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Cultivate Life! magazine

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Cultivate Life! magazine
is published every week

www.trans4mind.com

Trans4mind

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Heart to Heart Coaching:

Coach Doris Jeanette, replies to the question:

I am suffering from an inferiority complex since childhood days. How can I find a life partner who truly loves me?

Link: <http://www.trans4mind.com/life-coach/life-challenge3a/question265.html>

Philosophy: Hindu

Hopes and aspirations: First quit my inferiority complex and searching for a best person for my life (my life partner).

Question: I am suffering with inferiority problem since my childhood days. First I want to remove it from my mind. I want to improve courage, positive thinking, self-confidence, and self-esteem. I am average person, not that much beautiful. I want a life partner who loves me, not my beauty. So please help me. And also I want to improve my spiritual power.

ANSWER:

Thank you for your question on self-esteem and beauty. The outside world, media, and sexist culture we live in today do not help average people feel their beauty. Let me tell you a secret that might help you begin to feel more attractive and self-confident. Even the most beautiful women in the world do not have solid self-esteem.

Take Marilyn Monroe. She was the most famous beauty in the USA movie scene when I was growing up. At one point in her life, she was married to the famous intellectual playwright, Arthur Miller. Yet, Marilyn committed suicide. She was never able to relax and be self-confident about her body and brains.

Self-esteem has nothing to do with beauty or brains because Marilyn Monroe had plenty of both. It does not matter how beautiful or smart you are, possessing these qualities do not improve your self-esteem. Since

you are in a post-doctorate program you certainly have brains. But your intelligence does not help you feel emotionally secure.

The majority of people are average looking and you may or may not be average. Many times attractive people underestimate their beauty. Even the most beautiful, do not feel beautiful. So stay open to accepting the reality of your beauty wherever it may be.

In an earlier column I mentioned that every human being on the planet suffers from low self-esteem. More and more movie stars and world leaders admit they have psychological problems such as anxiety and low self-esteem. So please remember: from terrorists to movie stars, humans have trouble valuing their beauty and magnificence.

Low self-esteem is learned at a very early age. This means "the way you see yourself" will not change unless you actively engage in personal growth. However, if you want to improve your self-esteem, you can do so by leaps and bounds!

You do not have to live with your faulty, unhealthy conditioning. You have the ability to unlearn your false beliefs, redefine your misinterpretations and cease the magical thinking of your younger years.

When you feel good about yourself, everything is wonderful. When you feel bad about yourself, nothing is wonderful. This is why self-esteem is so important. Your relationship to yourself is the most important relationship in the whole world.

If you have a good relationship with yourself you will be happy and healthy. If you do not have a good relationship with yourself, you will be physically sick, emotionally insecure, mentally unstable and perhaps suicidal.

Feeling Good About Yourself Can Make You Beautiful

Did you know that if you felt good about yourself you could actually become more beautiful and attractive? How could this be? Easily. When you are self-confident, you are more relaxed. When your face and body are relaxed, all of the natural beauty you possess becomes more

obvious and visible. A relaxed face is a pretty face. A tight, worried face is not a pretty face. A relaxed body is attractive and inviting. A tight body is hard and cold.

Also, if you find, accept and love your emotional self, your energy will be affected in a most delightful manner. If you allow your vital, emotional energy to flow freely throughout your body, you will glow. When you glow you are radiating out positive energy to the world around you. Other people can feel your glowing, flowing energy and they are attracted to you. This is called magnetic energy.

Energy is the reason people move closer to people who are relaxed and open. Glowing, flowing energy will attract a life partner. Energy is the reason people move away from people who are closed and judgmental. Closed, controlled energy will repel a potential life partner.

So if you want to become more beautiful you need to focus on learning how to relax. If you want to attract a life partner, you need to develop yourself emotionally and you will be more magnetic and attract a soul mate.

Do Not Compare Yourself With Others

First, let me advise you not to fall prey to mass consciousness and its definition of beauty. You do not have to accept or agree with the definition of beauty you see in the magazines, movies or on TV. You see half naked women "made up" and unnatural in glamour, staged ads. These ads are selling cars, beer and junk to the masses. Bollywood and Hollywood movies usually portray phony images, not real people. So, please give up chasing unrealistic images of self-confident.

Even if you compare yourself to real people and not images, you will still fall short. You are sure to be miserable if you compare yourself to others who are more beautiful, more successful, richer, smarter and so on.

Your ego is very sneaky and loves to compare you to others to make you feel bad about yourself. Your ego is famous for putting you in a lose-lose situation. Lose-lose means the energy is irrational and there is no way you can win. You will always fall short.

This is the reason it is extremely important to evaluate yourself based on your own achievements and progress. Put yourself in a win-win situation. Set up a step-by-step self-improvement program where you are sure to win. If you compare yourself to yourself, you can become a better person this year than you were last year.

Then you can feel good about your progress. You have done enough and you are enough. You can feel proud of yourself for your real improvement. This is solid self-esteem.

Develop Yourself

If you focus on what you have, instead of what you do not have, you will get better results. You were born with many innate abilities and amazing natural talents. If you focus on your human potential you can become an interesting, exciting, fun, playful person to be around.

Put your energy into finding and developing your attractive qualities. Being beautiful is not the only quality that makes you attractive. I have many friends in my life and each one supplies a need I have.

For example, I need to be around creative people. I don't even think of how beautiful they are. I love their creative energy. I love my creative friends because they are creative and they feed my creativity.

Therefore you can become more:

- Creative
- Loving
- Open
- Kind
- Relaxed
- Assertive
- Powerful
- Effective
- Productive

All of these qualities will make you more attractive and desirable as a friend and partner. The simple act of developing yourself and your spiritual powers will automatically improve your self-confidence.

Accept your low self-esteem as a reality and begin to improve how you think of yourself. You are very judgmental of yourself. You find fault with your beauty. You do not like who you are. This needs to shift if you want to improve your self-esteem.

You need to shift into self-love and self-acceptance. To help you achieve this goal, you need a heart to heart connection between the adult you and your emotional self. You also need a loving relationship between you and your body.

At this point you are rejecting both your emotional self and body. Please realize that you cannot pretend to like yourself. Your emotional self can feel the difference between pretending and loving. You have to really begin to like yourself.

Give yourself the best Valentine's Day gift in the world. Improve your relationship with yourself by increasing the love you give to your emotional self and your body. Just a little bit each day will result in more solid self-esteem.

Action Steps to Improve Self Esteem

- **Stop comparing yourself to unrealistic images and other people.** Focus only on your own improvement and movements forward. Set up realistic goals you can reach each week to move forward. Start out with an easy goal so you have immediate success.
- **Stop judging yourself.** Stop finding fault with your face, body and emotional self. Notice how many negative thoughts about yourself you have each day. Then shift out of self-judgments into self-acceptance. The online course, Overcome Anxiety Naturally, leads you step by step out of self-judgments into self-acceptance and includes many other self-esteem boosting body exercises. <http://www.drjeanette.com/anxietyonlinecourse.html> (Cultivate Life readers can get a 30.00 bonus off the regular price if ordered by Feb. 7, put LIFE! in the coupon box.)

- **Develop a heart to heart connection with your emotional self.** You are currently rejecting your emotional self. Find, accept and love your emotional self. Meeting her or his needs results in an increase of magnetic energy in your body and energy field. This flowing, glowing energy attracts people to you. To find, accept and love your emotional self, use the emotional guide, "Opening the Heart," <http://www.drjeanette.com/emotionalhealthaudio.html>

(Cultivate Life! readers can get a 30.00 bonus off the regular price if ordered by Feb. 7 - put LIFE! in the coupon box.)

