

When Dorothy saw the writing in the sky, Surrender Dorothy, it scared her and her posse in a big way.

It didn't deter them, but it scared them.

Dorothy had grit, not quit and she stayed the course. We know the outcome and the lesson of this story...and we've all been guilty of giving up too soon, of quitting on ourselves and staying stuck.

But today I want to talk about when surrender is appropriate. When we need to get out of the way and into the flow so we stop being the impediment to progress in our lives.

Yes, there is such a thing!

What we focus on, we create more of—we know that.

So this this concept of "surrender" needs to be looked at, but with a different lens.

In psychological and emotional terms, surrender often refers to the process of letting go of trying to control outcomes or situations that are beyond our control.

Again, this doesn't mean giving up responsibility or effort but **rather accepting things** as they are, without resistance or struggle. It can be counterintuitive, especially in a culture that often values control, persistence, and the idea of battling through adversity no matter what.

However, the act of surrendering can be incredibly powerful and beneficial, and there's science to back up why and how it works.

Why Surrender Works:

1. Reduces Stress and Anxiety: Trying to control uncontrollable aspects of our lives can lead to increased stress and anxiety. Surrendering helps in reducing these feelings by shifting focus from what we cannot change to what we can influence. This shift can decrease cortisol levels and enhance overall well-being (Sapolsky, 2004).

2. Improves Psychological Flexibility: The act of surrender aligns with the concept of psychological flexibility, which involves **accepting our thoughts and feelings and committing to actions that align with our values, even in the face of difficult or unwanted experiences.** Research in Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) shows that this adaptability is linked to better mental health outcomes, greater life satisfaction, and enhanced well-being (Hayes et al., 2006).

3. Encourages Mindfulness and Present Moment Living: Surrendering encourages a state of mindfulness, where one is fully present and accepting of the current moment without judgment. This mindfulness can lead to reduced symptoms of depression and anxiety, improved cognitive functioning, and greater emotional resilience (Kabat-Zinn, 1994).

How to Surrender:

- 1. Acknowledge What You Can't Control:** Identify the aspects of the situation that are beyond your control and acknowledge your feelings about them.
- 2. Focus on the Present:** Engage in mindfulness practices. Concentrate on your breath or immerse yourself in your current activity fully.
- 3. Cultivate Acceptance:** Practice accepting your current experience without trying to change it. This doesn't mean you approve of it, but rather that you recognize it for what it is.
- 4. Engage in Value-driven Action:** Identify what's truly important to you and take actions that align with your values, regardless of the uncontrollable circumstances.

When to Surrender:

- **When Continual Effort Causes Suffering:** If your efforts to change or control a situation only lead to increased stress, anxiety, or pain, it might be time to consider letting go.
- **When Facing Unchangeable Circumstances:** Sometimes, situations or outcomes are simply beyond our control, such as the behavior of others, certain health conditions, or natural events. Surrendering in these cases can lead to greater peace and acceptance.

- **To Enhance Well-being:** When the pursuit of control is taking a toll on your mental, emotional, or physical health, surrendering can help restore balance and promote well-being.

Surrendering is a nuanced concept that involves recognizing when holding on or trying to control a situation is counterproductive.

It's about finding strength in vulnerability, peace in acceptance, and clarity in understanding what we can change and what we must let be.

By surrendering, we often gain more than we give up: peace, clarity, and the freedom to move forward in a way that aligns with our deepest values and truest sense of self.