



HEAD OR HEART?

Stupid is as stupid does.

Forest Gump

Have you ever noticed how much energy you spend proving how smart you are? It seems like our whole culture is obsessed with being clever, quick witted, and sounding intelligent. You are supposed to get smart and figure things out, identify the problem and implement the solution. Life depends on applying the right analytical ability in all situations. If you are not getting the outcomes you want, then there must be some missing knowledge, something you need to learn.

This kind of thinking often propels people into reading self help books, going on workshops, seeing therapists, getting coaching etc. If they are lucky, the process of trying to find the answers does help them learn and greater wisdom is attained. Sometimes, though, people end up stuck in their heads, often using the very tools they've learned to beat themselves up even more. They become adept at describing their problem and analyzing all the aspects of it, but it doesn't shift. In NLP terms, the more a person uses their Ad analysis channel (internal dialogue), the more likely it is that they are dead from the neck down. They are simply too busy talking to themselves, judging, thinking, reasoning, analyzing and computing, to access any other way of being.

The type of thinking that keeps you stuck in a problem, however, is not the type of thinking that can get you out of it. Sometimes it all starts with becoming too attached to an outcome, making it too important. A classic example was a young divorcee who really wanted to have a new relationship, but it just wasn't happening. She was very clear about what she wanted. She had elicited all the criteria and qualities of her ideal partner. She was really good at getting 'out there' and meeting potential partners, but often found they were not as interested as she was. After being rejected and hurt quite a number of times, her desire to find true love was becoming eclipsed by her fear of losing any love she might find and then feeling inadequate.

She started demonstrating 'learned helplessness' just like the rats in the psychology experiments, where they electrified different squares on the floor of the cage. Gradually the rats just stayed still to avoid the shocks and learned that nothing they could do would make a difference. A part of her started to believe that she wasn't supposed to have a relationship. In fact, she said that her life worked so well now that she couldn't imagine how anyone could add to it! This part of her didn't want to lose any of her freedom or add the extra hassle of having to deal with someone else's stuff. But even as she said this, the other part of her that was so attached to having a relationship retorted that she would NOT give up or give in! And so her internal battle continued.

What happens when you want a goal or outcome too much? It can become an obsession, something you NEED so much that it is like an addiction. A curious dynamic of life is that you can only have what you don't need. Equally, what you resist, persists. So if all your energy is being used to get your needs met, and to avoid whatever you fear, that creates a pretty effective strategy for disappointment.



Either your expectations and demands push away the very thing you want, or you run away from it out of fear. What's the way out of this?

What helps is a logical level shift. The easy way to do this is to step out of the dynamic for minute and remember that you are much more than this internal conflict. Step into your heart or your higher mind instead. Notice that when you want something too much, it actually creates the message that you lack that very thing. Well, obviously you might say! The evidence of not having it is clear. But the problem is that your energy then supports the lacking of it, which fuels the neediness. When you are needy it is difficult to receive. In fact, even if success comes your way, you're more likely to sabotage it, by making demands, looking for faults, or even pushing it away whether you perceive it to be good enough or not good enough.

Imagine there is a movie camera recording your whole life, every movement you make and even some narrative of your internal thoughts and experiences. What positive qualities would this camera pick up about who you are, how you are feeling and what your life story is all about? Maybe you have been too embroiled in one scene or with one potential outcome of this life story. Maybe the whole tale is much richer and more mysterious than you could ever imagine. What if there were other potential outcomes that could be even better than the one you have been chasing?

Putting her life back into a more balanced perspective, and remembering who she is, allowed this client to re-access her heart and feel more present. She stopped over focusing on her desired outcome. As she accepted herself more, she relaxed and chose to consider her outcome as more of a direction. This allowed her to be more flexible and curious about letting things unfold. She even felt more trusting.

If you do not need anything from another person, you cannot be pushed away.

Chuck Spezzano