

21 Ways to Stay in the Peace

From Byron Katie

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Introduction

The following are simple yet powerful practices that can give you new ways of looking at your life circumstances, and in that, create new possibilities for self-realization.

1. Reversing Judgements

Practice noticing when you judge or criticize someone or something. For example, in a grocery store line, you might be impatient and think the person in front of you is disorganized and rude. Quickly turn your judgment around and ask yourself: "Is it just as true about me? Am I rude? (Am I rude sometimes; to others - or to myself?) Am I being rude inside of me when I think they are rude?"

This exercise takes your attention off the "other" and places your attention on you. Forgiveness naturally results. Placing the blame or judgment on someone else leaves you powerless to change your experience; taking responsibility for your beliefs and judgments gives you the power to change them.

Remember, beyond the appearance of who it is you are looking at, it is always God disguised, standing in front of you so that you can know yourself. Reversing judgments allows complete forgiveness. Forgiveness leads to awareness of oneself, and reestablishes personal integrity.

2. The Three Kinds of Business

Notice when you hurt that you are mentally out of your business. If you're not sure, stop and ask, "Mentally, whose business am I in?" There are only three kinds of business in the universe: mine, yours, and God's. Whose business is it if an earthquake happens? God's business. Whose business is it if your neighbor down the street has an ugly lawn? Your neighbor's business. Whose business is it if you are angry at your neighbor down the street because they have an ugly lawn? Your business. Life is simple—it is internal.

Count, in five minute intervals, how many times you are in someone else's business mentally. Notice when you give uninvited advice or offer your opinion about something (aloud or silently). Ask yourself: "Am I in their business? Did they ask me for my advice?" And more importantly, "Can I take the advice I am offering and apply it to my life?"

3. Being in Nobody's Business

After working with the practice of staying out of others' business, try to stay out of your own business as well. Hold lightly whatever you think you know about yourself. "I am contained within this physical body." Is it true? Can I absolutely know that it's true? What do I get by holding that belief? There is a widespread belief that we are our

bodies, and we will die. Who would I be without the belief?

4. "Detaching" from Your Body/Your Story

Try speaking about yourself, for a period of time, in the third person rather than as I or me. Instead of saying, "I'm going to lunch", say, "She's going to lunch," (referring to yourself), or, "This one is going to lunch." Do this with a friend for an hour, the afternoon, or the entire day. Eliminate the use of all personal pronouns (I, me, we). For example, "How is that one (or this one) today? Does he want to go to the park?" Experience impersonally the body, the stories, and the preferences which you think you are.

5. Speaking in the Present Tense

Become mindful of how often your conversations focus on the past or future. Be aware of the verbs you use: was, did, will, are going to, etc. To speak of the past in the present is to reawaken and recreate it fully in the present, if only in our minds, and then we are lost to what is present for us now. To speak of the future is to create and live with a fantasy. If you want to experience fear, think of the future. If you want to experience shame and guilt, think of the past.

6. Doing the Dishes

"Doing the dishes" is a practice of learning to love the action that is in front of you. Your inner voice or intuition guides you all day long to do simple things such as doing the dishes, driving to work, or sweeping the floor. Allow the sanctity of simplicity. Listening to your inner voice and then acting on its suggestions with implicit trust creates a life that is more graceful, effortless, and miraculous.

7. Listening to the Voice of the Body

The body is the voice of your mind, and it speaks to you in physical movement as muscular contractions - as twitches, twinges, tickles and tension, just to name a few. Become aware of how often you move away from peace or stillness. Practice stillness and let your body speak to you of where your mind contracts, no matter how subtle the flickering contraction may be. When you notice a sensation, inquire within, "What situation or contracted thought is triggering this physical sensation? Am I out of alignment with my integrity in this circumstance, and if so, where? Am I willing to let go of this belief or thought that causes my body to contract?" Listen and allow the answers to guide you, and return to the peace and clarity within.

8. Reporting to Yourself

This exercise can help in healing fear and terror. Practice reporting events to yourself as if a circumstance you find yourself in is actually a news story and you are the roving reporter. Announce exactly what your surroundings are and what's happening "on the scene" at that very moment. Fear is always the result of projecting a re-creation of the past into the now or the future. If you find yourself fearful, find the core belief and inquire: "Is it true that I need to be fearful in this situation? What is actually happening right now, physically? Where is my body (hands, arms, feet, legs, head)? What do I see (trees, walls, windows, sky)?"

Impersonalizing our stories gives us an opportunity to look at circumstances more objectively, and choose our responses to what life brings. Living in our minds, believing our untrue thoughts, is a good way to scare ourselves to death, and it can appear in form as old age, cancer, degeneration, high blood pressure, etc.

