PATIENCE #2

**4 Steps to Working with Impatience**

1. Understanding the addictive nature of anger, irritation, outrage:

As evolving humans, we are still constructed with our old reptilian brain that protects our physical and emotional survival. On the emotional survival side, we want our way, to get ahead, to achieve, to "look good." It's not a "bad" thing; it's just an evolutionary older part of our brain than our newer midbrain and neocortex.

Let's just face it - that urge to protect ourselves, and what we deem valuable is absolutely addictive. Just try and not act on your urge and you'll see what I mean.

The first step in growing patience is to get in touch with the addictive quality of the opposite of patience; that being, anger, irritation, blaming, shaming. Usually, it starts with a slight discomfort, and tensing in the stomach area that goes along with the interpretation that things are not going our way. Then the thoughts appear, "I have never seen such incompetence, how could they, don't they realize, did they do it on purpose, or are they just ignorant ... blah, blah, blah." You know the rants we all have them. But, we can grow beyond them.

**2. Upgrading our attitude towards discomfort and pain:**

Many of us have the belief that being "comfortable" is the only state we will tolerate.

Pain does have its purpose; it pushes us to find solutions. Where we often go astray with the "solutions" that we are trying to find, it’s usually that we are trying to change the other person, situation, or thing that we think is causing our discomfort.

The problem really is that, it’s not the outside thing that's the source of our pain, but how our mind is set. No matter how bad, or good, the outer thing is, it's our mind that has the aversion or attraction. It's our mind that is the cause of discomfort, not the outer circumstances.

In the mind-training model of dealing with the pain of irritation, the idea is to reduce the pain and suffering that our impatience gives us, and to increase our ability to act in a way that has a higher probability of achieving our goals.

So, the solution to pain is an inside job.

**3. Paying attention when the irritation/pain starts:**

Most of us don't really realize it when we are feeling subtle—but very present—painful feelings. We ignore the fact that we are in pain, and focus exclusively on fixing the problem. To **really care for ourselves**, we need to ask ourselves if being irritated brings us comfort, or rather, the comfort of familiarity? Get curious about what's actually happening in the moment inside you. I know for myself, when I am critical, impatient with anyone — including myself — it really hurts more than almost anything else.

**4. SELF-TALK**

The main thing here is to just stop the story. As we get more and more practice attending to that vulnerability inside without fueling it with our story about how wrong it all is, how wrong they are, how wrong we are, the feeling can pass through in mere seconds.