Peace of Mind

-by Jacquie Clarke

~Why bother with this?

My meditation practice has given me insight into two types of questions. Why does this situation bother me? Why do I bother with this situation? When things bother me, it causes me anxiety and distress. During a meditation sit, I will become aware of my thoughts that are streaming by at a rapid pace. My tendency is to replay my day and when I catch those thoughts, I label "remembering, remembering, remembering" and aim my focus back to my breath. Many times, though, the runaway thoughts take over again and one thought of the recent past will trigger memories of a distant past. I will catch myself in a reverie of a situation that bothered me years ago. That event from the past is held with such a strong negative emotion that it is easy for me to keep re-experiencing it through the most recent episode. And then I worry about what might have happened, even though it didn't. And those thoughts make me start to wonder what might happen in the future and what could I do instead, or should do in anticipation. Back and forth my mind jumps and escalates and awfulizes.

I could choose peace instead of this. I repeat this phrase to bring myself back to the present moment when my anxious and stressful thoughts are causing grief. It helps me regain perspective when I am present in my experience of the current situation. I need to give myself a reality check to ask what is actually happening and why am I festering so much. I want to mindfully decide if this is something important for me to pay attention to. Consider what action is appropriate: if it is important, I will say or do something to address it. Other times, I decide that it is not important to me and I let it go.
The skill of discernment is one of the most valuable disciplines I have learned with Insight Mediation.

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