

Openness: A key ingredient to life

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Openness is a key ingredient to life. It is the readiness and willingness to receive. It allows every person, situation, and circumstance to be our teacher. The way we receive information will be key in determining our growth and development. As we encounter situations and circumstances that do not line up with our expectation, we must keep an open mind. How we receive, respond, and process information will determine how open minded we are.

First, we must be able to receive information. As you are evaluating the source, you must also be mindful of the information. Just because it is a child or a person that you do not like tells you the bridge is out, the bridge is still out. You must be open to receiving from others. "Unless God tell me himself" mentality will only result in a closed mind and missed opportunity. Many have passed on valuable information because they did not like the source.

Secondly, before we respond to others, one of the most important steps to keeping an open mind is to assume good intentions. This requires us to think the best before we think the worst. Preconceived notions, past hurt, and unwillingness to listen, all make it impossible to receive, learn and grow. Things look totally different if you already have your mind made up. It is best to just see what unfolds before making judgment. When information is filtered through the lenses of "good intention," it makes it easier for the receiver to keep an open mind. Openness assumes good intention before responding.

Next, openness is communicated in our response. The need to been heard is necessary for positive affirmation. It does not mean we agree with everything said, but it does mean we processed it and gave it the consideration that it deserved. A predetermined response is created from a made up mind. Some people are so close minded that their body language, facial expression, and response all lacks the key ingredients of life, hospitality, acceptance, and openness. When we are open, arms are extended, the face is relaxed, and words are supportive. Our response can make or break a person's spirit.

Finally, openness requires us to process our actions. You can increase your openness by practicing empathy. Move outside yourself into another's situation. Try to access the other's feelings and ideas. Self-evaluation prepares us for the next experience. What did this experience mean for me?' 'How can I grow from this? Do you usually think you already know how things are going to come out? How available are you to others? How interested are you in people, especially those quite different from you? These are the questions that those with an open mind ask themselves. Openness allows both positive and negative experiences to be our teacher.

Openness is a key ingredient to life. It allows unobstructed entrance and exit; and is not shut or closed. An open-minded person is hospitable, considerate, and responsive. Others are comfortable sharing, receiving, and being in the company of an open-minded person. An open mind allows to you receive information from unlike, and unlikely sources.

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