

**A client shared how the thing she liked and respected** most about her partner was that he never fooled himself. He always looked at himself clearly, apologized if his actions warranted, admitted when he didn't understand, acknowledged when he over-reacted and basically, always tried to look himself and life straight in the eye and proceed from there. A useful example, we would say.

**Not fooling yourself is the first step toward being with the 'what is' of life.** Not fooling yourself leads to looking at life clearly and finding a way with being with things just as they are. Being with 'what is' does not mean you are 'stuck' with things as they are. Change *can* occur, but you cannot begin to move toward change without that very first acknowledgment of how things actually are in this moment.

**Some people come to 'not fooling themselves' early on in life.** Perhaps they have a parent who *does* fool themselves, who impacts the family with not seeing clearly or avoiding obvious things that need attention. A young person may emerge holding the idea that *they* were going to call things as they truly are.

**Other people may come to value 'not fooling themselves'** through retrospect and introspection. They also learn to not fool themselves by having to deal with challenging consequences from the times they overlooked or convinced themselves everything would be alright or otherwise avoided taking the moment to see how things truly are.

**'Not fooling yourself' acts as a support and strength.** It is *not* a negating or pessimistic attitude. It is simply one that realizes the actual lay of the land *has* to be considered before changes, additions and other options can come into play. It can *feel* like an impediment, though. It may interrupt the forward movement of our idea or ideal of what we want or how we want things to be. It may feel like we have been caught up short. But that is only the effect when what is seen *needfully* interrupts our desire, as the truth reveals our desire was not aligned.

**And when the truth shows us that we cannot proceed** as we first thought, we actually really do want to know that information. Ideas and ideals that proceed only by *hiding* truth and clarity will, in time, be impacted in a way we had not hoped or expected by that which we didn't want to see.

**'Not fooling yourself' is an active attitude of awareness.** It is an attitude that says, *'Okay, let me see what is here. What is here with me in the situation, with others, with the timing, with situation itself, with as much as I can.'* It is an active attitude of inquiry, beginning with you in the situation and then perhaps proceeding to actually get more information about the situation.

**It is an attitude that is willing to risk** that seeing clearly may change something – you may alter a plan, not proceed, need to back up, need to apologize, need to rebalance with someone else, need to be cautious, need to act immediately, need to say no, need to say yes. But in the end, *clarity will be the most aligned path* – with both the inner and outer dynamic.

**'Not fooling yourself' is the essential foundation** to developing and experiencing the beauty and strength of being true to yourself.

**We cannot see everything at all times.** Truth is sometimes unclear and can take time and experience to be revealed, understood and recognized. Truth is often explored in retrospect and simply cannot be understood in the now as it can be from looking back. In the dance of clarity through retrospect, we evolve and inform our present and perhaps create markers and sign-posts to assist us in our future.

**Many people have had to deal with a disappointment of ideas and ideals** in 2017. Changes did not happen as one thought they would. Some change reverted to more of the same. Other things simply did not change. Leaders do not lead as we want them to. The economy impacted or even took away personal choices and options. New limits continue to show up and impact our daily lives. Truths are revealed but it does not affect anything. Lies are revealed and they do not affect anything.

**Often our idealism is asked to become more fluid,** open to further awareness by on-the-ground *actuality*. We don't want to easily give up our ideals, but to be unwilling to examine them in the actual moments of life, will lead us to not being fully engaged in the 'what is' of our lives. We may instead find we create conflict or operate blindly or with falseness when how we *want* it to be or think it *should* be is not integrated with how it is. It is easy to forget that actuality pulsates with the vitality of what truly is, while our 'ideals' may not be actualized, but live in the less vibrant world of the mind alone.

**When the outer world seems overwhelming,** we quite naturally turn our attention to our personal world, including our inner-world. Considering, exploring and perhaps, embracing, an attitude of *'Don't fool yourself'* may be gift of awareness you want to take into the new year.

**And in the idea of the '100th monkey'** in that your change may have an impact on others in ways you cannot fathom - not kidding yourself, honing your capacity to seek the truth through inquiry and conscious attention, may be the gift of awareness you *share* by living it yourself.

*Edited from a personal session with permission*