

Find Freedom in Any Moment

One of our deepest desires is for freedom: to be free of stress, anxiety, a frustrating person, a difficult situation, financial struggles, health problems, the daily grind, distractions, feeling inadequate.

So many books, products and other paid solutions offer a version of this freedom. Escape. Peace. Mindfulness. Simplicity. Self esteem. A better relationship. Health and fitness. Freedom, for a price.

One of the great discoveries of my life is that this freedom is always available to us. In any moment.

That might sound obvious to some of you, but you'd be surprised at how often we forget this, even after we discover it.

It's a practice of a lifetime.

Let's explore it a bit.

The Obstacle to Our Freedom

If freedom is always available to us, why is it so difficult to find?

It's important to bring awareness to the obstacle before we look at solutions.

Let's imagine you're in a situation with someone who is absolutely frustrating you ... you just want to get away from them, to a place with peace and quiet, to *freedom* from this frustrating person.

What in this moment is preventing you from feeling freedom? It might seem like it's the other person ... but it's never really something external. They might be the trigger for how you feel, but in reality **we are the ones who create the feeling of frustration, through how we're viewing the situation or other person.**

Let me emphasize that: how we view the other person, or the situation, creates our feeling of stress, frustration, anger, disappointment.

It doesn't really matter what the external situation is: some frustrating person, politics, a sporting event, our own behavior. If a feeling of lack of freedom gets created, it's because of our view.

This isn't to blame ourselves — we're not doing anything wrong. It's simply to bring

awareness to the cause of this obstacle.

The liberating thing is that if our views are responsible for this difficulty ... we have the power to change the situation! Always.

Creating Freedom in Any Moment

So let's go back to that moment when someone is acting in a frustrating way, and we just want to get away from them, to peace and freedom ...

In this situation, we can absolutely create freedom for ourselves by getting out of the situation, going for a walk, finding the freedom of nature. And in fact, I highly recommend it in most cases.

But I want to use this scenario to show that freedom can be had even without walking away. Simply an illustration of the principle, not a recommendation to stay in a frustrating situation.

So how can we find freedom? Here's a simple method that can be practiced:

1. **Recognize that you're frustrated** (or stressed, disappointed, lonely, etc). Let yourself feel the feelings, as sensations in your body. There's nothing wrong with how you're feeling.
2. **Then bring awareness to your view.** The view that is causing the frustration: "They shouldn't act this way" or "They always criticize me, I don't know why they have to be so critical" or "I shouldn't be such a procrastinator, I suck!" We're not criticizing the view, not even saying it's wrong ... we're just bringing awareness to the view that's causing the lack of freedom.
3. **Ask if the view is helping you or serving you.** If you're feeling frustration or hurt, it's probably not. Ask whether you're committed to staying this way, or if you'd like to change. If you'd like to change, move on to the next step.
4. **Loosen your grip on the view.** For example: Do you really know someone shouldn't act the way they should? Have you walked in their shoes? Do you know how everyone should act? I personally don't even know how I should act, let alone how others should act. This kind of inquiry is not to tell ourselves that our view is wrong — it's simply to loosen our attachment to the view, to show that there might be other possibilities. Is it possible there are other perspectives? Other things you don't know?
5. **Experience the world free of views.** In any moment, we can simply let go of our views and see the world just as it is. See the objects, the light, the colors and textures, the space of the world around us. See the other person simply as a collection of matter and energy. Just experience the moment as direct experience, not as part of a narrative that we have in our heads. This is true freedom, and it's simply being in the moment free of views, just experiencing. It's like when you've been out in nature, fully immersed

in the experience without really thinking anything, lazily lying in the grass staring up at the trees and sky, floating in the ocean feeling one with the water, on vacation in a hammock fully relaxed and without any worries. This is the freedom available to us in any moment.

6. **Bonus: Bring in a new, helpful perspective.** First of all, you don't need a new perspective — the freedom is experiencing the moment without views. That said, sometimes it can be helpful to try out new perspectives! For example ... can we find gratitude for this person, or for ourselves? Can we see the gift that they are, or that we are? Can we feel a connection to them, or find compassion for the fear and pain they're feeling? Could we bring curiosity or a sense of exploration to the situation? This kind of thing isn't always helpful (for example, if you're in danger or in an abusive situation, get away!), but can very often be worth trying out.

This all takes practice, obviously. You can't do the last few steps until you start practicing the first few steps. The last few steps can be a struggle when we're really strongly holding our views. Don't worry too much about that, just keep practicing!

The Power of Finding This Freedom

If we learn to practice this kind of freedom in any moment, we start to have much more choice.

For example:

- If we were thinking about breaking up with someone because we're tired of being in frustrating conflicts with them, we might be able to let go of the frustration and find peace, even when they're upset. This might allow us to be more compassionate with them, and could shift the entire relationship. Not necessarily, but there is possibility here.
- If we're frustrated with ourselves, it can be the start of a kinder relationship to ourselves.
- If we're avoiding something, like doing our taxes or budget, instead of avoiding it to be free of the stress ... we could actually find freedom doing the task. This allows us to find freedom in any activity: exercise, cleaning, decluttering, writing, being in a meeting.
- We can eventually be free to do anything: launch a business, write and publish a book, put our creations on social media, connect with people online, be on a stage, create a movement. Because the things that were limiting us before are no longer limitations — we can be free doing all of these things.

What would that be like?