Noticing Game -One of the Most

Important Spiritual Games to Play

 by Rob Smith
Before I get into what constitutes 'the noticing game,' I just observed that the font that automatically came up for this document is "Liberation Serif." :~) There are truly NO coincidences! :~) :~)
So, what's this noticing game that I've been encouraging people to play for, well, basically forever? Our 'master cat herder' :~) and good friend Mark Anderson asked me to provide some details about this game, which I am glad to do. There's an old saying in spiritual circles, "recognition is 90% of the solution." This applies to lots of other areas of life also, but I'll limit this discussion to the spiritual aspects.
As I'm sure you're aware by now, the vast majority of people pay VERY close attention to their thoughts; not only that, they think they ARE their thoughts! In many cases this leads to outcomes that are not, shall we say, very life-supporting. This is because the thoughts they are paying attention to are the result of them not being able to 'handle their heart;' in other words, when energy from our old conditioning(s) (called 'samskaras' in Sanskrit) tries to come up and be released, we don't let it. And the reason we don't let it is because we stored it inside precisely because it was 'uncomfortable' in some way, and it still feels that way. So rather than be willing to 'become comfortable with being uncomfortable' as Mickey puts it, we turn to our human minds to see if we can figure out how to change people and situations outside of ourselves to make ourselves feel better. Which seems to make sense, because if the people and situations outside of ourselves "matches our mess" (as Mickey says) then we WILL feel better.
The problem is that if this works, it never works for long.... because people and situations outside of ourselves are ALWAYS changing, and we will be unable to keep everything just the way we need it to be to always feel OK. So, sooner or later (and

usually sooner), we will get 'triggered' again and have to go back to the same old method of working outside of ourselves in an attempt to fix our inside disturbances. At some point we have to come to the awareness that this never works, at least not for very long, and become willing to try something entirely different. This realization is often the beginning of our spiritual journey.
So, now to specifics. One of the most powerful, yet simple, things you can do now that you're on the spiritual path is to play the 'noticing game.' This game is so simple that many people dismiss it as being trivial, not worthy of their time and energy. Quite the opposite, without this game (or something similar) you won't get very far spiritually, in my opinion. When I first thought of this practice, I decided to call it a 'game' in an attempt to make people be more willing to give it a try. I'm not sure if this tactic has ever worked, :~) but in any case, if you are willing to practice this technique consistently and persistently (the two most important aspects of spirituality, IMO) you WILL reap some very large benefits from it.
Here's how you do it. Make a resolution that, from now on, you will do your best to 'notice' whenever and wherever there's a 'disturbance in the force,' which is nothing more than you start noticing that you are feeling some type of 'non-peaceful' energy or thoughts that have arisen in your awareness. So, what do you do next? If you're new at this, you don't have to do anything else! Just doing the 'noticing' is very powerful, because two things are happening as a result of the noticing. One is that you will most likely find that the 'disturbance in the force' does not last nearly as long as it would have if you had NOT noticed it.
This is because the disturbance can't notice itself, what is doing the noticing is your Higher Self, also known as the 'witness' or the 'beholder.' So now you've brought a new element into your psyche, and this new element (which was there all along but you just weren't aware of it) will 'short-circuit' the disturbance and it will subside much quicker than it would have otherwise. In addition, as you keep playing this game, you will find that it takes you less and less time to notice the disturbance -- at first you might get all caught up in it for hours or even days, but eventually it will be

minutes and then seconds, which basically means you spend a LOT less time fretting about this or that (yay!!)
The second thing that happens as a result of noticing is that, because you are bringing your Higher Self into the picture, it (your Higher Self) will start becoming a bigger and bigger part of your awareness.... which is really what 'self-realization' is all about!

