

The Practice of Ho'oponopono

Begin by simply repeating the four phrases together: *I'm sorry. Please forgive me. Thank you. I love you.* I'm sorry. Please forgive me. Thank you. I love you.

Repeat them as you walk, as you drive, as you go about your daily tasks. Let them become the default state of mind for you, replacing the random rambling of your ordinary thoughts. Play with them over the span of a month; make the mantra your grand obsession. Watch how it opens you and frees you as you put it into play.

"I'm Sorry. Please Forgive Me."

If your goal is to focus on the positive—on those things that produce satisfaction, meaning, serenity, and joy—and you notice that you have been lost in replaying an argument you had with someone, or that you are wrapped in images of hurt, criticism, complaint or blame, you can instantly refocus by repeating, "I'm sorry. Please forgive me," from your heart until you feel a sense of peace.

"Thank You. I Love You."

Then, as peace enters you – and if you are genuine in asking for forgiveness, peace will indeed enter – you can respond to it with "Thank you. I love you." Your thanks is for the gift of recognizing the negative thought, and for the relief that came when you chose to apologize for it. Your love is an appreciation for choosing to let go of the negative, to embrace the healing, the cleansing of it from your mind. And with your sincere utterance of gratitude and love, you set off a wave of joy.

You Are Responsible

According to the teachings of Ho'oponopono (and just about every other system of well-being as well), you are responsible for everything that you experience. Everything you see, think, notice, hear and feel is a creation of your own mind. All your reactions and interpretations are of your making, based in memories from the past.

Have you become upset? Are you irritated? Pressured? Repulsed? Disgusted? Distressed? Accept that you are reacting to nothing but memory, apologize and ask forgiveness, over and over and over again, until you feel release. Then give thanks for the grace that cleansed your mind and freed you from the weight of your burden.

Circumstances arise that expose us to our shadows, to the places in us where darkness dwells. They come as teachers, to give us an opportunity to see our errors of interpretation and to shine the correcting light of truth on them. Ho'oponopono's mantra brings the correcting light. It's not necessary to understand what caused the darkness or why; you only need to release it, and the mantra ushers in the release.

When a troublesome person enters your sphere, he or she, too, has come to teach you peace and joy. As you watch your automatic negative reactions rise, begin your inner mantra. "I'm sorry that I react to this person so negatively. I'm sorry that I have closed my heart and mind. I'm sorry that I'm not really listening, that I'm not seeing the person behind the behavior. Please forgive me. I'm sorry. Thank you. I love you."

Whether you think so at the moment or not, on some level you love even the annoying or threatening one who is standing before you. In different circumstances, at a different time, you would clearly see what is there to be loved. Repeat "I love you" as you listen to the rant. See how it calms and centers you. See how

it softens the moment. See how it impacts and transforms not only you but the one who came to teach you in the first place.

Moments of Beauty and Joy

When you first begin the practice of reciting this mantra, you may find that many repetitions are needed before you feel it doing its work in you. But after you have some experience, a single whisper of “I’m sorry” will immediately dissolve your negativity and leave a bright and peaceful positivity in its place.

Your “thank you” will steadily grow more heartfelt and more joyful, and the “I love you” will pour from you in sparkling streams. More of your moments will be spent in positivity—in engagement, amusement, satisfaction, pleasure, inspiration and awe. Then the “thank you; I love you” becomes a vehicle for the up-welling of pleasure and delight, a means for expressing your genuine gratitude for life’s boundless goodness and grace.

Expanded Possibilities

When you are no longer reacting to the present moment on the basis of something you learned or experienced in the past—whether the ‘past’ was two seconds or decades ago—you are released to live in the present. You begin to see things as they are, uncolored by your projections and interpretations.

And because your heart and mind are no longer constricted, you discover that you are more creative and inventive, more open to the broad range of possibilities that each moment holds, more playful, more at peace. **In a word, you become happier. And isn’t that, after all, what each of us truly wants?**