

Lesson 116: Objective Awareness - the Antidote to Suffering

The causes that so prominently characterize human suffering are those that occur as the result of mental and emotional afflictions and adversities suffered internally, as well as externally. Mental and emotional suffering, generally speaking, first arises when the most fundamental level of psychological needs are not met early in life, beginning with the need to be loved, the desire to be accepted, to be truly valued and to know that one's existence really matters. These unmet basic human needs, especially when experienced early in life, create internal voids that trigger the onset of undetected internal conflicts, which can endure throughout life. Because these internal conflicts are undetected they operate on automatic pilot, thus, they perpetuate mental and emotional suffering. Attempts to seek fulfillment of unmet needs, without objective awareness, is a quest that leads to internal and external hardships that, consequently, causes suffering. The longer unmet needs remain unfulfilled, the more difficult it is to identify them, as well as to identify the cause of them, thus, the harder it is to identify and overcome the internal conflicts created by them. The purpose of this discussion is three-fold. First, it is to define objective awareness, second, it is to emphasize that objective awareness is key to identifying internal conflicts, most especially when caused by unmet mental and emotional needs. Third, is to emphasize that objective awareness is the antidote to mental and emotional suffering.

Although reality exists within the framework of objectivity, humans incline toward a conditioned conceptual and subjective interpretation of reality. As attention and the flow of thoughts, feelings, beliefs and expectations follows sensory experiences, whatever the mind perceives is manifested in the domain of objective reality. Because the senses (sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch) are not an objective function, sensory experiences lead to all sorts of subjective and conceptual interpretations and false assumptions, based on perceptions that when inaccurately or narrowly viewed distorts objective reality. Sensory experiences are also backed by supporting beliefs that may or may not enrich the experience of what is being perceived. Mental and emotional suffering caused by an objective event – a real event, as well as a perceived event, which is subjective, manifests in reality as an undesirable objective experience, as thoughts do become things and like does attract like. Thus, awareness that is objective, which is true and real, as opposed to subjective awareness, which is not being aware of reality as it really is, puts afflictions and adversities, encountered anywhere along the path of life, in a perspective that is true and real, which ends mental and emotional suffering.

Because mental and emotional suffering occurs in the wake of unmet needs, attempts to fulfill the voids are often futile efforts, especially when sought after in all the wrong places and typically in the company of the wrong people. Reliance on those who have not yet identified and resolved their own internal conflicts are not capable of fulfilling their own unmet mental or emotional needs, thus, in all likelihood, will fail to fulfill your

unmet needs. The inability to fulfill your mental and emotional needs in the company of those who are not equipped to do so, is not only an unrealistic expectation sure to disappoint, the effort perpetuates afflictions and adversities already experienced. Seeking fulfillment of your unmet needs where they are not likely to be found is a psychological setback that can leave you feeling like a failure, which also adds to your mental and emotional suffering. The inability to fulfill your own mental and emotional needs to your personal satisfaction, which may not be realistic due to undetected and, therefore, unidentified internal conflicts, is not just isolated to the feeling of failure, the adverse affects set in motion issues of self-worth and self-esteem. Thus, objective awareness is not only key to identifying unmet mental and emotional needs and the internal drive to fulfill them, often in negative and self-destructive ways; objective awareness is the antidote to the suffering caused as the result of unmet needs and the internal conflicts they create.

When afflictions and adversities are encountered early in life, the psychological dots are not easily connected to those events encountered later in life due to the passage of time. Distance from the initial cause can shadow your ability to see how afflictions and adversities encountered in the past are connected to what is going on in your reality today. Thus, the further along you are from the original cause, the less likely is the possibility of linking all current afflictions and adversities to the initial cause, the actual event that created the unmet mental or emotional needs to begin with. Distance makes the process of sorting through the psychological affects difficult, which becomes even more complex if the event is long forgotten, has been suppressed for the sake of emotional safety and mental survival or is a matter of distorted perspectives, all of which equates to looking for a needle in a haystack.

Exposure to afflictions and adversities, however and whenever they are encountered in life, when left unchecked or unexamined tend to leave a psychological imprint on the psyche, which creates internal conflicts and can even exacerbate existing unmet needs. Although internal conflicts may have been initiated by a single contributory cause, there is an active exchange of sub-causes and ongoing undesirable effects resulting from the initial cause. As each cause builds on the negative energy of a prior cause, the result is a myriad of ongoing and often self-destructive effects, creating all sorts of undesirable objective manifestations, appearing as if separate and isolated incidences. However, in actuality they are all intricately connected to the one contributory cause...the original adversity or affliction that caused the unmet need to begin with. Although it may seem that recent adverse occurrences are brand new experiences, perceived as unrelated, they are the after affects of afflictions and adversities experienced earlier in life. As nothing in reality happens by chance, all these adverse events are connected; each experience is linked to the other, which is why the mental and emotional suffering is ongoing.