Once you gain some mastery with the 'noticing game,' you can go a bit further and start doing the "R & R" technique with what you are noticing. But that's already been discussed in detail elsewhere on this site (https://tinyurl.com/relaxandrelease2) so I won't go into it here.
So, I hope you see the benefit of playing this simple, yet powerful game.... feel free to let me know if you have any questions! Namaste!
Peace, Rob Smith

Relax and Release

By Rob Smith

A key to the Relax and Release (R & R) process, in my opinion, is in what Mickey refers to as "relaxing the heart." Most of the 'disturbances' that cause us to want to R & R have their origin in the heart (more accurately, in our inability to handle our heart) - - when we first experienced something 'painful' we didn't want to feel it, so we pushed it down (repressed it). Which of course never works, it just comes back stronger later. So, you first must NOTICE the disturbance as it starts to ‘come up’ (see the other file on the ‘noticing game’ for more details on this), if YOU (your higher Self/Spirit/Soul) doesn't notice it, it will grow and take over your consciousness, and then you will cause even more of a mess by trying to get people and situations the way you want so they will fit YOUR mess, and so that you won’t have to feel that way anymore. Sad, but true - that’s how most people operate. It CAN work for short periods of time, but it ALWAYS reverts back to the ‘same old same old’ as you haven’t dealt with the underlying conditioning that is causing these disturbances.
We’ve all had the experience of at some point saying to ourselves, “Wow, I am acting like a complete idiot!” Well, it’s not the ‘complete idiot’ part of ourselves (the lower self/ego) that’s doing the noticing, IT would be happy to remain in this state as long as possible! :~) What’s happened is that our Higher Self (Soul, Spirit, etc.) has ‘made an appearance’ in our psyche and we are now looking at that ‘idiocy’ from a higher perspective, from where we can actually do something about it (such as relaxing and then feeling the sensation of the ‘disturbance’ in our body). And the earlier you notice the disturbance, the better, because everything is easier to deal with when it first starts to come up. Just like a weed is easy to pull up when it first sprouts, if you wait a few months it can be a real hassle. So, make it a game to see how quicky you can notice that a disturbance has started to 'blossom' in your psyche. One thing I heard Mickey say is that 90% of spiritual growth is in the noticing! If you catch it early enough, it will be at the 'physical sensation' level (you will be able to feel a tightness, or tension, or something like that in your body, most likely in your heart or gut). If it takes a while to notice it, by then you will probably be all caught up in it and will be having LOTS of thoughts about how to ‘make it better inside by changing people or things outside.’
Now that you've noticed it (at whatever stage, it's just that it's easier if early on), the first step is to ‘relax.’ This involves intentionally relaxing several of your major muscle groups, such as your neck, your shoulders, your stomach area, etc. When you put your attention on relaxing, you ‘disconnect’ from the disturbance you noticed at the beginning of this process. In other words, your attention (which is your consciousness) is no longer involved with the disturbance -- you are no longer ‘feeding it’ with your energy (chi, prana, shakti, whatever you want to call it). After a minute or two of relaxing the muscles, you may find that the disturbance is gone (either partially or completely). If it’s gone completely, great! If not, put your 'attention' on the disturbance itself and feel it fully. By ‘disturbance’ I mean a ‘sensation’ somewhere in your body, usually in your heart or gut area. By ‘feel it fully’ I mean that you pay close attention to it, as if you were going to have to describe it to someone.
Your attention is really the same as your awareness, or ‘pure consciousness’, which is your Spirit and which is the ultimate healing power. Even though it may be uncomfortable, keep your attention on what the sensation in your heart or gut feels like. This does two things, 1. it further relaxes the heart or gut, and 2. you have started the process of releasing it because you have 'moved away from it' as you are now ‘witnessing’ (or noticing) the disturbance from what the Buddhists call your ‘seat of the Self,’ Christians would call this your Soul or Spirit. This witnessing actually removes the energy from the disturbance, because your energy is now centered in your Self (soul, spirit) and the disturbance will ‘fall away’ by itself as you are no longer holding it inside you (either consciously or subconsciously).

