

About Patience / Savlanut

After the birth of her sixth son, Leah said, "God has given me a choice gift; this time my husband *yizbleni*, for I have born him six son" (Genesis 30:20). So she named him Zevulun. What is the meaning of *yizbleni*? All of the traditional commentaries I could find - Onkelos, RavSaadiaGaon, Rashi, Ibn Ezra and more - all say the root לבו means "to dwell", and therefore the verse means "my husband will dwell with me". Klein also offers this etymology.

But an article by [Prof. Moshe Held](#) gave me new insight into the subject. He writes that the Akkadian word *zabalu* means "to carry up, lift". But scholars such as [Driver](#) rejected a connection between לבו and *zabalu*. Held points out, however, that this was before the discovery of [Ugaritic](#), a language closely related to Hebrew. In Ugaritic, *zbl* has the meaning of "lift up", and the word for "prince" is *zbl* - which is parallel to the Hebrew *nasim*, whose root - אשנ - also means "to lift up". Therefore, Held translates the verse as "my husband will exalt/elevate me" - and the JPS and DaatMikra follow him.

Where did the explanation of לבו as "to dwell" come from? Kaddari writes that this was from an association between *zvul* and the word *bayit* (house) in the phrase לובזתיב - *beitzvul*, as found in Malachim I 8:13. But now, this can be better translated as "stately house".

The identification of לבו with "lift up" makes even more sense when we realize, as Held points out, that the root לבס has the same meaning. In fact, even Klein translates לבס as "to bear a load, carry a burden", and connects it to the Akkadian *zabalu*.

Just as the English word "suffer" can mean both "to tolerate" and "to feel pain", so to does the Hebrew root לבס have both meanings. From it we get *savlanut* - תונלבוס - patience and *sovlanut* - תונלבוס - tolerance, as well as *sevel* - לבס - suffering, pain.

There is a nice Chassidic drasha on Shmot 6:6 - והוצאתי אתכם מתחת סבל תמצרים - Instead of translating it as "I will free you from the labors (*sivlot*) of Egypt" it says God will free them from their "tolerance of Egypt". The Jews had begun to accept and tolerate their slavery in Egypt - they needed to no longer "suffer" this state in order to truly end their suffering.

Balashon – Hebrew Language Detective blog entry for November 29, 2006, (adapted)

Avot De-Rabbi Natan, version 1, chapter 6

אבות דרבי נתן, פרק שישי

מה היה תחילתו של רבי עקיבא?
אמרו, בן ארבעים שנה היה ולא שנה כלום.
פעם אחת היה עומד על פי הבאר.
אמר: מי חקק אבן זו?
אמרו לו: המים שתדיר נופלים עליה בכל יום.
אמרו לו: עקיבא אי אתה קורא "אבנים שחקו מים"?
מיד היה רבי עקיבא דן קל וחומר בעצמו: מה רך פסל את הקשה, דברי תורה שקשה כברזל על אחת כמה וכמה
שיחקו את לבי שהוא בשר ודם.
מיד חזר ללמוד תורה.

How did Rabbi Akiva start out?

They said: he was forty years old and had never studied anything. Once he stood at a well. He said, "Who engraved this stone?"

They told him, "[It was] the water, which drips upon it every day." And they said to him, "Akiva, are you not familiar [with the verse,] 'As the waters wear away the stones'?"

On the spot, Rabbi Akiva made the following deduction: If something soft [like water] could chisel its way through something hard [like stone], then surely the words of Torah, which are as hard as iron, can penetrate my heart, which is flesh and blood!" Immediately, he returned to studying Torah.

Submitted By

Yahel Israel Service Learning



Source URL: <http://www.on1foot.org/text/avot-de-rabbi-natan-version-1-chapter-6>

Savlanut ≠ Patience

Mussar's description of *savlanut* (patience) is a bit different than what we may think of as the typical English translation of patience. For those familiar with "The Serenity Prayer", it may sound a little more familiar.

Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Satanov gives the following guidance about patience: "When something happens to you and you did not have the power to control it, do not aggravate the situation further through wasted anxiety or grief."

