

And, So & Because:

A Doorway to Peace

By Shelley A. W. Roy

Have you ever felt tense and irritable? Challenged by what is happening in your life? Feeling as if the people around you are just making your life miserable? Do you wonder why that is? The answer is simple: you are experiencing error. Error is the difference between how you want the world (the events in it and those around you) to be, and what you perceive at any given moment. Taking a step back and recognizing that the problem isn't really the events or the people that are the issue is the first step in moving towards a more peaceful existence. Learn to become the observer of your life!

The people and events of your life aren't the issue; they are simply that- events and people. It is your own resistance to what you think or perceive to be happening that creates the problem. Using your personal energy to resist something that has already happened is a waste of that precious energy. It is like trying to collect all the shards of a broken glass and put the glass back together. Once you understand that your perception of what is occurring can help you become aware of a personal boundary, or construct, of how you think the world should be, you can use these situations as opportunities for growth. Taking a step back can help you let go of the resistance and move beyond the tension, pain and irritability. Your energy can be directed towards the moment and the future rather than the past, which cannot be changed.

Because the struggle is actually within yourself, not the event or the individual, you have the power to change and to be happy. Stress only occurs when you resist life's events. You can learn to be present and aware and to not push or pull- to stop resisting and instead become an unbiased witness to your own life. If you can keep your own power by not allowing the other people and the events happening in your life to take control of you and your thinking, you will experience more joy. Even the challenges in life will become

more pleasurable. So how do you do that? Three words, which create three simple questions, can help you become the observer of your own life: *and*, *so* & *because*.

Here's how. Let's say you arrive at your home to find several downed trees from a recent storm. Instead of freaking out, you can take a deep breath and ask yourself "*And?*" The "*and*" question offers you a way to figure out the next step and does not allow you to dwell on the event that has already happened. "*And thinking*" is a great way to keep your energy focused and move towards action.

Or perhaps you perceive that someone you love isn't acting in a loving manner. You can ask yourself, "*So?*" The deeper question is "*so what about this is bothering me?*" Answering this question helps you define or clarify your personal definition of loving behavior. Instead of sitting in judgment of the other person's actions, you grow from the experience by clarifying who you want to be and what is important to you in a loving relationship.

The last question, *because*, is a great one to use when you have created negative emotions. For example, let's say you find yourself thinking or saying, "I'm sad." Ask yourself "*Because?*" Be careful here not to put the control of your emotions with someone or something else. You are sad because you perceive the loss of someone or something and you don't want to lose them or it. Just as you don't laugh because someone made you; you laugh because you found humor in what you were experiencing. Owning that the source of your emotions is within you is a way to take more effective control of you life and stop giving others power over you. You become more of the observer in your life. The added bonus is the recognition that you hold the power in your life. Always ask yourself "What part of this can I control?" You can control how you feel; you cannot control others.

Meditation, affirmations, exercise, yoga, mindfulness, prayer, conscious connected breathing and other focusing techniques can enhance your ability to take a step back from the story of your life and spend more time being the observer. Observing the people and

events in your life as if you are watching a movie brings great perspective and increases the probability that you will experience true happiness throughout your life's journey. Embrace the opportunities to ask yourself *and- so- & because*. And notice what happens next!