This is what Mickey calls the ‘leaning away’ part - when you ‘lean away’ from something (such as your lower self/ego) you are automatically ‘leaning into’ something else (your Higher Self, your Spirit, the ‘witness’.) As Mickey says, the solution to everything is in the Witness. In other words, You (your Higher Self/Soul/Spirit) hasn't gotten “overshadowed,” or “lost,” because of the feeling in the heart; you've haven't gotten all caught up in this and then made a big deal of it 'out in the world.'

By doing this R & R process you are developing the ability to watch your emotions from a calm place just as you are now able to watch most ‘things’ in your field of vision without getting caught up in them (in a negative sense). You are now 'working at the root' and this is THE most effective spiritual technique there is. Every time you do this a samskara (a Sanskrit word for some old conditioning/scar that you have stored up in your psyche because you originally didn’t want to deal with it) is released (fully or partially). As you continue this practice you will find your mind gets more and more peaceful.... because it has less and less to think about as you keep releasing samskaras! It’s only the old conditioning/memories that keep coming up (because we originally repressed them) that cause virtually all of our anxieties, fears, etc. etc. When you learn to handle your heart (by doing the R & R process every time you feel a disturbance), you won’t have to ‘go to your mind’ to try and figure out how to get people and situations to change to fit your ‘mess,’ so you’ll find yourself feeling increasingly peaceful without all that ‘mind activity.’

So, to sum it up: when you first notice a ‘disturbance in the force’ :~) immediately do the simple R & R practice.... relax some of your muscles, then find the place in your body where there is some tension or anxiety and put your attention on that sensation and feel it fully. This will allow the suppressed energy to be released, and you WILL feel better! :~) Note that a few ‘samskaras’ (emotional scars) are deeper and stronger and may take several repetitions of the R &R practice to resolve... but that’s ok, what’s more important than doing this??? :~)

Please give this a try, and feel free to ask me any questions about this if it isn't clear. Peace, Rob Smith.

Video of this text is available on youtube at https://youtu.be/5gwSVKEZrv0

Low Hanging Fruit

By Mickey
-So you decide to use life to free yourself. You become willing to pay any price for the freedom of your soul. You will realize that the only price you have to pay is letting go of yourself. Only you can take inner freedom away from yourself, or give it

to yourself. Nobody else can. It doesn’t matter what others do, unless you decide that it matters to you. Begin with small things (low hanging fruit). We tend to let ourselves get bothered by the little, meaningless things that happen every day. For example, somebody beeps at you at the stoplight. As these little things happen, you will feel your energy change. The moment you feel a change, \*\*\*relax your shoulders and \*\*\*relax the area around your heart (RnR see file for more detailed description). The moment the energy moves, you simply relax and release. Play with letting go and falling behind this sense of being bothered (who were you before the disturbance). Let’s say someone at work took your pencil, and you notice that every time you go to use another one, your inner energy shifts—even the slightest amount. Are you willing to release the old pencil in order to liberate yourself? This is how you make freedom a game. Instead of getting into being bothered, you get into being free. When you reach for a pencil, and you see yourself getting a little uptight, let go. Your mind might start saying, “It was a pencil today and if I let go, they’ll step all over me. It’ll be my desk tomorrow, or my house, or maybe even my husband.” That’s how the mind talks. It’s very melodramatic. But you decide that for the cost of a pencil, you’ll go for the ride. You tell your mind, “When it’s the car, we’ll have a talk. Right now, it only costs a pencil to be free.” Just decide that no matter what the mind says, you aren’t getting involved. You don’t fight the mind. In fact, you don’t even try to change it. You just make a game out of relaxing in the face of its MELODRAMA. You simply learn how to release the tendency for getting drawn into the energy. The root is where the consciousness is aware of the pull of these energies.

This is one of the games we play here in our group. Make a pact with yourself to dedicate time every time you get in the car and traffic slows or someone is tailgating use the experience to FREE yourself. The second you notice your closing DON’T stay open and do Relax and Release - RnR (see file).\*\*\*