

How to Escape Misery

Today: How to escape misery. That's right. I'm going to help you very quickly, very rapidly escape misery. So listen, if one or more of these apply to you, here's how you escape.

Number 1, stop internalizing and personalizing everybody else's problems. There's a word for that and it's called neuroses. Other people have problems and they are responsible for solving them. Believing that you are somehow the one who has to take on the burden is ridiculous. Let them have the responsibility. By all means, support them. But don't think it's your internal problem or challenge to do so.

Next, forgive yourself. That's right, you deserve to be happy. Start giving yourself a break. You forgive others, right? Why not forgive yourself. The person we least forgive is the person in the mirror. So stop suffering, stop holding long and deep grudges, stop treating yourself like you ought to be beaten down. You're not unworthy. So stop telling yourself you are.

Next, stop isolating yourself. Don't avoid contact. You need a support system. It might be loved ones. It might be family. It might be friends. It might be colleagues. It might be people at work or people at clients or people in trade associations or people in the community or people at the coffee shop. Don't allow yourself to be isolated. Don't reject help that's offered. I'm not talking about unsolicited feedback. I am talking about honest to goodness offers of support.

Next, stop trying to please everybody. We spend a whole lot of time trying to make sure everybody else is pleased with us. Don't compromise your standards. It's okay if some people are pissed off. "What did he say?" Yes, I said it. It's all right. Your personal value doesn't depend on acceptance of others. Your personal value depends upon self-mastery. That is, how do you feel about yourself.

Next, stop comparing yourself with others. You're your own person. So speaking of self-mastery, be ipsative not normative. In other words, who are you according to you. Stop looking at others as your standard. Stop looking at others as the person who is your avatar. A lot of those people have feet of clay. A lot of those people are before congressional hearings right now or they're indicted for fraud. Please stop worrying about it and just be yourself.

Next, live for the moment. Don't look back in nostalgia and don't look forward in anticipation, look around and enjoy yourself. Today is today; it won't come again. Nor will this minute. And so, enjoy yourself in the moment. That's what self-actualization is all about. Don't be afraid to relish where you are right now. Don't feel guilty about that. Enjoy yourself. Connected with that, don't dwell on past mistakes and failures. I've got news for you, you can't undo them. In fact, the best thing you can do is learn from them. But then, move on. Stop focussing on things you can no longer change. It's astounding how many people spend time focussed on things they have no power in the world to change. Making yourself miserable doesn't help others you've made miserable in the past, trust me.

Next, try to stay positive and oriented towards solutions and new levels of performance. Don't be negative. Don't always look at problems. I talk to people who sigh after every other sentence.

That's right, "{sigh} well I guess I'll get more money today." Oh that's too bad, sorry to hear it. For goodness sakes, remain positive. Self-talk is real talk. Talk to yourself positively and look at your surroundings positively. Believe me, it could be worse.

Next, don't allow yourself to be controlled by others or by circumstances. We've touched on this a little to this point. But it's too easy in a world that is trying every day to make you into something else to fall victim to that. So don't allow yourself to be controlled. Don't worry about what the advertisements say you should be wearing. Don't worry about what unsolicited feedback tells you about your behavior or your speaking or your interactions. Don't allow yourself to be controlled by others unless you respect their opinion and unless you solicit it.

Next, take on involvement and responsibility. People who take on accountabilities are better off. The best people I meet on committees, on boards, on task forces are those who stand out in a crowd and chair something, or head something, or take a risk. Try things new. You'll be successful. You'll get increased satisfaction. But don't sit around avoiding involvement, avoiding responsibility. The world is not like that. Step out in the crowd. Get into the limelight.

Two more. First, set realistic expectations for yourself. If you want to lose weight, if you want to get in shape, fine. But telling yourself to lose 35 pounds in 2 months is ridiculous. On the other hand, signing up for a gym and promising to go 3 times a week is probably pretty achievable. Don't set unrealistic goals. Don't tell yourself you're going to make a million dollars 1 year from now. If you do, great! Listen, I'm not against having all the confidence in the world. But it's much better to say, "someday, in the meanwhile, I'm going to double my present income from \$200,000 to \$400,000." So don't set unrealistic expectations. Set expectations and achievements that you're likely to hit.

Finally, base your worth on things that you believe in. Don't base your worth on externals. Not external feedback. Not the way you look. Not what you do. That is not your job title. Not the possessions you have. Love yourself unconditionally. Don't base your worth on things to be pointed to. Now that comes from someone who wrote Million Dollar Consulting, and I am well aware of that. But I also know who I am. You have to know you're a good person. You have to believe that you're a good person. And if you do, the world will look a lot better because you're a good person.

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