

## Lesson 81: The Path to Cognitive, Emotional and Spiritual Maturity

### Series Five: Accepting and Making Changes in Your Life

The experience of accepting and making changes in your life can range from being subtle to devastating. Sometimes changes are self-motivated and sometimes changes are imposed upon you by an occurrence in your environment that relates to people, places and even things. Changes are sometimes an objective experience, in that they are intended, such as the changes that occur when a goal is achieved or a dream is realized. But changes can also be very subjective, especially when they are the result of an unintended or undesirable condition in your environment, and certainly not easily accepted or embraced. Change itself can be very challenging, regardless of whether it is self-motivated or was imposed upon you. Change spans the spectrum of experience; it can be scary, mysterious, exiting, thrilling, dreaded, desirable or undesirable; it can be debilitating or it can be the most rewarding experience. Some changes in life will either enhance your life experiences or it will feel as though you are being pushed right over the edge of your sanity. When change can be accepted and embraced, it brings with it opportunities for inner personal and spiritual growth. Change also opens the door wide to unseen opportunities. But one thing is for certain, change is inevitable, as the winds of change will always blow in and out of your reality. In this fifth series we will examine all the many aspects of accepting and making changes in your life.

The starting point of accepting and making changes always begins with expectations, as it relates to what you expect from yourself and from others and what others expect from you. The experience of expectations begins in childhood and spans across the bridge of adolescence and adulthood. Your experience in childhood may be such that you were expected to measure up to the accepted standards of those in authority. These early expectations may very well have been contrary to your own interests, visions, ideas, dreams and goals. You may have felt invalidated as an individual when you expressed or attempted to express your own likes and dislikes. Your parent(s), caretaker, guardian, or anyone who was responsible for you during childhood and even adolescence expected you to not only act in accordance with their beliefs, and what they perceived was good for you or was in your best interest, they also expected you to comply without resistance. Any hint of your own personality seeping to the surface may have been perceived as a blatant disregard for authority or was regarded as outright disobedience, was promptly squelched, even to the point of inflicting punishment on you. Outside the home you were exposed to the expectations of your teachers, and even your peers. Social, cultural, and religious expectations were no exception. Much was expected of you as a child, and in adolescence, and much is still expected of you as an adult. In most cases, those who were in authoritative positions were really looking out for your best interest, but were doing so from within the boundaries of their own limited

scope of knowledge, insight and wisdom, as well as from the influence of their own personal experiences.

All these expectations in life cannot help but to beg the question; to what degree are you required to change and for whose benefit? The answer is this: as a child and especially as an adult there are accepted expectations that require you to be compliant with the norms of social, cultural and even religious convention, to abide by the accepted rules and standards, sometimes at the expense of your individuality. But somewhere in the midst of conventions and norms, is your own sincerity and the right to its expression where the matter of your own personality, desires, wants and needs; the achievement of your own goals, and the realization of your own dreams, and even your own expectations are all equally accepted. Convention or not, all these things do count because you count! Unfortunately, many people get hung up and fall into countless ditches of error because they have been so conditioned by certain external influences, to the point where they really do not know where they begin and end in terms of who they really are. So changes that are not self-motivated or self-initiated must come by way of overcoming any negative external conditioning as well as any self-destructive conditioning which necessitates a change in what is expected of you and what you expect of yourself. Some people are able to overcome the negative affects by viewing their conditioning, such as it is, as an opportunity to overcome a built in challenge; if for no other reason than to prove the others wrong or because a personal goal is really worth achieving. But many others cave in and conform to the conditioning, and then everything they approach in life becomes an even bigger challenge because there are that many more mental and emotional obstacles to overcome, that many more uncertainties, thus personal successes, whether relational, academic or occupational often become illusive goals or dreams realized. In this latter case, every mental and emotional aspect of a your well-being is greatly affected because your thought patterns correspond to your beliefs, which corresponds to your feelings, which corresponds to your perceptions, and then all of which corresponds to your own expectations. Not to mention your self-esteem and self-worth are on the low end of the validity scale, thus you tend to lack courage and confidence, which are the two essential ingredients necessary for building character and achieving desired personal successes.

As the product of negative conditioning, there is a second layer that must be removed as well. This layer pertains to your willingness to examine what actually occurred, as opposed to the illusion of what you perceive occurred. Illusions are images of situations and conditions you create in the confines of your mind with the help of your underdeveloped ego and your uneducated will that are not actual events but are nonetheless perceived as actual experiences which make them feel very real. Because the ego and the will have a tendency to march to the beat of an entirely different drum, there is an inclination to see and feel things your higher mind does not recognize as an actual event, however, your ego perceives it as such, and as far as your ego is concerned

the experience is as real as real can get. The ego and the will are capable of conjuring up all sorts of distorted images in your mind. The problem with these conjured up images is that they actually do become an eventual reality the moment you put the images into action. And as like attracts the energy of like and thoughts do become actual things, the images that were formed in your mind, perhaps just moments ago, when acted on with intent, becomes a force of energy that is now subject to certain universal laws which requires the action to manifest a result that is definitely experienced on the feeling plane of your reality, in addition to becoming an actual event either immediately or sometime in the future. These events are not necessarily composed of substance, but are often the adverse reactions of others involved, which compounds the situation.

