

"World Peace Begins within Us"

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All of our waking time is influenced by our points of view about ourselves and others and everything about which we can have an opinion. What would happen if we stopped thinking for a moment? The answer is at the Great Freedom Center in Emmaljunga.

Short moments of clarity is a way to take the first step towards a more balanced life and getting to know our own awareness. We experience that we are stuck in our points of view, and we try constantly to control them. The founder of Great Freedom, Candice O'Denver, says that this is one of the reasons we are tense and often completely exhausted in the evenings. We worry, we try to right old wrongs, and we try to solve our problems on the basis of points of view.

Instead of doing this the whole day, we should take a short moment of clarity, become aware of our own awareness, and through that energy is released that was focused on points of view. It is not about boycotting or repressing difficult things, but rather letting them be as they are. We don't go into them and evaluate them. "Then you feel a relief and you notice an open clarity—a space that is always present," says Eva Areskog, one of those who work at the Great Freedom Center in Emmaljunga.

Eventually the short moments are no longer necessary. Instead, you experience a completely natural clarity all the time. You experience awareness in everything you do; you have a stability within yourself that cannot be influenced by any point of view—either internal or external. You could get angry, yet still have access to clarity. "We open up to an intelligence within ourselves when we don't control our points of view."

www.greatfreedom.org

The intention behind the Great Freedom practice is not that everyone should go around and "just be." The world needs to be changed.. The purpose is to learn to move beyond limiting thoughts and points of view and to find creativity and the capacity for better solutions.

"We believe the whole time that what makes us feel good is located elsewhere, and that if we had what someone else has we would be happier. We associate our well-being with outer circumstances, when it is really about focusing on our clarity instead of on all the points of view."

This doesn't mean that we should neglect to change things that need to be changed.. The practice is a way to handle life so that we become familiar with our inherent clarity in order to find balance within ourselves. "Then we are able to have a clear and balanced approach; we know which decision we should make, and then we can be more beneficial to ourselves and others."

Great Freedom is a so-called "grassroots movement" that spreads from person to person and is funded through donations. Everyone should have the chance to learn the practice, so each one just gives whatever contribution he or she is able to give. The movement was started in California seven years ago by Candice O'Denver, whose successful life crashed, and she had to face the fact that her old solutions no longer worked. The turmoil threatened to take over her life, when suddenly, she discovered that if she rested for a short moment, she felt a relief and calm which over time also included the turmoil. She could identify with that clarity instead of with anxiety. She writes in her book "One Simple Change Makes Life Easy, "By continuing with my simple exercise, I had access to an abundance of natural warmth, connection and compassion that arose in my thoughts, feelings and actions, along with insights into the nature of existence."

Two years ago Great Freedom landed in Emmaljunga, at the former treatment center for alcoholics in Björstorp. The interest is growing all the time, although the organization did not advertise itself actively.

"This summer we had 120 people from around the world living here; those who did not have a place indoors camped in the yard," says Eva.

She also talked about the wonderful atmosphere: everybody helped with doing the necessary work, and a part of being in the courses is to help out with both cleaning and cooking.

The major objective of Great Freedom is peace in the world, and it doesn't start at any president's desk. "No, world peace begins within us," says Eva Areskog.

Some effects of taking brief moments of clarity, according to Eva Areskog:

1. You get a mental and emotional stability, and you no longer believe in your inability.
2. Your relationships with other people get better. Many people state that especially the parental relationship changes for the better.
3. You have increased compassion.
4. You become focused on solutions, and it becomes easier to make decisions.