

# Acceptance & Forgiveness

Acceptance is to stop fighting the way people and things function. We end the thinking that stirs up anger, resentment, agitation, and disappointment. We learn to accept people and their choices without destructive anger and blaming thoughts.

## What's the purpose of anger anyway?

When I used to get angry at the way people chose to do things or the way systems worked I would, in a sense, be playing God, judge, and jury over what is right and what is wrong. I would rarely evaluate my own mistakes, character defects, and personality flaws.

I've come to understand that anger stems from perceiving something as a threat. I suppose I perceived other people and systems as a threat to me, my wants, and my goals.

Seeking acceptance was to learn to be at peace with all the perceived threats I was creating within my head. When I interpreted situations at work that interfered with my expectations, wants, or goals and I became fearful that such situations would delay my goals, I was to seek acceptance and give up argument or fighting. I was told to let go of my expectations because they could set me up for disappointment. I was to give up forecasting results.

When I forecast results I create within my mind results as if they are happening and respond accordingly. The results in my mind are likely to happen and I expect them to happen. I make preparations within my agenda to function with my interpreted results. I act within myself as if the results I predict are to come true or at least could come true. In my mind I am ready for what I believe could happen. Then when they do not come true because of a person or system, I blame outwardly that person or system for my emotional response, anger, disappointment, etc.

## Life on life's terms or Thy will, not mine be done

When I 'let go & let God' I stop forecasting results and setting expectations. I still have goals, but I do not cling to expected results. When things do not go

the way I think they should I learn to react in the way of faith, mercy, and forgiveness because it is a far better way to respond. I choose to give up going to anger, faultfinding, and blaming. Anger, faultfinding, and blaming simply hurt myself and others. There is no solution in this behavior, choice, and attitude. It only makes things worse. It destroys relationships, hurts moral, and blocks progress.

## **Where's the solution?**

I shift my thinking from faultfinding to solution creating. I begin thinking how I can improve this situation. I still need to examine myself for my attitude. If I am angry I can take time to breathe and let go of it. I can practice peace, mercy, and forgiveness with my thinking as I work towards a solution.

I have spent a lot of time thinking beyond the scope of my job with faultfinding, blaming, and anger. At work there have been many times where I believed I knew better than my boss. I learned to realize that it doesn't matter if I know better; I need to accept my role in the workplace. I am not the boss. When I accept my role and the tasks that are outlined for me to do, keep focused upon my role and do it, then the battle within my head decreases and my work performance increases.

When I simply focus on what is in front of me to do, stop forecasting results, and stay out of other people's business, my job becomes so much easier and less stressful. I remind myself frequently I'm responsible for my spiritual conditioning within my mind and attitude. I have tools to utilize to protect me from impatience, intolerance, resentment, and fear. Yet I must choose to use these tools. If I choose not to use these tools then I am hurting myself. I'm responsible for my spiritual, emotional, and mental condition.

## **Image management**

My pride, greed, and other forms of idolatry can set me up for a ride on an emotional rollercoaster. Worrying about what other people might think of me or my performance creates within my mind a system that runs on fear. I can choose to focus more on the work I am doing and less on worrying about what other people think. The less I worry, the better focused I can become on the work, which can improve my ability to do the work.

I find things go much better when I am focusing on doing God's will and seeking to be more aligned with God's character than when I worry about what other people might think. Yet, because much of the world's ways do not respond like this, I find myself frequently prompted to be concerned about what other people think which takes me back to fear and worry. When I do, I can remind myself that I am to serve God, not people. I can practice the Serenity Prayer, and set my thoughts toward acceptance, forgiveness, and mercy.

## **Questions, clarifications, & fact-finding**

When I interpret others around me as not being interested in me I respond much different than when I interpret they are interested. My whole being is different. My thoughts, feelings, and physical reactions are different. How I respond to others is different. All this reaction based entirely upon interpretation which has yet to be proven to be real. I can literally destroy my life with poor interpretations that are incorrect.

Most of the time with acquaintances I try to read body language to understand what people want or how to engage the relationships. Body language sends messages, but really it's the interpreter that creates the message. Body language is a signal that can often be misinterpreted. Misunderstandings happen all the time from misinterpreting body language. Many of us can intend to send one signal while the interpreter picks up a different one. Clarifying understanding, especially with close relationships is crucial. We can ask difficult questions that can be uncomfortable to get clear about what we are learning from each other.

When I feel awkward in a relationship, either at work or with loved ones, I can choose to reveal the elephant in the room and discuss the issue. Conversation can reveal the truth. I don't want to let my relationships be affected by some possible misinterpretation. Coworkers, significant others, spiritual partners, and many more types of relationships can be restored with a conversation or perhaps many conversations.

Relationships go deeper when we understand each other better. If I avoid getting to know someone better, how can the relationship grow? I can't love anyone if am unwilling to let others know my true feelings. There's no love in hiding truth or my heart. And if I hide both I can easily feel lonely and perhaps even empty. I can feel dry, dull, and even dead inside.

