

Entering a vision of equality

Spiritual Wisdom

Everybody is unique. Compare not yourself with anybody else lest you spoil God's curriculum.

— Baal Shem Tov

One of the most important spiritual qualities to attain is the state of equality consciousness. With *equality consciousness*, you see the universal creative force behind, within, and expressing as each form, rather than only seeing the outer details of the form.

With equality consciousness, you see the spiritual power that exists equally in everything even as you relate appropriately to all the necessary perceptions, judgments, actions, and decisions of life.

- Equality consciousness helps you let go of binding desires and enter a place of inner freedom.
- Equality consciousness brings peacefulness of mind.
- Equality consciousness allows you to make better long-term decisions based on a bigger picture view of universal spirit.
- Equality consciousness inspires you to be excellent even when nobody is watching.

Having equality consciousness is like being a jeweler who is purchasing gold. To the jeweler, gold is gold, regardless of its outer form. He weighs whatever pieces people bring to sell and pays them according to the weight of gold. The gold may be in the form of beautiful jewelry, a religious statue, or a lumpy brick, but none of those external details matters to the jeweler. His only interest is in the carats and weight of gold.

Seeing with equal vision is like being a jeweler of spirit. What matters most are not the details of outer forms, but the divine nature that exists within those forms. Equality consciousness helps you see people's worth beyond the usual determining factors, such as how much money or worldly stature they've achieved. Instead, your vision shifts from worldly matters to the great spiritual value that exists within each human heart.

With equality consciousness, you know that the servant is as valuable as the king, and the secretary is as valuable as the CEO. In fact, one thing I learned while working for various television and film studios in Hollywood is the immense power of a benevolent secretary to help get you that desired meeting, or the power of a friendly cleaning crew member to let you into the studio when you've lost your key.

With equality consciousness, you break free from the common materialistic focus and find as much appreciation for inner peace, a child's laugh, or a beautiful sunset as some would experience from getting a promotion, getting married, or winning an award.

Just think: If you could feel as much joy from taking a breath of fresh air in the morning as you would experience from achieving a worldly goal that has taken years of effort, then you get to experience happiness, joy, and contentment much more often than if you withhold and save your happiness and appreciation for only major outer events. Equality consciousness helps you see beyond appearances into the spiritual value of everything. With equality consciousness, you know that in spirit everyone is equally important – not just in terms of what they can do for you, but inherently so.

With equality consciousness, you still see all the different qualities of people and forms. You can distinguish their features, and even feel preferences for certain qualities over others. Yet, you also know that – just as all objects are made up of the same protons, neutrons, and electrons – everything is also made up of one Supreme Spirit. Each contributor to this dance of universal creation has a role to play and a melody to add, whether they're kind or not, beautiful or not, and accomplished or not.

Be Careful

Equality consciousness doesn't mean that you don't see the difference between a hundred-dollar bill and a pile of doggie doo. Rather, even as you pick up the hundred-dollar bill and step around the doggie doo, deep inside, you don't respond with extreme greed or disdain for either.

With equality consciousness, even as you feel that some people are special to you – whether they are family members or friends – you simultaneously know that every living being on this planet is also your brother, sister, and friend.

Some people think that having detachment and renunciation means that they won't get to have fun, be successful, or achieve great wealth. Perhaps this belief exists because many who detach from the common sources of pleasure are able to see more objectively how short-lived these pleasures are and choose to live simpler lives.

Is it possible to live surrounded with worldly pleasures and still stay detached and focused on spirit? Yes, although not very many people can easily achieve this balance. Therefore, some seekers who are firmly committed to spiritual growth above all else may choose to spend more of their time and efforts on what they feel to be more substantial spiritual goals – such as awakening to divine inner wisdom and soaring with sweet freedom in the eternal flow of universal bliss. This bliss is even better than eating chocolate cake, although chocolate cake together with universal bliss can also be a great combination!