I am not interested in a superficial change of behavior, but an inner change, which is the source of behavior.

I make the conscious choice to be free, and to hold my freedom as a priority, not to be compromised.

I take full responsibility for my state of mind and know that happiness is never dependant on anyone or anything outside of myself.

I value my inner peace more than I do winning, defending my identity, proving my point, or reactively expressing momentary emotions.

I know that stillness is the natural state of my mind, when not obscured by thought.

I know that awareness is not a secret to be learned & forgotten, but a full time commitment to remain alert of my internal dialogue & states of mind, and to prioritize well being over negativity.

I know that thought is a form of energy, and that whatever I choose to give energy will become stronger.

I know that negative states of mind require, are maintained by, and exist as, a continuous stream of thought.

I know that problems & challenging situations are the most vital times to remain aware & to guard against reactivity.

I refuse to be reactive, and to let my emotions be controlled by others.

I do not engage in self defeating behavior.

Anger does not guide my hand. Fear does not inhibit my action. Desires do not govern me. Attachments do not bind me.

I know that what I try to control and posses, controls and possesses me.

I value my energy, and conserve it by not wasting it on anger, fear, jealousy, hatred and negativity.
I know that I am going to face challenges, and fulfill responsibilities regardless, & I have the choice of suffering through them or coming to terms with them and doing the best I can without internal struggle.

I know that even a single moment of my life that is wasted cannot be regained & that I only cheat myself by doing so.

I know that words in themselves have no power, and that no one can hurt me without my cooperation.

I know that the meanings in which “things” hold are determined by my thoughts & perceptions and not inherent in the things themselves.

I know that negative emotions are not generated by what happens, but my thoughts about, and conflict with, what happens.

I know that anytime my thoughts and expectations conflict with reality, I create suffering for myself.

I know that I cannot accurately experience the present if my mind is clouded and biased with past judgments, assumptions, projections, desires, fears or expectations.

I understand the difference between what exists in thought and what exists in reality.

I see that if my thoughts have no correlative in physical reality that they are little different than imagination.

I know that if something is already the case, or is inevitable, that acceptance is the only intelligent response to it.

I know that acceptance is not a compromise, but a choice, sometimes necessary to face reality and eliminate inner conflict.

I know that all problems are temporary, and as with all things, “This too shall pass”.

I know that solitude cannot be found in running from my problems, or by putting off my responsibilities. Just by facing them, and beginning to take action can alleviate much of the associated anxiety.

I value mistakes as necessary feedback for improvement, and know that if my understanding needs to improve, it is only through action, through experience, that knowledge is acquired.

I know that there is no such thing as second hand wisdom.

I know that it is my actions, not my words, that reflect my knowledge.
I know that I will have to repeat the same mistakes until I have learned the lesson.

I know that my attitude & disposition can either call out to the best in others, or the worst in others; either may respond. Being positive doesn’t ensure the likewise, but it allows for it.

I know that focusing on others creates more happiness than constantly obsessing about myself.

I know that my self worth is in no way dependant on the opinions of others.

I do not define myself in terms of material.

I know that my identity is self defined and self imposed.

I have no strict idea of myself in which I must conform to.

I am neither above nor below anyone, and so make no comparisons.

I have no need to control or possess others.

I do not depend on others for validation or approval.

I do not need an external authority to tell me what is right and what is wrong.

I am my own authority.

I make no attempt to appear different than I am, regardless of who I am around.

I understand that my feelings are natural, and so make no apologies for them.

I allow others the freedom of being themselves, without judging them or attempting to change them.

I know that the only definite control that I have is over myself.

I am free to give love, without condition or expectation.

I can forgive others because I understand that we all act according to our current level of consciousness & understanding.

I will help anyone that I can knowing that ultimately the responsibility is theirs alone.

I learn from the past, but do not allow it to interfere with the present.

I do not attain to a goal in the future, but follow the Way, moment by moment.

I am a light unto myself.

John J. Patton 09-03-09
A “holy” person is someone who is “whole;” who has, as it were, reconciled his opposites.

