



# HOW TO REDUCE SUFFERING

Today, I want to go in a little bit different direction than we've been in the last few videos. Today, I want to talk to you about how to suffer less. I know that many of us suffer, and some of us suffer much more than others. I want to talk to you today about how to suffer a little bit less, and how to experience more ease and flow. I want to start by reading two quotes from a book called, *Loving What Is* by Byron Katie. This is the first quote: "Thoughts just appear. They come out of nothing and go back to nothing like clouds moving across the empty sky. They come to pass, not to stay. There is no harm in them, until we attach to them as if they are true." And the second quote I want to read is this: "A thought is harmless, unless we believe it. It's not our thoughts, but the attachment to our thoughts that causes suffering. Attaching to a thought, means believing that it's true without inquiry. A belief is a thought that we've been attaching to often for years."

I know that I talk a lot about our stories, our narrative, our thoughts, exponential thinking, and these kinds of things. I keep returning to this because it literally has been life changing for me to have this understanding that Byron Katie is talking about in this book, *Loving What Is*. And it's the work that I do with my clients as well, helping us wake up to or become aware of our stories, our narrative about what's happening out there. And if you want to want to suffer less then what Byron Katie is pointing to is that we allow whatever thoughts come about, we allow them to pass, rather than taking up residence in those thoughts and feelings. We must allow them to pass through us like clouds pass through the sky.

Pema Chodron talks about how thoughts are the clouds, and the clear sky is our true essence. That's who we are fundamentally. The thoughts and feelings that we have tell us absolutely nothing about who we are. But I know for myself, that there are a lot of thoughts that I've had in the past that I bought into and suffered with for years. One of the stories or the thoughts that I grabbed onto and kept alive for many, many years was that I was damaged. I was broken. I believed that for years. And so I felt I felt so much shame. I felt guilt. I felt a sense of hopelessness. That hopelessness almost undid me.

I can remember sitting across from a client a couple of years ago who had been to see all these therapists and psychiatrists and they told her that she was broken, damaged and that the best she can hope for was to try to navigate that brokenness, try to manage that, try to survive that. She believed with all her heart that she was broken. She had all manner of diagnoses. I sat across from her and said, You're not broken. You're not damaged. She looked at me stunned. Literally, nobody had ever told her that before. Over the next weeks of working together, we kept coming back to that. And she eventually, over time, was able to let go of her stories that



she was broken. Something within her began to wake up. Who she truly is began to wake up and she began to find her own resilience again, her resourcefulness, her wisdom, her clarity. That's what's available to each of us when we stop buying into our stressful thoughts. When in Byron Katie's words, we begin to question those thoughts, the validity of those thoughts, and we begin to let go of them so that they can pass through us, and no longer hold us hostage to them.

I've talked often about this with you in these videos when I say don't take up residence in your thoughts, don't move into those thoughts, don't move into the emotions. Sure, acknowledge them. Sure, tell your story, but recognize how attached you are to your stories.

I was attached to my story of shame for years. And certain circumstances contributed to me living in that shame. One was being involved in a fundamentalist Christian church which told me that I was broken. Which told me that my heart was deceitful above all else and I bought it, I believed it. I lived in that shame and judgment for years and it almost undid me.

I want you to experiment with waking up to or becoming aware of the beliefs, the thoughts, the emotions that you are really attached to and buy into. I want you to experiment with letting those thoughts and feelings move through you like the clouds in the sky. I want you to experiment with that and see what that does for you. Try it for yourself and see how it is.

If you want to learn more about how to do that, please feel free to reach out to me. I always offer a free session to new people because I don't want to work with anyone that I don't feel connected to and that I don't know that I can help.

I thank you for listening today.