

An Initiate's Guide for Carefree & Joyous Living

1. Understand that we are responsible for our feelings and emotions, and that negative feelings are created by negative self-talk and not the event itself. What we tell ourselves about an event determines our feelings. We can choose our emotions and feelings and not be at the effect of external events.

The Stoic philosopher Epictetus taught:

Man is affected, not by events, but by the view he takes of them.

In other words, we don't react to external events as much as we react to our opinion or judgment regarding them.

Shakespeare wrote:

There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so.

The same sentiment was echoed by Sant Kirpal Singh when He wrote:

*As a man thinks, so he becomes.
Nothing is good or bad in the world, but our thinking makes it so.*
(<https://www.ruhanisatsangusa.org/vegdiets.htm>)

Stoicism emphasizes the idea that our experience of the world and our mind's reactions involve three steps and not two. We usually think that an event happens and a natural emotional reaction results. We get a flat tire and we immediately experience a variety of negative feelings. The Stoics suggest a middle step involving our judgment about the event occurs before an emotional reaction and is responsible for it, negative or positive. The middle step of forming an opinion about an event often goes unnoticed as our reactions have become so automatic.

Epictetus: *Men are disturbed not by the things that happen but by their opinions about those things. For example, death is nothing terrible; for if it were, it would have seemed so even to Socrates. Rather, the opinion that death is terrible – that is the terrible thing. So when we are impeded or upset or aggrieved, let us never blame others, but ourselves – that is, our opinions.*

Epictetus: *Things themselves don't hurt or hinder us. Nor do other people. How we view these things is another matter. It is our attitude and reactions that give us trouble.*

Marcus Aurelius: *If you are distressed by anything external, the pain is not due to the thing itself, but to your estimate of it; and this you have the power to revoke at any moment.*

Marcus Aurelius: *It is not what men do that disturbs us (for those acts are matters of their own control and reasoning), but our opinions of what they do. Take away those opinions – dismiss your judgment that this is something terrible – and your anger goes away as well.*



*Life is a series of choices
and sometimes your only choice is what your attitude will be.*
(Shantideva)

The following selection illustrates the principle of creating our own emotions. It was written by Wayne Dyer and is contained in his famous book *Your Erroneous Zones*.

Choosing How You'll Feel

Feelings are not just emotions that happen to you. Feelings are reactions you choose to have. If you are in charge of your own emotions, you don't have to choose self-defeating reactions. Once you learn that you can feel what you choose to feel, you will be on the road to "intelligence" – a road where there are no by-paths that lead to N. B. D.'s [nervous break down]. This road will be new because you'll see a given emotion as a choice rather than as a condition of life. This is the very heart and soul of personal freedom.

You can attack the myth of not being in charge of your emotions through logic. By using a simple syllogism (a formulation in logic, in which you have a major premise, a minor premise and a conclusion based upon the agreement between the two premises) you can begin the process of being in charge of yourself, both thinkingly and emotionally.

Logic – Syllogism

Major Premise: Aristotle is a man.
Minor Premise: All men have facial hair.
Conclusion: Aristotle has facial hair.

Illogic – Syllogism

Major Premise: Aristotle has facial hair.
Minor Premise: All men have facial hair.
Conclusion Aristotle is a man.

It is clear that you must be careful as you employ logic that your major and minor premises agree. In the second illustration, Aristotle could be an ape or a mole. Here is a logical exercise that can forever put to rest the notion that you cannot take charge of your own emotional world.

Major Premise: I can control my thoughts.
Minor Premise: My feelings come from my thoughts.
Conclusion: I can control my feelings.

Your major premise is clear. You have the power to think whatever you choose to allow into your head. If something just "pops" into your head, you still have the power to make it go away, to decide to think other thoughts, and therefore you still control your mental world.

You alone control what thoughts you want to dwell upon. You and only you control your thinking apparatus. Your thoughts are your own, uniquely yours to keep, change, share, or contemplate. No one else can get inside your head and have your own thoughts as you experience them. You do indeed control your thoughts, and your brain is your own to use as you so determine.

