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6 Ways To Know You're Creating Your Own Suffering

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Do you ever feel that you're caught in a cycle of emotional or psychological pain that you just can't break? That no matter which way you turn, or which direction you go in, this pain follows you around like a persistent dog wanting attention? This pain that doesn't seem to go away is suffering ... and sometimes we consciously, or unconsciously, contribute to it. So how do you know if you're creating your own suffering and encouraging that persistent dog? Read on for 6 sure signs that you're creating your own suffering (and 6 ways to give up your suffering).

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1. You deny you're suffering.

Sometimes we deny that we're suffering because it's "not okay" (with ourselves or with others). Maybe the incident that triggered our suffering happened a long time ago, we don't acknowledge it as important, or we've buried it so deep because it was so painful that we're numb.

See if you can connect with your suffering and accept that you're suffering – that you're feeling something. You may feel hurt, angry, upset, frustrated,

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devastated, heartbroken, or you may be grieving. If we can accept our suffering, then this is the first step in working with our suffering (rather than against it). Often our resistance to pain creates our suffering.

2. You blame others for your suffering.

“They hurt me” “They’re making me feel this way” “It’s their fault”. While it’s very human to do this, it actually gives over our own sense of power or ability to change. If we see other people or situations as our ‘problem’, then we can feel powerless to change anything.

Own your suffering – your thoughts, your feelings and your behaviours. Know that you can change how you think, how you feel and how you behave. And know that it’s how you **respond** in situations that helps you to do this. Try not to take things personally, try to get perspective in situations, and try to be non-judgmental (of yourself, of others, of the situation). Yes, it takes practice ... but it really is worth it.

3. You keep having the same thoughts or feelings, or you keep doing the same thing ... again, and again, and again.

You may find yourself caught up in a ‘thinking loop’ (“If only ... would happen, then I could be happy” – “If only ...” “If only ...” “If only ...”). Or you may have recurring feelings (“I’m angry”, “I’m angry”, “I’m angry”). Or you may do the same thing in similar situations all the time (“Why do I always choose partners who leave me?”). This is an indication that you’re creating the same suffering, in multiple situations.

It might be time to challenge your

thinking (“Can I be happy now?” – “How much time might I lose ‘waiting to be happy’?”). It might be time to work through your feelings (“I notice I’m feeling angry, I wonder why that might be? And what might I need to change to feel less angry?”). And looking at recurring situations in your life might give you an idea of what ‘patterns’ you’re carrying through your life. Know that, with awareness, you can change these patterns.

4. You keep talking about your pain ... again and again and again.

Our pain and suffering can become a part of the way we interact with others. We may always update our family and friends on the latest installment of our suffering (“You won’t believe what happened to me today!”). We can blog it, Facebook it, tweet it, text it. By talking about our pain, we can reinforce it, or even become it.

Try talking about something else (something positive if possible). Try changing your routine to break the habit of focusing on your suffering. Or try acting in the opposite way to what your pain is telling you.

5. You catastrophise your pain.

Do these sound familiar? “I’ll never be able to ... again” “My life is ruined because of ...” “No-one understands my pain” “This pain will never end” We’re actually interpreting and putting added meaning on to our initial story that **may not actually exist**. This only adds to our suffering.

Try not to over think your pain (mindfulness or meditation is a great

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way to break this cycle). Notice that you're having these thoughts or feelings – don't become these thoughts or feelings.

6. We believe we are the **ONLY** ones who feel this bad/terrible/horrible/awful.

When we experience pain, it's easy to feel separate from others and believe that we are the only ones who feel this amount of suffering. By doing this we can lose kindness and compassion for other human beings. While our experience is unique, it might be useful to remember that we can all suffer.

Spending time with others who are in pain and offering a kind word, a kind gesture or just giving of your time may make you feel different. Make someone a meal who has just lost a loved one, visit friends or relatives who might be lonely, or volunteer in your local hospital or nursing home. Offer some simple kindness to others in need and notice how this makes you feel.

“While pain might be inevitable, the suffering that comes from the pain is not. Suffering is not a state of life; it is a state of mind. Suffering is your response to an event. Whether you suffer or not depends entirely on your reaction to that situation.”

Paramahansa Nithyananda

Hopefully you're now aware of how you might be contributing to your own suffering, and have some techniques to use with that persistent dog that wants your attention. However, know that further help is available if you need it. It's helpful to know that Psychologists use a range of effective techniques and therapies to assist people who may be finding life challenging.

If you would like help in managing your thoughts, feelings or behaviours, please feel free to contact us on 0488 954 195, amanda@awakenpsychology.com.au or [click here](#)

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