

Q1) What do I mean by 'Personal Development'?

Q2) Why is Personal Development so important?

I would contend that the most important person in one's life is oneself. Other people, animals, plants, things, beliefs are only important to you in that they fulfil *physical* and *spiritual needs* in *you*. A person therefore pursues a life trying to *satisfy*, possibly unconsciously, their *needs* in order to be *content* and *happy*.

I reach this belief by awareness of my own situation, discussion with and observation of others, and study of others thoughts on this subject.

However, if one attaches so much importance in the satisfaction of one's wants and needs, as we all do, it is only sensible to analyse and understand what it is that makes a person discontent. This will show us where true contentment lies.

Physical needs can be fulfilled by material means. However, spiritual needs can only be met through spiritual means. Some people may believe spiritual needs can be met by physical means in the form of 'recreational' drugs, but who can seriously believe those who need to take such drugs are genuinely content and happy?

In fact, I would contend that a person cannot ever be content until spiritual needs are met spiritually, from within the person. Emotional desires come from within the psyche of a person, and cause unhappiness.

If emotional desires make you happy you would not try to satisfy the desires but try to maintain and heighten the desire. It is my belief, backed by much traditional teaching, that desire actually brings about unhappiness. Either the desire is fulfilled giving transitory relief and possibly remorse, or it remains unfulfilled causing anxiety and discontentment.

All attempts to satisfy spiritual needs through material means are doomed to failure. However, it is precisely in this futile attempt at happiness that the vast majority of people in our society are engaged.

Unfulfilled spiritual needs manifest themselves in a variety of ways such as addiction, possessiveness, unlimited desire, insecurity, defensiveness, demands for power, and many other ways that inherently make a person's life less satisfactory for oneself and others.

Above all else each person is responsible for their own spiritual state. It is *only you* that can change *your* spiritual condition. This means that the person *you* become by making changes to yourself is *yourself* gained by *you* through *your* own efforts. In other words you re-create yourself or are 'born again', a phrase that has been much misunderstood and abused by those calling themselves 'Born Again Christians'.

My definition of Personal Development would centrally consist of the progression from immaturity, characterised by attempts at spiritual fulfilment through external phenomena, to maturity where fulfilment comes from within one's own psyche. Consequentially the individual is freed from emotional desire for the material world.

Accepting the need for Personal Development leads to an interest in philosophy, psychology and spiritual teaching of the religious. However, spiritual writings can be misunderstood and I would contend that they are only understandable by those engaged in a sincere attempt to grow spiritually. Spiritual writings try to explain the spiritual forces and dynamics operating within a person and can only be understood in this way. Religious writings that do not attempt to help and explain how a person can grow into one's 'True Self' are worthless.

The goal of spiritual development is to be one's 'True Self'. This is often expressed, in Mystical Theology, as Divination, Union with God, or man becoming God. So a person can achieve one's True potential and identity - that of God. This really is 'Good News'.

Personal Development is important because it is a truly worthwhile occupation for an individual. All else is worthless. One will never achieve one's objectives of a happy and contented life by material means.

One thing we know about death is that a person is removed from the physical realm and those things that mean most to them. If one's spirit lives when one's body dies, which is a possibility, then we can deduce that it will be separated from all that is most dear and meaningful to it. It is also likely that it would be faced with the Truth about itself as it no longer has the material world to distract or fulfil itself.

Psychological and spiritual growth comes about by the recognition of the Truth concerning oneself. This I believe also indicates the correctness of this approach to life, in that, axiomatically Truth is superior to falsehood.

It is my opinion, backed by much traditional wisdom, that a life is wasted if a person has not made valiant attempts to grow spiritually and know the *real* person within their mortal body.

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