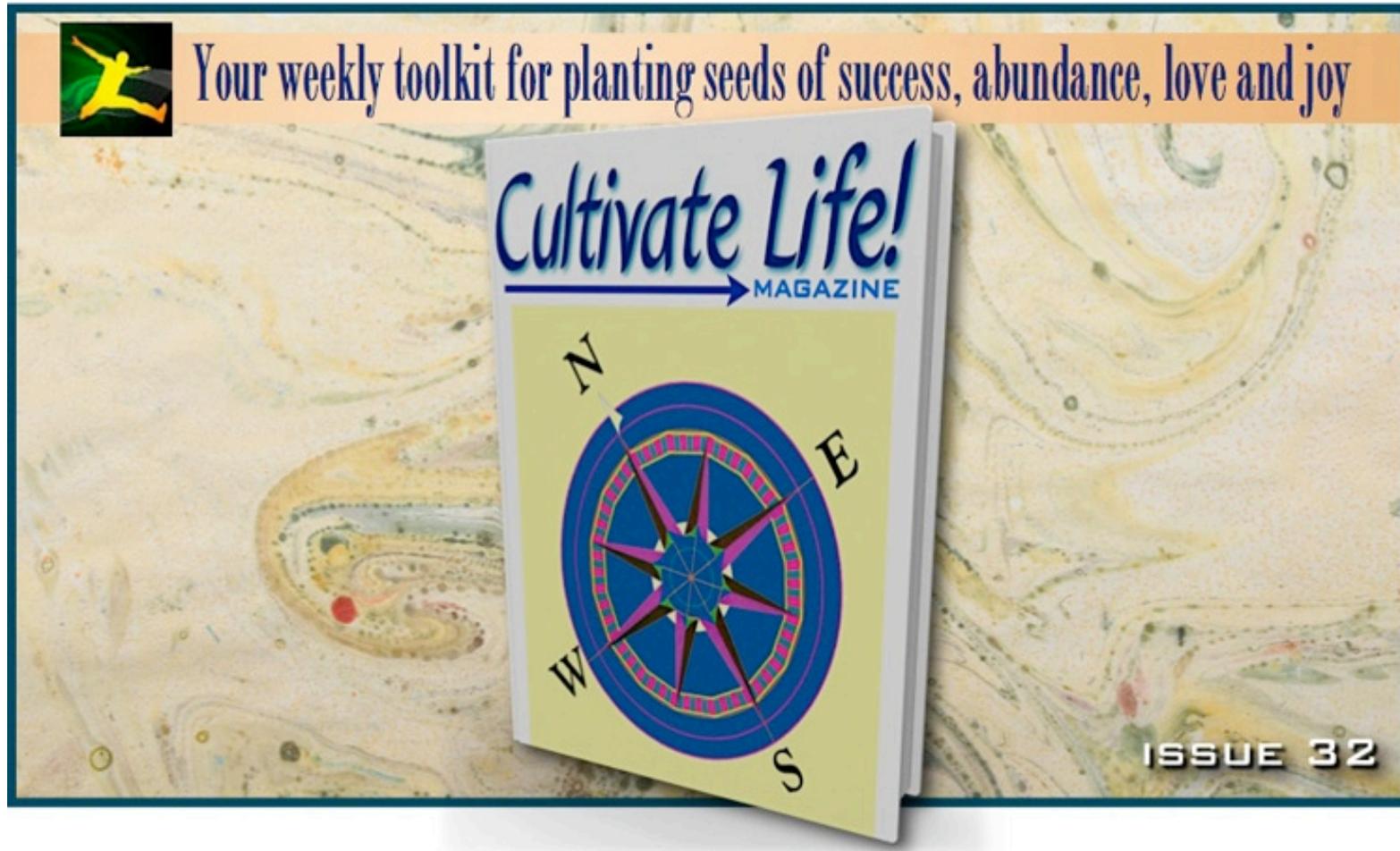


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Cultivate Life! magazine

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Why did the Buddha Cross the Road?

Buddhism and Humour

By Miles Murphy

Q: What did a Buddhist say to the hot dog vendor?

A: Make me one with everything.

We don't often associate Buddhism with humour. After all, the principal teaching of Buddhism is suffering, and, at first glance, suffering seems antithetical to humour.

The Buddha is often considered to be the Great Physician - one who has diagnosed our human condition, the ills of our body and our mind (suffering) and who has discovered the cure (Nirvana) and issued a prescription (the noble Eight-fold Path).

Laughter is good medicine. Laughter is known to reduce the level of hormones associated with stress, strengthen the immune system, reduce pain, lower blood pressure, promote muscle relaxation and is a natural anti-depressant.

Laughter helps us to cut through the absurdity of our lives, to realize the truth of our sometimes chaotic, always turbulent and sometimes puzzling existence and get to the heart of the matter. Humour teaches us that appearances are deceiving and upends our ideas about the nature of reality.

'A monk on his journey home comes to the banks of a wide river. Staring hopelessly at the great obstacle in front of him, he ponders for hours on just how to cross such a wide barrier. Just as he is to give up his journey, he sees a great teacher on the other side of the river. The monk yells over to the teacher, "Oh Master, can you tell me how to get to the other side of this river?" The teacher ponders for a moment, looks up and down the river and yells back, "You are already on the other side."

This cutting through the fabric of conventional appearance is essential to the practice of Zen Buddhism. In the Zen view, we are already Buddhas, but because ignorance has clouded our view, we have forgotten our original state. What is required, then, is a sudden breakthrough, something to shatter our everyday sleeping state. There

are countless anecdotes about how this is achieved. Some are quite amusing:

'A young monk brought two potted plants into the monastery's garden while the Zen master looked on. "Drop it," instructed the master. The young monk gently let down one pot. "Drop it," again ordered the master. The monk let go the second pot. "DROP IT!" roared the master. The young monk stammered, "But. I have nothing more to drop." "Then take it away," said the old master, smiling.'

'Gutei raised his finger whenever he was asked a question about Zen. A boy attendant began to imitate him in this way. When anyone asked the boy what his master had preached about, the boy would raise his finger. Gutei heard about the boy's mischief. He seized him and cut off his finger. The boy cried and ran away. Gutei called and stopped him. When the boy turned his head to Gutei, Gutei raised up his own finger. Reflexively the boy responded by attempting to raise his own (cut off) finger. In that instant the boy was enlightened.'

Maitreya, the Buddha of the future, is usually depicted as the laughing Buddha, representing the joy and prosperity that is available to us through practicing the dharma. Buddhism is not a dour path. It is the middle way, the way of balance and moderation. Humour is an essential part of the path. It tells us not to take ourselves too seriously. The Dhammapada says,

"Let us live most happily, possessing nothing; let us feed on joy, like the radiant gods."

The great Zen comic, Woody Allen asked,

"What if everything is an illusion and nothing exists? In that case, I definitely overpaid for my carpet."

Ajahn Brahmavamso Mahathera, born Peter Betts in London, a Theravadan monk of the Thai Buddhist tradition of Ajhan Cha, uses humour as an essential part of his teaching. In his book, "[Who Ordered this Truckload of Dung](#)", Inspiring Stories for Welcoming Life's Difficulties", he tells the story of the "Two Bad Bricks":

"After we purchased the land for our monastery in 1983 we were broke. We were in debt. There were no buildings on the land, not even a shed. Those first few weeks we slept not on beds but on old doors we had bought cheaply from the salvage yard; we raised them on bricks at each

corner to lift them off the ground. (There were no mattresses, of course - we were forest monks.)

"The abbot had the best door, the flat one. My door was ribbed with a sizeable hole in the center where the doorknob would have been. I joked that now I wouldn't need to get out of bed to go to the toilet! The cold truth was, however, that the wind would come up through that hole. I didn't sleep much those nights.

"We were poor monks who needed buildings. We couldn't afford to employ a builder - the materials were expensive enough. So I had to learn how to build: how to prepare the foundations, lay concrete and bricks, erect the roof, put in the plumbing - the whole lot. I had been a theoretical physicist and high-school teacher in lay life, not used to working with my hands. After a few years, I became quite skilled at building, even calling my crew the BBC ("Buddhist Building Company"). But when I started it was very difficult.

"It may look easy to lay a brick: a dollop of mortar underneath, a little tap here, a little tap there. But when I began laying bricks, I'd tap one corner down to make it level and another corner would go up. So I'd tap that corner down then the brick would move out of line. After I'd nudged it back into line, the first corner would be too high again. Hey, you try it!

"Being a monk, I had patience and as much time as I needed. I made sure every single brick was perfect, no matter how long it took. Eventually, I completed my first brick wall and stood back to admire it. It was only then that I noticed- oh no! - I'd missed two bricks. All the other bricks were nicely in line, but these two were inclined at an angle. They looked terrible. They spoiled the whole wall. They ruined it.

"By then, the cement mortar was too hard for the bricks to be taken out, so I asked the abbot if I could knock the wall down and start over again - or, even better, perhaps blow it up. I'd made a mess of it and I was very embarrassed. The abbot said no, the wall had to stay.

"When I showed our first visitors around our fledgling monastery, I always tried to avoid taking them past my brick wall. I hated anyone seeing it. Then one day, some three or four months after I finished it, I was walking with a visitor and he saw the wall. " 'That's a nice wall,' he casually remarked.

" 'Sir,' I replied in surprise, 'have you left your glasses in your car? Are you visually impaired? Can't you see those two bad bricks which spoil the whole wall?'

"What he said next changed my whole view of that wall, of myself, and of many other aspects of life. He said, "Yes. I can see those two bad bricks. But I can see the 998 good bricks as well.'

"I was stunned. For the first time in over three months, I could see other bricks in that wall apart from the two mistakes. Above, below, to the left and to the right of the bad bricks were good bricks, perfect bricks. Moreover, the perfect bricks were many, many more than the two bad bricks. Before, my eyes would focus exclusively on my two mistakes; I was blind to everything else. That was why I couldn't bear looking at that wall, or having others see it. That was why I wanted to destroy it. Now that I could see the good bricks, the wall didn't look so bad after all. It was, as the visitor had said, 'a nice brick wall.' It's still there now, twenty years later, but I've forgotten exactly where those bad bricks are. I literally cannot see those mistakes any more.

Ajahn Punnadhammo, a Buddhist monk from the same tradition, quotes his teacher Kema Ananda as having once said, "The universe is a huge joke. If you don't find it funny, that's because you haven't reached the punch-line yet."

Did the Buddha have a sense of humour? He tells this enlightening story:

A traveler, fleeing a tiger who was chasing him, ran till he came to the edge of a cliff. There he caught hold of a thick vine, and swung himself over the edge. Above him the tiger snarled. Below him he heard another snarl, and behold, there was another tiger, peering up at him. The vine suspended him midway between two tigers. Two mice, a white mouse and a black mouse, began to gnaw at the vine. He could see they were quickly eating it through. Then in front of him on the cliff-side he saw a luscious bunch of grapes. Holding onto the vine with one hand, he reached and picked a grape with the other. How delicious! ###

Miles Murphy works in the field of learning and professional development. An independent scholar, he has a wide range of interests including the humanities of East and West. He is a devotee of

Buddhism and a t'ai chi ch'uan enthusiast. His poetry and other writings endeavour to poke about in the rich soil and empty sky of the human condition.

See more Miles Murphy articles at <http://www.personal-development.com/miles/>

What A Difference A Perception Makes

Beca Lewis

Once I had a little yard that was filled with weeds. I couldn't find time in my day to weed the yard so it got worse and worse. One day without thinking, I bent down as I walked to the car and pulled a weed. On the way back into the house, I pulled a few more. Within a few weeks, my yard was free of weeds. One weed at a time made a difference.