The afflictions and adversities that first contributed to your unmet mental and emotional needs manifest internally and externally throughout the stages of your life, simultaneously corresponding to your attitude and your mental state of mind. Treating these adverse experiences, as if they are isolated and unrelated incidences, leaves you circling around the truth, but never actually getting to the center, which is the core of the truth. Thus, the way to end the resulting mental and emotional suffering is to identify the internal conflicts, which sometimes, though not always means tracing them back to their root cause. Doing so is often out of necessity because it puts everything experienced from then on in objective perspective and often comes as a huge relief, given the possibility of self-guilt. Because the recollection of past memories are not always accurately recalled and, therefore, are not accurately restated, makes tracing internal conflicts to their root cause difficult, just as perceptions of events that did not actually occur distorts objective reality, this too makes tracing the underlying cause of subjectively perceived events even more difficult.

Thus, the cognitive process of identifying internal conflicts are truths arrived at by way of objective awareness that when remaining as a constant mental effort results in an enlightened existence, which ends suffering. The more objectively aware you are, the closer you get to the discovery of your truths, which puts the nature of your own personal reality in objective perspective. And the greater your understanding is of those who have adversely affected your reality, opens the door to compassion and forgiveness, which is essential as you sift through the layers of your own afflictions and adversities, identify your own internal conflicts and come to terms with your own unmet mental and emotional needs. Since no one stands alone in their experiences, an attitude of compassion and sensitivity towards yourself and others will serve you well, given that most people are the product of their own misconceptualized conditioning, among a host of other contributing factors. The result is that they too have their own unmet mental and emotional needs and, therefore, lack the ability to understand reality from an objective perspective.

Objective awareness is essential to understanding that most everyone else is in the same evolutionary boat as you are. The people most prominent in your circle of life are at various stages of personal development and spiritual growth, if they are indeed pursuing this path. Either way, they are not always going to act and interact with you in the most desirable or perfect ways, anymore than you are capable of exemplifying perfection in all your ways and at all times, given the negative influence from your own internal conflicts. Much like you, they too may interact in rather adverse ways, not always meaning or intending to, but do so simply because they are the product of their own conditioned environment and have suffered afflictions and adversities just as you have suffered yours. Consequently, they act as they do mostly out of ignorance of principles that govern the plane of human behavior, such as cause and effect, attraction, manifestation and retribution, the very same ignorance you have been acting from too, which makes

you no better or worse off than anyone else, just on equal terms. Given the fact that not everyone has attained sufficient enlightenment, not everyone possesses the right knowledge, so rather than enhance their reality it becomes a personal mental and emotional struggle, sometimes of overwhelming proportions. Unfortunately, objective awareness and enlightenment is not built into the human psyche, it is learned, having attained a higher state of conscious awareness, which requires assimilation and the integration of principles learned. As few people become completely aware and fully enlightened in the course of one lifetime, anyone who has embarked on the path of becoming more aware is to be commended because the journey toward enlightenment is not an easy path to follow. As the outcome is always relative to the scope of understanding and the ability to integrate what is learned, sometimes means taking a step forward only to take one or more steps back and remain there for extended periods of time, which can be very frustrating.

In contrast, there are those who do not even know that such a path exists or is worthy of their time and effort, thus objective awareness and enlightenment is not a goal likely to be pursued, much less achieved, at least not in this lifetime. The uncaring aspect of their mental attitude aligns with their established negative thought patterns, limiting and even disabling belief structures, distorted perceptions and expectations that veer far from being realistic, not just of themselves, but of others too, which contributes to a rigid and inflexible mindset that is not easily changed. Although they are looking out for themselves, acting in accordance with their own expectations, fulfilling their own desires, dreams and goals, they do not always act in their own best interest, much less care to act in your best interest. In as much as this negative attitude speaks to selfishness and self-centeredness, these people choose to maintain an unaware and unenlightened existence because they do not think there is anything wrong with the way they are living, especially if life is going fairly well. Of course, this seemingly etched in stone self-directed mentality is subject to collapse when some important circumstance alters or dramatically changes the course of their perceived concrete reality, which can go in either direction. Either they will experience an attitude of sincere humility or they will take an even stronger stand, retaliate with even more selfishness and self-centeredness in an attitude of perceived self-defense.