Even our English language has significant variances in the use of the word “patience”. The American Heritage Dictionary defines patience as: “The capacity to endure hardship, difficulty, or inconvenience without complaint.” But the Harper-Collins unabridged dictionary—though giving a similar 2nd definition as American Heritage’s, offers the following 1st definition for patience: “tolerant and even-tempered perseverance”

Harper-Collins’ definition aligns with *mussar*’s and suggests that patience may be more about humility and perseverance than about repressing complaint. “Find a way to have some trust and see what may yet come of the situation” *mussar* invites us.

Note that “see what may yet come of the situation” does not mean “sit passively and suffer whatever happens to come your way.” *Savlanut* might be best translated as “presume you don’t yet have all the information, and leave open the possibility of something different happening than you expect...perhaps something even better than you thought possible.”

Happy growing!

Rabbi Yitzhak Miller, www.examiner.com, April 19, 2010

April -- Savlanut / Patience

Do you remember when overnight mail made its debut? It amazed us that we could get a package from coast to coast in 24 hours. The fax machine picked up the pace even more. We could feed a piece of paper into a machine in our office, hear the beeps at the target destination and within a few minutes, our print out could transfer from our hand to a recipient miles away. Email brought a whole new dimension to the speed at which we communicate. A push of a button and our message zoomed from one computer to another.

Today, in the age of the internet, many of us bemoan the idea of traipsing down to the post office to mail an overnight package. Or, we cringe at the thought of waiting for the fax to connect, the paper to roll through the machine, and the printing to occur on the other side. Today, we even drum our fingers restlessly, wondering why everyone has not switched to handheld devices to respond to our “important” emails. We expect things now! Not tomorrow, not in a few minutes, but NOW!

Patience, “they” say, is a virtue. In Hebrew, the word for “patience” is “*savlanut*.” *Savlanut* shares the same Hebrew root as the words for “*sivlot*/ burdens” and “*sabal*/ porter”. Patience, can therefore be understood as the ability to carry a burden. In our case, that burden can



often be time, or the burden of waiting. When do we experience this? Waiting for a response from others, waiting in traffic, waiting in line at the grocery store.

So what to do? A practice that I took on last year was to use that waiting time to count my blessings in life. Rather than letting myself get irritated at what I might be missing, I use the opportunity to reflect on what I have.

Rabbi Ted Riter, Temple AdatElohim, Jewish Values for Everyday Living blog, March 29, 2011

Patience is love



Patience is a learned virtue. When I was very young, I didn't have any patience. I wanted everything, and wanted it NOW! As life went on, I learned patience through resignation.

There were some things you just can't have instantly. Life teaches us through its roadblocks. As early as elementary school, we are taught to get into a line. Lines by their very nature teach patience because you have to wait. Like most people, I hate lines. It's a waste of time to get something you should be able to get in a few minutes. As we get older, lines extend to our vehicles. Waiting in traffic is an incredible waste. On more than one occasion the thought had crossed my mind that if all these people were dead, I'd be home by now.

Life is short and I don't like wasting it by waiting on line. Most people try to redeem the time by bringing along a book or an iPod, so if they have to wait, they are at least doing something they like.

Over the years, I guess I've resigned myself to the reality that you just have to wait for some things, and it doesn't upset me to be late, or to have to wait. It's just a part of life. This doesn't mean I've become patient, only that I surrendered to the unchangeable.

The thing I still need to work on is patience with people. I know people are complicated, and I know they come with their individual issues, and I need to be patient with people's physical limitations, mostly because it's who they are and it's not their fault.

Some people are easier to be patient with than others. When someone is being a jerk, I don't want to be patient with them. I just want to get them on their way so they are out of my life. I've endured obnoxious people all my life, and I just don't want to spend my life catering to their bad behavior. More often than not, the feeling is mutual, so it's not a problem.