- **Develop a loving relationship with your body.** Start by loving any physical part of your body that you sincerely like. Notice how much the loved part responds to your love. Give it more love and expand your love to other parts of your body. To help you listen to your body, accept its wisdom and love it, I recommend, "Hear Your Body Talking" self help audio: <http://www.drjeanette.com/hearyourbody.html>

If you live in a country, such as India, where the exchange rate is extremely low you can contact Dr. Jeanette for deeper discounts via her contact information at <http://www.drjeanette.com>

Doris Jeanette, Psy.D, knows the pain of low self-esteem and the joys of self-love and self-acceptance. She loves to show women and men how to increase self-love during experiential, emotional-energy sessions both in-person and on the phone. She is currently in Glenwood Springs, CO where she is accepting a few in-person energy sessions. Contact information and the sign up form for her free newsletter, "The Vibrant Moment" is at <http://www.drjeanette.com>

The Present Moment and the End of Suffering Eckhart Tolle speaks with Sounds True

For two years, a small man sits quietly on a park bench. People walk by, lost in their thoughts. One day someone asks him a question. In the weeks that follow there are more people and more questions. Word spreads that the man is a “mystic,” and has discovered something that brings peace and meaning into our lives.

It sounds like fiction, but today that man, Eckhart Tolle, is known world wide for his teachings on spiritual enlightenment through the power of the present moment. His first book, *The Power of Now*, is an international bestseller, and has been translated into 17 languages. More than 20 years have passed since Eckhart Tolle answered his first question on that park bench. While his audience has grown, his message remains the same: that it is possible to stop struggling in your life, and find joy and fulfillment in this moment, and no other.

Sounds True: Can you describe to us your own experience of spiritual awakening (and of course, can you define spiritual awakening as well)? Was there a singular event that occurred or has it been a gradual process?

Eckhart Tolle: Since ancient times the term awakening has been used as a kind of metaphor that points to the transformation of human consciousness. There are parables in the New Testament that speak of the importance of being awake, of not falling back to sleep. The word Buddha comes from the Sanskrit word *Budh*, meaning, to be awake. So Buddha is not a name and ultimately not a person, but a state of consciousness. All this implies that humans are potentially capable of living in a state of consciousness compared to which normal wakefulness is like sleeping or dreaming.

This is why some spiritual teachings use terms like shared hallucination or universal hypnotism to describe normal human existence. Pick up any history book, and I suggest you begin with studying the 20th century, and you will find that a large part of the history of our species has all the characteristics we would normally associate with a nightmare or an insane hallucination.

The nature of spiritual awakening is frequently misunderstood. The adoption of spiritual beliefs, seeing visions of God or celestial beings, the ability to channel, to heal, to foretell the future, or other paranormal powers—all such phenomena are of value and are not to be dismissed, but none of them is in itself indicative of spiritual awakening in a person who experiences them. They may occur in a person who has not awakened spiritually and they may or may not accompany the awakened state.

Every morning we awaken from sleep and from our dreams and enter the state we call wakefulness. A continuous stream of thoughts, most of them repetitive, characterizes the normal wakeful state. So what is it that we awaken from when spiritual awakening occurs? We awaken from identification with our thoughts. Everybody who is not awake spiritually is totally identified with and run by their thinking mind—the incessant voice in the head. Thinking is compulsive: you can't stop, or so it seems. It is also addictive: you don't even want to stop, at least not until the suffering generated by the continuous mental noise becomes unbearable.

In the unawakened state you don't use thought, but thought uses you. You are, one could almost say, possessed by thought, which is the collective conditioning of the human mind that goes back many thousands of years. You don't see anything as it is, but distorted and reduced by mental labels, concepts, judgments, opinions and reactive patterns. Your sense of identity, of self, is reduced to a story you keep telling yourself in your head. Me and my story : this what your life is reduced to in the unawakened state. And when your life is thus reduced, you can never be happy for long, because you are not yourself.

Does that mean you don't think anymore when you awaken spiritually? No, of course not. In fact, you can use thought much more effectively than before, but you realize there is a depth to your Being, a vibrantly alive stillness that is much vaster than thought. It is consciousness itself, of which the thinking mind is only a tiny aspect. For many people, the first indication of a spiritual awakening is that they suddenly become aware of their thoughts. They become a witness to

their thoughts, so to speak. They are not completely identified with their mind anymore and so they begin to sense that there is a depth to them that they had never known before.

For most people, spiritual awakening is a gradual process. Rarely does it happen all at once. When it does, though, it is usually brought about by intense suffering. That was certainly true in my case. For years my life alternated between depression and acute anxiety. One night I woke up in a state of dread and intense fear, more intense than I had ever experienced before. Life seemed meaningless, barren, hostile. It became so unbearable that suddenly the thought came into my mind, I cannot live with myself any longer. The thought kept repeating itself several times. Suddenly, I stepped back from the thought, and looked at it, as it were, and I became aware of the strangeness of that thought: If I cannot live with myself, there must be two of me—the I and the self that I cannot live with. And the question arose, Who is the 'I'; and who is the self that I cannot live with?

There was no answer to that question, and all thinking stopped. For a moment, there was complete inner silence. Suddenly I felt myself drawn into a whirlpool or a vortex of energy. I was gripped by an intense fear, and my body started to shake. I heard the words, Resist nothing, as if spoken inside my chest. I could feel myself being sucked into a void. Suddenly, all fear disappeared, and I let myself fall into that void. I have no recollection of what happened after that.

The next morning I awoke as if I had just been born into this world. Everything seemed fresh and pristine and intensely alive. A vibrant stillness filled my entire being. As I walked around the city that day, the world looked as if it had just come into existence, completely devoid of the past. I was in a state of amazement at the peace I felt within and the beauty I saw without, even in the midst of the traffic. I was no longer labeling and interpreting my sense perceptions—an almost complete absence of mental commentary. To this day, I perceive and interact with the world in this way: through stillness, not through mental noise. The peace that I felt that day, more than 20 years ago, has never left me, although it has varying degrees of intensity.

At the time, I had no conceptual framework to help me understand what had happened to me. Years later, I realized that the acute suffering I felt that night must have forced my consciousness to withdraw from identification with the unhappy self, the suffering “little me,” which is ultimately a fiction of the mind. This withdrawal must have been so complete that the suffering self collapsed as if the plug had been pulled out of an inflatable toy. What was left was my true nature as the ever present I AM: consciousness in its pure state prior to identification with form. You may also call it pure awareness or presence.

Sounds True: In your own life story there seems to have been a relationship between intense personal suffering and a breakthrough spiritual experience. Do you believe that for all people there is some connection between personal suffering and the intensity that is needed for a spiritual breakthrough?

Eckhart Tolle: Yes, that seems to be true in most cases. When you are trapped in a nightmare, your motivation to awaken will be so much greater than that of someone caught up in a relatively pleasant dream. On all levels, evolution occurs in response to a crisis situation, not infrequently a life-threatening one, when the old structures, inner or outer, are breaking down or are not working anymore. On a personal level, this often means the experience of loss of one kind or another: the death of a loved one, the end of a close relationship, loss of possessions, your home, status, or a breakdown of the external structures of your life that provided a sense of security. For many people, illness—loss of health—represents the crisis situation that triggers an awakening. With serious illness comes awareness of your own mortality, the greatest loss of all.

For many people alive at this time, loss is experienced as loss of meaning. In other words, life seems to lack purpose and doesn't make sense anymore. Loss of meaning is often part of the suffering that comes with physical loss, but it can also happen to people who have gained everything the world has to offer—who have “made it” in the eyes of the world—and suddenly find that their success or possessions are empty and unfulfilling. What the world and the surrounding culture tells them is important and of value turns out to be

empty and this leaves a kind of painful inner void, often accompanied by great mental confusion.

Now the question arises: What exactly is the connection between suffering and spiritual awakening? How does one lead to the other? When you look closely at the nature of human suffering you will find that an essential ingredient in most kinds of suffering is a diminishment of one's sense of self. Take illness, for example. Illness makes you feel smaller, no longer in control, helpless. You seem to lose your autonomy, perhaps become dependent on others. You become reduced in size, figuratively speaking. Any major loss has a similar effect: some form that was an important part of your sense of who you are—a person, a possession, a social role—dissolves or leaves you and you suffer because you had become identified with it and it seems you are losing yourself or a part of yourself.