At one of the homes we rented our landlady used a walker. However, she attended to a beautiful, practical, and constantly changing garden. She did it one step at a time—literally. She never complained that she had to move so slowly, or that she had to lean on her walker to bend down to work in the garden, she just did it.

One day we came home to find her sitting on the porch with a paintbrush in hand leaning from her chair to paint one section of the porch at a time.

One stroke at a time made a difference.

I was trying to put ice cubes in my glass that had melted slightly and then frozen together in lumps. I picked up a lump and tried smashing it into the sink to break it apart which was loud, messy, and probably dangerous. It didn't work anyway. Pausing I wondered if there was an easier way. Still standing at the sink, I ran water over the lump, which easily broke it apart.

Asking if there was a better way made a difference.

Sometimes we forget that it is the little things that make a difference. Three problems: too little time and too many weeds, a house to keep up and hard to walk, a lump of ice too big for a glass. The solution for all three was the same, a shift of perception.

Problems are not fixed outside ourselves, because they exist within our perception. Therefore, the only way to "fix" them is to shift perception. Perception doesn't create a problem. The perception **is** the problem.

My perception was that I didn't have enough time to weed, so I didn't. Our landlady could have had the perception that she is too old and too slow to make a difference in her house, she didn't.

When we identify with a limited perception of what is possible we block or color the view of what is possible. This is neither good nor bad, it is just perception. Whichever perception or point of view we choose to begin with “creates” what we experience. Not because we are creators, but because we see what we believe. When we shift to an expanded perception then our view is expanded and problems can dissolve as easily as running water over a lump of ice.

There is only one choice to make. What perception to choose. Since it is perception that makes the difference why not choose the “best” one we can imagine? Why not choose the perception that there is an infinite, loving, intelligent All? Since “what we perceive and believe to be reality magnifies”, why not choose a Reality that is abundant, loving, and effortless?

If we look at the “human” world, it is mostly effort. If we look at the spiritual world we discover that it is effortless. However, they are the same world. There is nowhere to go, just a perception to shift. Every shift of perception, no matter how small, makes a difference.

“If the doors of perception were cleansed everything would appear to man as it is, infinite.” —*William Blake*

Sometimes it feels as if the doors of perception are closed and we cannot see, let alone experience, the Infinite All. There is a simple key that will unlock the door. It is gratitude.

I was grateful I had a yard, our landlady is grateful for her garden and her home. Gratitude is like the water on the ice cubes. It flows over and around problems and melts them effortlessly. Gratitude reveals the infinite supply that is yours to use.

It takes no effort to be grateful. Perhaps that’s why we forget. Why not try it and feel the result. After all, gratitude is what we are celebrating isn’t it? Discover for yourself what a difference a perception makes.

###

Sign up for **Beca’s** free Shift Ezine and Ecourses here: <http://budurl.com/lwyr>

A Yearning for Learning

Chuck Gallozzi

We have a natural yearning for learning. Infants have an insatiable hunger, responding to each sight, sound, smell, taste, and tactile experience with curiosity. As toddlers, they roam everywhere, soaking in as much information as possible in their attempts to discover the nature of the world. This search for knowledge never ends. However, as we mature, the desire to discover and understand the world changes to a desire to discover ourselves.

The keys to discovery are learning and thinking about what we learn. Which is more helpful, thinking or learning? Well, both are essential, for as Confucius [1] taught, “Learning without thinking is useless; thinking without learning is dangerous.” Nevertheless, since we have to learn something before we can think about it, let’s focus on the subject of learning and begin by reviewing some of the common ways of learning.

Some of the Ways We Learn:

- *From positive experiences*
- *From our mistakes*
- *From personal study*
- *By taking action*
- *From others*, for “When I am with others, they are my teachers. I can select their good points and follow them, and select their bad points and avoid them.” (Confucius) But until we learn to respect others, we’ll be unable to learn from them.

In a word, everyone and everything around us is our teacher.

You have acquaintances and friends, don’t you? What’s the difference between the two groups? Although acquaintances are people you know, friends are people you *intimately* know. It is friends that you turn to for help. It is similar with knowledge and learning. Knowledge is what is found in books and taught to us by teachers and others. But until we integrate that knowledge into our lives and make it a part of us, it is no more than an acquaintance with little value. Learning is the result of embracing knowledge and applying it to our lives. We may forget what

we have read or heard, but we will always remember what we have learned.

The Purpose of Learning

Although there are many reasons to learn, Mortimer J. Adler [2] shares a major one, “The purpose of learning is growth, and our minds, unlike our bodies, can continue growing as we continue to live.” Here are other reasons for learning:

- Self-empowerment, self-improvement, professional development. If we learn one new thing each day, we will soon pass the ‘competition.’
- The more we learn about our world and life, the more at ease we will feel in it.
- Merely trying to be better makes us better.
- Technology is changing, world events are unfolding, and science is developing at a dizzying pace. We need to continue learning just to keep up.
- As long as we are learning, we never feel old.
- Learning makes life exciting.
- Men and women of learning are always comfortable, whether alone or with others.
- Is learning important? Well, it may not be compulsory, but neither is a happy life.

Ray Palmer [3] summarizes this section: “Learning, if rightly applied, makes a young man thinking, attentive, industrious, confident, and wary; and an old man cheerful and useful. It is an ornament in prosperity, a refuge in adversity, an entertainment at all times; it cheers in solitude, and gives moderation and wisdom in all circumstances.”

What to Learn

As the field of knowledge is unlimited and our life is not, we will have to choose what we wish to learn. Here are some subjects to consider:

- Because a positive attitude is a major key to success and happiness, it should be on the top of the agenda for anyone who needs help in this area.

- What is your purpose? What is important to you? How do you wish to contribute to life?
- What do you need to do to maximize your potential?
- We create our lives by the choices we make. What choices should you be making?
- Learning from our mistakes is great, but we can learn more from what works than from what doesn’t. So, be pragmatic, more concerned about what works than theoretical knowledge.
- We are blessed to live in the age of the Internet (the world’s largest library) and Wikipedia (the world’s largest encyclopedia), for access to both is at our fingertips. But because there is as much misinformation and disinformation available as information, use critical thinking. Consider the sources. Don’t be duped. Or, as John Locke [4] put it, “Till a man can judge whether they be truths or not, his understanding is but little improved, and thus men of much reading, though greatly learned, but may be little knowing.”
- Learn the benefits of doing good. Kindness is the grease that eliminates the friction between people.
- Learn how little you know. It’ll keep you humble and motivate you to learn more. Speaking about humility, Einstein [5] gives us a good reason for being humble, “The difference between what the most and the least learned people know is inexpressibly trivial in relation to that which is unknown.”
- Learn to ask questions. Rudyard Kipling [6] explains why, “I had six honest serving men. They taught me all I knew. Their names were Where, What, When, Why, How, and Who.”
- Question your assumptions, opinions, and beliefs. They may be obstacles to learning. Often, before we can learn something new, we must unlearn a false belief.
- Learn to play, relax, and take time for reflection. Take breaks to absorb what you’ve learned, and balance work with recreation.
- An important part of learning is experiential. Experience and book knowledge are world’s apart, or as Luciano Pavarotti [7] said, “Learning music by reading about it is like making love by mail.”

- There's nothing you can do to change your IQ, but you can significantly improve your EQ (Emotional Quotient) and AQ (Adversity Quotient). Your EQ determines how well you can get along with others while your AQ determines your resilience or how well you can cope. Regarding resilience, consider these words of Jon Kabat Zinn [8], "You can't stop the waves, but you can learn to surf."
- To get the most from life, study how life works, or the laws of life. Seneca [8] expressed it this way, "As long as you live, keep learning how to live."
- Learn your rights and how to stand up for yourself and others.
- Take advantage of learning tools, such as concept mapping, which will help clarify your thinking as you learn. You can download excellent, free concept mapping software here: <http://cmap.ihmc.us/>

Caveats

- The first step to learning is recognizing our own ignorance.
- Beware of believing you understand experiences you've never had. Don't judge the actions of those carrying burdens you never had to bear.
- Don't try to take shortcuts. First learn the trade; then learn the tricks of the trade.
- Don't let your learning go to your head. The moment we act arrogantly, we prove our ignorance.
- Put your heart into your learning. "Learn as though you would never be able to master it; hold it as though you would be in fear of losing it." (Confucius)
- Here are some wise words by Bill Gates [10], "We all learn best in our own ways. Some people do better studying one subject at a time, while some do better studying three things at once. Some people do best studying in a structured, linear way, while others do best jumping around, 'surrounding' a subject rather than traversing it. Some people prefer to learn by manipulating models, and others by reading."
- When studying, choose authors because of the wisdom they possess rather than the number of degrees they hold.

- The more we study, the more we realize how little we know. Don't let this discourage you. Rather, enjoy the awe-inspiring mystery of life and the cosmos.
- Relish learning, but don't neglect common sense.
- When studying, embrace what is useful; dispense with what is useless, and adapt it to your way of thinking. Also, keep in mind that what is not useful today may be useful tomorrow.
- When you have completed your learning, it is time to start new learning, for "He who adds not to his learning diminishes it." (The Talmud [11])
- If you're not asking questions; beware, because you're not learning anything.
- "There is only one thing more painful than learning from experience, and this is not learning from experience." (Laurence J. Peter [12])
- Remember, the most important rule of learning is, do not unlearn useful information that you have already learned.
- "Take good hold of instruction and don't let her go, keep her for she is your life." (Proverbs 4:13)

Two Learning Exercises

1. Make a list of what you have learned from life. What are your "Laws of Life"? Make a list and keep adding to it. For example, here is a partial list of what I have learned from life:

- We reap what we sow.
- People are the source of our power. The more we get along with others, the more powerful we become.
- We get from life what we give to it.
- Adversities strike, but they will pass.
- If we work twice as hard as others, we will learn twice as fast.
- No one owns the truth, the truth is shared by all.
- There is no evil in the world; it exists only in our minds. 'Evil' is a label that we attach to events, things, and people we do not agree with. Helen

Keller [13] explains what I mean, “We could never learn to be brave and patient, if there were only joy in the world.”

2. Set your learning goals. Choose three things you want to learn before you die. Next, work backwards listing three things you want to learn in the next twenty years, ten years, five years, this year, this month, this week and finally, three things you wish to learn today.

Conclusion

I’ll conclude by sharing four quotes from different times and places.

“The man who graduates today and stops learning tomorrow is uneducated the day after.” (Newton D. Baker [14])

“Try to learn something about everything and everything about something.” (Thomas H. Huxley [15])

“Learning is a treasure that will follow its owner everywhere.” (Chinese Proverb)

“Learning is the best of all wealth;

“it is easy to carry,

“thieves cannot steal it,

“the tyrants cannot seize it;

“neither water nor fire can destroy it;

“and far from decreasing, it increases by giving.”

(Naladiyar [16])

[1] Confucius (551~479 BC, Chinese ethical teacher, philosopher)

[2] Mortimer J. Adler (1902~2001, American educator, philosopher)

[3] Ray Palmer (1808~1887, American clergy and poet)

[4] John Locke (1632~1704, British philosopher)

[5] Albert Einstein (1879~1955, German-born American physicist)

[6] Rudyard Kipling (1865~1936, British author of prose and verse)

[7] Luciano Pavarotti (1935~2007, world renowned opera singer)

[8] Jon Kabat-Zinn (born 1944, Professor of Medicine Emeritus and founding director of the Stress Reduction Clinic and the Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care, and Society at the University of

Massachusetts Medical School; student of Zen Master Seung Sahn and a founding member of Cambridge Zen Center; teaches mindfulness meditation as a technique to help people cope with stress, anxiety, pain and illness.)

