

Lesson 97: Overcoming Adversities

Life is not without its ongoing adversities, fewer for some and far too many for others. Adversities are not the result of chance or destiny nor are they the result of God's will; they are the result of various day-to-day external influences and internal stimulus that do not always interact well with each other. Adversities are interchangeable causes and effects; sometimes they are the cause of an effect and sometimes they are the effect of other causes that created them. Like it or not, adversities are as much a part of everyday life as every other experience. This is not to say that such causes and effects do not work together for the good, because they do, sometimes in the strangest of ways and often in the way of well-learned life lessons, which incidentally, is the will of God. Whether adversities are the cause or the effect of some other cause, the bell of adversity does indeed toll in this reality. However, the undesirable affects need not take a permanent toll on your psyche nor do they need to affect your reality to the extent that you cannot overcome them. Although adversities are not a welcomed guest in anyone's reality, there is always something meaningful to take away. Within every adversity, there is an intangible value found, best appreciated and experienced when the veil of illusion and delusion parts sufficient to see the truth, many truths are sometimes revealed. The discussion in this lesson will serve as a means to help you overcome the adversities in your life, as well as to attract fewer of them. The intent is that this discussion should lead to a greater awareness of yourself and your reality.

The goal to overcoming adversities and attracting fewer of them into your reality begins with an understanding of your internal reactions and responses to the adversities you have already experienced. This is your initial starting point that will effect a change in your reality and will lead to your own internal healing. Because the unpleasant affects from past and present adversities tend to leave an indelible mark, sometimes deep in the psyche, knowledge of your inner self is tandem to your inner healing. In spite of the various emotional healing modalities that exist today, make no mistake that internal healing does in fact come by way of some degree of cognitive, spiritual and sometimes even physical effort, which might mean getting off your butt and actually doing something to change your reality. In the end, all healing modalities wind up in the same exact place because there really is no means to circumvent the effort required, as there simply are no short cuts. No one jumps the tracks of reality (i.e. quantum jumping) without making an effort to understand your own internal mechanism. Such enlightenment comes by way of effort; even meditation requires an effort of the will. The evidence speaks for itself; the Buddha did not become enlightened, such as he did, without a great deal of exerted mental, emotional, spiritual and even physical effort. To understand how and why you react and respond to adversities and, therefore, attract more of them into your reality, is to accept that at some point you will need to face your inner self.

The opening paragraph alluded to the fact that some people experience fewer adversities, in contrast to those who tend to experience more than their fair share of adversities. Why is this? Contrary to the beliefs of many, the gap between the two is not the result of exposure to favorable conditions, as not every successful person reached the pinnacle of personal success by way of favorable conditions. It is a well-known fact, stated in the success classics and re-stated again in today's business compendiums that many people reached their personal throne of success under unfavorable or harsh conditions and sometimes in the midst of extreme adversities, and did so even when the odds were against any hope of attaining success. The bridge that gaps the difference is in how they responded to those adversities. Their mental state of mind is just as dominated by their own thought patterns, beliefs, perceptions and by what they expect from themselves, as well as what they expect from others, no different from your own, except that theirs is focused and more inclined toward clarity of mind. They do not allow external influences to undermine the achievement of their goals, nor do they allow adversities to shake the ground they stand on. They have a tendency to view adversities, not necessarily as challenges, but as opportunities. Rather than engage in the futility of the blame game, they step up to the plate, meet the adversity head on, and walk away having gained something of value, as opposed to the mindset of loss that so many people fall prey to and think they are victims of. Thus, the mark of distinction lies in their mental and emotional approach to the adversities they too encounter in life. This approach also serves as a protection, in that their own 'can do' mentality and emotional stability shields them from attracting many more adversities that would otherwise besiege them no different from what most people experience and are overcome by the negative effects.

The desire to attract fewer adversities rests in your ability to overcome existing adversities, as doing so will better prepare you to overcome future adversities so that they do not wreak havoc in your life later down the road. Obviously, the more prepared you are, the less opportunity there is for things to get out of hand, especially emotionally, as is often the case in the midst of an adversity. Although you cannot know what to expect in advance, as adversities are not a mental or emotional cookie cutter experience, there is a forewarning if you know what signs to look for. Being observant of your reality is to be very aware of what is going on around you and with you. It means being aware of your mental state of mind, your prevailing attitude and the stability of your emotions, as these internal influences are the measuring stick or the gauge that will determine how you will habitually respond and react to an adversity. Thus, it is imperative that you are very aware of what is going on within you, as that is precisely where you will find the key that will unlock the cognitive door that will enable you to overcome and attract fewer adversities.

