



What We Practice

By Lisa Greene

We wish we were happy but we practice being unhappy. We wish we were enlightened but we practice being separate and unenlightened. We tend to practice all the things we say we don't want: anxiety, judgment, unhappiness and unworthiness. We practice being separate, which becomes part of our identity and belief system. Our actions and way of being then arise from this false system of beliefs instead of from our truth. We have practiced these things for so long it has become a way of life; we believe it is who we are. This is where awareness and self-inquiry come in: you can't change something, or let it go, if you're not aware of it.

Unawareness is the way of being for most people on this planet. We are conditioned to follow our minds and believe the ego-mind is who we are. So we practice the thoughts and beliefs of the ego-mind until that is how we show up in the world. In our culture we are conditioned to be good worker bees and good consumers; to be like sheep; to follow rather than lead. Our education and religious systems teach competition, repetition and separation.

Our conditioning works as a form of brainwashing that tells us who and how we should be. And then we unwittingly practice that until we believe it to such an extent that we cannot see beyond it. The mind creates a story of who we are. Thoughts feed us the script and we follow that script until we die or begin to awaken to our true self. We have practiced playing a role for so long that we forget we are free to choose a new role or simply let go of roles altogether.

Our minds are very conflicted, and so create conflicting roles. There is never peace when you follow the mind or the role it assigns you. As we begin to awaken we realize, "If I follow my mind I will never find peace. My mind tells me peace is out there and I'll achieve it when I get this or become that, but it never works." We just cycle through life never getting anywhere, especially to the peace we crave.

With self-inquiry we begin to question our minds and start to see that most of our thoughts are not even true; they are designed to keep us in the story. We actually practice reactions or states of mind that keep us in our stories. We may practice anxiety when confronted with certain situations or always respond in anger or

react by putting someone else down. When someone is unhappy with us, our response may be to feel unworthy, believing we aren't enough.

Anxiety, anger, unworthiness and lack are all states of mind that we practice over and over again. We blindly follow the mind when it says, "This is how we react to this," and practicing these programmed reactions reinforces our belief in them. Learning to recognize these conditioned states of mind and putting space around them allows us to choose peace. We realize it's not who we really are, it's merely a practiced reaction or state of mind. These programmed reactions come from the mind; they are mind generated, not truths. With awareness and practice you can let them go.

My conditioning resulted in me always being in some sort of reaction: not enough, shame, unworthiness, lack. Unconsciously I felt the need to be punished; my mind came up with solutions such as people pleasing, but these mind-generated "solutions" never worked. I cycled around, never getting anywhere, trying to keep my head above water and not drown in my story.

I began a process of self-inquiry: questioning and watching my thoughts. This became my new practice and soon it became a way of being, no longer something I "did." I practiced putting space around my reactions and states of mind. Soon, because I was no longer giving them energy and identifying with them, they began to fade away. I also began to practice what I wanted: peace.

More and more I saw peace was always there. It never went anywhere but it was up to me to choose it and not identify with my thoughts and states of mind. We always have a choice where to put our attention. We get so stuck in the story of who we think we are because we identify with it, give it our attention and practice it.

Deep down we all know there is more to us, more to life: we just don't know how to get there, it may seem impossible. If we continue to follow the mind, it is impossible. In our society we are taught to blindly follow the mind. Everyone does it. The thing is we don't even know how our minds work. We just hand our lives over to the ego-mind and then wonder why things don't work out for us. We don't realize the mind was never meant to, and is not capable of, running our lives. The mind cannot access *Life*; it only has what was programmed into it, like a computer. It will just keep bringing up the past, "This is how we react to this situation," again and again. The mind has no idea who you really are, or even what peace is.

Fear is what keeps the mind in place as the master. We are taught to avoid and escape from fear at all costs. It is the main reason we stay in such a mind driven culture. We are easily controlled when led by the mind. Fear must be faced head on. The funny thing is, when we do, poof, it disappears. We are the ones who give fear its great power. When we take our energy back, fear can no longer exist. You have practiced avoiding fear, now change that practice to meeting your fear and dancing with it.

As you begin to question your mind, story and program you see there is choice in where your attention goes. You can put your attention on truth and peace, or continue following the mind like a puppet on a string. ☺

Lisa Greene has a background in psychology and biofeedback. But it was the eight months of lying on her bed watching every thought that led her to true peace. Go to www.UndoingUnhappiness.com to get her free mini course.