- Alan Watts

See Chart Legend Below
CHART LEGEND

= Being, The Observer, Consciousness, The “I” Of The Hurricane, The Vertical:
The lotus which sits above the water, unstained
The center
The true self
The Vertical
Present moment awareness
Above duality
Above time

+ Thought, focus, energy, imagination, attention:
Roams the horizontal, time based plane
Looks everywhere but here & now
Lost between past and future
Torn between dualities & preferences, highs & lows
Looks outside & to others for fulfillment
Creates constant static, chatter, noise
Creates identifications with the horizontal
Tries to control, plan & protect
Good servant, bad master

Outside of the center is the wheel of Samsara, the hurricane, the horizontal plane of time &
duality, the ephemeral world. Outside of the center, everything is pushing you, pulling you,
tempting you, scaring you, & ensuring constant mental dialogue. The wheel turns without end.
No horizontal change will bring peace, only a vertical change, only upward, only a change in
elevation. The perimeter is the only boundary between human beings. The larger the perimeter
grows, the larger the barrier, the separation from other life. The majority of human relationships
are between peripheries only, contact is never made between centers. Contact between centers is
love, and love is the only essential connection possible between human beings. The perimeter
will eventually begin shrinking of itself.

The wheel is always turning, changing, time marching on. When you are identified with the
periphery, your identity is always changing as well. The success, the failure, the parent, the child,
the lover, the lonely, the healthy, the sick, etc. The identity changes as the storm of
circumstances changes. Could a true identity change so easily, so arbitrarily? Which one is the
real you? Or does it depend on when you are asked, and what is going on at the time? You have
no real center, only a moving, shifting center, which changes depending on what is dominating
your awareness at the time. The pseudo-center (the ego) changes as the storm changes, it is part
of the storm, it is not your true center.
-J.J.P.

Note: In the example shown, the attention may be seen as dwelling on enlightenment, as a
positive event in the future.
Psychological Centers Of Gravity
Based on the ideas of G.I. Gurdjieff
JJP

The Carriage – (Unconscious) - Animal Man – The physical organism in its most basic form.
Primitive – Instinctual – Biological – Survival & Reproduction.
Entirely Automaton – Without Will.
Behavior results from biological drives and environmental incentives.
Perspective is entirely subjective & exclusive.
Physically & Sensorially oriented. – Basic Pain, Pleasure or Indifference motivations.
Advances towards safety and retreats from danger.

The Horse – (Subconscious to Preconscious) Sensitivity, Feeling, Impulse, Emotion
Emotionally interprets and stores experience.
The Horse (Emotion) has the potential to lose control and run off on its own, bringing everyone else along for the ride. May conflict with Reason (Driver).
Comparative & Emotionally Oriented – Attachment & Aversion
Perspective is subjective / objective “separate from,” and “greater or lesser than”
Simplified Ego - Social Hierarchy & Territorial Politics
Submission (Child) & Dominance (Parent)
Requires contrast (i.e. conflict, competition, etc.) to define & maintain status.

Memory, Personality, Complex Ego, Social Identity, Role Play Actor, Social Representative.
The voice of reason, in (alleged) control of the horse (Emotion) and carriage (Body).
Perspective is objective (apart from and above, as well as occupying the center).
Can become disassociated from emotion & body, assuming a fundamentally cerebral existence.
Tends to confuse life & reality with abstractions & concepts, and so loses touch, residing in a state of waking sleep, viewing reality as if “through a glass darkly”.

The Master – (Higher Consciousness) Self Actualization – Transcendence
Without the story of ego. Connected to All. Beyond time & relativity.
Unidentified with, & unaffected by externals.
Perspective unites and transcends subjective and objective. Transcends (apparent) dualities.
Does not seek gain or profit from life or others. Does not use life or others as a means to an end.
Beyond abstract words and symbols.
Being precedes and facilitates all else.
This chart represents the conceptual boundaries that we create to “define” our “selves”. How you define your “self” as “opposed” to others and the rest of the world greatly changes your perspective & orientation to all aspects of life. The center of the spheres represents the most constricted state, of being limited to the persona only, drawing a boundary in your own mind between what you accept and perceive as positive and what you deny (repress) and perceive as negative; also known as your shadow. Moving outward the boundary grows and becomes less exclusive, opening up the scope of acceptance & identification. Notice that each sphere is a “whole” in itself, in which we divide into positive and negative. When a boundary dissolves, we create the next boundary by again separating the whole into what we perceive as positive and negative. Notice also that each boundary is inclusive of all that lies inside of it, and remains exclusive of all that does not.
Salt In The Wound - You must have a foundation, already established, that will alleviate any impulse to be defensive, to compete, or to prove yourself; so that you are not sidetracked & drawn into mind games and emotionally affected by verbal aggression. It is as if someone is throwing salt at you. If you have any open wounds, the salt is sure to find them. Similarly, if you have unresolved conflicts, insecurities, etc. they allow others to manipulate you and control your emotional state. Reconcile yourself with the past, forgive yourself for your mistakes & proceed with confidence and resolve. Nothing in the past can be changed, fully accept yourself and move forward. With these things known, you can feel free to address the matters at hand without getting defensive or reactive, without getting deterred by any personal attacks or psychological hang-ups.

