

“I listen but ...I can't do it”

by Timothy ©

Nearly 40 years ago, Sylvester Stewart of the once-popular band Sly & the Family Stone wrote and sang: “Everything I like is nice; that’s why I try to have it twice” (Song: Spaced Cowboy; Album: There’s a Riot Going On). I don’t know if Sly realized how profound that song lyric was, but I do know that his statement summarizes the process by which all humans form habits in every area of our lives. More specifically, if you experience something that feels good to you, you’ll almost certainly seek to repeat that experience in order to recreate the good feeling. In contrast, if you experience something that feels bad to you, you’ll seek to avoid that experience.

Unfortunately, this same habit formation process probably has you trapped in listening behavior patterns that appear to protect you from pain but instead prevent you from accessing the Infinite Joy that’s your true nature. Listening is an act of absorbing another’s thoughts and feelings, so you must be able to do it with relatively little internal communication noise if you intend to control what you contribute to the dynamics of your interactions. Internal communication noise refers to any psychological process that keeps you trapped in the past, the future, or in a state of judgmental stagnation that interferes with your capacity to fully tune into the present moment. This type of noise diverts you from your true purpose by screaming constantly in your inner ear, drowning out the “sound” of God’s Voice that whispers continuously from within your intuitive perception channels.

If you're one of the billions of people who identify with their ego (physical) minds rather than the intuitive (Spirit) mind, you've been listening only on the surface of your relationships. By listening superficially, you've been wasting most of your energy in vain efforts to eliminate emotional pain from your life. Emotional pain is manufactured by your ego, which, due to its nature as a matter-binding force, can't shake itself free from the poisonous effects of fear and doubt. And as long as you move through life afraid of the psychological threats that you imagine are lurking around the corner of every interaction, you probably don't feel safe to fully open your heart to the infinite possibilities that are always available to you in the present moment.

If guarding your heart brings you comfort (even though that comfort is based on a false sense of security), it's understandable that the safety you're feeling seems plenty real to you. If that's the case, you're probably holding on for dear life to whatever listening practices you think will keep you safe from excessive heartbreak. Therefore, no wonder you can't visualize how letting your guard down in your interactions with people will affect those relationships.

Admittedly, dropping your guard is scary at first because doing so exposes you to bombardment from the widest possible range of human emotions – both positive and negative. However, the more deeply you value your own worth as an expression of God's Infinite Beauty, the less inclined you'll be to allow others' feelings to overpower yours, and the more courage you'll find within yourself for practicing letting your guard down completely, little by little. After all, only by letting your guard down completely can you experience the fullness of God's Love!

The Indian philosopher Jiddhu Krishnamurti explained, “Life is relationship, which is expressed through contact with things, with people, and with ideas. In understanding relationship we shall have the capacity to meet life fully, adequately.” He added, “Relationship, surely, is the mirror in which you discover yourself. Without relationship you are not; to be is to be related; to be related is existence.” Unfortunately, there’s no guaranteed way to prevent sadness and other unpleasant emotions from infiltrating our relationships. Therefore, even if you succeed in building a fortress around your heart and encircling it with trenches and barbed wire, you’ll only broadcast to the world that you’re afraid to get hurt, and skillful people readers will easily see through your stoic disguise. In contrast, once you’ve been consistently practicing experiencing life with your heart more and more open and have built up a diverse portfolio of successful human relations outcomes, you’ll find it increasingly easy to lay aside the habitual listening strategies you’ve been using to cope with people’s differences.

Reaching this stage means you’ve replaced your automatic emotional reactions with the much more productive habit of intentionally listening to the Presence of God within your heart. This enables you to receive continuous guidance about what choices you should make from moment to moment. Reaching this stage is also a clear sign that you’re ready to transform the way you listen to others.

Once you feel strongly grounded in your own true being, you’ll no longer have any use for feeling overwhelmed by other people’s issues. Then you’ll be able to absorb their life energy and connect with it at a deeper level than you’d previously imagined was possible without losing your sense of self. At that point, your capacity to give and receive love and to perceive the underlying purpose and value of each of your

relationships will blossom in ways you can't now fathom. No other kind of surprise could be more rewarding!