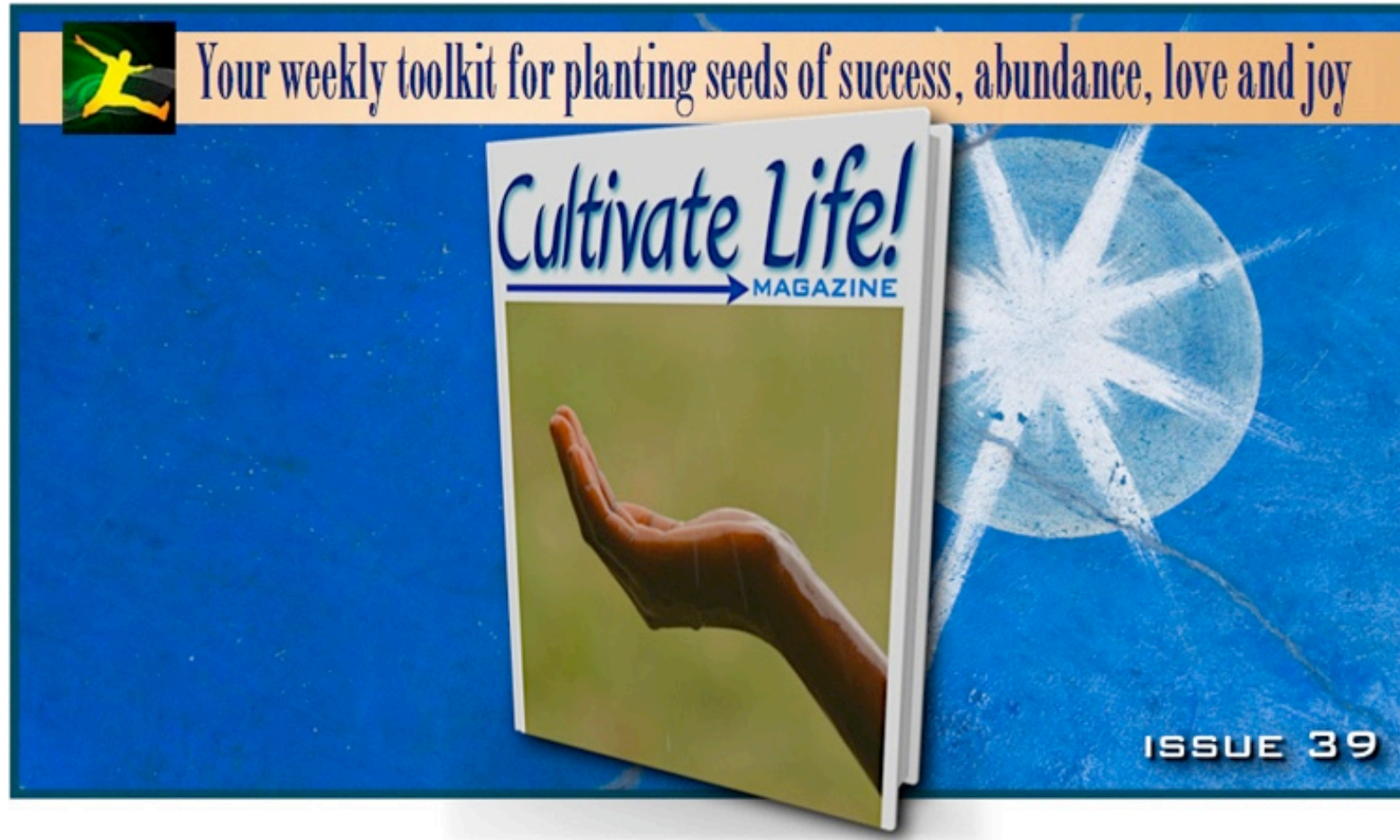


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Cultivate Life! magazine

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Heart to Heart Coaching:

Coach Doris Jeanette, replies to the question:

I sometimes feel like there are blockages somewhere within me. How can I release all the negativity and my limiting beliefs to really move on?

Link: <http://www.trans4mind.com/life-coach/life-challenge9/question264.html>

Philosophy: I am Christian and I am spiritual and I believe that every human being has the innate power to shape his life and circumstances. Believe that we are limited by our fears and conditioning.

Hopes and aspirations: I really want to find and tap into the greatness within me and be in control of my life and circumstances, to prosper, to find inner peace, find my purpose and live it thus live my life to the fullest.

Question: I have been doing a bit of studying and practicing law of attraction, but I seem to be experiencing ups and downs... today I feel like I am in the relevant wavelength; tomorrow it's like I have lost that connection. How do I maintain the momentum and is there any program that can help me release all the negativity and my limiting beliefs to really move on, I sometimes feel like there are blockages somewhere within me?

ANSWER

Thank you for your question. I have received several questions concerning positive affirmations and the law of attraction. It is encouraging that so many readers of Cultivate Life! are studying metaphysics and engaged in spiritual practices. Peter's newsletter is bringing together a powerful group of spiritual seekers. The more you study physical and metaphysical laws, the more effective you will be.

Laws operate equally on everyone and they are reliable, dependable and cannot be disobeyed. The more educated you are about laws, the more powerful you will be. There is no question about the important of studying physical and metaphysical laws.

A physical law that you are familiar with is the law of gravity. Gravity is NOT a theory. It is a law. No one escapes the results of gravity and it operates equally on every one. In contrast, a theory is a mental concept that may or may not be true. Psychological theories fill up the psychology textbooks around the world.

As a holistic psychologist, I am not fond of psychological theories. This is one of the ways the New Psychology is dramatically different from traditional psychology. If you have not read the difference, read my definition of holistic psychology: <http://www.drjeanette.com/newpsychology.html> Psychological theories have never helped my clients in the real world. In contrast, when I teach clients to respect and use natural laws, they dramatically improve.

The more you expand your consciousness, the more laws you will find and use. The law of attraction is one such law. It is a very old law. "Like attracts like" is a familiar saying for spiritual teachers and students throughout the ages. This means energy attracts like energy.

We also have a common saying in our language, "Birds of a feather flock together." This has been researched and appears to be a psychological fact about human behavior. This means that miserable people tend to seek out miserable people. Happy people tend to seek out happy people.

The physical law of resonance is a very important law to know and use in your daily life. The best example of the law of resonance is how the human voice shatters glass. See it for yourself here: <http://www.wikihow.com/Break-a-Glass-with-Your-Voice>

Congratulate yourself and feel proud of yourself for developing and using your parapsychology abilities. Unfortunately, people have developed unrealistic expectations about the law of attraction since the movie "The Secret" became popular. Many teachers, groups and books have surfaced that are based on glamour, glitz and superficiality.

Beware Impostors

Spiritual teachers warn their students of the evils of glamour. To seek glamour takes you away from a spiritual path. This means you need a good "crap detector." It is extremely important for you to be able to tell the difference between that which is authentic and that which is not authentic. Energy is the only way I know to tell the impostor from the truth.

Jesus himself warned of the pitfalls of impostors. He did not think people would recognize him because they would not notice the real thing. Humans are often fooled by glamour. It is like the story of the Emperor without any clothes. Only one brave child could point the finger and say, "he is not wearing any clothes."

You can find people online and psychologists in major universities who are promoting ALL JOY! ALL JOY! ALL JOY! If you want to drain your energy fast try to be ALL JOY! Notice what happens. It takes a great deal of energy to control your emotional state and be happy all the time.

As you learn to read energy, you will notice that being ALL JOY! has the same energy as ALL SAD. Feel the energy of ALL JOY! It is not real, authentic or grounded. ALL JOY and ALL SAD are both controlled, ego states. It is unrealistic to expect yourself to not be up and down at times. It is only the rigid, controlled ego that does not go up and down.

Real adults, like real babies, are joyful sometimes and sad sometimes. Authentic human beings ride the emotional energy waves like a masterful surfer.

Factors That Determine Your Results

Affirmations and the law of attraction are wonderful tools to use in your daily life. However, they are not the whole picture. If you are not getting the results you want, you need to look at the bigger picture.

For example, let's say you have severe gout and your research turns up that a natural cure is cherry juice. You start to drink cherry juice. You drink it all the time and yet, your gout does not get any better. Why not?

You can drink all the "cherry juice" you want to cure your gout, however, if you do not stop putting toxics into your body you will continue to be sick. You have to stop putting "soda pop", which is a major cause of gout into your body if you want to become healthier. No amount of cherry juice will make you well unless you stop putting toxins into your body!

This also applies to the law of attraction. The law of attraction cannot counteract all the dark, dense heavy energy in your body and energy field. You need to remove your dark, dense, heavy energy with education, personal growth and coaching. Just as cherry juice is not strong enough medicine to stop gout, the law of attraction cannot remove all the negativity from your life.

My teacher, Jack Schwartz taught me a helpful, physical fact to keep in your mind. If you have a glass half full of dirty water and you pour clear, clean water into the glass, what do you have? You have a full glass of dirty water. That is the way energy works. Pouring positive energy into a system that has negative energy does not clean up the negative energy.

Another factor that determines the results you are getting is the amount of physical work you are doing. Forget the mental work, pay attention to the physical work. There is no magic formula, positive affirmations or secret saying that is going to make your life better.

One of the Sufi teachings I love is "Trust in Allah, but tether your camel first." Allah has no hands but your hands. It is up to you to tie your camel at night or the camel will not be there for you in the morning! Being a spiritual person on a spiritual path is extremely rewarding and it is a lot of hard, physical work.

Therefore, you are correct that your conditioning and false beliefs are the source of your blocks. If you work on yourself in the physical area by looking at the bigger picture of your whole mind body system you will get better results.

Questions to Ask Yourself:

- Where in your body is the first level of unhealthy conditioning that you need to decondition?

- What are the false beliefs that you need to unlearn?
- How open or closed in your heart and solar plexus?
- Is your human energy really grounded to the earth?
- What is the difference between anxiety and fear energy?
- What is an authentic, healthy emotion?
- Do I truly believe what I am affirming?

Positive affirmations are not strong enough energy to decondition the lining of your stomach, the squeezing of your throat or your knee jerk response to criticism. In addition, if you do not truly believe what you are affirming it will not be effective. There are many universal laws and psychological laws that are operating at any given moment. And all of them are affecting your matter and your results.

You will get better results when you learn to relax your body so you have the relaxation response you need to decondition your unhealthy learning. You will also benefit from learning how to reduce your anxiety so you feel safe enough to let go of control and do transformational work. Transformational work is the opposite of trying to control the outcome.

So take heart and know that you are on the path to owning your greatness. Forget your ego's expectations and enjoy the process of transformation. "Tether your camel, do the physical work necessary to remove the dirty energy in your body and energy field and begin to decondition your anxieties and unhealthy learning.

Continue to use the law of attraction and positive affirmations to help you along the way, as you discover more of your authentic human greatness and other powerful laws that cannot be disobeyed.

However, it is unrealistic to expect yourself to remove all your negativity all at once and for it to be gone forever. One of the highest highs I ever had was hitting a certain note during a singing lesson. I was standing by my teacher's grand piano overlooking Rittenhouse Square in center city Philadelphia. As I looked down on the lovely trees and statues, my whole body became one single vibration. Wow!

These are the moment of being alive I live for... that is why I call my free newsletter, The Vibrant Moment. You can also become alive, excited and full of healthy vibrations and energy. You do not have to be depressed, anxious and live in self-pity. You are the "paramount of animals." Get excited and enjoy being yourself.

Actions Steps to Take

1. **Remove toxins.** Mental judgments are toxic to your mind-body. How many positive or negative judgments do you make against yourself or others in a day? (Positive judgmental statements are ALL JOY!) In contrast, how many blessings or statements of acceptance do you give yourself and others in a day? After observation, begin to reduce mental judgments and increase blessings of more and more people and things.

2. **Do not follow glamour and glitz.** Learn to read energy and pay attention to the "Sayers" of truth and the "Sayers" of glamour. Learn to tell the difference between glamour and authenticity. Beware the pitfalls of glamour and use teachers, coaches and mentors that are grounded and reality based. The courses that Trans4mind recommends for releasing negativity and limiting beliefs - see this page online <http://www.trans4mind.com/recommended4.html> - have proven to be authentic but the choice remains yours.

3. **Learn about energy and physical facts.** I recommend all of Jack Schwartz's books on the human energy field and his wonderful facts about how matter works on planet Earth are invaluable. ###

Doris Jeanette, Psy.D is a licensed psychologist who grew up on a farm where she learned many facts about physical matter and natural laws. She loves to empower people by teaching them about laws so they can live in the bigger picture. Check out her virtual mentoring program at <http://www.drjeanette.com/mentorprogram.html> and sign up for her free newsletter, The Vibrant Moment at <http://www.drjeanette.com/anxietyonlinecourse.html>

What Does That Mean?

Eldon Taylor

"The miracle is not to fly in the air, or to walk on the water, but to walk on the earth." — *Chinese proverb*

One night as I drifted off to sleep, I reflected on unexplained events in my life and wondered, What does that mean? The next morning as I dressed, I heard someone on the television in the next room saying, "It's amazing. The window washer fell 500 feet, and he lived. That story and more, next." I asked myself, What does that mean? What does it mean to the window washer?

That day as I drove home from the grocery store, I noticed a young man and his child. The weather was finally springlike, and this fellow was working in a tiny garden. He appeared to be breaking up some small clods by repeated blows with a hoe. I thought back to my first home and garden. Such pride, such ambition--and such is the great American dream. In the United States, most of us plan on owning our own little piece of heaven; after all, a man's home is his castle. As young people, we plan to buy our first vehicle, and the consumption cycle begins. (Oh, we're consuming prior to that, but for most of us it's limited to what the family provides, and because my point has nothing to do with when or how the consumption habit begins, I'll just leave it at that.)

So we make our plans, our dreams, and begin to live them out to the best of our ability. Our clothes, automobiles, homes, furniture, group memberships, and so on are all a part of our dreams. The food we eat, the stops at Starbucks for a fancy latte, the cell phones we carry, and on and on are also part of our dreams. I could go on, but let's consider another way to look at this dream. Are we consuming, or are we being consumed?

Is there a "now" moment where the heart is not just beating, as Henry Wadsworth Longfellow says:

And our hearts, though stout and brave,
Still, like muffled drums, are beating
Funeral marches to the grave.

Life has many twists and turns, and seldom do we find the road to be straight and narrow. The same can be said for the choices we have to make as well. We are sometimes tossed about like leaves in a windstorm, bouncing from one event to the next, and--despite our efforts to take control--unable to shut down the prevailing winds. In the midst of all of this, we can find ourselves experiencing the seemingly impossible.

Why? How does that happen? And what does it mean?

The Train Accident

When I was just 17 years old, I was driving a car that stalled on a set of railroad tracks. My side of the vehicle was facing an oncoming train traveling approximately 100 miles per hour and pulling more than 100 cars. The young lady who was with me, her hand on my leg, watched while I tried to start the car so that I could drive it off the tracks. But in what seemed no time at all, the train struck the car. The driver's side was crushed under the cowcatcher (the slanted piece on the lower front of the engine) as the train dragged the car down the tracks and finally threw the wreckage into a weedy field next to the tracks.

My friend Connie was cut from the car with a welder's torch. She asked about me while they worked to get her free, but they told her nothing. Bless her heart, she also worried that her new nylon stockings might have been damaged. Shock often has a disorienting effect such as that.

As for me, I found myself standing a few hundred feet away in the field. Suddenly, as if dropped there and awakened, I looked around to see all kinds of emergency vehicles, other automobiles, and a crowd of onlookers. I hurried toward the ambulance but was stopped by emergency crew members. They wanted to know who I was, since from my location and appearance, I clearly couldn't have been involved in the accident.

This experience affected my life in many ways. One of those, and perhaps the most meaningful, is the spiritual element. Either a miracle had occurred or I was dead. Connie knew I was in the car when it was struck. How did I live?

I told this story in my earlier book *Choices and Illusions*. Readers have written to tell me of similar events in their lives. Here is one of them (used by permission):

"Last night I read in your book the story about the train wreck and how you found yourself feet away from the accident site. I had a similar experience in Southern California. I was on the on-ramp to the freeway. At this particular entrance, cars also came off the freeway, and I had to look to my right to ensure I had room and that a vehicle wasn't coming at me. In front of me was a big truck, and I was driving a small, subcompact car. In an instant, the truck in front of me hit his brakes. I had nowhere to go and should have ended up under the truck. Yet through some strange turn of events, I found myself in a lane on the freeway, driving 60 miles an hour. There was no way I could have done that!

"I was totally shaken over the episode and thankful that I'd received the help of whatever or whoever put me in a safe place. It almost felt as if time and space were shifted to have me where I needed to be, out of harm's way. In that moment, I knew there are laws and explanations we don't seem to have if we only see ourselves as one-dimensional limited beings.

"Thank you for letting me share this story. I'd never heard of someone having a similar experience until I read your book *Choices and Illusions*."

So what does all this mean? What does it signify when life hands us the unexplained? What about when the wisdom of our culture crashes down on broken promises and failed dreams? What does it mean when our spiritual or scientific models collapse under the weight of real-life observation and experience? Is any of this really possible, or is it just a point of view, a place of perspective, an expectation self-fulfilled?