Your minor premise is hardly debatable if you examine the research as well as your own common sense. You cannot have a feeling (emotion) without first having experienced a thought. Take away your brain and your ability to feel is wiped out. A feeling is a physical reaction to a thought. If you cry, or blush, or increase your heartbeat, or any of an interminable list of

potential emotional reactions, you have first had a signal from your thinking center. Once your thinking center is damaged or short-circuited, you cannot experience emotional reactions. With certain kinds of lesions in the brain you cannot even experience physical pain, and your hand could literally fry on a stove burner with no sensation of pain. You know that you cannot bypass your think-center and experience any feelings in your body. Thus your minor premise is lodged in truth. Every feeling that you have was preceded by a thought, and without a brain you can have no feelings.

Your conclusion is also inescapable. If you control your thoughts, and your feelings come from your thoughts, then you are capable of controlling your own feelings. And you control your feelings by working on the thoughts that preceded them.

Simply put, you believe that things or people make you unhappy, but this is not accurate. You make yourself unhappy because of the thoughts that you have about the people or things in your life. Becoming a free and healthy person involves learning to think differently. Once you can change your thoughts, your new feelings will begin to emerge, and you will have taken the first step on the road to your personal freedom.

To look at the syllogism in a more personal light, let's consider the case of Cal, a young executive who spends most of his time agonizing over the fact that his boss thinks he is stupid. Cal is very unhappy because his boss has a low opinion of him. But if Cal didn't know that his boss thought he was stupid, would he still be unhappy? Of course not. How could he be unhappy about something he didn't know? Therefore, what his boss thinks or doesn't think doesn't make him unhappy. What Cal thinks makes him unhappy. Moreover, Cal makes himself unhappy by convincing himself that what someone else thinks is more important than what he thinks.

This same logic applies to all events, things and persons' points of view. Someone's death does not make you unhappy; you cannot be unhappy until you learn of the death, so it's not the death but what you tell yourself about the event. Hurricanes aren't depressing by themselves; depression is uniquely human. If you are depressed about a hurricane, you are telling yourself some things that depress you. This is not to say that you should delude yourself into enjoying a hurricane, but ask yourself, "Why should I choose depression? Will it help me to be more effective in dealing with it?"

You have grown up in a culture which has taught you that you are not responsible for your feelings even though the syllogistic truth is that you always were. You've learned a host of sayings to defend yourself against the fact that you do control your feelings. Here is a brief list of such utterances that you have used over and over. Examine the message they send.

"You hurt my feelings."
"You make me feel bad."
"I can't help the way I feel."
"He makes me sick."
"Heights scare me."
"You made a fool of me in public."

The list is potentially endless. Each saying has a built-in message that you are not responsible for how you feel. Now rewrite the list so it is accurate, so it reflects the fact that you are in charge of how you feel and that your feelings come from the thoughts you have about anything.

“You hurt my feelings” becomes “I hurt my feelings because of the things I told myself about your reaction to me.”

“You make me feel bad” becomes “I make myself feel bad.”

“I can’t help the way I feel” becomes “I can help the way I feel, but I’ve chosen to be upset.”

“He makes me sick” becomes “I make myself sick by caring what he thinks.”