9. Literal Hearing

Practice listening to others in the most literal sense, believing exactly what they say, and do your best to resist falling into your own interpretations about the information they share with you.

For example, someone might compliment you on how beautiful you are, and you interpret that as an implication that the person has ulterior motives. Our interpretations of what we hear people say to us are often far more painful or frightening than what people actually say. We can hurt ourselves with our misconceptions and our thinking for others. Try trusting that what they say is exactly what they mean: not more, not less. Hear people out. Catch yourself when you want to finish a sentence for someone either aloud or in your mind. Listen. It can be amazing to hear what comes out when we allow others to complete their thoughts without interruption. And, when we are busy thinking we know what they are about to say, we are missing what they are actually saying.

You might want to consider these questions: "What can be threatened if I listen and hear literally? Do I interrupt because I don't want to really know what they have to say? Do I interrupt to convince them I know more than they do? Am I attempting to portray an image of self-confidence and control? Who would I be without the need to possess those qualities? Is there a fear of appearing unintelligent? Would people leave me if I heard them literally, and no longer engage in manipulative games?"

10. Speaking Honestly and Literally

Speak literally. Say what you mean without justification, without any desire to manipulate, and without concern about how another may interpret your words. Practice not being careful. Experience the freedom this brings.

11. Watching the Play

See yourself in a balcony, watching your favorite drama about you and what distresses you. Watch the story on the stage below. Notice how you have seen this drama performed hundreds, perhaps thousands, of times. Watch this until you find yourself becoming bored. The performers are having to exaggerate their parts to keep your attention. Notice when you get honest with your boredom, you get up from your seat, leave the balcony, exit the playhouse, and step outside. Always know you can re-visit. Who would you be without your story?

12. Watching a Second Version of the Play

Write your story from the eyes and mind of another. Write as many different versions with as many different outcomes as you like. Notice what you notice.

13. Exercising Polarity

If you find yourself dwelling on a negative thought, practice going to the opposite positive extreme or polarity. When you catch yourself slipping back into negativity, choose again to return to the positive polarity and be present with your conscious choice; feel the truth of it. There is only love, and what doesn't appear as love is a disguised call for love. It is your birthright to live in the positive polarity of love and truth.

14. Self Loving Process

Make a list of everything you love about someone and share it with them. Then, give yourself everything that is on the list. You may also recognize that what you love about someone else is just as true of you. Then allow the fullness of it to be expressed in your life.

15. Coming from Honesty

Practice moving and responding honestly. Laugh, cry, scream, and speak as it is genuinely true for you in each moment. Be a child again; act in full integrity with your feelings. Don't let beliefs compromise your integrity. For example, practice leaving a room honestly without manipulating those you leave behind with a polite excuse. Live your truth without explaining yourself.

16. Asking for What You Want - Giving Yourself What You Want

Ask for what you want, even though it may feel bold or awkward. People don't know what you want until you ask them. The act of asking is a validation of the awareness that you deserve to have what you want. If others are unable or unwilling to accommodate your request, give it to yourself.

17. Awareness of You

Recognize that the one in front of you is you. Beyond all appearances and personalities is the essence of goodness, which is you. Remembering your presence in all forms will bring you immediately into the present moment, in awe of the fullness therein. The person before you will become an opportunity to know yourself. The heart overflows with love and gratitude, humbly saying, "Oh yes, this person or situation is here for me to learn about who I am."

18. Self Gratitude

For twenty-four hours, stop looking outside yourself for validation. On the other side of that you become the experience of gratitude.

19. The Vanity Mirror

If you want to see who you are not, look in the mirror. Use the mirror once a day only. Who would you be without your mirror?

20. Beyond Justification

Begin to notice how often you explain or justify yourself, your words, actions, decisions, etc. Who are you trying to convince? And what is the story you are perpetuating? Become aware of your use of the word "because" or "but" when you speak. Stop your sentence immediately. Begin again. Justification is an attempt to manipulate the other person; decide to be still and know.

21. The Gift of Criticism

Criticism is an incredible opportunity to grow. Here are some steps on how to receive criticism and benefit from it. When someone says you are "wrong, terrible, sloppy," etc., say (either in your mind, or aloud to that person) "Thank

you." This thought immediately puts you in a space where you're available to hear and to use the information in a way that can serve you.

After the criticism, ask yourself, "Do I hurt?" If the answer is "yes," then know somewhere within you, you believe the criticism also. Knowing this gives you the opportunity to heal that portion which you find unacceptable within yourself.

If you want to cease to be vulnerable to criticism, then heal the criticisms. That is the ultimate power in letting go of every concept. Being vulnerable means you can no longer be manipulated for there is no place for criticism to stick. This is freedom.