



Is There a Personal Development Quick Fix?

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Wouldn't it be wonderful if you could flick a switch to change your life? What if you could simply press a button to achieve your hopes and goals? Well, if you look around the internet a little – not much searching required, you will find personal development websites that suggest that changing your life can be just that easy. Naturally, there's no such thing as a quick fix when it comes to living the dream – otherwise everybody would be doing it. But even though there's no magic button that you can push, even though there your life won't change in a single mouse-click, in fact, personal development or self improvement is a little bit like tuning in an old-fashioned radio. And like old-fashioned radios, the signal keeps coming and going, you have to keep fine-tuning.

On the other hand, the normal mind is tuned out – or, perhaps, more like completely turned off! Psychology tells us that the normal mind is about 1% tuned into the only place and time where life is lived – the here and now. Most of your attention – and you're not even aware of it – is focused on the things that you learned about yourself during your childhood. These are the reference points that your subconscious mind uses to dictate your all-too-automatic reactions that everything that you think is going on around you. And, as I said, you're not aware of it at all.

But life is going on before your very eyes and, if you're normal, you're trying to listen to life's radio station but hearing nothing. That's because you're not paying attention. If you want to change your life, you're going to have to re-learn how to pay attention to what's really happening now – this is how you tune and transform your life. I say "re-learn" because, when you were a child, you were expert at paying attention – perhaps not at school because maybe school didn't turn you on – but, when you were even younger, when, say, you got a new toy, you gave it and possibly the box it came in all of your attention. You examined it, looked at it inside out, smelled it, licked it, shook it, held it up to your ear – you used all of your senses to fully experience the new toy. Each moment is like a new toy – to fully understand what's going on, you're going to have to see it, feel it, hear it, smell it and taste it as if you'd never come across anything quite like it before. And, of course, you haven't because every moment is a unique one-off.

When you do begin to appreciate what is actually going on in the here and now – instead of aimlessly wandering through your so-called life wondering why you cannot fix what you think is broken – you'll realize that life is full of surprises, excitement and opportunities that are all simply staring you in the face. How could you have missed them? Easy – you weren't looking. You're going to have to start really looking, really listening, really feeling the here and now. In becoming present, you will become far more astute, far more effective, far more productive and perfectly placed to fix what was, in reality, never even broken – you just thought that it was!

Yes, changing your life is as simple as tuning in. However, we've already said that life's radio signal keeps coming and going. It can be hard to pin down – not because it's all over the place, but because you've had a lifetime's bad habit of being all over the place yourself. All too often, when you should have been tuning in to life, all you could hear was noise – the noise of useless thought in your head. One sure way to tune into life is to tune out the noise in your head. And, because, you've been being "entertained" by this noise all your adult life, you're going to have to tune out the noise regularly – in fact, best to do it every day.

Therefore, I propose to you what I suggest to all my workshop clients. Start your day five or ten minutes earlier. Find somewhere where you won't be disturbed – it could be the bathroom, the kitchen, the bus, the train or the coffee shop. Sit yourself down and watch the world go by – see the scenery pass by, feel the touch of your clothing on your body, hear the clickety-clack of the train wheels, smell the coffee, of the "aromas" of your fellow passengers and run your tongue along your teeth and get the taste. The opportunity of life is to be found in the detail of the moment – open your eyes, tune yourself in, change your life.