

Change.

Change is hard. Change takes a conscious effort on our part. When our circumstances are chaotic, and we desire change in the people or circumstances around us- we often need to start with ourselves.

How many times have you wished that a person's annoying behavior would stop. A co-worker? A friend? A child? A spouse?

We all **know** someone. We are **all** that someone! Gasp! Yup, I said it. You and me. We are that annoying person with an annoying behavior. We are all that person that needs to work on something. Have you ever found yourself grumbling: "Ugh, I wish _____ would just. . .?"

Here's the thing. . . We can focus on what every other person is doing wrong. We can grumble, and complain. We can point out the speck in other people's eyes. Or, we can do the heart work. We can do the work inside ourselves, and wait. Wait and see how our spheres of influence, and our circumstances change.

And the best way we can do that is to give abundant grace to ourselves and others. That takes what I like to call: Heart Work. Making changes within our own hearts.

So, let's do the heart work!

If I'm honest, I can do a great job at pointing out all the ways everyone else is doing all the things wrong. Just ask my husband!

To be honest, I'm excited to start working on my heart, again. Yes, I said *again*. I go through seasons of my fair share of grumbling and complaining. Let's face it. . . heart work is a life long journey. When I'm working on having a gentle spirit, I feel more at peace.

Read 1 Peter 3:1-7. (If you don't have a physical bible with you, I love reading from The Message version on the YouVersion Bible App).

In 1 Peter 3, the Bible says, in short, that our husbands will not be won by words, rather our actions. (Re-read 1 Peter 3:1-6)

In the Message version, verse 4 starts off "Cultivate inner beauty. . ." I love the picture this paints. When I think of inner beauty, I think of someone who is at peace. She is graceful, gentle, and elegant. What does inner beauty look like for you? Write that down, and put it somewhere you will see it on the daily.

What I love about the Bible, is that I can often take what I'm reading and learning, and apply it other places in my life. Even though these verses are referring to the husband-wife relationship, here, we can apply this to all of our relationships-working on yourself and how you respond. Work on your inner beauty, and it spills out into not just your relationship with your spouse, but it'll spill out into all areas of your life.

Again, 1 Peter 3:4-6 refers to creating an inner beauty within yourself. For me specifically, that looks like uprooting my impatient and angry responses.

Is it ok to feel these emotions?

Absolutely.

However, I've learned that reacting from these emotions only hurts my relationships. And being someone who struggles with cultivating relationships, I've learned, the hard way, how important it is for me to communicate in a healthy way. To breathe, think, and process before I respond. To take a re-do on any given situation. To apologize when I'm in the wrong.

In my opinion, a lot of changes we desire boil down to communication: how we speak to ourselves, how we speak to others, and how we speak to God. We also have to be willing to release other people from our expectations. That's not to say that we don't have healthy boundaries; rather, letting go of the thought that things need to happen a certain way. Letting go of feeling we need to control every aspect of a situation.

I've noticed that when I'm working on these things, it's easier for me to find my gentle, quiet spirit.

Challenge:

Think of a way that you can practice having a gentle and quiet spirit. Do you lose your patience with your kids? A co-worker? Your husband? Think of a strategy you can use to rewrite that habit to turn to a gentle and quiet spirit amid the chaos. Write it down. We live in a world of chaos, and at the end of the day, our husband, our kids, and the people in our spheres need us to be a place of gentleness and quietness.

Father,

Thank you for this beautiful day. Thank you for change. Thank you that even though every day brings change, every day- you remain the same. Father, we need you. Fill us up. When we struggle, send us a whisper to remind us to respond with a gentle, quiet spirit. Help us to make time to spend with you each day. You are the gentle spirit we seek. Help us to be more like you, each day. Amen.