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Cultivate Life! magazine

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In Search of Meaning

By Basil E. Gala, Ph.D.

For thousands of years in all cultures and in all places, our ancestors have sought to find out what is virtue, good behavior, and how to attain it. Much of the search for goodness has been clothed in religious terms: the practice of piety and the avoidance of sin. The rest of the search and findings were philosophies in weighty volumes, or in the simple sayings of ordinary people known as folk wisdom. We have known for a long time what it takes to achieve a measure of peace, happiness, and a fruitful life for ourselves and our societies. What we have lacked has been the will, the capacity to act with reason, carrying out what we know is the right course of action. We often ask ourselves when we mess up our lives, why or why do I do these things that are bad and why don't I do this thing I know is the right thing to do for me and my fellows? For example, why do I smoke, drink too much alcohol, take this illegal drug, or why do I sometimes hurt people I love? Why don't I work harder to succeed, instead of wasting my time with trivial pursuits? My answer is--because we don't stop long enough to think as we pace our habitual dog run; we don't pause in our pursuit of comfort and pleasure; we don't listen to the source of our being; we don't deliberate, but rush ahead with what we have always been doing. We tend to react, distracted by others, friends or adversaries, to do what we have been accustomed in doing, with little conscious thought, planning, and foresight. For nearly all of us the problem is not ignorance of how to act, but the drive to act virtuously. How do we find the will to do what's right? I propose to you praxis, the art of virtuous action.

Praxis balances ataraxia: inner peace, coping well with whatever happens to us, a stoical stance. Ataraxia says whatever may befall me, I can handle it, even enjoy it, because my happiness is up to me. Praxis, by comparison, is action towards my goals; it's the application of theory to practice, the realization of plans, the fulfillment of dreams, the contact with what religious people call God.

Parents, teachers, bosses, and preachers, and all the gurus of success from Napoleon Hill to Anthony Robbins have lectured us on how to succeed. Now you and I will search for the secret of praxis using our

own peculiar reason and intuition. We're after that which connects-controls-couples what we desire and intend with what we actually cause to happen. We want to cause an effect, the same way gravity causes water to flow in a channel. We want a strong coupling of our purpose to our desired action, so that action is free to flow in the channel of our intention, without events or people interfering or blocking the flow.

Suppose, for example, we're fat and want to be lean, which is going from a given state A to a desired state B, the statement of any problem. We want to cause the effect getting lean, which cannot be done overnight except with liposuction. We need to reduce this problem so it's subject to the inevitable laws of nature. We know that taking in more calories than we can burn adds fat to our bodies and taking fewer calories reduces fat. We set up a calorie budget to that effect for each day, say 1400 calories; now we have reduced the problem to changing our behavior so that we stay within our calorie budget. Over time, we'll inevitably reach our desired lean state.

Wait, you say, changing our eating behavior, that's not so simple. Aye, there's the rub. How do we make this change in behavior inevitable? We do this by relying on an established behavior, which is inevitable in all of us except in thieves. Don't we always pay for a meal at a restaurant? Put 14 pennies in your left pocket when you wake up in the morning, each penny worth 100 calories. When you eat, for each 100 calories put one penny in your right pocket. The right pocket is the restaurant's money; it doesn't belong to you until tomorrow morning when you will put the 14 pennies back in your left pocket. When your left pocket is empty, you have no more money to spend on food today. You have effective control of your behavior on eating.

But what's to stop me from borrowing pennies and spending the borrowed money? Nothing will stop me except my will to succeed, to get lean. Yes, I depend on my will, about which thinkers debate whether it exists or not.

I say the will exists, because I can feel it when it's on, the same way I can feel anger, sadness, or love. When expressing my will, I may appear to others as stubborn, obstinate, unreasonable--a bulldog. I'm like the

English in 1941 facing the Nazis. I define the will as the emotion which moves me to do what's right even when I'm alone, uncomfortable, pained, or terrified acting this way. It's the same emotion of the will which stops me from doing something pleasant, enticing, even enthralling, when it's not right, harmful to me or others. My will is tied to my moral sense, a strictly human trait, and it's my connection with the source of life and consciousness deep inside me and beyond.

If you are new to the will, it will be uncomfortable for you at first. Activating the will is stressful, producing tension, even anxiety. Preparing to act under the force of the will can even be painful, as it is when we make up a list of things to do, meet deadlines on the way to our goal, or face the necessity of changing our long-entrenched habits to succeed.

Life runs on fundamental habits, inherited or grown mostly by the age of five. Habits lead us to inevitable actions. You can be confident that people will behave according to their basic habits, their characters. People are predictable in what they do if you know their characters. Study a person's character well and you'll know how that person will behave with a high degree of confidence. People as a rule don't change their habits, the good habits, the indifferent ones, or even the bad habits which they see as such. Only under great internal or external pressure will people change habits with great difficulty and slowly, if at all. Acting contrary to habit is uncomfortable, sometimes even painful, requiring much effort and concentration.

People don't like to stop, think, and concentrate on changing, life rushing on them as it does these days, demanding money and gratifications. They tend to avoid breaking long-held habits; they slip instead into old grooves, especially when they find pleasure in the actions. You can bet profitably that people will not change their ways.

Still, people need to change sometimes; it may even be a matter of life and death for some people to chuck a bad habit, like smoking for example. How do you change?

First, when a habitual routine is coming on, be on the alert and stop or hesitate before moving into it. Hesitate and become deliberate, choosing to recall your goals in life, and decide if your habitual routine will help or hinder your goals. If your habitual action serves these goals best, then continue with it; otherwise, re-orient yourself like the captain of a ship checking the stars, compass, or GPS. Listen to your inner voice; if you cannot find a better way, then do nothing but meditate. Then deliberate. To deliberate means that you slow down your thinking, feeling and action, slow down enough to move surely to the next step in what you want to do. It's like parking your car in a difficult space, where you don't want to hit anything. You'll not move fast this way, but you'll do it right.

Second, you can change by strengthening your will, confronting temptation, letting the intellect engage in the struggle and call on the emotion of the will to counter the temptation. You can feel the emotion of the will stirring, stiffening like cold anger in your heart. If you're a smoker quitting your habit, you feel the cool anger of your will when you put out a cigarette you just lit. Once you have experienced the will, you can call it up as needed and nurture its growth. Each time you activate the will, you make it stronger. Each time you act with the will to counter a bigger temptation for pleasure or greater fear of pain, you make your will more potent.

Intellect alone is impotent; the emotion of the will links what you know must be done with what you actually do. Feel the rise of the will then when it's needed and let it run with full strength to change your behavior in critical times. When you have done this long enough, you will have extinguished a bad habit or reinforced a good one; thereafter, you'll run free in the right direction without effort under the force of habit. As Verdi might say, *la forza del destino* is the force of habit.

Third, you can change habitual behavior by blocking and channeling its flow before it occurs. For example, if like me you're prone to overeating, keep little food in your refrigerator and pantry; use a small plate, fork, and spoon; shop food less frequently; avoid restaurants, especially buffets, and engagements where the hostess serves food too lavishly; wear tight pants and belt; go to bed early to skip night eating; eat slowly, chewing thoroughly, setting your fork down after each bite until it's gone

down your gullet; drink water one hour before sitting down to a meal; don't sit down to a meal, but grab a snack, and so forth. You can devise similar tactics for other habits you want to change. These tactics are cheating the will, but they work in the long run, because a habit is a repetitive action, and if not repeated it's bound to become extinguished. Similarly, you can set up channeling of desirable behavior, reinforcing a good habit. For example, if you want to get up earlier to attend to your duties, set a loud alarm earlier, out of reach unless you get up and out of bed.

We have found how to couple what we want to achieve to what we are doing, praxis, the exercise of the will, the force of life itself.

Now, let's think about life's purpose. Our purpose is to serve: to work and serve ourselves, our family, our community, our species, all species, Nature, God if you like. If we are children of a Creator, our purpose too is to create, to work, to build, to design, produce new interesting patterns, and to reduce the chaos, the disorder (entropy) in the world. Seeking pleasure, even happiness itself, is a lowly goal, unfit for us. Even less of a worthy goal is avoiding discomfort, pain, even agony if necessary in doing our work. Not that we want to seek out pain, damaging our bodies, beating our backs with chains like religious zealots. We want instead to enjoy as best as we can whatever comes from doing our duty; that's fine and good. On our deathbeds, we shall accept the utmost pain and carry on with our work if possible.

In our work we have primary goals: to achieve success in our chosen career, making enough money to feed, clothe, and house ourselves, to marry and raise a family, to win and influence people enough for social acceptance or even fame, to help cure the evils in the world and promote justice. We need to observe a number of supporting goals also: to promote our good health and fitness, to keep learning new skills and knowledge needed as the world changes, to save money and property for our security and retirement, to perform our civic duties, such as voting, tax payments, jury duties.

I want every year of my life, every day, every hour, every minute to be dedicated to my goals and actually be used to further these goals. How about rest and recreation? Some time should be given over to R & R,

scheduled for that purpose as needed and no more. When tired, rest; when rested, work. Needed fun for relaxation is helpful to a career; excess fun is damaging. What should I do about the arts—literature, drama, cinema, music, dance, painting, sculpture, interior and exterior design? Art can enter every phase of life—work, family, society—because art is an emanation of the life force, invigorating everything we do. I would like to integrate art into my activities as much as possible, into my eating, exercising, traveling, sleeping, socializing, loving, and work. How about laughter, adventure, and spontaneity? I will allow for these also, otherwise, life becomes boring, but I don't want the pursuit of trifles, pleasure, comfort, happiness even, taking over my life, distracting me from my purpose.

Felicity follows function follows fulfillment. Fulfillment, my life's purpose, determines how I function, how I behave, and such behavior makes me happy, joyful, and serene.

I expect fulfillment in experiencing sensations and feelings, as well as thoughts in exploring on this our planet. I see myself as a robotic probe on Earth, my consciousness a transmission from another place, another dimension. My body is very valuable, a complex mechanism at my disposal to get around on the surface, much more sophisticated than the surveyor craft on Mars. But my body is not I. I belong elsewhere and will go there again to join my transmitter and be debriefed fully after my body has ceased to function. My body is like a candle holder with a burning light. As the candle is used up, the light goes out to infinity like all radiation. Seeing myself thus, I have set my goal while living here to learn as much as I can—skills, knowledge, wisdom, right behaviors—to explore the world, seeking adventure without terminating my body too soon, experiencing all the activities this body is capable of tackling: swimming, dancing, loving, singing, playing, laughing, knowing other human beings intimately, and accomplishing things of value to me and others.

Primarily, however, my goal in life is to think, with the sharpest reasoning my brain is capable of exercising, about the fundamental problems of existence and the universe. And to write down my answers to the big problems with the best art and artistry I can muster.

That is the purpose of my life. I hope my work is of value to other people. In any case, my efforts are valuable to me. What is the purpose of your life?

A definite major purpose in life, perhaps some secondary goals also, enable praxis, the control, the wheel and rudder in steering your body in turbulent seas. Your purpose must be concrete, definite, and well defined. You cannot tie effective action to a vague, tenuous purpose. Your purpose must be vivid, foremost in your mind when planning and executing your actions. Repeating frequently to yourself and others, in writing and speech, what you want to accomplish, reinforces your vision for the success you want. Detail your goal, embellish it, picture it in your mind's eye often; it will help couple your goal to your daily activities and you'll be less likely to be thwarted by adverse events and people.