[9] Lucius Annaeus Seneca, (circa 4 BC~ 65 AD, Seneca the Younger, Roman philosopher and playwright, tutor and advisor of Nero)

[10] Bill Gates (Born 1955, American computer genius, businessman, co-founder of Microsoft, philanthropist)

[11] [The Talmud](#) (c. 200 and 500 CE, the central text of mainstream Judaism, in the form of a record of rabbinic discussions pertaining to Jewish law, ethics, philosophy, customs and history)

[12] Laurence J. Peter (1919~1990, scholar, author of [The Peter Principle](#))

[13] Helen Keller (1880~1968, American blind/deaf author and lecturer)

[14] Newton D. Baker (1871~1937, urban reformer, Woodrow Wilson's second secretary of war)

[15] Thomas H. Huxley (1825~1895, British biologist, educator)

[16] Naladiyar (c.5th~6th century, Tamil ethical literature, <http://www.sacred-texts.com/journals/ia/nldr.htm>) ###

Chuck Gallozzi lived, studied, and worked in Japan for 15 years, immersing himself in the wisdom of the Far East and graduating with B.A. and M.A. degrees in Asian Studies. He is a Canadian writer, Certified NLP Practitioner, Founder and Leader of the Positive Thinkers Group in Toronto, speaker, seminar leader, and coach. Chuck is a catalyst for change, dedicated to bringing out the best in others, and he can be found on the web at:

<http://www.personal-development.com/chuck-gallozzi-articles.htm>

Green Tea: Help Or Hype?

By Laura M. Turner

There's been lots of health-hype lately surrounding the benefits of green tea. I'm certain you've heard it, too. Have you ever wondered: "Is it really worth my while to drink tea of the green variety"? Stick around and decide for yourself.

First: The Claims:

A rich source of anti-oxidants:

What are anti-oxidants? Anti-oxidants neutralize "free radicals" or unstable molecules in the body that can eventually become unfriendly and wreak havoc on the cells. Free radical damage can cause everything from sun damage to hardening of the arteries. Green tea will help you bulk up on the anti-oxidant warriors that help to both lower cholesterol and reduce the risk of heart disease by controlling blood pressure.

Cancer prevention:

Green tea has been shown to lower rates of cancer in Asian populations. The cancers studied and which have been recorded include: bladder, colon, esophagus, pancreas, rectal and stomach. New evidence suggests green tea may also help prevent prostate cancer, as well.

Help with arthritis:

Studies also suggest there is possible anti-inflammatory and arthritis preventing effects in green tea although, I'll admit, solid scientific evidence was difficult to come by. By simple suggestion, I'll give green tea an A for effort in the arthritis category.

Liver protection:

Green tea has been proven to protect liver cells by stimulating the immune system. Green tea protects the liver by warding off toxins such as alcohol and cigarette smoke.

Teeth protection:

Green tea has been thought to promote oral health (although scientific proof was difficult to come by here, too). Green tea is supposed to work against bacteria, protecting teeth from cavities.

Weight loss:

Here's another benefit that will raise many an eyebrow. Several sources I found claimed that green tea may actually help to stimulate weight loss. Yes! Green tea contains polyphenols (molecule compounds) that actually help the body to burn weight and regulate both blood sugar and insulin levels.

The Bad News

What's the bad news?

The only negative side effect I've found is the simple recorded cases of insomnia due to naturally occurring caffeine in green tea. It looks like there's only 30-60 mg. in 6-8 ounces of tea, however. That's less than half the caffeine content of coffee which weighs in at 90 mg. per 8 ounce cup.

Other FAQ's About Green Tea:

How much green tea is enough to reap the benefits?

No one seems to be too sure about the answer to this question, either. Let's be realistic – most people could easily drink 3-4 cups of green tea daily. This is a good round number and one that I came up with based on its frequency in the research studied. A suggestion: why not try replacing your usual cup of coffee with a clean dose of health?

Where to get a good cup of tea?

Check out your local grocery for my favorite: Lipton. There's plenty of others, but I like the way Lipton aims to zip up green tea with variety. They even have a orange, passion fruit & jasmine flavor that's de-lish!

If drinking tea really isn't your thing, but you still want the benefits – no problem! Green tea is now available in capsule form, too. This could be as close as your local pharmacy. Check around.

In summation:

In this scientist's opinion, green tea is well worth your consideration. The simple speculation of benefits is enough to get excited about. It's easy to digest, tastes good and, hey, if it helps me with my goal of wellness and illness prevention, I'll take ample tea time, any day!

Research for this article has been created through careful consideration of research and articles appearing on WebMD and through several working texts which include:

Balch, Phyllis A., CNC. [*Prescriptions for Nutritional Healing*](#). New York: Penguin Putnam, 2004.

Mabey, Richard. [*The New Age Herbalist*](#). New York: Simon & Schuster, 1988.

Mindell, Earl, R.Ph., Ph.D. [*Herb Bible*](#). New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992.

Tierra, Michael L.Ac., O.M.D. [*The Way of Herbs*](#). New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998.

Laura M. Turner is a 15-year veteran fitness instructor, fitness trainer and natural health practitioner. She hosts <http://www.body-and-beauty.com> a website dedicated to inspiring and educating others about the benefits of creativity, natural health and fitness. Check out Laura's latest book [*Spiritual Fitness: The 7-Steps to Living Well*](#) or subscribe FREE to her online magazine *The New Body News and Wellness Letter*: <http://www.new-body-news.com>

Why is Handling Conflict So HARD?

& What We Need to Know to Change It!

By Louise and George Altman

"The problem with American business is that it is afraid of dealing with the business of people." —*W. Edwards Deming*

In the late 90's we created and led a very successful public seminar on Conflict Management. In the ten years that followed, we met thousands of participants who attended those seminars armed with their workplace war stories.

Some came because they wanted to improve their conflict management skills, but most came because someone (their manager, HR, etc) "suggested" they attend. Once we got the initial resentments of the participants who got "sent" out into the air, we would inevitably discover the amazing common ground that most employees in the workplace struggle with - how do we navigate the range of people differences and get work done effectively? Often, not an easy task!

People bring all of their unresolved emotional baggage to work - and there is little we can do about that.

Enduring outmoded collective beliefs like - work life and personal life should be separate - are really old, old-school ideas that speak to a lack of knowledge about the neuroscience of emotions and human dynamics. People don't stop being people just because they are at work.

But what really struck us in those years of experience was how little people know about conflict in general - where it comes from and how to respond to it. Even more telling is how little management and organizations know - and do to address it.

There are deep, historic reasons why business continues to manage conflict so poorly. Part of it has to do with the "legacy" of the organization as machine. People never did fit smoothly into the Frederick Taylor model of people as widgets. Their needs and emotions are sloppy and unpredictable and mess up the engine of production, right? All of these factors have undoubtedly contributed to the habitual ways organizations structure their management practices and policies.

Conflict issues usually get relegated to HR or some other designated entity and usually get remedial treatment.

Occasionally, an "enlightened" organization (or HR professional) will provide workers with conflict resolution skills training - a good thing (for consultants like us - and we believe for the participants and the organization). Unfortunately, too often those interventions are not system-wide and do not address the structural roots that can trigger conflict within an organization or department. Consequently, individuals and managers are left to fend for themselves with varying levels of conflict awareness to resolve the inevitable issues that will arise in the process of work.

What's Missing in the Conflict Equation?

One thing that has consistently emerged for us while working with people to increase their conflict management abilities is the persistent belief that there is a magic formula we can learn to resolve conflict. If there is one - we don't know about it. There is no magic bullet!

Our experience has taught us that becoming more successful in responding to conflict requires rigorous self-awareness and the deepening of knowledge and skills at many levels. The tendency of many people we have worked with is to look outside of themselves for answers, which often includes futile fault-finding and blaming.

There is an interesting saying within the mental health professional that goes: "Not everyone can be the patient." Meaning - someone has to step up to the plate - regardless of the source/s of the conflict.

Becoming More Skillful in Managing Conflict - A Checklist

"Everything we do is in service of our needs. When this one concept is applied to our view of others, we'll see that we have no real enemies, that what others do to us is the best possible thing they know to do to get their needs met." —*Marshall Rosenberg*

What is your Conflict Style? Few people have transcended what they learned as children about conflict. This has everything to do with expressing and handling feelings. Think back - who were your earliest conflict modelers and what did they teach you about conflict? Most of us learned some version of the three predominate conflict "styles" - avoid, attack and defend. If those fit your description, maybe it's time to learn something new and go beyond those old conditioned responses?

Identify Root Causes — Most of the time we never get to the real source/s of conflict. The root of a conflict has to do with human needs. Most of us are not practiced in identifying our deeper needs; we just keep roaming around the surface. That is one reason why conflicts continue to stay unresolved and recycle with new triggering external events.

Understand What Type of Conflict You are Dealing With. Most conflicts are internal - yes, we'll repeat that - internal. Even if we are reacting to something external that is triggering us emotionally - it is often our internal processes that drive the conflict (at least our part in it). All conflicts are not interpersonal. We can have an internal conflict when no one else is involved. Many conflicts are structural in nature. This is especially true within the workplace. The problem is too many people are internalizing conflicts whose roots are organizational and trying to solve issues that are out of their control!

Examine Your Beliefs. Unchecked beliefs play a huge role in conflict. Your expectations, assumptions and behaviors are driven by your beliefs. We have beliefs about EVERYTHING - people, work, how things should be done, why people do and don't do things, etc. And we have deep-rooted beliefs about conflict. The first question to ask yourself is: What do I believe about conflict? Can anything positive come from this experience?

Undeveloped Emotional Intelligence Skills. Without making a commitment to develop our emotional awareness and skills competencies, we really can't expect to improve our ability to manage conflict. Most conflict is triggered or exacerbated by a lack of awareness of why we feel what we feel and how to manage those emotions more constructively.

Ineffective Communication Skills. Lots of conflict results from lazy or unclear communication. In the blizzard of contact that happens in today's world, it is easy for misunderstandings to happen. Only about 1/3 of our audiences rate their listening skills as very good. We ALL need to get better at listening and practicing empathy towards others.

Care. Seems simple, doesn't it? You have to care. An alarming number of people we encounter in today's workplace tell us they really don't care about their co-workers! These people often see workplace relationships as a means to an end - and that end is getting things done.

If you see people at work as tasks - and not as people (with their own needs and feelings) you're likely to have much more conflict. This gets even more challenging when you don't like someone or they are "poor performers."

It's our experience that concentrating and applying even one of these principles in responding to conflict will shift your outcomes. You will feel and see the difference, even if it is, at times, subtle. While you may not get instant or total resolution to every conflict, understand that you are creating a new process - and shedding a life long pattern of habits that keep producing the same outcomes and results.

Whether you are a manager, a co-worker, parent, friend, partner or spouse, becoming more familiar with what drives your responses to conflict will serve you and those around you - well! Ultimately, it is about how you respond to the many events that are outside of your control to "fix" that shapes conflict. The big fix is inside - HOW you think, feel and respond to those events is always your choice. ###

Louise and George Altman have many years experience as trainers, coaches, seminar developers, group facilitators and public speakers - see more about their work at [Intentional Communication Consultants](#).

New Powers to Help You Perfect Your Relationships

By Guy Finley

“Since what others may do to us is not in our power to change, we need only concern ourselves with what we do to ourselves . . . for this is in our power.” —Guy Finley

There is always a moment before a problem starts with another human being where we realize that what we want is not going to happen. Ordinarily we'll say the other person is about to "ruin my day." But there is, for those of us who want to understand, not only a way for our day not to be ruined, but a way for us to elevate both ourselves and the other person, or at least give them the opportunity to change their lives as well our own.

The nature of change has nothing to do with what another person has done to us. What the other person did presented us with a moment of grace -- the opportunity for us to see that the reason this happened is so that we are moved to where we can take the next step in our life. We can use this painful moment to prove to ourselves that not only has what we've wanted all along not worked, but there exists something that if we *change* what we want, we can begin to know ourselves at a higher level.

