awareness and integration of a suppressed trait usually comes as a relief to most people because it provides them with the freedom to become more than they were, especially when what they were or thought they were was based on a perceived lack of a particular trait, talent, skill or ability. Clearing away any distortions so that the suppressed trait can fully develop moves you closer to fulfilling your desire to be better or more than you previously were. The benefits are that you feel more wholly connected to your true self, ultimately, bringing you closer to your true self than you may have ever been. Thus, you experience a spurt of individuation, which moves your own personal development and spiritual growth up a notch or two on the ladder of personal and spiritual evolution. Disabling beliefs can have a crippling affect on the psyche; they can hinder the manifestation and the development of suppressed traits. Thus, it is a very liberating experience to be freed from the erroneous belief that you are less than who or what you think you should be, not because the capability to be better or more did not already exist within you, it was always there, it's just that it was blocked by an erroneous belief, yours or others.

The desire to be better or more than you already are becomes a more serious matter when you are not putting forth the effort it takes to be better or more, even though you are quite capable of being better or more than what you currently are. Many people fall into this erroneous ditch of error because they hold fast to certain disabling beliefs that are self-defeating. They may think of themselves as being lazy or having no motivation or no desire to become something more. Ultimately, the effort it takes to become more



is thwarted by the mental attachment to a false belief or distorted perception. Such false and limiting beliefs can build onto or attach to other equally crippling beliefs, inevitably freezing you right in your tracks, literally stopping you from moving forward in one or more endeavors. Those who fall into this category seldom risk getting out of the starting gate, much less allow themselves the opportunity to get to first base because of a lack of self-worth or the fear of a presumed failure. Because disabling beliefs falsely depict your character in some manner of speaking, they are not only worth examining, it is essential that you do examine these beliefs if you are to ever dig yourself out of a needless self-defeating emotional and cognitive rut.

Disabling beliefs do not stand on their own accord; they correspond to related thought patterns supported by strong feelings, emotionally expressed and subjectively acted on. When you examine your own disabling beliefs, you are not likely to identify them as disabling beliefs, but are more likely to believe in the integrity of your beliefs, as if they are actual truths, as if they accurately depict you or the nature of your reality. Therefore, you will not know to look more closely at the embedded dysfunctional thought patterns that support these erroneous beliefs. The same is true about your feelings, which act as the spokesperson on behalf of your beliefs and support your thought patterns. Your beliefs do not carry as much influence on their own, but when they connect to your feelings and emotions, they become very powerful forces of mental energy that carry a great deal of weight, which inevitably determines the nature of your personal reality. If you feel you are not worthy or capable of being better or more than you are, you will remain stuck in that mental rut indefinitely. Your feelings will support your beliefs, which support your related thought patterns in an ongoing never-ending cycle, one always feeding into the other. The mental effort needed to break through the power of your own disabling beliefs requires an assessment of your thought patterns, your feelings and the emotions you exhibit in response to your thought patterns. Because it is not easy to pinpoint the origins of a disabling belief right away, as doing so often takes time to unravel its origins, it is very important to recognize that the belief exists and that it is preventing you from being better or more than what you have the real potential to be, can be and have every right to be. The purpose of pinpointing the origin of a disabling belief is so that you do not fall back into the same mental trap and so that you learn how to discern an oncoming disabling belief before it establishes itself in the subconscious and starts to wreak havoc in your reality.

A person can perceive derogatory things to be true about you, in accordance with standards that are acceptable to the beliefs they adhere too, most of which relates to their own conditioning and as such does not necessarily make their assessment of who or what you are or are not accurate. And as such a narrowly viewed assessment of you can be quite damaging, it is important that you take hold of your attributes and do your own honest assessment, discern what is true about you and what is not true about you, which cannot be based solely on one person's experience with you. Such a measure of

self-assessment is not an easy task, as discerning the truth about your self is subject to things like denial and subjective interpretations, thus making the process of sorting through fact from fiction not always an easy accomplishment. Self-assessment is very important because an inaccurate depiction of who you are is not only damaging to your psyche, it transforms into a negative state of mind that can cause a loss of your identity, cause you to feel disconnected from yourself and can even cause bouts of depression. Worse yet, is that the psychological weight resulting from an erroneous depiction of who you perceive yourself as or who someone depicts you as, maps a neural path that over time creates a neural profile etched in your brain making it very difficult to come out from under the strong influence of the derogatory depiction of you. Unless you get this depiction of yourself cleared out, you will have a very tough time pulling yourself up by your proverbial bootstraps. Unfortunately, good intentions will not help, your efforts will be in vain until you get a grip on just who you really are, not who someone thinks you are. Thus, the desire to be better or more shifts into an attainable goal that can be accomplished.

In closing, we hope that this discussion serves you well, that it not only brings to mind your own desires to be better or more, but that it sheds light on how factual your self-assessments are. As always, please feel free to ask questions, make comments or share your experiences.

Many Blessings,

Linda, Z and the Collective We