The world around us is often turbulent, chancy, even mad. People fail us, contraptions fail us, nature fails us. We begin by exercising ataraxia, complete inner peace with a smile. We submit for a time to the will of all-powerful, compassionate, and wise Jupiter, Jehovah, or Allah. We accept momentarily whatever fate dumps on our heads, we resign, relax, and remain calm in the eye of the hurricane. We no longer feel pain, have no need of pleasure, and enter a state of perfect mental tranquility. That's ataraxia, taught by Epicurus, another concept, taken up elsewhere. For now, we go the way of praxis, powerful action in the face of adversity. We want firm actions, day in, day out, hour in, our out, to take us out of the storm to our port of call. Actions that inevitably follow from our intention, premise, or axiom, like a logical or mathematical argument, like the laws of physics: gravity, electromagnetism, and the nuclear forces.

Praxis is a method for controlling your time and life, directing your energies to succeed in your goals. Your day has twenty-four hours, eight hours or so of which are given to sleep and dreaming over which you have little control. You still have sixteen hours remaining for goal-driven actions. If you use your waking hours effectively, you'll find your sleep and dreams may also be productive in ideas. Working effectively each hour, you push towards your goals. What you may control is the push,

the action you're able to take, not the result you want, although your aim is to hit your target.

In your daily schedule, do set up your target, but mainly plan your actions and later record what you actually did each hour. Stick to your planned schedule, unless you find a good reason to change course; don't vacillate. At the end of the day, study how you have deviated from your planned actions and how to correct your behavior next day. Praxis doesn't come at once without practice, like an epiphany; you perfect praxis gradually with constant and devoted training, like any other discipline. You may only control in the world what you feel, what you think, and what you do; the rest is up to the dice and toss of nature.

You can improve control of your behavior by rehearsing your planned actions enough times until what you're going to do is very vivid, certain, and real in your mind. Think of yourself as an actor preparing to go on stage to say your piece, because "all the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players."

Unavoidably, some of the time you'll be busy with necessary supportive actions: dressing, eating, exercising, resting, cleaning and nursing yourself. Enjoy what you can of these activities, but fit them in the interstices of your work schedule by making them brief. For example, eating is something we do too much; affluence leads us to overindulge. The adult human body requires few calories and nutrients in a few snacks: each day, sixty grams of protein, thirty grams of good fat, thirty grams of fiber, with traces of vitamins, minerals, phytochemicals, and anti-oxidants, which you can best get from delicious vegetables and fruits with complex carbohydrates for clean energy. Any excess food goes to waste or to body fat. We tend to eat too much and too fast. Less eating will give you, paradoxically, more energy--also better health, and a longer life. Eat little, slowly, and enjoyably, focusing on fine, fresh, food for ten minutes between work periods of fifty minutes, like a psychiatrist's hours. If the needed materials, like ready foods, are available at hand, you can fit most of your support activities between your fifty-minute productive sessions.

Begin your work on the hour and take a break for supporting activities ten minutes before the hour. Even exercise can be fitted in ten-minute sessions; the health benefits are the same as for longer exercise periods. Next to eating, we allow too much time for exercise if we are health conscious. Sweating in the gym for hours to lose weight is a waste of time. You can lose weight best by eating less. For body building, you need to work out more; but as for staying fit, three ten-minute sessions of exercise a day are sufficient, if they include aerobics, weight training, and calisthenics for flexibility. You can set an egg timer to remind you of work and break intervals.

With regular breaks, you will have more productive work periods and more stamina to work hard till the end of the day.

You need to work hard each day to achieve important goals. Praxis is a discipline of feeling, thought and action, empowering you to work hard, enabling you to do what promotes your goals in life and to avoid what is harmful or wasteful of your time and other resources. Why do we often neglect work we must do and indulge in actions that we should avoid? First, we seek pleasure for the sake of pleasure, instead of utility. Second, we run away from necessary discomfort or pain. Third, we lapse into apathy, even depression, neglecting what we need. Fourth, we submit to damaging habits, wasteful customs, or addictions, debilitating modes of behavior, such as overeating, smoking, gambling, drinking alcohol, shopping excessively, or fornicating indiscriminately.

Praxis will set you free from such chains of behavior, leading you to greener pastures, because praxis is a belief system, a faith not necessarily tied to religion.

To achieve, you need to have faith in yourself, in nature, and in your ability to succeed in getting results you deem worthwhile. Motivational teachers have called this attitude positive thinking. Positive or constructive thinking, enthusiasm, motivates us to move, to exert ourselves, and to achieve. Certainly, negative or downbeat thinking does the opposite, but it has its place in life too; it's conservative. When you practice negative thinking you fall into a passive state, lethargy, inaction, sleep, conserving resources, sometimes your very life. That is the

evolutionary advantage of feeling low, dejected, defeated, or depressed. Positive thinking, on the other hand, pushes you to expend resources liberally to get to your goal, because you believe you can reach it, sometimes risking your money, or your eye and limb. You may end up with irrational exuberance, or mania. Your nervous system firing neurons, your glands secreting hormones, and your muscles contracting all act together with positive feedback into larger and larger swings to resonance, causing sometimes a complete breakdown.

Negative thinking and feedback are beneficial when breakdown threatens. Go then into ataraxia with laughter, or at least a smile. It's all a game anyway to be enjoyed, this sporting life, acting on the stage of the world, having our exits and our entrances.

But while forging ahead with your daily goal-directed schedule, be prepared to counter distractions from your body, your negative mind, your bad old habits, your well-meaning friends and relatives, as well as those who mean to waste your time and damage your life. You'll be working intensely, doing much good work, when suddenly sleepiness will hit you, a friend will call to chat, or a salesperson will pounce on you. Be prepared to firmly resist these intrusions, pushing ahead with the things you have scheduled to do. This is the time to be stubborn, obstinate, pig-headed, projecting your powerful will.

If you want to accomplish anything extraordinary, you'll run into opposition; it's in the nature of the world. The world is jealous of achievers because most people are not. You'll need practice to defend your time and other resources from those friends or adversaries apt to waste them for their own aims or no aim at all. You have to possess the force of will to overcome the enemy, most of the enemy being within yourself, your lethargic slothful self, demanding to be pampered, comforted, pleased. The core of praxis, cold anger (thymos I call it) drives you on; it's what they call in marketing circles aggressiveness. You're not hurting anybody, but you extend yourself, projecting your objective on your own actions and those of others. Thymos, (aggressiveness or assertiveness) is that cool, calculating, controlled, enterprising push towards the goal, plainly seen in sports and business, but also energizing the arts, politics, professions, and sciences.

I'm not implying you should be devoting every hour of your day to your job, except for necessary rest periods. You have other goals and interests besides your career: family, friends, community interests. Give these interests their due--but no more, if you want personal success.

The desire for personal success will lead you to exercise praxis, part of which is the right self talk. What we think affects how we feel and how we feel affects what we do. Psychologists say that cognition does not usually occur in an affective vacuum, that is, thinking is tied up with feelings. On the athletic field or in business meetings you get pep talk from the coach or the boss. As an independent performer, you need to supply pep talk to yourself. "I can do this." "I can handle it." "It's a piece of cake." "I'm going to win this." "I'm going to make it through this." Keep talking to yourself until you have built up enough drive inside to act, unless it's time for conservation, and negative talk: "I need a little rest now before I begin again." "Look out, you're over extending yourself."

If pep talk fails to motivate you rightly to solve your problem, if nothing works for a time, relax, fall back on humor and laughter with the aid of ataraxia. Counteracting thymos humor is an easing up, spontaneous and frank, a play with friends or enemies you approach lightly, with laughter the relaxing reflex letting go of tension and stress for a while until you recover your balance to press on again with praxis.

Praxis is mainly intentional living, tied to goals not amusement, leading promptly to fitting and efficient action, as opposed to a casual and passive lifestyle directed by others, in which most people indulge, settling in mediocrity. Spiritually, praxis is the immediate and personal contact with the divine, a taste of the source guiding our destinies.

My lifestyle is a simple one as dictated by praxis, dedicated to purpose, integrity, conscience, ethical and frugal living in a village community, respect for the environment, mostly vegetarian eating, beneficence to all people and living things, resistance to ostentation, commercial appetites, and excessive money making. Like you or any human being, occasionally I'm assailed by doubts, anxiety, even despair about my life, family, the whole world. Then I quickly respond with praxis, blocking such feelings and thoughts and substituting the mind set which leads me

to thrive and to help others. The human mind can entertain one powerful emotion at a time; therefore, I bring on thymos banishing frustration, self-pity, fear, or despair.

When praxis with thymos is on, I know that every moment is a kernel of the future, my destiny, which must not be derailed by a foul mind set. As a rule, thymos transforms me to act with fortitude and enterprise. If in doubt of my next move, however, I stop and meditate, doing nothing, better than making the wrong move. I seek guidance in the silence of my spirit. I know that each moment my actions should bring closer to my goal, or else I pause and reset my mind. I may approach people I know who can influence me in the right direction, or read a passage or two of wisdom from my favorite thinkers, Plato, Marcus Aurilius, St. Augustine, Descartes, Russell.

Contact with good minds leads to good actions. I always seek to guide my steps with logic, sound reasoning, taking into account what I feel, but never to follow my emotions blindly. I program my actions towards my goal, visualizing each step in detail, in full color, rehearsing my movements enough times to completion; then I stop again, listen, attend, and repeat the sequence of actions in my mind, never allowing distraction, until I'm satisfied my course is right, firm, and inevitable.

The core idea of praxis is self discipline, a very different concept than discipline imposed on us by others. Self discipline leads to true freedom of mind and such success in life as is possible for us mortals in an indifferent, often hostile, world, ruled as much by caprice as by law.

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See <http://basilgala.blogspot.com/>

Born and raised in Greece, Basil came to America when he was 20 to study engineering. He earned a Masters degree in Engineering Science from CIT and a Ph.D. from USC, worked in aerospace for a number of years, then taught at the California State University for ten years. Upon retirement I have been writing on a variety of subjects, self publishing a philosophical book on religion, "The God Connection", and a card game manual, "The Biriba Game," available at [newvistasmedia.com. http://biribagame.com/index.html](http://biribagame.com/index.html)

Twain-isms

By Linda Sapadin, Ph.D.

Everyone loves short, witty comments that portray the essence of the human condition. And no one does it better than Mark Twain — who left this earth 100 years ago. Here are 21 Twain-isms that remain fresh, accurate and totally applicable to 21st century living...

Our opinions do not really blossom into fruition until we have expressed them to someone else.

Nothing so needs reforming as much as other people's habits.
Travel is fatal to prejudice.

Kindness is the language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see.

Take any road you please - it always curves, which is a continual promise; whereas straight roads reveal everything at a glance and kill interest.

Prosperity is the best protector of principle.

Always obey your parents, when they are present.

An uneasy conscious is a hair in the mouth.

The man with a new idea is a crank until the idea succeeds.

All good things arrive unto them that wait - and don't die in the meantime.

A full belly is little worth where the mind is starved.

A man cannot be comfortable without his own approval.

Always do right. This will gratify some people and astonish the rest.