Approaching the Many-Worlds Argument

I have a very bright son--more than one, actually--but the one I'm referring to has changed his colors many times as he has grown into his teenage years. He is named after my dear friend Roy Bey, whom I

shall tell you more about during the course of this book, but who has passed on. My son Roy adopted Catholicism last year and he pushed us to attend the Catholic church. This year, however, he's agnostic to atheist. He likes to think of himself as a six on the scale of the renowned atheist Richard Dawkins, and that means he is agnostic, for he doesn't believe there is a God, and he lives his life according to that belief. He also thinks it isn't possible to be sure about the divine either way, so he can't say with absolute certainty that there is no God, and as such he can't claim to be atheist!

Our recent conversations have often been focused on Freud, particularly his psychosexual development theories, and Dawkins, the author of *The God Delusion*. When Roy gets an idea in his head, it's imperative that he both share it and convince others of its worthiness. So if you're not inclined toward his kind of agnosticism, then it's his challenge to convince you of your error.

There have been many of what I'd call "miracles" in my life, and my agnostic son, Roy, knows of most of them. I brought up this topic, saying: "If there are no miracles in the world, then perhaps there's no evidence that can't be explained away by science. If there are miracles in the world, however, then perhaps you should rethink your position. For example, how would you explain the train wreck when I was a teenager?"

His answer, in brief, was: "Simple, Dad. It was a quantum jump."

We know about electron jumps--like them, my train-wreck experience was just a function of natural law that we have yet to understand. It all has to do with the many-worlds argument and dimensions.

The Garden in the Jungle

The many-worlds argument, quantum jumps, yet-to-be-discovered natural laws--all are reminiscent to me of an old Antony Flew analogy. Flew, a philosopher intellectual, suggested what's generally referred to as "the gardener story," or "the falsification debate." Loosely and admittedly with some exaggeration, the story goes like this: Imagine that two fellows happen upon a garden in the middle of a jungle. The plot appears to be very well kept: Corn, squash, carrots, peas, and so

forth grow in straight rows. There are no weeds. The compost windrows are not only straight, but appear to be groomed.

Now, our two gentlemen have different views about this garden. The first man (I'll call him Believer, or "B" for short) says, "What a nice garden. I wonder where the gardener is."

The second (I'll call him Doubter, or just "D") says, "There is no gardener. This is a natural part of the world. Like so many other perfect relationships in nature, this is a wonder, but it's totally natural."

Here are two opposing views of the same thing. B replies, "You have to be kidding. Look at the crops in the garden: they all grow in straight rows. Look at the weeds: there simply are none. Look at the compost windrows: you can see where they've recently been groomed with a rake."

D answers, "It's just like you to anthropomorphize everything. I suppose someone placed the stars in the sky in exactly the right way to create the Big and the Little Dipper. Look--everything in this natural area you call a garden is no more than a special type of oasis in the midst of a jungle. You wouldn't peer over a giant sand dune in the desert and argue that the oasis below was created by an oasis builder--or would you?"

B, speaking in a rather annoyed tone, says, "All right. Let's wait and see. I'll show you that there's a gardener. We'll hide; and when the gardener comes back, you'll have your proof. How's that?"

D, just as annoyed, replies, "Fine. That's just fine, but what if he doesn't ever appear? Then will you admit there's no gardener?"

No gardener ever comes. B argues that perhaps the person is invisible, so D installs an electric fence and takes guard dogs to the premises, but no one shows up. The crops still grow in straight lines, no weeds sprout, and the windrows continue to appear to be tended. All this, yet still no gardener.

B continues to believe, and finally D asks the big (and baited) question: "What would it take to convince you that there's no gardener?"

B answers, "There must be one. Just because we haven't seen or touched him, the dogs haven't smelled him, and so forth, doesn't mean he doesn't exist!"

D presents the argument of the empiricist, and the belief of B is ridiculed in light of the lack of observable evidence. However, the argument works the other way as well. Take my son Roy, whom I asked: "Are there miracles in the world?" If everything is only a matter of an as-yet-undiscovered natural law, then there are no miracles, and nothing can prove otherwise. The definition contains the subject and the predicate for all intents and purposes. In other words, it's a tautology (a circular argument) to define miracles as just those events that are explainable by undiscovered natural laws, for there's always room for the unknown to loom.

I urge you to read both Antony Flew's original parable and also his newest book, *There Is a God*. This legendary British philosopher and devout atheist garnered worldwide headlines when he turned theist. Perhaps it's just a coincidence that I thought of Flew in respect to my son's quantum jumps; perhaps it's something else, for Flew is also considered one of the world's leading authorities on miracles. You decide. What does it all mean? Does it need to mean anything at all?

About the Author:

Eldon Taylor has made a lifelong study of the human mind and has earned doctoral degrees in clinical psychology and pastoral psychology. He is the CEO of Progressive Awareness Research, an organization dedicated to researching techniques for accessing the immense powers of the mind, and is the author of the New York Times best seller, *Choices and Illusions*.

Visit the website: www.eldontaylor.com

For more information on a special offer for Eldon Taylor's latest Hay House release, *What Does That Mean? Exploring Mind, Meaning and Mysteries*, please go to:

<http://www.progressiveawarenesspromotions.com/it/11a/index.html>

What Does That Mean? by New York Times bestselling author, Eldon Taylor has had an amazing effect on all who have read it. Here's what one reader said:

"Wow--what a read! The idea of a book as an experience is not new, but this experience is! Just when I thought I was comfortable with "knowing" a little about myself the shutters were thrown open by "*What Does That Mean?*" and the light nearly blinded me. Sometimes the intensity was so great that I felt like throwing the book--but I didn't, I stayed with it and I do not regret that decision one tiny little bit. This book will provoke you, it will cause you to cry, it will bring laughter and joy to you, and much more--but what it won't do is allow you to remain status quo.

In the end, the read is inspiring, absolutely uplifting and full of hope. There are miracles and moments that just cause your skin to bubble with goose bumps. This is a great read--don't miss it!"

- J.F.

Act Now: <http://www.progressiveawarenesspromotions.com/it/11a/index.html>

When *What Does That Mean?* was released as a hardback it quickly became an International Bestseller! It has just been released as a paperback and now you can share the experience for a fraction of the original cost. In addition, when you get your copy during this special event, you will receive many bonus incentives offered by personal development leaders (including Trans4mindm), who all want to see you own this marvelous treasure.

Here are some comments about the book by some real visionaries of our time:

"Eldon's provocative voice of wisdom and compassion places his readers right on the dot about the meaning of their individual existence. *What Does That Mean?* reveals how the paradoxes we face in everyday life form the rich material that invites us to confidently enter the mystery and relish it. Read, practice, and celebrate!"

- Michael Bernard Beckwith, author of *Spiritual Liberation—Fulfilling Your Soul's Potential*

"*What Does That Mean?* goes far beyond 'exploring mind, meaning, and mysteries'! It's a deeply satisfying and divinely inspired book that will not only explain so many uncertainties; it will also heal many a tattered soul. Both scientific and spiritual, strong and soft, spellbinding and soothing ... this is a must-read!"

- Crystal Andrus, author of *Simply ... Woman! and Transcendent Beauty*

"I love this book! There is something about the energetics of Eldon's languaging that breaks open my heart. It's very vulnerable, but if one possesses the courage to fully let it in and respond to it, there is great power involved."

- Anita Rehker

"*What Does That Mean?* guides you to ask deeply probing questions that often go ignored but must be examined if you are ever to live your best life possible. Highly recommended."

- Marci Shimoff, #1 New York Times best-selling author of *Happy for No Reason* and *Chicken Soup for the Woman's Soul*

Act Now: <http://www.progressiveawarenesspromotions.com/it/11a/index.html>

Throughout these pages, Eldon shares life experiences that will lead you to revelations about your own life. Perhaps this book's greatest value is that it assists you in remembering who you really are and thereby places you firmly back on the path to personal enlightenment. English writer and poet Joseph Addison, said, "Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body." If that is the case, then this book is the perfect workout to enrich your thinking. You may not always like what

you read, but you will always find the depth of thought wholly provocative.

"I've found all of Eldon Taylor's books fascinating, but *What Does That Mean?* is his magnum opus, offering a rare look at how inner guidance plays out in real life."

- Caroline Sutherland, author of *The Body Knows . . . How to Stay Young*

"What Does That Mean? is engaging, thought provoking, and quite simply a great read!"

- Christiane Northrup, M.D., author of *The Secret Pleasures of Menopause and Women's Bodies, Women's Wisdom*

"Eldon Taylor provides a life changing compilation of personal and client experiences that reveal how our thoughts, emotions, and actions shape every aspect of our perceived reality. I highly recommend his captivating book, *What Does That Mean?*, for it offers readers an opportunity to move beyond misperceived limitations and write new empowering stories for themselves, their children, and the world."

- Bruce Lipton, Ph.D., author of *The Biology of Belief*

For a limited time only, take advantage of an amazing special offer that also includes a wonderful bonus gift from myself. You do not want to miss this one.

Get It Here Now: <http://www.progressiveawarenesspromotions.com/it/11a/index.html>

Excerpt from the book by **Eldon Taylor**

We All Win When We Evolve Away from Fear: Personal and Societal Wellbeing and Positive Music by Meryl Ann Butler

While recent events have inspired a louder conversation about the influence of verbal vitriol on aggressive behaviors and mental health, the reverse side of that coin also invites inspection: creating an environment of support, safety, hope and happiness can enhance personal as well as societal wellbeing.

And positive music is making its contribution.

I interviewed Elizabeth Balcar, MS, developer of Quantum Field Clearing, a protocol for resolving fear-based mind chatter.

Balcar says, "*what you choose to invite into your environment is what inspires your experiences in life. So, when you listen to the types of diatribes regularly delivered by Rush Limbaugh, Bill O'Reilly, Glenn Beck and Sarah Palin, you are drilling the beliefs that these people espouse into your subconscious mind.*

"The resulting feelings of fear, lack, danger, and the need for protection, can seriously affect your physical, mental and emotional health: when you are focused on fear and protection, then, by definition, you cannot simultaneously be focused on love and well-being. This is why a survival mentality undermines your health."

Balcar cites Steve Bhaerman and Dr. Bruce Lipton's book *Spontaneous Evolution*, noting that during previous centuries science has been determined to separate spirit from matter.

Balcar notes, "*Bhaerman and Lipton point to the scientific and social evidence that, as an evolving species, we are headed up the evolutionary tract toward reawakening to the reality which the ancients knew: that Spirit (also called the Field), and Matter are irrevocably married. The Field, and the thoughtforms we put into it, shape the quality of the matter that makes up our bodies.*"

Balcar notes that when you choose to put positive elements and influences into your daily environment -- such as positive music-- you

nurture your subconscious mind with images and thoughts that support a sense of self as a vital, worthwhile and empowered human being.

Michael Miller, M.D., director of preventive cardiology at the University of Maryland Medical Center, was principal investigator in research studies in 2008 on the effects of music on health. He documented that the emotions aroused by joyful music have a healthy effect on blood vessel function.

Miller's studies showed that the average upper arm blood vessel diameter increased 26 percent after the joyful music phase of the experiment. Why is that important? Because cardiovascular disease is America's leading cause of death, and opening the blood vessels is curative.

Don Campbell, author of *The Mozart Effect* notes that *"The healing chemicals created by joy and emotional richness" (in music) "enable the body to create its own anesthetic and enhance its immune function."*

Dr. Lester Dubnick says, *"Music increases the release of endorphins, the body's system of pain management. Whether you prefer Gregorian chant, New Age, jazz, big band, or rock 'n roll, music with strong meaning affects your body and mood."*

And music with positive meaning, affects positively.

The emPower Posi Music Awards were introduced in 2005 to honor the songwriters and artists who spread affirmative messages through their music. So it's timely that the winners of the 6th Annual Posi Awards have been announced tonight, because our nation could certainly use something positive right now:

2010 POSI AWARD WINNERS

GROUP / CHANT category: *Something Wonderful* by Harold Payne.

Preview of song: http://www.haroldpaynemusic.com/?page_id=18 (scroll down to the *Stayin' True* album.)

Website: www.haroldpaynemusic.com

Payne is a multi-platinum and Posi award-winning songwriter who has written songs for such diverse artists as Rod Stewart, Patti LaBelle, Snoop Dog, The Temptations, Sly Stone, Leon Russell, and Peter, Paul & Mary, among many others. He is also a longtime collaborator with Bobby Womack.

I discovered his winning song, *Something Wonderful*, while researching the Posi Awards. It zapped me right into bliss, and I wanted to share the joy, so I sent out a link to a list of my friends. That group included Tony, who's experienced a full spectrum of life, including continuing recovery from extensive injuries. (But it could have been a lot more "grave," to reference the Bard, if the guy in the morgue hadn't noticed Tony's slight movements inside the body bag.)

Tony wrote back, *"After reading your e-mail, I bought the album. I ADORE you for sharing this guy and this song ... I have been playing "Something Wonderful" almost constantly! It is a powerful mantra. It makes me so happy ... "*

SPIRITUAL SOCIAL ACTION category: *True Calling* by Jana Stanfield & Jimmy Scott

Full version: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p5y0p-CjkVc>

Website: www.JanaStanfield.com

Jana Stanfield is a multi-platinum songwriter, transformational speaker and humorist who has shared stages with notables ranging from Kenny Loggins and the Dixie Chicks to Lily Tomlin and Deepak Chopra.

She offers her signature presentations at conferences around the world and also leads "Volun-Tourism" trips, assisting others in finding their "True Callings."

Jack Canfield, of Chicken Soup for the Soul Enterprises, featured Jana's principles of success as Chapter 14 in his best seller, *"The Success Principles: How to Get From Where You Are To Where You Want To Be."*

UNITING Category: *All These Atoms* by Greg Tamblyn

Preview the song at <http://www.cdbaby.com/cd/gregtamblyn5>

Website: www.gregtamblyn.com

Greg Tamblyn, NCW, (No Credentials Whatsoever) is an award-winning speaker, humorist, singer and songwriter. Larry Dossey, MD, calls him *"a contemporary Mark Twain."*

Tamblyn won a Posi Award previously for *Just a Little Soul* from *The Shootout at the I'm OK, You're OK Corral* album. (Preview at <http://www.suekriley.com/justalittlesoul-Clip.mp3>)

One of my Tamblyn favorites, *The Grand Design*, is a previous Posi nominee, and a preview can be heard at: <http://www.suekriley.com/GrandDesign-Clip.mp3>

He publishes a very funny newsletter, if you sign up for it you can download two free songs at his website.

From his site: *"Advisory: Greg's songs contain anti-depressive lyrics."* He should post a warning about endorphin addiction, as well.

PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION category: *Right Here All Along* by Four Stories High

Laura Berman and Craig Benelli have toured extensively, opening for wellknown authors like Neale Donald Walsch and Marianne Williamson.

Website: <http://www.4storieshigh.com>

HEALING Category: *Allowing* by Susie Hulcher

Hulcher is music director for Unity of Fort Myers. *Allowing* is from her latest CD , *Like Ten Thousand Suns*.

Preview at <http://www.cdbaby.com/cd/susiehulcherjennings>

website: <http://www.susiehulcher.com>

MUSIC THAT MATTERS category: *If That's Not God Working* by Karen Taylor-Good & Jim Daddario

Taylor-Good has been nominated for a Grammy and has sung on recordings and movie soundtracks with Dolly Parton, Willie Nelson and Elvis among others. Her songs have been recorded by Melissa Manchester, Al Jarreau, Patty Loveless, Collin Raye and Diamond Rio.

Website: <http://www.karentaylorgood.com>

TRUE STORY category: *Nine Gold Medals* by David Roth

Full song at <http://vimeo.com/3795701>

Website: w www.davidrothmusic.com

David Roth is an award-winning songwriter, recording artist, and speaker, and his songs have found their way to Carnegie Hall, the United Nations, several Chicken Soup for the Soul books, the Kennedy Center, Peter, Paul, & Mary concerts, and onto NASA's Space Shuttle Atlantis.

Jack Canfield, co-author of Chicken Soup for the Soul says, *"David and his music will touch you to the very depths of your soul. He'll make you laugh and cry, inspire you to rise and fly..."*

If you can listen to his winning *Nine Gold Medals* without a kleenex, check for a pulse.

Last year, Roth's song, *Ahmed Al-Khatib* received a Posi Award in the same category. http://www.davidrothmusic.com/DR_45/Practice%20Makes%20Progress/11%20AHMED%20AL-KHATIB.mp3

See a list of all 21 nominees with links to previews and full length versions of their songs in the OEN article, *Positive Music Awards: A Fanfare of Harmony* at: <http://www.opednews.com/articles/Positive-Music-Awards-A--by-Meryl-Ann-Butler-110107-17.html>

A CD featuring all 21 nominated songs is available from emPower Music and Arts at <http://www.empowerma.com/node/9153>

RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

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Joyful Music May Promote Heart Health, According To University Of Maryland School Of Medicine Study. <http://www.umm.edu/news/releases/music-cardiovascular.htm> Accessed Jan. 15, 2011

Music for Health and Wellbeing by Dr. Lester Dubnick, The Health Journal, Southside edition, Nov. 2010, p 31.

