



Dr Pete Stebbins PhD

WELLBEING QUICKSTART

How To 'Trust The Universe'

Of all the personal growth challenges I have wrestled with, 'trusting the universe' has proven to be the most difficult. There's a wonderful line in the famous 1920's poem 'Disederata' by Max Ehrmann which says:

"And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should."

When I'm facing challenging life situations, I find this statement really confronting. It seems to suggest that the trials and tribulations I'm facing are actually meant to happen – unavoidable so to speak. If this is true, than paradoxically it means all the unexpected successes and easy wins were also actually meant to happen – also unavoidable so to speak.

So, if all these things are simply 'meant to be' then is there any point to self-improvement as a way to make my life better? Is there any point in striving towards goals? I mean, if it's all unavoidable, then why bother with anything?

And here's where many people (me included), make a mistake. We confuse the world around us with the world within us. Whilst it is true we cannot control the world around us, it is also true we can control the world within us.

We can operate in a state of 'acceptance' of our circumstances and be compassionate with ourselves and others as life unfolds OR we can 'resist' what is happening, 'grasping' or insisting that things should be different and passively or aggressively trying to force our will upon the earth.

Now, if we had divine powers, then it would be helpful for us to resist our circumstances and force our will upon the earth. But if we are mere humans then resistance will only cause suffering and our best course of action is acceptance and compassion. For in acceptance, we will find inner peace and in compassion, we will find healing and growth – with our lives evolving as the circumstances continue to change.

As Psychologists, we know that in conditions like Depression and Anxiety, people often have a very negative view of the world, themselves and the future. We also know that challenging this way of thinking and developing a more positive outlook on life is a key part of the recovery journey. So, here's 3 questions for you to reflect on that may help you embrace the wisdom with the Desiderate (and whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should):

1. What if the world is actually okay as it is, for reasons that none of us may understand?
2. What if you yourself are perfect just the way you are? Perfect in all your imperfections as you grow and change?
3. What if your life is unfolding exactly as it is meant to? What if your future will all work out fine (even if it's not exactly the way you thought it would)?