

Effort

"There is no place for effort in reality. It is selfishness, due to self-identification with the body, that is the main problem and the cause of other problems. And selfishness cannot be removed by effort, only by clear insight into its causes and effects. Effort is a sign of conflict between incompatible desires. They should be seen as they are - then only they dissolve." Nisargadatta

We need to make effort in our daily life of course. The effort we are thinking of here is in spiritual practice, though that should then pervade the rest of our actions. The problem with effort in spiritual practice seems to be that when we adopt the usual results-based, goal-based paradigm from our work and life practices, the imagined goals we strive for are not reachable by these means. We merely reinforce the sense of a 'doer,' a self, an "I" who is trying to achieve the results. The self can't eradicate the self or use the self to come to selflessness. A different paradigm needs to be used. We need a kind of exploration that allows layers of assumptions and conditioning to be seen through and relinquished. This also applies to clinging to dogmatic ideas of practice. We need to be willing to stay open to what is revealed to us, and be prepared to allow ourselves to change or be changed, as we find things we didn't expect through our meditation practice.

Practice seems more about discovering and embracing what or who we are (or are not) than changing or self-improving ourselves.