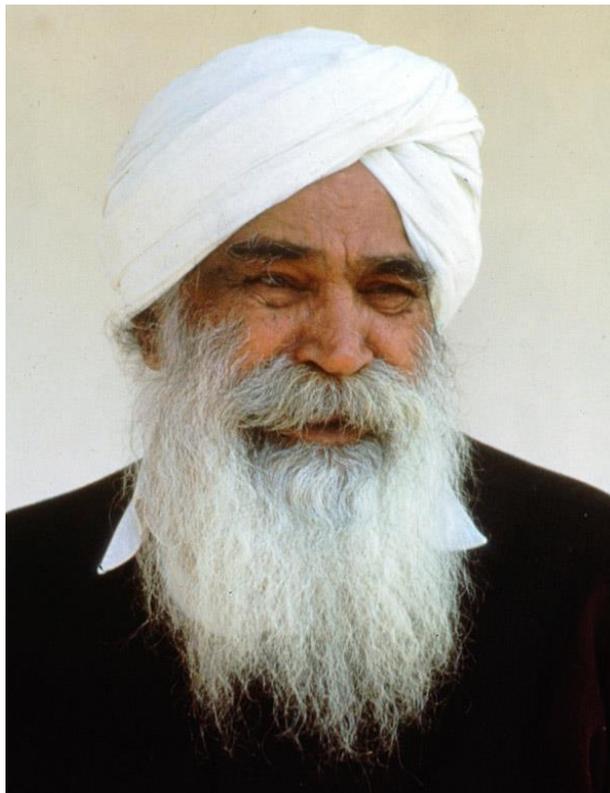
“Heights scare me” becomes “I scare myself at high places.”

“You made a fool of me in public” becomes “I made myself feel foolish by taking your opinion of me more seriously than my own, and believing that others would do the same.”

Perhaps you think that the items in List 1 are just figures of speech, and that they really don’t mean very much, but are simply figures of speech that have become clichés in our culture. If this is your rationale, then ask yourself why the statements in List 2 did not evolve into clichés. The answer lies in our culture, which teaches the thinking of List 1, and discourages the logic of List 2.

The message is crystal clear. You are the person responsible for how you feel. You feel what you think and you can learn to think differently about anything – if you decide to do so. Ask yourself if there is a sufficient payoff in being unhappy, down, discouraged, or hurt. Then begin to examine, in depth, the kind of thoughts that are leading you to these negative feelings.

It is not easy to think in new ways. You are accustomed to a certain set of thoughts and the debilitating thoughts that follow. It requires a great deal of work to unlearn all of the habits of thought you have assimilated until now. Happiness is easy, but learning not to be unhappy can be difficult.



Sant Kirpal Singh Ji Maharaj

2. Remember that everything that happens to an initiate is directed by the Satguru and is intended to pay off our karma and further our advance on the spiritual Path.

Baba Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj:

Whatever befalls us is regulated by the direct orders of our Satguru and we should take it as such, as a blessing in disguise. (The Dawn of Light, 94)

Pain and pleasure of the devotee are in the hands of the Master. He arranges them as he sees fit. The devotee should take delight in pain, for that is also a gift from him... A real devotee makes no distinction in pain and delight; his business is devotion. (Spiritual Gems, letter 49)

At all times our hearts should be full of love for the Master and our own mind should be so fearless that it should not be ruffled if it were given the kingdom of the world nor if the kingdom of the world were taken from it. (Spiritual Gems, letter 21)

Sant Kirpal Singh:

The Guru may give happiness or misery, for he has to make a beautiful form from a rough piece of stone and therefore has to wind up all the karmas; but a true follower will never complain, no matter what hardships the Guru allows. (The Teachings of Kirpal Singh, v. 1, 27)

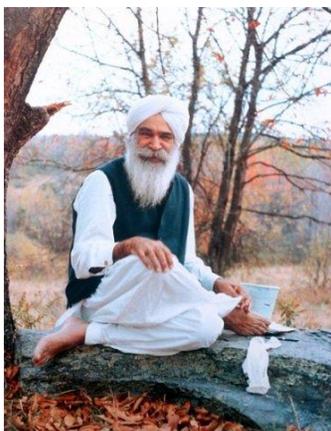
Whatever comes to your count is a blessing in disguise and should be accepted cheerfully. (The Teachings of Kirpal Singh, v. 2, 108)

The Master teaches that it does not matter in the least what happens to a man from the outside: sorrows, troubles, sickness, losses – all these must be borne by each and must not be allowed to affect the calmness of his mind. (ruhanisatsangusa.org/gemsq.htm)

Everything that comes to you in the Divine dispensation is invariably right for your spiritual progress. (Spiritual Elixir, 223)