A bigger problem is loved ones. It was hard for me to become patient with my mom. She's one of the most kind people I know, but as she has gotten older, I became impatient with her failing

memory. I would have to repeat the same things over and over. It hurt me because I remembered when her memory was good, and I didn't want to accept her new situation. At one point, my mom told me she knows her memory is failing, and its scaring her. It broke my heart to think that my mom was scared of anything. I started to think about all the times when I was a child and asked my mom to read me a story over and over. She didn't get upset and say that we already read it. She patiently read them over and over. It was now my time to become patient with her. I listen to her stories over and over, and answer her questions over and over, because I love her. She's the same person she always was, but needs extra understanding in this area. My grandmother had the same problem, but we sat and listened to her, because we loved her. After she passed away, I missed listening to her telling her stories. Someday, I'll miss my mom's stories, so I want to be around to listen to her tell them, instead of regretting that I didn't when she wanted me to listen.

Patience is an expression of love, which is why the Scriptures teach us to practice it. It's not as important to do as much as I can with the least amount of waiting, as it is to have treated people well along the way.

Rabbi Michael Schiffman, www.rivertonmussar.org

Patience in healing

Last week I had the privilege of experiencing the removal of all four wisdom teeth and one extra tooth that had grown behind one of my top front teeth. The entire experience has been a test of patience.

. . . Upon arriving home, the first day was filled with moments in which I attempted to act as if I were one step ahead of the recovery process at all times. . . I was impatient. It is completely understandable to be impatient when you're recovering from a surgical procedure. Our bodies are not used to having things taken out of them and/or having new things put into them. Nevertheless, acting out of impatience when your body is trying to recover can actually increase the time necessary for recovery. In other words, it is counterproductive.

Once I began to behave patiently with my body, my recovery process began to accelerate dramatically. It's still a little uncomfortable. I'm looking forward to apples, crunchy raw vegetables, and chips + salsa again. . . . It is my prayer that learning to be patient with my body was a mini-training to improve my ability to be patient with others. There is very little that can be accomplished trying to force any living thing to move before it's ready. Often, you'll spend longer in the argument about the forcing than you would have if you were just a little more patient. May this be a season in which we can all get a little better at being patient about those things over which we have no control.

Rabbi Benjamin Ehrenfeld,

Discussion #3: Patience – *Savlanut*

“Woe to the pampered person who has never been trained to be patient. Either today or in the future he is destined to sip from the cup of affliction.” – Rabbi Menachem Mendel Leffin, *Cheshbon Ha-Nefesh*

As *RJ* magazine author Gary Shaffer describes, rush-hour commuting can easily ignite impatience. You need to be somewhere and the person in front of you is moving too slowly, or the traffic is jammed. Or it’s just your luck to arrive at the one ticket counter staffed by a trainee.

Actually, the cause of our impatience is never the situation itself, though that is how it appears to us. A situation that infuriates us might not cause the slightest bit of concern to another person who doesn’t approach it brandishing the same fuse as we do. We experience impatience only when we strain against a situation we cannot control.

The Hebrew term for patience, *savlanut*, is made from the three-letter root *samech-lamed-nun* [S-L-N] shared by the following words:

- *sevel*(suffering)
- *lisbol*(to suffer)
- *sevolet*(tolerance)
- *sovel*(burden or load)
- *sabol*(a porter or carrier)

Seeking out the common element in all these words teaches us a fundamental lesson about patience, as Jewish tradition would have us understand it. Being patient does not mean that you are in a completely calm and unruffled state of mind, but rather that you are able to bear the burden of your hostile and explosive feelings without reacting. Think of your emotional load as a heavy suitcase, and you as the porter who can take it on his shoulder to bear the burden.

Still, it is not enough to learn the meaning of the word *savlanut*. If learning remains purely intellectual, the Mussar teachers insist, it is unlikely to have any impact on your behavior. That is why Rabbi ElyaLopian defined Mussar as “Making the heart understand what the mind knows.”

Questions to discuss:

- What can you do to internalize your understanding that patience means bearing a burden of emotions in the midst of the situation?
- What image, phrase, or other prompt might you use to remind yourself that the burden of your feelings of impatience are to be picked up and carried on your shoulder?

Alan Morinis, “Mussar Discussion and Study Guide,” *Reform Judaism*, Fall 2008

AJWS DvarTzedek: Parshat Lech Lecha

Rachel Travis

This Dvar Torah was originally published as a part of the AJWS DvarTzedek series.

