

## THE JOURNEY OF ENOUGH

In response to the relentless pace of modern life there is increasing discussion about how we might find peace amidst the frenzy and the chaos. This is why we've seen such a rise in the practice of meditation, in the sales of self-help books, in workshops and retreats of all kinds over the last thirty years, and currently, mindfulness, kindness and compassion being particularly topical. These activities have largely grown out of the desire to calm our increasingly busy lives; lives in which we have become less 'present', at times even absent! Despite the rise in these more 'mindful' activities, why then are we still no nearer that oasis of peace that our hearts and minds thirst for?

The main reason that the peace, joy and tranquillity we long for still remain beyond our reach is quite simply because we have not done enough. If we are to find the best in ourselves and express that within the world, then we must take the 'journey of enough'. This journey promises us peace and poise amidst the storms. It promises us insight and clarity, health and happiness, as well as the perception and perspective that will ensure we are no longer deceived by our pasts or misguided by our futures. So, what is this journey and what does it ask of us?

There are four primary considerations on this path, each one an essential point of retreat and reflection, if we are to really understand how this journey unfolds. They are best summarised in four words: knowledge, understanding, application and realisation. The promise put before us is simple - when there is enough knowledge, we are gifted understanding. When there is enough understanding we are compelled to take the journey of action and application. When there is enough application there is the bright dawning of realisation. Realisation is the point when it can be said that we are truly awake. The whole point of meditation, spiritual retreats, personal development workshops, self-help books, mindfulness programmes etc. is to help us to 'wake up' and be truly present in each moment. So, the question you need to answer honestly is, "are you doing enough to be where you want to be and for your life to unfold in the best possible way?"

You may need help to answer this question and if so, don't be afraid to seek it, but it's important to ensure that the source of that help also understands this principle of 'doing enough'. We have become caught up with the modern message that there's always a fast-track to wholeness and well-being and so the ancient principle that wisdom, healing and peace of mind take time and practice, is now less fashionable. We have come to revere speed above all else, as if it were the panacea. In fact, in some quarters, we've reached the point that if it can't be done quickly then there must be some flaw somewhere - we've come to expect everything to come with the promise of immediacy and are not sufficiently concerned about sustainability. What's the point of getting anywhere quickly if you're not there long enough to enjoy it? This doesn't mean the journey has to be long and hard, but it does need to be taken with respect for how the process of change really works. There is no doubt that some change can and does happen quickly but there is equally no doubt that there are times when that just isn't the case and unless we understand this we will keep pushing at those times when we simply need to wait and be patient.

You can, of course, take this journey by yourself, calling on what help you need from time to time but this will require proper planning, self-discipline and that you sustain a balance between tenacity and compassion. When we take a journey like this, we have to remember to be kind to ourselves especially at those times when we get it wrong - which we will and that's okay. We are not defined by our mistakes but by how we respond to them. Do not be afraid of failure, otherwise you will fail to find your real meaning and purpose. It is often on the road of mistakes that we discover the best in ourselves and our own paths become clear.

Let us come back to the four considerations on this path. The first of these is knowledge.

**Knowledge:** To truly undertake the journey of being the best we can be, knowledge is needed. We cannot get there on knowledge alone, but equally we are unlikely to make it at all without the beauty of knowledge. In this context knowledge is the map. It makes us aware of the terrain and the conditions we will have to face. It enables us to prepare for the journey in the right way to ensure we have the best chance of reaching our destination. The modern face of personal development offers so many solutions, each one more enticing and seductive than the last and so how on earth are we meant to negotiate our way through this? There is no easy answer to this question, but what you do need to do is start listening with your heart. You have to learn to trust yourself and start by developing a dialogue with yourself. You cannot hope to find your way if you are not consulting your inner world. Consuming all the information available 'out there', whilst ignoring the inner landscape will only help you to further lose your way. You must consult widely, properly researching those things that promise you peace, happiness and fulfilment. But then you must test them using your instincts and intuition and only if they stand up to that interrogation should you move forward in confidence and in faith. When you've done this enough, this will then lead you to the next stage on your journey of becoming.

**Understanding:** Understanding begins when we have gathered the necessary data from outside and consulted our inner world, listening keenly to the voice within, the voice we so often ignore. Out of the wisdom of that dialogue the concepts offered by the knowledge we have explored, start to be understood. We can then begin to fit the information into the framework of our personal experience from which the infinite possibilities, available in each moment, present themselves readily to us. The map of knowledge now begins to make more sense and we can see the way(s) we need to go. But the journey is not over at this point, it's really only just beginning. This is the mistake that so many of us make because once we *think* we have understood, we march forward with a certainty that can often mislead. However, this is a trap we need to be aware of because understanding *only* introduces us to the possibilities. It's the point of potentiality, where we are able to access those things we haven't even imagined, as well as those we have. But the key word here is potentiality - and it mustn't be mistaken for what will actually happen, because that is dependent on what we do - not what we say. In truth, until there's enough understanding there will be no application and application is the key to personal power and positive change.

**Application:** Those who have understood this process realise that understanding actually means to take action and that personal transformation and positive change are not possible simply because we understand. These individuals become busy planning exactly what they are going to do using this newly found awareness. They now appreciate it is only what we do that counts, good intentions simply are not enough! At this point in the journey a healthy obsession for putting what has been learned into practice takes place. The value of structure, the power of routine and the understanding of the laws that govern change are very much at the forefront of the mind. The individual recognises the only real power that knowledge has is when it's applied. It's important not to make the mistake of thinking a little application over a short period of time is enough; often what's required at this stage of the process is the 3'P's (practice, patience and perseverance). When we do what's needed and patiently wait for the dividends of our endeavours, we are enriched not just by reaching the destination, but also by the journey itself. Doing enough, in terms of application, isn't simply about moving on to the next stage; it's also about enjoying the beauty and potential of each moment along the way.

**Realisation:** This is the prize, the moment of awakening, the moment when the knowledge that began this process is really understood. No longer are these words inanimate, lying static on a piece of paper, nor do they remain unheard in the heart of the one who owns them. This is the point where innate knowledge of the self and what has been acquired from the world are now clearly understood and become manifest in one's life. The individual's life is now a testimony to those things that really matter and so their life is a celebration of virtue and truth. This is the point of awareness where what needs to be understood is understood; there is little mystery to such a mind and the knowledge beyond logic and the senses is increasingly unveiled. The journey from this point is full of compassion and love because nothing else makes sense. Realisation is not freedom from the storm; it's finding peace within it. The heart full of peace shares its gifts freely with the world. It's time to take the journey of enough... there you'll find your true meaning and purpose.

*“A person should only accept a doctrine if his own experience verifies it”.*

Buddha  
(563-483 BC)