Psychological Perspectives of Mental Health and Inner Peace

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Abstract

Every individual seeks happiness and desires to be happy, but happiness is highly inter-related with both physical and mental health. Mental health affects physical health, but the more the amount of inner violence, disharmony and negative emotions the lower our mental health. Negative psychological states such as distress, depression, and anxiety have been found associated with higher risk of mental illness. Negative thoughts have been found to play a critical role in depression and psychological maladjustment. One's positive thoughts are found to be positively related to satisfaction with life and happiness. The richer we become in inner-peace, the healthier our mind becomes. This sense of wholeness and adjustment of mind and body, accompanied by a sense of inner harmony, is often reflected in the spiritual and wisdom . It is, therefore, imperative to determine the relationship between inner peace and mental health, because the complex health and well-being challenges that individual faces today are also an urgent issue for the entire society. Thus, the present study is structured to establish the relationship between inner peace and mental health.

Keywords: *Psychological perspective, Mental health, Inner peace.*

Mental health and inner peace are very useful and essential for everyone. They are highly treasured by most people, but few possess them. However, each one can develop them, some more, and some less. All individual seeks contentment and wishes to be happy, but happiness is very much inter-related with social, physical and mental health. Mental health affects physical health but more the sum of inner violence, dissonance and negative emotions the lower our mental health scores. Downbeat psychological states such as distress, depression, and anxiety have been found related with mental health problems. Negative thoughts have been found to take part in a critical role in depression and psychological maladjustment. One's positive thoughts are found to be positively related to satisfaction with life and happiness (Ingram, Kendall, Siege & Guarino, 1995). The richer we become in inner-peace, the healthier our mind becomes. This sense of wholeness and assimilation of mind and body, accompanied by a sense of inner harmony, is often reflected in the spiritual and wisdom traditions of both the East and West (Underwood & Teresi, 2002).

The question of existent, eternal world peace concerns human beings, so basic human feelings are also at its extraction. Through inner peace, genuine world peace can be achieved. In this, the importance of individual responsibility is quite clear; an atmosphere of peace must first be created within ourselves, then gradually stretched to include our families, our communities, and ultimately the whole planet.

Inner peace refers to a condition of being mentally and spiritually at peace, with enough knowledge and understanding to keep oneself strong in the face of discord or stress. Being 'at peace' is considered by many to be healthy and the opposite of being stressed or anxious. Peace of mind is generally associated with bliss, happiness and contentment. Peace of mind, serenity, and calmness are descriptions of a disposition free from the effects of stress. In some cultures, inner peace is considered a state of consciousness or enlightenment that may be cultivated by various forms of training, such as prayer, meditation or yoga. Many spiritual practices refer to this peace as an experience of knowing oneself. Finding inner peace is often associated with traditions such as Hinduism and Buddhism. People have difficulties embracing their inner spirituality because the everyday stressors get the best of them and finding peace and happiness in the little joys of life can seem like a lot of work, and results don't seem all that gratifying.

When things go wrong in our life and we encounter difficult situations we tend to regard the situation itself as the problem, but in reality whatever problems we experience come from the mind. If we were to respond to difficulties with a positive or peaceful mind they would not be problems for us; indeed we may even come to regard them as challenges or opportunities for growth and development. Problems arise only if we respond to situations with a negative state of mind. Therefore, if we want to transform our life and be free from problems we must learn to transform our mind. Sufferings, problems, worries, unhappiness, and pain all exist within our mind; they are all unpleasant feelings, which are part of the mind. Through controlling and purifying our mind we can stop them once and for all.

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and perform. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood. Over the course of our life, if we experience mental health problems, our thinking, mood, and behavior could be affected. Inner peace is a by-product of good mental health. The main ways of promoting mental health and inner peace are to find meaning, be engaged and cultivate pleasure. No single way of being happy works for everyone:one should use their strengths and find the ways that work for them. Being happy can be as simple as accepting

Figure 1 Benefits of Positive Mental Health

Mental health is the key to development of sound individual personality, which, in turn, is the basis for the creation of healthy human society. But the knowledge concerning factors that would enhance or confine the development of positive mental health state is very limited which is very important to uphold inner peace. Finding inner peace is not trouble-free; it's actually one of the most difficult things to find in life and one should be prepared for a challenge. This is going to be a process, so one should be prepared for a slow but firm progression. Inner peace can only be found if one is decisively ready to change oneself. So it is important to keep mind open and be ready for some new experiences.