Related OEN article: Positive Music Awards: A Fanfare of Harmony <http://www.opednews.com/articles/Positive-Music-Awards-A--by-Meryl-Ann-Butler-110107-17.html>

emPower MUSIC AND ART: www.empowerma.com Contact: 866.476.5529

Greg Tamblyn's concert, *Saving the World From Whiny Victim Love Songs* was reviewed for OEN at <http://www.opednews.com/articles/Greg-Tamblyn-Saving-the-W-by-Meryl-Ann-Butler-091207-700.html>

Have fun romping around clips of award nominees from previous years here: <http://www.suekriley.com/empowerma.htm>

Quantum Field Clearing is a paradigm-busting protocol that resolves emotional baggage, cleans up relationship boundaries and silences

the negative or fear-based chatter in the back of the mind that continually sabotages and undermines the sense of well-being. www.quantumfieldclearing.com

Steve Bhaerman, co-author of Spontaneous Evolution. www.wakeuplaughing.com/

Bruce Lipton, PhD, co-author of Spontaneous Evolution. www.brucelipton.com/ ###

See a list of all 21 nominees with links to previews and full length versions of their songs in the Jan. 7, 2011, OEN article, Positive Music Awards: A Fanfare of Harmony at: <http://www.opednews.com/articles/Positive-Music-Awards-A--by-Meryl-Ann-Butler-110107-17.html>

A CD featuring all 21 nominated songs is available from emPower Music and Arts at <http://www.empowerma.com/node/9153> ###

Meryl Ann Butler is a Renaissance woman: journalist, visionary artist, author, labyrinth builder, citizen diplomat, educator, and mom. She has been actively engaged in employing the arts as stepping-stones toward joy-filled wellbeing for the past three decades

She is the author of the bestseller, *90-Minute Quilts: 15+ Projects You Can Quilt in an Afternoon* (Krause, 2006), which she wrote as her "healing-through-creativity" response to 9-11. In it, she quips, "They don't call quilts 'comforters' for nothing!" Her newest book is *MORE 90-Minute Quilts: 20+ Projects with Triangles and Squares* (Krause, 2011.)

Meryl Ann was trained in traditional drawing and painting by master of realism, Harold R. Stevenson, who was a student of Norman Rockwell. She ran an art school for a decade before

becoming involved in fiber arts. The great-granddaughter of a documented psychic, Meryl Ann is also an intuitive who offers custom soul matrix pattern drawings called Illuminated Mandalas. She is the creativity expert featured on the Edgar Cayce New Millennium TV/video series.

Meryl Ann and her work have been featured in hundreds of magazines and periodicals including Newsday, and a wide variety of trade publications. Her artwork is in hundreds of collections around the world, including those of His Holiness, the late Swami Satchidananda, the Hon. Nelson Mandela, Cathy and Ed O'Neill, Dr. Caroline Myss, Dr. Barbara King, Dr. Norman Shealy, the Hon. and Mrs. Dennis Kucinich, Harpo Productions, Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia Productions, The Findhorn Community (Scotland), City Hall (Moss, Norway), The St. Petersburg Peace Committee (Russia), School 119 (Odessa, Ukraine) and the University of Peace in Costa Rica.

YouTube video: Visionary Artist Meryl Ann Butler on Creativity and Joy http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UcGs2r_66QE

Illuminated Mandalas and other artwork at www.merylannbutler.com
Quilt books at www.90minutequilts.com

The Courage to Stop Suffering Over Mistakes by Guy Finley

There is a very surprising reason why we tend to suffer over our mistakes as we do. The real source of our pain in these moments -- whether we're alone or with others -- is the fear of being seen as less than we've imagined ourselves to be. We all know how it feels to try and save face, to scramble for scraps of lost dignity. But fearfully trying to cover up a misstep is not the same as knowing where we're going. In fact, whenever we feel compelled to cover our tracks, something is in command of us, isn't it? But here's the real question: What part of us wants us to believe that a good "cover-up" is the same as being right? The answer is surprising: It's our "un-original" self . . . a level of being that only knows itself through a slew of acquired social images, including the false belief that they must be protected at all costs.

Though we have yet to see it, beating ourselves up after making a blunder doesn't mean that we actually knew better than what we just did — nor does this kind of suffering lead to greater command or better decisions the next time around. Self-punishing acts prove only one thing: Something in us would rather suffer over what happened in the past than be present to those parts of us that erred in the first place. Real self-command dawns within us as we realize that reliving the past is powerless to change a present misunderstanding; it comes from the light of our new knowledge that having the courage to drop the level of Self that keeps wronging us and others is far more important than being seen as right. This same realization also grants us the courage to start life over -- again and again. ###

Excerpted from *The Courage to Be Free* by Guy Finley (Weiser Books, 2010)

About Guy Finley

Best-selling “Letting Go” author Guy Finley’s encouraging and accessible message is one of the true bright lights in our world today. His ideas cut straight to the heart of our most important personal and social issues – relationships, success, addiction, stress, peace, happiness, freedom – and lead the way to a higher life.

Guy is the acclaimed author of [*The Secret of Letting Go*](#) and more than 37 other books and audio programs that have sold over a million copies in 16 languages worldwide. In addition, he has presented over 4,000 unique self-realization seminars to thousands of grateful students throughout North America and Europe over the past 25 years and has been a guest on over 600 television and radio shows, including national appearances on ABC, NBC, CBS, CNN, NPR, Wisdom Network, and many others. His syndicated weekly radio program is aired on several international networks including Healthylife Radio Network, WorldTalkRadio Network, Contact Talk Radio International, BBS, Earthchannel, and Penguin Radio.

Guy Finley is Director of Life of Learning Foundation, the renowned non-profit Center for Self-Study in Merlin, Oregon, and over 400,000 people in 142 countries read his popular “Key Lesson” emails each week. His work is widely endorsed by doctors, business professionals, celebrities, and religious leaders of all denominations.

Guy’s career reached this point through a circuitous path. Born into a successful show business family, he is the son of Late-Night TV and radio pioneer Larry Finley. His childhood friends were the sons and daughters of the most famous celebrities in the world. As a young man Guy enjoyed success in a number of areas including composing award-winning music for many popular recording artists including Diana Ross, The Jackson 5, Billy Preston, and The Four Seasons, as well as writing the scores for several motion pictures and TV shows. From 1970 - 1979 he wrote and recorded his own albums under the Motown and RCA recording labels.

Throughout his youth, Guy suspected there was more to life than the type of worldly success that led to the emptiness and frustration he saw among his own “successful” friends and colleagues. In 1979, after

travels throughout North America, India, and the Far East in search of truth and Higher Wisdom, Guy voluntarily retired from his flourishing music career in order to simplify his life and to concentrate on deeper self-studies.

In addition to his writing and appearance schedule, Guy presents four inner-life classes each week at Life of Learning Foundation headquarters in Merlin, Oregon. These classes are ongoing and open to the public. For more information about Guy Finley and his life-changing work, visit www.guyfinley.org.

Which Came First, the Chicken or the Egg?

Chuck Gallozzi

A reader asks, “Which comes first, our thoughts or our feelings?” So, let’s consider this question, as well as how an understanding of our thoughts and feelings can help us lead better lives. But before we begin, let me clarify what I mean by “feelings.” The word has two meanings. First, the sensations we experience, such as tactile, smell, taste, and other forms of sensory input. Second, it is commonly used to mean emotions. When I use the term feelings in this article, I will be referring to the second meaning (emotions).

The reader’s question has been and continues to be asked by many people. It seems as difficult to understand as the mystery of the chicken and the egg. If we cannot have a chicken without first having an egg, and cannot have an egg without first having a chicken, which came first?

Feelings and thoughts are similar, for experts remain divided on which one comes first. Why is that? Look, if I were to give you a map of London and ask you to point out the location of the Brooklyn Bridge, no matter how hard you searched, you would never find it because the Brooklyn Bridge is located in New York City, not London. You have to use the right map, don’t you? Well, the questions we ask map out the possible answers. How can I get the right answer by asking the wrong question?

Why is our reader’s question wrong? Well, it assumes or implies that feelings and thoughts are different and that one of the two always comes before the other one. Suppose thoughts and feelings are the same thing. How could you discover that by asking which one comes first?

Wait a minute! How can thoughts and feelings be the same? Aren’t they very different? Well, let me ask you a question. Are water vapor, rain, water, snow, and ice different things or manifestations of the same thing? Hmm, they’re very different forms of the same thing, aren’t they?

We use words to describe the thoughts, opinions, and beliefs of our conscious mind. However, our subconscious uses images and feelings, not words, to record those same beliefs. So, we can call feelings the thoughts of the subconscious. In other words, thoughts and feelings are the same thing expressed in different languages (the language of words and the language of feelings/images).

Still not convinced? If not, I don’t blame you. After all, in our attempt to understand the world, we break down everything into pieces, label them, and separate them. And then because we use different words to describe pieces of the same thing, we come to believe they are different things. Here’s an example of what I mean. In trying to understand the world, we label some things as animate and others as inanimate. Are animate objects, such as dogs, cats, and people different from inanimate objects, such as stones, tables and chairs? Or are they the same?

Why were you so quick to assume there is a big difference between you and a stone? True, you can move, talk, and reproduce while a stone cannot. But all you are is a swarm of molecules. And the same is true for the stone. How are your molecules any more animate than those of a stone? Here’s another point, since both thoughts and feelings are registered in our body as a series of chemical reactions and electrical signals, aren’t they basically the same thing?

But enough of that. Let’s now assume that feelings and thoughts are different. If they are, the question is then which comes first? The answer is neither because what first occurs is a stimulus, which then evokes a feeling or thought. If the stimulus brings up a feeling, that feeling then leads to a thought. But if the stimulus causes a thought, that thought then leads to a feeling. Sound confusing? Let’s try to clarify by looking at some examples.

Example 1. Tom wakes up at 3 am because of a full bladder. His full bladder causes a bodily sensation that acts as a stimulus, causing him to awake and think “I need to relieve myself.” This thought leads to the emotion of fear or anxiety because if he fails to do anything about it, he may wet the bed and himself. When you think of emotion, think of

motion, for it is always emotions (feelings) that motivate us to take action.

Example 2. Larry arrives at his desk ten minutes early with a coffee in his hand. He takes a few sips and a computer alarm goes off, reminding him that he has a 10:30 appointment with a very disagreeable client. “Ugh!” thinks Larry, “I hate doing business with that client. He’s so hard to get along with.” These thoughts create a feeling of distress. He would love to somehow avoid the meeting. After a pause and a prompt by his conscience (which is a feeling), he thinks, “Men and women of integrity live up to their responsibilities, whether they’re in the mood or not. After all, some things are more important than feeling comfortable. So, I better prepare the our meeting now.”

In this example, a stimulus (the computer reminder) led to unpleasant thoughts, which appeared before the unpleasant feeling of anxiety. Although tempted to avoid the meeting, this desire was replaced by another feeling, the feeling of guilt and that he should do the right thing. In other words, the pattern was stimulus → thought → feeling → action. Feeling → action (planning for and meeting with client) → consequences (feeling good because he did the right thing, and an improvement in relationship skills).

Example 3. Harold is walking on a crowded street when he is struck from behind with such force that he is knocked down, painfully landing on his right knee. The jolt from behind (stimulus) causes him to think, “Who could be so careless as to bump into me?” That thought leads to anger, and as Harold falls to the ground, the searing knee pain enrages him. Raising to his feet, he turns to face the perpetrator, only to discover the person who bumped into him was a blind man who tripped and stumbled because of a pothole in the sidewalk. Seeing this, Harold felt sheepish and all anger dissipated.

The above scenario can be mapped as follows: stimulus (bump from behind) → thought → feeling (anger). Stimulus (searing pain) → feeling (rage) → action (face ‘perpetrator). Stimulus (sight of blind man) → feeling (shame) → feeling (relief).

As you can see, it is not such a simple matter as thoughts or feelings always coming first. Rather, the order in which they appear vary. However, if we must answer the question which comes first, the answer is it depends on whether we are acting consciously or automatically. When we act automatically, without thinking, our emotions rule us, and when we act consciously, carefully selecting our thoughts, we can rule over our emotions.

By the way, most of the time we act automatically. Part of the reason for this is the habits we form. Also, we are programmed to do most tasks automatically so we can focus on more important matters. But perhaps the major reason we usually act automatically is because our feelings flow from our old brain (reptilian brain or brain stem and the limbic brain), and signals from our old brain (feelings) reach our awareness before signals (thoughts) from our thinking brain (neocortex). This makes it possible for us to act in times of emergency (flee or fight), even when there isn’t enough time to think.

The Role of Emotions

Although emotions can lead us astray, they play very important roles, which include the following:

1. Emotions are how we experience life. Life excites us. It amazes, bewilders, disgusts, saddens, and worries us. It also fills us with love, hope, and joy. We can find it scary, wonderful, or boring. We know life by feeling it.
2. Emotions are at the core of our personality. It is what makes us find people attractive or unattractive. Think of people you like. Why do you like them? Perhaps you find them friendly, gentle, kind, warmhearted, generous, cheerful, passionate, or enthusiastic. And those you don’t like? Perhaps they come across as arrogant, selfish, or mean spirited. We like people who make us feel good and avoid those who make us feel bad.
3. As suggested earlier, emotions prime the pump, turn on the ignition, get us moving. Behind every action, there is a motive. Emotions provide the reasons why we behave as we do. A mother who rushes

into a burning building to rescue her child is motivated by love. Some are motivated by a lust for power, riches, fame, revenge, control, or pleasure. Others do good because it feels good.

4. Our feelings can also serve as a powerful guidance system or conscience. It illuminates the path to happiness if we choose to follow it. It's a tool that simplifies life and one that was used by Abe Lincoln [1], who said, "When I do good, I feel good. When I do bad, I feel bad. And that's my religion."

5. Emotions help us know others better. We may think we learn about others by the conversations we have with them, but only 7% of their communication is verbal. That is, most of what we can learn about others is communicated emotionally, rather than by the words they use. It is not the words, but how they are expressed that speaks louder than words. More precisely speaking, the message is conveyed by the volume, pitch, inflection, and speed that is used. These four characteristics of speech are called tonality and represent 38% of the message. The remaining 55% of the message is expressed by body language (eye movement, facial expression, body movement, gestures, posture, eye contact).

Nonverbal communication is done automatically and is controlled by the subconscious. The communicator cannot hide their emotions; it is there for all to see. Also, you do not have to understand all of the subtleties of nonverbal communication to benefit by it. You see, your subconscious understands and will automatically feed you impressions of the people you meet. That's why you may find that you dislike someone and not (consciously) know the reason why.

6. Because of the mind-body connection, our thoughts and feelings have a huge impact on our body. Emotional and physical health go hand in hand. Conversely, emotional distress is the cause of stress and disease.

7. Emotions are the key to motivating others. When you are sincere and passionate, you can easily persuade others to your point of view. In relationships, affection and love form a strong bond and build lasting friendships.

8. Emotions also tell us what is important to us. What excites me? I should be doing more of it! What am I afraid of? I should do that to become more resilient!

Emotional Awareness

Because of the roles emotions play in our lives, it is important to become aware of them. Here are steps you can take to increase your awareness.

1. The first sign of an emotion surfacing is physical. Is your heart racing? Palms sweaty? Muscles stiffening? Remain attuned to your bodily sensations for indications on how you are feeling.

2. Is there something you should be doing; yet, you want to do something else? What is that telling you? Are you avoiding something? If so, why? Are you afraid of something? We cannot change inappropriate behavior until we first become aware of it. Stay tuned to your behavior, and make corrections when necessary.

3. Perhaps something is troubling you, but you're not exactly sure what it is. For example, you may feel bad, bored, or overwhelmed. It's good to know that *something* is troubling you, but it's far more helpful to know precisely what it is. So, when your negative feelings are vague, dig deeply and try to uncover the source of your problem, for it is only at that time that you can do something about it.

4. After a little digging, the troubling emotion will come into sharper focus. For instance, you may feel angry, sad, or worried. If so, dig deeper. What are you angry, sad, or worried about? What can you do to improve the situation?

5. Explore the full range of emotions you are experiencing. You may be angry about one thing and happy about another. At any one moment you are probably going through several emotions at once. How can you better harmonize them? What are they telling you about your present status?

Changing Our Emotions

Emotions are paradoxical. After all, they are spontaneous; they pop into our awareness outside of our control. Yet, we can choose to feel as we like. We can change our feelings. Let's look at an example.

Jeffrey has just received an assignment from his boss. But Jeffrey feels overwhelmed. After a while, however, he realizes that sulking and feeling sorry for himself won't help him get the job done. So, he decides to take a more positive approach.

Rather than remain paralyzed by fear, he asks himself what he is afraid of. He decides it's not knowing how to start, where to begin. He then asks himself what are the possible beginnings? There must be many ways he could begin, what are they? All he is looking for at the moment are possibilities; he doesn't need right answers yet, just possible answers. And after he has built himself a list of possible ways to begin, all he has to do is choose the best possibility and start with it. He can always refine or revise his plan later. The main point is to begin.

Can you see how Jeffrey's emotions changed? Since we cannot think of two things at the same time, once Jeffrey started looking for a solution, his attention shifted from his fears to the hope of finding an answer. And as he grew embroiled in his hunt for possible ways to start, his project slowly changed from fearful to interesting to fun!

Returning to our original question, I still don't know which comes first, the chicken or the egg. But when it comes to feelings and thoughts, more and more researchers are concluding that thoughts, feelings, and perceptions coexist as a unified whole and cannot be easily taken apart.

