



A weekly summary of a student's reflective journal during the ICIS course: Power of Attitude

November 14th, 1998

This week has been a difficult week. The overwhelming feeling has been of a certain dryness, the lack of joy in the effort.

Almost everyday I was forced to face failures in work as well as in my relationships at home. In a way I was being shown the depth of the darkness and negativity that has hold of me. After last week's success at overcoming some negative habits, with ease and felicity, it is as if all that has been taken away.

I sorely felt the lack of support and often wanted to give up. Writing the journal was a great help as I could spill out this pain and ask for help. When I was at the lowest ebb I realised, I was feeling sorry for myself and the darkness grew 'heavier'. At this point as I struggled, to throw off the self-pity, came the answer.

In the storm as I asked for patience, to wait it out, I saw clearly that much of what I believed, was an intellectual understanding and an emotional attraction, but that unshakable faith was missing.

I was shattered; years of effort seemed as if nothing had been accomplished. How could my faith have been so weak and fickle? As I meditated everyday before writing the journal I asked for the courage to be honest while reflecting upon the acts of self-offering I had made. These attempts hid in them a desire. Even in the offering was a desire for a return, if I was making this effort surely there should be joy in return and my work should improve.

Each day my work would go wrong, meetings ended in loss of temper, things got misplaced, I missed meetings and mixed up my schedules.... Was my attitude to blame, how was I going to cope as this was the busiest time of year?

I pledged to make a stronger effort to throw off the dejection. The attempt to exercise and go for a walk every morning helped. As I concentrated on the body, slowly a quietness returned, this time deeper, calmer, more a quality of peace than joy.

I realised how important it was to reject quickly any despondency, to prevent it from taking root. The quietness grew even deeper; I seemed to be working in a sort of numb way, which allowed me to become even more distant from myself. I found I was watching myself now quite dispassionately; while the storm still raged, it seemed to be outside not within.

Patience, a great deal of quiet patience, is the need. In a strange way the calm returned with an understanding that I had no choice, things would be done anyway. My job was quite simple, just to go on increasing the vigilance and bring out each negative quality I could, without flinching or trying to hide behind justifications.

I am tired but looking forward to what new insight the next week will bring. Meanwhile the mind is calmer but the heart strains to feel that oneness again.