JJP

Moon In The Water - “The moon reflects in the still water clearly. In moving water, although the appearance is different, the moon is still the same.” The moon symbolizes our mind, the water our thoughts. The images in the water are reality “reflected.” When we look at the reflection and the water becomes disturbed we think that the moon has become disturbed. We don’t know that we are only looking at a reflection of the moon and not the moon itself. The ripples in the water are our thoughts, which obscure the reflection. Our true mind is in a different direction, and it remains calm and undisturbed at all times. We take the thoughts and reflections to be our whole mind and completely identify with them. We try to calm the water with more thought, which can never happen. Staring into the water we are asleep, engrossed in the dream of reflections and fantasies. If we were to wake up, we would lift our heads and see the moon, which has been there all along.

JJP

Problems - Is anything problematic in nature? It seems that problems only exist in the human mind, when our ideas about reality conflict with reality itself. From this conflict arises resistance, and resistance creates suffering. A natural conclusion to this would be that surrender to reality and acceptance, rather than resistance would eliminate a great deal of our suffering. A line must be drawn however to differentiate between healthy acceptance and complete and total passivity. It seems to me that this would be summed up perfectly in the serenity prayer.

"God grant me the Serenity to accept the things I cannot change, Courage to change the things I can, and the Wisdom to know the difference."

Reconcile yourself with the past and make necessary provision for the future, beyond that fully participate, without withdrawing into the mind. Be decisive, accept total responsibility & then proceed with resolve.

The Sacred Seat - The image of the sitting Buddha exemplifies what meditation is. To sit, physically and mentally, to stop the frantic chase of life. To take a break from trying to become something more, from trying to gain, to maintain, to grasp, to control, stopping everything that implies the future. To meditate is to drop all desire & intention, to release all identifications, to take a vacation from yourself. When thoughts dissipate, there is only awareness, only presence, only freedom.
Meditation – Meditation is not a thinking process, but a non-thinking experience of the present moment. By the time the present can be “thought” about it is already in the past, therefore it can only be experienced directly. The only moment the mind can “grasp” is the previous moment. Don’t grasp, don’t cling. Flow

My Method - Listen to your breathing. Anytime you hear anything in the form of words, any inner commentary, regardless of how convincing, urgent, or seemingly important, cut it off short, do not finish it. A thought may begin, but you notice it immediately, and you negate it, bringing your attention again and again back to present moment awareness and your breath. You may not at first be able to stop thoughts from occurring, but with awareness you can stop them in their tracks. The awareness and the breath are top priority, as if in a state of open listening. This will take practice since we are accustomed to habitual thought. Remember, getting discouraged is only more thought. Practice strengthens awareness. Return again and again to the moment, without delay, and you will attain more and more control. It is very important to set this time aside and know full well that silence is the priority, because every kind of thought, of seemingly utmost importance will attempt to dissuade you from awareness. Make sure you have no unnecessary distractions. There is no need to feel guilty, as if you are dodging important responsibilities, as you have plenty of time for thinking after meditation.

You have to know your reason for prioritizing silence. If not, it will never become a priority, the mind will not disengage. Some understanding, some context, is necessary beyond “Just quiet your mind”. The purpose is not to fill the mind with more information, but to give it the proper context within which to be still. Even this will fade away as the mind becomes empty, but will continue to exist as silent intent, as silent non-verbal priority.

- JJP

Detachment - Sitting by a river, watching things float by. Liking some, disliking others. They still float by. The changing panorama.
J.J.P.

Thoughts arise, but we do not cling to them, we allow them to pass without making an impression on the mind. They are confined to the surface of the mind, as our focus remains on the breath. Like mosquito’s that land but cannot bite, they soon fly away.

Knowledge is power. Beyond knowledge is freedom.

