

On Surrender (How To Free Yourself From Emotional Pain)

Red Pill Theory | 1 May, 2017 | by Avery

Any state of discomfort, whether it be anxiety, stress, or frustration, is a state of resistance. Negative emotions are so uncomfortable because they make you feel like you're not in control. When in such a state, you want to regain power over your emotions.

Struggling against these feelings only gives them more charge. The act of fighting your emotions is what gives them so much power over you. This is a totally normal response, but it doesn't work. The solution to discomfort is extremely counterintuitive. Surrender to it.

The process is similar to exercise. At first, exercise is extremely uncomfortable, you are intentionally putting yourself through physical pain to grow stronger. When new to working out, you will feel an emotional resistance to going to the gym. The pain of working out is something you'll have a desire to avoid. But continuously lean into the pain on purpose, and your response to that pain changes.

Eventually, the pain and discomfort transforms into something that is enjoyable for its own sake. These feelings were subjective, and by consistently going to the gym you were training your brain to want to lean into the pain of exercise, and eventually you began to gain pleasure from it.

We have a habit of avoiding discomfort. It is like pulling on a rubber band, the harder you pull the more tension you create (until eventually it's too much and you snap by having a panic attack or emotional outburst). Instead, intentionally trying to intensify that discomfort diffuses the emotional tension. Once you embrace discomfort, it stops being uncomfortable. Whenever I feel social discomfort, I intentionally intensify it.

Lean In

How do you do this? Through your conscious intention. Conscious intention sounds very woo-woo but it's actually well-grounded in experience. To understand what a conscious intention is, try to make your hands experience a tingling sensation (or to make them feel colder, or hotter). If you do this with focus, you will notice the sensations in your hand do indeed change in the way you intended them to.

That's all conscious intention is; it is your mental desire to feel something. When you feel social discomfort (uncomfortable emotions or physical sensations), intend to make that discomfort more intense. You will find that the intensity does in fact increase. At first, this will be challenging.

This practice is sending your brain the message that whatever emotion or sensation it is you are intensifying is not a bad emotion. It is not an emotion that you need to avoid, and therefore that feeling stops being stressful. You will still experience similar feelings in the future, but they will stop triggering psychological resistance.

We all develop our own responses to discomfort, the emotions and sensations you will experience are unique to you. Simply begin to focus on them, intensify them, and they will, over time, have less and less power over you.

I've made this into a meditative practice. The most well-known meditation in the west, mindfulness meditation, is a practice of bringing awareness to your thoughts. Instead, this is a pain meditation. I focus on my negative sensations and emotions, and intentionally intensify them.

I sit down for ten minutes, scan my body, and wherever I feel discomfort (emotion or sensation), I focus on that discomfort and use my conscious intention to magnify that feeling. This retrains my body to embrace difficult emotions the same way exercise retrains the body to embrace physical pain.

You won't stop having negative emotions through doing this, but your relationship with those negative emotions will qualitatively change. They will no longer have power over you, they will still affect you, but they won't have a negative charge.

Your discomfort exists for a reason, and once you stop resisting it, discomfort can serve its real purpose, which is to guide you towards actions you ought to take. When you feel butterflies in your stomach, instead of fighting the discomfort, you will see it as a sign that you need to talk to that girl.

When you feel afraid to speak up, you'll see that fear as a call to action, not something to struggle against. When you feel uncomfortable at the thought of going out, you will no longer cope with that discomfort by numbing yourself with social media; instead you will feel compelled to leave your cave and meet people in the real world.

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