You must also realize that you really are empowered to overcome the adversities in your life, regardless of whether or not they are self-inflicted or imposed on you by external

influences. Many spiritual texts speak to the power of self-control, including the Bible. It is a feat accomplished by way of your mental faculties and control of your emotions. In fact, the ability to control your emotions is paramount to restoring order in your life. Now this is not to say that you should not *feel* your emotions, because you should, but it is to say that there is an appropriate time and a healthier way to express your emotions, to yourself and to others, without making matters worse. The goal of this lesson is to overcome adversities and attract fewer of them in your reality. Before you can hope to avoid attracting more than your fair share of adversities, you must learn how to change the way you are mentally responding and emotionally reacting to any existing adversities. There are no other means of eradicating a lifetime of well-established negative or dysfunctional thought patterns. The same is true of habitual and often destructive emotional reactions. Neither of these internal influences can be changed or altered without coming face to face with the underlying factors, the unseen forces that provoke a resistant, oppositional and otherwise negative mindset, as well as the runaway effect of strong emotions. Such internal changes or alterations are not an overnight success – the shift is an ongoing process. The reason why change is an ongoing process is due to the very simple fact that you are able to see the truth in things that concern your reality in proportion to the grace given to you along the way – you can only realistically see what you can see and are willing to see. As your awareness shifts and increases, the level of your understanding also increases in equal proportion because they are relative. If it were not that way, man would have breezed through its mental and emotional evolution eons ago. The mental faculties would have given way to precision due to extreme clarity of mental thought and the emotions entirely bypassed, as there would be no need for emotional expression or the experience of the senses. The fact that man has not already accomplished this feat on a broad scale is a testament to the difficulty, not just in overcoming adversities, but the ability to stop attracting so many of them, which too is the will of God or whatever Higher Power you choose to recognize outside of yourself.

While some people can more easily shrug off adversities, the act of breaking habitual behavior patterns is not quite so easy for most people. In fact, it is almost more overwhelming and sometimes even more fearful than facing the adversities, as there is a perceived loss linked to the fear of change, as well as to the adversity itself. Unfortunately, there is a well-ingrained tendency to over react to adversities, often making them appear to be far more than what they really are, which equates to making a mountain out of a molehill. Thus, the gap between the adversity, the mental response and the emotional reactions are seldom proportional. The disproportion occurs when one attempts to respond to an adversity from a self-defeating negative, resistant and oppositional state of mind, which in turn leaves very little room for the emotions to be less reactive. The disproportion extends further onto the plane of emotions because there is a propensity to react from strong emotions that usually have very little to do

with the adversity at hand, but rather are memory associated emotional reactions that correspond to past adversities that may have been painful or difficult experiences. Just as strong emotions can quickly become like a runaway freight train, attempting to run away from strong emotions or worse yet to suppress them is equally dangerous to the psyche. Emotions are integral to the experience of the five senses. They are the measuring gauge of everything experienced in tandem with the senses, but they also serve as a warning when something is not right. Emotions are the expression of a wide range of feelings and should not be ignored, discounted or degraded in any manner of speaking. It serves no good purpose to ignore or suppress emotions at a time when you should actually be *feeling* them. Attempting to ignore or suppress your emotions will ultimately result in very unpleasant manifestations often in the way of physiological or biological discomforts. Neither of these self-defeating actions results in attaining a real sense of balance nor do they enable you to cope with the adversity at hand. In fact, getting in touch with your emotions, accepting them as you feel them, putting them in perspective and then letting them go is essential to maintaining your mental and emotional composure, as such equilibrium is necessary to overcome and attract fewer adversities into your reality. Thus, being aware of your mental responses, as they correspond to your mental state of mind and getting your emotions in check is necessary to overcoming adversities and is the primary means of attracting fewer adversities in the future.

By way of ancestral evolution, the brain is mapped to survival mode via neural pathways, which kicks into action the fight or flight instinct. This instinct serves you well in the face of eminent danger. However, this same inbred instinct can also trip you up when you erroneously act on either your fight or flight tendency, which occurs when you do not see things as they really are. You fall into those mental ditches or error when you react to illusions, which are nothing more than perceived realities, and as skewed or distorted perceptions of reality can be very convincing, you can easily get caught up in the trap of your own delusions. Not only do you deceive yourself, you are deceived by the illusions of others who claim that the reality they see is indeed real when, in fact, nothing could be further from the truth. Reality is only as real as it is made out to be and as Einstein said, it is a persistent illusion. And even though the experiences are felt, that does not mean the reality itself is real, mostly it is an illusion that can be altered in the mind and by the emotions – ad infinitum. An artist can create anything he imagines in the confines of his mind, which is where his art is first born and is then caught up by his emotions. You are no different! You create imaginary realities in the confines of your mind in accordance with how you perceive reality from a perspective that corresponds to your own beliefs and your expectations.

Programmed to believe certain things about life in accordance with environmental conditioning right from childhood, the cultivation of many of those beliefs continues as an adult and often does so without notice. The influence of your environment comes by

way of the conditions, circumstances and events you experienced as the result of your interactions with others and them with you. You may set out to do a certain thing on any given day, only to be side tracked by an unforeseen event, an external influence that steers you off course. But although the event appears at first to throw you off course, the degree that you are thrown off course corresponds to how you respond and react. The way you react corresponds to your own internal compass, which too is the result of ingrained environmental influences. The things you believe about yourself, as well as others in part dictates how you respond to the influence of others and the affect of that influence in your reality. Therefore, you become the measure of your thinking and your thinking does indeed become the measure of your experiences.

