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BRINGING ABOUT CHANGE

Swami Suryadevananda

All of you has to face the new direction. You have to become the new changes themselves inwardly, psychologically, and this has to be immediate. Outer change will catch-up, don't worry about it. You can never know darkness if you are facing the light—turn and face the light of your aspiration now. A rose is fragrance, it is not being fragrant—it is fragrance and so it can never know odor even if it is nearby. You have to become what you wish for right now. This is not just positive thinking; change does not involve thought at all. When the house is on fire, you get out—what is there to think about? You just do it right now.

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Big things come from little things

The biggest ocean waves start with an intention, and then begins the smallest disturbance or movement away from the source—its center. An intention to move gains momentum gradually by unidirectional persistence.

Ocean waves form when wind transfers some of its energy to the water through friction between the air molecules and water molecules. By constant effort, air molecules rub against water molecules and generate a motion away from the source in the form of disturbance within the surrounding water.

One small molecule of air can start a huge wave if it persists in the same direction relentlessly. Both are necessary—effort or energy and direction or intelligence. We may see the first movements as the waves' practice only because it seems that larger effects are not visible, but each 'practice', so to say, is a total effort. The energy is being exerted intelligently, gaining momentum, increasing focus as it goes along. This persistence in the same direction efficiently is not mechanical but living, dynamic—getting more focused, more efficient, and hence, there is less loss or movement in contrary directions. What seemed to be practice, itself becomes a formidable wave that can move or carry anything in its path. The intention, the initial movement, the ongoing movement and the great big wave are not different from one another. The intention itself becomes the wave—it is the wave.

think of your words carefully. Respond as part of the whole situation and not just your personality. If something you are about to say or do can degrade the situation—why do it? It is already better now than what it can turn into.

Get rid of clutter, all clutter—don't be a packrat. If you do not use it once a week, give it to someone who may. Avoid hoarding, as it leads to hoarding an accumulation of memories, hopes and things like hurt, too. Be quick or instantaneous to forget all harm done to you, as then there is nothing to forgive and no inner grudges.

Be cheerful and read inspiring writing each day. Do your own work—and this includes things like washing your car, as you will take care of things better and see that what you have is quite all right and this cuts down on always wanting new things or desires. Put things away as soon as you have used them, and always keep things in order as if you may never return to them.

Keep a diary and write down your goals and hold yourself accountable. Embrace health completely. Not just physical health, but habits, cleanliness and regulate your life—and this does not mean mechanizing it but living consciously and purposefully. Let's talk about this one more next time.

and steer clear to try to avoid an accident. This does not mean you get paranoid—you are just being careful so impulses are seen and avoided and you can get to your destination safely. These are not two things but one single feeling without which change is not possible .

First, completely dismantle the excuse mechanism and totally abandon the blame game completely. These are ways to perpetuate the old ways.

Second, be clear about the changes you wish to see within you own self and let your every thought, feeling, word and action or your every expression be the means to manifest this.

Third, have a safe corner or activity for those times when old thoughts and impulses get tempest. This is not an escape but a positive outlet for the energy that is flowing in old grooves so that you can understand it better while it is being channeled positively.

Fourth, keep a detailed diary of your activities and progress. Read the autobiography of Benjamin Franklin; he felt it was instrumental in his success. Be honest, regular and hold yourself accountable.

Some general tips

Do one thing at one time and avoid being distracted, as this opens the door for old habits to flow in and resume mischief with increased vigor—be alert always. Slow down your response; look, listen and

A little acorn or sapling grows into a huge oak or redwood in much the same way. We may call the sapling young and tender, but the young one is full of zeal, energy and clear focus. It knows it has to grow and have its own direct access to sunlight in order to survive, and towards this end all energy is mightily expended. Conditions may not be in its favor, but that does not in the least bit deter the little sapling or the starter wave from all-out unidirectional effort.

Should effort involve struggle?

It should not. Effort is necessary for success in any endeavor. Struggle is a sure sign of something being wrong. Since struggle requires something to struggle against or friction and this is experienced completely in the mind, struggle, we now realize, is only within ourselves and not with others—it must be psychological—you yourself resisting your own self!

Why is it commonly thought that there should be struggle? If you really want change, the whole of you should be onboard in the inspiring new direction you are facing and then there is nothing to struggle with or against. This is the commitment required and this commitment dispenses with struggle. You are not even concerned about the end result any longer, as you will come to discover such wonderful confidence in giving yourself to the new direction that you are already a changed person.

What commitment is required to change?

All of you has to face the new direction. You have to *become* the new changes themselves inwardly, psychologically, and this has to be immediate. Outer change will catch-up, don't worry about it. You can never know darkness if you are facing the light—turn and face the light of your aspiration now. A rose is fragrance, it is not being fragrant—it *is* fragrance and so it can never know odor even if it is nearby. You have to become what you wish for right now. This is not just positive thinking; change does not involve thought at all. When the house is on fire, you get out—what is there to think about? You just do it right now.

What is the uncontrolled mind?

The uncontrolled mind is a mind that does not move in a single direction—it changes direction constantly. Rising moods carry the whole personality into action without a chance to examine things rationally. Just as the intention can never become a wave, no matter how hard it tries, if there is no unidirectional effort—success is not possible for an uncontrolled mind. The uncontrolled mind is the only enemy one has, and the controlled mind is one's best friend.