Psychological defense mechanisms created in an attitude of self-defense, whether perceived or real, not only corresponds to your state of mind, they control the projection of your state of mind. Projecting negativity creates additional personal and interpersonal turmoil, thereby attracting even more afflictions and adversities, which is counterproductive. Identifying these internally structured defense mechanisms, understanding how they are really affecting your reality and then learning how to counteract the negative effects is a step in the right direction toward eliminating the need for these defense mechanisms and the turmoil they create. Objective awareness along with an intelligent and practical approach to understanding the adversely affected

nature of your reality is the means to a balanced readjustment of your thoughts, behaviors, feelings and emotions that in turn halts the projection of negativity, thereby resolving your own internal conflicts, which eliminates your mental and emotional suffering.

The conscious or unconscious act of avoiding the identification of negative afflictions and adversities, as well as the internal conflicts they create, manifesting as external problems wherever and however they exist in your reality, is counterproductive too. Burying your head in the sand is an example of an unenlightened existence that is dangerous to yourself, as well as being a potential threat to others. Pretending a problem does not exist, when in fact it does, even if the problem only exists in your head is still an internal conflict that must be resolved, if mental or emotional suffering is to be alleviated. Thus, projecting blame on others or accusing them of perceived flaws or faults, which are reflections of your own flaws and faults, is not a solution to resolving your own internal conflicts. However, making a conscious choice to put your reality in objective perspective is a very wise choice, as it alleviates unnecessary self-inflicted suffering, which in a sense is self-punishing and is even punishing to others. Putting the afflictions and adversities encountered in the past and those experienced in the present in objective perspective also reduces the risk of blowing things out of proportion, thus creating additional personal and interpersonal difficulties.

The conscious or unconscious act of making a mountain out of a tiny anthill, as the result of self-defeating defense mechanisms, distorted perceptions and misconceptions about the past, opens the door wide to additional self-inflicted suffering, which is non-productive. The longer your reality remains out of objective focus, the more difficult it is to stop the avalanche of undesirable effects, as the result of unresolved internal conflicts. The mountain you inevitably construct from the anthill turns into an entire mountain range, now completely out of objective focus, which is the result of subjective perspectives that not only leads to future problems, there is also the risk of projecting or transferring the fault of these problems to those who are not at fault. The more focus placed on afflictions and adversities experienced in the past and the associated emotions, the higher the risk of conscious or unconscious self-absorption. This self-absorbed, self-centered mindset can give way to a multitude of equally damaging psychological effects, such as impatience, intolerance and most especially denial, as well as short-term or even long-term depression, in addition to other physiological symptoms, such as fatigue, muscle pain and headaches, to name but a few.

The after affects suffered from afflictions and adversities encountered early in life correspond to the level of your own personal development and spiritual growth. The less these two planes are individuated and matured, the greater the suffering and even how you suffer and the duration. Likewise, the more closed-minded you are, the less you understand how it is that you can bring about your own self-inflicted suffering, even

when the original cause was not your fault, but was inflicted on you by others or was the result of an adverse circumstance.

Your mental state of mind is the equivalent of a tree trunk that supports the attitude you hold with regard to your experiences and overall attitude toward life in general. From this symbolic tree trunk grows many strong branches that represent your dominate thought patterns, your reactive behavior patterns, your own disabling beliefs, your unfocused perceptions and your unrealistic expectations. Your prevailing attitude, like a root, runs deep in the confines of your mind and from your mind comes the kind of experiences you are likely to encounter, as like does attract like and thoughts supported by a negative attitude does become the negative reality you will continue to experience and, consequently, suffer from. As everything is relative, the stability of mind, thought, behavior, feelings and emotions are largely affected when under the influence of negative and self-destructive internal conflicts, that when left unexamined, overshadow the truths that explain the objective nature of your reality. Thus, the deception and the illusions of your distorted reality live on right along with your unmet mental and emotional needs, as does your suffering.

The freedom to express emotions is essential to life, at least as it exists at the current stage of human evolution. However, this freedom comes with a price tag, often heavily paid when emotions are acted on or expressed to dangerous extremes, whether to oneself or when lashed out at others. Thus, emotional expressions based on distorted perceptions and unrealistic expectations are not only out of balance, they are subjective and illusional at best. Like all things in life, mental and emotional balance is also essential to well-being, psychologically, physically and spiritually speaking, as body, mind and soul are all intricately connected. However, the antidote to expressing emotions is not suppression or repression, as this method of avoidance gives way to psychological, physiological, as well as physical disorders, often as the result of pent up frustration and anger, which can easily lead to depression, resulting in emotional imprisonment. The antidote to emotional reactions and overreactions is the objective awareness that you are overreacting, which stops the suffering and often immediately or at the very least, gives you space and time to allow for more clarity from an objective perspective.