In reality, of course, what feels like a diminishment or loss of your sense of self is the crumbling of an image of who you are held in the mind. What dissolves is identification with thought forms that had given you your sense of self. But that sense of self is ultimately false, is ultimately a mental fiction. It is the egoic mind or the “little me” as I sometimes call it. To be identified with a mental image of who you are is to be unconscious, to be unawakened spiritually. This unawakened state creates suffering, but suffering creates the possibility of awakening.

When you no longer resist the diminishment of self that comes with suffering, all role-playing, which is normal in the unawakened state, comes to an end. You become humble, simple, real. And, paradoxically, when you say “yes” to that death, because that's what it is, you realize that the mind-made sense of self had obscured the truth of who you are—not as defined by your past, but timelessly. And when who you think you are dissolves, you connect with a vast power which is the essence of your very being. Jesus called it “eternal life.” In Buddhism, it is sometimes called the “deathless realm.”

Now, does this mean that if you haven't experienced intense suffering in your life, there is no possibility of awakening? Firstly, the fact that

you are drawn to a spiritual teaching or teacher means you must have had your share of suffering already, and the awakening process has probably already begun. A teacher or teaching is not even essential for spiritual awakening, but they save time. Secondly, humanity as a whole has already gone through unimaginable suffering, mostly self-inflicted, the culmination of which was the 20th century with its unspeakable horrors. This collective suffering has brought upon a readiness in many human beings for the evolutionary leap that is spiritual awakening. For many individuals alive now, this means: they have suffered enough. No further suffering is necessary. The end of suffering: that is also the essence of every true spiritual teaching. Be grateful that your suffering has taken you to this realization: I don't need to suffer anymore.

Sounds True: Your teaching about “the power of now” seems so simple. Is that really our primary spiritual task—to fully engage the present moment?

Eckhart Tolle: Identification with thoughts and the emotions that go with those thoughts creates a false mind-made sense of self, conditioned by the past: the “little me” and its story. This false self is never happy or fulfilled for long. Its normal state is one of unease, fear, insufficiency, and nonfulfillment. It says it looks for happiness, and yet it continuously creates conflict and unhappiness. In fact, it needs conflict and “enemies” to sustain the sense of separateness that ensures its continued survival. Look at all the conflict between tribes, nations, and religions. They need their enemies, because they provide the sense of separateness on which their collective egoic identity depends. The false self lives mainly through memory and anticipation. Past and future are its main preoccupation.

The present moment, at best, is a means to an end, a stepping stone to the future, because the future promises fulfillment, the future promises salvation in one form or another. The only problem is the future never comes. Life is always now. Whatever happens, whatever you experience, feel, think, do—it's always now. It's all there is. And if you continuously miss the now—resist it, dislike it, try to get away from it, reduce it to a means to an end, then you miss the essence of your

life, and you are stuck in a dream world of images, concepts, labels, interpretations, judgments—the conditioned content of your mind that you take to be “yourself.” And so you are disconnected from the fullness of life that is the “suchness” of this moment. When you are out of alignment with what is, you are out of alignment with life. You are struggling to reach a point in the future where there is greater security, aliveness, abundance, love, joy ... unaware that those things make up the essence of who you are already.

All that is required of you to have access to that essence is to make the present moment into your friend. And you may realize that most of your life you made the present moment into an enemy. You didn't say “yes” to it, didn't embrace it. You were out of alignment with the now, and so life became a struggle. It seemed so normal, because everyone around you lived in the same way. The amazing thing is: Life, the great intelligence that pervades the entire cosmos, becomes supportive when you say “yes” to it. Where is life? Here. Now. The “isness” of this moment. The now seems so small at first, a little segment between past and future, and yet all of life's power is concealed within it.

When there is spiritual awakening, you awaken into the fullness, the aliveness, and also the sacredness of now. You were absent, asleep, and now you are present, awake. The secret of awakening is to unconditionally accept this moment as it is. Some people do it because they can no longer stand the suffering that comes with nonacceptance of the isness of this moment. They are almost forced into awakening. Others have suffered enough and are ready to voluntarily embrace the now. When you become present in this way, the judgments, labels, and concepts of your mind are no longer all that important, as a greater intelligence is now operating in and through you. And yet the mind can then be used very effectively and creatively when needed.

Now the question may arise: Would there be anything left to strive for when you are so present in the now? Wouldn't you become passive in that state? Many meaningless activities may fall away, but the state of presence is the only state in which creative energy is available to you.

When your fulfillment and sense of self are no longer dependent on the future outcome, joy flows into whatever you do. You do what you do because the action itself is fulfilling. Whatever you do or create in that state is of high quality. This is because it is not a means to an end, and so a loving care flows into your doing.

Sounds True: Being “in the present” sounds so obvious, and yet is quite hard to sustain. Do you have any practical tips for people for maintaining awareness of the present moment?

Eckhart Tolle: Although the old consciousness or rather unconsciousness still has considerable momentum and to a large extent still runs this world, the new awakened consciousness—presence—has already begun to emerge in many human beings. In my book *The Power of Now*, I mention ways in which you can maintain present moment awareness, but the main thing is to allow this new state of consciousness to emerge rather than believe that you have to try hard to make it happen. How do you allow it to emerge? Simply by allowing this moment to be as it is. This means to relinquish inner resistance to what is—the suchness of now. This allows life to unfold beautifully. There is no greater spiritual practice than this.

Sounds True: On your video *The Flowering of Human Consciousness*, you talk about a new consciousness that is emerging in our time. What do you mean? Hasn't the present moment always been available to genuine seekers? What's new about our current time in history? Are you pointing to a certain evolutionary process—an acceleration in human spiritual development?

Eckhart Tolle: Yes, the present moment has always been available to spiritual seekers, but as long as you are seeking you are not available to the present moment. Seeking implies that you are looking to the future for some answer, or for some achievement, spiritual or otherwise. Everybody is in the seeking mode, seeking to add something to who they are, whether it be money, relationships, possessions, knowledge, status—or spiritual attainment. Seeking means you need more time, more future, more of this or that. And there is nothing wrong with it. All that has its place in this world. To

make money, to gather knowledge, to learn a new skill, to explore new territory, even to get from A to B—for all these things you need time. For almost everything you need time, except for one thing: to embrace the present moment.

You need no time to open yourself to the power of now and so awaken to who you are beyond name and form and realize that in the depth of your being, you are already complete, whole, one with the timeless essence of all life. For that you not only need no time, but time is the obstacle to that realization, seeking is the obstacle, needing to add something to who you are is the obstacle. The story of your life, how it all unfolds, whether you succeed or fail in this world...Yes, it matters, yes, it's important—relatively, not absolutely. Only one thing is of absolute importance and this is it. If you miss it, you miss the deeper purpose of your life, which I call the flowering of human consciousness. And ultimately nothing else will satisfy you.

Some of the first human beings in whom the new consciousness emerged fully became the great teachers of humanity, such as Buddha, Lao Tzu, or Jesus, although their teachings were greatly misunderstood, especially when they turned into organized religion. They were the first manifestations of the flowering of human consciousness. Later others appeared, some of whom became famous and respected teachers, whereas others probably remained relatively unknown or perhaps even completely unrecognized. On the periphery of the established religions, from time to time certain movements appeared through which the new consciousness manifested. This enabled a number of individuals within those movements to awaken spiritually. Such movements, in Christianity, were Gnosticism and medieval mysticism; in Buddhism, Zen; in Islam, the Sufi movement; in Hinduism, the teachings called Advaita Vedanta.

But those men and women who awakened fully were always few and far between—rare flowerings of consciousness. Until fairly recently, there was not yet a need for large numbers of human beings to awaken. For the first time in human history, a large-scale transformation of consciousness has now become a necessity if humanity is to survive. Science and technology have amplified the

effects of the dysfunction of the human mind in its unawakened state to such a degree that humanity, and probably the planet, would not survive for another hundred years if human consciousness remains unchanged. As I said earlier, evolution usually occurs in response to a crisis situation, and we now are faced with such a crisis situation. This is why there is indeed an enormous acceleration in the awakening process of our species.