Regardless of the correct answer, I think we can all agree with Henry Ward Beecher [2], "See that each hour's feelings, and thoughts and actions are pure and true; then your life will be also."

Also, because of the pain we can inflict with cruel words, remember the words of Physicist, J. Masai, "Feelings are everywhere – be gentle."

Recommended Reading:

[Thoughts & Feelings: Taking Control of Your Moods and Your Life](#) by Matthew McKay, Martha Davis, and Patrick Fanning

[Your Brain on Food: How Chemicals Control Your Thoughts and Feelings](#) by Gary Wenk

[Mindsight: The New Science of Personal Transformation](#) by Daniel J. Siegel

[1] Abraham Lincoln (1809~1865, 16th American President)

[2] Henry Ward Beecher (1813~1887, American preacher, orator, writer) ###

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>

Dancing With The Devil

Beca Lewis

One of my all-time favorite movies is, *It's A Wonderful Life*. It never fails to remind me of the dangers of dancing with the devil and the power of Love to overcome that danger.

This is a movie about two people, George and Mary who fall in love, marry, and due to circumstances choose to give up their personal dream in order to take over a business that in large and small ways does good for everyone who lives in their community.

Of course, in every good life and every good business there is 'someone' who wants to tear it down and destroy it, which is exactly what happens in this movie. The character through which the 'devil' plays its hand finds a way to make George believe that he has failed everyone and that it would be better if he had never been born.

And so he begins his dance with the devil. He reviews his past and sees only failures. He decides it would be better for everyone if he died so his family could have his insurance money. At that moment, Love steps in through an unlikely angel, Clarence.

Clarence displays before George what would have happened to the town and his family if he had not been born. George discovers that what he had considered a useless life had impacted for good all that lived in his community. As a result of this awareness, his faith in the power of goodness and love is restored. On returning home, he finds the entire community waiting for him and rejoicing in his return. Through this awesome display of Love he realizes that it is indeed a wonderful life.

How often during the day do each one of us dance with the devil? When we review what we are, what we have done and what we have and then hold it up as not enough or unimportant we dance with the devil. When we are afraid, angry, sad, and discouraged we dance with the devil.

The devil has two CD's that he plays for us to dance with him. One is filled with songs of not enough, won't work, small, lack, no good, bad, and the worldview that we must get somewhere to experience perfection, love, and abundance. Then he asks us to dance, we agree and the dance begins.

The other CD the devil plays has songs with lyrics that tell us of the benefit of dancing with him in the material picture of with love, admiration, success, fun, good and wealth. He sings and hums a message that tells us what we will have if we would follow him in all our daily pursuits. This tempter, called the devil, promises us rewards beyond our imagination. It promises us that we will be kings and queens of our world.

This is the most dangerous dance of all because in this dance the devil is disguising himself as Good. We can often miss that this devil is our partner because it gives us what we desire. We would do well to stop and ask ourselves often, "With Whom am I dancing?"

Whichever CD and song the devil plays to entice us to dance, the only person who benefits in this dance is the devil. There is no happiness anytime, anywhere in dancing with the devil. If it feels as if there is, that illusion one day will melt away and we will see clearly that we have chosen the wrong partner.

Turn off that music. Walk away from dancing with the devil. Dance with the Angels instead. These Angel Ideas are waiting right beside you to dance with you to the music of Love. These Angels will tell you of the power of love, of abundance, good, and happiness. They will sing to you what works, what's good, the truth of your innate perfection and the gift of your being that blesses all that you meet.

We cannot dance with the devil and with Angels at the same time. Next time an emotion, a situation, a thought, or an idea calls you to dance with it, stop - and look closely at who is asking. If it is the devil tell it 'no' - now and forever.

Choose instead to dance only with the Angels. ###

About Beca Lewis

As an author and guide **Beca Lewis** is dedicated to bringing Universal Spiritual Principles and Laws into clear focus, to shift material perception to spiritual perception, which following the law “what you perceive to be reality magnifies™”, adjusts lives with practical and measurable results.

Beca developed an easy system to do this called The Shift® and has been sharing how to use this system to expand lives, and bring people back to the Truth of themselves for over 40 years.

Beca and her husband Del Piper are constantly working to develop new ways to support and reach out to others. Much of what they have been developed can be found for free at their membership site [Perception U.com](http://Perception.U.com). They also founded The Women’s Council with the intent of “strengthening the connection to yourself, to others, and to the Divine.”

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

Reconciling the Hurt Heart and Troubled Mind Steve Wickham

Tussles occur within each of us when things don't go right. When we're hurt, the heart attends and the mind is convoluted in pathological spirals.

Better still is the destination we get to where the mind knows that all's okay - at the logical level - and it can gently placate the aberrant heart.

When things don't go well for us we're often thinking of the people enrolled in those circumstances - about what they might have 'against us'. Most of the time, however, these people are not against us at all - or not the way it appears to us at least.

There is a coarse interaction between the heart and mind as we deal with hurtful and troubling circumstances.

The Roles of the Heart and Mind

The heart's role is to feel. It is there as our instinct. We intuit and perceive things with it. And often we respond from the heart. The mind's role is to think. It is there as our way of sensing situations; with it we decide and therefore judge. Because neither the heart nor the mind is exclusive to the risk of the other they work in unison to form our sense of wellbeing.

Common Traps in Feeling and Thinking

Merry-go-round thinking is what happens when the heart is constantly informing the mind of its hurt feelings and the mind's not doing anything but complying or agreeing with that input. As a result we have a situation where erroneously caustic thinking erodes at our concepts of these and other living situations, and ultimately on our self-esteem.

A sinkhole syndrome is therefore manifested and it can continue to form into something quite dangerous to us. This situation sees us not responding to the self-propagated negativity in positive, countering ways. The lower we go, the closer we get to mental, emotional and spiritual ill health.

A Proposed Solution

Our best objective is to simultaneously receive the hurt so it can be dealt with and processed - not denying it - whilst we manage these levels and process the hurt in safety. We need to be destined for healing, ultimately.

Let's not forget that one core life purpose is to receive our healing throughout our lives. There is a more-or-less continual need of it. We need to develop a system of responding to our hurts in a way that uses the best faculties of both the heart and the mind. This is best done when the heart is free to feel, and where the mind checks and validates the feelings before rebutting these situations with its gentle truth, empathising always.

Here we're allowing and even encouraging a dichotomy to exist between the heart and the mind. The heart is necessarily (and healthily) irrational, but the mind counters it with an empathetic logic. This way we're not at war with ourselves. A sensible peace is therefore thrust at the pandemonium we otherwise experience.

Rocking back and forth, then, the heart issues its hurt feelings to the mind and the mind then responds with loving care, so that internally we're not being torn apart. We're actually just innocently vacillating. This sort of temporal double-mindedness is normal in situations of adjustment.

This is how we were designed to cope with everyday life grief.

This is how we adapt to our changing circumstances and mature through them. ###

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Is Gratitude Healthy?

Andrew Weil

Question: I recently heard that being grateful is good for you - that it boosts the immune system. This sounds far-fetched to me. Is there anything to it?

Answer: Maybe. Investigators engaged in "happiness research" have made a case for gratitude as a contributor to health and well-being. These studies are an outgrowth of positive psychology research, which focuses on what makes individuals happier, fulfilled, and engaged in life. Gratitude is an example of a positive state of mind that can reduce risk of depression.

In terms of measurable health benefits, researchers maintain that gratitude fosters optimism, which has been shown to positively influence the immune system. Optimism and other positive emotions are also associated with lowered production of the stress hormone cortisol and with reduced risk of chronic disease.

A study published in February, 2003, in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* found that participants who kept weekly gratitude journals exercised more regularly, reported fewer physical symptoms, felt better about their lives as a whole, and were more optimistic about the coming week compared to those who recorded hassles or neutral life events. The same researchers have reported that while grateful people don't deny or ignore the negative aspects of life, they tend to report positive emotions, life satisfaction, and vitality as well as greater optimism and lower levels of depression and stress than people who are not grateful.

Cultivating the habit of gratitude isn't a bad idea, especially as we move into the new year. A weekly gratitude journal could keep you focused on the positive aspects of life instead of its frustrations. Simply pausing daily to list a few things you have to be grateful for can enhance your health and happiness.

We all can find reasons to be grateful: people we're close to, the beauty and bounty of nature, pets and the companionship they offer and, of course, our health

Question: Should I Give Up Coffee While Pregnant?

Answer: The answer to your question is a qualified yes. It is all right to drink some coffee while you're pregnant, but not too much. I checked about this with Tieraona Low Dog, M.D., director of the Fellowship at the [Arizona Center for Integrative Medicine](#) and an expert on women's health. She suggests limiting your consumption to one to two cups per day, especially during the first trimester. If you are used to drinking more than one to two cups of coffee per day, Dr. Low Dog recommends mixing some decaf with regular to cut down on your caffeine intake.

The concern focuses on the potential adverse effects of caffeine. Researchers have found that consuming the amount of caffeine in five or more cups of coffee per day doubles the risk of miscarriage. One-and-one-half to two cups of brewed coffee contains about 200 mg of caffeine; you would get half that amount in two cups of brewed tea.

There's no evidence that moderate caffeine consumption of 200 mg daily from coffee, green tea or other beverages increases the risk of miscarriage. And while a cup of green tea typically contains only half the caffeine found in a cup of coffee, some brands of brewed imported green tea can deliver as much as 110 mg of caffeine per cup, almost as much as you would get in some brewed coffee. When estimating your daily caffeine intake, remember to add in other sources of caffeine in your diet, such as soft drinks and energy drinks.

Fortunately, no studies have found any connections between caffeine and birth defects, low birth weight, a baby's motor development or intelligence. But because caffeine can enter breast milk, you'll also need to watch your coffee and tea consumption if you plan to breastfeed your baby. In that case, limit your caffeine intake to 300 mg daily. ###

Andrew Weil, M.D., is a world-renowned leader and pioneer in the field of integrative medicine, a healing oriented approach to health care which encompasses body, mind, and spirit.

Combining a Harvard education and a lifetime of practicing natural and preventive medicine, Dr. Weil is the founder and director of the [Arizona Center for Integrative Medicine \(AzCIM\)](#) at the University of Arizona Health Sciences Center, in Tucson, where he is also a Clinical Professor of Medicine and Professor of Public Health and the Lovell-Jones Professor of Integrative Rheumatology. Dr. Weil received both his medical degree and his undergraduate AB degree in biology (botany) from Harvard University.

Dr. Weil is an internationally-recognized expert for his views on leading a healthy lifestyle, his philosophy of healthy aging, and his critique of the future of medicine and health care. Approximately 10 million copies of Dr. Weil's books have been sold, including [Spontaneous Healing](#) and [Why Our Health Matters](#).

Online, he is the editorial director of [drweil.com](#), the leading web resource for healthy living based on the philosophy of integrative medicine. He can be found on Facebook at [facebook.com/DrWeil](#), Twitter at [twitter.com/DrWeil](#), and Dr. Weil's Daily Health Tips blog at [drweilblog.com](#).

PMS Blues

by: Elizabeth Morgan

Many women experience emotional changes that make them feel low during the days before their periods. In some women, these changes may be mild and transient, disappearing with the onset of a period. In other women, emotional symptoms may be severe enough to interfere with normal activities. Common symptoms are depression, anxiety, irritability and aggression, resulting in what is sometimes called the "PMS blues".

When emotional or physical symptoms of PMS are severe, this condition is called premenstrual dysphoric disorder, or PMDD. PMDD occurs in two to ten percent of all women of reproductive age in the United States. Women with PMDD may have feelings of hopelessness and guilt and a sense of being overwhelmed. Many women with PMDD report feeling very tense and become suddenly sad or are overly sensitive to other people. These symptoms may cause them to withdraw from normal social interaction and can seriously interfere with normal activities and relationships at home and at work.

Many of the emotional symptoms of PMS experienced by women are thought to stem from the brain's reduced ability to utilize a chemical called serotonin during the premenstrual phase. Serotonin has a mood-enhancing effect. Therefore, the mainstay of treating more severe emotional symptoms is a group of drugs called selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors, or SSRIs. These drugs act by improving the brain's ability to utilize serotonin, thereby stabilizing a woman's mood.

Some emotional symptoms are worsened by the effect of physical symptoms of PMS. A woman may experience pain and tiredness and not feel up to sticking to her normal exercise routine. Exercise releases natural mood-elevating and pain-relieving compounds called endorphins; less exercise means lower endorphin levels. Weight gain, bloating, and insomnia may worsen anxiety during PMS. Therefore, management of these physical symptoms through exercise, diet, and medication can help reduce emotional symptoms. ###

[PMS](#) provides detailed information on PMS, PMS remedy, PMS symptoms, PMS treatment and more. PMS is affiliated with [Vaginal Yeast Infections](#).

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How to Deal with Lying in Children and Teens by Janet Lehman, MSW

When you catch your child in a lie, it's natural to feel betrayed, hurt, angry and frustrated. But here's the truth: lying is normal. It's wrong, but it's normal. In fact, we all do it to some degree. Consider how adults use lies in their daily lives: When we're stopped for speeding, we often minimize what we've done wrong, if not out - and - out lie about it. Why? We're hoping to get out of something, even if we know better.

I believe that with kids, lying is a faulty problem - solving skill. It's our job as parents to teach our children how to solve those problems in more constructive ways. Here are a few of the reasons why kids lie. (Later, I'll explain how to handle it when they do.)

Why Kids Lie...

To establish identity: One of the ways kids use lying is to establish an identity and to connect with peers, even if that identity is false. Lying can also be a response to peer pressure. Your child might be lying to his peers about things he says he's done that he really hasn't to make him sound more impressive.

To individuate from parents: Sometimes teens use lying to keep parts of their lives separate from their parents. At times it may even seem that they make up small lies about things that don't even seem terribly important. Another reason children lie is when they perceive the house rules and restrictions to be too tight. So let's say you have a 16 - year - old who isn't allowed to wear makeup, but all her friends are wearing it. So she wears it outside the house, then lies to you about it. Lying may become a way for her to have you believe she's following your rules and still do "normal" teen activities.

To get attention: When your child is little and the lies are inconsequential, this behavior may just be his way of getting a little attention. When a small child says, "Mommy, I just saw Santa fly by the window," I think it is very different from an older child who says, "I finished my homework," when he really didn't. Younger children also

make up stories during imaginative play, or playing "make believe." This is not lying but a way for them to engage their imaginations and start to make sense of the world around them.

To avoid hurting other's feelings: At some point, most people learn how to minimize things in order not to hurt other people's feelings. Instead of saying, "I love your new shoes," we might say, "Those shoes are really trendy right now." But kids don't have the same sophistication that adults do, so it's often easier for them to lie. I think as adults, we learn how to say things more carefully; we all know how to minimize hurt. But kids don't know how to do that. Lying is a first step toward learning how to say something more carefully. In some ways, we teach them how to lie when we say, "Tell Grandma you like the present even if you don't, because it will hurt her feelings otherwise." We have a justifiable reason--we don't want to hurt someone's feelings who's gone out of their way for us--but we are still teaching our kids how to bend the truth.

To avoid trouble: Most kids lie at one time or another to get out of trouble. Let's say they've gotten themselves into a jam because they did something they shouldn't have done. Maybe they broke a rule or they didn't do something they were supposed to do, like their chores. If they don't have another way out, rather than suffer the consequences, they lie to avoid getting into trouble.

Again, in my opinion, the overall reason why kids lie is because they don't have another way of dealing with a problem or conflict. In fact, sometimes it's the only way they know how to solve a problem; it's almost like a faulty survival skill for kids.

I believe it's really the parent's job to differentiate the type of lie their child has told, and to make sure that it isn't connected to unsafe, illegal or risky behavior. This gets to the whole point about picking your battles. If you see your child say to another child, "Oh I really like that dress," and they later tell you in the car, "I really don't like that dress," you might say something to them, but you might also let it go, especially if this is unusual for your child. If they're lying about something that's risky or illegal or really unsafe, you definitely have to

address it. And if it's to the point of being really significant--like a lie about risky sexual behavior, drugs, or other harmful activities--you may need to seek some help from a professional.

So pick your battles. Decipher what's really important versus looking at what's normal. And again, that often depends on the developmental age of your child. A four - year - old is going to make up big whopping stories as a way to be creative and begin to figure out their world. It's a normal developmental stage. Seven - and eight - year - olds are going to do some of that as well, but they may have more black and white thinking. So they might say, "I hated that lady" when they simply disliked something that person did. I think you can let those kinds of things slide or just gently correct your child. You can say something like, "Do you mean you didn't like what she did yesterday?" This type of stretching of the truth is really the result of concrete thinking because kids in this age group don't have good skills to say something else more neutral or tactful.

I don't believe lying in children is a moral issue. I think it's imperative not to take it personally if your child lies. Most kids don't lie to hurt their parents; they lie because there's something else going on. The important part for you as a parent is to address the behavior behind the lie. If you're taking it personally, you're probably angry and upset--and not dealing with the more specific information concerning the behavior.

Here's an example. Let's say your child didn't do his homework but he told you he did. When you find out that he's lying, he admits he didn't do it because he was playing sports with friends after school. If you yell at your child about being betrayed and say, "How dare you lie to me," that's all you're going to be able to address. You're not going to be able to deal with the real issue of your child needing to do his homework before he plays sports. The bottom line is that your anger and frustration about the lie is not going to help your child change his behavior.

