

LIFE MANTRA

# To have the right attitude, be inclusive



GAYATRI NARAINA

Our attitude is a combination of our thoughts, feelings, opinions and beliefs. This is manifested in three basic ways: emotional, behavioural and underlying beliefs. Attitude is the pivotal point of balance between awareness and action. As is our awareness, so is our attitude, and as is our attitude, so is our vision, and as is our vision, so is our action. Our attitude shapes our behaviour and also the way we face the challenges that life presents. Attitude can also be said to create an atmosphere which can be positive or negative and can be a magnet that attracts

others or that drives them away from us. For example, if we are caring and loving, accepting and understanding, people will enjoy our company. If we are always critical, sad or hopeless, then others will find being with us to be difficult.

So, how do we adjust our attitude? A benevolent attitude is very powerful. Benevolence is the source of kindness, compassion, inclusivity and acceptance. One of the ways to strengthen a benevolent attitude is to 'find the silver lining'. A very good practice for this is to start, and maintain, a daily gratitude journal. We can look back over the day and write down events, moments or encounters that filled us with joy and appreciation. A small act of kindness, perhaps, or moments of deep peace.

Start with small things and watch them grow. Another practice is to make sure that we spend



time with as many optimists as possible. Optimists notice the beautiful moments and like to share them.

These activities, small as they are, help us to look more closely at the self. I may then notice that I have the habit of viewing situations and perhaps even people, with a tendency to hold prejudices or have a biased attitude towards

one set of people, or even discriminate against another set of people.

These observations will make me realise that if I want to emanate benevolence, I need to shift perspective. This requires great honesty and great courage. To strengthen a benevolent attitude, I need to consider looking at those who hold different beliefs through a lens of

inclusivity and equality.

Adjustments to our attitude serve to imbue our lives with optimism, and this builds inner strength. This strength is sustained through contemplative and reflective practices. We may not be able to change situations or circumstances, but we can change our attitude towards them.

For this we need spir-

itual growth, and this is the primary and fundamental reason to adopt the daily assimilation, in meditation, of light and strength developed through a deepening relationship with the source of all benevolence, God.

Gayatri Naraine represents the Brahma Kumaris at the United Nations in New York.

DISCOURSE

## LEARNING SHOULD MAKE US SENSIBLE



DADI JANKI

Some things facilitate learning, and other things destroy it. Arrogance destroys it — "I know this already" — have this thought and learning will stop. Also, being tied up in a million things will not help you get

to the depth of a thing. You cannot really change until you get to the depth of something. When learning stops there is no more change, there is no more progress and the soul, whose task it is to learn and change, is bereft.

"This much I have understood, but tomorrow, I will understand even more" — this is a thought of appreciation for what has already been received. It is a good way to ensure that more will be received in the future.

There will always be the opportunity to learn for those who desire it. Learn in such a way so as to absorb the new and live it. That is being sensible, which is the aim of learning.

ULTIMATE TRUTH

## RIGHT REMEMBRANCE BRINGS GREAT TREASURES



B.K. ATAM PRAKASH

What if someone were to forget that they had received a huge inheritance from their father and lived in penury, begging and borrowing money to survive? They would bemoan their fate and vent their anger on all who appeared to them to be selfish and unhelpful, ignorant of the fact that they owned a fortune. This seems to be the condition of many people today.

Our experiences in life depend, to a considerable extent, on our self-image, which determines how we feel about ourselves and relate to the world. If we see ourselves as lacking one, or many, things and are focused on our shortcomings, we are likely to feel weak,

unworthy or plain unlucky. We will then perceive everything from that position.

This is apparent from the way people relate to each other and God. The Supreme is the Father of all souls: He is the Almighty, the Benefactor, the Merciful. But the children have forgotten who their father is, and they beg Him for help, for wealth, love, happiness, comfort, and even death, in order to escape their sorrows.

Do children need to beg for their inheritance? It is theirs by right. But when we forget our relationship with the Divine, we no longer remember what we have received from Him. This tragic amnesia leads to a lot of suffering.

What we remember determines how we feel. Think of irritating things and you will soon feel irritated. Similarly, dwelling on the Divine — deliberately, quietly, without prejudging — begins to fill us with His qualities of peace, love, and strength. The soul starts to recognise that these virtues are very



much a part of them. They only need to turn their attention inward to discover and experience them. And if they want to fill themselves with more, they just have to connect with the ocean of virtues, their Father.