This new large-scale spiritual awakening is occurring primarily not within the confines of the established religions, but outside of those structures. Some of it, however, is also happening within the existing churches and religious institutions wherever the members of those congregations do not identify with rigid and exclusive belief systems whose unconscious purpose is to foster a sense of separation on which the egoic mind structures depend for their survival.

Sounds True: How much time and effort is required to realize “the power of now”? Can this really occur in an instant or is this the work of a lifetime?

Eckhart Tolle: The power of now can only be realized now. It requires no time and effort. Effort means you're trying hard to get somewhere, and so you are not present, welcoming this moment as it is.

Whereas it requires no time to awaken—you can only awaken now—it does take time before you can stay awake in all situations. Often you may find yourself being pulled back into old conditioned reactive patterns, particularly when faced with the challenges of daily living and of relationships. You lose the witnessing presence and become identified again with the voice in the head, the continuous stream of thoughts, with its labels, judgments and opinions. You no longer know that they are only labels, judgments, and mental positions (opinions)—but completely believe in them. And so you create conflict. And then you suffer. And that suffering wakes you up again. Until presence becomes your predominant state, you may find yourself moving back and forth for a while between the old consciousness and the new, between mind identification and presence. “How long is it going to take?” is not a good question to ask. It makes you lose the now.

Sounds True: How would you recommend that people listen and watch *The Power of Now* teaching series in order to get the most out of the teachings? In your opinion, why are audio and video teaching tapes such a powerful way for people to learn?

Eckhart Tolle: If at all possible, you should not be engaged in other activity while you are listening or watching so that you can give your complete attention not only to the words but also to the silent spaces between the words. You will most likely learn many helpful facts about the emerging state of presence as well as the obstacles you are most likely to encounter.

But this is only the secondary function of these tapes. Their primary purpose is not to convey information, but to help you access the state of presence as you listen. As in all true spiritual teachings, the significance of the words that are being spoken goes far beyond their informational content. Words that arise spontaneously out of the state of presence are charged with spiritual power: the power to awaken. All that is required of you is to be in a state of attentive listening. Don't just listen with the head. Listen with your entire body, so to speak. Feel the aliveness, the animating presence, throughout the body as you listen.

I recommend that you listen and/or watch these tapes over and over. Each time you listen, it will feel as if you were listening for the first time. Each time you listen, you will grow in presence. But do not listen compulsively. Allow a gap of at least two or three days, and ideally more, before you listen to the same tape again. Each time after you finish listening, just sit in silence for a few minutes.

Enjoy the greatest adventure a human being can be engaged in: to be part of the emergence of a new consciousness. ###

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About Eckhart Tolle

Spiritual teacher and author Eckhart Tolle was born in Germany and educated at the Universities of London and Cambridge. At the age of twenty-nine, a profound inner transformation radically changed the course of his life. The next few years were devoted to understanding, integrating, and deepening that transformation, which marked the beginning of an intense inward journey. Later, he began to work in London with individuals and small groups as a counselor and spiritual teacher. Since 1995 he has lived in Vancouver, Canada.

Eckhart Tolle is the author of the #1 *New York Times* bestseller *The Power of Now* (translated into 33 languages) and the highly acclaimed follow-up *A New Earth*, which are widely regarded as two of the most influential spiritual books of our time.

Eckhart's profound yet simple teachings have already helped countless people throughout the world find inner peace and greater fulfillment in their lives. At the core of the teachings lies the transformation of consciousness, a spiritual awakening that he sees as the next step in human evolution. An essential aspect of this awakening includes transcending our ego-based state of consciousness. This is a prerequisite not only for personal happiness but also for the ending of violent conflict endemic on our planet.

Eckhart is a sought-after public speaker and teaches and travels extensively throughout the world. Many of his talks, intensives, and retreats are published on CD and DVD. Most of the teachings are given in English, but occasionally Eckhart also gives talks in German and Spanish. In addition to *The Power of Now* and *A New Earth*, Eckhart has written a book designed for meditative reading entitled *Stillness Speaks*. A book consisting of selections from *The Power of Now* entitled *Practicing the Power of Now* is also available.

For more information on Eckhart Tolle, [please visit his website](#).

Sounds True was founded in 1985 by Tami Simon with a clear mission: to disseminate spiritual wisdom. Since starting out as a project with one woman and her tape recorder, we have grown into a multimedia publishing company with more than 80 employees, a library of more than 600 titles featuring some of the leading teachers and visionaries of our time, and an ever-expanding family of customers from across the world. In more than two decades of growth, change, and evolution, Sounds True has maintained its focus on its overriding purpose, as summed up in our Vision Statement:

Sounds True exists to inspire, support, and serve personal transformation and spiritual awakening.

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How to Be a Great Speaker by Amanda Gore

I became a speaker after meeting Ron Tacchi at the first conference I ever presented.

He listened as the MC and when I had finished said "you should be a speaker" and I said "what's a speaker?!" Needless to say he had a lot of coaching to do and bless him - he did! For the next 5 years he taught me so many things I rarely hear now.

On top of that I have been studying with Michael Grinder who is an 'educators educator'; a master of non verbal communication and the process of delivering content so it's memorable and effective. (www.michaelgrinder.com) He is a must to study with if you are serious about being a great speaker.

So here we go with the 'rules'!

1. You must have fun!

Ron drilled into me that if I have fun, they will have fun. No matter how serious your content or how professional you need to be, you can always have fun. Even at a funeral - people love to laugh or have a good time and there are very few occasions where a bit of levity and humour is inappropriate. Find ways to inject a bit of fun into each few minutes of your conversation with the group.

2. It's a conversation NOT a speech or a keynote. The purpose is to connect! You to them and them to each other.

Think about the best speakers you have ever seen. They are the ones who seem to be talking directly to you - that's a conversation - not a speech. Too many times, we focus on our 'speech' and practice it and rehearse and re-craft it so the words are just right.

Although the words must be relevant, they are only one side of the equation! Think about how you have a conversation with another person or a small group. It's interactive - you speak, they listen, they speak, you listen etc. So it is with you on stage.

Think of it as a conversation - you are listening to their non verbals and watching them carefully to make sure they are engaged and listening to your side of the conversation. If they seem distracted - or unconscious! - then you need to do something to re engage them. Probably something like stop speaking! And get them to do something active - so they are part of the conversation.

Some people have such a powerful story (like Charlie Plumb an ex Vietnam prisoner of war) and the story is so compelling that he doesn't need to have a conversation - you are spellbound from the beginning! But few of us have a story so dramatic - Li Cunxin, the Chinese ballet dancer who escaped Mao's China is another amazing spellbinding story - so we have to use conversations!

3. People will remember how you made them feel.

This is truly the key - remember this and do all you can to make sure people feel great when you have finished speaking - and if you are delivering bad news make sure they feel that you have compassion for them and care!

People do not remember facts and figures nor does that make them change their behaviour or thinking. We need to touch their hearts with stories and experiences or memories that will make them feel some positive emotion.

Ron was a master at taking his audiences on an emotional roller coaster - he would take them emotionally up and down and then finish them up a big high - so they left feeling fabulous - and changed.

4. You are an experience creator!

We need to be creating experiences for people - not delivering a 'speech'.

If you can create an environment in which people can feel safe; they are given permission to do things they have never done before; they join in and interact (even if they are reluctant); in which they can learn and remember information that is packaged in a way that is memorable; in which they have fun and laugh, where they have an AH HA moment which inspires them to change - then you will be a

successful speaker! Experiences are living, interactive emotion filled events which inspire people in some way. We are all in the experience together,

5. It's never about you!

Too many people are so focused on what they are saying and where they are in the 'speech' sequence. If they are distracted in any way, they go blank cos they can't remember where they were in the 'speech'.