So lying is not a moral issue; it's a problem - solving issue, a lack of skill issue, and an avoiding consequence issue. Often kids know right from wrong--in fact, that's why they're lying. They don't want to get in

trouble for what they've done and they're using lying to solve their problems. What that means is that they need better skills, and you can respond as a parent by helping them work on their ability to problem solve.

How to Address Lying: Staging a "Lying Intervention"

While it's important to address the behavior behind the lying, if your child lies chronically or lies about unsafe, risky or unhealthy behavior, I think it makes sense to address the actual lying by having an intervention. A "lying intervention" is really just a planned and structured conversation about the lying behavior. This lets your child know what you've been seeing, and gives you a chance to tell them that you are concerned. Here are some things to keep in mind:

Plan ahead of time: Think about how you're going to intervene beforehand. Plan it out ahead of time with your spouse; if you're single, ask another close adult family member to be there with you. When this issue came up with our son, my husband James and I planned out what we were going to say, how we were going to react emotionally, and even where we were going to sit. We decided we were going to be neutral and that we would be as unemotional as possible. We made a decision about what the problem behaviors we wanted to address were. We also decided what the consequences for our son's behavior would be. We did almost all of this ahead of time.

Don't lecture: When you catch your child lying, remember that lecturing is not going to be helpful. Kids just tune that out. They've heard it over and over--and when you start lecturing, the kids are gone. They're no longer listening and nothing changes. So what you need to do instead is to identify what it is that you're seeing and what you're concerned about.

Be specific and talk about what's obvious: When you're talking with your child, be specific about what you saw and what the problems are. You can state calmly and in a matter of fact way, "If the lying about homework continues, this will be the consequence." Or "It's obvious you snuck out last night. There will be a consequence for that behavior." Remember, it has to be a consequence that you can actually deliver on and are willing to follow through with.

Don't be too complicated in your message: Keep it very focused and simple for your child; concentrate on the behavior. And then tell him that you want to hear what was happening that made him feel he needed to lie. (You are not looking for an excuse for the lie, but rather to identify the problem your child was having that they used lying to solve.) Be direct and specific. The intervention itself would be quick and to the point; you don't want to lecture your child for a long time. This is just ineffective.

Keep the door open: Because the lie is most likely a way your child is trying to problem solve, make sure you indicate that you want to hear what's going on with him. He may not be ready to talk with you about it the first time you raise the subject--and this is where the neutrality on the parent's part comes in. You want to be open to hearing what your child or teen's problem is. You want to create a safe environment for him to tell you during that intervention or that first conversation. But if your child is not ready, it's important to keep that door open. Create this environment by being neutral and not attacking him.

If You Catch Your Child in a Lie...

If you catch your child in a problematic lie, I recommend that you not react in the moment. Instead, send him to his room so you can calm down. Talk with your spouse or a trusted friend or family member and come up with a game plan. Allow yourself time to think about it. Remember, when you respond without thinking, you're not going to be effective. So give yourself a little time to plan this out.

When you do talk, don't argue with your child about the lie. Just state what you saw, and what is obvious. You may not know the reason behind it, but eventually your child might fill you in on it. Again, simply state the behaviors that you saw.

So the conversation would go something like, "I got a call from the neighbor; they saw you sneaking out of your window. You were falling asleep at the kitchen table this morning at breakfast. But you told us that you were home all night." And you might then say to your teen, "There's going to be a consequence for that. You're not going to be

able to stay over at your friend's house next weekend. And we're concerned about where you went." Leave the door open for him to tell you what happened.

Remember, state what you believe based on the facts you have. Do it without arguing, just say it matter - of - factly. "We have this information, we believe it to be true and these are the consequences." Keep it very simple and hear what your child has to say, but be really firm in what you believe.

A Word about "Magical Thinking"

Be aware that kids and adolescents are prone to engage in "magical thinking." This means that when your child gets away with a few lies, he will start thinking he should be able to get away with them the next time. Often that just feeds on itself, and the lies become more and more abundant--and absurd. Your child might convince himself they're true in order to get out of the trouble. I also think kids often don't want to believe they're lying; no one really wants to be a liar.

So you'll see kids who've gotten caught smoking at school say, "No, I wasn't smoking"--even though the smoke is still in the air. And when you're a kid, you think that if you keep repeating the same thing over and over again, it will be true. But it's your job as a parent to say as matter - of - factly as possible what you feel is the truth. Acknowledge the lie, but give the consequence for the behavior, not for the lie.

Realize that most kids are not going to lie forever and ever. There is a very small percentage of kids who lie chronically. That's more difficult for parents to deal with, and it requires professional help. In all my years in working with adolescents, there were very, very few kids that I met who lied chronically for no reason. Usually, kids don't lie arbitrarily; they have a reason for doing so, no matter how faulty that reason might be. Your child really does know right from wrong, but sometimes he overrides the truth.

I'm a parent too, and I understand that it's hard not to take that personally or be disappointed. But just remember, your child is trying to solve a problem in an ineffective way. Our job is to teach them how

to face their problems head on, and to coach them through these confusing years. Over time, I believe they will learn to do that without lying. ###

Janet Lehman, MSW has worked with troubled children and teens for over 30 years. She is a social worker who has held a variety of positions during her career, including juvenile probation officer, case manager, therapist and program director for 22 years in traditional residential care and in group homes for difficult children. Janet graduated with a BA in Sociology from Farleigh Dickinson University in New Jersey, and received her Master's in Social Work from the University of West Virginia.

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How to Motivate Teenagers Q&A with Josh Shipp

Does your teen seem completely unmotivated? For parents of teens, the refrains of, "Whatever," and "I don't care," can become all too familiar. In this interview by Empowering Parents magazine, Josh Shipp explains where your child's motivation really lies—and how you can tap into it...

EP: Josh, what should parents do when their child seems to be unmotivated?

JS: I think that most—if not all—kids have drive, but I think there has to be a reason for the drive. What most kids need is a "why." Eric Chester calls teens "Generation Why" because they always want to know, "Why am I doing this? Why is this history project important to me?" And the answer from you can't be, "Because I told you so." The answer can't even necessarily be "because this is your school work." There has to be something within your child that pushes him past the inconveniences, the shortcomings, and the hiccups that will, without question, arise when he undertakes something that's challenging. So it's important for kids to understand why they want to do something, not just that they have to do it.

What you want to communicate to your child is that you have to do what you have to do so you can do what you want to do.

If you're the parent of a teen, you know how much they like to debate and question things. Sometimes that's a pain, but I think it's actually okay to a point. Here's something I've come to understand from personal experience as a teen. When they finally understand how something benefits them, they will do it long term. If the reason your child does something is only because it's important to you, that is short term motivation and that will end. The reason also needs to be important to your child, not just important to you. If your daughter is making good grades only because she wants to make you happy, eventually that's probably going to stop. She needs to have a personal reason WHY. Her personal reason can be that when you do a good job at something difficult, you have a sense of accomplishment.

Feeling a sense of accomplishment is worth the effort it takes to experience it.

Here's an example from my own life. I'm part of a running group that meets every morning. Do I want to get up at 5 a.m. and run? Heck No! Why do I do it? Other people depend on me to be there. Something is motivating me to get out of bed. I think there's a sense of accountability that we as human beings have; our default nature is that we will disappoint ourselves before we disappoint others. If it was just me, I assure you that I would hit the snooze button seven out of ten times. But instead I think, "I promised Steve I would be there; he'll give me a hard time if I don't show up." And secondly, it makes me feel good. Most people don't drive to the gym and then stay in the parking lot--the issue is that they never get in the car. Once you do something you have a sense of accomplishment; you feel good about it and it's worth it. It's just the getting started part that's the pain.

EP: So what's a good way to explain what the "WHY" is and how your child is going to benefit from it?

JS: Here's the place I would start. It's very unlikely that you have a kid that is 100% lazy and unmotivated. What's more likely is that in a few areas that drive you crazy as a parent, he's lazy and unmotivated. This was true for me. As a kid, in certain periods of my life, I wasn't focused on my academics, but I was 100% committed to baseball. I would practice batting, throwing and catching for hours. Clearly I had the ability to be disciplined and to work hard at something. So what I would say is, find an area where your child is motivated. Where is she committed? Talk to her about that. You can say, "Why is it that you're so committed to softball?" She might say, "Well, I think it's fun. I like it and my friends are on the team." Then you can come back with, "Okay, so how could you transfer that to these other things that are important in your life? How could you take some of that ambition you have and transfer that to your schoolwork, which is also important? Could you figure out a way to make your homework fun and involve your friends?"

EP: Why would a child want to do that? Just putting myself into a kid's head right now, I'm thinking, "Okay, Mom wants me to do my

homework." But why would I want to transfer my love of softball into doing my history project?"

JS: That brings us back to the "why" of things. I think it's important to help your child understand why she needs history and school. So you can say, "You may not love history, but you need history in order to graduate." What you want to communicate to your child is that you have to do what you have to do so you can do what you want to do. Find out what your child wants to do or become in the future. The average kid's ambition does require them to graduate high school. I'm not saying every kid needs to go to a four year college. Some are better working with their hands or going to technical school, but you have to graduate high school. So you can say to your child, "Look, history is one of those things that you have to do so you can do what you want to do. Maybe later you want to be a computer programmer. That's great, but you're going to need to go to college for that. At the very least you're going to need a high school degree." It's the concept of "short - term sacrifice for long - term gain."

I also tell teens that the issue isn't the piece of paper--the document that says "I graduated from Central High School." The issue is that no company wants to hire a quitter. And if you drop out or stop doing the work, you are categorizing yourself as a quitter. It's just not worth it.

EP: OK, that makes sense. So what should you say if your child says that they hate math or they're not good at chemistry? How do you motivate them then?

JS: I think it's okay for your kid to say, "I hate history. I'm not good at this." Those are fine things to express. And you don't need to say, "No you don't." After all, maybe they don't like history. We all have subjects that we gravitate towards a little more. That's not what you need to focus on. What you DO need to focus on is "I understand that you don't like it, but how can you succeed at this?" Maybe that means your child doesn't make an "A" in history, but he needs to at least do his best so he can graduate.

Again, to them, it's a valid feeling when they say, "I'm not good at this. This is hard. I hate history." In my opinion, a good response from you

is, "I have no problem with you hating history. But I do have a problem with you quitting tonight."

EP: Josh, what about kids who come across as lazy or unmotivated but really it's a self - esteem issue. Some kids worry a lot and just don't feel like they can do it.

JS: This is a very good point. I think there's a lot of pressure on kids, and many of them tell me that they get anxious or feel overwhelmed with everything they have to do. I think, to a certain degree, kids are not allowed to be kids these days. They need to be college ready and fluent in eight different languages by the time they're four years old.

Sometimes kids really are overscheduled. It's pretty realistic that they would feel overwhelmed in that case. I think it's important for you to help your child make positive goals and then make sure the things that he or she is saying yes or no to match up with that.

Frankly, I think a lot of us (myself included) need to make "To Don't" lists. We make so many "To Do" lists in our lives, but sometimes they're just entirely too lengthy. I think we need to commit to not doing some things. It's freeing for kids to sit down and write out the things they don't need to do in their lives, and it also helps them narrow down what they need to focus on.

EP: Josh, what about procrastination? Do teens put things off because they're anxious about not being able to do something?

JS: I think the issue here is that we often look at step ten, but we don't see step one. We think, "I have this big project due by next week"--but that's step ten. How do you get there? You've got to do steps one through nine. There's a famous story about a woman who had to write a book report about a hundred birds. How did she do that? Bird by bird.

If your child is feeling overwhelmed, what I don't suggest you do is relieve them of the things they have committed to by doing any of those things for them. Don't say, "You've got five things to do, let me

do one of them for you." When you do that, you're handicapping your kid. You're essentially letting them give up without letting them experience the guilt. And believe me, your child needs to experience that guilt and disappointment if he gives up.

What you can do is help him break it down. Lots of kids are visual, so you can say something like, "All right, these are the four things you have to do this week, let's write these four things down. Let's look at your time. It looks like Tuesday would probably be the best day for you to do this. Does that sound good? You could do it Thursday afternoon after practice." Just help them break it down. Most kids lack a game plan. So this monster that's actually quite small and which your child could probably slay easily becomes an enormous beast in his mind. He starts thinking, "Oh my gosh, there's no way I can do this." And so instead of actually doing his work or getting stuff done, your teen sits around agonizing about it. And then the deadline looms more and then he gets more and more freaked out. My advice is, don't handicap your kids by doing things for them; empower them by helping them develop a plan for how to do it themselves.

EP: That makes a lot of sense. But what about kids who need help getting started? Would you recommend giving them help in the beginning of a project?

JS: I think that's fine. What I would want to see, though, is my child asking for my help--not me shoving it upon him. I think it's important to talk to kids about how they can creatively ask for help. Your child could run his project by a friend who's doing one of his own. He could go on the Internet and look for ideas. He could ask you what you think about his project and how he's planning to go about doing it. I want to see kids learning things here, like how to ask for help and use the resources that they have. I have no problem with a parent helping, but I think it's important for your child to learn how to ask for that help.

And I would say, "I have no problem helping you out. I'm not going to do it for you, but let me know specifically what you would like help on." This is how you can relieve pressure without doing it for your child. So let's say your son says, "Hey, I'm really having a hard time finding this

research book, Dad. Could you try to hunt it down on Amazon or see if the bookstore has it or something?" I think you could say, "I'm happy to do that. I know that would help you out; I'll do that so you don't have to run across town." So making a plan, reading it over, giving feedback, critiquing their work--totally fine in my opinion. Again, you're helping but you're not doing the work for them. I've met too many 17 - year - olds who are still being babied. They need to get up off the couch and do it themselves, because if they don't, then they're 19 and they go to college and they wonder why things are falling apart.

So we have to be careful as parents. I think you have to ask yourself, "Am I helping my kid to actually help my kid or am I helping my kid for my own ego?" This is a question I love because it's sort of a punch in the gut. So, is it that I don't want to have the kid that gets an "F" on his book report? Is it that I don't want to look like an idiot or be embarrassed? Or is it that you want to help your child learn something?

EP: So how do you motivate a child who has a self - esteem issue?

JS: People can say things that are motivational to us; we can experience things that are motivating, but whether or not we're motivated is up to us. I'm not necessarily of the belief that you can motivate anybody. Motivation is something we have to choose. Every single day you wake up and you have that choice. Will I be my best or will I not? Not the best, but my best. Will I apply myself, will I try these difficult things? One thing that you can do as a parent is expose your kids to things that inspire them. Maybe your child does want to be a computer programmer and there's a computer programming convention in town. Take him to it. It may be the most boring thing in the world for you, but your child is totally going to nerd out and be all excited about it. Use what your kid is into to motivate him. Maybe you know someone who's a computer programmer who would talk with your kid. Obviously this person is going to say that there are certain things you've got to do to be successful in that field, certain sacrifices you have to make. They might say, "Yes, I love what I do, but there were certain goals I had to achieve to get here, like graduating from high school and going to college."

I personally find that when you surround yourself with people who are doing what you want to do, it inspires you. You realize that they're just people, they're not super human. They made mistakes and had some roadblocks but they kept going and they're doing what they love. It makes you think, "Wow, this is possible. If this guy did it, why can't I?"

Sometimes the key is just knowing that someone else was able to achieve what you want to achieve. Back in the '50's, no one had ever run a four minute mile. A lot of people tried it and then finally Roger Bannister ran it in 3:59. Then a month later, four other people did it, and that's because they were inspired. Someone proved to them that it was possible. Encourage your kids not to study their heroes' end results, but their heroes' first steps. By the time someone becomes your kid's hero, they're on step eight, nine or ten. So read about them, look online. What were their first steps, how many times did they go bankrupt? How many times did Michael Jordan get kicked off his high school basketball team? How many times did the publisher say no, we don't like your book? Study the first steps, not the end results.

I think these sorts of things provide for better motivation than trying to come up with the perfect sentence or the exact right thing to say to your child to get them to do what you want them to do.

EP: Josh, you tell parents that it's not effective to lecture children and teens. What should you do or say?

JS: So much of the time we're focused on what our teens shouldn't be doing and the things they did wrong. But I think it's important to compliment your child on things you've noticed them doing well. Catch your teen doing something good. Say something to them even if it's as simple as, "I noticed that you opened the door for that lady," or "I saw you take some time out and play catch with your little brother. Nice job."

It's not effective to nag your kids. If you've taken on that role, understand that any time a project approaches, your child is going to assume by default that you are not there as a supporter, but as a nag and a nuisance. Let's face it, all of us want to quit things sometimes. We think to ourselves, "This is really hard. I don't know if I can do it."

But how would you feel if every time you were working on something difficult, a friend walked into the room and said, "Hey, you're not finished yet? What's holding you up? You should be done by now. I don't think you're doing it the right way." You'd just tune him out. And you really don't want to become that person to your child.

As I said in the last article, we don't want our kids to give up and quit when they face challenges. But we don't want to label them as "quitters" either. Focus on the behavior, and don't tag them with that label. And try to avoid calling them lazy, because chances are that they're not lazy with everything. Instead, I think it's better to ask pointed questions that bring your child to a specific solution.

