



The Impatient Patient

by Carmen Allen

How do we become more patient?

“Patience is the the capacity to accept or tolerate delay, problems, or suffering without becoming annoyed or anxious.”

If you had asked me a month ago if I was a patient person, I would’ve said “Yeah, fairly patient.”

Turns out that’s a bit of a lie.

When my patience is tested, I often fail.

I had surgery a few weeks ago, and after five days my slow recovery frustrated me. ‘Enough of this lying around, reading books, watching TV and sleeping through the day. I want my life to return to normal!’ But it wasn’t just the forced rest that annoyed me; it was all the other limitations, too. Couldn’t drive, couldn’t lift heavy things, had trouble showering, dressing, moving AND don’t even get me started about those support stockings!

The six-week recovery period my doctor warned me about loomed before me. I was like a kid when you tell them they can have an ice-cream when they arrive at Grandma’s house. “Are we there yet?”

So how do we become more patient?



Two ways to become patient

What's the secret to becoming more patient?

I believe it's the combination of two things: Acceptance and Contentment.

Accept that the change I want to see may not always be in my control and learn how to be content in all circumstances.

1. Acceptance

It's accepting that even though I hope things will change or pray things will change, the change I'm looking for may not always be in my control; particularly if I want another person to change, the weather to change, or my health to change.

I'm only 'banging my head against a brick wall' when I allow my lack of control to ruin my mood or frustrate my day.

The bottom line is... Change what I have the power to change. Accept that I can't change others, but I can change my attitude.

2. Contentment

Learn to be content in all circumstances and have an attitude of gratitude for the good things in life.

But what if it's not so much other people or external circumstances that trigger our impatience? What if we're impatient with ourselves?

For example:

- We're slower than we expected learning a new skill.
- We keep reacting unhealthily to certain triggers.
- We're trying to lose weight, get fit, or break a habit.

The same key applies, my friend; Acceptance and Contentment.

It's like a balancing act.

Pretend you're balancing two weights on your hands. On one hand, you look forward to becoming an expert in a new skill, but on the other hand, you accept it **will** take time. Whether it's a physical skill, or growing emotionally or mentally, you acknowledge it will take time. You'll be more patient with yourself.

Does a baby know how to read when it's born? No. So don't expect perfection when you're learning a new skill.

Learning to be content where we are right now in the process brings the sunshine back into our world. We're no longer thrashing around in the darkness.

Modelling patience also helps those around us, including our children. Remember that character is caught, not taught.

Life teaches us lessons and we'll grow in character IF we let those lessons change us for the better. You can be the hero of your own story.

Here's a little bookmark you can download and print.