Man is the only animal that blushes - or needs to.

Architects cannot teach nature anything.

It's not best that we would all think alike; it is the difference of opinion that makes horse races.

I was seldom able to see an opportunity until it had ceased to be one.

It is better to keep your mouth shut and appear stupid than to open it and remove all doubt.

An old, cold letter makes you wonder how you could ever have got into such a rage about nothings.

A compliment ought always to precede a complaint, where one is possible, because it softens resentment and insures for the complaint a courteous and gentle reception.

There is nothing in the world like persuasive speech to fuddle the mental apparatus.

Copyright 2010, Linda Sapadin, Ph.D. is a psychologist in private practice who specializes in helping people enrich their lives, enhance their relationships and overcome self-defeating patterns of behavior. For more information about her work, contact her at lsapadin@drsapadin.com or visit her website at <http://www.psychwisdom.com/>.

Visit her newest website www.sixstylesofprocrastination.com which is devoted to understanding and overcoming debilitating procrastination patterns.

Your True Inner Nature

By Owen Waters

Sooner or later every man and woman wakes up to the fact that they are divine beings. Despite the appearance that we are physical in nature and that reality is filtered through the perceptions of our physical brains, there is much more to each human being than their physical aspect.

Above your physical brain is your mind, which is a field of consciousness. Within that field of consciousness, you exist as an aspect of the divine source from which you came.

Long ago, you inserted yourself into the human experience. In those days, nothing was yet physical and being human meant being a specialized personality with the freewill to explore consciousness in greater detail than previously.

Later, physical experience was sought as it made the experience of being a rational, freewill-driven, unique personality all the more interesting. At that point, being physical meant living in a lighter density than today's version of physical existence.

The experience of being physical was so fascinating that, like youngsters excited about a new thrill ride at a funfair, we said, "How about if we try it with the lights out?" And, so, the lights went out.

Today, we are immersed deeper than ever in the human experience of being physical. This includes being apparently cut off from the normal information flow that comes with higher consciousness and we're here to find the answer that lies somewhere out there in the gloom. Or, is it somewhere inside instead of somewhere out there?

Being mostly disconnected from the inner light means that we don't have an inbuilt awareness of our oneness with the universe. We have to earn that realization through dedicated meditation. We don't have always-on telepathic ability to exchange thoughts and feelings with other life forms. Conscious telepathy takes patience and practice. We aren't attuned with conditions in nature like animals are. When an earthquake

jolt is imminent or a tsunami is headed our way, wild animals suddenly head for the hills and we're left wondering why our pets are getting agitated.

As humans today, what we do have is self-awareness, intellect, and freedom of choice. Within this mysterious maze of the thrill ride of being human with the inner lights turned off, there is a treasure to be found. That treasure is the realization that the light was there all the time, yet hidden from sight.

When you first find the spiritual light within, it begins to beckon you forward into the realms of more light. Then, you are firmly on the path of spiritual discovery. You are heading back along the pathway to the level of consciousness from which you came before the thrill ride began.

Remember, your brain is not your mind and your mind is not your real personality. Your immortal soul is your real personality and it is functioning through the filter of who you became in this particular lifetime.

Attune yourself with your soul consciousness every day and you will always be able make the right choices in life. When you sense the essence of your true personality, you will also sense which of the options that lie before you resonate best with your inner guidance. This attunement with the right options and their real potential is the secret to gaining the most from your experience of life as a human being.

This material was extracted from <http://www.infinitebeing.com/ebooks/freedom.htm> *Freedom of the Spirit: Four Powerful Steps to Spiritual Freedom* by Owen Waters. This deeply insightful e-book combines some of today's most proven and time-tested spiritual practices into one powerful and effective package.

Facing Fear

Chuck Gallozzi

Not living your dreams because you're living your fears?

When you were a child, did you believe in ghosts? Were you frightened by 'strange' sounds in the night? If so, the fear you experienced was real. So were the physical effects: a dry mouth, a racing heart, and perspiration. Yet, your fear owed its existence to something unreal. Your fear, like the ghost you were frightened of, was nothing more than a phantom. It was nothing more than an illusion. It had no substance; it was nothing more than a feeling. The dreadful thing you feared existed only in your imagination. You can be excused for acting like a child when you were a child.

But how can we excuse adults who abandon their dreams, abdicate their reason, and destroy their happiness by being mired in fear, anxiety, and worry? Take Joanne, for example. She confided to me that she was afraid her company was preparing to downsize and she might lose her job. Six months ago her company held a general meeting and announced pay cuts of 8% and a 4% reduction in its contribution to the pension fund. For six months Joanne worried that this was the beginning of the end, that downsizing was sure to follow. Her fears robbed her of her usual enthusiasm, resulted in some restless nights, made her irritable, and sapped her energy.

Now she was alarmed. "There is an unusual flurry of activity at the office," she explained to me three weeks ago. "My boss and other department heads are meeting behind closed doors daily with the Chief Financial Officer." This went on for two weeks. Rumors were flying and morale was low. Now at last, there was proof that something was in the works, for at the end of two weeks of meetings, the company announced that there was a general meeting scheduled for the following week.

I met her on the day of the general meeting. She was no longer looking distraught. In fact, she was beaming as she explained, "The company has ended our 8% pay cut and is increasing their contribution to our pension fund to the previous level." Imagine, six months of anguish, all for naught. Have you ever had a similar experience? How many of your present fears and worries will never come to pass? Or, if they do, will

have far less significance than you now imagine? Isn't it time for us to stop believing in ghosts?

My car is parked in my driveway, just ten feet below my bedroom window. Imagine my surprise, a year ago, when I discovered I forgot to lock the door of the car and someone had attempted to steal it. Just ten feet from where I was sleeping, a stranger was in my car, jamming a hairpin or something into the ignition, hoping to start the car! They were unsuccessful. The key to my car would no longer fit into the ignition; so I had to have it towed and repaired. Of course, I wasn't happy about the extra expense and inconvenience, but I WAS HAPPY that my car wasn't stolen and had only minor damage.

When similar events happen to some people, they feel vulnerable and violated. They feel a painful loss of security. They feel threatened. They are afraid they may become victims again. They live with fear and discomfort. Is that any way to live? Isn't it amazing what a difference the interpretation of events can make in our lives? Instead of feeling despondent because I was a victim, I chose to marvel at the fact that so little harm has come my way. I also accept the frailties of human nature, understanding that we live among thieves and criminals. For most of us, the good we experience far exceeds the bad, so there is no justification for living a life of fear.

Like despair, defeat, anxiety, worry, self-pity, and hopelessness, fear is a habit. If we have the power to imagine all kinds of terrible things that will befall us, we also have the power to imagine overcoming every difficulty we face. Why not change the negative habit of fear into the positive habits of hope, confidence, and exuberance? Besides, fear can be beautiful. How could you experience the exhilaration of a 'death-defying' roller coaster ride unless you first experienced fear? The more we fear a particular task or situation, the greater the triumph in overcoming it. So, in truth, fear is nothing to fear. It is just a promise of great personal achievement for those who overcome it.

There comes a time in life when we have to put our foot down and say, "I'm not going to give in to fear any more! Despite the lump in my throat, the tremor in my voice, and the churning in my stomach, I am going to do what I believe is right." Besides changing lives, a simple decision

such as that can change the world. An example of such a story follows.

In the 50's, the southern part of the United States was still segregated. In, Montgomery, Alabama, the first ten seats in all buses were reserved for whites. Even if they were unoccupied, blacks could not use them. On the other hand, if all the white-only seats were occupied and more whites boarded the bus, blacks were forced to give up their seats to the whites. On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks, a black woman seated in the first row of the black section, was asked by the bus driver to give up her seat to a white person who just boarded the bus. Rosa Parks decided not to give in to fear and intimidation and not to give up her seat. As a result, she was promptly arrested. The blacks in Montgomery rallied to her cause and boycotted the bus line for more than a year. This event led to the birth of the American Civil Rights Movement and the rise of Martin Luther King Jr.

The refusal of Rosa Parks, and those who followed her, to give in to fear led to their liberation. Similarly, our refusal to give in to our fears will lead to our liberation. When immersed in fear, we need to separate ourselves from it. Just because we are afraid, it doesn't mean that we are in danger. Just because we are scared, it doesn't mean we are not smart enough, good enough, or strong enough to overcome our fears. We need to step back and analyze what's troubling us. Fear resides in the primitive part of our brain. Once we switch to analytical thinking, we disengage from it and weaken its hold on us. Fear increasingly diminishes as we study our options, make plans, and take action.

Henry Ford (1863 ~ 1947) describes one of life's magnificent rewards, "One of the greatest discoveries a man makes, one of his great surprises, is to find he can do what he was afraid he couldn't do." Don't miss this great opportunity to discover the excitement life brings when we face our fears. Also, every time you feel fearful, remember that those around you have their own fears. So, keep a watchful eye on them and lighten their burden whenever you can by offering them encouragement.

Claiming the Empty Spaces By Marlene Lockwood

"What is this life if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare."
—W. H. Davies

The Importance of Idle Time in a Fast-Forward World

You're just about to leave for your dentist appointment, when you receive a phone call saying the dentist has been called out on emergency and will have to reschedule your appointment. Congratulations! You are the winner of one unexpected free hour!

What will you do with your winnings? Answer your email? Return to the project you were working on before you had to leave? Pay bills? Return phone calls? Ever consider doing nothing?

If you're like many of us today, the thought of doing absolutely nothing for an entire hour seems as wasteful as throwing a week's worth of groceries out with the garbage. Indeed, free time with nothing to do can generate near panic among some of us who are overloaded and time-starved.

"We seem to have a complex about busyness in our culture," says Thomas Moore, author of *Care of the Soul*. "Most of us do have time in our days that we could devote to simple relaxation, but we convince ourselves that we don't."

And yet, the harder we push, the more we need to replenish ourselves. As Stephan Rechtschaffen, author of *Timeshifting*, says, "Each of us needs some time that is strictly and entirely our own, and we should experience it daily."

The importance of this downtime cannot be overstated. We see more clearly, we hear more keenly, we're more inspired, we discover what makes us feel alive.

On some level, we know this already. But claiming time to ourselves—time that is often labeled "unproductive"—and sticking to it can be

difficult. We need to establish formal boundaries around our idle time to ensure that others—and we, ourselves—honor this time.

Some ways to do this are:

- Make a date with yourself. Get to know someone who deserves your attention, —you.
- Stand firm. Learn how to say "no" to co-workers, children, a spouse or a friend. In just a short while, you can say "yes," but now is your time.
- Be clear about your needs. It's not, "I need more time to myself." It's more like, "I'd like to spend 20 minutes by myself in the morning before everyone gets up."
- Be on the lookout for stolen moments. Use the canceled dental appointment to sit on a park bench watching pigeons.
- Practice doing nothing. "Doing nothing" is an art, and like all art you need to practice it to reach your highest potential.

How we define idle time varies by individual. For example, for one person, gardening may be meditative downtime, whereas for another, it is one more item on the to-do list (to be done as quickly as possible). The woods is a great place to stroll through for one person, an opportunity to be in and with nature; for another, it's a great place for a power walk while dictating letters into a small tape recorder.

Our idle time should be like a beautiful flower: it has no purpose. It's just there. And yet, it refreshes us and reminds us of nature's glory.

