

The Only Question Worth Asking

By Dave Markowitz

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Albert Einstein said that there is only one question worth asking; the answer to which determines your entire outlook on life and affects your finances, romance, and even your health: Do you believe the Universe is malevolent or benevolent?

If you dare to ask yourself this and answer honestly, you will see what spiritual traditions have known for centuries. If you believe the Universe is malevolent, you will see things through those eyes. Everything will be arduous, painstaking, and make little sense. Suffering will be seen as inevitable. Making good money is impossible. Finding and keeping romance alive is a chore. And because you age, your health has to decline. And all of that is true—IF you believe the Universe to be malevolent.

If, on the other hand, you believe the Universe is benevolent, you will see a whole different worldview. Things will still be arduous, and painstaking, but suffering needn't exist. Making good money is challenging and even fun, not impossible. Finding and keeping romance is replaced with enjoying the search and the reveling in the interplay between lovers that may or may not last forever and being okay with that. And even though health issues arise, they are seen as lessons, not burdens.

Buddhists say that pain is inevitable and suffering is a choice. Though this seems eclectic at best, and false at worst, if you really think about it, it's true. Months back a client's left shoulder was causing him great pain. He was angry that he could no longer lift weights regularly—an activity he loved and missed. A series of doctors could see nothing from the inside or out, threw their hands up in the air and recommended painkillers. This would only provide temporary pain management—not healing. This too angered him. This injury was costing him a lot of money and time. He was out of sick days and his blood pressure was rising. He believed the Universe was malevolent, and why not? It seemed as everything was against him. But when I told him that within the pain there is a message, and that once the message is received and acted upon, the pain should dissipate, he seemed inquisitive. While that may seem a bit out there, the fact that it was intermittent only proved my point. If it was physical, such as a muscle tear, then the pain would more likely be consistent. And if he was on painkillers, messages of pain and its true cause couldn't be heard. Painkillers provide a false sense of security because your perception of a problem has been blocked. You now only think you can do certain movements but really can't—often this further aggravates an injury or at minimum delays its healing.

I asked him to quiet his mind, even a little bit if that's all that was possible, and ask his own body what was going on. When he did, he said he saw a vision of his mother from his youth—one of the many times it appeared to his child mind that mom was being overbearing. When I shared with him that his mom was only showing love in the best way she knew how, he said the pain lightened up a bit. I asked him to really think about that over the next few weeks and see what happens. I recommended brisk walking, which got him outside and back in touch with nature. By changing his mind and acting upon that change, he went from suffering with pain, to living with pain, to healing with pain, to being healed. His blood pressure has dropped, and he's now back at the gym and can see the benevolence in the pain, mom, and in life overall.

Many of us spend entire lifetimes trying to avoid pain. This can get very tiring. When we can open up to pain being part of life, suffering is diminished. Acceptance of the moment as it is, how it is, and when it is replaces the mind's list of how things should or shouldn't be. The latter is a very weak place to be in. It really says that you think you know more than God does. If you believe the Universe to be a benevolent one, you will see the preposterousness of human arrogance. If you believe it to be malevolent, you will justify your own arrogance at any cost, and on some level—if not all—it will cost you. Abraham Maslow said that if the only tool you have is a hammer, you will see every problem as a nail. I believe we're in a benevolent Universe. And that love and understanding the true nature of things are the only tools needed to experience it that way.

Dave Markowitz is a best-selling author, intuitive health consultant and spiritual healer who's lectured with Deepak Chopra, Gary Null, and more. Sign up for his free newsletter at www.DaveMarkowitz.com!