But the good news is that these illusions undergo an immediate change of direction the moment you change your perceptions. This is where the miracle of making or accepting changes occurs. But it does not stop there because a change in perception has a domino-like effect. Changing your perceptions affects your beliefs, and your beliefs affect your thoughts and feelings, as well as your emotions. So when you change the energy of your perceptions, beliefs, thoughts and feelings, you not only change your expectations, you actually change the energy of accepting or making changes. The end result is that some aspect of your reality, whether past, present or future changes immediately or changes over time, and does so in a very desirable way. But of course, this is all subject to the lenses you choose to view your life through, including everyone and everything in your environment. The more distorted the images are in your mind, the more you box yourself in, and likewise, the more you limit your own possibilities for expanded experiences as well as the inner growth that comes with change.

In the face of change, you can choose to erect tall fences, consequently drawing in your boundaries and parameters, which makes it really hard to accept or make changes or you can choose to lower your fences so that you can see over them, or better yet, take the fences completely down; after all, what exactly are you afraid of and what are you really protecting. There is something to be said about expanding your boundaries outward and increasing the distance of your parameters when it comes to accepting or making changes in your personal environment. The results are that you will either enhance the quality of your own life experiences or the self-imposed limitations will ultimately feel like a ball and chain around your own ankle, thus limiting your own experiences and the possibility of change. Self-justification is not the answer and neither is avoidance, because the experience of life is indeed multi-faceted. Life does not limit itself to only being viewed through one lens, but rather it is to be viewed from many different lenses, as life itself seeks its own internal and external expression ad-infinitum, and does so without limitations. So here again, perceptions play a very important role. Perceptions will either allow you to experience the many facets of life or they will constrict the quality of your experiences and hinder the benefits from accepting or making positive changes.

The willingness to embrace the possibility of making personal changes is to first of all accept that habituated behaviors, actions and reactions are learned, and that they correspond to the conditions of your past and present environment. Consequently, your own thoughts, beliefs, perceptions, and your expectations correspond to your behaviors, actions and reactions, which are not etched in cement, nor are they fixed within your psyche, but rather they are subjective variables, which means they can be unlearned and unhabituated with effort. In spite of any surface resistance to embrace change, you are empowered to change the quality of your experiences, if you truly desire such a change. This is a realization you will want to give a lot of thought to because your whole life has been a conscious and unconscious adaptation to your personal environment, so why not make it intentionally desirable. Making changes, whether subtle or significant requires a shift in your mental attitude from an “I can’t” to an “I can” mindset, but you have to be willing to put forth the effort. Your current mental attitude relates to how you have been responding to the conditions of your life, which has mostly been a subjective experience anyway, and likewise, your habitual responses have been learned, and therefore, can be unlearned. Establishing a new pattern of behavior by modifying or altering a limiting or disabling belief, and viewing your circumstances from a different perspective is the formula for setting up the habituation of a new thought process, and consequently new and desired experiences that come by way of change.

It is often said that when you change your mind, you change your experience. And while this concept is true, it takes knowing much more about yourself than just to rely on the notion that simply changing your mind changes everything. Changing your mind is the first step in the process of accepting or making any changes in your environment. Changing your experience involves some degree of mental or emotional adjustments either in your thought patterns, your belief structure, your perceptions, and most definitely, your expectations. There is no ascending or descending order because each of these influences is connected and interconnected to the other; therefore, a change in one directly affects the influence of the others, which ultimately directs the course of accepting or making desirable or undesirable changes. And because the process of making change is circular, your mindset cannot be in opposition to any of these influences. Not only does an oppositional mindset distort your reality, it creates confusion, not to mention the unavoidable imbalance of your psyche.

Accepting changes in your life falls under two categories. The first relates to changes that are welcomed because they provide pleasant and desirable outcomes, and are often attributed as being the fruits of your labor, the realization of your dreams, and the achievement of your goals. Nothing more needs to be said about the reward of desirable changes, as the quality of these changes speaks for itself. However, the same cannot be said with respect to changes that are imposed on you by outside influences that may or may not be in your control, are usually not changes you desire, and can be difficult to accept, let alone to initiate making any further changes. But there are also changes that

are connected to certain choices and decisions you make that ultimately affect a desirable or an undesirable outcome. The inability to accept an undesirable change in your environment, regardless of the reasons, can send you running in all the wrong directions in an effort to regain control of the situation or condition. Or perhaps you are struggling to accept a change because an existing situation or condition does not suit you in some manner of speaking. The ability to make a clear distinction in terms of what you do or do not have control of or what you perceive you have control of is crucial to your own well-being, and the well-being of others. The ability to accept or to make changes not only applies to situations, conditions, circumstances or events, it also applies to personal matters as well, and speaks to the matter of control and being controlled.