Unfortunately, afflictions and adversities encountered early in life come in all shapes and sizes in terms of what is actually experienced and the degree of the experience. As no two people experience an affliction or an adversity in the same exact way, so the psychological impact and imprint on the psyche varies greatly. A seemingly less threatening or minor incident can evoke just as much strife, hardship, struggle and suffering as can a more serious, threatening or significant affliction or adversity. However, even this perspective does not hold true of all people at all times. A person can encounter a very serious or threatening adversity and come through it as if nothing

ever happened and even be the better for it. On the opposite side of the same coin is the experience of others who encounter a minor affliction or adversity, but can be affected by its negative influence for many years to come. The psychological impact resulting from a minor or a major adversity, in the way it is personally experienced, cannot be predicted, therefore, there simply are no concrete standards. The unpredictable range of personal experiences and corresponding mental constitutions makes it very difficult to assess the psychological impact every imaginable affliction or adversity can possibly have on a person, until it is actually experienced. And although there are similarities that weave a common thread, each person's experience in terms of how they mentally and emotionally react and respond to an adversity is very individualized, as is the adversity itself. And although there are adverse and even threatening situations that cannot be avoided or not easily avoided, the resolute is to become objectively aware of your circumstances as soon as possible because doing so is the real means of minimizing and, thus, eliminating your suffering and finding solutions where solutions can be realistically found. A subjective interpretation will not relieve your suffering, but it will surely enhance and prolong it.

Coming out from under the hypnotic spell of negative afflictions and adversities, is to identify unmet needs and the resulting internal conflicts, and if necessary, identify the source of them so as to get beyond the after effects, thus ending or at least initially minimizing the suffering. But to accomplish this, there has to be a personally driven incentive, a determined choice, acting on an inner motivation to discover objective truths that have been hidden from your conscious awareness, perhaps for a very long time. The determination to effect a positive change in your reality can be something as simple as refusing to buy into negative influences, which may be someone expressing disapproval of you in some manner of speaking. You may discover that happiness really does exist from within and that you really don't have to chase it down in places where it won't ever be found or if found is only temporary at best.

Making a mental choice, by way of cognitive, intellectual and practical efforts to prevent internal or external negative influences, whenever and however they come into your reality, from dictating your reality and control the quality of your experiences, takes a strong mental constitution. But for those who do not possess such a strong constitution, afflictions and adversities, even minimally experienced, can have long-term negative and debilitating psychological effects, thus giving way to a self-defeating victim mentality and/or the creation of perceived defense mechanisms that serve no real purpose. People are not generally inclined to go in search of the answers that would explain their circumstances from an objective perspective, thus settling certain internal conflicting issues. They typically seek help when a personal or catastrophic event strikes or when the dysfunctions in their lives gets so far out of hand that they can no longer safely manage their reality.

The complexities that characterize human suffering, psychological speaking, are not any easier to untangle than they are easily understood, especially when self-worth, self-esteem, courage and self-confidence are badly shaken. The ability to overcome the negative effects from an affliction or adversity can be a long journey back to psychological restoration and well-being. Thus, the means of accomplishing this psychological feat is to exert a fair amount of cognitive effort in an attempt to try to see things as they really are, not as they appear to be or as someone said they are. However, the cognitive act of parting the veil of illusion and delusion in an effort to see things for what they really are can be extremely difficult, more so when what is perceived to be true is tightly connected to long held beliefs, which are not easier to part ways with anymore than it is to recognize unrealistic expectations. The shift in awareness is not an easy transformation, as one does not merely shift from one well-established mindset and equally well-formed corresponding attitude to the uncertainty of the unknown, which is unfamiliar territory not previously explored and is, therefore, scary.

In closing this discussion, it is important to keep in mind that in as much as objective awareness is the key to identifying internal conflicts caused by unmet mental and emotional needs and, furthermore, that objective awareness is the antidote to such suffering, reaching this state of objective awareness is not easy, but it can be attained. There is a path to mental liberation and emotional freedom, but it is not sought after or traversed without the personal incentive and motivation to do so. We hope that the discussion in this lesson encourages and motivates you to seek your own path of mental liberation and emotional freedom, as the result of becoming objectively aware about the nature of your personal reality and, thus, becoming more spiritually enlightened.

Many Blessings,

Linda, Z and the Collective We