

Who am I?
How does my past flow into
the present?



Aarsha Vidya Foundation

Vedic wisdom for a fulfilling life

About Vedic wisdom for a fulfilling life

- It is a programme of 8 sessions based on Vedic wisdom for anyone who wants more from life.
- Even if one is not interested in Vedic wisdom, the principles if understood and applied will offer windows of insight and mirrors of reflection paving the way for a fulfilling life.

Why would I seek to apply these principles?

- Firstly it will help me to enhance the fulfillment I wish to derive through family, work or any other pursuits.
- Secondly, as I am engaged in my many pursuits, being a student of Vedanta, my self growth is a necessary and non-negotiable step to Self discovery

Session 1: Who am I?

How does my past flow into the present?

Self esteem is a disposition by which I experience myself as competent to cope with the basic challenges of life and to see myself as worthy of happiness. (Adapted from Six pillars of Self esteem - Nathaniel Branden)

Simply put:

Self esteem = Self efficacy + Self respect

Self-efficacy: Confidence in the ability to cope with life's challenges.

Yogah karmasu kausalam (Bhagavad Gita 2.48)

Effectiveness or competence in action (based on dharma) is Yoga.

What Self esteem is

- Self-respect: I experience myself as deserving of happiness, achievement and love. Joy and fulfillment are my birthright. I am not apologetic about it.
- Self-esteem is a necessary condition of well being. Rapid changes in the world place new demands on psychological resources - capacity for innovation, self responsibility, personal direction – self esteem is a need not a choice.

What Self esteem is

- Self-esteem is like the immune system of the mind. A healthy immune system doesn't guarantee you'll never become ill, but, it does reduce your susceptibility to illness. Immunity provides resistance, strength, and a capacity for regeneration.
- Self-esteem is self-reinforcing.

When we have confidence in our ability to think and act effectively, we can persevere when faced with difficult challenges.

Myths about Self esteem

- Self esteem is feeling good about oneself primarily

No. Self esteem is a more stable disposition over a period of time and situations and does not depend on feelings which are fleeting and temporary by nature. Feeling good contributes to self esteem but is not a determinant.

- Self-esteem is a substitute for food, clothing, shelter.

No. It increases the likelihood that one will find a way to meet such needs.

Myths about Self esteem

- Self esteem is ego or pride

It is not. It is based on a realistic view of oneself. Those who are truly comfortable with themselves and their achievements take pleasure in being who they are. Self esteem is saying, 'I can', Pride is saying 'I did'.

- Becoming successful automatically confers good self-esteem.

It does not. Success, power, good looks may contribute to self esteem but the realistic view of oneself is based on facts and a disposition to deal with whatever life brings.

Myths about Self esteem

- Affirmations or positive statements of oneself will take care of self esteem-

Telling oneself 'I am capable and lovable' accomplishes little if I am operating irresponsibly in key areas of your life.

- Self esteem is a western concept.

It is not. Self esteem is related to a favourable disposition towards my self concept. The closest equivalent of self concept is ahankaara in Sanskrit language meaning conceptual self.

How can I improve my self esteem?

**I practise living consciously and awarefully.
Living consciously and bringing things into
my awareness involves:**



1. Being willing to examine assumptions and correct them if required – Examining the impact of labels and childhood messages
2. Paying attention to information and feedback about my needs and goals
3. Paying attention to inner reality of my mind and outer reality of circumstances and situations
4. Search for feedback for any course correction

The practice of living awarefully



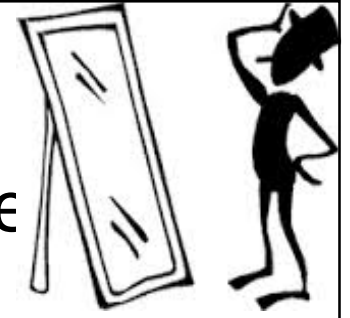
1. Being willing to examine assumptions and correct if required

We examine the impact of labels and childhood messages received while growing up.

Why do we need to do this?

Depending on the childhood messages and the labels that were put on us by parents or significant others such as partners or even our own children, we tend to carry these labels in our minds; Can be encouraging or discouraging. Labels are for products such as tomato sauce not people. Labels limit a person and his or her potential.

The practice of living awarefully

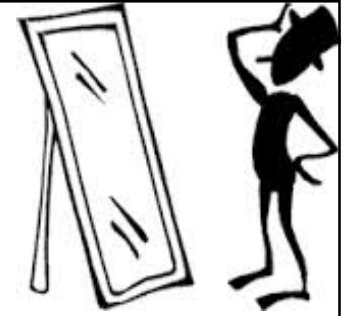


In childhood we may have been brought up with the following kinds of messages from our parents:

- Nurturing messages: e.g. I care for you, I love you unconditionally
- Structuring messages: e.g. Let me show you how this is done
- Critical messages: e.g. You are not good enough
- Smothering messages: e.g. It is okay if you are a good for nothing.

