

## Patience is a Virtue

I will begin this week's column by expressing my gratitude to all of the people in our community who read, acknowledge and enjoy these articles. I would also like to relate my appreciation to the Record Bee for their continued support. I am deeply touched by the people who literally stop me at the grocery store to express their gratitude for this work. Interestingly, some have now begun to ask me to write about their own topics of interest. One patient of mine recently asked me to address tolerance and patience. So in acknowledgement to these requests, this week I will explore the virtue of patience.

Personally, I am challenged by patience. It is a quality I would like to improve. I am constantly focused in my own life on stress reduction and impatience is a form of stress. I am sure we can all agree impatience causes fear, guilt, stress and disappointment. As we give so shall we receive. Likewise, what it is we wish to learn, we are best served to teach. Sharing ways to understand and deal with the challenges of impatience is thus a path to its resolution.

These are trying times and life brings numerous challenges that can act as triggers for impatience. Financial hardship, jobs, bosses, relationships with spouses and children offer ample opportunities to practice patience. These sources can act suddenly or build up over time. Usually there is a tipping point reached which ignites an outburst. An important distinction needs to be made between anger and impatience. True anger tends to be a constant attitude. Impatience, on the other hand, is episodic. I know in my own life, negative emotional episodes are mostly related to impatience rather than anger.

A further distinction is that the emotional feeling may be anger, but the mental attitude is impatience. In my practice I tend to become frustrated and impatient with paperwork and administration, rather than being truly angry. What one must realize is being impatient can be perceived by others as insensitive. Therefore, it is wise to promptly make amends to others for your faults so as not to be misunderstood.

To help cultivate patience it is wise to understand that it operates like nature. Nature functions as a process, not an event. A good example is the process of healing. A broken bone will heal independent of opinion. It can not be rushed or hurried. A broken bone will heal on Mother Nature's time, and not your own. Any effort to control or manipulate the healing time is of no consequence. When will a rose bloom? Answer: when it blooms. On patience Shakespeare said, "How poor are they that have no patience! What wound did ever heal but by degree?"

To help yourself become more patient, consider doing the following exercises. First, take a deep breath. If you get triggered try to remember to take a deep abdominal breath. Pull air down into your belly and expand your abdomen. Do this five or ten times before you respond to any upset. If you have an episode of upset and others are involved, promptly admit your error and make amends. Come clean with others about your faults and make an apology. In my own recent experience I said, "Sorry for the outburst. I am impatient with this situation, not angry at you."

Wisdom is a decent regret, not wallowing in guilt. We all make mistakes and get upset. If you loose control of your emotions understand this is normal and a part of being human. There is no need to feel guilty. Regret is to be human; guilt is an excuse not to forgive.

Forgive yourself for your humanity. We all get frustrated, upset and impatient; and we are all doing the best we can. You are responsible for the effort and not the result. Make an effort to forgive, the result will take care of itself. Lastly, I recommend you share this article and discuss its elements so as to teach someone else what it is you wish to learn. As you give, so shall you receive. In *A Course in Miracles* it says, "Infinite patience brings immediate results." Good advice. For more inspiration, visit my web site at [drmcquaid.com](http://drmcquaid.com).

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