EP: What kinds of questions work best, in your opinion?

JS: I would start with questions like, "Why are you having a hard time with this? What's going on?" And really listen to what your child has to say. Another good thing to ask is, "What can I do to relieve some of the pressure?" Make it clear that you're not going to do the work for your kids, but let them know that you can help. Maybe your daughter was supposed to babysit over the weekend, but she needs more time to finish a big project; you might try to find someone else to babysit in her place. You can say, "Clearly you're pretty worried about your project. I want to see you succeed. What can I do to relieve some stress?"

It's also good to get your kids to see things long term. I don't mean to lecture them, but to just make sure they have an incentive. Again, this goes back to talking to your kids about doing what you have to do so you can do what you want to do.

I think it's good to ask your child what tools he needs to succeed. I've found in my own life that there are certain days when I'm just "on"--days when I have lots of ideas and feel motivated. When I look back on those days, I find patterns: I have time to exercise, some time to myself, and time with my family and friends. The bottom line is that you should look back at a time where you succeeded and then try to duplicate that environment. Sit down and talk with your child about his

best environment and the tools he needs to succeed. When I speak with kids, I always tell them, "Put yourself in a position to win." Maybe it helps your child to get up every 20 minutes and take a short break, then go back to work. That can often be a useful technique because then he's not feeling like, "Oh, I'm going to be sitting here for eight hours straight studying." So encourage your child to give himself rewards if that's what he needs. Again, you're helping him without doing it for him.

I think the best thing that you can do is be involved in your kid's life, know what's going on--and then help him make a plan to reach his goals. If he has a plan, then the goal doesn't seem like this big, scary beast, and he's going at it one step at a time.

EP: What if you see your child starting to slack off a little on a project and you start to worry that he's not going to finish on time. Is there anything you should step in and do at that point?

JS: I think it's best to let teens figure it out for themselves unless there's a fire. As a parent, you obviously need to put out fires, but if it's just a short-term inconvenience I believe they need to figure it out for themselves.

If your child doesn't hand in his project on time and gets a bad grade, that's a natural consequence. Certainly, there should be guidelines and rules at home around expectations and responsibilities. But if your child doesn't complete his work, he needs to experience the consequences of that lack of follow-through himself.

EP: Josh, a lot of parents say that their kids play video games all the time and avoid doing work. What would you say about that?

JS: I think you can use video gaming to your advantage as a parent. Frankly, I believe video games in moderation can be a good thing. They teach kids critical thinking skills, how to respond quickly and make decisions. I think you can say, "I know you have this big project due and you're stressed out. Maybe we can set up a plan where you work on this for an hour, then you get 20 minutes to ease your mind,

have a little fun, and play some video games. Then you get back to work. We'll try it for a while and see if it works." The bottom line is, I think you should use whatever works the best--and use the things your child enjoys to motivate your child.

Remember, discouragement arrives before defeat. That's why one of the most important things you can do for your kid as they're trying to do these things is just encourage them. When people stay discouraged, defeat is inevitable. It's all about your mental fitness.

EP: Some kids bite off more than they can chew and end up doing too many activities. Is it OK to let your child quit a few things if they're feeling stressed and overwhelmed?

JS: Often in high school, the activities are cyclical. If my child signed up for too many activities, I personally wouldn't want him to quit the team--I would want him to stick it out and then not sign up again. Once you allow the idea of quitting to enter into your child's mind as an option or possibility, it becomes dangerous.

I'd rather be on the offense as a parent. Before your child is signing up for activities, sit down with him and look at what he has on his plate. I can understand why parents might want to say, "Maybe you should drop out of a few things" when they see their kid feeling overwhelmed. In an effort to relieve some pressure, parents might say, "Well maybe you should quit the softball team." But I think it's better to not join these activities in the first place. See if there is a way to encourage your child to finish out his commitments if at all possible. I see this a lot with teens. They will overbook themselves with friends. They'll say, "Let's hang out this weekend," but they only keep the appointment until someone better comes along.

I think it's important to live by the following guideline: "My word and my commitment should be my word and my commitment regardless of whether or not it's convenient for me." So on the surface, something like quitting the softball team doesn't seem to be a big deal. But you want your child to have the goal of following through on their commitments. If your child has really overbooked herself and signed

up for the school play, the basketball team and yearbook committee, she is probably doing too much. Try to problem solve with her on how to fulfill all those commitments. It might be a tough six months--and it's going to teach her a lesson.

Here's a good rule of thumb: Begin with the end in mind. Tell your child before she signs up for things to think about what it will do for her semester or for her school year. Remember, you're always saying "no" to something. If you say "yes" to too many activities, you're saying "no" to time with your friends, time with your family, and time for yourself.

And this is a big thing with teenagers because they don't want to upset anybody. Even teens who are a little bit insecure usually don't want to rock the boat. So they over-commit themselves. I think it's fine for them to choose not to do activities. I don't care if they say no, but I do care if they give up.

EP: Josh, some kids give up easily because they feel that everyone else is better--that they'll never be the best. I think sometimes kids give up because they feel like other kids are better at something than they are. What would you say to them?

JS: What I always tell kids is that it isn't about who's the best, it's about who works the hardest and who's the most dedicated. When I spoke at Harvard University, kids came up to me afterward and talked about how challenging it was to come to Harvard. They were the smartest kid in their school, but now they've come to a place where everyone is the smartest kid in school.

I think you need to be careful about complimenting your child and simply saying things like "You're so smart," because it's a relative term. It's much better to encourage and compliment them on how hard they worked--ultimately, that's what matters. It's not, "Do you have good ideas?" It's "Will you do something with your ideas?" Remember, there are a lot of people who are smart or athletic or musically talented, but all they do is sit around and think about it. It's really not

about intelligence or even natural talent. It's about applying those things in your life.

So as a parent, I think it's important to know what your kid's goals are--because then you can use that as a tool to motivate them. Your child's goals may be really good and realistic, or they may be really bizarre. I don't think you should criticize them if this is the case, however--at least they're dreaming about something. They might say something like, "I want to be a computer programmer." At least there's something there that you can use as incentive when they're unmotivated. You might say, "Stay on target. Remember your goal of becoming a computer programmer requires that you get good grades."

With teens, I think it's best to remind them of things they themselves have said. To a certain degree, you're allowing them to co - author certain things. It's effective for you as a parent to say, "Remember your goal is to become a computer programmer. But let's be honest, you're not going to be able to pull that off if you don't have a high school degree, at least."

Another thing I would say to kids is, "It's not how talented you are that matters, it's how dedicated you are that counts." Everybody is talented in some way. Most people are smart. So what? But if you're dedicated and smart, you can do amazing things. ###

Josh Shipp has established an international reputation as a teen communication expert. Abandoned and abused as a child, Josh was able to triumph over the tragedy and positively influence the lives of the countless adolescents he's coached. He is a recognized authority on teens for such media outlets as MTV, CNN, and FOX. Josh has spoken at Harvard, M.I.T., UCLA, and Stanford on the science of getting teens to listen. He is also the creator of the Identity Program.

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"Josh Shipp has the ability to get through to ANY teen and point them in the right direction. It's an incredible thing to witness." — Harvard University

Josh is the host of TV Show JUMP SHIPP, author of "The Teen's Guide to World Domination" (St. Martins Press), named a CNN Young Person Who Rocks and was listed on INC. Magazine's 30 under 30 list.

Josh has established an international reputation as a teen communication expert who can get through to any teen. He's spoken at Harvard University, Stanford, UCLA, M.I.T. and to over 1.5 million teenagers live. He is a recognized teen expert for such media outlets as MTV, CNN, and FOX. Josh offers up a healthy dose of advice that he calls "in your face, but on your side."

He counsels teenagers on everything they care about and it's all done in a youth-friendly, humorous tone that is more hilarious survival guide than preachy sermon.

Josh certainly knows a thing or two about survival. Abandoned and abused as a child, he was able to triumph over the tragedy. He attributes his personal growth to the support of a great foster family, dynamic teachers and enriching school programs that opened his eyes to his true potential. After serving as State DECA President and on the School-to-Work student advisory committee, Josh decided to commit his life to helping teens.

"I've found that sometimes the very thing that has hurt you the most, is the very thing you can use to help others. You can't change the past — so why not focus on building an incredible future?" —Josh Shipp

Josh lives in sunny California, is a spokesperson for National Foster Care Month, and a guitar hero.

Visit <http://www.joshshipp.com>

The Gateway to Spiritual Consciousness

By Owen Waters

Love is the saving grace of all of humanity. We contact this primal energy in our finest moments. From the moment a baby is born, it is enshrouded in the unselfish love of its mother. From the moment a person springs into action to save others from peril, their own thoughts of survival are 'overlighted' by the love and caring that shines from their heart.

When a person looks back on their life, they see that one thing that mattered the most: Love. Pure, unadulterated, unconditional love.

It is the source of compassion. It is the energy of caring for others. It is the binding force which holds together the entire universe, and it flows through you whenever you simply allow it.

Love is the gateway to spiritual consciousness. It is through activation of the spiritual heart that we pass into a whole new world of expansion and joy. In the realms of spiritual consciousness, we find peace, bliss, and continual inspiration. In the realms of spiritual consciousness, we expand our view of life to see the issues that are important to the soul. We can then see how love can heal and how we can and should make the time to spread a little more love in the world every day, even if it is simply done in silent prayer for the well-being of others.

Let your heart open to love each and every day. When you are attuned to the natural flow of love throughout the universe, you then feel the natural flow of energy within your own being. Your senses of insight and timing develop to help you achieve more and to succeed easily at the tasks that are important to you.

The flow of love is critical to life. Without the all-pervasive love of the Creator which fills the universe, nothing would exist. For centuries, humankind has been playing a role where love and inner inspiration have been blocked off and ignored. Today, the tide is turning and people are opening up to this wonderful flow of natural energy.

Remember the love within, especially when outer circumstances seem dark. Remember that love is the gateway to the higher realms of consciousness where answers can be found to meet every challenge that life presents.

Tune into love. It will never let you down. Instead, it will set your spirit free to explore the realms of consciousness which offer greater vistas of awareness, greater peace of mind, and a sense of constant joy.
###

This was an excerpt from **Owen Waters'** book, [**Spirituality Made Simple**](#), which is available both as a paperback and a downloadable e-book, at:

<http://www.infinitebeing.com/ebooks/simple.htm>

Peter Shepherd writes: "Owen has written in depth in his earlier books about the human condition and the potential we have to raise our consciousness to an altogether higher level - plus he has described the ways and means of doing so. In Spirituality Made Simple, with his characteristic clarity, Owen summarizes his teaching and explains how each one of us can make a positive difference by using spiritual energy to heal the world and make it a better place. It's a call to action and I feel the time is right to respond."

**Create a New Life: One Intention at a Time
or Thoughts Create Molecules**
by Gabriella Kortsch, Ph.D.

Wonderful things are happening. Global consciousness of the power of thought is growing person by person, minute by minute in an ever-widening fashion. So it stands to reason that the more people who think peace rather than war, or compassion rather than revenge, the more the world as a whole has a chance of moving in those directions.

How Can I Apply These Concepts?

Having said that, many of those who have read the books, heard the audios, seen the movies, have also said that although they grasp the concepts, they still don't really see how to apply all of this to their immediate life. How can the power of thought make a difference on the individual level? How can it improve the life of a person who is grappling with relationship issues, with financial stress, with professional set-backs, or with health concerns?

Empirical Proof

Einstein said: "When you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change". Candace Pert's research spanning almost a quarter of a century as a molecular biologist shows that *every thought creates a molecule*. Bruce Lipton's decades-long research as a cellular biologist indicates that our beliefs and thoughts create (and change) not only our cells, but also our DNA and that our bodies depend much more on environment and *what we make of our environment and how we react to it* than genetics, hence taking research far beyond the classical nature-nurture controversy. Max Planck, quantum physicist, said in his Nobel Prize for Physics acceptance speech in 1927 that beyond sub-atomic particles there is a field. That field connects us all. *Merely observing* such sub-atomic particles, *causes changes in them*. If we are all connected in the field, as drops of water are connected in the ocean, then what one does creates effects on others, and what others do, creates an effect on one.

We Are All Connected

Bearing all of this in mind, should we not begin to concern ourselves with understanding the inter-connectedness of the tapestry within which we are all woven? I can hear you saying: *"But that is all very complicated. I can't possibly begin how to understand all of that."* Perhaps you can't, but what you most definitely *can* do, is to begin some work on yourself on the individual level in order to improve not only your own life, and how you feel about yourself, but also how you feel about *life in general* all day, every day for the rest of your life. If you begin today, your life will begin to change today.

Kinesiology, or muscle testing, shows one aspect that the power of thought (and lying or truth saying) has on our bodies.

Bestsellers All Over the Globe

It comes as no surprise that at this writing (March 2007) amazon.com includes in its top 15 bestselling books *four* items about the intention of thought, as does the New York Times. Further, the Canadian and the UK affiliate of Amazon also include from one to three of the same items in their own top 15 lists.

Emerson said, it, Thoreau said it, Christ said it, James Allen said it (you may request your copy of his *As A Man Thinketh* in e-book format from me)...they all said that your thoughts become your reality, but now, in the 21st century, it is not only philosophers, metaphysicians, religious figures and other esoteric thinkers who say this, but also quantum physicists, biologists, and a host of other empirical thinkers and researchers. *So there can no longer be any doubt...*check out the many resources mentioned in this article. *And then, if you still don't believe it, you might consider that perhaps you belong to the same group of people who wanted Copernicus arrested and jailed for proclaiming that the earth revolves around the sun instead of the other way around!*

Some Simple Suggestions

Ok, so now for those of you still reading the article, let me say this: understanding the concept behind the very simple words that thoughts have power, can change the very foundations of your life. Let's look at

an everyday example. Suppose you and your partner or spouse are continually bickering. When you met, fell in love, and got married, you were ecstatically in love, and couldn't wait to be with one another. Now...well, let's just say that things are different.

Remember: our goal is to understand the power of thoughts. So now I'd like you to try an exercise for the next week. Make a list of about 10 qualities or aspects or characteristics about your partner that you really enjoy and appreciate (even if lately they seem to have gotten lost in the shuffle). Look at that list on a daily basis. Think about the items on the list, remember some of the times when they were in evidence on a regular basis. Whenever you find yourself thinking about the unpleasant aspects of your partner, or what he or she said or did (or didn't say or do) last week, the other day, or this morning, deliberately change your thoughts towards your list, and think about the good things about your partner, rather than about the negative ones. Focus on the good traits. Refuse to think about the negative ones. Just for one week.

Practice Makes Perfect

I would love to hear some of the results of this little experiment, but my guess is that a good number of those who try it, will be somewhat surprised to realize that things went better than usual. They may even say that it was just one of those weeks that was less difficult than others. Hmm. Could it be possible that it had something to do with the thoughts that were being focused on; the positive aspects of the partner rather than the negative? Could it be possible that the more you think about something ... *anything* ... the more precisely that will appear in your life? This is, after all, what all the afore-mentioned thinkers and researchers have said. Focus on the negative aspects of your partner, and your life will be filled with them. Focus on the positive ones and note the difference in what happens.

I invite you to try similar experiments about whatever it is that plagues you. Do I hear someone saying that this is impossible? A pipe dream, because thoughts creep unbidden into the mind and one can't control them? Did I say this is easy? How did you learn how to use your computer? How did you grow nearly non-existent bicep muscles into a

hard, firm, well-toned upper arm? How did you learn that foreign language? How did you learn how to play tennis? Was it not with some practice and discipline? Of course. And so it is with this.

Realize that in order to grapple with your thoughts; in order to find some measure of control over your thoughts in such a way that they *speak the language* that most approximates whatever it is that you wish to see or realize in your life, you must practice *changing* the thoughts that do not lead you in that direction into other thoughts.

And this is only possible with practice. Just because we are talking about your thoughts and not muscles or the grammatical structure of a new language, does not mean you do not have to be disciplined about it. For a time, particularly at the beginning of your journey down this wonderful pathway, you will need to spend a good portion of your leisure time practicing this endeavour. Reminding yourself of it. Recognizing over and over again, that once again you forgot, and then, just like a child who is learning how to walk, and falls, and gets up, and falls again, and gets up again, and again, and again, and again, you also, will get up as often as is necessary, in order to come to a point, where this new way of thinking becomes a well-ingrained habit.

Choose Your Thoughts, Choose Your Conversations, Your Reading & Viewing Material: Make Good Choices at Every Moment of Every Day

Although there are times in life when thoughts are necessarily dark, when people one loves have died, when difficulties visit one in unexpected ways, there are, nevertheless, ways of dealing with these times that continue to be positive. You might ask: what can be learned from this? How can I use this experience to become a better, more all-rounded person? Read books such as those written by Victor Frankl, Nelson Mandela, or Alexander Solzhenitsyn in order to better understand this philosophy, as evinced by individuals who survived despite horrendous pain and suffering – and who survived without bitterness and hatred in their hearts.