You cannot expect to overcome adversities when your mind is cluttered with dysfunctional or limiting thoughts, disabling beliefs, distorted perceptions, unrealistic expectations and emotions that are out of control. You are empowered to overcome adversities when you have clarity of thought, but to cultivate a state of clarified thought takes training. Achieving clarified thought is a cognitive process that requires mental retraining and emotional stability. It is shifting from the non-productive effects of habitually reacting to the adversities you encounter in life, whether by way of attraction or by way of choices that others impose on you, to taking control of your mental faculties, as well as getting a grip on your emotions. Such cognitive shifts are the catalyst that enables you to break free from the stronghold of your own self-deceptions, which are more dangerous to you than many external influences. Self-deceptions keep you locked down in the grips of very limited or distorted perceptions, in which you view the matters of life from a narrow perspective, while ignoring the unlimited panorama of broader perspectives. Self-deception is a veil that separates reality from illusion and with illusion, there is delusion, the two just go hand in hand. You are caught in the trap of your own delusions, and not only are you caught up in these mental traps; you are prone to actually believing that things are truly just as they appear on the surface. Thus, it is the appearance of a reality, and not the actual adversity you might be responding to that in turn keeps you bound to your emotional distress, which too is just as distorted as the illusion you see before you. So when you consider all these factors, you can see that an adversity may not really be as adverse an experience after all.

It is one thing to *feel* your emotions, it is another thing to unleash your emotions on others, and especially those whom you perceive inflicted the unwanted condition, circumstance or event on you. The *feeling* stage of your emotions is necessary and healthy. The process of feeling your emotions puts you in touch with how you feel about yourself and how you feel about the people, places or things that adversely influenced your reality in some undesirable manner of speaking. However, the operative word here is 'process' which means a series of actions or steps taken to achieve an end. Achieving an end implies that at some point and time you need to get a grip on your emotions, lest you achieve an end that has served only to make matters worse, now and in the future.

The quality of your future experiences rests on how you process your current experiences. Adding unleashed emotions to an already undesirable adversity does not alleviate the adversity or the effect of it, but rather it compounds the situation, sometimes making it far worse than it really is. Dysfunctional mental processes feeds into self-deception, which feeds into strong emotions, which results in unnecessary chaos and sometimes even confusion, as one is typically unable to make heads or tails out of the matter at hand.

Fear adds a very destructive element to the existing turmoil, to the degree that it can take center stage. Things start to deteriorate very quickly the moment the element of fear enters into the picture and gets a stronghold on your emotions, as well as your mental faculties. From that point on nothing appears as it really is, the veil of illusion is brought down over reason and intellect like a curtain coming down between the scenes of a play. The only sure means to lift the veil of illusion is to deal with the underlying basis of the fear. When fear enters into the equation, the adversity at hand become much more than it really is and will remain that way until there is an admission to the fact that something is feared, which is usually attributed to a perceived or real loss. Fear must be brought into the light of truth, as there is nothing to fear but fear itself.

Overcoming adversities requires an internal change that begins in your brain, carried down to the cellular level. You simply cannot expect to overcome adversities externally, because there is nothing out there than can help you accomplish this task. The reactive mechanisms are not just stored in the unconscious regions of your mind; they are stored in your brain and in the cells of your body. As contradictory as it sounds, such shifts begin by changing your mind and changing how you feel about the things in life that confront you in adverse ways. The moment you change your thinking, the adversity itself shifts in its intensity, even if only by one degree, but that one degree is relative. When you latch on to this mindset, you can experiment with this principle, as the fundamental application of it is the proof in the pudding.

As no two people react to adversities in the same exact way, there are those who let adversities roll off their shoulders, those who *appear* to let adversities roll off their shoulders and those who are deeply affected by adversities. Internalizing the negative effects from an adversity, whether perceived or real, is damaging in so many ways. One way or another it will wreak havoc on your psyche and consequently in your reality, either by way of an emotional explosion, a mental breakdown or it will rear its ugly little head in a variety of other undesirable ways. Unpleasant things can manifest outside of your awareness to the extent that you will not even know to connect the dots, much less to be know that there are dots to connect.

Lastly, overcoming adversities requires patience and the allowance for time. Patience is needed to come out from under the affects of an adversity and time is especially needed

to heal and recover, as well as to gain a better understanding of your own responses and reactions to adversities. Patience and time are essential to shifting onto another level of reality, one that is more real and less of an illusion, thus attracting fewer adversities.

In closing, it is our hope that this discussion does indeed shed light on the significance of overcoming adversities and just as importantly to attract fewer of them into your reality. Please feel free to ask questions or share your thoughts or comments.

Many Blessings,

Linda, Z and the Collective We

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