A self-working man or a woman, the person to whom and in whom the Truth begins to become a living force, cannot have a bad day or a bad relationship. It's impossible, because everything that happens to that self-working man or woman is used for the purpose it was created, which is to help the person discover first the condition they're actually in, and then to want the understanding that rests above them.

What happens when another person hurts us? We either lash out in the moment we feel hurt, or we run the other way. Have you ever changed another human being by lashing out at them or running away from them? *It is not in our power to change anyone.* All that happens is the experience (that is there to bring us understanding) just keeps repeating itself... over and over again. Our experience always brings us to this moment of truth where we have the possibility of changing what happens to us.

This is what *is* in our power to do: Whenever someone hurts us, we can put our understanding first and remember that this person cannot do

anything different toward us than what he or she understands to do. Simply put, the person who is hurting us is doing the *best* they know how to do... and no one wants to be punished for their ignorance. The only way that person will ever know what they don't know is when we stop punishing them for it. But here's what we say: "That's not good enough!" Then we try to drag them through a change, which means we resist their negative behavior. And what do we do when someone resists *our* negative behavior? We just hunker down all the more. So our resistance to their state not only keeps their state alive, but we're convinced that we're different than them, when really it's one secretive relationship perpetuating itself.

In the moment that I feel hurt, I am in a space where I'm upset with you because of what you just did to me. That space wouldn't exist if I weren't standing as a secret opposite to the other person. What I'm looking at and feeling is really *me*. Therefore, what's mandatory in that moment is to realize that this space that I'm in – meaning my sense of self – must be abandoned. This is what is in our power to do: Instead of placing our attention on the person that we say has hurt us, we can place our attention and our wish on Love. I *intentionally* place it on my understanding that, even though I can't see it at the moment, the Love that would free me from this moment exists right there within me, above me.

When I understand that this human being could not do better than they're doing right now, and even though I'm sure they're wrong, that they're the worst thing that ever happened... I can realize: that doesn't help *me*. That doesn't take me to the next level, and I can't make the other person go there... it's impossible. Therefore, I must *quit* the relationship that seems to be the only possibility at that moment, and join myself to the relationship that I know in my heart stands here even if I can't see it, and I can *intend* the Truth. I intend to be in relationship with what I know.

This is a key problem for us: I know the Truth is above me, and right now I'm angry and upset, and I don't feel any love at all. But by the same token, I know that what I am feeling is not only conducive to keeping this conflict going, but it's not letting me rise above myself. What I must do is understand that above me sits this Truth, this Love, this Goodness, and here is where I am, and that there exists some relationship between where I am and where I long to be.

Nothing in the universe can prevent a man or a woman who wants to know Love, who wants to reach the next level, from reaching it. The entire universe is set up for the purpose of us realizing our intention. The whole thing is designed for us to succeed at rising. When we understand the true nature of change, we can begin to intend that. It is not necessary to strive to succeed or to blame oneself if one doesn't. As we allow our understanding of the truth about our relationships to guide us, we will change... and we will know the change that we go through was given to us by something above us, and we will continue to long for that until our life is one beautiful upward movement. Truth promises it. ###

Guy Finley is the best-selling author of [*The Secret of Letting Go*](#), [*The Essential Laws of Fearless Living*](#), and 35 other works that have sold over a million copies in 18 languages worldwide. His work has been featured on hundreds of radio and TV networks including NBC, CBS, ABC, CNN, NPR, and PBS. Guy has spent the last 30 years showing individuals the authentic path to a higher life filled with happiness, success, and true love. Finley lives and teaches in Merlin, Oregon where he is Director of non-profit Life of Learning Foundation.

[Visit the website](#)

Pam Garcy

Part 7. Choose your attitude!

This is Part 7 of a multi-part article by Pam Garcy. Each week Cultivate Life! Magazine will bring the next section until the article is complete.

The word attitude is used to describe how your beliefs, feelings, values and actions combine to create outcomes. Often, we have the opportunity to choose our attitude. Other times, our attitude is the result of a psychiatric condition. Below, I'll discuss those instances in which your attitude is a choice. In the instance of a psychiatric condition, however, you might need to get some professional help to change your attitude.

A wise person once said, "Your attitude determines your altitude." How is it that your thoughts, feelings, values and actions can determine how well you do in following your path and reaching your goals?

Let's look at some of the characteristics of people with positive and negative attitudes for a moment. When you understand their characteristics, you'll begin to see how attitude can determine altitude!

Positive attitude: People with this type of attitude tend to look for the opportunity, learning experience, road to growth or reason to be happy about their situations. They focus upon the goal of creating great outcomes, which leads to self-expansion. If they make mistakes, they tend to use mistakes as feedback and tend to correct their behaviors. These folks have been labeled "winners", "optimists", "owners" and "empowered."

Negative attitude: People with this type of attitude tend to look for the dark clouds in their lives. They notice the elements of doubt and uncertainty, which leads to fear and self-contraction. They are more likely to blame, criticize, give up, defeat themselves, become demanding upon others, display a great deal of anger and find reasons to be unhappy about their situations. They focus upon the reasons why they cannot create great outcomes and stop there. These folks are sometimes labeled "losers", "pessimists", "victims" and "blamers."

Now you see how attitude can determine altitude.

I have another question for you! Do you identify with either of these attitude sets? Which one? Have you ever considered that this is often your choice?

Now I want to tell you something else--something that may surprise you. Did you know that these labels that I just told you--those labels that are associated with each set of attitudes are actually incorrect? The reason that one person may be labeled as a winner is basically because that person simply chose to hold a positive attitude most of the time. This attitude led to certain results, and the label stuck. The reason that another person may be labeled as a loser is basically the same--it has to do with how PERSISTENT the attitude is and what outcomes result.

So, yes, these labels are actually mistaken--they're just describing the current behavior, not the person! Most people are capable of choosing either attitude.

If you label yourself as a loser, you're making a mistake and keeping yourself trapped in this role. A loser can never be a winner, by definition, because a loser is someone who always loses. Obviously, you can choose to change, so that means that the label is wrong.

Basically, labels cloud your ability to move past an attitude that is disempowering you. So, if you are someone who likes to simplify life through labeling consider this: rather than labeling your SELF, if you have to label something, label your attitude as helpful or unhelpful.

You are not a label, but rather a person who often chooses your attitude. Therefore, attitude boils down to choice! This is exciting to many of you because you realize that if you simply take responsibility for your attitude, you can become more positive and more powerful--pretty cool, huh?

Sometimes, however, you may be so caught in your own negativity that you find it amazingly difficult to break out of your personal prison. Everyone is different, but you might consider the following ideas:

Friendship. Friends with positive attitudes tend to help you to see the silver linings around the clouds! They also help you to see your strengths and your growth, which is sometimes invisible to you when you are in a negative mental state.

Coaching and REBT Therapy. Many coaches and REBT therapists tend to help you to look at things more objectively. This objective stance often

leads you to become more open-minded to the possibilities in your life, moving you beyond your insecurities toward growth.

Gratitude. Gratitude is a special kind of attitude. It is one in which you DECIDE to pay attention to all that you have, all that you've been blessed with, all that you've been given and all that is at your disposal. Have you taken time to think about all that you have?

Self-caring. Taking good care of yourself is almost always an essential element of maintaining a positive attitude. Getting enough sleep, exercise, relaxation, good nutrition and life balance are important in creating the setting for a positive attitude to thrive!

Once you start to feel more positive, use this energy to pull you out of your funk! Take a step, however small, upon your path--and allow yourself the chance to enjoy it!

REMEMBER: This is a process. Keep going to see ongoing results!

Next issue: Part 8

Pam Garcy, PhD is a Psychologist and Coach in Dallas, Texas. If you'd like a partner in reaching your goals and overcoming the obstacles that seem to stand in your way, please contact Dr. Pam for coaching at drgarcy@aol.com. Dr. Garcy offers a special 10% coaching discount to all valued subscribers of *Cultivate Life* and to customers of Trans4mind.com. Dr. Pam's best-selling books - including the bestsellers *The Power of Inner Guidance: Seven Steps to Tune In and Turn On* and *Wake Up Moments of Inspiration*

<http://www.myinnerguide.com>

The Unruly Mind

By: Robert Darby

Learning how to free ourselves from the tyranny of the unruly mind is not easy. Most of us have been the victims of the chaos of our own mind for so long that we don't even recognize that there is a need to do anything about it. What problem? Yet in a very real sense we are slaves to an endless dance of impulsive reaction to the thoughts generated by our mind and the emotions that those thoughts initiate. But even if we somehow become aware of this situation and realize that we probably should develop some level of mental and emotional self discipline, we encounter a strong resistance to such a task. Why?

Why would we want to remain slaves to our unruly mind? Do we not want to be free? Well, like so many things in life today, it just isn't that simple. While the concept of developing self discipline may not be complicated, actually traveling the path to achieve it can get downright ugly. I once read a book where the author compared training the mind to training a wild elephant. You tie the elephant to a stake in the ground and let it rage until it realizes that it isn't going anywhere and settles down, at which point you can begin to feed it and train it.

First Contact With Crazy

I smiled when I read this because I remembered my own early experiences during meditation. You should know that there is one task that is common to almost all forms and techniques of meditation, and that is the development of a certain level of concentration. It is in fact, one of the first requirements in the development of meditation skills. The development of concentration requires that we develop mental self discipline and this means training our mind. What does training a wild elephant have to do with training our mind?

Anyone who has tried to develop skills in meditation eventually discovers the crazy behavior of the undisciplined mind. It is one of the first major challenges that must be overcome before moving on in meditation. And if you have encountered this crazy mind, then you know that it is like the raging elephant that must be calmed before any real work can be done. In the world of meditation, the goal here is called mindfulness. Mindfulness is the state of consciousness that is able to be aware of the activities of the mind without getting caught up in the event

cycle of impulsive response and reactions. Mindfulness simply notices everything internally and externally and then lets go of it and brings the mind's attention and focus back to some object of concentration.

Resistance To Discipline

The development of mindfulness is the method by which we can develop mental self discipline. The simple act of meditating and watching the chaotic activities of our own mind and mindfully noticing when we have been captured by our own thoughts and have somehow been in the past or future for the last five or ten minutes is the act of mindfulness and when we experience this state of consciousness and bring our awareness back to the here and now and the object of our attention and concentration, we are developing mental self discipline. This is not easy, especially in the beginning.

Why is this so difficult? Why would we resist something that has the potential to set us free from tyranny and essentially give us unlimited power over our own lives? The answers to these questions are not easy either. These answers are found in the scary territory of self awareness, which involves the exploration and discovery of not only what we do, but also why we do what we do or don't do. We may discover that not having any mental discipline serves some purpose that we may or may not even be aware of. We may intuitively perceive that the development of mental discipline will open up doors much like dominoes falling and begin to reveal things that we invest a great deal of energy into avoiding. Yes! We may be heavily invested in not becoming aware of many things on many levels, and our slavery is a trade off we have accepted somewhere along the way.

Strength Courage And Faith

It all seems to get down to whether we want happiness and tranquility in our lives and are willing to make the effort it takes to acquire these conditions or we have somehow become comfortable with our fear and ignorance and the stress and insecurity that are the consequences and price for our surrender to our weaknesses. Are we willing to be the victims of the whims of life or are we ready to take up the challenge and become the architects and masters of our lives?

Slavery is easy, personal power is difficult. The truth here is that we are the Human adaptation of life and this means that we have unlimited

creative power available to us if we have the strength, courage and faith to take possession of it. This is the difference between living in the darkness of fear and ignorance or the light of truth and knowledge. So, make sure that your stake is strong and driven firmly into the ground and tie your elephant securely to it until it settles down and then begin the journey of a lifetime. ###

Robert Darby is a self change and personal development specialist who writes for many organizations including [The Agenda Of Life Foundation](#). He focuses on developing personal power since that is usually the cause of all human problems. Robert takes a practical approach in that he looks at the various tools and techniques out there that are designed to help us achieve our mental, spiritual and emotional goals.