This sort of internal focus means that we are totally disconnected from the audience who will feel it; AND we forget that people are never thinking about us. They are too busy wondering what you are thinking about them to be thinking about you!!

So forget about how you look and how stupid you sound or if you just made a mistake or if you forgot something - just be real! The more authentic you are in this conversation, the more they will relate to you. Our work is to serve others and be useful to them; to give them what they need.

6. Have your focus on the audience or group - always!

Prepare yourself before you get on stage or in front so that when you stand up in front of a group, you can focus totally on the audience. Watch them carefully to monitor how engaged they are, what topics and issues they relate to most, to how fidgety they are, to what makes them laugh the most and do something to re engage them.

That 'doing something' may be inserting an interactive exercise as simple as 'turn to the person next to you and tell them one thing you have learned so far'; or creating an opportunity to laugh or asking a question or having them stand up and move to a different seat - anything that shakes their state and gets them listening again!

7. Be original.

Too many speakers take jokes or content from other people and make it their own material. This is a no no - you may find something on the internet you wish to use in which case, try to find the source and acknowledge them or say you could not find the source. Taking a joke

and adapting it as if it's a real life story of yours is also fraught with danger if someone has heard the joke before!

Life is full of funny incidences and events; look at your life for the humour or lessons. Everything that happens to me is potential material to change a mindset.

Walking down a hotel corridor in Opryland, lost and frustrated, I ran into a family of Mum, Dad and 2 little girls. While all the adults were grumpy and lost, the little girls were excited and jumping up and down with joy!

This became the basis of a story I use to introduce the idea of how as adults we lose our sense of awe and wonder and reverence. People relate to it immediately and then I give them symbols to remember the content.

8. Tell stories to deliver your messages

Lou Gerstner said 'facts and figures will not change peoples behaviours', I added touching their hearts will. You can change someones behaviour in a heartbeat if you give them an "ah ha" moment or touch their hearts.

Steven Covey in *7 Habits of Highly Effective People* tells a story of one time he was catching a train at the end of a long day. Tired and wanting to relax, he was frustrated with a young man who had boarded with his 3 small children. After a period of time when the children were running all over the carriage disrupting people, Covey leans over and asks the man to control his children.

The man is startled and comes out of a daze and apologises saying 'we have just come from the hospital where their mother died.' In a heartbeat, Covey changes. He becomes full of compassion rather than irritation and plays with the children rather than glaring angrily at them. That's the power of a story.

Tell stories to illustrate all your main points. Or give people an experience around them. Create characters and act out skits on the stage to make a point or tell a story.

By the way, what stories do you tell your self about your presenting? Are you telling yourself you are terrible at this stuff? That you are probably going to make a fool of yourself? That your mind will go blank? There are all going into your subconscious mind and you will program that behaviour in! Is that what you want?

Do you judge yourself along the way as you are speaking? Which of course immediately disconnects you from the group and you disengage from them which makes them disengage from you! They have no choice.

9. Internalise your message and come from your heart.

I have heard so many young speakers talking about 'rehearsing' their 'keynote' in front of the mirror or other people and while this may be something useful to do a couple of times, it is not the best way to be a great speaker! Ron used to tell me to 'internalise' my messages - to find a way to have the concept resonate within me, to make sense to me and then I could deliver it to others without notes and with heart.

In the early days of my career, I would wake up the morning of a presentation and MENTALLY rehearse. I would imagine me delivering the content and the audience interacting, and see and hear and feel the positive outcome. I would picture the sequence of the content and then remember it- looking at my notes if I forgot the next point I was going to make in my imagination.

I would do this for an hour and then get up and exercise to integrate what I had memorized. Here is the key though. I would LET GO of that as soon as I went on stage! I had faith that what emerged from my mouth was in the right sequence for what this group needed - if I didn't follow my 'script' then it would be ok!

I would pray before I went on stage for God to give these people - through me - what they needed and that allowed me to be in my heart connecting with them, trusting that He would put the right words in my mouth!

If you go on stage with a spirit of serving - a desire to help these people in some way, to give them what they needed, they will notice! Remember - it's not about you - not even a tiny, weeny little bit!!

10. Preparation does not equal rehearsal!

Rehearsing in front of a mirror or others, crafting the perfectly worded keynote or attending a course on speaking does not constitute preparation!

In my opinion to prepare for a presentation you need to:

- consider the objectives/outcomes for the meeting
- put yourself inside the minds of the people you will be addressing and imagine how life is for them so you can frame the information in a way that is relevant for them
- find out all about their current situation, stresses and challenges
- learn the right language and phrases used in this company - eg IBM lives on acronyms and if you don't know a few of them, you are not part of the group! Some people talk about customers; some, clients.
- in other words, know your audience and how they think and feel right now
- ask yourself what information would help them and how can I deliver it so it's relevant to them and their situation and needs.
- find stories and exercises that will illustrate the points in the best way for this group
- sit in on any previous presentations of meetings before you on the day so you can relate to what has been said and modify what you say based on what they have already heard
- make sure you know your content before you are on stage and then let go of it from the minute you walk on stage
- pray to give them what they need before you go on stage

11. Room preparation

Where you can, have people sitting theatre style - it makes them connect much more. If you sit people at round tables, you split them into clumps or separate groups of 8 or 10 and the group dynamics is very different.

If you are trying to make people become more of a team - separate tables is the worst thing you can do - you will split them into teams of 10 or how many tables you have! If you must have a table then have them sit classroom style rather than rounds.

In my opinion, it's best to have them sit theatre style and give them clip boards and gather their chairs into circles if you really want people to connect!

Always have bright music playing fairly loudly as they walk in - if you play relaxing soothing music they will be in a coma before you start!! Van Morrison or disco music is always a good way to lift the mood! It sounds bad but it really works well! People will talk much more to each other when there is music playing at a reasonable volume in the background.

The lighting is critical as well - the brighter the lights they more the connect. Make sure you are well lit on the stage - it's very difficult to watch and listen to someone who is in the dark! Do not stand on the stage in a dark patch - this is where checking the room out at least an hour before you speak is an important first step!

And at that time check out the microphone and how it sounds - set up an audio visual check with the AV people during a break where there is plenty of time.

12. Always start with an activity, icebreaker or questions.

I think the most boring way to start a presentation is to say 'thank you' or 'I am glad to be here' or 'it's great to be here' etc. Anything in that genre is so ordinary!! Instead change the energy of the group from the minute you start by engaging them.

Ask them a question - or better still - 3 questions with the third one something that makes them laugh - for example, I sometimes start with this series of questions:

How many people wake up every morning full of energy and vitality?
(raise your hand as you ask the question indicating to them that they need to raise their hand - if you don't do it, they won't either!)

How many people go home every night full of energy and vitality?

Pause - laugh at how few people put their hands up and then ask

How many people just want to remember what it was like to have energy and vitality?

HAHAHAHAH (remember to raise your hand each time you ask the question and you want an answer)

Perhaps you can start by asking them to turn to the person next to them and introduce themselves or tell each other one thing they learned from the last presentation...or one thing they would like to learn from yours. And acknowledge them and then start with yours with a transition statement like "if I don't cover what you wanted to learn then feel free to connect with me afterwards so we can cover it then."

Buy a book on icebreakers and use one of those - there are millions of activities that work really well out there - and they set you apart, wake your audience up and engage them! In fact, you can keep doing icebreakers all the way through if you have very dry content - people will remember it much more!

Amanda is an Aussie (living in the U.S.) and an expert on joy and being connected. Her speaking, writing, and whole life is committed to helping people connect their hearts with other people's hearts, and reconnect their own hearts with their heads! In other words, Amanda speaks about the emotional intelligence that makes us more successful at work and at home. Sign up for Amanda's monthly newsletter, "The Endorphin Injection!" at www.amandagore.com

Never Feel Sorry for Yourself by Guy Finley

One thing that makes it so difficult to drop feeling sorry for ourselves is how *real* it feels when we are full of self-regret. But any perception of reality that requires us to submit to any such self-centered suffering is always a lie! Here's just one of several facts to be revealed that will give you the courage to walk away from ever feeling sorry for yourself again. Study it until you suddenly smile!

