

Leaning Into Your Feelings and Leaning Into Your Judgements Won't Kill You (and actually can free you)

Getting Younger

Some people had been working with my teacher for up to eleven years before I first began working with Charles nine years ago. They commented to me that everyone who does this work, and stays with this work, looks younger. I've seen this phenomenon many times. The longer a person does the work of being more intimate with what is uncomfortable in them, the younger they look.

Getting Younger From The Inside Out

Why is it that people continuing to do this work look younger? The troubling feelings, thoughts and judgements release as a person stays intimate with these held emotions and thoughts. There is also an acceptance that bad things happen in everyone's life. The held emotions and held thoughts about these bad experiences put a limit on a person's happiness.

As we let go of past stress, we become younger. One of Charles' sayings is that stress is the number one killer of people. Stress happens in the moment, though it's the stress that we carry for decades in our emotions and thoughts that is the slow killer of us.

Carrying Stress

Being free of stressful thoughts and stressful emotions leads to happiness, freedom and liberation. Why do we carry so many stressful emotions and thoughts?

Humans are programmed to go toward pleasure and to go away from pain. The stressful thoughts and emotions are painful, so our natural tendency is to not go into the pain inside of us. Our natural tendency is to go toward something that makes us feel good. By not healing the pain of our emotions and thoughts, more and more pain accumulates over a lifetime.

Going Toward Pleasure

Since people are designed to go toward pleasure and to go away from pain, most people carry a lot of internal pain. They also keep going toward pleasure. They keep themselves busy, they buy more things, they take drugs or drink alcohol, they exercise a lot, they throw themselves into projects or hobbies. They keep doing things that make them feel more pleasure.

If many people investigate why they want to do so much of what they do, they may find that they're doing things to keep from feeling the pain inside. When they slow down, they can become more uncomfortable. The culture of America is to keep busy doing what makes you feel better. This is why so many 'aholics' exist; workaholics, alcoholics, exerciseaholics, yogaaholics, save-other-peopleaholics. We can be doing very good things outwardly and still carry so much pain inside.

Myself

I know firsthand about not wanting to go into the pain inside (the stressful thoughts and emotions that have accumulated from life). I spent many years going toward pleasure to temporarily quiet the internal pain. I spent many years avoiding leaning into the feelings and thoughts. And it didn't work. Not one bit. All of my accumulated pain inside was waiting for me when I decided to stop trying to ease the pain inside through going toward pleasure.

It took years of more directly and intimately being with the painful emotions and judgements before most of their charge lessened. I couldn't have gone into and stayed with the pain inside without help from others. Having a teacher and doing work in group for many years has been invaluable in helping me to go deeper into the pain.

When The Internal Pain Is At Its Most Terrible

I've always found that when the emotional and mental pain are at their most terrible, it's a sign that what is beneath the pain is very close. I've always found that what is beneath the pain is love. It's this connection with love that gives us freedom, liberation and brings back our youthfulness. It's the last holding out of the emotional or thought pain, when it's at its worst. Just when we 'can't take any more' is the threshold of our breakthrough.

Breaking through this barrier of our pain is to be gradually worked with. I don't expect someone new to experience a big breakthrough. There is a resiliency and an internal strength that is needed to be able to let go enough for a breakthrough.

Why Our Painful Thoughts and Emotions Just Don't Leave

We need help in going into our held painful emotions and thoughts. If the pain wanted to go, then it would leave. Pain wants to stay. This is likely from a very primitive survival mechanism. If our internal pain leaves, then we may forget. And if we forget, we may set ourselves up for danger. If we keep every painful thought and emotion, then maybe, just maybe, we'll live longer. Our survival mechanism says to us: don't forget the pain.

Conclusion

This short article is to bring to the reader's attention that the path to freedom is often in letting go rather than in trying to have more. Leaning into the pain inside is a way for the pain to release. As Winston Churchill said: "If you're going through hell, keep going."

Our hell is any unreleased anger, fear or judgement that we carry. Our heaven is being free of any held emotion or thought that limits our happiness. Being free is not condoning behavior toward us that was hurtful or condoning our hurtful behaviors to others. Being free is being free of our internal painful emotions and thoughts. Without painful emotions and thoughts, we do live in paradise.

May all beings live free.