

## AWARENESS, DISCRIMINATION AND ACCEPTANCE

The path of personal progress is a minefield. Not only is there internal chaos, confusion and instability in our own minds but interwoven with that is also the incredible web of human interaction. The combination of the internal and external is awesome, which is why at times we find our lives so overwhelming. Just think about all your habits, moods, tendencies, drives and patterns and how often you fall victim to their powerful, seductive forces. Have you not pledged countless times that this will be the last time you fall foul of something you wish to be free of? And yet before you know it you are once again entangled in the disabling web of unwanted habits and motivations. Of itself, this internal force is a huge mountain to climb but when wedded to the behaviours and motivations of others you have an infinite pool of possibilities, both negative and positive. Although there is a stream of countless positive opportunities available to us from the sea of human exchange, our primary consideration in this moment is the countless opportunities we have to be a victim. It is the push and pull of the negative energies that exist outside of ourselves, with which we are concerned, because through understanding what enslaves us, we can negotiate our release. So, how on earth are we supposed to be free of our own shortcomings and not fall victim to those external forces that press against our lives, inviting submission? The answer is through increasing awareness, discrimination and acceptance.

Awareness in this context means being aware of one's own shortcomings, not in a way that undermines and devalues but seeing what it is that still needs to change, improve or be disowned within the self. It is only when you have an honest internal dialogue that you come to realise what external forces need to be avoided. Honest dialogue with the self gives rise to insight and clarity. True awareness is the gift of integrity. So, if you strive to move within the world in a way that honours yourself and others, then the path of self-progress continues to unfold before you.

Discrimination is the ability to draw on all relevant knowledge and experience alongside a true understanding of one's own motivations. That which drives us often distorts the truth about ourselves and others. Therefore, to understand one's drives and motivations is imperative if the knowledge and experience we have acquired, are to serve us in making wise choices and decisions. Once again it is honesty and integrity that provide you with the kind of discrimination that makes every situation one which is clear in terms of what it is you need to do. Then it is generally courage that is needed for successful execution.

Once you are aware of yourself and move skilfully through the maze of human relationships, using the eye of discrimination to guide you, then you need acceptance as your companion if you are not to be defeated by the challenges of being human. Acceptance means realising that the world is not always going to mirror your hopes, your desires, your needs and aspirations. In fact, acceptance means to understand that others are also pursuing their dreams and desires, and these will not always match yours. So, you need to renounce the great pull of expectation if you are to find your own way, otherwise you will be disappointed again and again when your needs are not being met by those whose lives touch yours. Acceptance is the realisation that you will make it to your own destination, understanding that each one is at a different point on the path of self-discovery, and it is not their role to fulfill your needs, nor is it your responsibility to fulfill theirs. We all need mutual support, co-operation and encouragement but the responsibility for growth lies with each of us individually. If your mantra is 'treat others in the way you wish to be treated', then your attitude, actions and approach will foster the best outcomes for you.