What is above our genes?

Jahiel Yasha Kamhi

When I was at the university, our education included genetics, the science which taught heredity and variation in organisms.

We learned that our genes control our life: Our bodies and our behaviour are pre-determined in our genes. For many years this was the dogma (a truth without proof), and nobody challenged the validity of this fact.

The only problem with this “fact” is that it is no longer scientifically correct!

Hear me out before you start yelling: “Who said it is not scientifically correct?”

Well, it's not I who said this, it's a science called – epigenetics.

Epigenetics is a mind-body biology, an aspect of molecular biology, which studies DNA and RNA, cell function, proteins and other genetic information.

The science of epigenetics is now beginning to explain a different approach to genes.

Epigenetics literarily means “above the genes”. Basically, what was realized through epigenetics is incredibly interesting and also revolutionary: Something is controlling, or is “above”, our genes!

And what is above the genes?

It is environmental influences, including our mind!

Wow!

Does this mean that the expression of our genes can be changed by external factors?

That is correct!

Dr. Bruce Lipton is “responsible” for this hard-to-believe statement! He is the leading scientist in the field of epigenetics, and it has taken real courage to say this, thereby breaking with traditional opinion:

“Our mind has the power to create or cure disease because our thoughts affect the expression of our genes”.

What epigenetics is saying is: We are in charge of our genes. We can influence our genes through the foods we eat, the lifestyle we live, and..... through the thoughts that we think!

This is really very good news - we are not victims of our genes, anymore!

At the beginning of this breakthrough in understanding, everyone was sceptical.

To say that the human mind and body are energy, and that we have control over our genes through this energy, was revolutionary to the geneticists!

The statement: “Cell's life is controlled by the physical and energetic environment, and not by its genes”, came as a complete surprise.

Do we now have a scientific explanation for mind-body connections, the placebo effect, and many other “miracles”?

According to the old dogma, we were controlled by genes. With the new insights from epigenetics, we are now in a position to master our genes. Knowing that something is superior to our genes came as quite a shock!

Epigenetics sees illnesses differently:

With genetics, illnesses are pre-determined: with epigenetics, they are ... optional.

The new science accepts that the mind and environment – and not only our genes- have influence over human health, giving us control over our genetic expression.

From the perspective of epigenetics, genetic design is no longer a problem. The source of health problems comes from the way cells interpret the instructions received from the mind.

It turns out that the mind can change genetic expression in both directions: Not only can the mind cure disease, but the mind can create disease as well.

The human mind works as healer or destroyer.

A person's interpretation of an event, whether it is good or bad, is the most creative thing. How the person sees a situation will determine their reaction, and as a result it will determine the reaction from their genes.

Control over the genes comes not only from the individual's mind: it comes also from the people around them.

Yes, the people around us have the power of authority over our genes.

This goes beyond creative thinking, it is also confusing thinking: Other people's behaviour manipulates our genes?

Since our observations control our genes, other people's behaviour around us will become part of our own system of beliefs.

There is no way around it: Watch out who is around you and how people behave: They can heal you, but can destroy you, as well.

Beliefs are energy, our body is energy, and we share energy, communicating both inside and outside of ourselves.

If self- healing works and we know it works, what is stopping us from applying this knowledge? ###

Jahiel Yasha Kamhi holds a degree in Medical Biochemistry and a Bachelor's degree in Chemistry. Jahiel writes regularly for www.personal-development.com and other magazines. He also delivers presentations that inspire others to find more meaning and balance in their lives. He is passionate about writing, and conveying positive ideas that help people live life with more passion and purpose.

Jahiel's mission is to promote a good mental and physical health.

Email at: jasakamhi@hotmail.com

Type A Worriers

By Dr. Linda Sapadin

Are you a Type A Worrier? Not sure? To find out, answer these questions:

- Do you have difficulty relaxing?
- Do you think about all the horrible things that could happen to you (or a loved one) if.....?
- Do you have a can't- get-to-sleep/ get-up-in-the-middle-of-the-night personality?
- Do you beat-yourself-up for every little infraction you make?
- Do you worry about things that haven't happened yet, and may never happen at all?
- Do you hear a cacophony of voices in your head telling you what you should do? And do you try to listen to them all?
- Do you easily become impatient with yourself?
- Do you have a secret stash of worries marinating in your mind, even though you appear composed to others?
- Do you become easily agitated when change is thrust upon you?

Okay, how did you do?

If you answered "Yes" to at least three of these questions, it's likely that your worrying has intensified since you took the test.

Relax. Worrying is not a fatal disease, though it does make life more difficult and not so pleasant. But you already know that. So what can you do about it? Here are some guidelines for you to follow:

Take three deep breaths - inhaling slowly, exhaling slowing. As you do, say to yourself, "relax and let go; there's nothing I need to take care of at this very moment." If you worry when flying, tell yourself it's okay to relax; under no circumstances will the pilot be calling on you for help in landing the plane. Then use the time to read, play a game or doze off.

Treat the worrying part of yourself like a troublesome toddler whose attention needs to be redirected. Yes, worrying is troublesome. So what else could you pay attention to? Try anything that begins with mmm,

mmm, good: how about music, movies, muscles, marriage? Doesn't work for you? Pick another letter of the alphabet and see what pops into your mind.

Limit your worrying. Allow yourself 20 minutes, max. After that, pick yourself up, dust yourself off and move on to something else. No, not another worry. Another activity. You do have something else to do, don't you? Besides chomp, chomp, nervously feeding your face, chomp, chomp or downing another drink.

If you've tried these guidelines and your worrying has not disappeared, relax. Be kind to yourself. Change takes time. Continue to put these ideas into practice. Seek help in discovering other ways to overcome worry. And soon you'll discover that temperament is a trend, not a destiny. ###

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.

The Eternal Presence Behind Life's Pains

Victor Da Ponte

The Eternal presence is everywhere. It is in the air. It is in the trees, the oceans, the rivers and everywhere you look. But not only is it in the physical world outside of you, it is also within you. You may wonder where I could find it within me. Is it in my mind? Is it in my body somewhere? I believe the answer is all of the above and more. There is nowhere eternal presence is not within you. It's even behind your anger, your fears and your hatred. It's behind your worries, your guilt and your sexual fantasies.

There cannot be an experience or object not sustained by its creator – the living, breathing consciousness that holds it all together – all for the benefit of the experience of re-experiencing itself. Yourself.

Even life's greatest injustices are encoded with the eternal presence. It may be a paradox, but if this paradox is ignored, it will keep you locked within the wheels of ignorance and suffering. Karma.

On the surface, a great injustice will cause great pain when experienced through the lens of the mind. The mind is linear, if one person is stealing from another; it's an ugly and awful thing. Period. At its root the mind has only one perspective. Survival. All is calculated by adding and subtracting – from a superficial perspective – and once there is a negative result, pain is experienced as a warning to help bring back the balance of “good and bad” from its dualistic standpoint. The mind is missing a greater perspective – a divine perspective.

Getting trapped in the emotions will keep you blind to the eternal presence behind it all. But simply shifting your attention to the source of all existence will quickly begin to dissolve any suffering. Shifting your attention to the present moment, and the vibration of stillness are some simple ways to tap into the eternal now.

Life's challenges are only opportunities to awaken to the unified source that you really are. You are one with all of creation – but it's not the 'reality' this planet lives by. This planet lives by the illusion of separation and subsequently pain and suffering. We are always one with eternal presence. No matter how many mistakes you've made or the kind of life that you are living now, you can easily access this consciousness. It

does not matter what your life experiences have been. Everything that God is you *Are*. You are eternal presence and whatever pain you experience is just your stairway to the consciousness of love and joy – the land of milk and honey.

Every aspect of the pain you may experience is just a seed of love, compassion and glory. Do not fight with your pain and suffering. Do not make it your enemy. It is not. It is a seed which, at first glance, may appear ugly and feel undesirable. But if you fight it and suppress it, you will be suppressing the flower that is locked in the seed.

The energy within an unpleasing looking seed under the right conditions will turn into a beautiful plant, fruits and flowers. Behind anger – waiting to flower is love and compassion. We are inherently filled with layers and layers of deeply rooted seeds that have the potential to completely transform our lives. The deeper you go within, the more potential you find. The more seeds you find that may appear most unpleasant, but will carry the greatest energy for personal transformation.

The deeper the pain –the more powerful the love it will release that will seep into your every cell. It takes courage and an equally deep desire to face these seeds within, but just like one seed can turn into a tree and transform the landscape for years and years, so too will your deepest pain transform your life for the rest of your life – and every aspect of it. Yet even the fear of facing what's deep within is just another seed waiting to help you transform into who you really are. From the moment you make the decision to go deep within fear may rise up. Know that it is also love, a love response from your mind, trying to keep you from feeling pain –the only way it knows how –through fear.

By having a deep acceptance of all that is, whether it may appear as good or bad to the mind, you will know that you are inherently good. You always have been and you always will be. Have a deep acceptance of all emotional discomforts. Don't judge. This is the key to the inner magic which will allow your heart's deepest desires to come floating to you on life's unseen undercurrent. You want to be happy. Turn what appears to be lead into gold. You are filled with it. You want to feel joy. Turn your seeds of sadness into joy. Turn your seeds of doubt into trust and peace. That's the only reason they are there. No other reason exists – everything else is just an illusion. The illusion is not that your pain is not

really there, the illusion is that the logic for holding on to the pain is true and valid. The logic behind the pain is the illusion. It is not logical. It is just ignorant of the truth. It is just an attempt to create truth. You cannot create truth. Truth just is. The only truth is that you need nothing and the only question is –do you really want to live in truth? ###

Victtor Da Ponte is a gifted energy healer, spiritual counsler and originator of the iMaster Techniques. He has been in the personal development field for more than 20 years, and is committed to assisting others in their evolution. Learn more about Victtor's work by claiming a [Free Intro-Video course on the iMaster Techniques](http://imastertechniques.com). <http://imastertechniques.com>

Becoming Truly Great — Become Smaller

Steve Wickham

John the Baptist said at the immanence of God in Jesus:
He must increase, but I must decrease.

~**John 3:30** (NRSV).

John's rejection of greatness was at the same time an attraction of greatness.

One of my little anthems relates to greatness - personal and interpersonal greatness - and that, for everyone around me who wants it. It's a beautiful concept.

'Greatness' is a buzzword in coaching and self-development circles, and usually for the wrong reasons. People generally want greatness out of selfish desires. No amount of telling some will get through, however; that's never getting anyone 'greatness'.

Then I thought, "What's the quickest, surest way to true greatness?"

Immediately thrust into the nearest reaches of my mind, as if the invitation to answer that question had become raggedly overdue, the Spirit caused me to think: *humility*.

It's a sharply cogent paradox.

The way to real success in life is the fight to become less. The way we truly get glory beyond ourselves is by convulsively giving God the glory - as if to staunchly reject the praises that might readily come.

John the Baptist did it and so did Jesus.

The Underpinning Glow of John the Baptist's Message

This has such spiritual relevance to every human being for all people desire some form of greatness.

The Spirit comes from above and we come from the earth. When the Spirit comes alive in us - despite it being housed within us in any event - we cannot help but draw on, and find our meaning in, the glory of the Lord, in as much as we are.

Becoming smaller so God can be bigger (he is bigger in any event!) is recognising the laws of life and it's cooperating with the Spirit to a point where due credit is given and glory comes to us whether we like it or

not... and we're never really in a position to reject the glory that genuinely comes from godly things. They naturally effuse themselves to us.

Overwhelming Joy

We can't know joy, not truly, until we place God at absolute first place in our coming in and going out.

