



The Surrender Experiment, by Michael Singer

Life rarely unfolds exactly as we want it to. And if we stop and think about it, that makes perfect sense. The scope of life is universal, and the fact that we are not actually in control of life's events should be self-evident. The Universe has been around for 13.8 billion years, and the processes that determine the flow of life around us did not begin when we were born, nor will they end when we die. What manifests in front of us at any given moment is actually something truly extraordinary—it is the end-result of all the forces that have been interacting together for billions of years. We are not responsible for even the tiniest fraction of what is manifesting around us. Nonetheless, we walk around constantly trying to control and determine what will happen in our lives. No wonder there's so much tension, anxiety, and fear. Each of us actually believes that things should be the way we want them, instead of being the natural result of all the forces of creation.

Every day, we give precedence to our mind's thoughts over the reality unfolding before us. We regularly say things like, "better not rain today because I'm going camping" or "better get that raise because I really need the money." Notice that these bold claims about what should and shouldn't be happening are not based on scientific evidence; they're based solely on personal preferences made up in our minds. Without realizing it, we do this with everything in our lives—it's as though we actually believe that the world around us is supposed to manifest in accordance to our own likes and dislikes. If it doesn't, surely something is very wrong. This is an extremely difficult way to live, and it is the reason we feel that we are always struggling with life.

Nonetheless, it is also true that we are not powerless in the face of the events unfolding around us. We have been gifted with the power of will. From deep inside, we can determine how we want something to be and apply the power of our minds, hearts, and bodies in an attempt to make the outside world conform. But this puts us in a constant battle of our way versus the way it would be without our intervention. This battle between individual will and the reality of life unfolding around us ends up consuming our lives. When we win this battle, we are happy and relaxed; when we don't, we are disturbed and stressed. Since most of us only feel good when things are going our way, we are constantly attempting to control everything in our lives.

The question is, does it have to be this way? There is so much evidence that life does quite well on its own. The planets stay in orbit, tiny seeds grow into giant trees, weather patterns have kept forests across the globe watered for millions of years, and a single

fertilized cell grows into a beautiful baby. We are not doing any of these things as conscious acts of will; they are all being done by the incomprehensible perfection of life itself. All these amazing events, and countless more, are being carried out by forces of life that have been around for billions of years—the very same forces of life that we are consciously pitting our will against on a daily basis. If the natural unfolding of the process of life can create and take care of the entire universe, is it really reasonable for us to assume that nothing good will happen unless we force it to? Â For lack of a better name, I have called this the Surrender Experiment.

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