I grew up around dangerous people that sought harming others for personal entertainment. So I learned to keep people out in order to protect myself. I purposefully distanced myself from others for protection. Trusting other people was dangerous and in many cases for me, poor judgement. As I grew spiritually I chose to no longer associate with such destructive people. As I began to let go of sarcasm, passive aggressiveness, and condescending talk I also set boundaries by ending associations with others who did such things. I would let others know either verbally or with body signals I was not interested in such behavior.

## **Courage to change**

There is that part in the Serenity Prayer that says, “courage to change the things I can.” I needed to get real about setting boundaries and choosing associations that can help me grow spiritually. If I choose to associate with others who are doing things I am trying not to do, then I am part of the problem. If I’m trying to quit gambling, I probably will need to stop going with my friends to the casino. Sometimes growing spiritually requires changing associations with friends, work, and family.

In sobriety I found it necessary to let go of some associations with other people who were sober and actively going to meetings. These people were into service and helping others. Yet due to each person defining God in their own way I needed to find others who defined God similarly to the way I did. In order to surround myself with others choosing to grow as I am I needed to continue to make adjustments. I needed to accept that I was changing and I needed to accept actions that could help me grow in order to grow. I needed to accept change meant doing things differently, including associations.

Humility, mercy, and forgiveness simply make life more enjoyable and beneficial.

## **Accepting other’s anger**

When I make choices to grow spiritually sometimes my friends don’t agree. I can accept that other people will not agree with me. In the beginning I had trouble understanding why others didn’t see things the way I do and tried to sell my views upon them. This only created problems. I had trouble accepting how others would not share my view point. I would get angry, intolerant, or

disappointed. This attitude of mine would only escalate similar behavior in others. Arguments would ensue. Resentments would form. And hurt relationship would result.

Everyone gets angry. The idea of trying to stop others from getting angry or feeling angry is to try to control other people. Sure I can modify how I present things to do it with patience, love, and gentleness, but I am supposed to speak the truth without partiality. Partiality to God is the way to go. God wants the truth to be said and people to be encouraged toward God's ways. There are many people who are not interested and do not want to hear the truth.

Truth be told I am often more silent than outspoken. People can often tell when I agree and when I do not. My face rarely hides my opinion. This has displeased many people and at the same time has helped others. I have struggled to stay honest and such honesty has cost me social points, yet increased spiritual fulfillment.

As I make decisions for myself to grow spiritually I have come to understand many others around me will not be interested in joining me on my quest. So it is best for me not to try to sell them on it. I share what I am doing and if they want to learn more, then we can talk further.

People get angry and I get angry. The anger isn't a problem. I've had many relationships grow from hurt because I chose to continue with the spiritual principles of forgiveness and mercy. I humbled myself and apologized for my harsh words or indifferent demeanor. Most the time when I make amends for my wrong there is forgiveness. Then, after having a personal talk like that, we bond. An intimate experience had just developed. An intimate experience that had mercy and brought peace. Joy was a result. So when anger is followed up with God's good ways it can produce many good things.

## **Experience Acceptance**

The bottom line is we all need to go through the journey of understanding these situations and they are not easy. Humility and faith in God are always the most important items to bring into any relationship. I am to abandon myself to God's ways and principles first and foremost for anything good to come. Such abandonment requires humility. Once I have these two things done right, I can more quickly and easily move into acceptance.

When I have faith that God's way works I can let go of any resisting ideas in the background of my mind. Fear is often reduced. My faith has developed and grown through experience. As I go out and put into practice these principles, my experiences often prove it works. When I experience beneficial results it grows my faith. Then when I see and understand through testing and trial that this way works it becomes that much easier to continue with it.

My mind and limited understanding has always been the enemy to growth in new understanding. If I can't see the benefit in something I've never done or do not understand I will often have a convincing argument not to do it. I often remind myself the scientific method involves testing. I want to be smart, so I convince myself it's stupid not to try. I can't really know unless I try. The more I practice spiritual principles the more I experience a better way of life.

I need to accept there will always be a sense of resistance within me and around me. Anger is part of all of us and it is okay for anyone to get angry. I simply need to continue in faith with God and to learn how to better do God's will. I am to practice these spiritual principles in all my affairs.

## **Serenity**

Today I can "accept the things I cannot change" and I can seek God for the "courage to change the things I can." This prayer is entitled 'Serenity' because Serenity is the trait that makes it possible. "God grant me the Serenity."

To become empowered to do well at acceptance I can practice spiritual tools of meditation, prayer, and patience. The better I practice such skill building exercises the easier it is to practice acceptance.

When I meditate I seek to bring peace within my mind. Sometimes I can spend much of my day and night sorting out complications with the craziness of things going on in my life trying to come to a resolution. I may need to accept it's not for me to know or understand yet.

Progress is key. Progression toward peace and serenity to become empowered toward acceptance and many other good spiritual abilities. It all begins with what I choose to think. Am I utilizing my mind to formulate thoughts toward peace or anxiety. Is my thinking stirring up resentment or forgiveness. I choose what to develop within my heart and relationships with

how I use my mind. I will need regular introspection to practice spiritual principles.