These are some strategies to find inner peace in our life by keeping our mind healthy:

- **Conquer Thoughts**

Thoughts resolve our state of mind and therefore are directly linked with our level of peace. This is why one should become very vigilant over what he thinks and how he thinks. One must learn to weed all the infertile and unconstructive thoughts and replace them with more positive, peaceful ones. It might seem odd or tedious at first but over the time, this screening process will be very useful and will come naturally.

- **Accept the Unchangeable**

There is no point in complaining or worrying about things one can't change. This is one of the many reasons why people don't have inner peace. They keep trying to change the unchangeable and therefore rather than gaining, they destroy their peace of mind. This is why one must learn to be more accepting and find his limits in life.

- **Work with the Flow**

Working against the flow of things only brings stress and anxiety. Now this doesn't mean that one should stop being creative or imaginative but it simply means one shouldn't try to over force things.Take everything one day at time and be patient with life. Use the pace of life to advantage and work with it. Flow with whatever may happen and let the mind be free. Stay centered by accepting whatever is going on.

- **Simplify**

Simplification and peace go hand in hand. Our modern lives tend to get over cluttered and one have a tendency to end up doing a lot of unnecessary things. One should try to unclutter life and only do what is truly important**.** This will not just make one feel good about himself as he will be doing self-rewarding things but he will actually become more peaceful.

"Our life is frittered away by detail... simplify, simplify." - Henry David Thoreau

- **Give Generously**

One can find this strategy the most beneficial. Giving is fundamental to attaining peace. When one gives, he forgets his sense of self, and it is only when one forgets his sense of self then he finds true peace and attains harmony. Give generously and one will become not just more peaceful, but he will in return receive more.

- **Acceptance**

Acceptance is crucial for peace of mind. Accepting that there are few guarantees in the world and learning to tolerate uncertainty is a huge leap in the peace-of-mind stakes. Differentiate between what one can and cannot control.

- **Be true to you**

This is another vital component of peace of mind. When we practice congruency, we behave similarly to the way we feel and think. When the way we see ourselves and the way the world sees us is the same, we are practicing congruency. Problems arise when we see ourselves one way (for example, as a loving mother) but behave in ways that are at odds with how we would like to see ourselves (for example, neglect our children because we are too busy). Finding ways to keep our inner ideals and the way we behave similar is one of the keys to peace of mind.

- **Stand up for what you believe in**

Fight the urge to fit in and do what's expected.Whether it's protecting animals or helping those who are less fortunate than yourself, follow your heart and your passion. When you change yourself to suit others you give away your peace of mind.

Conclusion

Mental peace is more about being than doing. It's about leaning towards rather than struggling against. It's about being fully present and focused on the task at hand. The rewards of inner peace are numerous. They include mental and physical health and well-being, self-confidence, better relationships, and a more passionate and joyful experience of life. Most of us want these things, but sometimes we must reallocate our perceptions of ourselves and how we live in order to create an environment to promote inner peace. Once we make the shift, we must practice the actions that lead to inner peace in order to sustain it. The most important ways to achieve peace of mind involve being true to oneself, accepting the uncertain nature of life and watching one's thinking process. Many of us mentally 'torture' ourselves by pondering and brooding over negative thoughts which is indeed not a good practice instead we should observe our thoughts, pay less attention to the negative ones and focus on what we are thankful for in life. Practicing this regularly will surely pave the way for inner peace of mind.

Working on healthy habits to sustain or develop our mental health is an investment in ourselves.

References

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*This is the part of my Ph.D. work titled"A study of mental health in relation to some socio-psychological variables"