

## **Learning to Listen to Ourselves**

by Kirsty O'Callaghan

Listening to ourselves involves self awareness. This leads to understanding what we are thinking, feeling and our reactions to this process.

We have reactions to everything we do and notice. Most of these reactions are generally ignored. Other people are often more aware of our reactions that we are.

Our reactions can come in many forms. They can be how we speak, how we think, how we present ourselves to the world, how we hold our posture, how we feel, and our bodies can even get sick with a reaction to a situation we find ourselves that is not in line with who we are and what we would like.

### **Why is it important to Listen to Ourselves?**

When we listen to ourselves we are more able to see clearly the lessons life is giving us as well as when we have perhaps taken the less than desirable direction. This allows us to constantly ask the questions how can I use this situation for my personal growth, why have I drawn this experience to me at this time or what is this experience trying to teach me? Then we can really listen and hear the answer.

We can create a more harmonious journey as opposed to a journey that seems constantly challenging. If we are aware of what is easily pushing us along towards what we want to create in our lives, for example positive thoughts or the study we are doing or the job we are in, then life seems to flow easier than if we are thinking negative fearful thoughts or wanting something but not heading in the right direction and doing the right things to support the outcome.

We can head off certain confrontational or misunderstood communications with others. If we hear how we really think, then how we speak to others we can see if we are not telling our truth or hiding information or even not sure ourselves on what we want the person to hear and why.

We can empower ourselves with clear visions and goals for the future and act appropriately to turn these into our reality with more ease. If we sit, give ourselves time to understand 'who we are', we can more easily identify what feels right, what our strengths and interests are and who we feel uplifted around to be on that journey with us. To know these things and be positive in your vision and effort it definitely can make not only the process of getting it easier but you can have more fun along the way.

We can also possibly avert some illness, by being aware of how we are thinking, where we are heading and how it feels to us. In the book, You Can Heal Your Life, by Louise L Hay, she suggests that all illness is from a

subconscious or conscious negative thought pattern, that if not changed can lead to many different types of bodily reactions related to that thought process. I personally have generally found this to be true. Underlying most illnesses there is a belief or thinking that has helped lead to our bodies giving us signals that this is holding back our energy or blocking our progress in some way.

It is also much easier for us to explain our actions and plans to others and be accepted if we are confident wholly in ourselves.

The most important part of listening to myself that I have found, is that if I am giving myself the respect to listen to what I want, what is good for me, what is purposeful for me and noticing what I am doing or thinking that is not in line with who I am and where I want to go in my life, then it is amazing how automatically you can gain the respect and acceptance of others. If I have made myself good enough to listen to, then I have experienced that others give me the same treatment.

### **Coaching suggestions for your consideration**

Before we take time to listen to ourselves we need to trust ourselves. To do this rate yourself on a scale of one to ten, one representing 'not at all' and ten representing 'all the time', on the following questions:

- How well do I honour my needs? Do I sleep when I am tired, eat when I am hungry or take a break when I need to?
- When I make a promise to myself do I keep it?
- Can I trust myself to make choices for me that may seem tough? For example walking away from a situation that weakens my self esteem, changing jobs when I may need to move on or I feel unfulfilled.
- Do I stand up for myself when someone steps over my boundaries or acts in an inappropriate way?

After rating yourself on these questions, ask yourself what could I do and changes I could make that would take me higher in my rating so I may trust myself more and act in line with who I am?

You may like to journal or write down your answers on a notepad and make a promise to yourself to follow up on the changes you could make.

Another area that is ideal for beginning to understand ourselves and our thoughts is journaling. Take time out each day to write how you are feeling, what your experiences were for the day, how you would have liked them to be and even how you want tomorrow to be. As you write you may find areas for improvement, ideas on how you think, whether it is mostly positive or

mostly negative and what you could do differently. This has proven to be a very powerful tool in making changes and gaining clarity.

You could take time out each day, just for you. Whether you use this time to meditate or just listen, either or both is ok. Allow yourself this time of reflection and contemplation, ask yourself how you are going and relax. You can also take this time to create visions for your future or focus on goals or how you would like to see an upcoming event playing out. You may like to journal your thoughts after you have finished, and create an action plan to support any realizations you had.

At random times of the day you can stop and ask yourself:

- How am I feeling right now?
- What sensations do I notice in my body?
- What images come into view?
- What are these images or feelings trying to tell me about myself or my current situation?
- Is there something I feel I need or want? If so what is it?

Again, you may find it helpful to jot down your thoughts.

In closing there are five important messages I would like to leave you with for your consideration:

- Your thoughts are like magnets, they will shape your life.
- Spend regular time with yourself.
- Slow down, do less and feel more.
- Create and keep daily habits to build a solid foundation of self trust.
- You always have options.

You are the expert in your life, all it takes to hear the ‘expert’ advice is to listen and be honest with yourself.



**Author Profile:** Kirsty O'Callaghan is the Proprietor of Unity-Qld. Kirsty specialises in assisting and guiding working parents to create a stronger connection with their children and satisfaction in their parenting role. The techniques and strategies Kirsty uses focus on a holistic and individual basis; knowing we are all capable

of greatness, with the right knowledge, tools and support.

**Website:** [www.unity-qld.com.au](http://www.unity-qld.com.au).

**Phone:** +61 7 3482 4295

**Business:** Unity-Qld

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