

# The Purpose of The Work

The purpose of The Work is to discover that peace is always an option on the inside. In every situation. No matter how bad things are.

When I look outwardly, my peace seems to depend on outside circumstances. I have to get the job to be happy, my partner has to be nice to me, my body has to feel good, etc. When I look outwardly, I believe that I need these things in order for me to be happy.

The result is that my happiness is like a roller coaster. I am up when things are going my way, and I am down when things are not.

## **And it Becomes a Vicious Cycle**

When things don't go my way, then I become angry, or sad, or disappointed. And I act out of these emotions, which only makes things worse. I take a bad situation and make it really bad. And of course, this feeds my negative emotions again, perpetuating the cycle.

## **The Work Is a Way to End my Dependence on Outside Things**

The Work is very different than problem solving. Problem solving is trying to change outside factors so that I get what I want. Or trying to fix myself so that I can be happy. For example, if I don't have enough money, I problem solve to try to figure out how I can make more money. Or if my health is not good, I problem solve to try to improve my health.

Problem solving is good. This is what we all do to keep improving our lives. But it is always dependent on outside things changing for the better. Unfortunately, there are many things we can't change at all. I can't change the death of a loved one. I can't change many things about myself. I can't change how people behave.

## **So There Has to be Another Way to Find Happiness Besides Changing Things**

When things can't be changed on the outside, The Work helps me find my happiness regardless. By simply exploring other ways of seeing things.

The Work works with my thinking. It doesn't touch the outside world at all. It works solely with my thoughts about the outside world. As I question my thoughts, my perspective changes, and my experience of the same outside world shifts and changes. I start seeing that what I thought were "bad" things are actually "fine," or even "good."

(Continued...)

## **The Work is Not about Solving Problems**

It is about understanding that there is no problem. That's freedom. Because it means that the world can change for better or for worse, and I can go on being happy by simply changing my perspective as things change.

This happens naturally in some people. And it happens to all of us at times. There are times when we all are able to go with the flow. But in those moments when I'm not able to "go with the flow," The Work is a way for me to look at my thinking and question it, and to see if there is a valid perspective that I might be missing. The Work takes me step-by-step, starting with where I am stuck in my negative emotions, and helps me explore every side of things. Often the result is a discovery that unhappiness is not my only option.

The Work is a gentle way to start from where I am (quite possibly screaming and hollering) and allow myself to give voice to those stressful thoughts, and to listen to them with true understanding. And to question each thought to see if it really is true. And to notice how much this one thought affects my life. And to consider if there might be another side to my story.

Welcome to The Work of Byron Katie. This work is a practice. So let's dive in and start doing it. We will learn everything in this course through the process of doing The Work.