Do something that has no purpose other than joy. Take a half-hour a day to surprise and delight yourself. Keep it simple, and keep it consistent. If your idle time becomes a "program," or becomes progress toward some productive goal, begin again.

It's stunning, how simple it really is. Enjoy an hour for yourself this week.

Transition Coach Marlene Lockwood helps individuals and groups navigate through life change and transition with more ease, increased balance, enhanced inner peace and improved creativity and vitality.

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Principles of Invisible Justice

Guy Finley,

We can never hope to be free as long as any part of us struggles with, or suffers over what others are doing, have done, or won't do with their lives. If we could remain aware of the often-compromised state of our own character, that is, how we still do those things to others that we don't want to do, this awakened conscience would stir in us a new need. Rather than worrying about whether so-and-so gets his comeuppance for being the kind of person he is, our attention would be elsewhere. It would be focused fully upon being in the Now of our own life where we would be actively attending to what we must do to let go of old resentments that won't let go of us!

A great part of our inability to release this conflict-bred sense of feeling ourselves to be a hostage of how others behave is born of a mistaken perception. In our ignorance, we believe we must fix those who have done us wrong, otherwise justice won't be served. But, as we are about to thankfully discover, the truth is far from this popular view and the chain of victims it serves to create.

There are great Eternal powers at work around and within us all the time. And as we awaken to realize that these same perfect principles are already in place to empower us, this same understanding puts us in relationship with a whole new order of freedom. Freedom is not a creation of ours. It is not something attained by making life line up with our wishes; it is a system already in place, needing only our awareness of its abiding reality to realize its power as our own.

These same invisible laws hold true when it comes to justice for all. We've all heard the phrase, "What goes around comes around." This principle of karma, that what we give, we will receive in return, is a mathematical law whose root runs through the heart of reality. Our present problem is that we don't understand this principle in operation because we can't always see with our physical eyes its unfailing fruition. But be assured, what is evil in nature never goes without its reward, just as what is good is always rewarded in kind. With these truths in mind, how many of us spend our precious time and energy fuming over what others may have done to us?

Unseen in the steam of our heated emotions and churning thoughts is the one inescapable fact that we are the secret prisoner of anyone we wish to punish. And the more we would punish this person, the less freedom we have to be at peace with ourselves. Here's a beautiful lesson in invisible justice, followed by an explanation that will help you let go of any revenge-filled, self-tangling thought. We need never concern ourselves with whether or not some wrongdoer will get his just due. Here's why: *any person who does wrong to another is already punished.* More correctly stated, anyone who acts unjustly in life instantaneously ensures that he or she will be corrected by the celestial laws that govern all such trespasses. It doesn't matter one bit that you or I don't see this law enacted to our satisfaction. The fact remains: **an invisible justice system already exists.** This means we need never judge anyone, nor wish some sentence of suffering upon him or her. This understanding is a gift of great freedom known only by the true few. And we can count ourselves among these liberated ones if we are willing to learn what we must. Here are a few vital facts about this unseen system that ensures equality for all.

Around and within us reside invisible and powerful laws that rule over reality in all its infinite forms. These forces of instant righteousness, or perfect balance if you prefer, are always at work. Nothing escapes their imperceptible presence; everything yields to the weight of their judgment.

One reason many of us fail to recognize the existence of this celestial justice always acting upon us in the Now—or find solace in its perpetual sovereignty—is because of our conditioning: we just aren't comfortable with the idea of any other order of rectitude apart from exacting the proverbial *pound of flesh*. But here is just one small example of how these perfect laws—in one even motion—sentence those who trespass, while liberating those who realize them: *All pretence punishes the pretender.* Here is proof of this truth. The smallest act of cunning on our part always starts with secret self-conflict. Other truths that are the foundation of justice are all around us if we know where to look within ourselves. For example, *Any embraced hatred festers the heart of the one holding this sickness.* Here's another principle governed by these same laws, a principle that allows us to pity those who blindly

accumulate power or possessions at the cost of a greater good: *the seed of any greed always lies within some self-compromising fear, so that nothing can be won by its actions that doesn't frighten us further.*

These next truths are also part of this same system of justice. It is our growing insight into these incorruptible laws that shows us the wisdom in the timeless idea of *letting go and letting God.*

The love of God transforms all things bitter into something better. Self-correction is instant self-elevation.

All of these truths—along with their exciting implications—prove the existence of a great and universal system of invisible justice that upholds the laws of the Invisible Eternals. And if we look deeper still into the heart of these new discoveries, we will find within them the promise of this welcome relief: we are forever *relieved* of the conflict and misery of wanting to penalize those who may have caused us pain. We can let go of all forms of lashing out at others because we see the truth of how things actually work. Getting wrongly caught up in the conflict of wanting to fix the bad behavior of someone else only opens the door and invites other problems and pain into our own life! Now we can leave these people alone to their own trials and torment, for we have seen that their negative nature is one and the same as their punishment; and further we have seen that whatever weight we would try to add on to their backs only falls onto our own. To act from this higher self-awareness not only helps free us from the initial pain born of a negative reaction to what others have done to us, but it also keeps us from wrongly investing ourselves in trying to correct what is already in the throes of being corrected! And once we stop locking ourselves up with wasted judgments and their attendant, never-ending worries, we find that not only are we free, but that there's no power in the universe capable of holding us captive again.

(Excerpted from ***Let Go and Live in the Now*** by Guy Finley, Red Wheel/Weiser, 2004)

No Fixing Required **Beca Lewis**

I thought it was a rag lying in a puddle of water, but when I looked closer it was a tiny baby bird. “Oh so cute,” I thought as I knelt down to look closer. It didn't move, so I carefully touched its wing producing a tiny hop from the bird.

“Are you hurt?” I asked it, and in that moment realized something about myself I had not known. I realized that somewhere deep inside I hoped it was hurt so that I could take it home and “fix it”. It was all about me. I could find comfort in helping this tiny bird. It might even think I was special and love me in return. I would have a story to tell about how wonderful I was for finding and helping this helpless bird.

I thought by wanting to care for the bird and help it I was demonstrating love. But within that moment of clarity I realized I was simply demonstrating a desire to “be” somebody by fixing someone else. Sitting back on my heels while watching this baby bird I realized that real Love would begin with the awareness of the current perfection of everything. That would include the bird and me. We were both just fine. I didn't need to prove love by fixing it; I could simply know that the bird was safe within a much greater Love than my human love.

As I listened to the idea of real Love I heard a bird in the trees—probably the mom telling me to get the heck away from her baby. Since it was very early in the morning, and the bird was sitting in an out of the way place, I decided to continue my run and let the bird and her mom work it out. If the baby bird was still there when I came back I would do something. It wasn't.

Recently a statement I wrote for my book “*A Woman's ABC's of Life*”, has been showing up in many places. I had begun to wonder why it was becoming so popular when the baby bird meeting occurred and I thought I had found my answer. The phrase I wrote was: “Yearn to understand first and to be understood second.”

At the time I wrote this I was thinking about the quality of unselfish love and how much it would change the world if each person cared more about understanding the other person's needs and desires than they needed to be understood themselves. Can you imagine how much every relationship would shift if each of us took this point of view? Perhaps many people feel that using this simple idea would transform their lives and bring the peace that we all desire.

However, the baby bird taught me the next step. Today could we imagine one step further? What if we began with the point of view of perfection for each of us? What if we weren't trying to understand in order to "fix" someone but instead from the celebration of his or her innate perfection?

The baby bird wasn't the first time I thought by fixing something or someone I would be loved or be good. In fact — truth be told — fixing was what I thought I did best. And I am not alone in this mistaken view of love.

A few years ago a real estate agent was visiting our rental home in preparation for selling it for the owner. As she looked around the house she saw our stacks of "Living in Grace" books that we had just received from the printer, which prompted her to ask what we did. After a brief explanation that we teach how to start from a spiritual point of view in all that we do, she was quiet for a moment and we both thought, "Wow — she understands." Except what she said was, "Great, can you fix my husband?"

In a way this is what we all do. We look for solutions to fix others rather than fixing our own point of view. It is so much easier to look outside our self to find someone with a problem to fix than it is to begin with the correct premise of Love first. With our real estate agent friend we tried to explain that if she could find just one thing that she absolutely, without qualification, loved about her husband, no matter how small, and focus on that when she thought about him, their lives would begin to change. After 10 minutes of trying, and after 30 years of marriage, she was unable to see anything that she was willing to love without judgment.

Willingness to love from perfection first is the key. When we begin from the point of view that there is a problem that needs to be fixed the solution will remain within the human. Within the human point of view solutions have pluses and minuses. Sometimes the solution, or cure, seems worse than the problem. There is plenty of evidence in the world today that beginning from the human story and trying to fix it from a human point of view is not the answer. Starting from the correct spiritual perfection premise we could avoid this whole story all together.

Isn't it clear that "what we perceive to be reality magnifies?" As I knelt to the baby bird, if I would have stayed within the reality that the bird needed to be "fixed," I might have taken a perfectly happy and healthy bird away from its natural environment.

As I shifted to a perception that the bird was perfect in Love, that reality magnified with the result of the bird flying away with its mom. At other times the outcome of this point of view may have produced a different action from me, but starting from Love's perfection my action would not have been to fulfill a need for me, but as an expression of Love's care for each of us.

This applies to all our relationships beginning with the relationship with our self. Sooner or later we all will have to give up our stories about how much fixing we need or need to do for others. Sooner or later we will have to give up all thoughts and statements that begin with, "I need to fix this," and begin instead with the spiritual perception of the perfection of the higher power called Love. This Love knows us all now as the complete and perfect expressions of Itself. The result of this shift, the outcome of this shift, will be much more grace-full and loving than any amount of human effort could ever accomplish.

If we could all kneel before each other and say without doubt, "I see you now as the perfect and whole expression of Divine Love and my actions reflect that knowing" I imagine that will set us all free to fly "home" to "Mom". ###

Mind Constraints - Working Within Them

Steve Wickham

The limitations of our conscious thought have us scurrying in next to no time as pressure bears down. The key is to always remember, these panicked moments too shall pass.

We'll often wonder why it is that we're either stuck for something to do or madly trying to keep up. Like, where's the much cherished balance to life we all seek?

We can ask another question, a much better one; one with real wrangling pertinence.

What are our limitations and why?

The Large Capacity of a Small Space

Our minds deal with so much that we're not even remotely aware of. Only a very small part of our brains is devoted to actually living consciously, and this is where we are found out.

We can't help but think we're in control, especially when it seems that way. Then a flood of two or three issues hit us at once and then we're overwhelmed.

The truth is we're overwhelmed quickly in the cognitive space. Our thinking cannot keep up when things are coming in from different angles simultaneously. Sure, some are more capable than others, but generally we don't cope well with many things at once.

Acknowledging Limitations Frees Us from Despair

Another thing we cannot help but think about is how despairingly easy we're overpowered by the thundering 'service game' of life (to use a tennis term).

One thing we have a God-blessed right for is a life where balance is accorded; where we can be active and engrossed in our lives, indeed 'busy,' without suffering continual exhaustion.

And, still, there'll be times when we've wondered why life's so suddenly and unfairly against us.

The key initiative to engage with is simply acknowledging in the battling moment that the moments themselves - the ones clamouring all over, and wrestling with, our peace - will pass, eventually.