What Does That Have To Do With This? - This is something that came to me in meditation. What does that have to do with this? This is said in the context of a dialogue. Similar to the Zen dialogue between student and master. The student asks a question and the master answers with something seemingly non related to the question. In this case the answer to the question is “What does that have to do with this?” It may be taken as saying that the question is unrelated, and that is partially true. “This” refers to present experience, present moment awareness, what is occurring, the now moment…etc. “That” refers to all else. Thought, objectivity, abstraction, past and future & any and all thought forms. All things that avoid the direct experience of that which is presently occurring. Which is necessarily what the students question or comment will always be.
This is the same principle used by the Zen masters when they answered a question with something about the wind blowing or the moon. They were bringing the student back to awareness of the moment & out of the thinking mind. Directing them back to reality. But, then again, what does that have to do with this?

Planning - Things will not and cannot turn out as you expect them to. They may come close and they may not but reality does not follow the minds projected plan. The mind can roughly plan and predict but ultimately reality must dictate and we must adjust accordingly. It can never fully be controlled or predicted and we cannot bend it to fit our ideas of how it should be. It is flowing and ever changing and we must do likewise, staying centered, open, dynamic and adaptive.

Love (Ego Variety) By J.J.P. – We think that we deserve to be loved on the basis of who we really are but we don’t believe that anyone will really love us based solely on that. So we go to great extremes to give them incentive. These incentives are how we will be judged initially just for the qualifying round, which we must pass before someone will even take enough interest to get to know us. They range from our appearance (sex appeal), our intelligence, our income, the kind of car we drive, our sense of humor, personality, similarity to ideal partners …etc. Most of these incentives are based a great deal more on pretenses and vanity than anything that reflects us personally. We make great effort to make sure that these incentives are enough to qualify us for the type of mate that we desire and feel that we deserve. It is important for our ego to find a mate in which reflects to us what we feel we are worth. It is not as much how we feel about them as how they make us feel about ourselves. This is why we are devastated when we are left for someone else, and why we must quickly find another partner to validate our self worth. Each person must feel that they are getting what they deserve in relation to what they have to offer, so that there is a balance. Once this balance is achieved we feel free to project all of our fantasies onto our approved partner.

Desire / Deserve Ratio  -  Want / Worth Ratio

Our reaction to things, in most cases, happens automatically and unconsciously. Although it is rarely noticed, our common state of mind is on auto pilot. Between our perception and our reaction, the information is compared to our past experiences, our beliefs, underlying assumptions, fears, preferences, attached meanings, ideas, etc. The meaning of a perception can be completely different between different individuals, and their individual mental filters. Something may be paramount to one person and insignificant to another. The meanings in which “things” hold are determined by us and not inherent in the things themselves. This being known, we can change our relationship to things, and so provide ourselves choices in the way in which we relate to them, according to our will and not our unconscious reactionary tendencies. Until we become conscious of the processes affecting us, we have no choice but to be automatons in our relationship to others and our environment.
The world comes to us through the five senses. Our sense perceptions bring us the world of objects and events, which are always perceived in relative relationship to the observer. They may be experienced through feeling, as direct sensation, (eliciting pain, pleasure or indifference), or interpreted (perceived) via our thinking faculty for comparison. The way in which we relate to them will determine the type of reaction we will have, whether they will be perceived as positive, negative, or indifferent, and whether they will incite only a passing thought, a strong feeling (emotion), or direct action. Without “relationship,” nothing has a nature of its own.

Reality and truth never exist (to us) beyond our current comprehension of them, of what we can conceive of them to be. Our ideas of them are never the things themselves, just a fractional representation. Additionally, the majority of our perspectives are based upon limited knowledge, our personal inclinations, and the way in which things exist in relative relationship to ourselves. The limitations in which we perceive reality must be kept in mind.

Assimilate & Integrate – Synthesize & Summarize.

Much about our identity is usually unconscious and unexamined. Trace back your behaviors, habits, orientation to life, etc. to your core identity structure. Once you become aware of things, you have the possibility of change. Determine the benefits and drawbacks of holding certain beliefs about your identity. Do they coincide with your goals? What makes them valid? Who designates & maintains them? Who is the final authority?

Who are you and who do you want to be? How would you be if you already were that? Visualize yourself in various situations as you would like to be. What would it take to change? What prevents you?

Negative emotions are a signal that change is needed. Every emotion has a message, find it out. Emotions cannot be wrong, though they can be based on false assumptions, or be the result of distorted logic.