The young man stood among the debris. Shattered torsos, crumbled appendages, clay and stone that moments before had posed as gods littered the ground. He quickly planted a stick into the still hand of a large idol—the only one left standing—as his father’s footsteps echoed on the threshold. Avraham’s father, Terach, returning to his shop, surveyed his decimated wares and cried out, “Who did this to them?” His son answered, “A woman brought a grain offering for the idols, and they argued about who would eat first. Then the largest got up, took the stick and shattered them all!” According to the midrash, Terach bellowed, “What nonsense are you telling me—are they then conscious?” Avraham rhetorically replied, “Do your ears not hear what your lips are saying?”

This midrash is one of the best-known rabbinic anecdotes of the life of Avraham, the forebear of the Jewish people. It introduces us to a young revolutionary, recently awakened to monotheism, passionate and determined to rip the blinders off of a complacent, hypocritical society. . . . So why does God remain curiously silent throughout Avraham’s youth?

In fact, Avraham is seventy-five when, in this week’s *parshah*, God addresses him for the first time. . . . God speaks to Avraham now because he has proven himself a capable emissary, prepared to pursue sustainable change. This Avraham is ready to heed God’s directive to change society from the ground up, in essence creating history’s first grassroots social movement.

Nonetheless, Avraham soon discovers what many of us have learned through our own work: that the path to substantive, enduring change can be daunting. . . . As Avraham and Sarah age beyond the normal period of childbearing, he despairs of his ultimate success. His faith is unshaken but . . . he fears that the movement will die with him.
http://ajws.org/what_we_do/education/publications/dvar_tzedek/5771/lech_lecha.html - f9 The advancement of his mission hinges not only upon the promise of an heir, but also on the development of an entire nation forever charged with improving the world.

Many of us, like Avraham, have experienced a revelatory, idol-smashing moment. Inspired by a personal experience, a stirring article or a role model, we are galvanized to work towards radically transforming the world, immediately. And yet, as we learn from Avraham, true change requires patience, dedication and perseverance. Ultimately, Avraham could not build a religion out of the rubble of his father’s broken beliefs. Enacting substantive reform required that he leave the comforts of home and endeavor to construct a community of like-minded souls. . . .



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Feeling Short on Time? Try Something Awe-Inspiring

A study suggests that the experiences that make us notice the vastness of the universe also make us feel there's more time in the day.

by Stacey Kennelly
posted Oct 25, 2012



A view of Moro Rock in Sequoia National Park. Photo by Linda Tanner.

Always plugged in and constantly juggling tasks at work and at home, many of us feel there aren't enough hours in the day.

But wouldn't it be awesome to feel like you had more time? In fact, that feeling might only be as far as a trip to the mountains, the sea, or a place with a clear sky where you can see the stars.

A new study suggests that the experience of awe—which psychologists define as the feeling we get when we come across something so strikingly vast in number, scope, or complexity that it alters the way we understand the world—may help relieve feelings of impatience. What's more, it might make us more generous with how we spend our time, and improve our overall well-being.

All the time in the world

In one part of the study, researchers induced feelings of awe in participants by showing them video clips of people encountering tremendous things like waterfalls and whales; while members of a control group saw video clips of people surrounded by confetti in a joyful parade.

“Awe-eliciting experiences might offer one effective solution to the feelings of time starvation that plague so many people in modern life.”

One group saw images that inspired awe while the other saw images that inspired happiness. The results, published in the journal *Psychological Science*, show that members of the first group were more likely to report feeling like they had more time.

“Awe-eliciting experiences might offer one effective solution to the feelings of time starvation that plague so many people in modern life,” write the researchers, who are based at the Stanford University Graduate School of Business and the University of Minnesota’s Carlson School of Management.

Stargazers in soup kitchens

This led the researchers to predict that people who experience awe would be less likely to feel impatient—since people feel impatient when they think they’re short on time—and would be more willing to devote time to activities like volunteering.

To test this hypothesis, they instructed participants to write stories about events in their lives. One group was prompted to write about an experience that was vast and altered their perceptions of the world, while the other group was told to write about a time when they felt contentment or joy. Then, all participants completed a survey assessing their impatience and willingness to lend time to others.

