

How To Really Let Whatever Happens Be Okay -- and Why You Would Want To by Bill Harris, Director

Many of you know that much of the support we provide to Centerpointe program participants, and much of what I have been writing about in Mind Chatter for the last year and a half, has been centered around my Nine Principles for Conscious Living (to read the original Nine Principles articles, click here ---> <http://www.centerpointe.com/news/archives/2001-07-15.txt>).

The first of those principles -- and in my opinion the most fundamental -- is the Principle of Letting Whatever Happens be Okay. If you can follow this first principle, your entire life will fall into place in a most wonderful way.

After the original Nine Principles article, I wrote a series of articles going into more detail about each principle. To view the original article about Letting Whatever Happens be Okay, click here ---> <http://www.centerpointe.com/news/archives/2001-08-15.txt>.

Today, I want to go into more detail about this first principle. This principle could be described as UN-learning something: the tendency to resist those things, large or small, that you don't like or want in your world. Resistance is a poison that can keep you from the happiness and inner peace you deserve, and this article is about how to stop doing it to yourself.

Resistance, in the context in which I will use it here, means to be emotionally attached to having what IS-and cannot be changed (either because it is unchangeable, or because it is already over)-be different than it is. Even when something can be changed, to be in emotional resistance to it while doing what you can to change it is also resistance.

The Centerpointe program is about creating a life where you experience well-being, happiness, and inner peace all the time-or, at the very least, having you realize that in those times when you do not feel happy and peaceful, you chose that response.

You create any emotional discomfort, pain, or suffering we experience through your resistance to people, situations, and things being the way they are. Once this resistance is dropped, happiness and inner peace are the result-and, you become more effective in changing whatever you want to change. This may seem like an outlandish claim, but I have learned to live this way, I have seen many other people do it, and I have every confidence that you can learn to do it, too.

I have identified six important principles that will help you understand and apply this Principle of Letting Whatever Happens Be Okay. The result of understanding and internalizing these principles is a deep and lasting happiness and inner peace.

Important principle #1: All discomfort is caused by resistance.

Whenever you are experiencing any kind of discomfort, whether in the Centerpointe program or in life in general, you are resisting the fact that some person, situation, or thing is the way it is. You may be doing so unconsciously and automatically, but nonetheless, all suffering, all discomfort, all pain, comes from not allowing what is to be what it is. If you could be totally nonresistant to what is, life would flow easily and happily, without discomfort, no matter what the external circumstances.

This does not mean you can't take action in order to make things different. It just means that when faced with something that is the way it is, and cannot be changed, you do not, as a result, suffer over it. Unfortunately, most people, most of the time do suffer over things they cannot change, or suffer while they are changing something that can be changed.

I am suggesting that you do what you can to create what you want, but that you are not attached to the outcome, and that your level of well-being can remain the same, regardless of the outcome. In this way of living, you may prefer a particular outcome, but your emotional response to what happens does not depend on a particular outcome. Your happiness comes from inside, not from what does or does not happen around you.

Important principle #2: We each have an internal map of reality, the contents of which we did not consciously choose, and which operates automatically to create our results and experience of life.

As we grow up, we each create an internal map of reality, an internal conceptualization of who we are, what the world is, how we are related to it, and how to best determine in each moment what to do and how to do it. This map, however, is not reality. It is a representation of reality.

This map is formed as a result of our interactions with parents, teachers, friends, the media, and from many other influences-the accumulated effect of all our life experiences, good and bad. Most of it is unconscious and runs on automatic, and most of it we did not consciously choose, but rather became part of us before we were old enough to know any better. Some of it serves us, but some of it gives us results we don't want.

Having such a map is very handy. It helps us navigate through life, just as a road map helps us navigate from place to place. But remember that with a road map, you cannot drive on those little lines representing roads, and you can't go camping on those little triangles representing mountains, and you cannot go swimming in those blue areas representing rivers and lakes. The map is not the territory-it just represents the territory. It may, in some cases, even

misrepresent the territory (which might cause us to get lost from time to time).

