



I'M HURTING: WHAT CAN I DO TO HEAL?

There is a saying, “God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the one I can, and the wisdom to know IT’S ME.” Accepting that you can’t change other people is usually the hardest part. Remember that you can only change your reaction to something or someone. This is the theme throughout my book.

Realize too and appreciate that there are situations in our lives that are not ours to control. If we keep hitting a brick wall, we must at some point accept our fate until we have a roadmap in hand to find a way around it. The answer doesn’t always appear instantaneously and this is where patience comes in.

This philosophy helped me survive my childhood, and today it guides me when life seems to hurl curve balls straight at my head. My motto is: “Acceptance of anything outside my control is liberating.”

What can you do to find and maintain happiness in your life? Here are four simple steps that have worked for me during my lifetime:

- 1) **Most importantly, recognize that you *can* change 98% of the things in your life that make you feel frustrated.** (The 2% in my mind are reserved for the two things you can’t alter: past childhood experiences and death.) If you hate your job, are feuding with your relatives, or dislike your family environment, stop blaming other people. Stop making excuses. That’s the first step. Take ownership for where you are in your life TODAY and who you have become. No more victim mentality!
- 2) **Buy a journal and write down your hopes and dreams.** Prioritize the list. Make sure your aspirations are in the right, logical order—with the most important item on top. Below the first item, write ten things *you* can do—ten small steps you can take—to alter the situation. If you say, “There’s nothing I can do about this,” dig deeper. Nearly all stumbling blocks can be broken down if you continue to chisel away.

Be realistic. Do not write down what others need to do so that you can accomplish your goals (e.g., “My husband needs to clean the house more so I have time to exercise”). Remember, you can’t change other people, only yourself, so make these goals about what *you* can do. This is about you. A better example to the above might be: “I will hire a housekeeper so I have more time to exercise.”

Keep a daily record of your thoughts, your setbacks and your successes. Review your progress on a weekly basis. Ask yourself:

- a) “What steps have I taken this week?”
- b) “If I haven’t taken any steps, why not?”
- c) Am I putting more effort into making excuses than in instituting change?
- d) “What things can I do differently next week?”

If you use your journal consistently, you will come to understand what obstacles *you* are placing before you on your road to success.



Warning: Don't spread yourself too thin, i.e., set yourself up for failure by tackling too many things at once. You are not Superhuman! We'd all like to think we are, but let's face it, with all the demands we have today, we have to set reasonable goals. Once you have **fully** accomplished your first goal then, and *only then*, move onto your second item.

- 3) **Surround yourself with supportive people.** If you have caustic or overly negative individuals in your life—emotional vampires who suck the very life out of you—be clear and set firm boundaries with them. If they don't respect those boundaries, you might have to restrict time with them. Above all else, you must monitor your emotional health each and every day. Remember, our thoughts about ourselves become a self-fulfilling prophecy that will either help us stand tall or tear us down.
- 4) **Love yourself unconditionally.** Even if you have minor setbacks and sometimes feel defeated, continue to focus on your hopes and dreams, knowing you deserve them. The road to self-discovery is usually forked and can lead you in many directions. Evaluate where you are and where you would like to be at the beginning of every day, every week, every month. Pat yourself on the back for what you have accomplished thus far. If you feel overwhelmed or confused, sit down and analyze your goals and reprioritize them. Be flexible and most of all—love and forgive yourself for all past transgressions, even when it seems no one else will. Why? Because change comes when we truly know in our hearts that we are deserving of it.

Bottom line: Mastering change within *us* takes self-love, sustained diligence and focus and above all, patience.