

Patience – The Result of Practicing Skill #14

Patient people are able to wait calmly in the face of frustration or adversity. In relationships, patient people are able to face annoying individuals with equanimity. Patient people can wait out life's hardships without frustration or despair. Patience is both an emotion and a skill. In DWP language it can fit under skill #14 Distinguishing Facts from Feelings. Religions and philosophers have long praised the virtue of patience; now researchers are starting to do so as well.

A 2007 study by Fuller Theological Seminary professor Sarah A. Schnitker and UC Davis psychology professor Robert Emmons, found that patient people tend to experience less depression and negative emotions, perhaps because they can cope better with upsetting or stressful situations. They also rate themselves as more mindful and feel more gratitude, more connection to mankind and to the universe and a greater sense of abundance. In a study of nearly 400 undergraduates, Schnitker found that those who are more patient toward others also tend to be more hopeful and more satisfied with their lives.

In 2012 Schnitker invited 71 undergraduates to participate in two weeks of patience training, where they learned to identify feelings and their triggers, regulate their emotions, empathize with others, and meditate. In two weeks, participants reported feeling more patient toward the trying people in their lives, feeling less depressed, and experiencing higher levels of positive emotions.

Kira Newman in her blog *Four Reasons to Cultivate Patience* suggests three strategies to practice patience. Mind and Body Four Reasons to Cultivate Patience by Kira M. Newman/ April 4, 2016 blog

1. **Reframe the situation.** Feeling impatient is not just an automatic emotional response; it involves conscious thoughts and beliefs, too. If a colleague is late to a meeting, you can fume about their lack of respect, or see those extra 15 minutes as an opportunity to get some reading done. Patience is linked to self-control, and consciously trying to regulate our emotions can help us train our self-control muscles.
2. **Practice mindfulness.** In one study, kids who did a six-month mindfulness program in school became less impulsive and more willing to wait for a reward.
3. **Practice gratitude.** In another study, adults who were feeling grateful were also better at patiently delaying gratification. When given the choice between getting an immediate cash reward or waiting a year for a larger windfall, less grateful people caved in once the immediate payment offer climbed to \$18. Grateful people, however, could hold out until the amount reached \$30. If we're thankful for what we have today, we're not desperate for more stuff or better circumstances immediately.

For more information read: Patience as a virtue: Religious and psychological perspectives
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Authors: Sarah A. Schnitker and Robert A. Emmons

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