In just the same way, the internal map we create is not reality, but rather a representation of reality-it's not who we are; it's just our conceptualization of who we are.

Important principle #3: Our main agenda in creating this map is to be safe.

We construct this map as we grow up in such a way that we create the greatest amount of safety for ourselves. In your map you might, for instance, suppress certain feelings or aspects of yourself because it wasn't safe to express them while you were growing up. Or, you might develop certain strategies for dealing with different situations, such as withdrawing, or becoming angry or depressed or anxious. You might learn to scan your environment for anything that reminds you of people, situations, and things that have caused you pain, hoping to better avoid these things.

Your internal map is a collection of many generalizations, values, beliefs, decisions, and strategies about who you are, about the world, and about other people. Though there are other criteria used in the creation of this map of reality, the most important is that of creating the greatest amount of emotional, and in some cases, physical, safety.

Important principle #4: The more that safety was an issue in your family, the more likely your map of reality will be built around the issue of safety, and the more likely you will be to protect it from changing.

As an adult you might find that certain things about your map-things that helped you feel safe while growing up-don't work very well anymore. They don't serve you as well as they did when you were a child because now your situation is different. You are not under the control of parents anymore (unless you allow that). You have much more personal power now that you are an adult instead of a dependent child. You are not in a closed environment with certain rules that may apply only in your family situation. Instead, you are dealing with a wider range of people and situations, often with different, and perhaps changing, rules.

Not expressing certain feelings, for instance, might have been necessary in your family (or at least it appeared to be so). But as an adult, not expressing your feelings might keep you from forming close relationships. Reacting in anger might have worked in your family, but might create problems out in the rest of the world.

Certain strategies for coping or making decisions may have worked in your family, but create problems in your adult life. Perhaps being obstinate with your mother generally caused her to give in when you were a child, but an adult, it causes your employer and co-workers to find you to be difficult to work with. Perhaps

withdrawing diffused uncomfortable feelings between you and your siblings while growing up, but as an adult it just creates situations where nothing is ever resolved and you end up feeling lonely.

Let's say that as an adult you experience some of these things and realize there is a problem. As a result, you begin doing some kind of personal growth work, and end up in the Centerpointe program (a good place to end up!).

Your daily listening to Holosync® and your interaction with the support materials and the support staff begins to break up that old map of reality so it can be replaced with a better and more functional map, one that gives you better results. Consciously, you're saying "Yes! I want this change," but a part of you, on an unconscious level, says "What? Are you kidding? Change that? No way. This is what has kept me safe all these years." So, you hang on, you resist—at least on the unconscious level (and sometimes consciously, too).

This hanging on to the old way when a change is trying to happen is a form of resistance.

Important principle #5: Though they may seem to cause your discomfort, outside events are merely triggers. The root cause of all discomfort is not what we resist, but the resistance itself.

When you are resisting something or someone (and therefore feeling discomfort of some kind), it will seem as if the thing being resisted is causing the discomfort or pain, but it is really the resistance itself that causes the pain. Making something outside of yourself the cause of your discomfort is called projection, and projection actually keeps you from doing something about the discomfort, because putting the cause outside yourself takes away your ability to do much about it.

Important principle #6: Because the resistance is the cause of discomfort, ending it is the solution.

Because the cause of all your discomfort is your own resistance to whatever is happening, the real and only truly effective solution is to end that resistance. Certainly you can and should take whatever steps are available to change a situation you don't like, but once you have done everything you can, emotionally resisting what cannot be changed (or even resisting what is while you are trying to change it) just causes needless suffering.

Here's what you can do about resistance:

1) Recognize

First, you have to recognize that you are resisting. You do this by noticing when

there is discomfort. Discomfort = resistance, every time. No exceptions. Surprisingly, many people are not even aware that they are experiencing discomfort. Often this is because whenever they experience discomfort their attention immediately goes to something outside of themselves in an effort to find something to blame for their feeling (i.e., they project the feeling on something outside themselves).