Accepting and making changes in your environment relates to the expectations you have with others in your environment as well as yourself. It is essential to understand that everyone has their own personalities and their own interests that may or may not correspond to your own. They are not supposed to. No one should ever have to march to the beat of your drum. Everyone has the right to their own individuality. Acceptance of another person's personality and interests leaves you and the other person to function in a state of relaxation, as opposed to being stressed out from the pressure of unrealistic expectations. Refusing to accept or support another person's personality, their interests or their activities keeps you entangled in a nasty web of criticism, ridicule and being prone to ostracizing a person because their interests do not interest you, which has everything to do with your own expectations in terms of what you are and are not willing to accept, and even try to enforce a change, all of which keeps you fired up and perturbed more often than not. Not to mention it threatens your happiness and your peace of mind, as well as the other person's happiness and peace of mind. Any attempt to control another person's activities or interests is just that – it is control. No one has the right to control another person just because they cannot see the value in that person's creativity. Everyone has their own path to travel on and everyone has the right to its exploration, and can accomplish this without being selfish or stepping on anyone's toes when acted on with a positive and accepting attitude. Everyone has their own measure of creativity and should be free to express themselves in safety, and without fear of reproach. To disapprove of personal creativity is to deny the very existence of creation being freely expressed in an individual.

Fear is often attributed to making and accepting changes that are either positive experiences or are in your best interest for reasons pertinent to your own personal circumstances. The fear of change represents giving up something that is familiar for something that is unfamiliar. Fear can cause you to cling to what is known and comfortable, as opposed to embracing a change that is not known and may be perceived as uncomfortable, and sometimes even foreign to your usual experiences. The fear of change can be threatening because it involves not always knowing the end results. The

fear of change questions the possibility of what is beyond the horizon, or that anything desirable lies on the horizon at all. The fear of change involves a level of trust that is not automatically available, and usually needs subtle or significant coaxing and convincing. When fear is an underlying internal cause that blocks the path to accepting and making desirable changes, it is worth the effort to process what is at the root of that fear, to bring the fear into the light of truth because most of the time that fear is attached to an experience you are certain is or is not going to happen or is going to repeat itself, and is usually the result of a distorted, skewed or a deceptive perception more than it is the result of an actual event.

Accepting or making changes can be an intimidating experience, not just when change is hindered by fear, but also when there is a lack of self-worth and self-esteem. Confidence and courage are also very important contributing factors, especially when your own dreams, visions, ideas, goals and dreams have been undermined by someone who did not understand you or your personality or who did not recognize the value of following your dreams or achieving your goals, regardless of what they were or how unimportant they seemed to someone else at the time. Many goals have been left unachieved, and dreams not realized because the necessary internal ingredients to effect such desired changes were stamped out and were buried in the depths of your psyche, typically because some misunderstanding person, at some time along the path of your life, saw fit to squelch your enthusiasm and likewise squelched your energy. However, no one can really squelch your visions and ideas or your dreams and goals because they are a permanent part of your true self, and were inspired by your true self. You can take control of your life in this respect. You can accomplish this by taking a stand for yourself, as expecting others to take a stand on your behalf is not always likely to happen, especially when they do not see the value in what it is you hope to achieve, or a dream you know you should follow because it beckons you onward.

Desired changes can be achieved in spite of environmental conditioning. But changes cannot occur if you do not realize the value of your own self-worth. If you do absolutely nothing to raise the level of your own self-esteem, or to consider at least taking the first step, you will never know what changes can be accepted or made, or to know what really does lie on the horizon. Taking that first crucial first step and then taking all the other steps in succession will eventually lead you to the apex of a goal achieved or a dream realized. This is a mindset that can accept and makes positive changes. Resistance for any reason will not in the least bit effect a desired change, nor will it help to accept changes that come your way. Even radical changes, whether by intent or by external influence contain the potential for inner personal growth as well as spiritual growth, as well as the possibility for the doors of opportunity to open wide, but this cannot occur with a negative and self-defeating mindset.

In closing, we hope that we have brought the matter of accepting and making changes in your life to a whole new level of your understanding, and that you will reconsider the situations, conditions, circumstances and events of your life from a different perspective as the means to embrace accepting or making changes in your personal environment, which, incidentally, affects others who share in your personal environment. Please feel free to share your thoughts, comments or personal experiences.

Many Blessings,

Linda, Z and the Collective We

[linda@dragonofdrama.com](mailto:linda@dragonofdrama.com)