The secret attraction behind self-pity--why it's so hard to set down--is that the part of us that feels like nothing makes the part of us that points out this nothingness feel quite special!

Negative states, in general, are part of an interior conspiracy to produce the illusion that no choice exists for us other than to cave in to their punishing presence. But, in truth, it is not we who are without choice in such moments. Rather it is the negative state that has no choice but to disappear as soon as we remember that no darkness is greater than the light that reveals it. In our heart of hearts, we know the truth of this liberating idea because we've all seen the great law that sits behind it.

We know that love is greater than hatred, courage slays fear, and that what is light, bright, and good only shines the more for anything that tries to darken its way.

The key to dismissing the parts of us that love to attend "pity parties" is to blow out the match that lights the candles of bitterness before they become inflamed.

Here is another life-saving fact, so welcome the healing it brings by being willing to see the truth hidden within it.

There lives nothing real in our past--regardless of how disappointing or painful it may have been--that can grab us and make us its captive, any more than dark shadows have the power to keep us from walking into the sunlight.

Now, add to this fact the realization that there is never a good reason to go along with feeling bad about yourself, and you're on your way to living in a world without self-pity. Call upon the following special key lessons to guide you as needed. Use them to help strengthen your wish to be free of all dark self-compromising states.

1. The only thing feeling sorry for yourself changes about your life is that it makes it worse.
2. No matter how you look at it, you involve yourself with whatever you resist!
3. Being wrapped up in self-pity completely spoils any chance of being able to see new possibilities as they appear.
4. The only thing that grows from cultivating any dark seed of sorrow is more bitter fruit.
5. Feeling sorry for those who want you to feel sorry for them is like giving an alcoholic a gift certificate to a liquor store.
6. Your thoughts can no more tell you what is true about your possibilities than a set of streamside boulders can know the nature of the waters that rush by them.
7. Feeling sorry for your self is a slow-acting poison. First it corrupts, then it consumes your heart, choking it with dark and useless emotions.
8. You cannot separate the reasons you have for feeling sorry for yourself from the sorry way you feel.
9. The heart watered by tears of self-pity soon turns to stone; it is incapable of compassion.
10. When you agree to live with sad regrets, you ensure they'll still be with you tomorrow.

One last thought. Before we can know happiness beyond the reach of any sorrow, we must ourselves be whole, for any happiness apart from self-wholeness is only half a happiness and must, in time, prove itself so. ###

(Excerpted from *The Courage to Be Free*, 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.

For more information about Guy Finley and his life-changing work, visit www.guyfinley.org.

—including [free MP3 audio download](#), *7 Words to Turn Painful States Into Healing Powers* [CLICK HERE](#)

7 Words to Turn Painful States Into Healing Powers

By Guy Finley

By Special Arrangement - A free 60-minute MP3 download exclusively for subscribers of *Cultivate Life! Magazine*

Break free from negative states for good! In this 60-minute talk by best-selling author Guy Finley, learn seven special words that will inspire and empower you to rise above all manner of negativity and brighten every corner of your life.

- Learn to see through and rise above any negative state
- Find new strength to let go of old baggage and persistent problems
- Deepen your connection to the quiet beauty of the present moment
- Discover the perfect security of your fearless Self

Stop resisting, and start living! Get the inside story on energy-stealing negative states, and point your life in a happy new direction. ###

Why We Criticize and What to Do about It by Chuck Gallozzi

What do you think of people who descend on their friends like vultures, criticizing, maligning, ridiculing, scorning, blaming, insulting, and belittling them? Actual vultures feed on carrion, but these human vultures pick their friends apart while they are still alive. Our family members are supposed to be our closest friends, yet even they may engage in the same malicious tactics. It's time to impose a cease-fire, and the best way to start is to become aware of our actions and to accept responsibility for them.

When we criticize others, we do not expose them, but expose ourselves. We broadcast our own weakness and smallness. For as an unknown author wrote, "The most censorious are generally the least judicious, or deserving, who, having nothing to recommend themselves, will be finding fault with others. — No man envies the merit of another who has enough of his own."

What would you think if I were to tell you that I'm brilliant? Would you be impressed? Not at all, you would think that I'm vain or delusional. For this reason, rather than boasting about our imagined greatness, we disguise what we wish to say by criticizing others. In other words, when we speak about the supposed inferiority of others, it is just a clever ploy to announce our own superiority. Yet, those who are genuinely superior don't speak about it, and those who believe they are inferior, pretend to be otherwise.

This being the case, aren't our criticisms misdirected? Don't we need to redirect our energy? Our time would be spent much more productively if we would practice self-criticism (self-improvement) instead of attacking others. How can we see the faults of others so clearly, unless we share the same weaknesses? Let's take advantage of this clarity of vision by eliminating our own faults. When we do so, we will no longer need to pretend we are superior, and we will, therefore, stop criticizing others.

The Pain of Criticism

Imagine stabbing a friend in a fit of anger. As the knife blade sinks into his chest, your friend gasps in astonishment. Bewildered, his face contorts in excruciating pain. Losing blood and succumbing to shock, he collapses. Fortunately, someone called an ambulance, which quickly arrived and rushed your friend to the hospital. Although he recovered, his chest is marred for life by an ugly scar.

Hard to imagine you would do that, isn't it? And if you did, after realizing the harm you have done, I am sure you would never repeat such an act. Yet, many of us, almost daily, stab the ones we love. We use invisible knives that do not draw blood. The weapon of choice is *criticism*. The harm we do is just as vile as that produced by a real knife.

Our criticism tears down their self-esteem. They feel unloved and experience self-doubt. Before their wounds have time to heal, we stab them again and again in the same place. How can we be so cruel? Perhaps we are deceived because our weapon and the victim's wounds are invisible. Why are we so vicious? It is because of our own insecurities.

How can we improve? The next time you feel like butchering someone with caustic words, pause for a moment, and in your imagination, make your knife visible. Once you realize the harm you are about to inflict, I'm sure you will stop.

The Story of Bobby

I was in the Humane Society, in the adoption room for cats. As I peered through the bars of the cage in front of me, I saw vacant, yet beautiful, blue eyes. They belonged to a six-year-old stray cat named Bobby. He had reddish-brown and black stripes and his front paws were enormous, reminding me of a tiger. When I spoke to the attendant about him, she warned me that he did not like to be handled and he should not be adopted by anyone looking for an affectionate cat. "Good grief," I thought, "who's going to adopt an unfriendly six-year old cat?" I figured I'd better rescue him from an almost certain death, so I adopted him.

Bobby was declawed. He probably escaped from the home of his owner and roamed the streets. One day, however, he was brutally attacked. Someone hacked off most of his tail and smashed his pelvis with a baseball bat. Because the stub of his tail made him resemble a bobcat, the attendants at the Humane Society named him, "Bobby."

His damaged pelvis caused his rear end to taper and instead of walking gracefully, he would hop. Poor Bobby was traumatized. When he first arrived in his new home, he hid under a bed for a day or so. But hunger pangs finally persuaded him to come out from his hiding place. Whenever we picked up the broom to sweep the floor, he fled in terror. It took a long time for him to realize the broom was an instrument to clean the floor, not a weapon to beat him with.

After two years, Bobby was finally confident enough to come of his own and jump into my lap. Whenever he would do so, I would gently pet him. But, after a few minutes, he would suddenly bite my arm, drawing blood, and then hop away as quickly as he could. Though the bites were painful and messy, I never did get angry. After all, I understood. Bobby was experiencing a traumatic flashback and defending himself the only way a declawed cat could, by biting.

