

What do you want in life that you do not now have? I am sure that much that we want and value depends on our point of view, so it may be the right thing for us to check up on ourselves and to see what we believe in, to examine what we are giving the major portion of our attention to, because our viewpoint is very important and indicative of the experience of our life. Many of us are missing the beauty and the goodness and the joy of life simply because our attention is on the very opposite of these things. It is like having a camera that is focused on an unpleasant and unsightly scene--the closer we get to our troubles the larger they seem until eventually they fill our whole world. If you find yourself in such a plight, then perhaps you need to change your point of view, to look for larger and more promising horizons. There are so many things that you can do to create for yourself wider interests and more wholesome attitudes.

Since we live in a world where people are all important, we might first examine our world in so far as people are concerned. Do you have trouble getting along with people? Do you sometimes feel that the world and everyone in it is against you? Do you harbor hurt feelings and resentments? Do you sometimes consider how you can revenge yourself for what you consider to be a personal grievance? If you are out of harmony with even one person, you need to change your viewpoint from which you regard that person. Even if you have been hurt by someone, and you need to satisfy your personal ego by retaliation and revenge, are you really happy about it? Don't you experience a little disappointment or a feeling of defeat when you have wasted your thought substance and bodily energy in the pursuit of vengeance? Once you have tried the way of forgiveness, you know how gratifying it is to be able to overlook the slight or wrong intention of others. The magnanimous feeling that comes with true forgiveness always gives you more true joy and satisfaction than all the personal efforts that go with retaliation.

When Peter inquired how often he should forgive his brother, it was no idle thought that prompted Jesus to reply "until seventy times seven." Probably in the history of the whole world no one has found it necessary to forgive another person that many times, so I am sure that Jesus was wise enough to know that when a person has practised forgiveness even a few times, he very soon becomes so big spiritually that he never takes offense. So, there is nothing to forgive; that is the important thing.

We all know persons to whom we are greatly attracted, and that we find easy to like. We probably know some persons of the other kind also, persons who do not appeal to us with even one desirable quality. If we have really reached the place where we desire not to dislike anyone, we are usually just indifferent to the latter group. Very early on we must realize that other persons are so much a part of our lives that they cannot be disposed of in such a casual manner. If we are going to obtain the utmost joy in living in a world with them, we have to find some way of dealing with them positively in every perception of the outer world.

The action that we get out of life is generally what we put into it. You hear people say, "Life owes me a living and happiness." How often do those who feel this way ask themselves what they owe to life? How often do they try to pay their debt by expecting good, by being the sort of person they admire, or by living the sort of life that they would like to see lived by others? Frequently, we have discovered that we have missed beauty and gentleness, and we have missed the privilege of knowing and understanding a noble character because of our refusal to invest something in the other person. Everytime we really make an effort to become better acquainted with someone who does not at first appeal to us, we find that the person becomes not only interesting but probably very worthwhile. We are able to find something in him that we can admire and enjoy. So, if you don't like someone it is usually because you don't understand him. Make an effort to understand him, and

thus, as we so often say, you elevate him. Then you begin to draw out of that consciousness of the the person something that is very endearing and something which can be very profitable in terms of your own experience.

Life has a certain charming way of surprising us with happy things when we change our point of view and begin to look for and to expect something good. Every time we doubt the inherent goodness of humanity we doing people an injustice, though we do ourselves the greater injury. Our success, our happiness, our prosperity, our health depend to a large degree on our faith in and cooperation with others. I often say that Shakespeare is one of my guru's who was certainly a great writer and poet as part of the flow of the great transcendant stream. He said of mankind in Hamlet, "What a piece of work is man, how noble in reason, how infinite in faculty, in form and moving how express and admirable, in action how like an angel, in apprehension how like a god." Well, it is obvious that Shakespeare loved people. He could see and understand their shortcomings, but at the same time he could believe in their inherent strength, in their goodness, in their potential greatness.

We need to change our viewpoint if it is negative towards people, to give up harsh judgment, the biased opinions, and become more open-minded and understanding, to experience a kind of mutuality. You cannot measure others by your own standards because they doubtless have had to meet problems different from yours and have had to walk a path that is not the same as yours has been. We cannot expect to place all persons in the same category or to try and understand them as you would a mathematical problem. Logic can state and prove what we can comprehend, but love and tolerance can behold and prove what we can only apprehend.

We have all watched our viewpoints change as we have grown from childhood into maturity. We will, I am sure, see them change even more as we go forward in our spiritual growth. Probably we all remember little incidents from our childhood that seemed very important and often very tragic. Now, we pass over them lightly. We see how unimportant little things were that hurt or disturbed us that seemed so frightfully big at the time. For many of us life is made up of little things, but then life is not a little thing unless we make it so. Life can be as big and grand and wonderful as we want it to be, and as we see it to be. What it becomes to us depends entirely on our point of view. Now we all know persons I am very sure who have reasons for being happy--who have health, affluence, position, status, good homes, etc.--and yet are restless, irritable, dissatisfied. On the other hand, I am sure that you know persons who have good reason according to the world's standards for being unhappy, and yet they are peaceful, contented, harmonious, and remain unruffled and sure of themselves.

We are taught how wonderful the body is in creative form, how adaptable to heat and cold and other changes, and how under stress we can get from it extra strength, help and endurance. We should also remember that the mind is even more wonderfully made because it has dominion over the body and is even more adaptable to changes and has even more power to be used in the right way if we will...even to forming an entirely different viewpoint if necessary. When you change your viewpoint, then you change the manifestation of your outer life. It is well worth the effort you may try. Your viewpoint is valuable.