

Where is your ATTENTION?

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Imagine your life is like a basketball game. You have two teams. One team represents everything that you love about your life and more: your optimism, enthusiasm, faith, joy and self-empowerment. The other team, however, represents your self-doubt, self-judgment, self-criticism and every place in your life where fear and doubt reign. The basketball represents your ATTENTION. And as you know, the team who controls the ball (assuming they can get it in the net) WINS. **YOU are in charge of which team gets the ball.** Which team will you allow to get the ball, thus, your Attention? Getting and keeping your Attention is one of the most important skills in the game of life.

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There are a lot of conversations, quotes, books and articles written about INTENTION; and rightly so, as it is a major component in the creative process of all humans, whether they know it or not. A lesser, yet extremely important subject, is the subject of one's ATTENTION. **The quality of your attention absolutely determines the quality of your life.** This is the premise for this article. Similar to the amount of direct attention it takes to drive your car safely, your life needs that same level of attention; yet, for most, not only does it not happen, it is not even considered. In today's society, market researchers spend billions of dollars to find out ways to capture our attention. One of the results is that we have become lazy, allowing others to do our thinking for us; thus, advertisers have become experts at capturing our attention. This only adds to the fact that although we were born with a magnificent brain and mind (not the same thing); we were never taught how to use them to their full potential.

Every day through television, radio, billboards, ads, and massive Internet marketing your attention is being grabbed by companies and corporations whose main intention is to GET YOUR MONEY and BUY YOUR LOYALTY. They have become experts in seducing you to do things that you do not actually care about or to need things you do not really want. Observe a child mindlessly watching television and then notice how his/her eating and purchasing habits mirror what was viewed. Notice that the length of time between a child's viewing and purchasing is very close and easy to monitor. And the statistics for television viewing is so staggering that it is frightening. Every day that we either place our toddler in front of a television or allow our children to view it, we are giving major corporations the license to influence our children. More so, this truth applies to you, which proves that we, too, must learn to discriminate.

Actually, take a look at yourself and your choices; can you see a direct relationship between your viewing habits and the choices that you make? Do you ever stop to ask yourself why you buy one product over another, eat at a particular eatery, buy a certain gasoline or go to one specific movie theater? If not, take time to figure out what is pulling you; what is driving you; what is IN CHARGE OF YOU.

Learning to observe your attention cannot be over emphasized because it is the link between the influences of the world and how you experience your life every day. As you begin to raise your level of awareness regarding your attention, closely observe a very simple thing as you answer this question: In the course of any given day, do things that are negative get your attention as quickly as things that are positive? When someone is bellyaching or gossiping or complaining, do you find yourself hooked into that conversation and possibly joining in without even thinking about it?

Here is a simplified version of how the process works:

You see or hear something around you (it can be positive or negative). Rather quickly and without thinking, you formulate a thought and opinion around it, which often bring you to creating an entire story about it in your head. This happens so quickly that you don't see it or catch it; nevertheless, what happens next is very important. If this thought or opinion is not challenged immediately and is given free reign, you begin to have "feelings" around it. The problem with that is that as soon as something becomes a feeling, most people are convinced that it is real. In today's society we are feeling driven and we often do not question from where our feelings stem. Additionally, when this process goes unnoticed and is left unchallenged by our intelligence, all of these feelings and reactions have a direct affect upon our health and body temple.

This is what I am suggesting:

- Learn to ask yourself questions. Begin to look deeply into your reactions, especially when there are emotions connected to them, and start to figure out their source. It is absolutely possible that you are not even in agreement with what you are reacting to, but because these reactions slipped by your thinking, they started to rent space in your emotional body. Left on their own, they can create havoc.
- Begin to observe the world around you and listen for evidence of gossip and watch how individuals believe what they are told or believe what they are saying without asking intelligent or qualifying questions. As you watch TV or read the news, look for assumptions, which are another form of gossip. Begin to familiarize yourself with what this process looks like in the world. See how your children believe what you say and repeat it without

question. This is how the pattern of believing without questioning begins. The practice of not thinking and not allowing our children the room to think or ask questions is how we “domestic” our children according to Don Miguel Ruiz in his book *The Four Agreements*.

