

MORALITY

You do not become good by trying to be good, but by finding the goodness that is already within you, and allowing that to emerge. But it can only emerge if something fundamental changes in your state of consciousness. –Eckhardt Tolle

Be a good boy/girl. Don't be afraid. Be strong. Get along with others. Put on a big smile. Be positive. Most of us grew up with directions such as these repeated, consciously or subconsciously, throughout our early lives. While we may look at these as valuable qualities, there is something deeper at play here that needs recognition.

What happens then when you're unhappy, afraid, doubtful? Are these signs something is wrong with you? Should you try to be different? Does that even work?

The underlying message we get is that being "good" or "happy" is something we must manufacture, rather than something we already are. It teaches us to mistrust ourselves, and to put on a mask of pretense to show to the world. Our authenticity is sacrificed in service of trying to be how we "should" be.

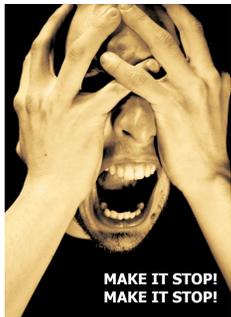
I remember attending my grandfather's funeral as a child. My grandmother was weeping and wailing in her grief, and everyone else seemed to feel it was their job to console her with supportive words, like "He's in a better place now" or "It's all for the best". They acted like she needed to be lifted out of her experience, when to my young eyes she was doing exactly what one does when there is a great loss – grieve fully.



Says Barbara Ehrenreich, in *Bright Sided*.

It requires deliberate self-deception, including a constant effort to repress or block out unpleasant possibilities and “negative” thoughts. The truly self-confident, or those who have in some way made their peace with the world and their destiny within it, do not need to expend effort censoring or otherwise controlling their thoughts.

Why are we so uncomfortable with what are labeled “negative” emotions, like anger, fear, hurt? We are not taught that being willing to encounter life fully and authentically is a sign of our strength; rather, that it is indicative of a defect in us. Now we are divided, there is the “good” side of us which tries to suppress the “bad” or unacceptable part. Our original goodness and wholeness get lost in this attempt to be someone other than who we are. And what happens to those pieces of Self that are consigned to be locked away? They return to torment us in forms like depression, anxiety, and doubts of self worth.



The fear is that if we do not control these states in us, there would be nothing to prevent us from acting violently or greedily. This adopts a dim view of the nature of who we are. Our natural goodness is then replaced with Morality – the attempt to impose good upon us. And in spite of all the attempts to stamp them out, do we not continue to be violent, greedy, and corrupt? We could make the case that this is so **because** of this repression, not in spite of it.

The fundamental change that Tolle refers to is the shift of identity from the “who” we are trying to be to the truth of who we already are. What to do? Trust yourself. Trust existence. Make friends with whatever is happening. This doesn't mean you stay paralyzed in fear – if you actually will meet this fear fully and lean into it, you won't have to let go of it – you will have learned what it has to teach you and it will let go of you.

As I often tell clients in *Awakening*, the thoughts and emotions are not the problem, the attempt to get away from them is. As they say, it's not the crime that gets you, but the cover-up.

I would rather risk your horrified rejection by revealing my naked core than stay safely bundled in the arms of your uninformed acceptance.
- Kamala Devi