

Focus for Day 50, March 20: I CHOOSE

*“You can’t stop the waves,
but you can learn to surf.”*

**Joseph Goldstein, Co-founder of the Buddhist
Insight Meditation Society**

Although I cannot change others, the past or situations beyond my control, I can change me!

I can choose how I think, feel and behave. I do what is within my power to make the best of challenging situations.

By focusing on how I want to behave, I create new pathways in my brain that support changes in my behavior.

Since my mind doesn’t distinguish between what is real or vividly imagined, I choose to actively rehearse and practice positive habits.

Reflection Questions:

- ❖ When am I feeling the most stuck and unable to see that I have any choices?
- ❖ How does my language reinforce the power of choice, rather than the victimhood of: “I *“have to”* or “I *should”*”?
- ❖ What would it take to choose to “surf” the waves, rather than to complain about them?

Action Step:

When I feel stuck, I stop and discover what I DO have choices about. I choose to: _____

Focus for Day 51 , March 21: I ADVOCATE

“All that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good people to do nothing.”

Edmund Burke, Political Philosopher

Martin Niemoller, a German pastor during World War II, described what happens when good people are silent and do not advocate for others.

“First, they came for the ___ (socialists, trade unionists, etc.) and I did not speak out because I was not a _____.

Then they came for the _____ (Jews, Muslims, etc.) and I did not speak out because I was not a

*_____ . . .
Then they came for me and there was no one left to speak out for me.”*

Reflection Questions:

- ❖ Who are the “despised” people today that are often targeted in hate crimes?
- ❖ When has my silence allowed bullying or evil to triumph?
- ❖ How will I support those who are treated with contempt and have no one else to advocate for them?

Action Step:

I speak up and advocate for myself. I am an ally and an advocate for those most despised, such as: _____

Focus for Day 52 , March 22: I SUPPORT EQUALITY

“I speak not for myself, but for those without a voice. . .for their right to live in peace, their right to be treated with dignity, their right to equality of opportunity, their right to be educated.” Malala Yousafzai, Pakistani Activist and Youngest Nobel Peace Prize Winner

Throughout history we have continued to justify inequality. We rationalize not treating others with the respect and the dignity they deserve because we view them as “less than,” or not equal to us.

We make these judgments on the basis of skin color, ethnicity, nationality, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, economic status, education level or political beliefs.

Any time we treat others as a “them” we de-humanize our brothers and sisters .

Reflection Questions:

- ❖ What helps me to recognize my blind spots when I view others as less than my equal?
- ❖ Who are the “thems” in my life that I treat with disrespect by limiting their rights and access to opportunities?
- ❖ How will I advocate for all people to be respected with equality and dignity?

Action Step:

I notice when I think I am better than others. I commit to treating others as my equal, particularly:

Focus for Day 53 , March 23: I TAKE ACTION

"If there is to be peace in the cities, there must be peace between neighbors. If there is to be peace between neighbors, there must be peace in the home. If there is to be peace in the home, there must be peace in my heart."

Lao Tzu, Chinese Philosopher

Rather than wait for someone else to make the first move, I take even a small step to create the change I want.

To avoid feeling overwhelmed and paralyzed by so many needs, I listen within to clarify what is mine to do. I make a conscious choice about the best way for me to respond.

Reflection Questions:

- ❖ How do I clarify what is mine to do?
- ❖ Without becoming compassion-fatigued, how will I work effectively for change?
- ❖ What action(s) will I take to benefit the common good?

Action Step:

Good intentions are not enough. I take action to promote peace and non-violence by: _____

Focus for Day 54 , March 24: I GIVE

"Give better back."

Mona Barbera, Ph.D.,

Author of: Bring Yourself to Love

Be generous in all things, but particularly in relationships. When someone has offended me it is tempting to treat them badly in return.

To *give better back* means that I pause, breathe and respond with greater respect than I received.

Rev. Rich Henry, reminds me to bless others when I would prefer to curse them. His form of "giving better back" is to pray: *"Bless them; change me."*

Reflection Questions:

- ❖ How do I offer support to those I find it difficult to give to?
- ❖ What helps me to give freely without strings being attached?
- ❖ When offended, what will remind me to pray: *"Bless, them; change me"*?

Action Step:

I commit to giving better back, especially to: _____

Focus for Day 55 , March 25: I AM RESPONSE-ABLE

“Do what you must to keep your heart open, for a closed heart is like a blocked birth canal.”

Dorie Cameron, Author of: *Why Did I Do That?*

Sometimes being responsible feels like a burden. Like a blocked birth canal—no life can flow through.

When overwhelmed by responsibilities, I practice the **SNAP** tool developed by Rima Bonario, Th.D., and Q Effect co-founder, to be able to respond better.

S = Soothe and calm my body.

N= Notice my thoughts and feelings.

A= Accept the gift from this situation.

P= Practice being the change I want to see.

Being response-able empowers the opening of my heart for creativity. If weighed down by responsibilities, I remember to **SNAP** out of it!

Reflection Questions:

- ❖ To what degree do I accept full response-ability for the life I am living?
- ❖ When I feel overwhelmed by responsibilities, how will I use the **SNAP** tools to respond?
- ❖ What action would open my heart to support new creativity flowing through my life?

Action Step:

One way I will open my heart to be more response-able is:

Focus for Day 56 , March 26: I AM SELF-SUFFICIENT

“Freedom is the greatest fruit of self-sufficiency.”

Epicurus, 3rd Century Greek Philosopher

Self-sufficiency, or self-determination, is one of the principles honored during the African tradition of Kwanzaa. Celebrated between December 26 and New Year’s Day, Kwanzaa is based on 7 African principles.

These include: unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity and faith.

Self-sufficiency is balanced with partnership. Together, they empower an inter-dependency that creates a more just world.

Reflection Questions:

- ❖ When have I relied upon others inappropriately because I lacked the confidence, or the skills, to do things on my own?
- ❖ How could I practice greater independence and self-sufficiency to enjoy greater freedom?
- ❖ What helps me to balance self-sufficiency with inter-dependency?

Action Step:

I practice a new skill to feel more confident to do things on my own, such as: _____