What is a controlled mind?

When wisdom guides all of one's actions, the fluctuating mind is gradually being controlled. The fluctuating mind is one with strong moods and feelings that are difficult to see beyond. One must learn to free

Do I have to give up the old completely?

It has given itself up—you just have to let it be so. Why not instead look at the new that arrives each moment? There are no good old days or good old anything—only old. Everything good is fresh, just like a good salad must be.

The old flows away like a river; just let it go. A river looks steady but it is new every moment. They say the human body renews itself completely every 60 days or so. Life is an ever new stream—to hold on to the old which is only memory is as unnatural as holding on to water that is flowing away.

Isn't this some sort of escapism?

No. Escapism is turning away from something real. Here, you are directly facing what is real and avoiding living in a world of thought and imagination which is unreal.

How do I get started?

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A basis for change is absolutely requisite: having seen the danger of staying the course or feeling trapped, and wanting a way out. Your every action must be as careful as the care you must take while driving in stormy conditions when you see the danger present

What to do about old habits?

First, embrace the new fully. This new is not a formula or a catchy slogan but a newness you have to have every moment. You have to learn to be attentive, and this is more than just listening. Old habits ride on the twin rails of distraction—they cannot come in when you are attentive because you see what rises in the mind and, recognizing this surge, you can focus on what has your attention and let it pass.

Old habits are only thoughts that have gained momentum through repeated use. Nature is ever fresh, yourself included, so if freshness in attitude is facing the ever new, old habits have little room to enter. The idle mind is an open door for mischief. This does not mean being busy all the time, but being attentive or alert. Each time you recognize the rise and see the fall of the surge of old thoughts, they weaken by disuse and are easier to spot the next time.

Is mind control, self-control?

Yes. Without mind control or self-control, success in any endeavor is very difficult. Both, effort in the new direction and an unwavering commitment are necessary. This unwavering commitment is to face the new direction so completely that you are always in its light. The proper steps or course of action are also necessary, but that is not a struggle if all of you is onboard the new direction.

the inner intelligence or wisdom from the grip of personality and self-centeredness so that inner wisdom is able to start operating, and to do this is to control the mind. We are not talking about philosophy or psychology but the ability to be able to see precisely what is in front of us without the interference of these moods and feelings so we may consider the best response possible.

What is the best response?

If we can do what needs to be done in light of the widest perspective possible—it will be the best response. The best response fits each situation not by shrewd calculation or to boost popularity, but when something needs to be done—this one response seems to be the perfect answer to the situation and not to the personalities involved.

Isn't mind control unnatural?

What is natural is to be able to respond to each new moment in freshness. When old thoughts and habits color perception, they interfere in our responses and this is not natural, as it is not part of nature—which is what is actually happening. Old thoughts and notions are accumulations in the mind and are never part of the actual landscape. Freedom from the mind's coloring is what allows us to be natural and it requires understanding. This understanding is not theoretical but a direct insight into the danger of succumbing to habit, and this is itself control.

Is control of mind difficult?

Yes and no. Mind control is self-control, and it is easy if one cooperates. One has to change if one wants change. For change, one has to apply oneself in new ways and this itself must lead to abandoning old ways that have not been beneficial. Applying oneself in new ways is letting go of the old, and these constitute one single movement of change. If the danger in staying with old habits is clearly seen, mind control or self-control is easy. If there is not this insight, it is very difficult.

Does change take time?

Change is instantaneous, though its effects may be visible over time. If you decide to get healthier, for instance—the change in your mindset if unidirectional is total. This inner change will keep guiding external behavior so that you eat in a healthy way and get some exercise; and this movement to all that is conducive is itself turning away from all that is counterproductive. It may take some time for the physical results to be noticed, but inner or psychological change does not take time. Why should it? If you really see that something is good for you or something is not good for you—what has time to do with an all-aboard decision that is empowered to act now?

Two smokers have each been smoking the same amount for the same time, what makes one quit 'cold-turkey' and the other continue smoking? Assume that both have the same health conditions, lifestyle and are even friends—what makes one 'see' the danger of

staying the course and other 'not see'? Seeing—direct perception of the danger of staying the course—is itself transformation or change.

What if I cannot change all at once?

You are talking about visible results, not change, but why concern yourself with them at all? If every moment gets your fullest response, all inhibitors will fall away. I call them inhibitors instead of obstacles, as we like to think obstacles are external and caused by someone or something else. These inhibitors get in the way and are mostly internal—the old ways that one clings to inwardly while trying to move forward. One only sees these inhibitors when circumstances that involve them repeat themselves, which is painful, or if one really tries and experiences them to be very much present. In either case, these inhibitors are confronted and then one sees them as the problem—and that is it. We shelter ourselves from them because we think the conclusions we have reached keep us safe. When we are made to confront them or when we confront them repeatedly—old ways are seen as counter-productive to change and abandoned.

We can call effort practice only because there are repeated attempts to get onboard fully. But, each attempt is a total attempt, just like a pole vaulter makes several attempts to reach new height. You can call it practice for competition, but each attempt is an all out attempt. Practice, the big event, realization and discovery are words that are useful in communication, but it is best not to get trapped in them.