For John the Baptist, his joy had been fulfilled (John 3:29). He understood his role as the forerunner; the one people would naturally assume was the Messiah, assimilating honour to him that wasn't truly his. He was most probably relieved - other than being awed - at Jesus' eventual arrival.

Paradoxically, though John is deflecting all the kudos and fame from himself onto the "One coming" he is found to be rather famous in God's court - the eternal riches of glory were genuinely his in humility to have known his place. ###

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Steve Wickham is a Registered Safety Practitioner (BSc, FSIA, RSP[Australia]) and a qualified, unordained Christian minister (GradDipBib&Min). His blogs are at: <http://epitemnein-epitomic.blogspot.com/> and <http://inspiringbetterlife.blogspot.com/>

Letting Go of Fear

by Anne Hartley

"What the caterpillar calls the end of the world, the master calls a butterfly."

—*Richard Bach*

I was woken from a deep sleep by blood curdling screams. I knew the screams weren't human and my first thought was that possums were fighting outside my bedroom window. As I lay in the dark trying to work out where the screams were coming from two of my cats ran into the bedroom and circled my suitcase, which I'd left lying on the floor the night before. My heart started pounding and I felt real fear thinking a rat, or something worse, was lurking in my bedroom.

I put on the light, stood on the bed and hoped for a miracle. When no miracle arrived I put on sturdy shoes, went in search of a broom then moved very carefully around my bedroom but found nothing. Knowing I wouldn't be able to sleep with something in my room I went into my daughter's bedroom, stuffed towels under her door so nothing could crawl under, then climbed into bed with her.

The following day I had to catch an early flight from Sydney to Los Angeles so I closed my bedroom door and told my girls to call WIRES (our wildlife service which rescues animals). WIRES came and searched the room but nothing was found.

Ten days later I arrived home late at night feeling exhausted and grateful to sleep in my own bed after days of travelling. Shortly after I fell asleep I was woken again by the same unearthly screams and I went through the same routine of searching my room before jumping into bed with my daughter again.

Over the following week the nightly screams continued, by this time my need to sleep in my own bed was greater than my fear. During the day I searched the house, looked under beds, behind doors and even went as far as dragging my mattress outside without finding anything. Then, three weeks after the first incident I heard a really pitiful weak cry and found a tiny gecko, which could easily fit into the palm of my hand, trying to escape out my front door. Fortunately I was able to save him and returned him to the garden.

I believe this tiny gecko came to teach me to let go of fear. During my absence my two daughter's had stayed in my house without any incidents and it still amazes me that the gecko was silent that whole time and only started screaming once I returned. At that time I was really stuck in fear as I was worried about one of my children, I believe the gecko sensed my fear and screamed as a way of protecting itself.

There is only one thing that takes us away from being happy and manifesting all our desires and that is fear. The problem with fear though is that it has so many faces that sometimes we don't always recognise it. Fear can sometimes be called money worries, stress, anxiety or it can manifest as resentment, depression or anger. Most of us handle fear by trying to get rid of the problem or avoiding it, as I did when I hid from the gecko. Or, we try to force change, which is how all wars begin. For many people though fear is their constant companion, it rules their lives and influences all of their choices even when they aren't consciously aware of it.

Anything that we resist we give our energy to and whatever we place our energy upon we manifest more of the same. When we learn to stop fighting fear with fear then our world will change. I used to teach people to face their fears but I have learnt that there is a much easier way, all you need do is to have a conscious intention to let your fears go, then support that intention with your thoughts, words and actions.

Letting go doesn't mean that you will never feel afraid again, you will and so will I. It simply means that you are willing to let go of your fear and trust that there is a purpose behind everything that happens.

It's no accident that my love of the bush brings me into contact with creepy crawling creatures which I'm afraid of. I've had baby bandicoots in my kitchen, snakes in my garden and spiders all around me. I would prefer to live without these little creatures but I thank them daily because they remind me to trust.

I firmly believe that there are no accidents in life. Every situation, every person presents us with an opportunity to accept and trust. Acceptance is the king of values and if you choose to be an accepting person and nothing else you will see dramatic changes in your life. Acceptance does not mean giving up, or resigning yourself to being, doing, or having less than you really want, it's about accepting that there is a higher purpose to everything and sometimes there is a better way than you imagine.

You need to accept what is, yourself and other people as they are and allow each soul to walk his path. Sometimes what appears to be a tragedy may be a catalyst that will transform a person's life and that of countless others.

Remember, there is no magic formula to letting. Letting go is an intention that you support with consistent action. The action comes first and the feeling follows. ###

Anne Hartley is a life coach trainer, author and creator of *The Heart Process*. For more information on Anne's work visit [Hart Life Coaching](#)

Going Within

Part Three

By Carolyn Evers

*"Most assuredly, I say to you, **he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.** John 14:12*

There is much more to Jeshua's teachings than we perhaps understand. Our knowledge and richness of who he was has been limited simply because the information that has come down to us has been tampered with. All of the sacred writings that concerned him have not been put into the Bible and what was put into the Bible has been limited in some fashion because of what was removed to suit those who were in power at the time, whether it was the Catholic Church itself, or the Roman Emperors who dominated the church and its beginnings.

Those that have knowledge that threatened the powers of the moment were silenced in some fashion. The Gnostic writers were completely disenfranchised and held to be heretics. Yet it is this very ability of being able to **go within** and bring forth knowledge that is available through the right side of our brain www.RightBrainMagic.com that allows us to understand a greater truth.

We have the ability to connect with all consciousness whether it is a star, grass, a tree, the Masters, or Prime Creator. We have the ability to stretch our consciousness throughout the entire cosmos and bring back the information that resides there.

Few of us do this because we have been told that it cannot be done. We were taught that we needed an interpreter between our God and ourselves. We needed someone to tell us what would make our relationship right with our God. If we stay in that box our spiritual growth remains static. We are contained within our beliefs and the boundaries of our perceptions.

We still argue over the meaning of words that we find in the Scriptures, not understanding that our minds have been contained to a very small window of what is truth. We have been taught falsely, of how to meditate

and to be satisfied with what was given to us and not even thinking of exploring the vast tapestry of truth.

How Do We Change This?

Be open to the thought that perhaps there is more knowledge available to you as it resides hidden behind those things that we have been taught to believe. Be open to the thought that perhaps we have been limited.

Reincarnation

I remember many of my lifetimes. I have found it to be of great benefit to me for many reasons. I have a sense of who I am, where I came from, my mission, and my future. This has helped me make sense of why I am here. It also has helped me understand the mistakes that I have made and how to correct them. Working with the lessons of reincarnation has helped me understand why those in my present life have acted and reacted to me in the way in which they did.

I could find the reasons behind some of the most painful experiences in my life, learned from them, and moved on. I have become all the stronger for this. If there was an establishment or individuals that wished to control us, this tool of reincarnation and the understanding it brings would present a problem for them. We wouldn't allow their control if we had the understanding of our journey. Therefore, the Church and the State would find this a very dangerous ability if we realized that all we required was our own guidance.

Reincarnation as Taught by Early Christians By I.M. Oderberg

www.theosophy-nw.org

The idea of reincarnation is found in the oldest traditions of Western civilization, as well as being taught throughout the ancient near East and Orient. And there is solid evidence that during its first centuries, Christianity did indeed impart what it had learned about the pre-existence of souls and their re-embodiment.

Josephus, the Jewish historian who lived during most of the first century A.D., records in his ***Jewish War*** (3, 8. 5) and in his ***Antiquities of the Jews*** (18, 1, 3) that reincarnation was taught widely in his day, while his contemporary in Alexandria, Philo Judaeus, in various of his writings, also refers to re-embodiment in one form or another. Moreover, there

are passages of the New Testament that can be understood only if seen against the background of preexistence of souls as a generally held belief. For instance, ***Matthew*** (16:13-14) records that when Jesus asked his disciples "Whom do men say that I am?" They replied that some people said he was John the Baptist (who had been executed only a few years before the question was asked). Others thought he was Elijah, or Jeremiah, or other of the prophets. Later in ***Matthew*** (17:13), far from rejecting the concept of rebirth Jesus tells his disciples that John the Baptist was Elijah.

In ***John*** (9:2-4) it states that the disciples asked Jesus whether a blind man had sinned or his parents that he had been ***born*** blind. Jesus replied that it was in order that the works of God may be made manifest in the blind man, that is, that the law of cause and effect might be fulfilled. Or, as St. Paul phrased the thought: We reap what we sow. The blind man could not have sown the seeds of his blindness in his present body, but must have done so in a previous lifetime.

Early Christians believed in reincarnation

The earliest Christians, especially those who were members of one or other of the Gnostic sects, included re-embodiment among their important teachings. For them it enabled fulfillment of the law – karma, as well as providing the means for the soul to purify itself from the muddy qualities resulting from its immersion in matter and the egoism we have developed in the first stages of our journey through Earth life.

Karma

In the work that Richard and I do, we have found that while this might be true, a better explanation of the process is that those emotions that we held at death, as we were crossing over to the other side, were not cleared from the physical body. It is a law that imperfections collected in a lower dimension cannot be taken to a higher dimension.

Presently most people who cross over move to a higher astral plane. Some consider this place as Nirvana, and since it exists in a higher vibrational level than our three dimensional life. These negative emotions are captured in our emotional subtle body and placed within a seed. During the next life as the soul incarnates again, this seed which was contained in the DNA is released into the bloodstream with the intention of clearing these negative emotions.

If someone were attacked by the dark as they crossed over, were murdered, or came to an unfortunate end, you could see where these emotions would have filled the energy body.

Those who chose to usurp our power such as the Catholic Church and early Roman Emperors intended for us to follow their dictates and discouraged us from **going within** and finding the truth about ourselves. When we **go within** we connect to consciousness, whether it is our higher self which is the entranceway to the soul monad, or to other forms of consciousness such as trees, animals, or even rocks and crystals.

The right side of the brain

All of this is possible when we learn how to work from the **right side of the brain** www.RightBrainMagic.com. The right side of the brain is where our intuition lies and it is **through our intuition** that we are connected to the gifts of our soul. Those who would control us understood this and they also understood that if we stayed within the left side of the brain, we could not connect to our intuition and thus to those gifts which enabled us to move into what is called the NOW. In the NOW we are able to see and understand our past, such as our past lifetimes and of course the present. Understanding what surrounds our present means we can heal what requires to be healed. Connecting with future events allows us to see the results of the healing. All of this is possible depending upon where you place your focus.

The early Gnostics understood this process and they could trace their own history, knowing where they came from and the path that would lead them to their future. Working through this skill you could understand that one does not need an authority such as the Church or the State to tell you what to believe. Therefore, those who wished to keep us under their control would make certain that we would be involved in activities supported by the left side of the brain.

Threats of death were placed over humanity by the Roman Emperors. The concept of sin, languishing in a state of eternal hell, excommunication, and in some aspects of history, torture and death as was used by the Inquisition, were methods used to keep humanity under the authority and control of the Catholic Church.

Today's distractions

Today these tools do not work as in the past. However, those of the dark presently use other methods such as discordant music, violence in every thread of our work and pleasure, such as movies, video games and the like, keep us engaged in activities from the left side of the brain and manage to keep us from engaging our intuitive side of the brain.

Jeshua's story and teachings, which has been called ***The Greatest Story Ever Told***, has been changed and watered down to fill the needs of those who would control us.

We will explore some of the facets of Jeshua's life in areas that have perhaps been overlooked. There is much about Jeshua's life along with Mary Magdalene's that is coming to the surface presently as this is the time of great change. At this time we will again be connected to these great gifts of our soul.

Healing our past history

When our soul was created, we truly were formed in the likeness of Prime Creator. If one uses the tools of traveling through the right side of the brain, we can go back to the past and actually see the soul being created.