As the researchers predicted, those who wrote about awe were less likely to feel impatient and more willing to volunteer than study participants who wrote about happiness.

However, experiences of awe did not make people more likely to donate money, suggesting that they don’t make people more generous in general. Instead, it was the sense that they had more time to spend that seems to have made participants more willing to lend a hand.

“The idea that an emotion can alleviate this problem is an incredible idea to me.”

Experience over objects

In another experiment, the researchers induced awe in some people—by having them read a story about ascending the Eiffel Tower and getting a high-up view of Paris—but not others. Afterwards, they found that members of the group that read the story reported feeling more satisfied with their lives than the other one. Also, when given a choice between material goods and positive experiences—such as a watch vs. tickets to a Broadway show—the group that read the story was more likely to choose the positive experiences.

Prior research has found that positive experiences are more likely than material objects to bring us happiness. After analyzing their data, the researchers conclude that the higher life satisfaction and preference for experiences over objects they found among the first group could be explained by the fact that they felt they had more time on their hands.

Melanie Rudd, the lead author of the study and a PhD candidate in marketing at Stanford University, says the results show how something as subtle as our perception of time can have a big influence on our lives.

“Our willingness to volunteer to help other people and even our well-being,” are all affected, she says. “That an emotion can alleviate this problem is an incredible idea to me.”

She suggests that people evoke more feelings of awe in their lives by exposing themselves to nature, art, and music.

Stacey Kennelly wrote this article for *Greater Good*, the UC Berkeley-based magazine that covers research into the roots of compassion, happiness, and altruism. This article is republished through a

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Patience
Rabbi Zelig Pliskin
Published by Shaar Press

The essence of patience is to live in the present. We are impatient because we want to be in the future faster than reality will take us there. Since we will generally be in the exact same place whether we will experience patience or impatience it makes sense to choose to be patient.

Every time you see someone who is impatient, you have a heaven-sent opportunity to learn patience. Impatience can look ridiculous. Why is this person so impatient just because something is taking a few seconds longer than he would have wished? When you witness the ugliness of impatience, increase your resolve to master the beauty of patience.

What is the very first piece of wisdom cited in *Ethics of the Fathers*? It is to be patient when judging. This speaks volumes for the importance of patience.

A judge who is called upon to render a decision needs to obtain a thorough picture of a situation. The reality of a situation can be very different from what it appeared to be at first. The more information that is gathered, the more likely that an accurate judgment will be reached. This process takes patience.

What is true for judges is true for all of us.

We are all judges when it comes to judging other people in our minds. Before judging someone negatively, ask yourself, "Have I gathered enough data to be certain that my judgment is accurate?" The answer will usually be, "No." Be Patient. Don't pass judgment until you have gathered all the relevant information.

My teacher, the late Rabbi Chaim Shmulevitz, Dean of Mirrer Yeshivah, used to say that we are all judges when it comes to judging our words and actions. Every time we make a decision we will be having an effect on our future actions and on our present character. This will eventually effect the lives of others. Should I take this action? Should I go there? Should I say what I am about to say? Be patient when making your decisions. Think first. Weigh the data carefully. Your patience in making these judgments is a wise move.

Recognizing your impatience

Recognizing your impatience is an important step in mastering the attribute of patience. It is easy to identify the impatience of others. But when we ourselves become impatient, it can happen so automatically and spontaneously that we are not aware of it.

How do you know when you are impatient? Be aware of your patterns. When impatience is strong and intense, we find it easier to detect. Learn your early warning signals. Notice how you speak and what you tend to say when you become impatient. Notice the muscle tension you experience when you become impatient.

When your body's muscles tighten with impatience, that is a message that you need to increase your level of acceptance. Be grateful for the tension serving as a coach. Express your appreciation to the Creator for giving you this wonderful gift.

If you find yourself being impatient, step back and gain composure. When we get caught up in our experience of being impatient, we can forget to step back. We often are not consciously aware that we have become impatient. But as soon as you do become aware, you have the ability to immediately change your state by mentally or physically stepping back.

