



THE INSTITUTE FOR HEALTHY FAMILIES OF NORTH TEXAS

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IHF Newsletter, Vol. 1, No. 6

May 15, 2009

The Inquiry Approach to Examining What Is!

(Excerpts from *The Work of Byron Katie*, 287 S. Montgomery St, Ojai, CA 93023)
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This is a continuation of the April 2009 Newsletter that introduced the “**The Work of Byron Katie.**” The cause of our pain and suffering is not the world around us, but what we *believe* about the world around us. In other words, it is our repetitive *negative thoughts* that are causing our emotional suffering. The following *inquiry approach* was developed by Katie to allow us to question our negative thoughts and to meet reality as it is so that we can experience freedom.

1. **Putting the Mind on Paper.** Katie has developed an inquiry approach that she calls “**The Work.**” You can go to www.thework.com to download a worksheet called “Judge-Your-Neighbor Worksheet” which has the four inquiry questions. Katie encourages you to write about someone you haven’t totally forgiven.
2. **How to Write a Worksheet.** a) Who angers, disappoints, or confuses you, and why? b) How do you want them to change? c) What is it that they should or should not do, think or feel? d) What do you need from them in order to be happy? e) What do you think of them? f) What is it that you don’t want to experience with that person?
3. **Inquiry: The Four Questions and Turnaround**
 - a. **Is it true?** (If you answered “no”, go to the third question.)
 - b. **Can you absolutely know that it is true?** (How can “no” be the right answer?)
 - c. **How do you react, what happens, when you believe that thought?** (Do you feel uneasy?)
 - d. **Who would you be without the thought?** (Wouldn’t you like to feel peace?)

Turn it around! (To do the turnaround, rewrite your statement or belief. Using an opposite statement, write it as if it were written about you.)

4. The **Turnaround** is the hardest part of the process, but that is where we experience enlightenment and freedom from the *negative thoughts* that are tearing away at our peace of mind and destroying our relationships. When we examine our thoughts from an opposite perspective, we experience reality. Here are examples of turnarounds:
 - a. “My spouse ignores and does not listen to me.” Turn around the statement to “I don’t listen to my spouse.” Or, “My spouse does not have to listen to me.” Although it is hard to admit that your negative belief toward your spouse may be part of the problem, this is the way to meet your spouse more than half-way to have a loving relationship. (This does not mean that you become a doormat or accept verbal, emotional or physical abuse. If that is the case, get out of the relationship!)
 - b. “My children do not respect me.” Turn around the statement to “I do not respect my children.” Or, “I have not earned my children’s respect.” Or, “I do not deserve my children’s respect because of the way I treat them.” (This does not mean that you allow your children to do whatever they choose without parental guidance. You hold them accountable for their actions in a loving manner without driving a wedge between the parent and child. You are still the parent in the relationship.)
 - c. “My boss is thoughtless and demanding. I can’t stand to work for that person.” Turn around the statement to “I am thoughtless to my boss by not doing the work that he (or she) requires.” Or, “My boss can’t stand to have me as an employee.” (Again, this does not mean that you continue to work for a superior who repeatedly harasses you as an employee—start looking for another job. However, examine your thoughts to make sure that you are not part of the problem.)

If you or anyone in your family needs counseling for a career change or personal counseling to address losses or changes in your life, check out our web site at www.texasicounselors.com. Our rates are affordable.