2) Acknowledge

Once you have noticed that you are experiencing some kind of discomfort, no matter what it is, acknowledge that it is a direct result of your own resistance to something, even if you don't know what it is or why you are doing it. The resistance may be unconscious, and for that reason the source or reason why may not be obvious. It doesn't matter, however, whether you can, at this point, determine exactly what is going on, or why it is happening. All you need to know is that somehow, whether you can see it or not, the resistance (and resulting discomfort) is coming from something in you, that while the trigger may be outside of you, the response is a function of who you are, and is created, on some level, by you.

3) Watch with curiosity

Once you have recognized that you are experiencing discomfort, and have acknowledged that it is coming from something in you, just notice it. "There I am, feeling _____. I must be in resistance." Then WATCH yourself. Notice how your body feels, notice your thoughts, notice your emotions. Just NOTICE. Be the watcher, the witness to what is happening.

Be a scientist...

As you watch, approach whatever happens with curiosity. Let it be okay that whatever is happening is happening, and just watch. Be okay that something is triggering your resistance, and be okay with the resistance itself. Pretend that you are a scientist, lurking in the Amazon jungle, searching for the last 25 years for a certain butterfly. Finally, it flies by-and you're not going to miss anything. You are keenly interested in just watching and noticing what happens. You have no agenda for what you think should happen, how you should feel, think, or act-you just want to notice what does happen.

If you can treat your resistance in this manner, most of it will probably disappear immediately (though not if you're focused on having it disappear, which is more resistance).

"But it's not working!"

If you're doing all of the above, and you're doing it as well as you possibly

can-you're noticing that you're experiencing discomfort; you're realizing that since you're experiencing discomfort you must be resisting something, even if it's not clear what it is; you're realizing that this resistance is coming from you and not from the thing or situation being resisted; and you're watching with scientific curiosity whatever thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are happening-but you're still experiencing discomfort, then what do you do?

* First, realize that dropping the resistance habit may take some practice. For most people, it is a very old habit. Give yourself a break and realize that there is a learning curve for mastering this important skill. Once you "get it," you'll realize how easy it actually is.

* Second, realize that fretting about your resistance is just...yes, more resistance. Let it be okay that you are who you are at this point in your development, and keep practicing the above steps.

* Finally, if you are responding to the changes being created by the Centerpointe program with resistance, and assuming you have done everything possible for you at this point to deal with your resistance, you might want to take short a vacation from your daily listening until your nervous system catches up. Take a day off. Take two off if need be.

* Remember that the root cause of all discomfort is resistance and, for this reason, the ultimate solution is to end the resistance. Removing the trigger (whether the trigger is the changes being created by the Centerpointe program, other people, certain situations, or anything else) does not deal with the root cause, and is therefore not as effective as actually ending the resistance.

Your goal is to choose your response to each situation...

No matter who you are, there is no way to avoid all potentially unpleasant people and situations. Your goal, then, is not to avoid these things, but rather to have your response to whatever happens be a choice, and to have that response be independent of anything happening around you. Once you learn how to exercise this choice, you can choose happiness and peace regardless of what is going on around you. If, on the other hand, you wait for perfect conditions before feeling perfect...well, you know how often that happens.

Trust the Centerpointe program to help you change...

Also keep in mind that no matter how much you resist, the Centerpointe program will eventually push you through it all anyway. It did with me, despite my unconscious efforts to screw it up, and I've seen it do the same with many, many others. Your mission (if you choose to accept it) is to get out of your own way as much as possible. To the degree you do so, the program, and life in general, becomes effortless. To the degree you choose, instead, to continue your

resistance, you will make the program-and your life-difficult. You've already tried the resistance approach. Why not try letting whatever happens be okay? What do you have to lose?

Finally, you don't have to do this by yourself. If you are a Centerpointe program participant, please do use the Telephone Hotline (503-672-7117, between 9:30 and 5:00 Pacific time, M-F) when you realize you're in resistance. Our support counselors can help you become more aware of your resistance and how to drop it. The results could change your life.

If you're not a Centerpointe program participant, well...

Be well.

Bill Harris, Director

Excerpt taken from Centerpointe's monthly newsletter, Mind Chatter, December 2002.