Imagine another person interrupting your pattern of impatience by screaming at you, “STOP!! HOLD IT!! STEP BACK RIGHT NOW!!!” Imagine that their voice resonated loudly and they shouted this with a powerful, booming blast of their vocal cords. This would shake you out of your state of impatience. You can make this image as large as you want since it is your imagination that is the creative artist.

Your coach is in your brain and you can ask him to pop up as soon as he observes you becoming impatient. Practice visualizing this over and over again. Associate this imagery with the feelings you have when you begin to experience impatience. Keep practicing until you find it impossible to be impatient without this imagery coming to your rescue.

Acting “As If”

True patience emanates from within. When you are really patient, you experience it authentically. But what if you try your best and nevertheless are not yet able to really be patient? Does that mean you should act impatiently toward others until the great moment when you actually become patient?

There is a powerful principle that applies to many other traits and qualities as well as patience. Even before you actually become patient, you have a right to act as if you were patient. By acting as if you were patient, you are making an important step in the right direction. It is very likely that when you go through the motions of patience, it will become the real you. Even if this takes a long time, at least others will not suffer from your impatience.

Breathing Serenely

Master the art of breathing serenely. Since you are continuously breathing the entire day, this is the most powerful and effective tool for creating the peaceful feelings that are conducive for patience.

In previous books we cited the Midrash on the last verse of *Psalms*. There we are told to praise the Almighty for each and every breath that we take. Those who practice this regularly already know the spiritual, emotional, and physical benefits. Breathing slowly and deeply with thoughts of gratitude releases stress and tension. Then one is able to create and access peaceful and joyous states.

As soon as you begin to feel impatient, let the feelings you experience be the start of your focusing on the gift of oxygen. As you exhale, feel all stress and tension leaving. As you inhale, feel the fresh oxygen traveling from head to toe relaxing every muscle and every cell in your entire body.

As you breathe, repeat the word, “Patience.” Say it with gently and soothing patience. As your brain is conditioned to associate slow breathing with patience, the very act of breathing slowly will continuously enable you to be more patient.

Focus on Your Goal

Whatever you focus on gets reinforced. Therefore, when you are working on patience, keep your main focus on increasing patience. Those who keep focusing on instances of impatience, strengthen the quality that they do not want.

Model and Morph

Learn from the patience of others. Every person you see who is patient in a situation that challenges you serves as a role model for how you too can be patient.

As you observe the body language, manner of speaking, and word content of patient people, you have a picture of what you need to do to become more patient yourself.

You Never Know What You Might Gain

When you have to wait for someone or something, you never know what and how you might gain. Keeping this in mind can save you from the frustration and anxiety of impatience.

If you were to miss a bus, plane, or train because a clerk did his job too slowly, you may never know if you were saved from a serious accident.

If through someone's neglect you wait at home longer than you expected, it is possible that you will receive a call which makes a valuable positive difference in your life.

If you had to stay in a certain store, office, or waiting area longer than you thought was necessary, perhaps you will gain an opportunity to do an act of kindness for someone. You may be able to provide needed information, advice, or help. This is an eternal gain that was made possible by your being the right person at the right place.

There is always some gain in waiting. Sometimes you will realize this within a short time. In other instances, it might take a longer time until you can see the gain. By internalizing Rabbi Akiva's Talmudic principle, "Everything the Almighty does is for the good," you will realize that you always gain even though you are not yet aware exactly how that gain will manifest itself.

Perceptions of Patience

Some people equate patience with passivity and weakness. Their mental image of someone who is consistently patient is a person who lacks inner strength. Their picture is incorrect. True patience that is a virtue goes together with mental toughness and an indomitable will. It is an inner strength that combines with kindness, compassion, and sensitivity. The ideal mixture will not happen simply by chance. It takes a conscious effort to create the optimal personality.

Someone who is not highly motivated, lacks assertiveness, fears the disapproval of others, and tends to be passive will act and react patiently. But this is not the ideal to strive for. Rather, patience is praiseworthy when someone is highly motivated to accomplish, can easily speak up and assert himself, has transcended all fear of disapproval, and tends to be proactive and still consistently speaks and acts patiently.