And during less difficult times choose to think only those thoughts that lead you in your desired direction. Think only those thoughts that raise your energy. Think only those thoughts that cause you to feel even better. This is not easy. At least not at the beginning. Keep reminding yourself. Remember the little child that continues to get up even after falling down twenty times. Read books (see the complimentary e-books I offer with most of my newsletters; some are about these topics) from authors such as those mentioned in this article, listen to CD's about the topic (many are available by those same authors), see movies with related topics, scatter reminders to yourself about thinking this way about your house and office, and remember, this is just as easy or just as hard as it was to build the muscle or learn the vocabulary of a new language. The difference is that this doesn't just give you a better looking body or a way of communicating in another country, but a way to change your entire life. Go for it! ###

About Gabrielle Kortsch, Ph.D.

Dr. Kortsch holds a doctorate in psychology and dedicates herself to integral coaching, clinical hypnotherapy, relationship coaching, and energy techniques. She is an author and professional speaker and broadcasts a live [weekly radio show](#) in English that is available on the Internet or for listening on her website, and has appeared in numerous television programs in English and Spanish. She can help you move towards greater personal and relationship success with her integral approach to life and offers training and workshops in the field of self-development and choosing responsibility for the self. Visit [Advanced Personal Therapy.com](#) and sign up for her cutting-edge newsletter in English or Spanish, or visit her blog for more timely articles.

Top 5 Regrets of the Dying by Bronnie Ware

For many years I worked in palliative care. My patients were those who had gone home to die. Some incredibly special times were shared. I was with them for the last three to twelve weeks of their lives.

People grow a lot when they are faced with their own mortality. I learned never to underestimate someone's capacity for growth. Some changes were phenomenal. Each experienced a variety of emotions, as expected, denial, fear, anger, remorse, more denial and eventually acceptance. Every single patient found their peace before they departed though, every one of them.

When questioned about any regrets they had or anything they would do differently, common themes surfaced again and again. Here are the most common five:

1. I wish I'd had the courage to live a life true to myself, not the life others expected of me.

This was the most common regret of all. When people realise that their life is almost over and look back clearly on it, it is easy to see how many dreams have gone unfulfilled. Most people have had not honoured even a half of their dreams and had to die knowing that it was due to choices they had made, or not made.

It is very important to try and honour at least some of your dreams along the way. From the moment that you lose your health, it is too late. Health brings a freedom very few realise, until they no longer have it.

2. I wish I didn't work so hard.

This came from every male patient that I nursed. They missed their children's youth and their partner's companionship. Women also spoke of this regret. But as most were from an older generation, many of the female patients had not been breadwinners. All of the men I nursed deeply regretted spending so much of their lives on the treadmill of a work existence.

By simplifying your lifestyle and making conscious choices along the way, it is possible to not need the income that you think you do. And by creating more space in your life, you become happier and more open to new opportunities, ones more suited to your new lifestyle.

3. I wish I'd had the courage to express my feelings.

Many people suppressed their feelings in order to keep peace with others. As a result, they settled for a mediocre existence and never became who they were truly capable of becoming. Many developed illnesses relating to the bitterness and resentment they carried as a result.

We cannot control the reactions of others. However, although people may initially react when you change the way you are by speaking honestly, in the end it raises the relationship to a whole new and healthier level. Either that or it releases the unhealthy relationship from your life. Either way, you win.

4. I wish I had stayed in touch with my friends.

Often they would not truly realise the full benefits of old friends until their dying weeks and it was not always possible to track them down. Many had become so caught up in their own lives that they had let golden friendships slip by over the years. There were many deep regrets about not giving friendships the time and effort that they deserved. Everyone misses their friends when they are dying.

It is common for anyone in a busy lifestyle to let friendships slip. But when you are faced with your approaching death, the physical details of life fall away. People do want to get their financial affairs in order if possible. But it is not money or status that holds the true importance for them. They want to get things in order more for the benefit of those they love. Usually though, they are too ill and weary to ever manage this task. It is all comes down to love and relationships in the end. That is all that remains in the final weeks, love and relationships.

5. I wish that I had let myself be happier.

This is a surprisingly common one. Many did not realise until the end that happiness is a choice. They had stayed stuck in old patterns and

habits. The so-called 'comfort' of familiarity overflowed into their emotions, as well as their physical lives. Fear of change had them pretending to others, and to their selves, that they were content. When deep within, they longed to laugh properly and have silliness in their life again.

When you are on your deathbed, what others think of you is a long way from your mind. How wonderful to be able to let go and smile again, long before you are dying.

Life is a choice. It is YOUR life. Choose consciously, choose wisely, choose honestly. Choose happiness. ###

Bronnie Ware is a writer, singer/songwriter, songwriting teacher and speaker from Australia. She has lived nomadically for most of her adult life. Bronnie shares her inspiring observations and the insights gained along the way through the diversity of her work. To read more of her articles and learn about her other work, please visit Inspiration and Chai at <http://www.inspirationandchai.com>.

The Power of Contrast **by Hrvoje Butkovic**

A few weeks ago, I've had the privilege of meeting an extraordinary person. It was a chance encounter. I was walking to a nearby store and she was going in the opposite direction. She waved to get my attention, and then handed me a piece of paper.

The written message said that she was mute and so couldn't explain her situation in her own voice, but that she was trying to buy a birthday cake for her four-year-old daughter and would be grateful for any contribution that I could give her.

Such requests are commonplace in the city of Johannesburg, where I live. Far more people have moved here looking for work than the city is able to accommodate. Those unable to find employment often resort to providing odd street services in a desperate attempt to secure whatever income they can, or simply beg.

Over the years, I've grown weary of giving them money. It's hard to tell what they are going to do with it. I'm sure that some use it to buy food and other necessities, but there are also those who spend it on cigarettes, alcohol and drugs.

Looking at the written request for money that would seemingly be used to buy a birthday cake, I decided not to take the chance. I offered to buy her the cake instead. The inconvenience was minimal as I was already on my way to the shops. She could come with me and choose the cake that she wanted. Best of all, it would ensure that the money really was used for the stated cause.

I half-expected her to turn down my offer, confirming my fears of what she was really after. To my surprise, she eagerly accepted. The enthusiasm that radiated from her face dispelled any residual doubts I might have harboured about the honesty of her request. I resumed my walk to the shops with her.

Once there, I left her in the bakery section and went on to do my own shopping. She found me a few minutes later, a beautifully decorated pink birthday cake in her hands. I could almost imagine the smile on her daughter's face when she saw it. I confirmed that I would buy it for her, leaving her to go back and sort out the packaging. I thought that was the end of the matter.

The error in my assumption was revealed some ten minutes later, when she came back and handed me another piece of paper. The new message explained that, as much as she would have loved to buy the cake for her daughter, they needed regular food more. The same hopeful look returned as she showed me a Christmas hamper that she had found. It contained a variety of food that they needed, and it was currently discounted.

I was taken aback by the request. It suddenly became clear to me what this was about. They needed food, plain and simple. She was so desperate to get it that she was willing to sacrifice her dream of celebrating her daughter's birthday with a cake in order to get it.

I couldn't bring myself to turn down her new request. In fact, instead of simply agreeing to buy her the hamper, I asked whether she would rather have the hamper and the cake. Her eyes opened wide with shock. Apparently, the idea had not occurred to her. Later, when I picked up the hamper and realised that it was quite light despite its bulky appearance, I suggested that she might want to get another one.

I could tell from the tears that she was trying to hide that it was a very special day in her life.

It was a very special day in my life, too. Ever since the chance encounter with a beggar woman at a road intersection years ago, I've understood that it was the giving of what we had at times and in situations where it was needed that enabled us to experience its bounty. Be it material wealth or prized skills, it was their application for the upliftment of other people that enabled us to feel plentiful ourselves.

What I hadn't understood then was why this should be the case. Why was it that, if I wanted to experience abundance, the most effective way was through others, by causing them to feel abundant? Why couldn't I do the same for myself? The answer eluded me until the clue was provided again, this time by the lady with two Christmas hampers and a birthday cake. That clue was the necessity and the power of contrast.

It is change that makes experience possible, and the extent of change that drives its intensity. A kind word passes unnoticed in a flurry of praise, yet carries the power to stop a heated argument. Habitual success is hardly worthy of special mention, but let it occur in the midst of failure and it becomes something to celebrate.

The question of how best to experience abundance translates into the question of how to create the deepest contrast between an affluent present and the memory of a destitute past.

This is very difficult to achieve in our own lives. For the vast majority of people, acquisition of wealth is a very gradual process. Whatever possessions, skills and mindsets have enabled us to acquire the wealth that we currently have also stand in our way of rapidly acquiring more. Even if our life story is one of going from rags to riches, chances are that it has taken many years to accomplish. The passage of time dulls the memory of whatever contrast we might have had.

When it comes to material wealth, the most effective way to create pronounced contrast in our own lives is probably by winning a fortune, especially with lottery. The change is immediate and dramatic. It enables us to have a profound experience of abundance by looking at nothing more than our own lives, at what we can do now that we couldn't do before. Unfortunately, it is not up to us to make it happen. It resides beyond our control, and might not grace us even once.

Experiencing abundance through other people suffers from none of these shortcomings. Because we experience abundance by giving rather than hoarding, the limitations that are holding us back from

acquiring further wealth – be it lack of tools, skills or a self-defeating mindset – no longer apply. Nor does the extent of our possessions. We don't need to have a lot to give to find someone who has even less, and to whom such a gift would make a world of difference.

The two hampers and the cake that I bought for that lady had cost me less than the daily grocery shopping for my own family. The gift was negligible from my point of view, yet it was beyond her reach. The worldview that governed her notion of what was possible was clearly much more restrictive than mine. So restrictive, in fact, that the possibility of acquiring both a hamper and a cake did not occur to her until I pointed it out.

When experiencing abundance through other people, there are two sets of limitations in play. The person who is giving is restricted by what he has and what he believes he can afford to give away. The person who is receiving is similarly restricted by what she has, what she still needs, and what she believes she can or cannot have.

The experience of abundance arises from the contrast between what the receiver believes she can have and what the giver believes he can give away. The greater the gulf, the more intense the resulting experience. The receiver experiences abundance by having her perceived limitations blown away and finding herself in possession of wealth that she didn't think possible. By sharing in her experience, the giver comes to know himself as the source of that wealth, which now seems to hold far more worth than it ever did before.

The effectiveness of experiencing abundance through other people stems from the ease with which we can achieve the necessary contrast. Instead of having to transform our lives by acquiring sought-after riches in record time, we can find someone to whom our present circumstances appear unbelievably prosperous and transform their lives by a simple and modest act of giving.

Perhaps the most rewarding facet of this approach is that it never runs out of opportunities. No matter how many people we may have helped, there are always other people in need and other situations

that we can tap to make each experience unique, and thereby fresh and profoundly desirable. It is perhaps the most rewarding use that we can put our wealth and talent to. ###

Hrvoje Butkovic is the author of *A Glimpse of Another World*, which is a social commentary in a science fiction setting. For more information, please visit <http://fluffygroovy.com>.

From the Shelf

Uncommon: Finding Your Path to Significance

By Tony Dungy, Nathan Whitaker

Retailer's Choice Award winner!

Super Bowl-winning coach and #1 *New York Times* best selling author Tony Dungy has had an unusual opportunity to reflect on what it takes to achieve significance. He is looked to by many as the epitome of the success and significance that is highly valued in our culture. He also works every day with young men who are trying to achieve significance through football and all that goes with a professional athletic career—such as money, power, and celebrity. Coach Dungy has had all that, but he passionately believes that there is a different path to significance, a path characterized by attitudes, ambitions, and allegiances that are all too rare but uncommonly rewarding. *Uncommon* reveals lessons on achieving significance that the coach has learned from his remarkable parents, his athletic and coaching career, his mentors, and his journey with God. A particular focus of the book: what it means to be a man of significance in a culture that is offering young men few positive role models.

Reader Reviews:

Good Follow Up to Quiet Strength

Recently retired Indianapolis Colts coach Tony Dungy delivers an outstanding follow-up to his bestseller *Quiet Strength* in his new book, *Uncommon*. The name of the book is derived from a quote by former University of Minnesota coach Cal Stoll, who said:

"Success is uncommon, therefore not to be enjoyed by the common man. I'm looking for uncommon people."

Dungy first heard these words as a freshman on Stoll's football team almost three decades ago, and they have stayed with him ever since. The only difference is that it is now Dungy summoning men to an uncommon life of significance.

The book does not differ much from *Quiet Strength*, as it is written in a casual tone similar to most sports figure's memoirs. It is, however, less autobiographical, leaning more toward an advisory manual on how to live life. It is divided into seven parts, each dealing with important issues that men deal with in their lives, such as family, friends, career, and relationship with Christ. It is sprinkled with stories from Dungy's personal life which illustrate the themes of each chapter. Perhaps most refreshing is the coach's tone. He is never condescending or preachy, adamantly proclaiming that his way is the best way. Reading this book is almost like talking to a big brother who is handing out advice because he's been there.

For those who are weary of self-help books, have no fear. Dungy's focus is on service to God, family, and fellow man. There are no get-rich quick schemes in this book, or promises of blessings. This is just Tony Dungy trying to instruct men how to be better husbands, fathers, and human beings. He doesn't claim to have all the answers; he's just willing to share what he's been through.

It's a quick, easy read, and there's enough football mixed in to keep most guys interested. There's a Q & A with Tony Dungy in the back, giving his opinion on more direct questions. My only knock on this book is the goofy picture of Dungy on the back cover. But it's definitely worth the money. Tony Dungy scores again.

The Road Less Traveled

Tony Dungy, best selling author of *Quiet Strength*, has penned another Super Bowl quality book in *Uncommon: Finding Your Path to Significance*. The two books cover similar terrain: how to win in life. However, Dungy's latest work focuses especially on how young men can pursue and achieve a life of significance and success.

Dungy is eminently qualified to write such a book, given his lifetime of leadership coaching not only athletes in sports, but men in the proverbial game of life. Additionally, his own drive for success, not simply defined by wins and losses, but by other-centered relationships, is Dungy's ultimate qualification for writing *Uncommon*.

Dungy begins by defining success, not from the world's perspective, but from his Christian worldview. He then notes how uncommon true success and significance are, outlines many of the reasons, and prescribes practical pathways: attitudes, ambitions, and allegiances.

What Rick Warren achieved with *Purpose Driven Life*, Tony Dungy has accomplished with *Uncommon*. Both books are user-friendly, easy-reads, without being dumbed-down or simplistic. And both books, while maintaining a Judea-Christian ethic, are not preachy.

Though focused somewhat on young males, *Uncommon* is for every person pursuing a life of meaning, a path of purpose, and the road toward significance. Learn from an uncommon man the uncommon art of leaving a lasting legacy.

Reviewer: Bob Kellemen, Ph.D., is the author of *Beyond the Suffering: Embracing the Legacy of African American Soul Care and Spiritual Direction*.

Much needed hope and help for a better life

Taking one's life beyond success in business, the author describes how to be a person of significance and how to make our life truly meaningful.

He reflects on lessons he learned from his parents, his mentors and career and his faith. He provides fresh insight into becoming significant, someone who matters.

A particular focus of the book is what it means to be a man of significance in a culture that is offering young men few positive role models. I personally think this is an excellent thing and much needed.

"Highly recommended."
—*Susanna K. Hutcheson*

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Pam Garcy
Part 14. Daily learning

When I was a child, my mother taught remedial-reading to fourth-graders in an impoverished part of the city. The week before school started, I was allowed to go into her classroom and help her to set it up for her future students. The heat of the summer was tempered only by the whirl of rotating electric fans that my mother strategically placed in her non-air-conditioned classroom. The musty smell of the school triggered a sense of excitement for me, because I knew that soon my mother would be rocking the worlds of the children that entered her room!

Before the children walked into my mother's classroom, they'd already had many negative experiences with learning. Learning was associated with pain for them, and in some cases they devalued learning. Some of the children simply had different styles of learning or dyslexia. Others read rarely and simply didn't have enough practice reading. Some came from households where they were given messages about learning which were less than growth-promoting. Others came from loving families but the families simply didn't know how to help them learn. Some spoke other languages in their homes, meaning that they were acquiring both a new language and a new skill. Others simply saw themselves as unintelligent due to multiple failure experiences at school.

I remember that I helped my mother clean and decorate whichever dusty classroom she'd been assigned to. We wanted to create a setting that would encourage the children to look at learning in a new way. One of the ways that we did this was to use posters and bulletin-boards that had special messages for this group of kids. I recall that I had a favorite bulletin board that my mother would allow me to pin up to one of the corkboards in the room. It was a picture of the earth, the sky and a child reading a book. Next to him was another child in a hot-air balloon looking out at the world with a telescope. Above this, I would carefully pick out die-cut letters, one by one, and pin them to the bulletin board. The letters spelled out, "Read and watch your world grow!"

Sometimes during these moments, older students would enter my mother's classroom for a visit. They'd discuss all of the great things that were happening in the student's life. It was very powerful for me to witness the gratitude in those moments, and years later I returned to my own teachers with similar expressions of appreciation!

"What does all of this have to do with inner guidance?" you're probably asking.

If you are selective about your continued learning, then you can empower yourself in ways that you might not realize! Learning can help you to move beyond your present limits and into a journey of growth! It can trigger new ideas, which can then trigger new directions! As you expand your mind, you will also expand your awareness, opening you to your inner guidance! YOUR world can grow too!