The longer term initiative is about life design. What steady state of mind activity do we personally find optimal? We see here a clue to the meaning of life. It's learning about how we personally tick, and then adjusting the 'income' of life perfectly to measure.

Here, fundamentally, are we granted control - for the greater good.

Feeling Compassion: *Only for the Hungry, or Also for People Who Hurt You?*
By Gabriella Kortsch, Ph.D.

Most people have no problem in understanding *how* to feel compassion for the poor and hungry from third-world countries, or even those in similar positions in our own wealthier nations. And certainly, most people understand *why* we would even begin to entertain the idea of feeling compassion for people in such a predicament. It seems the normal, human, charitable thing to feel, doesn't it? This may even lead a good portion of the people feeling such compassion to actually undertaking something tangible that might ease the burden of those who suffer from poverty, hunger, homelessness, persecution, etc.

Partners Who Hurt, Cheat, Lie

Often when clients walk into my office for the first time, they will expend an inordinate amount of energy telling me, during that first session, how much their partner, companion, or spouse has hurt them, cheated them, lied to them, deceived them, manipulated them, changed on them, or abandoned them, to name only a few. And, of course, I am expected to empathize with their position, and essentially see that the other party is someone who can only be defined in unspeakable terms.

It Takes Two to Tango...

At this point I frequently intervene and offer the opinion that it *does* take two to tango (so, for example, if he/she did such-and-such to you, why did you let it go on for so long?), and further, that *no matter what* "relationship crime" the other party has actually "committed", he/she also deserves some compassion because who knows what has happened in their life up to that point (and particularly in their early life) in order to bring them to behave in such a despicable way.

This will occasionally merit me a baleful glare from my client. But often I also see a glimmer of understanding, or even of agreement. Sometimes I think it's their way of assuaging their own angry thoughts at themselves for having fallen in love with the other person at all, of justifying to themselves that there *was* something wonderful there for them at the beginning, and that therefore it is not necessary to view themselves as total relationship failures for having chosen so badly. Indeed. But there is more to be looked at.

The Why and the How of it all

Why we might feel compassion for someone who has hurt us seems to be easy to understand. They may have become the way they now are; this awful way they are behaving with us, in other words, because of, as mentioned earlier, difficult traumas in their childhood, perhaps painful relationship patterns prior to meeting us, or a myriad number of other plausible reasons that might allow us to get a glimpse into the inner makings of this other person.

But *how* do we go about feeling this compassion, when what we really would like to do is wring their necks, or never let them see the children again, or take them for what they're worth and leave them without a penny, or make them pay in some other way that will truly make them realize just how much they have hurt us?

How do we find it in ourselves to bring up any measure of compassion when they obviously are such absolutely awful people? People who have perhaps hurt us more than anyone else. Deliberately. Hatefully. Viciously. A betrayal of this nature, where once there was love, and now there is only blackness, is perhaps more difficult to deal with than any other kind of betrayal because we see it from the position of deliberateness on the part of the other person. They wanted to hurt us. They did so knowingly.

Finding the Way to Compassion in the Mirror of our Self-Image

While major religions spend a great deal of time preaching compassion, religion is by no means the only method to find your way to compassion. Rather, I would venture to say, the first step might be by taking a look at yourself. By seeing what is inside of you. By getting to know yourself, your intentions, your desires, your needs, your fears, your vanities, your pride, your ego, your priorities, your patience, and your degree of self-awareness.

Self Awareness and Responsibility

Self-awareness is such a tricky thing. If you don't have it, you generally don't know that you don't have it, and when you begin to acquire it, you keep forgetting about it until you make a discipline of it, of forcing yourself to be self-aware at as many moments as possible in your life. Only then does it have a chance of becoming second nature, and thus of you being self-aware at almost all times. This implies that you begin to take responsibility for *everything you feel, think, and do*, and as you

take on responsibility for all that, you begin to understand that what another person has done to you is his/her responsibility, his/her problem, his/her issue to be resolved, and that no matter how much you may rant and rave or crave revenge, you will never be able to change the other. *You can only change yourself.* As we absorb the truth of this statement, we begin to understand that what others do unto us is truly only interesting and important from the point of view of *how we react* to their words or acts.

And *how we react* depends in large measure on our degree of self-awareness. It is at this point that the possibility for compassion enters the picture. The more self-aware you are, the more you know you have choices and alternatives at every turn of the road. Therefore you begin to understand that someone who has hurt you (hurting others generally implies, among other things, fear in the one who hurts; fear of feeling insecure, fear of chaos, fear of loss of control, etc., but that is a topic for another article) has done so from a position of blindness, of a lack of self-awareness.

Careful now, I am not suggesting we simply excuse all these people and say, "oh, they didn't know what they were doing, so it's ok". Of course it's not ok. But because you are now capable of understanding where they are coming from; in other words, from blindness, you are now able to feel compassion. How they resolve their own issues that cause this behavior on their part, is their problem. Perhaps you will want to be supportive in helping them shed light on it, perhaps not. But in the meantime, you have resolved an enormous issue of your own, by looking at yourself, by resolving to become self-aware, and by choosing the path of compassion rather than the path of hatred, anger, self-pity, or revenge (For more about [Destructive Emotions](#), see the collaboration in book format between Western psychologists, neuroscientists, philosophers and Buddhist scholars, narrated by Daniel Goleman).

Compassion for others does have a ripple effect. Try it and observe what happens...not only with others, but most particularly, inside of you.

Pam Garcy

Part 4. "I don't have a clue what I want to do."

Are you tied to what others are telling you to do because, deep down, you don't have a clue what you want to do? What you "put in" is often mirrored by what you get out. If you want to get more out of your life and you want to develop greater clarity of vision, you may have some "putting in" or "paying" to do first.

If you don't have a clue what to do, yet you believe that you're not pursuing your passion, you can begin by tuning into yourself using my "three-payment plan":

=Pay attention to how you feel. Start by paying attention to how you feel as you do various activities. Which activities lead to happiness and joy? Which make the time fly? Which seem to be linked with sorrow, despair, and a persistent desire to flee?

=Pay respect to a desire. Allow yourself to honor one of your small desires. Observe how you feel. Build upon this experience, allowing yourself to honor one small desire at a time. Keep a journal. Notice any patterns which emerge--what are the things you'd like to start doing more?

=Pay your dues. As you start to become more aware of your interests, values, and passion, pay your dues. Start reading and learning more about the subjects that light your fire! Talk with others in who are doing what you'd love to do. Create time every week to focus upon this "practice", and you will soon have more than a clue about what you want to do.

Are We Happier Today?

By Piercarla Garusi

I am sure you would agree that people would like to be happy, but are we happy? Are we happier today? If not, why? What is preventing it?

Perhaps first we need to ask ourselves, what is happiness? Of course for each person happiness means something different, but are there some common traits? And are there some common causes for people not to be happy? Is happiness feeling good or is it something else?

I was recently reading a blog related to an art Peace Project to help people in Sierra Leone and I wept. People there have almost nothing and they were so joyous and grateful because someone cared. I was watching a video of young people at a refugee camp playing football, amputees without one leg or arm, and they were laughing, with the sense of warmth and connection that comes from a community feeling. There was no bitterness or anger, no fear or despair. Do we have that in Western countries or is there a growing sense of isolation, separation and loneliness?

Happiness first of all is a mental state, it is feeling good. This means we need to find the freedom from negative emotions, thoughts, memories and beliefs. Some of us may be familiar with the fact that everything in the Universe is made of energy and if the energy of negative emotions gets stuck in the body, it causes problems. It is like having a bottle of sparkling water, when we open the bottle the bubbles come out, we cannot keep pushing them down, otherwise the bottle bursts. It is not about controlling the emotions, we need to release them. Do we do this normally?

Then how about feeling good about who we are? If we look at society, why is that that more and more people are suffering from depression and social anxiety? There is a lot of social pressure to conform and criticism, which could cause people social anxiety and fear to show themselves for who they truly are. Isn't it that perhaps in the past people were more themselves with simplicity? How can we know what would makes us happy if we are disconnected with who we are?

Happiness comes from feeling in control of our life, from feeling free to be ourselves and doing what we choose. Alongside social pressure, there are also the 'have tos', rules we should follow, things we should do, etc. They are mainly subconscious and come from society, culture, etc. - it is the conditioning. We need to find the freedom from conditioning if we are to be ourselves and live the life we want.

Nowadays there is a lot about 'more' and 'not enough'. We want more because we don't have enough, we try to be someone because we are not enough, because we have not achieved enough. But more is never going to be enough. This is the ego mind game. It keeps telling us that we are not ok, that we are not enough, that we do not have enough. This is going to cause us just unhappiness and pain. This is why today consumerism makes us actually unhappy.

Happiness is then about connection. What is connection? What does it mean feeling connected? Real connection comes from daring being ourselves, being honest with ourselves and others, opening up, showing our vulnerabilities and how we are, it is about daring to love. There are people with whom we immediately feel 'at home', with whom we know it is safe to open up and share ourselves. What do they have that is so special? They respect, appreciate, give; they love us because we are the way we are, let us free to do what makes us happy and are ready to help if they can. People yearn for connection and warmth, that is why the development of social networks is huge. But do we really connect? Or are we afraid to?

Happiness comes from allowing what is to be, which means not resisting it. There is a saying that "what we resist, persists", and that's true. Resistance keeps the problem in place and creates more of the same energy; and it is often accompanied by negative emotions, like anger for example, creating even more negativity. When we do not like something in our reality or in the outside world and we resist it, it increases. We need to be very aware of this and allow what is to be; then we can create something different. Do we do this or do we resist what is?

Happiness then comes from knowing that we matter, that our life matters. We need first of all to matter to ourselves, but how many times do we beat ourselves up? How can we feel good about ourselves if we

beat ourselves up? If we keep looking for approval from outside, it will always bring us pain. We need to love ourselves. And in order to feel that our life matters, we need to do something for other people. This is closely connected with finding meaning.

Happiness in fact comes also from meaning, from living a meaningful life. And living with meaning is linked with our purpose. When we do something for others that we feel is part our purpose, what we are here to do on this planet, we feel peace. And our purpose is always linked to our joy, to what brings us joy, to doing what we love. Do we do that today or are we told to follow the market when for example we decide to start a business?

We need to become aware and free from what I call anti-happiness beliefs. There may be beliefs we have picked up, maybe from culture, society, upbringing, television, peers, etc., which actually cause us to be unhappy. For example, if we have a belief that we need to please other people, that we need to conform, that we need to follow the trend, etc., how can we be happy?

Happiness finally comes from having a sense of being part of something bigger than ourselves, something that reunites and encompasses us, other people, the planet, the cosmos, and All that Is — something that now some scientists are beginning to call Consciousness. There we find true peace, connection, oneness.

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Piercarla Garusi is a professional certified coach, NLP master practitioner, hypnotic practitioner, Release Technique graduate, spiritual painter and mathematician. She is preparing new coaching workshops on Sustainable Relations. For info on paintings for a shift in consciousness please visit www.piercarla-paintings.co.uk and on coaching www.pgcoaching.co.uk.