There were magnificent lights in a brilliance that cannot be described and along with that, there was magnificent music that some have called ***The Music of the Spheres***. In the midst of this there was a brilliant white light as Prime Creator brought forth the particles that were theirs to bring forth as these particles were part of them. And in that mix of light and music, love and colors, we came forth as the sound that God uttered called us. In one moment we did not exist and the next moment there was our consciousness as a soul. We were overwhelmed at the sight of it all as in astonishment, we looked into the face of God.

The cosmos is extremely large in its structure and Prime Creator stays in the center to keep creation balanced. For its greater understanding, Prime Creator sent particles of itself out into the cosmos to understand its creation to the fullest. Our souls are those particles that Prime Creator sent forth. So I ask you, how could we be born in original sin if we are the progeny of God?

Once someone understands this process and works with it, they need no one else to explain their journey and the Source from which they come. The Gnostics have developed this ability and for this they were

feared and called heretics. Their records were destroyed and in many cases they were burned at the stake.

Next month: We will look more closely into the one that we call Jeshua.

Carolyn Evers is a messenger for the spiritual hierarchy. She has written six books and a course, Journey To The Other Side. Her work encompasses information that she has received from the Spiritual Hierarchy. Carolyn believes that there is a connection between spirituality and science, and she endeavors to incorporate scientific research along with what she receives from spirit. Her work can be found at www.CarolynEvers.com and her contact address is Carolyn@CarolynEvers.com. Her latest websites are www.SteveFossettLives.com, www.metatronminutes.com, www.IamJeshuaReturned.com, www.the2012countdown.com and www.RightBrainMagic.com. She also works with the Cherubim Angels and reads from the Universal Akashic Records. She has a radio show with BBS Radio, The Messenger http://www.bbsradio.com/bbc/the_messenger.php. Call in for healings and readings from the Akashic Records - Toll Free 1-888-815-9756

Dr. Richard Presser works closely with Carolyn and is the author of "The Coming Golden Age and How to Prepare for it" - www.thecominggoldenage.com

Heart to Heart Coaching
by **Dr. Doris Jeanette**

I don't relate to people and they turn on me. What lesson can I learn from this painful experience?

Philosophy: I am God and I am working on remembering all that I am.

Hopes and aspirations: Christ Consciousness Realized.

Question:

I don't have friends, I never did, it seems only men that were interested in me. I don't relate with people very well; there's a pattern of problems in the office. People are afraid of me, they turned on me and it is exhausting. I realized I create all this to show me something... but what? I am different? I must accept myself? I am not interested in people? Please help me if you can see this lesson or pattern.

Answer:

There is a huge disconnect between what you say you desire, "Christ Consciousness Realized" and what you are living in reality, "I don't have any friends." One is an open hearted, trusting life and the other is a closed hearted, distrustful life. The end result is that you are confused and do not know why you are experiencing such unpleasant results.

You acknowledge that you need to take responsibility for what you have created and yet what you have created does not make any sense to you. Many people are in this confused state of consciousness. They are in despair and they do not know the what, where, when and how of their life circumstances.

Many people long for aspects of their soul and yet do not know how to go about getting positive results. This confused state offers you an excellent opportunity for major transformation. I remember this painful place. I would sit in dark despair, confused that I, who wanted to do well, be so good, and help the world, was alone, hurting and in pain. I did not enjoy other people either. They bored me, they were mean. They hurt

me. I would read the self-help books, say the affirmations and be totally confused about my current state. Where were the loving relationships, joy and bliss I desired?

One of the problems I began to notice with the self-help books and the spiritual teachers available to me is that they seemed to forget the process they went through to reach fulfillment. Popular authors reported fantastic end results and did not tell me the process of how they got through the "dark night of the soul." They did not share their difficulties, hardships and sorrow that allowed them to reach "nirvana." Many of them did not even mention the reality of authentic feelings and emotions; it was all about thoughts and thinking.

I also read in the books that I "should" be responsible for all my creations. Yet, how could I be responsible for creating such a miserable life for myself? Let me see if I can share some of the process necessary for transformation with you to help you know the reality you must live through. My goal is to direct you to a point, a place, a space, a way to shift your energy into a more fulfilling path.

First, you need to know that mental confusion can often be a defense mechanism. Yes, strange as it may seem, when you are confused you are in a defensive state. There are many states of consciousness and many behaviors that are defensive. Anytime an explanation does not easily clear up your confusion you are probably defensive. When we are defensive we:

Stay stuck and do not move forward.

Do not trust and are surrounded by darkness.

Do not know that we are defensive.

When you deny your defensiveness, it is impossible to move forward. Therefore you need feedback from teachers and outside data to help you know when we are being defensive. I am grateful I have trusted outside sources to help me make my way through my defensive energy. From my traditional talk therapist, who first helped me be aware that I was being defensive to the bass player at the bar who told me I had a "chip on my shoulder" to my current mentor who stays firm when I react

to her feedback, I learn and grow.

What do I mean when I say defensive? When I use the term ego, I am talking about defensive energy. The wall around you that I have mentioned in previous answers is composed of defensive energy. Anytime you shut out inner realities and external realities you are in a defensive state. Instead of experiencing your inner and outer realities, you are in touch with your thoughts about reality. Your thoughts about reality are very, very different from reality. This is the reason you have a huge disconnect between what you say you want and what you are living.

Here is a list of thoughts, behaviors, feelings, states and energy that can help you discover when you are being defensive. You are defensive when you:

- Deny the truth in any form
- Exaggerate the truth in any form
- Refuse to communicate with others
- Feel alone and like no one loves you
- Have a knee jerk reaction
- Are confused
- Do not cooperate with others
- Shut people out
- Think you are better than others
- Think you are not as good as others
- Make others wrong
- Make others bad
- Feel misunderstood
- Experience anxiety
- Tighten your body
- Don't notice your body
- Push too fast
- Slow down too much
- Control people
- Control yourself
- Control your environment
- Get stuck

Refuse to move
Shut down your energy
Close your chakras
Avoid genuine feelings and emotions

The most reliable feedback you can use to know if you are being defensive is your physical energy. For example, I was working with a man in my Philadelphia office a few years ago. He looked brittle and upset. Since he was a regular client, my feedback usually helped him become more aware of his body, feelings and energy. Then he could shift his energy immediately, during the session, to a more open, flowing, healthy state. As a result he had reached many of his personal goals. Yet, during this session, every reality I mentioned was denied. He continued to say, "No, I feel just fine. Everything is all right with me. My girlfriend and I are getting along just fine."

Finally, I took my little, wooden ball that I ordered from England many years ago with a long string on it, out of its little box. I asked him if I could check his chakras. He agreed. I placed the ball over the energy flow of each of his chakras. One by one we both saw the little ball tell us that each one of his chakras was totally closed. Shut tight. We both were silent as the feedback from his energy told us clearly that he was in a state of absolute denial.

As a holistic psychologist, I gave up using talk, tests and words many years ago to know the condition of my clients. Psychobabble can get you in a mental mess while using physical data for feedback is very effective and accurate. The most reliable best way to know the truth of your psychological state is to use your energy as feedback about reality.

After my client directly experienced how closed his chakras were, he did not leave and refuse to work on himself. No, he returned for his next appointment eager to work on his issues. The goal of the next session was to help him feel safe enough so he could open up instead of close his energy vortexes.

So perhaps one of your lessons is to stop closing down because the more you close down, the more you will suffer in needless pain. The

new, healthy option for you would be to give up your confusion and admit that you are closed. Only by admitting reality will you be able to go forward.

You are absolutely correct that you are responsible for everything you see around you. You have created the unfulfilling relationships at work and at play. However, please be careful about your judgments. Taking responsibility is the only way to empower yourself. However, you may be so judgmental that when you try to take responsibility, you end up blaming yourself. If you stop judging others and start to judge yourself, this is no improvement what so ever. This is exactly where I suspect that you are stuck.

Blame is a mean, nasty, judgmental energy of the ego. Blaming others or yourself will definitely lead to the unpleasant results that you report. On the other hand, taking responsibility for your creations is a healthy, loving, powerful act. If you are responsible for something, you can change it. If you created this mess, you can clean it up.

I am sure you can learn to give up blame and take responsibility for your life circumstances. Then you will definitely move forward and create the life you want with awareness. There will many joys along the way.

Action Steps to Move Forward

1. Use the Defensive List above whenever you are stuck, confused or unhappy. Go through the Defensive List and notice if any of the behaviors, thoughts, feelings or energy apply to you. The more that apply, the more defensive you are. Admit the truth, which will automatically help you move forward.
2. Learn more about blame. Get to know the blame energy of the ego as different from taking responsibility as a mature adult. Visit the free library at [drjeantte.com](http://www.drjeantte.com/blame.html): <http://www.drjeantte.com/blame.html>
3. Pay attention to outside physical feedback and use the data to increase your connection with reality. Use teachers, coaches, and mentors to help you relate directly to reality, instead of to your thoughts about reality.
4. Get to know your judgments. Notice how often you judge yourself.

Notice how often you judge others. For an entry point to judgmental energy and how to stop it from making you miserable no matter what you do, check out "Find Peace Beyond Judgment and Guilt" audio at: <http://www.drjeanette.com/guiltbuster.html>

For a full 10 week course on how to step by step become conscious of the judgments that are keeping you from taking responsibility and moving forward, check out the "Overcome Anxiety Naturally" online course: <http://www.drjeanette.com/anxietyonlinecourse.html>

D Doris Jeanette, Psy.D. is a licensed psychologist with a holistic approach that helps you use facts, data and energy to empower you. She loves to teach, coach and mentor people to self actualization. Check out the "Holistic Psychology Mentoring Program" at: <http://www.drjeanette.com/mentorprogram.html> and sign up for her free newsletter, "The Vibrant Moment" at <http://www.drjeanette.com/>

Quotes of the Week

"It is your prime responsibility to acquire useful knowledge from others and to apply it appropriately. You don't have to reinvent the wheel, but you do have to learn from those who did."

—*Gary Ryan Blair*

"It is more important to know where you are going than to get there quickly."

—*Mabel Newcomber*

"Be who you are and say what you feel, because those who mind don't matter and those who matter don't mind."

—*Dr. Seuss*

"It is good to dream, but it is better to dream and work. Faith is mighty, but action with faith is mightier."

—*Thomas Robert Gaines*

Here Comes Inspiration with Phil Evans

A Brief Look at Fear

Regardless of what particular fear any of us may be feeling, like with most other things controlling us, we must shift our focus onto the exact opposite of the fear! This is about reversing the focus completely: 180 degrees! Once you've actually identified your fear (or I've helped you to do same), then begin to focus on verbally and visually living the 'safe' focus-point! I can help with specifics, but here is a great overall list of mantra's or affirmations to focus on, which covers the most common stuff for most people!

I feel safe in everything that I do!

I am safe financially - and I feel safe financially!

I am safe physically - and I feel safe physically!

I am safe spiritually - and I feel safe spiritually!

I am safe emotionally - and I feel safe emotionally!

Every day, in every way, I am safe - and I feel safe! ###

Zen Story

No Water, No Moon

When the nun Chiyono studied Zen under Bukko of Engaku she was unable to attain the fruits of meditation for a long time.

At last one moonlit night she was carrying water in an old pail bound with bamboo. The bamboo broke and the bottom fell out of the pail, and at that moment Chiyono was set free!

In commemoration, she wrote a poem:

In this way and that I tried to save the old pail

Since the bamboo strip was weakening and about to break

Until at last the bottom fell out.

No more water in the pail!

No more moon in the water!

100 Words

Tony Juniper

Who Is Tony Juniper?