How can daily learning help you to tap into your inner guidance?
There are several avenues in which learning can serve as a vehicle toward your inner guidance:

1. Learning can help you to shift into a different energetic state. For example, you might move from discouraged and pessimistic to encouraged and hopeful. When you have shifted to a healthier state, you will be more receptive to your inner guidance.
2. Learning can teach you new skills. If you want to tap into your inner guidance most successfully, it is helpful for you to know how to relax, for example. (This is covered in more detail in *The Power of Inner Guidance: Seven Steps to Tune In and Turn On* by me.)
3. Learning can keep you open to truths that you might forget due to the pressures of daily life. These truths remind you of who you really are, and your being resonates with greater clarity when these truths are activated.
4. Learning can contribute to your confidence. As you learn new skills and new information, you will begin to develop greater self-reliance. This self-reliance and independence make it easier for you to listen to

yourself, even when others are attempting to dissuade you from taking healthy risks. For example, reading Insourcing might be one of the ways in which you empower yourself to walk upon your own path.

Healthy versus Unhealthy Learning? Uncover the truth.

Like most things, learning can be healthy or unhealthy. There are some learning experiences that take you away from your personal truth. While it is good to be open-minded, to challenge yourself and to grow, multiple negative learning experiences are like taking repeated doses of poison--eventually you're toxic. So, as you learn from others, please examine the motives behind the messages.

If the motives are to dis-empower, discourage, degrade, destroy, limit, close, and needlessly scare you--especially if it then tells you to follow one person's opinion at all times--then this might raise a red flag. Social psychologists are well aware that the technique of raising your anxiety and then manipulating you into submissiveness is one that has been used by totalitarian governments and cults alike. Included in this is usually an intolerance of learning--except insofar as it involves reading more of the same--this is called a "closed system". So, be aware of this and use wisdom! You might turn inward and ask, "What does the wise part of me say about this information?"

Healthy learning experiences are laid upon an entirely different foundation! Again, examine the motives behind the learning experience and you'll discover a lot! If these motives are to inspire, empower, uplift, enlighten, energize, delight, heal, develop, stretch, inform and otherwise expand your awareness, then go for it! These are exactly the types of learning experiences that will enrich your life and open you to your inner guidance! In fact, if you are already very tuned into your inner guidance, you will naturally gravitate toward this type of learning!

What is healthy to read, listen to, watch or attend? This is an important question, especially if you have limited time. You might have heard the term GIGO. This stands for two different things (1) Garbage In Garbage Out and (2) Great In Great Out.

If you are in a good mental state, the question of what to learn is actually a question that you can use your inner guidance to help you answer. You can ask, "What topic do I need to learn more about?" and see what emerges. You can begin to observe what you are drawn toward and begin to honor these inclinations. You can ask trusted friends for recommendations, and you can see what you naturally move toward. You can look toward role-models, those who are living as you'd like to live, and you can ask them for ideas.

Learning and Inner Guidance

Remember that learning is actually a big part of your path, whether you acknowledge it or not! The faster you wake up to this fact, the richer your life will become. Some of the wisest people I know use their inner guidance to answer this question: "What lesson is this experience teaching me?"

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

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A Course in Miracles Lesson 30

God is in everything I see because God is in my mind.

The idea for today is the springboard for vision. From this idea will the world open up before you, and you will look upon it and see in it what you have never seen before. Nor will what you saw before be even faintly visible to you.

Today we are trying to use a new kind of "projection." We are not attempting to get rid of what we do not like by seeing it outside. Instead, we are trying to see in the world what is in our minds, and what we want to recognize is there. Thus, we are trying to join with what we see, rather than keeping it apart from us. That is the fundamental difference between vision and the way you see.

Today's idea should be applied as often as possible throughout the day. Whenever you have a moment or so, repeat it to yourself slowly, looking about you, and trying to realize that the idea applies to everything you do see now, or could see now if it were within the range of your sight.

Real vision is not limited to concepts such as "near" and "far." To help you begin to get used to this idea, try to think of things beyond your present range as well as those you can actually see, as you apply today's idea.

Real vision is not only unlimited by space and distance, but it does not depend on the body's eyes at all. The mind is its only source. To aid in helping you to become more accustomed to this idea as well, devote several practice periods to applying today's idea with your eyes closed, using whatever subjects come to mind, and looking within rather than without. Today's idea applies equally to both.

Commentary by Allen Watson

As the previous lesson was the "whole basis" for vision, today's idea is "the springboard". That God is in everything I see forms the foundation. Knowing that this is so "because God is in my mind" is what can propel us from mere sight into vision.

From this idea will the world open up before you, and you will look upon it and see in it what you have never seen before. Nor will what you saw before be even faintly visible to you.

Fundamental to understanding what the Course is talking about is the fact that what we see is quite directly *caused* by what is in our mind. The commonsense idea of perception is that something outside causes an impression, through my senses, on my mind. The reality is the reverse, according to the Course. The thoughts of my mind are projected outward and cause my perceptions. "Projection makes perception," says the Text in two different places.

What this lesson attempts to teach us is "a new kind of 'projection'". We might call it "positive projection." Instead of using projection to get rid of thoughts we are uncomfortable with, we are attempting to see in the world *what we want to see in our own minds*. What I want to see, for one thing, is my own innocence. Therefore I am attempting to see the world as innocent. I am choosing my thoughts and deliberately "projecting" them onto the world. I want to see myself as having God in my mind, and so I choose to see everything as having God in it.

If all things contain God, and I contain God, then we are joined. "Thus, we are trying to join with what we see, rather than keeping it apart from us. That is the fundamental difference between vision and the way you see". Our kind of seeing emphasizes differences and distinctions; vision emphasizes sameness.

"Real vision is not only unlimited by space and distance, but it does not depend on the body's eyes at all". It is becoming clearer with each lesson that the vision being talked about has nothing at all to do with our physical sight. In the Course's thought system, our eyes do not see at all; they are merely the means for deception. We can include in

our vision things beyond the range of physical sight. This is a seeing done with our minds, not with eyes. "The mind is its only source".

Now I recall our earlier lesson, "Above all else I want to see" (Lesson 28) with a stronger sense of purpose. I want vision; I want this other kind of seeing that sees God everywhere. I want it because somehow I instinctively know that if I can see things that way, I will also be able to see myself that way. If I can see you as a holy child of God, innocent and blameless, I will know that I am seeing a reflection of myself. I want to see myself that way, so I want to see you that way.

God is in my mind. The world mirrors what is in my mind. How, then, do I want to see the world? Am I willing to see the world with God in it? If not, it only reflects the fact that I am unwilling and afraid to see His presence in my mind. ###

The Master Key System Part 17 **by Charles F. Haanel**

The Master Key System teaches the laws at the very foundation of all attainment and success. Whatever you desire, *The Master Key System* will teach you how to bring it into your life. **Cultivate Life! magazine** is presenting the full twenty-four part course material on a fortnightly basis. In this way you will have time to work through the text and exercises as they were originally designed to be studied by the author, Charles F. Haanel.

Part Seventeen

The kind of Deity which a man, consciously or unconsciously, worships, indicates the intellectual status of the worshipper.

Ask the Indian of God, and he will describe to you a powerful chieftain of a glorious tribe. Ask the Pagan of God, and he will tell you of a God of fire, a God of water, a god of this, that, and the other.

Ask the Israelite of God, and he will tell you of the God of Moses, who conceived it expedient to rule by coercive measures; hence, the Ten Commandments. Or of Joshua, who led the Israelites into battle, confiscated property, murdered the prisoners, and laid waste to cities.

The so-called heathen made "graven images" of their Gods, whom they were accustomed to worship, but among the most intelligent, at least, these images were but the visible fulcrums with which they were enabled to mentally concentrate on the qualities which they desired to externalize in their lives.

We of the twentieth century worship a God of Love in theory, but in practice we make for ourselves "graven images" of "Wealth," "Power," "Fashion," "Custom" and "Conventionality." We "fall down" before them and worship them. We concentrate on them and they are thereby externalized in our lives.

The student who masters the contents of Part Seventeen will not mistake the symbols for the reality; he will be interested in causes, rather than effects. He will concentrate on the realities of life, and will then not be disappointed in the results.

PART SEVENTEEN

1. We are told that Man has "dominion over all things"; this dominion is established through Mind. Thought is the activity which controls every principle beneath it. The highest principle by reason of its superior essence and qualities necessarily determines the circumstances, aspects and relation of everything with which it comes in contact.

2. The vibrations of mental forces are the finest and consequently the most powerful in existence. To those who perceive the nature and transcendency of mental force, all physical power sinks into insignificance.

3. We are accustomed to look upon the Universe with a lens of five senses, and from these experiences our anthropomorphic conceptions originate, but true conceptions are only secured by spiritual insight. This insight requires a quickening of the vibrations of the Mind, and is only secured when the mind is continuously concentrated in a given direction.

4. Continuous concentration means an even, unbroken flow of thought and is the result of patient, persistent, persevering and well-regulated system.

5. Great discoveries are the result of long-continued investigation. The science of mathematics requires years of concentrated effort to master it, and the greatest science -- that of the Mind -- is revealed only through concentrated effort.

6. Concentration is much misunderstood; there seems to be an idea of effort or activity associated with it, when just the contrary is necessary. The greatness of an actor lies in the fact that he forgets himself in the

portrayal of his character, becoming so identified with it, that the audience is swayed by the realism of the performance. This will give you a good idea of true concentration; you should be so interested in your thought, so engrossed in your subject, as to be conscious of nothing else. Such concentration leads to intuitive perception and immediate insight into the nature of the object concentrated upon.

7. All knowledge is the result of concentration of this kind; it is thus that the secrets of Heaven and Earth have been wrested; it is thus that the mind becomes a magnet and the desire to know draws the knowledge, irresistibly attracts it, makes it your own.

8. Desire is largely subconscious; conscious desire rarely realizes its object when the latter is out of immediate reach. Subconscious desire arouses the latent faculties of the mind, and difficult problems seem to solve themselves.

9. The subconscious mind may be aroused and brought into action in any direction and made to serve us for any purpose, by concentration. The practice of concentration requires the control of the physical, mental, and physical being; all modes of consciousness whether physical, mental, or physical, must be under control.

10. Spiritual Truth is therefore the controlling factor; it is this which will enable you to grow out of limited attainment and reach a point where you will be able to translate modes of thought into character and consciousness.

11. Concentration does not mean mere thinking of thoughts, but the transmutation of these thoughts into practical values; the average person has no conception of the meaning of concentration. There is always the cry "to have" but never the cry "to be"; they fail to understand that they cannot have one without the other, that they must first find the "kingdom" before they can have the "things added." Momentary enthusiasm is of no value; it is only with unbounded self-confidence that the goal is reached.

12. The mind may place the ideal a little too high and fall short of the mark; it may attempt to soar on untrained wings and instead of flying, fall to earth; but that is no reason for not making another attempt.

13. Weakness is the only barrier to mental attainment; attribute your weakness to physical limitations or mental uncertainties and try again; ease and perfection are gained by repetition.

14. The astronomer centers his mind on the stars and they give forth their secrets; the geologists centers his mind on the construction of the earth and we have geology; so with all things. Men center their minds on the problems of life, and the result is apparent in the vast and complex social order of the day.

15. All mental discovery and attainment are the result of desire plus concentration; desire is the strongest mode of action; the more persistent the desire, the more authoritative the revelation. Desire added to concentration will wrench any secret from nature.

16. In realizing great thoughts, in experiencing great emotions that correspond with great thoughts, the mind is in a state where it appreciates the value of higher things.

17. The intensity of one moment's earnest concentration and the intense longing to become and to attain may take you further than years of slow normal and forced effort; it will unfasten the prison bars of unbelief, weakness, impotence and self-belittlement, and you will come into a realization of the joy of overcoming.

18. The spirit of initiative and originality is developed through persistence and continuity of mental effort. Business teaches the value of concentration and encourages decision of character; it develops practical insight and quickness of conclusion. The mental element in every commercial pursuit is dominant as the controlling factor, and desire is the predominating force; all commercial relations are the externalization of desire.

19. Many of the sturdy and substantial virtues are developed in commercial employment; the mind is steadied and directed; it becomes efficient. The principal necessity is the strengthening of the mind so that it rises superior to the distractions and wayward impulses of instinctive life and thus successfully overcomes in the conflict between the higher and lower self.

20. All of us are dynamos, but the dynamo of itself is nothing; the mind must work the dynamo; then it is useful and its energy can be definitely concentrated. The mind is an engine whose power is undreamed; thought is an omni-working power. It is the ruler and creator of all form and all events occurring in form. Physical energy is nothing in comparison with the omnipotence of thought, because thought enables man to harness all other natural power.

21. Vibration is the action of thought; it is vibration which reaches out and attracts the material necessary to construct and build. There is nothing mysterious concerning the power of thought; concentration simply implies that consciousness can be focalized to the point where it becomes identified with the object of its attention. As food absorbed is the essence of the body, so the mind absorbs the object of its attention, gives it life and being.

22. If you concentrate on some matter of importance, the intuitive power will be set in operation, and help will come in the nature of information which will lead to success.

23. Intuition arrives at conclusions without the aid of experience or memory. Intuition often solves problems that are beyond the grasp of the reasoning power. Intuition often comes with a suddenness that is startling; it reveals the truth for which we are searching, so directly that it seems to come from a higher power. Intuition can be cultivated and developed; in order to do this it must be recognized and appreciated; if the intuitive visitor is given a royal welcome when he comes, he will come again; the more cordial the welcome the more frequent his visits will become, but if he is ignored or neglected he will make his visits few and far apart.

24. Intuition usually comes in the Silence; great minds seek solitude frequently; it is here that all the larger problems of life are worked out. For this reason every businessman who can afford it has a private office, where he will not be disturbed; if you cannot afford a private office you can at least find somewhere, where you can be alone a few minutes each day, to train the thought along lines which will enable you to develop that invincible power which is necessary to achieve.

25. Remember that fundamentally the subconscious is omnipotent; there is no limit to the things that can be done when it is given the power to act. Your degree of success is determined by the nature of your desire. If the nature of your desire is in harmony with Natural Law or the Universal Mind, it will gradually emancipate the mind and give you invincible courage.

26. Every obstacle conquered, every victory gained, will give you more faith in your power, and you will have greater ability to win. Your strength is determined by your mental attitude; if this attitude is one of success, and is permanently held with an unswerving purpose, you will attract to you from the invisible domain the things you silently demand.

27. By keeping the thought in mind, it will gradually take tangible form. A definite purpose sets causes in motion which go out in the invisible world and find the material necessary to serve your purpose.

28. You may be pursuing the symbols of power, instead of power itself. You may be pursuing fame instead of honor, riches instead of wealth, position instead of servitude; in either event you will find that they turn to ashes just as you overtake them.

29. Premature wealth or position cannot be retained because it has not been earned; we get only what we give, and those who try to get without giving always find that the law of compensation is relentlessly bringing about an exact equilibrium.

30. The race has usually been for money and other mere symbols of power, but with an understanding of the true source of power, we can

afford to ignore the symbols. The man with a large bank account finds it unnecessary to load his pockets down with gold; so with the man who has found the true source of power; he is no longer interested in its shams or pretensions.

31. Thought ordinarily leads outwardly in evolutionary directions, but it can be turned within where it will take hold of the basic principles of things, the heart of things, the spirit of things. When you get to the heart of things it is comparatively easy to understand and command them.

32. This is because the Spirit of a thing is the thing itself, the vital part of it, the real substance. The form is simply the outward manifestation of the spiritual activity within.

33. For your exercise this week concentrate as nearly as possible in accordance with the method outlined in this lesson; let there be no conscious effort or activity associated with your purpose. Relax completely, avoid any thought of anxiety as to results. Remember that power comes through repose. Let the thought dwell upon your object, until it is completely identified with it, until you are conscious of nothing else.

34. If you wish to eliminate fear, concentrate on courage.

35. If you wish to eliminate lack, concentrate on abundance.

36. If you wish to eliminate disease, concentrate on health.

37. Always concentrate on the ideal as an already existing fact; this is the germ cell, the life principle which goes forth and sets in motion those causes which guide, direct and bring about the necessary relation, which eventually manifest in form.

Thought is the property of those only who can entertain it.

—*Emerson*

Study Questions with Answers:

161. What is the true method of concentration?

To become so identified with the object of your thought that you are conscious of nothing else.

162. What is the result of this method of concentration?

Invisible forces are set in motion which irresistibly bring about conditions in correspondence with your thought.

163. What is the controlling factor in this method of thought?

Spiritual Truth.

164. Why is this so?

Because the nature of our desire must be in harmony with Natural Law.

165. What is the practical value of this method of concentration?

Thought is transmuted into character, and character is the magnet which creates the environment of the individual.

166. What is the controlling factor in every commercial pursuit?

The mental element.

167. Why is this so?

Because Mind is the ruler and creator of all form and all events occurring in form.

168. How does concentration operate?

By the development of the powers of perception, wisdom, intuition, and sagacity.

169. Why is intuition superior to reason?

Because it does not depend upon experience or memory and frequently brings about the solution to our problems by methods concerning which we are in entire ignorance.

170. What is the result of pursuing the symbol of the reality?

They frequently turn to ashes just as we overtake them, because the symbol is only the outward form of the spiritual activity within, therefore unless we can possess the spiritual reality, the form disappears. ###

The Master Key System Part Eighteen will be included in **Cultivate Life! magazine**, issue 41 in two weeks.