



Yesterday I wrote about some expectations and ideas that can disappoint people when they come to the Ashram. I sometimes think how crazy it is that we have so many ways of making ourselves unhappy for no real reason. It is sad to see when someone does this to himself and often we can watch ourselves doing the same thing. One very common way to make yourself unhappy is by taking unnecessary responsibility for things that you are actually not responsible for.

I am sure you have either experienced and done that yourself once in a while or you have seen and watched others how they took responsibility which was not theirs. For some people this happens nearly automatically and it has become a habit to take everybody else's responsibility. You can imagine how much stress it can create when you feel that you are the one who has to do everything. This thinking occurs in relationships, among friends, at work and very often in families.

You start your day by thinking what has to be done. But you don't only think about the things that you have to do. You think about the things that others have to do, too. You worry whether the other one will think as much as you do. Before anybody else is able to say or do anything, you start it. You do your own work and you do the work of others, too, or at least tell them to do it, let them know the best way how to do it and prepare everything necessary in detail.

There are several consequences of this behavior. The first one is your mental, physical and emotional state. Nobody is able to do everything at the same time. You get into stress because you try and because you think you have to do it. Your thought is 'If I don't do it, nobody does it!' You don't realize that only you believe you have to do everything. In your mind, the world will stop turning if you don't push it but you need to realize that things work without you, too! They worked before you did them and they will work if you stop, too. It is self-made pressure that can cause serious problems such as burn-out and depression on the long run.

If someone says anything about what you do, if they even dare to remark that you would not need to do something, you reply sharply that you actually have to do it. You are wondering 'Don't they see how important my work is?' You get short-tempered because of this pressure and additionally you get the feeling that nobody properly appreciates your work. How could they, you are doing everything, you are running the world! What would be an appropriate way of appreciating that? It is impossible to fulfill that expectation of endless gratitude!

This all will lead to one more consequence: your surrounding will change their behavior towards you. They either give you all the responsibility that you are demanding for, because it is just easy for them or they feel strange about your attempt to take over their responsibility. They don't like it that you do their work. This means that you alienate the people around you in the thought that you are doing something good.

What you are doing in reality however is that you take away their responsibility! You do everything with a very good intention and you only mean the best for everyone, I am well aware of that. The problem is however that you disable the other person! You don't let that person take his or her own responsibility and these people will never be able to learn doing it on their own. This can even hurt the other one who might get the impression that you believe him to be unable to do his job.

Everybody has to take his own responsibility and not the responsibility of others. See how many problems you are creating for yourself! Take responsibility for yourself, not for others, otherwise you forget yourself! If everybody first of all takes his own responsibility, nobody will be in stress about doing the job of others. If we think it would not work without us, it is already a wrong thought. You worry too much about others and not enough about yourself if you let it get that far. You can help others and support them but they have to stand on their own feet, too. Take care of yourself before you take care of others.

