

Choosing Your Focus Amy G. Martin APRN, RhD

It seems so easy these days to be focused on all the difficulties in the world, from the financial doomsday news to global warming, to an upcoming election which seems to be polarizing people everywhere. But when you look only at the challenges, it's like staring in the mirror at the one imperfection on your face, and ignoring the rest. It's just so easy to focus on the flaws, the negatives...why?

We know from experience that when our eye is on the 'bad,' it becomes a self-perpetuating reality, or a self-fulfilling prophesy. "See, I knew it," you might say to yourself, "everything always happens to me." And sure enough, every time something happens, you have your proof.

What about changing perspective? What if you sought to see every good thing about your situation, changing your focus completely? What if, instead of saying, "I am completely at the mercy of fate," you say, "I am completely in control of my own internal perceptions about every event in my life?"

One thing we learn from living life is that we really don't have much control over external events, other people or the rotation of the planet, but what we do have control over is just one thing, and that is our internal life, meaning our thoughts and ultimately our emotions and reactions to those events and people around us. What power there is in this knowing!

Emotional self-regulation is a trait we all need. Emotional toughness, (that is resilience as opposed to a hard, I don't give a care, edge), gives us a platform of stability upon which we could stand and deal with everything that comes to us in life. It is this strength that helps to correct our course. Where do you want to be anyway? Do you want upset, suffering and pain? Or do you want peace, equanimity and a light heart? Choose your direction and keep yourself heading that way.

Sometimes we all have a bit of emotional amnesia, we just forget that what we really wanted was to be happy. And other times, it may have been so long since joy was felt, that the pain becomes habitual. How long does one have to suffer until it's long enough? The definition of depression is more than two weeks of sadness, along with a number of other symptoms, but we also know many people who suffer chronically, never seeking help. If you are not able to lift yourself out of depression on your own, consider talking with someone about it. Consider using a short-term antidepressant, an SSRI (Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitor). These medications really are miraculous, exhibiting their effect by correcting the chemistry in the brain. 30 years ago the only available meds we had, made a person feel deadened and zoned out. Now, if you are short on serotonin, one of the neurotransmitters required for smooth brain functioning, an SSRI can restore your brightness and help you to feel like yourself again, within a few weeks.

If you're ready to change your focus, ready to be done with your pain, then awareness and choice need to be priorities! Here are some steps to keep you on task:

1. Acknowledge how you feel when things are difficult
2. Assess your emotional health and resilience
3. Be aware of what thoughts are dominating your head and make any necessary adjustments
4. Reclaim the power to choose your focus
5. Maintain a vision of your desired outcome
6. Check in with yourself often to stay on track

It's always our choice which mental channel we tune into. It may take a lot of commitment, especially if someone else is trying to handle the remote control, but the truth is, we decide our reactions to everything. And ultimately, when we go to sleep at night and arise in the morning, it will be our own thoughts that bathe our minds with either harsh acid or sweet peace. Make your choice; the power is yours.

Go to www.Time4Healing.com for more information about changing your thinking to gain peace and emotional freedom. Amy Martin is a Doctor of RoHun Transpersonal Psychotherapy and a Nurse Practitioner with three decades of experience. RoHun Therapy is an alternative to traditional psychotherapy. Her private practice, "Healing Therapies", is located at 8 West Main St, Suite 1-3 Niantic, Ct. Call for a consultation. (860)691-0743 or email to amymartin@time4healing.com