



Relating with Others

Talks with Babaji

What is the balance between avoiding negative emotions like anger or confronting and examining it?

If you just avoid it, then it will not be worked out. If you avoid it by understanding the cause, then it will work out. If you express it honestly, that will lead to more confrontation. Or it may work out if the other person sees the cause. What causes it? The cause is not outside. It is within us and we don't want to accept "it's me."

Is there a point where I would avoid seeing negativity in other people and not have contact with that or better to confront it?

Not to take it in. You see a gambler. You say it's a negative thing. You can't avoid the person. You need only to avoid that desire. First confront the negativities within. Then you can honestly see the negativity in others.

Suppose I'm at my job and someone criticizes and I respond by saying it was right. How do I keep my image of being productive and competent and still weaken my ego of individuality which is important for my sadhana?

If you are right and you know you are right, then don't dwell in criticism. By arguing you want to prove it is right, when it is already right. If someone tells a 6-foot tall man, "you are not really 6 feet tall," then what will he say? We like to do these things because it feeds our negative part of life.

If liking to tell stories of painful and tragic experiences we've had keeps our ego alive, what about liking to tell stories of devotional experiences we've had? Are we still just keeping our ego alive?

Ego gets its strength as individuality in negative thoughts. In positive thoughts, the ego becomes sattvic (pure). Ego still exists.

Most everyone at some point experiences extreme anger or rage. What is the best way to release that anger or rage?

Anger is in the human nature. In this creation, humans are on the highest level and yet the most cruel creatures. No animal harms anyone with no reason except humans. We express this violence all the time in various ways. We are used to it so we don't notice it. If we learn to watch the cause of our action, then we start noticing it. In extreme rage, people lose their discrimination and become violent physically or verbally. One should learn to think before acting.

So the best way to deal with anger is to notice the cause?

Yes, but that does not develop until the mind is pure. To purify the mind, a disciplined and virtuous life is important.

Is it possible to turn the mind toward positive energy and not have to find the cause, or is it necessary to root out the real cause?

When the anger is buried down by positive life, in time it will become dormant. Why do we get angry? We defend our existence. We don't just exist; we exist with lots of desires. If any desire is obstructed, we burst with anger. So the root is not very far to dig. Just watch the rising desires and treat them as binding thoughts.

You've said that as we do virtuous things regularly, it becomes a pattern. We can do good things often and then in a moment of anger or frustration, an act comes out and it hurts someone. That seems to stick in our mind more strongly than the good things we are doing.

1) Good things create good samskaras. 2) Bad things create bad samskaras. In good things, the ego doesn't feel its strength of individuality as strongly as in doing bad things. If you do bad things, the ego is right there in the present. Then its memory which repeats in the past. Then its imagination of doing bad things in the future appears. If we look back in our own life, what do we remember the most? All bad things we did or people did to us. Memories of good things appear as if veiled by fog.

The Gita talks about not reacting to people with cruel and abusive, harsh speech. How to create the equanimity of mind not to react?

Very, very, very hard. But not impossible. You try your best. In the process of trying, you start understanding what causes that reaction. The more you understand this cause, the less you react.

In the Gita it says to speak truthfully, to relate what we have seen, heard and experienced. Because everyone is governed by his or her egos, it's impossible. For example, after World War II, growing up in Austria, people would not speak of what had been done to Jews, gypsies, or homosexuals. In India, the same is true with people of lower caste. It's easy to see what is happening when you come from outside. But those involved are not seeing, hearing or experiencing it.

You know the cause: how our ego wants its power in all situations. This is a universal thing. All common people live this way. No country is better. The Gita is talking about those who are seeking liberation. But we forget the teachings and start thinking what is good for us. Then we defend our way of living in the world. The problem did not change after Germany up to this day. It will always exist if everyone doesn't understand the cause. What happened in Germany was never forgotten in the mind of sufferers but those people became numb and powerless.

Sometimes we do things we feel we need to do for our own benefit and the result is that people are hurt, for example leaving a dysfunctional family. How do we discriminate or justify or how does it fit in with non-harming?

We always need to stand up for our own progress. Our self-development is the most important part of this life. But in this process, we cannot separate our family, friends, teachers and others. They also help us either by doing good or bad things. Life is for learning. We learn by experiencing good or bad things.

Yesterday, when a 7-8 year old boy asked "how come you know so much?" you said to "listen to your parents and teachers." Does that still apply when the boy is 14-16 years old?

Did you ever notice how much we listen? If an astrologer says you will live to be 60 years of age, you will always remember it because you listened to it with elephant ears. So what we listen to we remember. Listening is the most important thing for one's self-development. If we listen honestly, then we can reflect on it. Then only our intellect can discriminate right or wrong.

Sometimes in speaking the truth, the words aren't pleasant and are offensive. Is it better to speak the truth of a situation or to avoid speaking anything that may be taken to be offensive?

It depends how the person uses words in speaking the truth. If the person acts superior and says something: "this is wrong; it should be like this." You spoke straight but forgot about your ego that is putting itself in a superior position. If you tell the truth in more compromising language, then it will not hurt the feelings of the other person.

If we see two people in a conversation and someone is getting hurt, as a third party, how can one decide whether to get involved to help the situation?

If you know them, then you can do that. If you do it to unknown people, they both will thank you because you are trying to poke your nose in someone else's affairs. You can ask them about giving your suggestions.

What is the best practice for controlling a critical mind and a critical tongue?

The tongue is easy to control, but the mind is hard to control. Why is one critical of others? It is our own fear. We are defending ourselves by attacking others. Offensive defense. You hit before one tries to hit you. The tongue doesn't function independently. The critical mind expresses itself by critical words.