

When practicing unconditional acceptance, start with yourself.

The 'start with yourself' part of this really leapt out at me. I want the world to change to suit me, not me having to face my own shortcomings. I'm starting to notice how much time I spend thinking about the general difficulties 'we all' face instead of practicing on myself. For me, unconditional acceptance means accepting my whole package of abilities and disabilities as I am now, without depending on the arrival (much delayed) of a new improved version of me that will result from studying some course, or book, or from some new treatment for my physical condition that will turn up in the future.

When everything goes wrong, treat disaster as a way to wake up.

Like when a relationship breakup happens. This is a pretty traumatic experience for most, well, it is for me anyway. For something to be a personal disaster means we must have had a strong emotional investment in it, or were not accepting the temporariness of the situation in the first place. I wonder at this requirement I have that life should be fair.

"Don't cry because it's over. Smile because it happened." ~ Dr. Seuss

I wonder why we have such strong expectations that life will go smoothly when it is so obvious that life doesn't work that way. I am starting to believe that life really does present us with difficulties to teach us lessons we need to learn.

Take all the blame yourself.

Funny how we look for someone to blame when things go wrong. As if pinning the blame onto someone actually changes anything. At least it gives us a sense of relief by taking the load of responsibility off us. It is a way of taking the spotlight away from us, a spotlight that might reveal areas in us that need work. But shifting the blame also stops any further inquiry in the depth that might be needed to avoid further recurring incidences of wrongs.

Taking the blame for things yourself simplifies, clarifies issues, Chogyam Trungpa says. It stops the issue bouncing around causing more and more damage. It is so easy to see with national conflicts and wars how much each side is always blaming the other side for all their woes. Taking all the blame yourself seems very difficult - maybe it is best to adopt a practice of not assigning any blame at all? But if I admit having made a mess of something, it is surprising how quickly the situation eases and I am surprised that condemnation from others does not automatically follow. The converse is also true of course, why not give myself/ourselves a little credit for success at something once in a while?