The Master Key System, Part Twelve **By Charles F. Haanel**

Part Twelve

Part Twelve is enclosed herewith. In the fourth paragraph you will find the following statement: "You must first have the knowledge of your power; second, the courage to dare; third, the faith to do." If you concentrate upon the thoughts given, if you give them your entire attention, you will find a world of meaning in each sentence, and will attract to yourself other thoughts in harmony with them, and you will soon grasp the full significance of the vital knowledge upon which you are concentrating.

Knowledge does not apply itself; we as individuals must make the application, and the application consists in fertilizing the thought with a living purpose.

The time and thought which most persons waste in aimless effort would accomplish wonders if properly directed with some special object in view. In order to do this, it is necessary to center your mental force upon a specific thought and hold it there, to the exclusion of all other thoughts. If you have ever looked through the viewfinder of a camera, you found that when the object was not in focus, the impression was indistinct and possibly blurred, but when the proper focus was obtained the picture was clear and distinct. This illustrates the power of concentration. Unless you can concentrate upon the object which you have in view, you will have but a hazy, indifferent, vague, indistinct and blurred outline of your ideal and the results will be in accordance with your mental picture.

PART TWELVE

1. There is no purpose in life that cannot be best accomplished through a scientific understanding of the creative power of thought.
2. This power to think is common to all. Man is, because he thinks. Man's power to think is infinite, consequently his creative power is unlimited.

3. We know that thought is building for us the thing we think of and actually bringing it nearer, yet we find it difficult to banish fear, anxiety or discouragement, all of which are powerful thought forces, and which continually send the things we desire further away, so that it is often one step forward and two steps backward.

4. The only way to keep from going backward is to keep going forward. Eternal vigilance is the price of success. There are three steps, and each one is absolutely essential. You must first have the knowledge of your power; second, the courage to dare; third, the faith to do.

5. With this as a basis you can construct an ideal business, an ideal home, ideal friends, and an ideal environment. You are not restricted as to material or cost. Thought is omnipotent and has the power to draw on the Infinite bank of primary substance for all that it requires. Infinite resources are therefore at your command.

6. But your ideal must be sharp, clear-cut, definite; to have one ideal today, another tomorrow, and a third next week, means to scatter your forces and accomplish nothing; your result will be a meaningless and chaotic combination of wasted material.

7. Unfortunately this is the result which many are securing, and the cause is self evident. If a sculptor started out with a piece of marble and a chisel and changed his ideal every fifteen minutes, what result could he expect? And why should you expect any different result in molding the greatest and most plastic of all substances, the only real substance?

8. The result of this indecision and negative thought is often found in the loss of material wealth. Supposed independence which required many years of toil and effort suddenly disappears. It is often found then that money and property are not independence at all. On the contrary, the only independence is found to be a practical working knowledge of the creative power of thought.

9. This practical working method cannot come to you until you learn that the only real power which you can have is the power to adjust yourself to Divine and unchangeable principles. You cannot change the Infinite,

but you can come into an understanding of Natural laws. The reward of this understanding is a conscious realization of your ability to adjust your thought faculties with the Universal Thought which is Omnipresent. Your ability to cooperate with this Omnipotence will indicate the degree of success with which you meet.

10. The power of thought has many counterfeits which are more or less fascinating, but the results are harmful instead of helpful.

11. Of course, worry, fear, and all negative thoughts produce a crop after their kind; those who harbor thoughts of this kind must inevitably reap what they have sown.

12. Again, there are the Phenomena seekers who gormandize on the so-called proofs and demonstration obtained at materializing séances. They throw open their mental doors and soak themselves in the most poisonous currents which can be found in the psychic world. They do not seem to understand that it is the ability to become negative, receptive and passive, and thus drain themselves of all their vital force, which enables them to bring about these vibratory thought forms.

13. There are also the Hindu worshippers, who see in the materializing phenomena which are performed by the so-called adepts, a source of power, forgetting, or never seeming to realize that as soon as the will is withdrawn the forms wither, and the vibratory forces of which they are composed vanish.

14. Telepathy, or thought transference, has received considerable attention, but as it requires a negative mental state on the part of the receiver, the practice is harmful. A thought may be sent with the intention of hearing or seeing, but it will bring the penalty attached to the inversion of the principle involved.

15. In many instances, hypnotism is positively dangerous to the subject as well as the operator. No one familiar with the laws governing in the mental world would think of attempting to dominate the will of another, for by so doing, he will gradually (but surely) divest himself of his own power.

16. All of these perversions have their temporary satisfaction and for some a keen fascination, but there is an infinitely greater fascination in a true understanding of the world of power within, a power which increases with use; is permanent instead of fleeing; which not only is potent as a remedial agency to bring about the remedy for past error or results of wrong thinking, but is a prophylactic agency protecting us from all manner and form of danger, and finally is an actual creative force with which we can build new conditions and new environment.

17. The law is that thought will correlate with its object and bring forth in the material world the correspondence of the thing thought or produced in the mental world. We then discern the absolute necessity of seeing that every thought has the inherent germ of truth in order that the law of growth will bring into manifestation good, for good alone can confer any permanent power.

18. The principle which gives the thought the dynamic power to correlate with its object, and therefore to master every adverse human experience, is the law of attraction, which is another name for love. This is an eternal and fundamental principle, inherent in all things, in every system of Philosophy, in every Religion, and in every Science. There is no getting away from the law of love. It is feeling that imparts vitality to thought. Feeling is desire, and desire is love. Thought impregnated with love becomes invincible.

19. We find this truth emphasized wherever the power of thought is understood, The Universal Mind is not only Intelligence, but it is substance, and this substance is the attractive force which brings electrons together by the law of attraction so that they form atoms; the atoms in turn are brought together by the same law and form molecules; molecules take objective forms; and so we find that the law of love is the creative force behind every manifestation, not only of atoms, but of worlds, of the Universe, of everything of which the imagination can form any conception.

20. It is the operation of this marvelous law of attraction which has caused men in all ages and all times to believe that there must be some personal being who responded to their petitions and desires, and manipulated events in order to comply with their requirements.

21. It is the combination of Thought and Love which forms the irresistible force, called the law of attraction. All natural laws are irresistible, the law of Gravitation, or Electricity, or any other law operates with mathematical exactitude. There is no variation; it is only the channel of distribution which may be imperfect. If a bridge falls, we do not attribute the collapse to any variation of the law of gravitation. If a light fails us, we do not conclude that the laws governing electricity cannot be depended upon, and if the law of attraction seems to be imperfectly demonstrated by an inexperienced or uninformed person, we are not to conclude that the greatest and most infallible law upon which the entire system of creation depends has been suspended. We should rather conclude that a little more understanding of the law is required, for the same reason that a correct solution of a difficult problem in Mathematics is not always readily and easily obtained.

22. Things are created in the mental or spiritual world before they appear in the outward act or event. by the simple process of governing our thought forces today, we help create the events which will come into our lives in the future, perhaps even tomorrow. Educated desire is the most potent means of bringing into action the law of attraction.

23. Man is so constituted that he must first create the tools, or implements by which he gains the power to think. The mind cannot comprehend an entirely new idea until a corresponding vibratory brain cell has been prepared to receive it. This explains why it is so difficult for us to receive or appreciate an entirely new idea; we have no brain cell capable of receiving it; we are therefore incredulous; we do not believe it.

24. If, therefore, you have not been familiar with the Omnipotence of the law of attraction, and the scientific method by which it can be put into operation, or if you have not been familiar with the unlimited possibilities which it opens to those who are enabled to take advantage of the resources it offers, begin now and create the necessary brain cells which will enable you to comprehend the unlimited powers which may be yours by cooperating with Natural Law. This is done by concentration or attention.

25. The intention governs the attention. Power comes through repose. It is by concentration that deep thoughts, wise speech, and all forces of high potentiality are accomplished.

26. It is in the Silence that you get into touch with the Omnipotent power of the subconscious mind from which all power is evolved.

27. He who desires wisdom, power, or permanent success of any kind will find it only within; it is an unfoldment. The unthinking may conclude that the silence is very simple and easily attained, but it should be remembered that only in absolute silence may one come into contact with Divinity itself; may learn of the unchangeable law and open for himself the channels by which persistent practice and concentration lead to perfection.

28. This week go to the same room, take the same chair, the same position as previously; be sure to relax, let go, both mentally and physically; always do this; never try to do any mental work under pressure; see that there are no tense muscles or nerves, that you are entirely comfortable. Now realize your unity with omnipotence; get into touch with this power, come into a deep and vital understanding, appreciation, and realization of the fact that your ability to think is your ability to act upon the Universal Mind, and bring it into manifestation, realize that it will meet any and every requirement; that you have exactly the same potential ability which any individual ever did have or ever will have, because each is but an expression or manifestation of the One, all are parts of the whole, there is no difference in kind or quality, the only difference being one of degree.

Thought cannot conceive of anything that may not be brought to expression. He who first uttered it may be only the suggester, but the doer will appear.

—Wilson

Study Questions with Answers

111. How may any purpose in life be best accomplished?

Through a scientific understanding of the spiritual nature of thought.

112. What three steps are absolutely essential?

The knowledge of our power, the courage to dare, the faith to do.

113. How is the practical working knowledge secured?

By an understanding of Natural laws.

114. What is the reward of an understanding of these laws?

A conscious realization of our ability to adjust ourselves to Divine and unchanging principle.

115. What will indicate the degree of success with which we meet?

The degree in which we realize that we cannot change the Infinite but must cooperate with it.

116. What is the principle which gives thought its dynamic power?

The Law of Attraction which rests on vibration, which in turn rests upon the law of love. Thought impregnated with love becomes invincible.

117. Why is this law irresistible?

Because it is a Natural law. All Natural laws are irresistible and unchangeable and act with mathematical exactitude. There is no deviation or variation.

118. Why then does it sometimes seem to be difficult to find the solution to our problems in life?

For the same reason that it is sometimes difficult to find the correct solution to a difficult mathematical problem. The operator is uninformed or inexperienced.

119. Why is it impossible for the mind to grasp an entirely new idea?

We have no corresponding vibratory brain cell capable of receiving the idea.

120. How is wisdom secured?

By concentration; it is an unfoldment; it comes from within.

Heart to Heart Coaching by Dr. Doris Jeanette

Question/Title: I want to work from home and have a more meaningful life, but I'm still searching for my life purpose and passion, to understand why I am here.

About the Questioner

Philosophy: I am spiritual, but not religious. I believe that God is in all of us, in everything. I know we are all connected, but know that I must be an individual. I often feel out of sync with the world and I'm just fine with that.

Hopes and aspirations: The biggest, hugest, most time consuming thing to me is to find my purpose, WHY AM I HERE? The next biggest, hugest, most time consuming thing for me is to discover a passion that I can make good money at that I can do from home - most importantly to set my own hours and finally retire from a system that I don't believe in (old work till you drop then retire model).

Question: I have lived alone with my two dogs for the past 5 years and love it. I own my home and yard (with a high mortgage) and travel to work and back everyday 20 miles. I am 57 years old and divorced and am not looking for a partner. I was in a severe auto accident nearly 2 years ago that left me quite broken, but I was put back together again, only to come back to work doing the same old thing with the same people - only now with PTSD and pain. I have to work to support myself, but I KNOW that there is an alternative out there for me. I don't want to do what everyone else is doing, get up, go to work, come home, eat and go to bed only to start it all over again the next day.

