

Question: I've been learning the art of acceptance and understanding, how to let go and surrender to the Now. However, it always leaves me feeling very confused when I try to put it into practice. When a situation or person triggers me, I want to let it go, accept it totally and be at peace, but when I do, I feel an inner resistance. Is it my ego saying "Hmmm, there we go again and you've let them walk all over you; You've allowed yourself to get used and abused over and over again, just bypassing the whole situation and not dealing with it." It's difficult to see the forest for the trees sometimes, and although I really want to let things go and surrender to the present, that annoying little voice chimes in with a thousand doubts and opinions. I try to just be present, but the voice is always there, telling me I'm wrong. It's so confusing. What's happening in me when this takes place, and why is it happening?

EP Response: Thank you for this thoughtful question. Let us begin by saying that your question highlights a common misunderstanding in the quest for spiritual enlightenment and self-awareness. This is the reason that simplistic rules and admonishments touted by many religions and spiritual teachings can be lacking, and can lead us to feeling inadequate, uneasy or, at times, completely lost and confused.

In short, one size generally does not fit all. Each person is on their own journey, as outlined by their Soul, which created the lifetime with a specific goal or mission in mind. To achieve that mission in a manner befitting the Soul's desire for specific kinds of growth, the Soul further creates specific parameters and personality traits that are developed in you during childhood. This is usually generated through the Soul's pre-lifetime choices of such things as parents and the environment into which you are born and are raised during your formative years.

These traits not only become the basis for how you see the world, they become the "driver" and starting point, if you will, of your learning experiences and your Soul growth throughout life. Becoming conscious and aware of the way in which you see and react to the world is an important part of understanding how to direct that growth during the physical lifetime.

In addition, these traits become the basis for how universal laws, including spiritual axioms, are applicable to you specifically. And it is for this reason that even though there may be certain commonalities found in the simplistic and singular directives provided in certain spiritual practices, they are never as simple as they sound.

In fact, they must always be applied to each individual based on the individual's own uniqueness and the expansion of their consciousness over the course of the lifetime. The results can sometimes seem paradoxical, and can even seem to contradict the spiritual practice or universal law in question, although, as we will see shortly, the growth derived from the axiom is somehow always obtained.

In this regard, you express confusion around the concept of acceptance and understanding, and each time you attempt to live this by turning the other “cheek,” it leaves you feeling taken advantage of and walked on. It could be said that your confusion is based on your belief that in order to be at peace, you must become neutral through acceptance and understanding.

On the surface, this belief is, indeed, a powerful Truth applicable in some way to all. But what if we look deeper from a higher perspective, and peer into the specifics of how this applies to you personally, and why it makes you feel disoriented and stepped upon. There we will find a unique dynamic that your Soul created in order to maximize your growth around that particular Truth.

So how can a universal Truth do this? And, more importantly, why aren't you achieving the neutrality and peace you are so diligently working towards?

The answer lies in the relationship between your personal parameters, or the personality traits you chose to have created for you early in this lifetime, with which you see the world, and your life mission, as they both apply to this universal Truth. This also becomes the source of your inner conflict, a conflict that brings opportunities for Soul growth by forcing you to become aware of who you are as a stepping stone to finding true peace and happiness. Let us explain.

Suppose for a moment that together with your Soul you chose as your life mission to learn all the aspects of acceptance. As a life mission, you planned to be presented with situations that would help you grow from learning everything there is to know about acceptance, as well as its brother, rejection.

Now let's say, to up the ante, together with your Soul you chose that this life lesson would be played out through the glasses of your personality, which were developed by ongoing interactions with your parents, your siblings, related loved ones, your friends, your romantic relationships, your work colleagues and your environment at large. Imagine further that the main personality trait, that ultimately emerged as “You”, together with this mission, was your choice to explore all the aspects of sainthood and martyrdom.

Such a scenario would mean that, when these lessons were experienced in the positive polarity, you would give and give, as a saint would, without any expectation. This in turn would magnetize people and situations to you that allowed you to give freely, as any saint would, without expecting anything in return.

In the negative polarity, however, the events you would experience would unfold quite differently. In that case, the endless giving and giving to others would lead you to feeling taken advantage of and, ultimately, martyred. As you created that vibration in the world, you would attract to yourself events and people ready to exploit you, and ultimately these same people, despite all that you may have given them, would keep taking advantage of you, leaving you feeling, in a word, rejected and martyred.

In both cases, through your experiences, you would be faced with issues surrounding acceptance or its flip side, rejection, thereby contributing to Soul growth generally. In that way, you would always face the prospects of being accepted or rejected by either giving and giving endlessly, with your patience constantly tested as you are forced into the role of Saint, or by having your boundaries tested through being taken advantage of, as any martyr would be.

Now add to this the fact that over time, you are holding fast to the belief, as expressed in the Universal Truth we've discussed, that in order to find peace, you must first "accept" and be understanding of others, despite living in a world where you tend to be constantly tested, in accordance with your personality trait and life mission. Naturally, an inner conflict would develop whereby your personality trait and life mission would appear to always be in direct opposition to the axiom you have chosen as your mantra. In short, you would try to find peace by accepting the situation, but your feelings of being taken advantage of (martyred) would constantly rise up in direct conflict with the Truth you believe you must follow to find peace.

Hopefully, this scenario begins to make it clear that in order for you to experience acceptance, you must practice the art of being able to give of yourself without any expectations of receiving something in return. By detaching from any outcome, in a sense you neutralize your vibrational energy so that situations around being martyred, taken advantage of and rejected are not the manner in which you are learning lessons around acceptance and rejection.

To do that, you need to establish strong boundaries in life, with the ability to know when to stand up for yourself, when to say NO, when to give freely of yourself and when to withhold your energy. Through strong boundaries you adhere to, and by giving of yourself only when you have no expectations or desire to receive anything in exchange, you are no longer subject to the feelings of personal martyrdom that you have had in the past. In this way, it is not acceptance that brings peace, but strong boundaries and standing up for yourself that bring you acceptance, which ultimately brings you peace.

Leaving out just one step of the equation, which the axiom would have you do, delivers a paradox to you. In other words, if you hold onto the belief, as stated by you, that you must first "accept" and understand everyone and everything in order to find peace, you set yourself up for learning your life lesson through martyrdom and rejection. Of course, martyrdom and rejection will bring anything but peace and will lead to more potential upsets, as you experience your life lesson through the more challenging negative polarity.

As you can see, that is clearly the opposite of what you wish to do, and this is the real basis of your question. It's not that the universal Truth you were trying to emulate is incorrect; it's that your way of interpreting that Truth and not dealing with it based on your unique life mission and personality traits has put you off the mark. This, in a nutshell, is why "knowing thyself", as the ancients extolled, is the real path to true happiness, peace and joy.

One size does not fit all. Becoming aware of how your unique life lesson, your personality features and your individual situation combine and unfold to attract your reality is paramount

to understanding how to apply such axioms of Truth. To do so is the true sign of a Being on the path of enlightenment.