The stronger someone's basic personality, the more elevated that person is with highly developed patience. In my book *Courage*, I wrote about developing assertiveness. The more assertive you are able to be, the more important it is for you to develop patience. Yes, you have the ability to say whatever you feel like saying to another person. Therefore it is imperative to be patient with those who might be slow or inefficient. When you try to rush them or point out ways they can improve, do so with compassion and sensitivity.

Coping with Uncertainty

"There is no greater joy than resolving doubts." In this often quoted aphorism we find that uncertainty is highly distressful. It causes so much anxiety that one of the greatest joys of life is to be free from its pain. Since uncertainty is an integral part of everyone's life, the ability to cope well with it is crucial for living a life of joy and inner peace.

Patience is serenity. When one masters patience, one has a higher level of tolerance for uncertainty. Achieving certainty in many areas takes time. Will I be accepted to the school I wish to attend? Will my business or project succeed? What will be the outcome of the election? What will be the results of the medical tests? How will things turn out in a multitude of areas?

Every uncertain situation is yet another opportunity to help you increase your patience. Transforming uncertainty into patience means that when you master patience, uncertainty will no longer be considered a problem. Rather, it is an integral part of your lifetime course on gaining patience. Dealing with uncertainty can be highly challenging. And that is precisely why it is so important to learn to cope with it.

His Time is Also Important

Do all you can to avoid testing the patience of other people. Be sensitive to their time needs and concerns. When they are in a rush, do not needlessly delay them.

When you want to speak to someone and get a feeling that this person might not have enough time right now, ask, "Is now a good time for you?" Even if they say, "Yes," keep to the point and be careful not to take up more time than necessary.

When speaking to someone who is generally impatient, be as concise as possible. Mentally prepare in advance what you will say. In certain situations, it would be worthwhile to write what you plan to say on paper. You might want to begin by saying, "I'll be as concise as I can. Please be patient with me."

When you see that someone is busy and does not have much time, but the matter you wish to discuss is urgent or pressing on you, begin by saying, "I see that you are busy, and I respect that. What I need to talk to you about is important for me. I would greatly appreciate your kindness." By acknowledging that this person is busy, you make it easier for him to be patient.

"Thank You for Your Patience"

Reinforce the patience of others. Whenever someone waits patiently for you or answers your questions patiently, thank him. When you see that someone is patient when interacting with another person, express your appreciation for that patience. You might say something like, "I noticed how patient you were. I respect that."

When you give people feedback that their patience was observed and appreciated, they are more likely to be patient in the future. Your focusing on their having this quality reinforces it in their minds. Your positive feedback is creating more patience on our planet.

Condition Your Brain Each Night

Before you fall asleep at night, your brain is in a state that is conducive for conditioning it. Speak to your brain and give it messages and suggestions to help you increase your patience the next day and all the following days of your life. Say to yourself:

Right now before I fall asleep, I will increase my visions of having more and more patience. I will dream dreams that will increase my patience and every other positive inner resource that will enhance my life spiritually and emotionally.

I will allow myself to relax deeper and deeper, and to become more and more relaxed with each breath that I take. Each and every breath is helping me release all stress and tension. As I continue to breathe I feel a soothing and calming sense of light that scans every cell and muscle from head to toe and gives me a greater feeling of calm and relaxation. I feel deeper and deeper relaxation with each and every breath.

I will picture myself being patient and calm. And as I continue to breathe, my patience is becoming more and more of an integrated and integral part of my entire being, more and more patient with each breath.

I will visualize myself being patient in every situation. Patience is within me and I am gaining a greater mastery over being able to access it. I will gain a greater ability to remain patient regardless of the challenges that arise. The more I visualize myself being patient, the easier it will be for me to actually be patient.

And now my mind will create even more mental pictures of my being patient and thinking clearly. And with my added patience, I will remember more and more times that I have already been patient in the past.

And with all the patience that I already have, I will now be able to make new mental pictures of myself accessing patience and remaining patient in situations where I might not have been patient before. And this will be a powerful and effective inner resource for the rest of my life.