Because of the accident and PTSD, I have low energy levels; so don't feel motivated to do much outside the usual routine. On top of that I live in a very small town (nice and very quiet, which I love) and drive to a small state university. Driving in the winter causes extreme anxiety because that is when the accident occurred, driving on black ice and losing control and hitting an on-coming vehicle head-on. I don't want to have to drive everyday; I want to retire but would only bring in \$325/

month. I want to work from home, but at what?

I've been looking for my life purpose and a passion for what seems like forever. I've gone through self-help books to help me discover what that is, I've meditated on the question, but nothing is coming to me. I have NO extra money, only just enough to pay the bills and my mortgage and not much left for groceries each month. I've cut every bit of extra spending so I have no TV, no Internet. I've tried applying for part time jobs, but there aren't any; I've sold a few things online but not enough to make much of a difference. The financial constraints are secondary to this extremely frustrating, lost, drifting, soul-draining life I have right now. I can't sell my house in this economy and I don't want to. Why am I here, what is my purpose, how can I retire and work from home?

Coach Doris Jeanette replies:

"Why am I here?"

"What's it all about, Alfie?"

Hear Peggy Lee singing her famous song... "Is That All There Is?"

I used to listen to "Is That All There Is?" over and over on the radio wondering why I did not feel fulfilled and contented. I had just graduated from East Carolina University and had been accepted into a Ph.D program at Baylor University in psychology. I was living with my best friend, soon to be my husband... and yet I still did not have joy in my heart and feel satisfied.

So, thank you for asking this challenging question that goes straight to the heart of human existence. Even the people who have all the money they need and a loving relationship can identify with this question because they too, long for more.

Your money issues need to be faced and dealt with in a responsible fashion. Some suggestions are to get your mortgage cut in half by negotiating, like a friend of mine just did. Rent out a room to help with payments. Continue to sell online. Do part time work as a Virtual Assistant. Become a Virtual Assistant who works from home.

Back to your major concern and a question I have spent this lifetime asking, "What is the purpose of being a human being on the planet Earth?" Some of the answers I have found are below and more are in my unpublished book, "Fear is the Pathway to Freedom and Joy." I am looking for a suitable publisher or agent. If anyone has referrals please email me at drjeanette@drjeanette.com.

Since Earth is such an emotional planet we currently experience a great deal of suffering, pain and sorrow. As a licensed psychologist, I have heard stories of sexual abuse, physical abuse and emotional abuse that bring tears to my eyes and a searing pain to my heart. How does one find hope, direction and answers in the midst of these earthly dramas?

Looking at our "earth dramas" from a spiritual point of view seems to be the only way to make sense of what is going on down here. Otherwise, there does not appear to be any purpose whatsoever to the hardship and difficulties that we face. So the older I get, the more spiritual I become. I consider myself to be a spirit who is seeking to be incarnate, which means in the flesh. My goal is to be the best human being I can be while I walk on this planet and to leave it a better place than when I arrived. Therefore, every experience I have is to feed my soul and make me stronger.

Thus, I am happy to report that I no longer feel unfulfilled, numb or melancholy. At the age of 34, after a severe loss, I started to open my heart and solar plexus. This appears to be the real secret to living on this emotional planet. I discovered that the process of opening your heart and feeling your feelings leads you to meaning and purpose.

Let me share with you some of the information and methods I teach my clients about how to create this wonderful shift into fulfillment. At this point in your life, your ego dominates your personality and not your authentic self. You are getting the results you are getting because your ego is the one you identify with and follow. Your life will improve the moment you decide to choose your authentic self over your ego.

Therefore, the task before you is to find, accept and follow your authentic self if you want rich meaning and deep purpose. As you work on your personal growth, your authentic self will gradually replace your

ego as the dominant force in your consciousness. When this happens, you will be "in the flow of your own authentic energy," consciously taking action steps to fulfill your purpose.

The spiritual journey begins by acknowledging the truths in your heart. If you want to know why you are here, look inside your heart. Your heart, in the form of your emotional self, will lead directly to your soul. Your soul is your authority. There is no other. Your soul contains all answers. This is the pathway you need to follow to find meaning and purpose.

I must confess, I heard the answer to my purpose many times and could not accept it. Why? I did not like the answers. I struggled and resisted. Kicking and screaming every step of the way I slowly moved forward. You can still hear me resisting at times! "Oh no, not me! I can't do THAT!"

The journey to your purpose will also be full of conflict and struggle because the ego does not want you to ask this question or to hear the answer to this question. The ego does not want you to find, accept and follow your authentic self. Your authentic self is composed of a unique mind, body and soul. If you find and then follow your authentic self this means the death of your ego. The ego cannot live in the presence of truth, love and light.

To be clear about the ego energy, it is composed of dense, heavy energy that is no longer healthy for you. Your ego is made up of false beliefs, conditioned responses, negative thought forms and knee jerk reactions. Your ego is a learned image. Due to the physical reality of the ego there is a natural process of contraction and expansion that you need to learn to move through to be successful in leaving it behind.

The energy of the ego creates a wall of frozen energy around your authentic self. This frozen, rigid energy is completely different from the energy of the authentic self and you can learn to recognize this difference. Then you can choose to follow your authentic self instead of your ego as you please.

The most exciting news is that your authentic self is safe and whole no matter how much abuse you have suffered. She is inside of this frozen

wall of energy, waiting for you to find, accept and follow her. Your authentic self is intact, wise and strong.

The reason it is so important to find, heal and follow the emotional self is because this part of you leads you to your purpose in life. Until you find, heal and follow your emotional self you do not know what your purpose in life is. Your emotional self is the authentic part of you that tells you the truth about everything. When you follow your emotional self you know what you need to eat, when you need to rest your body, what you want to do in this moment, who you like and what you need to be learning in order to fulfill your purpose.

So your emotional self puts you in the moment and knows the bigger picture of where you are going. The natural process of finding, healing and following your emotional self will lead you straight to your compassion heart which will lead you straight to the energy of your soul. Your soul knows and tells you the reason you are here. Your soul is the only authority. There is no other.

Let us compare you with a seed. The seed knows what to do without being told what to do. All you have to do is learn to take care of the seed and it will come up out of the earth and grow into a healthy plant. So your job is to learn what you need and give yourself what you need so you can grow into the human being that you were born to be. Everyone is lacking in the emotional area so this is the area where the major work occurs. When you develop a loving relationship with your emotional self you know what to do and when - just like the seed.

At least two major opportunities for growth have occurred to you. Your divorce and accident. Perhaps you have already used these events to help you grow and follow your authentic self. It sounds as if you love the town you live in and have moments of pleasure and joy. This is the energy you need to increase, for more success in living your purpose.

Here is my teacher, Jack Schwartz's definition of spiritual energy: "pure, unadulterated energy." This is the healthy energy you want to flow in and out of your body and chakras.

Each human being has:

- 1. Access to pure undiluted energy, which comes in the top of the head.**
- 2. A heart with emotions to feel and experience.**
- 3. A body for grounding both physical and spiritual energy.**
- 4. A soul that knows the answers needed for fulfillment.**
- 5. Access to information about universal, natural laws.**
- 6. A unique learning history to discover, heal and transform.**

You have all of the above qualities to work with, just like every one else. Therefore, you can find and fulfill your purpose in being here. You have the power to use what you know to reach your goals and you have access to information, education and necessary skills training.

As soon as you decide to listen to your purpose and follow your authentic self, you will immediately fall into your natural process. This means you fall in the moment. When you fall into the moment, you feel better immediately because you are in your own natural flow of energy, not in your ego!

You do not have to wait until anything else happens. When you are in the moment, in your body, with an open heart---it is always ENOUGH.

Action Steps

1. Find, heal and follow your emotional self. This will heal past wounds and open your chakras. Meditation does not work because you need to stop thinking and directing and start feeling and letting go. I suggest the "[Opening the Heart](#)" audio and eBook. Three hours of audio guide you through the confusing ego energy into the authentic self energy so you can find, heal and follow your emotional self to your soul's purpose.

2. Desensitize yourself to the driving incident. Read more about PTSD, anxiety, anxiety attacks and panic attacks and how to overcome them in the free library at the [Center of New Psychology](#)

3. **Pay attention to your breath and see how deep you allow air to go into your lungs.** Do you stop your breath at the top of your lungs? Or do you allow air all the way to the bottom of your lungs? When you are holding your breath, try letting go and feeling what is around you and what is inside of you.

Dr. Doris Jeanette is a licensed psychologist in the USA and director of the Center for New Psychology which offers a **Certification Program in Holistic Psychology** via phone, online and in person workshops and classes. Sign up for her free weekly newsletter, "**The Vibrant Moment.**"

Quotes of the Week

"He who smiles rather than rages is always the stronger."
—*Japanese proverb*

"Is life not a hundred times too short for us to stifle ourselves?"
—*Friedrich Nietzsche*

"There is only one real failure in life that is possible, and that is not to be true to the best one knows."
—*John Farrar*

"To speak gratitude is courteous and pleasant, but to live gratitude is to touch heaven."
—*Johannes A. Gaertner*

"The pen that writes your life story must be held in your own hand."
—*Irene C. Kassorla*

Here Comes Inspiration

A Smile is More than Just a Smile!

Smiles have the ability to completely change your mood, your outer appearance, and the impact you have on others: possibly even more so than positive words of affirmation and encouragement!

They can change your inner world - and your outer world - almost instantly!

Mother Teresa once said, "Peace starts with a smile."

A little bit of theory: *In looking at emotional expression, what is behind the anatomy of a smile?*

We know that emotional expression requires some sort of physical action. Whether it's a sigh, a sob, a smile, or a dash for safety: in order for we humans to express emotions, some outward physical change must occur. If we suppress or hide our emotions, what actually results are physical changes on the inside. Our blood pressure starts to rise, digestion is disrupted, and ultimately blood circulation tends to diminish resulting in fatigue, inability to concentrate, and an overall decreased sense of well being. Stress is with us, and depression may not be too far away either!

That's it - the theory's over, but it is worth knowing nonetheless: Now back to the smiling stuff

How we show our emotions as facial expressions is universally the same, regardless of what part of the world we are from. This does suggest that we as humans are hard-wired to express and respond to emotions in a particular way, rather than it being brought about through our cultural learning. The social smile is quite different from what is a genuine smile of pleasure.

Facial expressions can also transmit and trigger emotions in others too.

The sight of a person smiling triggers the observer's brain area associated with feelings of happiness or pleasure.

Remember this old saying: "If you smile, the whole world does indeed smile with you"!

Experiments in which tiny sensors have been attached to the actual smile muscles of another person looking at smiling faces, showed that the sight of another person smiling triggers an automatic response to smile back at them. In other words, when we see others smile we can't help but smile ourselves.

Peace with others really does start with a smile!

If ever you're feeling low, or life seems to be handing you just a bit more than you can handle, a very good place to begin feeling better is in your very own bathroom mirror. Practice smiling at yourself early in the day, or before you leave the house, because it can change how you're feeling, and therefore your whole day may change because of it. This does work, so for your own sake try it if ever you need to.

Even if you aren't near a mirror, and you're feeling less than average, learn to become aware of the smile process, and practice smiling and actually feeling the difference in your inner feelings. The difference may only be small at first, but it may be enough to change your day, and more.