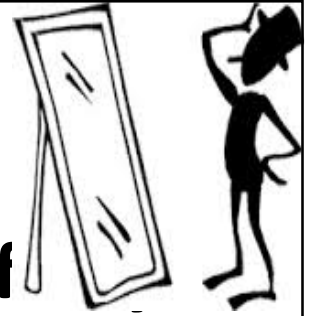
The intention is to not blame our parents or others. It is only to be aware of what gave rise to our thought patterns and change anything that is damaging.

The practice of living awarfully



- Step 1: The task is to identify the messages or labels that I grew up with.
- Step 2: Check to see if these labels are representative of me, reflecting the reality of the situation
- Step 3: If the label does not reflect reality, then reframe
E.g. My father used to say, "You are not good enough."
Since then, this tape plays in my mind all the time
Reframe – "My father was trying to encourage me. He did the best he could. I am good enough as I have consistently been hardworking in my many pursuits."
- Step 4: See if it resonates and reframe every time the tape in the mind plays, 'you are not good enough'

The practice of living awarefully



2. Living consciously means being clearly aware of needs as a human being and how these are met.

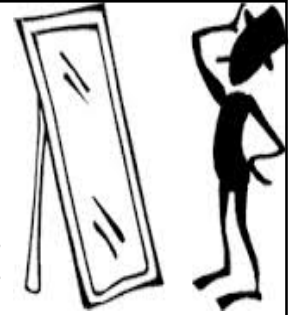
- Needs are natural, common to all and universal. What differs is how each person meets his or her needs. Some common needs are:
 - ✓ Physiological needs
 - ✓ Need for love and belonging
 - ✓ Need for self esteem
 - ✓ Need for power and achievement
 - ✓ Need for independence
 - ✓ Moksha or spiritual need underlies the above.

The practice of living awarfully



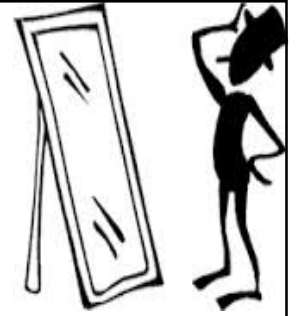
- A quick way to identify some of my major needs is completing the sentence with the first thought that comes to mind. There are no right or wrong answers. Try and come up with at least 3-5 statements to complete the below. Please do not judge these.
- ✓ My need for love and belonging is met when....
- ✓ My need for power and achievement is met when....
- ✓ My need for love and belonging is met when....
- ✓ My need for independence is met when...
- ✓ My physiological needs are met when....
- ✓ My need for self respect is met when.....

The practice of living awarefully



- If I pay 5% more attention to the most important relationships of my life.....
- If I pay 5 % attention to my body.....
- If I bring 5% more awareness to my insecurities.....
- If I bring 5% more awareness to my needs.....
- If I bring 5% more awareness to my goals.....
- If I bring 5% more awareness to what my job requires of me.....
- The scary thing about being more awareful in life is...
- The advantage of not being awareful is
- If I choose to be more conscious.....

The practice of Self Acceptance



- **Self acceptance** is to see what is – not a false sense of approval..

- **Self acceptance is the refusal to be my own enemy**

Uddhared aatmanaatmaanam naatmaanam avsaadayet

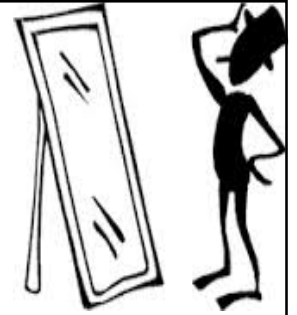
Atmaiva hyaatmano bandhuhu Aatmaiva ripuraatmanha

May one lift oneself by oneself, may one not destroy oneself

For the self alone is one's friend and self alone is one's enemy. (BG 6.5)

- Self acceptance is the willingness to see what is true or real about me – my feelings, thoughts, fears, desires.

The practice of Self Acceptance

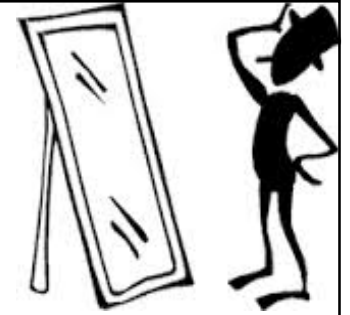


- In self acceptance there is no denial, no evasion, no justification, precondition to any change
- I do not consider anything alien and own up every aspect of me

Complete the following with the first thought that comes to mind:

- Self acceptance to me means
- If I am more accepting of myself.....
- If I am more accepting of my conflicts.....
- If I am more accepting of my body.....
- When I disown my feelings.....

Meditation on self acceptance



Learning to be your best friend:

Identify endearments or loving words by which you would like to be addressed. For example sweetheart, darling, your nickname, my dear, preferably in your own language.

Anything that you want to say to yourself try and prefix it with these loving words.

Observe the impact of this simple exercise as you refuse to be your enemy and consciously talk to yourself just like a close friend would – in a supportive, caring and encouraging way.