Find the lesson in everything, and be aware of the growth that adversity creates. If the lesson remains unknown, it will tend to repeat itself. Tension is necessary for action, growth. Get the message from tension. We pretend we want to get rid of tension. We make it the enemy. Use it instead of fighting with it. Allow yourself to be instructed by reality.

You must discover your “True Will.” If this is not discovered, you will keep going in circles. Determine what is most important to you, and the direction you want to go. Then determine the deterrents & know them well. Know very well what compromises the true will. If not, you will sabotage yourself again and again, by pretending that the will changes for every passing desire. Know what undermines your goals, what is self defeating, counterproductive, what may cause you to neglect what is important in your life, what leaves you empty and disappointed, what creates those nagging disturbing thoughts, what only serves to reinforce the ego, what prevents your stillness and peace, what causes your happiness to be dependent and conditional, and what only serves to bind you more firmly to the wheel of suffering.
States of mind can greatly change how we feel towards others and towards reality itself. Given how often our states of mind can change, we need to be aware of how they affect us. We have a tendency to be unaware of how they might affect our behavior and to see the temporary perspectives that accompany them as real and true. What many of them have in common is that they tend, of course, to be centered on us, and put us in a very exclusive, if not neglectful mindset toward others.

Since depression, anxiety, and stress involve a high degree of focus on the self, focusing on the needs of others helps to shift our attention, and reminds us that life is not all about us, that others are dealing with challenges as well which are no less important than our own.

Passions and desires can cloud our minds, govern our thoughts & distract us from priorities, that if our minds had been clear, we would never have compromised. They can enable us to be completely absorbed with ourselves, often at the cost and to the exclusion of others. They can cause us to forget our priorities and bring great regret.

As our conditions improve, so in direct proportion do our demands of what we require for happiness.

Peaceful Resolve – How do we learn to participate fully in life, without doubt or reservation, without wobbling? Why are we always so overwhelmed with anxiety and frustration when things don’t go as we planned? What are some of the causes of our problem? Given the fact that circumstances can never be completely controlled, we cannot blame reality for not living up to our ideas. So, we must determine fully, before anything else, that what we are working with here is ourselves. This is not about making reality obey our every whim, but about living in harmony with reality. It’s not as much about what’s happening, as how we deal with what’s happening.

First, decide on what you must do. This includes the fundamentals, such as your responsibilities in life, the necessities. These things should leave no room for doubt. The less sure you are of something in the first place, the more half-hearted you are, the more you will be deterred and disturbed by obstacles. The more your mind will be divided against itself.

So, the more inevitable the goal, the less doubt that should accompany it. Acting with complete resolve should minimize the internal struggle. So, establish the goals of the basic plan, then proceed, though not too rigidly. Proceed without doubt or hesitation. Participate fully. Doing otherwise ensures a miserable experience. Don’t let your energy be drained by obstacles. Don’t oppose the circumstances. Reality must always dictate the course of action. Psychological conflict is futile, energy draining, and over all detrimental and self defeating. Realize completely that reality, or circumstance, is not against you because it has manifested in a way that is not in accordance with your plans. It is absolutely relative to your apparent, separate, perspective. “Conflict” is psychological in its entirety. It is relative to the psyche, the separate individual psyche, in need of protection, security, fulfillment, purpose, power, control, reinforcement, validation, sustainment, continuity, relationship.
When you are resolved, with purpose and intent, your mind is not split with doubt. You are free to participate fully, without reservation, without excessive thought. Participation and thinking are opposites. To participate is to be fully engaged with the moment, present and aware. To begin thinking is to withdraw into the mind, into thought about reality rather than experience of reality.

Doubt and despair do not allow us to be fully present and engaged, but keep us trapped in the mind. To have resolve and to accept responsibility is to free yourself from the mind. Past & Future – doubt & worry, uncertainty.

The stream doesn’t get upset if a rock blocks its path. The stream doesn’t define the path as being *through* the rock in the first place.

It can take some of the load off of our minds when we realize that we cannot control everything in life. So much is going on and we are such a tiny part of it, and yet inseparable from the whole universe.

Relativity Of Perception - Anything that is a positive in the beginning, if it remains constant, eventually goes from positive to neutral, becomes the norm, then disappears for all practical purposes, and is noticed only in its loss or absence. Without sufficient contrast, objects become unnoticeable. We become habituated, insensitive to them. This type of relativity, in one scale or another, is seen in countless areas of life. This is what enables us to take things such as our loved ones, our health, etc, for granted until we lose them. It is also why our desires bring only temporary fulfillment.