Like everything in life: If at first you don't succeed, then fake it 'til you make it!

Regardless of how you're feeling right now, please smile, go on, just for the heck of it: try it!

And keep smiling as often as you can - 'cos it does suit you, you know - it really does! ###

Zen Story

Inch Time Foot Gem

A lord asked Takuan, a Zen teacher, to suggest how he might pass the time. He felt his days very long attending his office and sitting stiffly to receive the homage of others.

Takuan wrote eight Chinese characters and gave them to the man:

Not twice this day

Inch time foot gem.

This day will not come again.

Each minute is worth a priceless gem.

100 Words

Susan Jeffers

Who Is Susan Jeffers?

Susan Jeffers, PhD, is considered one of the top self-help authors in the world. *The Times* (London) named Susan “The Queen of Self-Help.” Her first book, *Feel the Fear and Do It Anyway*, launched her career as a bestselling author. Seventeen more books have followed, the latest being *The Feel the Fear Guide to Lasting Love*. Her books have been published in over one hundred countries and have been translated into thirty-six languages. Susan recently created a publishing company, Jeffers Press, to publish her own books and those of other inspirational writers. www.susanjeffers.com

Five of Susan’s favorite books:

Man’s Search for Meaning, Viktor Frankl

Chop Wood, Carry Water, Rick Fields

We’re All Doing Time, Bo Lozoff

Still Here, Ram Dass

Awakening the Buddha Within, Lama Surya Das

Insight by Susan Jeffers

It’s all in your perception. If you see your tasks in life as drudgery, then they are drudgery. On the other hand, if you see them as gifts of the universe manifest through you, then your tasks are done in the spirit of love and generosity. You step out of your ordinary life and make it extraordinary. Little by little, you realize that your life truly makes a difference and you are filled with a wondrous sense of gratitude and abundant flow. A heavenly feeling, indeed! Yes, it’s all in your perception.

From the Shelf

The Water Secret

The Cellular Breakthrough to Look and Feel 10 Years Younger

By Howard Murad M.D.

From one of the world's leading experts on health and skin care - a revolutionary guide that will help you look and feel ten years younger

He has been called one of the “Best Forward-Thinking Doctors” (*Vogue* magazine) and acclaimed as a “Beauty Genius” (*Elle* magazine). Howard Murad, M.D., FAAD is one today's foremost authorities on health and skincare, and his philosophies have helped men and women around the world look and feel as young and healthy as possible. With *The Water Secret*, Dr. Murad shares a new, scientifically proven strategy, cultivated over years of practice and treating over 50,000 patients, to help you look and feel better from the inside out.

The Water Secret will:

- Reveal groundbreaking secrets to help you take years off your looks, feel better and healthier
- Debunk health myths through cutting-edge research and tell the truth about how inflammation, hydration, and other factors *really* affect your health
- Explain how damaged cells that leak water can sabotage your looks
- Introduces an integrated, multidisciplinary "Inclusive Health" approach to help optimize cellular strength
- Give you a complete 10-step action plan with recipes and meal plans to start you on the path to clear skin, fewer wrinkles, more energy, and better overall health

Discover *The Water Secret* and learn to take control of the process of aging by improving the health of every cell in the body. Begin the program and you will see and feel the difference your healthy new lifestyle will make in as soon as one week!

Q&A with Dr. Howard Murad

Q: I've always heard that I should drink eight glasses of water a day. But in your book you talk about “eating your water.” Why is eating your water better than drinking it?

A: What happens when you drink eight glasses of water a day? You are in the bathroom eight times – or more – flushing your system of vital nutrients. The best source of hydration is the water built into the structure of the foods we eat (structured water) especially raw fruits and vegetables. This form of hydration lasts longer since water is released slowly as you digest and doesn't merely flush through. That's why I encourage my patients to replace one glass of water a day with raw fruits or vegetables. Not only will they feel more hydrated, they will be getting more of the vital nutrients they need to build healthy, watertight cells, which are essential to keeping their bodies fully hydrated and operating at their peak.

Q: Will improving my ability to hold cellular water prevent me from developing chronic illnesses and diseases?

A: *The Water Secret* is not a cure for illness or diseases. Living according to the insights I offer in the book helps to create an Inclusive Health lifestyle that helps you create the optimal environment in your body to help fight illness and disease. At my practice, I see numerous patients who are suffering from a range of diseases in addition to their skin concerns. Many of my patients with cancer have adopted an Inclusive Health lifestyle and attribute their ability to withstand the rigors of chemotherapy to their improvement in overall cellular health. *The Water Secret* is not a cure but a guide to helping you become as healthy and strong as possible so you can live life to the fullest – no matter what your life may look like and at any age. By adhering to the guidelines presented in *The Water Secret*, you are aiding every cell in your body by giving them the best environment to thrive and become healthy.

Q: If I have a problem sticking to a diet to lose weight, how is *The Water Secret* different than a diet?

A: Although weight loss is a common benefit of living inclusively, *The Water Secret* isn't a diet – so it really doesn't create the physical and psychological burden of deprivation that a diet usually creates. To live inclusively, I believe that people should eat what they enjoy but also incorporate healthy raw fruits and vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins and other nutritious food and dietary supplements into their daily meal plans. *The Water Secret* is not limiting; it is about small lifestyle changes that add up to a life transformation. In *The Water Secret*, I have included recipes and suggestions on how to integrate healthy, delicious foods into your diet to build the strong new cells you need to optimize your overall health.

Q: What is the overall philosophy of *The Water Secret*?

A: *The Water Secret* is a paradigm shift in truly understanding the aging process. In the book, I introduce people to a new way of looking at care that I call Inclusive Health® that optimizes the health of the whole person beginning at the cellular level. Inclusive Health accomplishes this through a 3-prong approach that addresses cellular health by focusing on topical, internal and emotional self care. This care is not focused on resolving or preventing one specific problem – but resolves problems in the context of making the whole body healthier. Inclusive Health is a unified way to look at health and aging. Every cell in your body is connected and if we can improve cellular health, we can make a dramatic change in our lives, our looks and even slow the aging process. I believe that with a little effort anyone can learn to live inclusively and feel as young as possible.

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Eastern Wisdom With Richard Singer

“If a thing is worth doing, its worth doing well.”
—Chinese proverb

Meditation

Everything you do in your life deserves your greatest attention and 100 % effort. This is the most effective way to seize the opportunities and miracles that avail themselves to you along your daily journey. Strive to engrave your unique and precious trademark to everything you pursue in life. This encompasses everything from washing the dishes to creating a masterpiece. Each task in each moment of life is sacred and should be treated this way. Simply to be healthy enough to wake up, to take a shower, to vacuum, and to complete all the other so called “ordinary” tasks in your life is a miracle and each of these tasks is overflowing with divinity.

Real Life Application

Dedicate one entire day to focus all your attention and energy on each task that you are involved in. Immerse yourself in each moment, each breath and experience the ecstasy and power of the eternal present. Notice the energy that surrounds you and the serenity and quietude of the Universe. Simply BE and become one with whatever you are involved in. This is life; your presence in the NOW is as sacred as living gets.

Conquering Your Procrastination Habit

By Dr Linda Sapadin

Tip# 9

Choose “feeling good about yourself” over “feeling good for the moment.”

Guard against your proclivity to seek pleasure from being passive – just letting time drift on by as you watch TV, surf the Net or lounge in the sun like a lizard on a rock. Of course, there’s nothing wrong with relaxing on occasion; but overdo it and it will be at the expense of your self-esteem and well-being.

Feeling good about yourself (as opposed to simply feeling good for the moment) helps you take pride in your accomplishments. On a short-term basis, you may not feel good pushing yourself to work-out, to learn a new skill or to put quality time into your project. However, on a long-term basis, the self-confidence and self-respect you will acquire from perfecting these activities will make you feel enduringly good about yourself and your achievements.

Ponder a Moment

Finish each day and be done with it. You have done what you could; some blunders and absurdities have crept in; forget them as soon as you can. Tomorrow is a new day; you shall begin it serenely and with too high a spirit to be encumbered with your old nonsense.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

A Course in Miracles

Lesson 20

I am determined to see.

We have been quite casual about our practice periods thus far. There has been virtually no attempt to direct the time for undertaking them, minimal effort has been required, and not even active cooperation and interest have been asked. This approach has been intentional, and very carefully planned. We have not lost sight of the crucial importance of the reversal of your thinking. The salvation of the world depends on it. Yet you will not see if you regard yourself as being coerced, and if you give in to resentment and opposition.

This is our first attempt to introduce structure. Do not misconstrue it as an effort to exert force or pressure. You want salvation. You want to be happy. You want peace. You do not have them now, because your mind is totally undisciplined, and you cannot distinguish between joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain, love and fear. You are now learning how to tell them apart. And great indeed will be your reward.

Your decision to see is all that vision requires. What you want is yours. Do not mistake the little effort that is asked of you for an indication that our goal is of little worth. Can the salvation of the world be a trivial purpose? And can the world be saved if you are not? God has one Son, and he is the resurrection and the life. His will is done because all power is given him in Heaven and on earth. In your determination to see is vision given you.

The exercises for today consist in reminding yourself throughout the day that you want to see. Today's idea also tacitly implies the recognition that you do not see now. Therefore, as you repeat the idea, you are stating that you are determined to change your present state for a better one, and one you really want.

Repeat today's idea slowly and positively at least twice an hour today, attempting to do so every half hour. Do not be distressed if you forget to do so, but make a real effort to remember. The extra repetitions should be applied to any situation, person or event that upsets you. You can

see them differently, and you will. What you desire you will see. Such is the real law of cause and effect as it operates in the world. ###

Commentary by Allen Watson

This week's lesson does not really ask all that much of us: Every half hour, remember to repeat the words "I am determined to see." If we are studying the Course this is something we probably truly want.

You want salvation. You want to be happy. You want peace.

Why then all the foofaraw about our feeling coerced, resentful and opposed to the instructions?

Because "this is our first attempt to introduce structure", and it will not be the last. Our undisciplined minds have a built-in resistance to structure. So what if it's good for us? Actually something we want? If someone *tells* us to do it in a certain way, at certain times, we rebel. We drag our feet. We don't like being told what to do or how to do it. Our mind is "totally undisciplined" and wants to remain that way to protect the ego's vested interests.

The practice asked is extremely simple. So try it. You'll probably be amazed at how often you forget, how the thought of doing it may flash into your mind only to be postponed because it isn't convenient at the moment, or because "it isn't really important," and then forgotten completely. This is why the Workbook approaches the whole idea of structure with great caution; it knows there will be resistance, and is trying to make us realize just how important this deceptively simple practice really is. This is why it says: "Do not be distressed if you forget to do so, but make a real effort to remember".

"Your decision to see is all that vision requires". If we could really get this lesson, in other words, and truly mean what we are saying, the job would be done. Vision would be ours. "In your determination to see is vision given you". This is *not* a trivial lesson; it is the core of everything the Course is teaching. So let's put our heart into it today! Let's do this

joyfully, even-dare I say?-religiously, every half hour. Let's repeat the idea "slowly and positively". Let's "make a real effort to remember". Let's apply it "to any situation, person or event that upsets" us.

You can see them differently, and you will. What you desire you will see. Such is the real law of cause and effect as it operates in the world.