

## TOOLS FOR THE PRACTICE OF MODERATION / BRAHMACHARYA

### 1. Celebrate awareness

It can be discouraging and sometimes downright depressing to shine the light of awareness on behavior or thought patterns. Even so, we can celebrate awareness as a victory as the alternatives like denial, minimizing or rationalizing will tend to continue suffering and dissatisfaction. Therefore the yogic perspective is that, “sometimes awareness is enough.” Awareness is the first step in making conscious choices. Sometimes it’s hard to change behavior or thought patterns. Sometimes, they drop away easily as they become intolerable or just don’t make sense anymore.

- a. Awareness. Acceptance. Action. Temper awareness with compassionate self-acceptance before making a choice to respond to the awareness.
- b. If I make changes based on negative self-thinking, self put-downs, it tends to build resentment, dis-ease, reactivity and end in regression.
- c. If I make changes based on self-respect, self-love or self-dignity it’s like planting a young tree in fertile soil, with plenty of water and sunlight.

### 2. Use the Whole Message format to help identify what you might need.

- a. When I (insert thought, feeling or behavior)
- b. I imagine that (the thoughts that are emerging)
- c. I feel (take a pulse of what’s happening on the emotional level)
- d. I need  
this sometimes requires some vulnerability. Maybe I need a little love. Maybe I need someone to listen to me. Maybe I need someone to do something for me, help me, give me advice, make a suggestion, order me a pizza

e. I request

- Once I have identified a need that I have there is one more step. Getting the need met.
- Making a request requires vulnerability too. Making a request is distinct from making a demand. Making a request is distinct from taking what I need without asking.
- Making a request means allowing the other a choice.
- Making a request means allowing for responses like, “I’m sorry. I can’t do that.” “Not right now.” “Not now. Not ever.”
- Sometimes the request is directed toward myself. “Please get up off the couch and order a pizza.” As above, I have a choice in how I respond to myself. The response might be, “I’d rather just heat up a little soup. That would satisfy the hunger, be a healthy and economical choice.”
- Somewhere, someone said, “If you want self-esteem, make esteemable choices.”

3. An example

- a. When I get a craving for dessert
- b. I imagine that I would feel joy if I could have some cake and ice cream.
- c. I feel conflicted because I made a commitment to restrain from such and I’d have to drive to the store to get it.
- d. I need to satisfy the craving somehow.
- e. I request that I consider the options of what I have on hand. Water. Tea. Fruit. Nuts. Toast. Toast and jam. Hmmmm. Maybe one of those would work. They would satisfy the need quicker without the side-effects that will be problematic later.

4. Compassionate self-observation without self-judgement.
  - a. Shame, Comparison, Criticism is not helpful. They create suffering.
  - b. "I'm doing the best I can with the information and energy I have."
  - c. "I'm entitled to be in development with anything, anytime, anywhere, forever."
  
5. Is there a relevant self-inquiry to enter into.
  - a. What would this moment be like if I took five slow breaths?
  - b. What would this moment be like if I checked to see what I'm feeling first?
  
6. Do I have a self-care plan for today
  - a. Are there simple things that I can plan to do so that I feel taken care of, so that I feel considered while I launch into a long busy day.
  - b. Setting a 15 - 20 minute repeating timer to take a sip of water can be a very interesting practice that can impact how I feel, my focus and my energy level.
  - c. Do I need to commit to the time frame for some exercise, whether that's taking a walk, yoga, cycling, swimming, taking an online movement class.
  
7. Do I have the support I need  
Do I need to call a friend? Call a professional? Call for tech support?  
Look something up on Google? Call the police? Call customer service?  
Get a loan? Call an attorney? Make an appointment? Buy a tool? Call my congressperson's office? Say a prayer? Light a candle? Write a letter? Send up a flare? Buy some insurance? Get some battery cables? Call a hotline?