- As you move through your day, become acutely aware of what it is that hooks your attention. If you are aware that it is something negative, see if you can un-hook yourself. If someone tries to suck you into gossip, see if you can pull back and respond with a simple: That’s interesting! And then get the heck out of there.

See if you can spend ONE WHOLE WEEK without watching, listening to, or reading about the news. Notice if your attention feels like an addiction and, if so, STOP. Once you spend a week without engaging in any of the aforementioned activities, begin to replace your old habits by carefully choosing what you watch by finding a responsible news source.

- Spend some time every day consciously focusing on what is good in your world. Catch yourself and all the people around you doing something right. Compliment yourself and others. Begin to breed beauty, joy and gratitude. Let these things get your attention. The more you consciously focus your attention on what is good and beautiful, the more you see it. Your eyes and your mind will begin to focus in on positive aspects with ease. You will find yourself pulled to all sorts of people and events that open your heart and your mind.

By becoming an expert on moving your attention, you will begin to propagate so much more good in your life. One of the reasons for the transformation is simple. Every single thing in life has an energetic and vibrational value whether you fully understand the science behind it or not. You simply know when something feels good and light, like joy and peace, or when something feels dark and heavy, like anger and jealousy. When your attention is spent more on things that are good and light, you will feel better, lighter and more joy-filled. Thus, if you watch your attention and learn to redirect it, in a very short time you will see how your life begins to reflect the switching of your attention.

Here are some questions to support your waking up:

- What news source do I watch and trust and why?
- What opinions do I have about other religions and cultures and why?
- Do I trust other people? Yes, no and why?
- Do I feel safe in the world or am I suspicious and why?
- What do I believe about the military or the government and why?

Asking “why” after each question is what will lead you to greater understanding of yourself. Being an expert on YOU is worthy of your focus. One of my favorite quotes of all times is from Socrates who said, “Know thyself and you will hold the keys to the Universe.” Self-exploration that leads to greater self-knowledge in the end leads to true liberation.

Here is a Spiritual Mind Treatment (Affirmative Prayer) to support you in your WAKING UP:

There is an Intelligence that exists in, as and through all. This Intelligence avails itself to me right here and right now as I open to receive its value through an immediate and available download. I am guided, guarded and protected by this Intelligence to the level that I accept Its influence and make room for It in, through and as my life.

Today, this very moment, I begin to retrieve my attention. I begin to wake up to the full awareness of who I am, what I think and why I think it. This awareness supports my freedom and further mental, emotional and spiritual expression. I declare that I am no longer under the quiet influences of the global consciousness of money and greed. I reclaim my own power and redirect it to being Awake, Aware, Alive and Fully Expressed. As I begin to stand on my own in my thinking and choices, I begin to increase myself as a wonderful positive and loving influence to the world around me.

The truth of this word that has been spoken is definite and my heart and mind move into divine and perfect alignment toward its acceptance and demonstration. Feeling a full measure of gratitude, I live faithfully in its demonstration as I release this word into the Law.

Now go, enjoy, and pay ATTENTION to beauty, joy, love and peaceful things. You deserve to live the positive effects of paying attention.

Namaste

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About the author of ***Where is Your ATTENTION?***

Michelle Wadleigh is the Founding Spiritual Director of the Center for Spiritual Living North Jersey in West Orange, New Jersey. She is a passionate and demonstrative teacher of New Thought Principles. She brings her message alive through a variety of spiritual practices. Known for her authenticity and availability, you only have to be around her for a few moments to experience her love and compassion. Rev. Michelle is a certified Spiritual Empowerment Coach, motivational speaker, workshop and retreat facilitator. She has also produced a wonderfully educational CD, *Organic Visioning*, which teaches the Visioning Process, and a variety of other life enhancing CDs. She comes alive in the classroom where her sense of humor and dedication to practical application support individuals, while transforming their lives. Come love and laugh with her; you will be touched forever. For a greater understanding of these spiritual principles remember to visit Center for Spiritual Living North Jersey's website www.cslnj.org; and Michelle's blog living or her new blog site for the podcasts: www.lovinglifeasis.blogspot.com.

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