By drawing a line between the present and the future, and filling the future with all of our hopes and dreams, it naturally holds a positive charge. With a line down the middle and a positive charge on the side of future, the present implicitly holds the negative charge (Thus creating tension). It is reduced to a means to an end, something to suffer through. Through our desire and fantasy we rob ourselves of any possible contentment with the present, which is of course all that there is.

When we have a breakdown we have lost the ability to control some aspect of our “life.” Or there are things happening in our “life” in which we cannot accept. What is actually breaking down is our idea of what our life should be as well as the boundaries of what our idea of ourselves can accept & still stay intact.

The Path - Life examined clearly consists mostly of frustration, with short respites along the way in which temporary relief is attained. These short periods serve as the motivation for us to endure the long intervals in between. We tend to aggrandize memories of our childhood and project ideal circumstances into our future, while standing in between them, in the only moment there is, discontent with our lives. True happiness existing only as a pretence for the world to see. The easy solution seems to be the fulfillment of our desires, or losing ourselves in imagination. The only problem with chasing our desires is how temporary the relief is that they bring. Whether we gain pleasure from material attainment of some sort, or sensual desire, they can act at most as a mild anesthetic. And once they wear off, we return to our exact point of departure, none the better. In most cases we feel worse than we did in the first place.
We have all stood at the cross roads, knowing exactly where one road ends, and still we choose it time and time again. Just as in the movie The Matrix, when Neo tries to get out of the car and go back, and Trinity says: “You have been down there Neo, you know that road, you know exactly where it ends. And I know that's not where you want to be.” But we have continued, in the same circle, the same cycle, which some refer to as Samsara, or “wheel of suffering.” We continue in our ignorance by maintaining that the next thing will really be what we have been looking for. If we could just get this, or do this, life would be ok. It won’t. Albert Einstein defined insanity as: “Doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.”

We can never solve a problem that we don’t know exists, or that we won’t acknowledge. If we persist in this long enough, we can hardly ignore the developing pattern. Like coming down from the “high” effect of a drug, we always hit the ground. And the higher we get, the further we must fall. Indeed, the only way to make any true and lasting ascent, would be to raise the ground itself, to elevate our basic, inherent state of existence, our ground of being.

If there were such a change possible, it could not depend on our circumstances, nor on anyone outside of ourselves, since life is in a constant state of change. If this were not so, then anything we may accomplish may be taken away in an instant, by life’s changing tides, or by someone who suddenly has a change of heart. Insight may reveal the root of the problem as being our insistence on something or someone outside of ourselves to make us happy. Therefore, if we wish to traverse this new path, we must begin by changing the direction of our search, from outward to inward, and no step may be taken, without being completely honest with ourselves at all times.

**Grounding** - Come out of the clouds and rest on the ground and you won’t fall so far, won’t be let down so hard. I think it has something to do with just being ok. We don’t need to be ecstatic, or have our hopes up at all times. We just need to be ok, low maintenance, at peace. This doesn’t mean we can’t work to improve our lives, but we don’t put so much more importance on the future than the present. Our usual state, and one we can count on and maintain, is just being ok, grounded, tranquil. It all comes back to keeping your feet on the ground. The more you wander into thought and imagination, desire and fantasy, the more your feet leave the ground and your head stays in the clouds. The more elaborate your fantasies and desires, the worse the present situation of your life appears, the less you can enjoy it. We set the standards and requirements for our happiness, though we rarely acknowledge it. Many people define happiness in the wrong way, as excitement or thrills, or some attainment in the future. That’s why sometimes it feels good to give up, and drop the expectations that have been stressing us. When we are “down,” we do sometimes come to terms with reality, but we do it in protest, in indignation, playing the role of the victim. We give up, only in bitter resignation. We temporarily drop out of the game, until our story takes a turn for the better and we can feel back on top. Or at least until we modify our expectations of it, or begin to forget what was “wrong” in the first place. Any insight we may attain, or freedom we may taste, from releasing reality from our ideas, from aligning ourselves with it, are drowned out and over shadowed by our feelings of anger and defeat.
We all stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before us and profit from their knowledge and experience. Our societies have evolved to such a degree because we have continually passed on the torch, so that one may start where the other has left off, in at least as many ways as possible. Unfortunately we become cut off from our essential relationship with reality, relying more on the words of others than on personal experience. We deprive new generations of their own experiential investigations into the nature of life.