Once souls have acquired abundant peace and happiness, these qualities radiate from them the way fragrance naturally spreads from a flower. Those around them will feel peaceful and happy in their presence. This is the wonder of remembrance — remember who you are, whose child

you are, and from a beggar you can turn into a benefactor.

The moment we find ourselves expecting, desiring or longing for something, we can check if we are remembering who we are. Knowing that one belongs to the Supreme brings contentment, joy and strength. Where there is the right remembrance, there are no complaints.

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RIGHT CONNECTION

## WHY WE NEED TO BE QUIETLY GOOD



SHARONA STILLERMAN

Most of us want to be and do, good. However, in everyday life, it's not so straightforward! We continually do or say things we wish we had not. Or, worse, we may very well say and do the right thing, but inside there are the very unrighteous feelings of dislike, irritability, and

every other sort of negativity. We are one thing on the outside, something else on the inside. This reduces the benefits of 'being good' to almost nothing, leaving us wondering if 'being good' is worth all the trouble.

Being good should make us happy, fulfilled individuals. Being good should make others happy to be with us. Yet so often, even while doing our best to be good, we still get hurt. Others don't appreciate our efforts; they disapprove of us. They keep their distance.

There is however, a very powerful way to be good, one that guarantees all the

benefits, and that is to be 'quietly' good. This kind of goodness is not the same as that which most of us have been working with. It is an internal goodness that is based on a constant, elevated awareness that the original nature of the self, and God, is one of supreme and divine goodness. This awareness greatly increases confidence in the value of goodness. It also creates a lot of enthusiasm for personal transformation; we long for a goodness that flows, unstopably, from the inside, out.

If we fail to recharge the battery of our cell phone, how well will it function?

In the same way, if we fail to keep the soul — our innermost self — 'charged', how effective will be our goodness? It will be goodness filled with neediness, making us into takers rather than givers. Trying to give while running on empty is the real reason our good intentions still cause so much unhappiness.

Being quietly good means that our attention is on keeping ourselves 'plugged in'. We fill ourselves with the pure peace and love coming from God. This creates fulfilment — yes! Fulfilment exists! — and being good starts becoming natural and easy. We radiate what we are. When we ourselves are full and happy, those are the vibrations we share.

The world today needs us to be quietly good; it needs the peace, love and happiness that God is just waiting for us to claim, as an inheritance. We only need to make that connection.

Sharon Stillerman coordinates the activities of the Brahma Kumaris in Israel.



GO INSIDE

## SELF-ESTEEM AND SELF-RESPECT



LUCIANA FERRAZ

A lot of unhappiness is experienced in life, and often on a spiritual journey, because of the lack of self-esteem and self-respect. Many people think that these are one and the same, but they are distinctly different, and both are required for a happy and stable life.

There is always someone to look up to in life. Many of us put other people on pedestals, like teachers and parents, or famous artists, and use them as reference points on how to be. On the spiritual path, the same thing can happen. Then, what if the 'idol' has feet of clay? There can be disappointment, disheartenment, and sometimes on the spiritual path, faith can be shaken very badly.

We need to understand that the spiritual journey is to let go of ego and return to our own self-respect. To experience being our own master, the master of the mind



and have ruling power over old habit patterns and ways of thinking. We need not put power in the hands of others by being influenced this way and that way by what others say and think. We can still remain open, and listen with humility to others, but have so much belief in what we are doing, that we are doing what is the best for our own development, that we maintain total stability.

Self-respect is connected to what we really are, the soul. Each soul is perfect and on its own journey and has its own story. However, self-respect is not about the story, it is

about before the story. It is about understanding the full potential of the eternal being within. Unless a person makes the journey towards the real self in this way, self-respect and self-esteem cannot develop.

In the consciousness of the eternal beautiful being, there comes a deep acceptance and value of the self, and the more we love ourselves, the more we are able to love others. Self-respect is about you with yourself and with God. Self-esteem is about the way you behave with others.

Self-esteem springs from the understanding that

everything is beneficial, not by chance and not without cause. In self-esteem I am able to take 100 per cent responsibility for how I behave and respond to people and situations.

For this awareness to develop, we need introspection, to go inside and see what we really are, then introspection to reflect deeply on what we find in silence. The highest task of life is to develop the self, the real self, and make that inner world manifest through our behaviour.

Luciana Ferraz is a sociologist and the national coordinator of the Brahma Kumaris in Brazil.

### A THOUGHT FOR TODAY

Human hearts become parched and shrunken when living in a world of worry, pain and fear. Love can act like a soothing shower to quench the dryness of the spirit. Today let me replenish myself and others with spiritual love.