When a true Master accepts a disciple, that person's status changes. We were lost wanderers whom not one befriended; accepted by the Satguru, we were then recognized. He becomes an "accepted" soul, under the care of the Master. (ruhanisatsangusa.org/gurumukh.htm)

As soon as the Master initiates, the Master-power takes charge of the disciple. He is helped a good deal at every step. (ruhanisatsangusa.org/wol/wol_iii.htm)



Sant Kirpal Singh Ji

From a Letter to a Disciple

Whatever good or bad happens to you, through whatever persons or object, directly proceeds from our loving Father. All persons and objects are but tools in His hand. If an evil befalls you, think it as His greatest mercy. We have to suffer for our past actions sooner or later. Our Master, by taking us through these sufferings speedily, and by hastening the approach of those which were to come later, intends to relieve us of our burden earlier. And by this earlier payment of debt - because debt it is - the amount of the suffering is very much lessened. We may have to pay one ton of karma first, but instead, by the Grace of the Master, we are released and only pay one pound. So never be disheartened if you are made to pay some severe debt. It is all for your good...

...Whatever happens is for the ultimate good, although at times it appears antagonistic to our calculation. We are ignorant of our past karmas but Master knows. So the whole thing reduces to this: that we do what we have been asked to do by the Master (spiritual exercises) and doing our worldly things with our ordinary wisdom and never caring for the result. Do your duty and expect nothing; leave that to the Master. Take for granted that all that has happened, is happening, or will happen, is with His will. So in whatever circumstances we find ourselves we should remain contented. If He sends us misery, we should accept it with pleasure and if He keeps us happy we should take it as His children. So do not consider that your life is not a bed of roses. Take it as His gift and be happy with it. (ruhanisatsangusa.org/trials.htm)



The apparent adverse circumstances which crop up as a reaction of past karma, on which this physical life is based, serve as a lever to raise the child disciple for spiritual growth and progress. It is His rare divine grace that you are blessed with the rare boon of right understanding when you see everything in its right perspective. (*Spiritual Elixir*, 239)

The Right Perspective

Since the Master has our ultimate welfare in mind at all times, it stands to reason that every thing He sends us is a good thing. The Masters use the words “take delight” “blessing in disguise” and “accepted cheerfully” to emphasize the positive mind state we should aspire to assume during times it would be easy to spin off into a negative state of mind.

An initiate cannot help but feel gay and happy when the realization takes root that the God-man is directing our life events. Words such as “accident”, “luck”, “bad break” and “unfair” lose their meaning. Complaining, feeling sorry for one’s self, playing the role of the victim and other nonproductive behaviors lose their power over us.

With the Master as the Captain of our ship, we can do our best to please Him in all our thoughts, words, and deeds and then sit back and enjoy the ride. Sant Kirpal Singh Ji wrote:

*Do your best and leave the rest to the Master Power overhead
and leave off all worry and anxiety.*

It is time to be gay and happy.

(ruhanisatsangusa.org/pdf/Elixir.pdf)

The following two stories demonstrate the principle of right understanding in action:

1. Sant Kirpal Singh's last evening darshan talk:

Disciple: Master, why don't you heal yourself? You are all-powerful.

Master: Why don't you heal yourself? If anybody whom you love gives you something, would you refuse it? Tell me. What does he hope to do? He would gladly accept it.

2. On one occasion a Sufi said to Rabia when she was ill, "If you would utter a prayer, God would relieve your suffering." She turned her face to him and said, "O Sufyan, do you not know who it is that wills this suffering for me? Is it not God who wills it?"

"Yes", he replied.

"When you know this, why do you ask for what is contrary to His will? It is not well to oppose one's beloved," replied Rabia.

Conclusions

1. We don't react to events; we react to our judgments about them, and our judgments are up to us.

2. Sant Kirpal Singh wrote: "*See Him present in every experience and remember He is always with you, ready to assist whenever you turn your thoughts to Him.*" (*Spiritual Elixir*, 93)

Baba Sawan Singh Ji tells us "*Whatever befalls us is regulated by the direct orders of our Satguru and we should take it as such, as a blessing in disguise.*"

3. The two points above are all we need to lead a carefree and joyous life. We can learn to see Master's hand present in our daily lives in "every experience." We begin to realize the nothing just happens to us, nothing "bad" happens to us. Everything that happens to us comes from our Beloved Master.