Tony Juniper is the director of Friends of the Earth and vice chair of Friends of the Earth International. His environmental work spans more than twenty years and ranges from activities with primary school children on local conservation projects to helping the global campaign to highlight the impacts of world trade policy on the environment. He has been a leading figure in many of the main environmental campaigns of recent times, including the anti-road building protests of the 1990s and the mobilization against GM crops and foods. His present focus is climate change. In addition to running Friends of the Earth, and his lobbying and public awareness work, he writes and comments on environmental issues. Tony is a naturalist, an ornithologist, and a recognized expert on parrots. He is the coauthor of the award-winning [*Parrots: A Guide to the Parrots of the World*](#) and of the widely acclaimed [*Spix's Macaw: The Race to Save the World's Rarest Bird*](#). He is also the author of [*How Many Lightbulbs Does It Take to Change a Planet?: 95 Ways to Save Planet Earth*](#). www.tonyjuniper.com

Five books that have deeply inspired Tony:

[*When Corporations Rule the World*](#), David Korten

[*Life on Earth*](#), David Attenborough

[*Biodiversity*](#), E. O. Wilson

[*Six Degrees*](#), Mark Lynas

[*First Light*](#), Geoffrey Wellum

Insight from Tony Juniper

The creativity and brilliance of humanity could so easily be harnessed to create paradise. We already know how to sustainably farm, use low carbon energy technologies, conserve nature, and live efficiently. If we turned our attention to solving the twin crises of environmental degradation and deepening inequality, then we could all live in comfort and feel secure. The missing ingredients are not technological; pretty much all we need for everyone's needs to be met sustainably is already invented. The challenge is economic and political. A different economic system that values the Earth is what's required. The intellectual work for

this is largely done: now we need leadership and inspiration to give it life. A new approach to development needs to be built on cooperation more than competition, and geared toward well-being rather than crude growth.

From The Shelf

A Course In Weight Loss: 21 Spiritual Lessons for Surrendering Your Weight Forever

By Marianne Williamson

“If your ‘weighty thinking’ does not change, then even if you lose weight you’ll retain an overwhelming subconscious urge to gain it back. It’s less important how quickly you lose weight, and more important how holistically you lose weight; you want your mind, your emotions, and your body to all ‘lose weight.’ Weight that disappears from your body but not from your soul is simply recycling outward for a while

but is almost certain to return. It’s self-defeating, therefore, to struggle to drop excess weight unless you are also willing to drop the thought-forms that initially produced it and now hold it in place.”

— **Marianne Williamson**

What is the connection between spirituality and weight loss? Best-selling author **Marianne Williamson** is about to answer that question for you in her groundbreaking new book, bringing you 21 spiritual lessons to help you surrender your weight forever. These lessons form a holistic

paradigm for weight loss, addressing the spiritual, emotional, and psychological elements involved in what Williamson refers to as “conscious weight loss.” If you are a food addict, a compulsive eater, or someone who for any reason sees food as the enemy, this book is for you.

A Course in Weight Loss addresses the true causal root of your weight-loss issues: a place within you where you have forgotten your divine perfection. This forgetfulness has confused not only your mind but also your body, making you reach for that which cannot sustain you . . . and reject that which does. As your mind reclaims its spiritual intelligence, your body will reclaim its natural intelligence as well.

The 21 lessons in this book will take you on a deep, sacred journey. One step at a time, you will learn to shift your relationship with yourself—and your body—from one of fear to one of love. And you will begin to integrate the various parts of yourself—mind, body, and spirit—to become, once again, and in all ways, the beautiful and peaceful person you were created to be.

As Williamson writes: “When it comes to your enjoyment of eating, your best days are not behind you but ahead of you!” So get ready to begin a new relationship with food . . . and with yourself.

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Eastern Wisdom

“The man who removes a mountain begins by carrying away small stones.”

—Chinese Proverb

Meditation

When we look at the entirety of any task that confronts us along our passage through life, our ego immediately fills our mind with overcomplicated messages and often defines the task as an impossibility. The ego's goal is to overwhelm you with these interpretations and ultimately lead you to giving up on your true purpose; the ego desires endless struggle and suffering. As a spiritual being searching for truth and awareness you must transcend the influence of the ego and simplify your world. Simplicity is where success, peace, and enlightenment will be discovered. This is the essence of your being.

Real Life Application

Choose a task in your life that you often dismiss from your consciousness because of its complexity. Sit and simply break this task into small manageable steps that you can take without much difficulty. This process applies to any project that you wish to embark upon. Its that simple; stop intellectualizing and pushing yourself further away from completing and begin taking the necessary action to progress. All great feats are done in this manner. I apologize that I don't have any great philosophical or intellectual suggestions to share with you, but try it this way you may be pleasantly surprised.

Conquering Your Procrastination Habit, by Dr. Linda Sapadin

Tip# 12

Work *with* your team, not against it.

Remind yourself that you do depend upon others for your livelihood and happiness. Hence, you need to remain open and accommodating to what the team needs - the team can be your family, your company, your community.

Whether you're on the job with your colleagues and clients, or at home with your family and friends, team players help to ensure that a project or activity runs smoothly. If you, however, fall into a habit of procrastination, you undermine the team's objectives.

Get into the habit of giving, supporting and aiding your team's efforts, instead of withholding, obstructing and hindering the team goal. ###

"For additional tips, go to www.BeatProcrastinationCoach.com. Discover how *success coaching* and "*The Six Styles of Procrastination E-Program*" can empower you to reach your goals.

Ponder a Moment

When you make a mistake, don't look back at it long. Take the reason of the thing into your mind, and then look forward. Mistakes are lessons of wisdom. The past cannot be changed. The future is yet in your power.

—Phyllis Bottome

A Course In Miracles, Lesson 23 plus Commentary by Allen Watson

Lesson 23

I can escape from the world I see by giving up attack thoughts.

The idea for today contains the only way out of fear that will ever succeed. Nothing else will work; everything else is meaningless. But this way cannot fail. Every thought you have makes up some segment of the world you see. It is with your thoughts, then, that we must work, if your perception of the world is to be changed.

If the cause of the world you see is attack thoughts, you must learn that it is these thoughts which you do not want. There is no point in lamenting the world. There is no point in trying to change the world. It is incapable of change because it is merely an effect. But there is indeed a point in changing your thoughts about the world. Here you are changing the cause. The effect will change automatically.

The world you see is a vengeful world, and everything in it is a symbol of vengeance. Each of your perceptions of "external reality" is a pictorial representation of your own attack thoughts. One can well ask if this can be called seeing. Is not fantasy a better word for such a process, and hallucination a more appropriate term for the result?

You see the world that you have made, but you do not see yourself as the image maker. You cannot be saved from the world, but you can escape from its cause. This is what salvation means, for where is the world you see when its cause is gone? Vision already holds a replacement for everything you think you see now. Loveliness can light your images, and so transform them that you will love them, even though they were made of hate. For you will not be making them alone.

The idea for today introduces the thought that you are not trapped in the world you see, because its cause can be changed. This change requires, first, that the cause be identified and then let go, so that it can be replaced. The first two steps in this process require your cooperation. The final one does not. Your images have already been replaced. By taking the first two steps, you will see that this is so.

Besides using it throughout the day as the need arises, five practice periods are required in applying today's idea. As you look about you,

repeat the idea slowly to yourself first, and then close your eyes and devote about a minute to searching your mind for as many attack thoughts as occur to you. As each one crosses your mind say:

I can escape from the world I see by giving up attack thoughts about

Hold each attack thought in mind as you say this, and then dismiss that thought and go on to the next.

In the practice periods, be sure to include both your thoughts of attacking and of being attacked. Their effects are exactly the same because they are exactly the same. You do not recognize this as yet, and you are asked at this time only to treat them as the same in today's practice periods. We are still at the stage of identifying the cause of the world you see. When you finally learn that thoughts of attack and of being attacked are not different, you will be ready to let the cause go.

Commentary by Allen Watson

This is one example of a statement that sums up the message of ACIM for us. We do not escape from the world by controlling it, manipulating it, fixing it, or trying to make it better. We escape by an act of mind, by giving up attack thoughts. The world I see is the effect of attack thoughts in my mind, and therefore I can "escape" from it by changing my mind. This is "the only way out of fear that will ever succeed. Nothing else will work; everything else is meaningless".

"It is with your thoughts, then, that we must work". The Text puts it like this:

You must change your mind, not your behavior, and this is a matter of willingness. You do not need guidance except at the mind level. Correction belongs only at the level where change is possible. Change does not mean anything at the symptom level, where it cannot work

The world is the symptom level; the mind is the level of causation.

It is very hard for most people to accept this dictum of the Course: "There is no point in trying to change the world" (2:3). As often as I have read this I keep running my head up against it. I find myself trying to

change some outward factor, something in the world around me, thinking that such a change will somehow make things better. All this accomplishes is to alleviate some symptoms, like taking a cough drop when I have a cold. It cures nothing. Or, as Marianne Williamson has said, it is like trying to solve the problems on the Titanic by rearranging the deck chairs. What works is changing my thoughts about the world, because my attack thoughts are the cause of the world I see.

"You see the world that you have made, but you do not see yourself as the image maker". We don't recognize the power of our mind; we use the very images made by the mind to mask the mind's power. We resist being tagged as the image maker. We want it to be someone else's fault, even God's.

Vision already holds a replacement for everything you think you see now. Loveliness can light your images, and so transform them that you will love them, even though they were made of hate. For you will not be making them alone.

Every single thing we made out of our hate, our attack, and our rage can be transformed if we join with the Holy Spirit to let His light shine on them. Every special relationship, whether it seems hateful or loving, can become a source of blessing to the world. Every act of vengeance can be turned into salvation. This is what a miracle does. "The holiest of all the spots on earth is where an ancient hatred has become a present love".

We are not trapped in the world "because its cause can be changed". Then follows a wonderfully brief summary of the process, which Ken Wapnick has labeled the three steps of forgiveness. It is found in a single sentence: "This change requires, first, that the cause be identified and then let go, so that it can be replaced".

"This change requires, first, that the cause be identified...." We must recognize mind as the cause. We must become aware that we are constantly "making" the ego every moment within our own minds, by our thoughts. We must become aware that we are responsible for what we see.

"...and then let go...." Having recognized the mind as cause, we must choose to change our mind about the world. We must realize that the thoughts we have been thinking are not the thoughts we want

because, as the lesson said yesterday, we have realized this is not the world we want to see. It does not say anything here about coming up with new thoughts; it merely says we let go of the old ones. All that is needed is a willingness for change, a recognition that "I no longer want this."

"...so that it can be replaced." The third step is the replacement of attack thoughts with holy thoughts, thoughts of love and peace. The next sentences are extremely important here: "The first two steps in this process require your cooperation. The final one does not". *The replacement step is not our job!* We cooperate in identifying the cause, uncovering the ego within our minds, and we cooperate in letting go of those ego thoughts, but the replacement with God's thoughts is not our job. That just happens.

When something happens to upset me, this is all I need to remember:

The cause is not outside, but is instead my own thoughts.

I do not want these thoughts.

Step 3 takes care of itself, for if I take the first two steps, I will see that my false images have *already* been replaced. The true thoughts spoken of earlier are already in my mind, but they are masked by the false ones. Remove the false, and the true is seen to be already there.

Within the practice instructions there is one other idea worth singling out:

Be sure to include both your thoughts of attacking and being attacked. Their effects are exactly the same because they are exactly the same.

An "attack thought" is not just a thought I have about attacking another; it is also a thought of *being* attacked. If everything I see is a reflection of my thoughts, then what seems to be attack coming at me from outside is really my own thought of attack bouncing back at me.

Fears of all kinds are attack thoughts. Uneasiness when a highway patrol car cruises by is an attack thought. Worry about competition at work, or in a relationship, is an attack thought. Cheering when the Death Star blows up is an attack thought. Watch your mind on Super Bowl Sunday!

We have a lot of giving up to do. The result is worth it.