And as I fall asleep, the word patience will reverberate in my mind. Feelings of inner peace, relaxation, and even serenity will enable me to sleep deeply and I will wake up with renewed energy and patience.



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An Excerpt from *Patience: The Art of Peaceful Living* by Allan Lokos

Allan Lokos presents reasons and practices designed to make patience a way of life. Here is an excerpt on patience which falls under the spiritual practice of hope.

"We can train the mind in a way that will make the word *patience* readily available. Here is a deceptively simple yet highly effective program that can be done over a two- to four-week period. Working this exercise will help prevent the damage that can be done by a single burst of anger, and it will lay the ground for the development of true patience. Each day during the training period, think *patience* just as you are about to do a specific activity that you tend to do fairly often on most days. This is an exercise designed to repeatedly bring the word *patience* to mind. You are not likely to need patience while doing any of these daily activities. You will be training the mind in a way similar to how we train the muscles of the body. In most cases it will be best to use only one of these exercises per day:

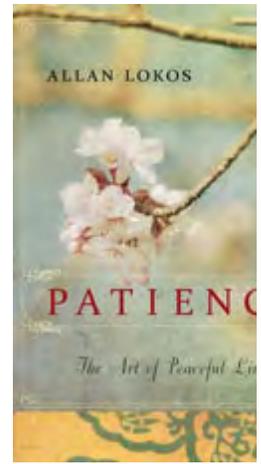
- "If you send a lot of e-mails, every time you are about to press the Send button, think, *patience*.
- "If you make phone calls regularly throughout the day, just before you dial, think, *patience*.
- "While reading the newspaper, as you are about to turn each page, think, *patience*.
- "At meals, as you are bringing the fork to your mouth, think, *patience*;
- or each time you bring a glass to your lips, think, *patience*.
- "Every time you are about to touch a handle to open a door, think, *patience*.
- "Every time you are going to stand up, think, *patience*.

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- "Every time you are about to sit down, think, *patience*.
- "Every time you change the channel on the television, think, *patience*.

"These are just examples. Make up other versions of this practice in accordance with your regular activities. For instance, I often play a word game on my iPad and when I am doing the training, each time I change the words of the game, I think, *patience*. The practice itself is quite easy to do. The most challenging part is remembering to do the exercise throughout the day. If it helps, try training every other day or on alternate weeks: a week of training and a week off. The important thing is to stick with the schedule you set up; consistency reaps rewards. Just like training the body, training the mind works best when you train regularly. There may be times when the exercise itself feels annoying. To be absolutely honest, the practice is no more exhilarating than thirty minutes on a treadmill, but the results can be life-altering.



"Sometimes it is wise to state the obvious. If, in a given circumstance, you become adamant that the behavior of another is so offensive or the conditions to which you are being subjected are so unacceptable that you decide to no longer be patient, then you are, in that moment, willing to undermine your progress, and understand that you must live with the consequences. My own experience is that as patience develops, those circumstances diminish. I believe your experience will be similar, especially as you see that you are the one who is hurt most by your loss of patience. No matter what the external circumstances, your impatience can only exist within you. You develop patience by working on yourself, not by attempting to change others."



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Marge Piercy, "To Be of Use," Circles on the Water, (New York: Knopf, 1982.)

The people I love the best
jump into work head first
without dallying in the shallows
and swim off with sure strokes almost out of sight.
They seem to become natives of that element,
the black sleek heads of seals
bouncing like half submerged balls.

I love people who harness themselves, an ox to a heavy cart,
who pull like water buffalo, with massive patience,
who strain in the mud and the muck to move things forward,
who do what has to be done, again and again.

I want to be with people who submerge
in the task, who go into the fields to harvest
and work in a row and pass the bags along,
who stand in the line and haul in their places,
who are not parlor generals and field deserters
but move in a common rhythm
when the food must come in or the fire be put out.

The work of the world is common as mud.
Botched, it smears the hands, crumbles to dust.
But the thing worth doing well done
has a shape that satisfies, clean and evident.
Greek amphoras for wine or oil,
Hopi vases that held corn, are put in museums
but you know they were made to be used.
The pitcher cries for water to carry
and a person for work that is real.