The majority of people stop seeking answers at a very young age, most often because they accept what others have told them, and so they substitute true knowledge and understanding with beliefs and ideas, and this pacifies them. They prefer the authority and guidance of others to their own experiential investigations into life and truth.

How many things do we use to pacify our discontentment, to make us feel more secure? Pleasures such as food or sex. The thrill of getting things we desire. Power over others. Trying hard to be liked by others, to be popular, to be envied etc.

Because we do not know who we are, we require others to define us. Because we do not love ourselves, we compromise ourselves to gain favor with others.

Are your desires really so important or is it just the gratification involved in getting what you want, the tension and relief involved in desiring and acquiring? Does desire create a void, a negative, an absence, a tension, which facilitates the object of desire, and the positive that it brings, known only in contrast to the absence created by that desire itself? Are they an excuse you must have before you allow yourself to be temporarily happy, or before you can even recognize happiness? If happiness truly comes from within, is this not the case?

What does the answer of a burning question, or the fulfillment of a strong desire accomplish? What is the end product, the result? Is the result happiness, contentment? What is it that happens subjectively once a desire is fulfilled, regardless of the specific desire, or anything outside of our own awareness? What is the result of rationalization, consolation, success, security, comfort? Or anything else that brings the same subjective feeling of being ok, being at peace, acceptance, contentment. What defines happiness and contentment? The relaxation of the mind, the return to calmness, the stilling of the mind. The departure of desire & the relaxation of tension?

Physical, Mental, Emotional Tension. Tension is a force, or the interplay between forces. The ego consists primarily of tension. Hunger, fear, desire, pain, hope, need, are all forms of tension. There is tension placed on us from the outside which may vary depending on our inclination to it and interpretation of it. There is tension that we place, impose, on ourselves from the inside, consciously and unconsciously, for innumerable reasons, which may or may not have an actual relationship to outside circumstances. Must some tension be maintained in order for “ease” or “relaxation” to be noticed in its contrast? Would you know you were ok, without the contrast of tension? Without tension, would we not remain apathetic & inert, without ever growing or learning?
From birth, what have you done voluntarily, other than acting to resolve the most dominant tensions at the various stages, while telling yourself stories along the way, and accumulating those stories to form your identity & story. Biological, social tensions, etc. If there were no tension you would become static, why do anything else? You would have no “reason” to do otherwise. Pleasure is the temporary, justified, relaxation of tension, which by its very existence creates a form of tension to perpetuate itself. Any desire whatsoever is a form of tension. Preferences, opinions, involve opposites, and the interplay of tension between them. The ego is inherent with tension because it lies between dualities, which in themselves would not exist without something with the faculty to discriminate between them, something capable of perceiving their contrast.

Desire is a form of tension between the present and future. A tension between what we have and what we want.

We either consciously or unconsciously place tension on ourselves in order to accomplish various results. This is aside from the various biological tensions inherent in survival and reproduction. Now, it seems that depending on the person, and their particular set of motivations, goals, preferences, etc. that the tension they place on themselves varies. As most of us know, we never relax for very long after our desires, goals, are met, before we develop new ones, which facilitate new tensions. This isn’t necessarily bad, since this is how apparent “progress” is made. Here is the kicker though: it seems that the specific goals, desires, etc. aren’t the real payoff, since their importance diminishes quickly. The real & disguised payoff is much more simple, as it seems to be the relaxation of tension upon ourselves. Those brief moments when we allow ourselves to be o.k. The short period of rest in between desires. When we feel as though we have earned a momentary state of peace.

We have to “earn” happiness, by getting everything to line up just right, depending on our expectations. It all only works though if we can maintain that we don’t set up the rules, that they are imposed on us. If we maintain our story, and identify with it, the expectation part seems to be imposed, based on our story & the preferences and requirements of our character.

A battery consists of a positive side and a negative side, one which is deficient in electrons, and one which has an excessive amount of electrons. The result is a potential energy, or tension, which seeks to resolve itself. Without the “tension” generated by the opposite polarities, the potential would be zero. Ohm’s law states that the current flowing in a circuit is proportional to the applied potential difference or Voltage. The greater the opposition, the greater the potential energy. Resistance is the opposition to flow. A conductor stands in between the poles, its resistance obstructing the flow of energy. Without resistance, flow is unimpeded. The flow of energy is dependent upon the conductor, and its degree of resistance. No opposing polarities, NO POTENTIAL!