

Ashok Sharma: Advice for Hoteliers

Ashok Sharma is a veteran hotelier who has spent over three and a half decades in Hotels Management and Operations with Taj Group of Hotels. He was Sr. VP Operations of Taj International Hotels before he moved into Renard Hospitality Search Consultancy and Hotel Mystery Evaluations in 2003. His favorite and proven traits are offering mentorship and guidance for young budding hoteliers. He also writes blogs on Mindfulness practices, which helps encourage positivity in self driven efforts for success in life.



Random Acts of Kindness

Many of us are so focused on our own responsibilities and lives that we forget to look up for constant opportunities around us to be kind to others. We may not instinctively go out for others because we don't feel connected to them. Perhaps we are caught in a mind of scarcity or we do not feel that we have means to be generous. Perhaps we are too busy to stop and notice those around us.

There are always opportunities to be kind and it is important to remember that the smallest acts of kindness can mean a world for someone. Sometimes a small kind gesture from us reaches someone with sadness and disconnection. That tiny gesture could feel like a shiny ray of sunlight reminding them that basic human kindness exists in this world. Many of us lead lives with a brave smiling face but facing challenges and pain- an act of kindness from a total stranger can be one thing that can lift one up and helps them to feel connected with world around them. This has an impact on their heart way beyond our small effort of kindness. Try looking for an opportunity to be kind.

Be the reason someone believes in goodness of the people around... it costs us nothing and it all adds up to our credit.

Conflict

One of the misperceptions out there is that the goal of meditation is to generate so much of peace and serenity that we are never again confronted by conflict. Like it or not Conflict is part of life. Clashes over opposing opinions, disputes around legal issues, quarrels in relationships, public controversies, misunderstandings at workplace or home and so on. Through course of our lives conflict is sure to arise in various forms. Practicing mindfulness does not remove conflict. It gives us inner capacity to withstand and learn from inner conflict. Mindfulness helps us to discover wisdom from conflict. To see these challenges as opportunities to grow. The key to this process is looking deep within and understand our reaction to challenging, even volatile situations. Each one of us have ingrained patterns of thoughts and emotions that kick into autopilot when we are faced with challenges or a threat. When we retain these automatic reactions, we can shift our behaviour and reach for the other tools in the mindfulness toolbox.

For example, if we are provoked by a family member of ours with arguments and in reaction to their hostility we close up and disengage. Next time when this hostility behaviour is repeated and we feel ourselves slipping into a reactionary pattern, we can pause for a fraction of a moment and try to gain some insight before reacting. In that moment we can choose and wait until matters of the conversation are grounded, open minded, communicative and trusting. We are sure to avoid emotional stress and feel better about the encounter afterwards. We maintain composure and do not allow the reactivity to take over. These are all split moment decisions.

When we see it as a chance to evolve and grow, what began as a conflict can turn in to a good connection. Truth is that conflict is as much part of our life as Ice cream headaches and those rainy afternoons. It is to

be expected. If we are mindful, we can see conflict as a teacher, an opportunity to cultivate patience, non-judgement and deep listening.

Difficulties are meant to rouse not discourage and human spirit is to grow by conflict.

Resistance

We often resist things that we cannot change. Resistance causes suffering. Often our resistance to our circumstances does more harm than the circumstances that we resist. When we are alone, we are aware of our ever-flowing thoughts, emotions and sensations without judgement. We practice acknowledging and learning into our experiences in a way to soften them and accept things. What is true in meditation is what is true in life.

Like we often resist harsh winter months. We think that after many winters the resistance will erode but every year it is a challenge. A tool to deal with this resistance is to find the enjoyment in the changing reality. Look at the bright side of whatever you are resisting. Find out the bright side. There is prettiness in the snow fall. When presented with an opportunity we can wade through, walk in the snow, do a snowman, talk to someone in south, how beautiful the snowfall is...feel it. Try and find appreciation for these upsides. When on some days finding an appreciation is a challenge, simply remind yourselves of principle of impermanence. All things have a beginning and an ending. So, we can trust that spring will arrive in just a few weeks. As we build up sense of acceptance of life's constant changes, we grow in to strength and resilience towards these changes.

In midst of winter, I found within me the invincible spring and summer - that makes me happy. No matter how hard the world pushes me, within me there is something stronger, something better pushing all negativity right back. Stay positive.