If we take the Masters' words literally, (the Master is present in every experience and He regulates all that happens to us), we will feel blessed with whatever our Master sees fit to send us. "Good" and "bad" lose their meaning when everything that comes our way is a blessing from the Lord of Love. Sant Kirpal Singh Ji wrote:

I have great love for all of you. Indeed, if you knew how much I loved you, you would dance for joy. You will become so intoxicated by His love that it will carry you straight into the arms of your beloved within. (ruhanisatsangusa.org/gemsq.htm)

Our task is to be aware of our judgments. We can learn to control the direction our thoughts take and we can challenge negative thinking and replace it with thoughts that reflect the comfort of knowing that our Master is behind all that happens in our life. When we remember "*Whatever comes to your count is a blessing in disguise and should be accepted cheerfully*" we can replace negative emotions with positive ones. Our self-talk will then produce positive feelings/emotions.

The Master wants His children to be gay and happy, carefree and joyous. If we trust the Master with our welfare – both material and spiritual – we can agree with Epictetus when he said:

*I am always content with what happens;
for I know that what God chooses is better than what I choose.*

Marcus Aurelius: *Here is a rule to remember when anything tempts you to feel bitter: not, "This is a misfortune," but, "To bear this worthily is good fortune."*

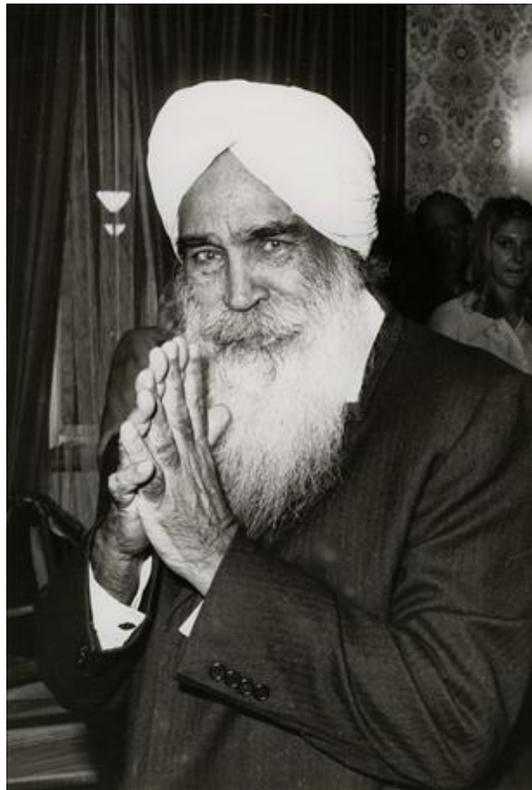
Meher Baba: *Be resigned to every situation and think honestly and sincerely: "Baba has placed me in this situation."*

Every day and every hour convey thanks to the Master – the God in Him, Who has put you on the Way – and for all other gifts you enjoy. In this way you will be aware of the Master all the time. Without Him you can do nothing and with Him you can do all things.

(Sant Kirpal Singh, *The Teachings of Kirpal Singh*, True Living: to World and to God)

Once I said to God, "How do you teach us?" And He replied, "If you were playing chess with someone who had infinite power and infinite knowledge and wanted to make you a master of the game, where would all the chess pieces be at every moment? Indeed, not only where he wanted them, but where all were best for your development; and that is every situation of one's life."

(Saint John of the Cross)



*The Master-Power overhead is constantly working with you for your benefit. His protective hands will shadow you from all kinds of dreadful perils. Follow Him. He will never forsake thee and will take you into His Kingdom of Glory forever. (Sant Kirpal Singh, *Spiritual Elixir*, 204)*

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(Spiritual Quotations for Lovers of God)