Why am I writing about Bobby? Because many of us, like him, have been injured psychologically to one degree or another. Perceiving an imagined threat, we snap at others. The difference between Bobby and us, however, is that his injuries were clearly visible: a missing tail, tapered rear end, and an inability to walk gracefully. Not so with those we meet daily. Their injuries are psychological and hidden from view. As a result, we usually don't realize their attacks are not due to viciousness, but to pain they have experienced.

So, the next time your boss, spouse, or anyone else unfairly attacks you, don't get angry. Instead, pause, and imagine it is Bobby biting you. If it were, you wouldn't get angry, would you? If we would treat others as well as we would treat Bobby, it would be a much better world. Besides, sometimes we are Bobby, attacking others for no clear reason. At such a time, let's hope our victims will recognize us as Bobby and forgive us.

When we look at an iceberg, we see only a small part of it. Similarly, when we look at others, it is rare indeed that we see any deeper than the surface. Isn't this one of the reasons why it is so easy to criticize? If we can penetrate the heart of others and feel their pain, fear, and loneliness, how could we be critical? Instead of judging others, let's appreciate them. For as Mother Teresa said, "If you judge people, you have no time to love them."

Does this mean all criticism is bad? Not at all. But it should be used in two cases only. First, parents, teachers, supervisors, and others in authority have an obligation to correct the faults of those they are responsible for. Second, we can offer our advice to friends and others who *ask* for it. But don't offer it unless they request it. Whether it's those we are responsible for or our friends, we must always frame our suggestions in a positive or helpful manner. What is the difference between constructive and destructive criticism? We seem to believe that when we criticize others, it is constructive, and when they criticize us, it is destructive. But that is not what I mean here. To clarify, I offer the following guidelines for constructive criticism.

1. Be particularly careful when your friends ask for advice. Before offering any, be sure that is what they really want. Often, when friends ask for guidance all they want is someone to listen. They may want to arrive at their own solutions by bouncing their ideas off you. Or, they may have already decided on a course of action and would like to hear you agree that they have made the right decision. In other words, they're not looking for advice, but looking for support. So, be sensitive to their needs.

2. Use a carrot, not a whip. Use praise, not criticism. Here's what Charles M. Schwab had to say on the subject, "In my wide association in life, meeting with many and great men in various parts of the world, I have yet to find the man, however great or exalted his station, who did not do better work and put forth greater effort under a spirit of approval than he would ever do under a spirit of criticism."

3. Be a coach, not a critic. Offer support, not criticism. Edmund Burke explains, "Applaud us when we run; Console us when we fall; Cheer us when we recover."

4. Before beginning, think of your own weaknesses. This will help you to frame everything more gently. Follow the sage advice of the Chinese, "Do not use a hatchet to remove a fly from your friend's forehead."

5. Start on a positive note. First explain what they are doing right and what you like about their behaviour. And follow this with suggestions on how they can do even better. Assure them that you are confident in their ability.

6. Don't expect others to do what you are not willing to do.

7. When people complain to you about others, get the viewpoint of the person they're complaining about before criticizing him or her.

8. Take special care before criticizing those who lack the power to defend themselves.

9. Evaluate those under your care not by their present level of behaviour, but by the progress they have already made and can continue to make.

10. Consider your counsel unsuccessful unless those you advise leave feeling they have been helped.

11. Judge others' actions not by what you think, but by what they thought at the time. It is not the action as much as it is the intention that needs to be considered. Use the same standard that you use to judge yourself. Too often, we judge others by their actions and ourselves by our ideals, aspirations, and good intentions.

12. Offer them an opportunity to save face. Don't trap them in a dead end. Give them an escape route.

13. Follow the advice offered in the Native American proverb, "Never criticize a man until you've walked a mile in his moccasins."

What to Do when You Are Criticized

What should you do when you are the victim of criticism? Here are some tips:

1. Use the criticism as a learning experience. That is, *remember the pain* you feel, and vow not to do the same to others.
2. *Remember they are using invisible weapons*, so are unaware of the pain they are causing. Forgive them.
3. *Remember their pain*. What do I mean by that? Here's an explanation by someone who's used to getting criticized, the singer Boy George, "When folks is mean, it ain't that they hate you personal. It's more likely because they are miserable about something in their inside. You got to remember how most of the time when they yell at you or get after you, it ain't you they are yelling at but something inside themselves you never even heard tell of, like some other person has been mean to them, or something they hoped for didn't come true, or they done something they are shamed even to think of, so they get mad at you just to keep their minds off it."
4. *Remember not everyone is equally enlightened*, or as John Wanamaker said, "I learned 30 years ago that it is foolish to scold. I have enough trouble overcoming my own limitations without fretting over the fact that God has not seen fit to distribute evenly the gift of intelligence."
5. After being criticized, *thank them for their advice* and promise to take it into consideration. By thanking them, you are disarming their antagonism and ending the conversation peacefully.
6. *Consider the source*. The person criticizing you may be incompetent or envious. If so, after thanking them for their advice, just brush it off.
7. *Evaluate the criticism*. Although the complaint is subjective, there still may be some truth to what they say. Try to use this as an opportunity to grow. Remember, you are imperfect and others may see

your flaws more clearly. Learn from them whenever you can, but don't return the favor by criticizing others!

It is natural to make mistakes, including the type that hurts others. And when we do so, we may dismiss our mistakes with a simple, "Whoops, sorry about that, I'm only human, you know." Yes, we're only human; that's why pencils have erasers. But have you noticed that when we are the victims of the mistakes of others, we may become angry and hold it against them? In other words, if we make a mistake, it's because we're only human, but if "they" make a mistake, it's because they're stupid! Not rational, is it?

If we catch ourselves becoming angry by someone's carelessness, why not stop and forgive them? It's an opportunity to transcend our humanity and act in a divine way. The purpose of forgiveness is not to absolve others, for who are we to judge them? Rather, the purpose is to free ourselves from the toxicity of resentment, animosity, and bitterness. Those who hold a grudge are held hostage by fear, guilt, and anger. It doesn't make sense to shackle ourselves to negative feelings and limiting beliefs. Isn't it much better to choose forgiveness, or the path of peace, understanding, and acceptance? ###

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>

Did I Understand What You Said? **by Beca Lewis**

Once I read two very funny stories representing the concept of “Mondegreen” which is the idea of mixing up words so that what is said is not what is heard. When these word mix-ups are funny, we laugh. However, these stories made me think about how many times in a day we misunderstand each other.

Sometimes it is a simple misunderstanding that seems to harm no one. Other times this misunderstanding leads to major consequences that may take a long time to heal. But, all misunderstandings eventually result in a feeling that all of us have at one time or another. The feeling that, “No one understands me.”

It is so easy to misunderstand. Many years ago, I was preparing for a date with my boyfriend. I had carefully planned out my outfit, but was still worried about it because it was a new “look” for me. As we were going out the door he said, “Boy, you look hot.” I thought he meant I had too many clothes on for the season and didn’t look good. I was devastated, and very hurt.

After a brief pause to take in what he said, I asked him “Do you mean I have too many clothes on?” He was amazed how easily I had jumped to the wrong conclusion. He, of course, meant I looked — well I just as I wanted to look. We both laughed. However, what if I wouldn’t have asked him what he meant? What if I had brooded all night about my appearance? What if I thought he was rude for saying such an unkind thing to me? Imagine the effect this would have had on our relationship.

This is what we do isn’t it? We have our own point of view or perception about something — anything, and that colors everything we see, hear, or say about it. Do we really hear anything but our own point of view? Perhaps it’s true, no one understands anyone. What could we all do to understand each other and be in more harmony and balance? There are some practical things we could try.

We could stop and pay attention to what we are thinking while we are listening. We could ask ourselves the question, “ Am I listening to what is being said, or am I listening to myself comment internally about what I think is being said? “ We could care more about the outcome for the other person than for the outcome for ourselves. These ideas will work, and we can all practice becoming better at human communication. At the least, we could learn to laugh at those misunderstandings that do happen rather than taking them too seriously.

