



Space in the Crowded Workplace, by Ashvin Iyengar

The more I live, the more I am realizing the importance of space. Space between thoughts and actions. Space which has room for possibilities despite being crowded with opinions. Space which makes choice possible. Space that allows me to respond instead of having a knee-jerk reaction. The list goes on and on.

Someone opposes what I am trying to do and I want to brush him aside out of fear that my assignment may not get done otherwise. If I have the internal space in the moment, then I can choose to flow around the obstacle instead of trying to overcome it. Or maybe I realize that flowing around is not working and I need to confront the issue. Space is what allows me to have the confrontation with the right amount of force and without making it into a "me against him/her"™ issue. Space is what lets me win a point without making the other into a loser. Space is what lets me concede a point and change my stance without feeling like a loser.

And sometimes, holding a free and open internal space, or presence if you will, can result in a transformation of the environment around you. The environment around me, and I suspect for most if not all people, is mind-blowingly complex and full of divisive groups at odds with each other and competing with each other fairly as well as unfairly. And even within a group, often people have their own agendas that run counter to the goals of the group. No surprise here. This is a fractal pattern that repeats almost at every level of society.

But if I hold an internal space that does not project this and allows people to come together towards a common objective, I find that sometimes it results in almost magical co-operation. Where meditation comes into this equation is that it allows you to open up to all your opinions, pre-conceived notions, irritations and reactions on the cushion and have equanimity with this so that when they surface in the middle of a meeting or any work-interaction, they have a lessened chance of making you react blindly.

--Ashvin Iyengar