

Moving from Competition to Cooperation

I was raised thinking that competition was a good thing. From a young age most of what I was taught pointed to making me a competitive person. Whether it was in school, in sports or in life itself, I was taught you had to try your hardest to win. I was conditioned to make myself better and better in order to come out ahead. To be the winner was an important concept in my life. For generations we have been conditioned to compete. Why? Why is it so important to be the best, to win, to overtake the other person? Competition did not make me feel very comfortable, but it was only recently that I came to consciously realize this. This issue came up for me as I started to work on my feelings of self worth and self esteem. In spite of having owned and managed a multimillion dollar business I realized that I really didn't feel very good about myself. Outwardly I may have appeared self confident but that was not what I felt on the inside. In the work I do as a life coach I have realized that most people suffer from issues of self worth and self esteem. This got me thinking about competition and why I really don't like it. I concluded that when I competed in anything I really didn't like the feeling of being the loser. Since competition is about winning and losing there is always a chance someone would be the loser.

I believe that we have been so conditioned to compete that we don't even realize how it has affected our lives. Recently I came to realize that unconsciously I have been competing with my siblings for our parent's love. My feelings towards my brother and sister had turned competitive without me even realizing it. Take a few minutes and think about how competition has unconsciously become a major part of your life. How in your life are you competing to win? For those who have done well in the competitive world, outwardly you may seem successful. However, the people who have "successfully" competed in life may not be as happy as we may think they are. For those of us who don't feel comfortable competing, our lives continue to be full of constant internal conflict. How can that be you ask? Because winning over someone or something else is not what truly makes us feel good about ourselves. I truly believe that the inner peace and happiness we seek comes from within us and not from conquering someone or something else. That is not to say that the thrill of victory does not have its moment of glory. Of course it does. To win will always make us feel good in the moment, but that too passes quickly. That is how we become addicted to competition. When the thrill of victory moves on, we need another victory to feed what soon becomes an insatiable appetite to win, so we will feel good about ourselves. Although most of us have had our share of defeats we tend not to be too empathetic towards those who are suffering the agony of defeat. Our advice to them is try harder, work harder and practice more so you too can win. And what about those who for many different reasons do not have the ability to compete in today's society? They are left behind. Why? Is it because we have no room or no time for the losers in life? Are we too busy focusing on getting ahead ourselves, trying to be winners that we don't want to stop and help out those in society who cannot succeed by competing?

A while ago I contemplated this subject of competition because I witnessed so much of it around me. It has probably been with us for as long as man has been on the earth. I thought about the animal and plant kingdom and there too I saw competition. If competition was bad why would the world have been created in such a way as to promote it? How does God feel about competition? I thought about Darwin's theory of evolution and the survival of the fittest. What came to me was an insight that if the desire to surpass, to improve, or to break records is for the purpose of evolution, then it makes sense. To compete against what exists so we can make the planet; the people, the places and the conditions better, feels much better to me. If we could move away from emphasizing the winners and forgetting the losers and focus on the evolutionary process of what we are doing our world would become a better place. We have come a very long way since the dark ages. Unfortunately we have been focused more on progress than on people. If our planet is to survive and continue to evolve I believe we must change the focus of competition in our world today. How can we do that?

My suggestion is to shift from a mindset of competition to a mindset of cooperation and collaboration. What if we the human race, the ones with the ability to think and comprehend were to move away from the ways that we inherited from the animal kingdom. We don't have to kill each other to survive. We don't have to conquer our fellow man. We don't always have to compete to win. God made us different from animals so we could learn new ways and evolve into a higher order. What about taking some time to pause and reflect on the fact that we have unconsciously taken on the ways of the plant and animal kingdom. What about if we used the brains and logic we were given to come up with a new way? The way of cooperation I believe is the key to our survival on this planet. The good news is some people are beginning to get it already. I was out with a friend the other day and she was telling me about the fantastic work her non-profit foundation is doing by promoting cooperation and collaboration within cities and communities across our country. She has written a book on this collaborative model of people sitting down together representing all facets of our society to work together to solve the major problems that exist in most of our cities. The very problems created by a world obsessed with competing. She was telling me that the concept is gaining in popularity and she is being asked to speak more and

more on this topic. It is time for a major shift in how we think. It's time to move away from competing and move towards cooperation and collaboration. What can you do to help promote this new shift in our world?

I ask you to take some time to think about how your life and the lives of those around you might change if we moved away from competition and embraced cooperation. Dr. David Hawkins an internationally renowned psychiatrist, physician, researcher, and pioneer in the fields of consciousness research and spirituality has done extensive work on applied muscle testing to determine in his map of consciousness how various things compare in vibratory energy. He has come up with a scale from 0 to 1000 and has determined that anything above 200 is truth and anything below 200 is the absence of truth or falsehood. If you are interested in this subject you can read more about this concept in Hawkins many books. Hawkins website is <http://www.veritaspublish.com/>. The point I wish to emphasize here is that Dr. Hawkins has calibrated competition at 140, while cooperation calibrates at 440. If we are to continue to move our planet to a higher level of consciousness then I strongly believe it is time to let go of our old attachments to competition and allow ourselves to shift to a more compassionate and understanding approach using cooperation and collaboration. What a different world we would be living in if we all allowed cooperation to be our guiding light.