However, there is a more effective, faster, and permanently better way. We could change our perception to something that would really clear up misunderstandings and would eliminate forever the feeling that “no one understands me.” We could shift our perception.

Our perception is that we are all separate from each other, with many points of view, many needs, many pains, and many agendas. If we would step out of the Earth State of Mind Game and know what Divine Mind knows, that we are all the uniqueness of Love and Truth expressing Itself, then all missed perceptions and their ramifications would vanish. They would disappear as easily as dark does when we switch on the light.

Next time I am wondering what someone means by what they say to me, I plan to stop and ask myself, “ What does the Mind that is Love and Truth know about this?” I am positive that this point of view will result in a better understanding of the true meaning of their words, and will keep us both in harmony and love. ###

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://PerceptionU.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>

Resisting Feelings of Uselessness and Worthlessness by Steve Wickham

Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord [and the opportune time].

~**Romans 12:11** (NRSV [footnotes added]).

Even megastars experience feelings of uselessness and worthlessness.

Just the thought of having all we've done, or all that we're doing, as being stripped away is usually enough to achieve this.

We are very much what we do, or how we're seen.

Whether we like it or not, what we do is mostly attached to what we are, and how we're seen, because we cannot usually detach our identities from these without some significant impact. This is why having our identities grounded firmly in God is a key. But, practically, this is a much harder thing to attain and maintain (for the many) than we originally suppose.

Why is this so? We live in a world of people and relationships. Our meaning to life is either attached firmly to these relationships, and therefore our self-concept is formed from how these are going, or we get our meaning from God, and so we're impervious to the same disappointments. (More generally so, however, we fit between these two, or we vacillate between them.) The latter is a difficult place to arrive at.

But, we must strive for it.

Zealous, Ardent Responses to All Life Situations

The more we practice the zealous and ardent response to any and every given life situation the more we'll achieve it. This is the Joseph response of Genesis 37-50.

But there are times when, like Job, we're best to just sit and absorb the hurt and disappointment. This is not a loathing in self-pity as much

as it's allowing the full force of feeling to dwell so that it can be processed and so it doesn't remain longer than is necessary.

So, at the right time it is always best to respond to such despondency.

'Getting back up on the horse' of life might be an overused cliché but it's nonetheless very true.

Faith of the Instant

The trick is instant faith - or active-enough faith to 'manage' the instant. This is not so much about the time-instant as it's describing the situational instant. So, we're not so much under pressure to respond in 'this' time or 'that' time. But respond we're best, generally, to do.

Wisdom is making the most of the opportune time.

Getting past our occasional feelings of uselessness and worthlessness is an exercise, then, of proper context and wisdom. It's not running from our feelings, but it's absorbing how we feel as a catalyst for healing the instant, and as a platform for future focus and self-development, so we're not so prone to the same feelings in the future, if that's possible. ###

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

Learn How to Shower To Keep Your Skin Healthy by Rudy Silva

Everyday you wash, shave, shampoo, clip your nails, wash, and dry your hair. Personal grooming, for most people, is a series of well-entrenched habits. And in most cases it is over done. Would you be willing to change your routine if doing so made your skin look more attractive and created a better-looking you?

Most adults whom are over thirty commit one big mistake when it comes to washing: The do too much of it. They shower in the morning, another after the gym, maybe even one before bedtime. If you spend twelve minutes in the shower, that's too long. Cut your time in the shower to five minutes for your skin's sake.

Too much washing results not just in cleanliness but in removing too much oil from your skin, and itchy and irritated skin, particularly in the winter months.

If you are using a shower without a water filter and with the steam build up, you are subjecting yourself and your skin to excess chlorine.

Below are bathing tips that you can benefit from:

1. Avoid using a washcloth on delicate areas, especially the mucous membranes. Do use a soft sponge to massage your skin. Use a glycerine soap and sponge and move in one direction toward your heart.
2. Use medium-warm water in the shower, the cooler the better, but not too cold.
3. If you have normal to dry skin, use Dove Unscented or Basis for Sensitive Skin on your body and either a soap free cleanser or nothing at all on mucous membranes. Do use many of the commercial bar soap, since they are harsh on the skin.

4. If you tend to have oily skin, then use good glycerine soap. I use this type of soap and it removes just enough oil without drying my skin.

5. Skip a shower as often as you can. This may not seem like appealing advice but the more time you have in between showers the better. Skip a shower for a whole day once or twice a week, especially in the winter. Allow your skin to produce and maintain its natural oils. Or if this does not appeal to you, make your shower extra short on some days.

6. Make sure you use shampoos that contain mostly natural ingredients. A lot of commercial products contain synthetic chemicals, petrochemicals, and various dyes and artificial coloring. All of these un-natural chemicals are extremely bad for you health. Learn which chemicals to avoid.

So that you can improve the health of your skin, takes some time to look over your shower habits, Decrease the time in your shower, use a water filter to remove toxins from the water, massage your skin, and use only natural products for your skin and hair. ###

Rudy Silva is a natural nutritionist. If you want to learn more about which chemicals to avoid in skin care creams and how to take care of your skin go to: <http://www.for--you.com/SkinCareTreatment>
Rudy Silva is a natural nutritionist. If you want to learn more about which chemicals to avoid in skin care creams and how to take care of your skin go to: <http://www.for--you.com/SkinCareTreatment>

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Don't Be Fooled By Your Symptoms **by: Roseanna Leaton**

Why do we so easily get fooled into focusing upon symptoms and blinded as to their causes? The very act of focusing so fully upon the symptom itself distracts your attention away from its root cause. This is true of many things in life, be it work, relationships or health. We pay dearly for this folly in every area, but none more so than in our health.

In a relationship it becomes all too easy to pay attention to a minor argument whilst not looking at the emotions and the history which have set a solid foundation from which that little squabble has sprung. In reality the only way to make things better in the long run is to look at the whole picture and not at that one little blip on the horizon. We know this, but do we do it?

Why do we turn a blind eye to the bigger picture? Usually the answer is because we are afraid. We don't want to be confrontational, or we are scared that pandora's box is about to be opened and the lid will never go back down. We are basically creatures of habit and are scared of change and the unknown. But in a relationship this is not always the best way forward.

In business it is similarly easy to become tied up in the focus upon "symptoms" as opposed to their causes. Unless you have a solid understanding of the overall business you can easily find yourself fighting fire in a frenzy of frustration and losing sight of where you are meant to be heading. This is why in large businesses there are key people whose task it is to maintain their focus and organize all players to best achieve the desired result.

But if you are a "one man band" you have to do everything yourself. You have to find a way in which to deal with the minutia and the overview. This can be a challenging task and one of the easiest ways in which to fail is to spend endless hours dealing with the lumps and bumps, thereby distracting your attention away from what you really want - propelling your business forwards in the right direction.

In health issues we can see this same pattern so very clearly. You get indigestion and take a "Rennie" or equivalent. You get a hangover and nurse it all day, but do you stop drinking so much? You get acid reflux, IBS, stress and endless other symptoms, but do you change your lifestyle? Do you change your attitude? But you can ignore the messages which your body is trying to tell you at your own peril!

It is important though not only to observe your own body and lifestyle, but to take a look at the bigger picture too. The community in which we live has a major impact upon our health and our susceptibility to disease. Read a little about the "Roseto Study" and I'm sure you will agree.

As a community we suffer heart disease, cancer and many, many illnesses which scientific research has clearly shown are caused as much by the way in which we live (if not more so) as by our genetic inheritance. When I say "the way we live" I do not just refer to diet and exercise regimes; I mean community spirit, the effect of being in a good and close relationship, family support, relaxation and balance.

It is very clear that the only way in which these major health issues can be tackled is by looking at the whole community, not just the whole person and certainly not focusing merely upon the symptom.

Focusing upon symptoms is the easy way out, but in reality it is a cop out; Unless you open your eyes to the bigger picture it may ultimately prove to be a killer. ###

Roseanna Leaton, specialist in hypnosis downloads for health, balance and well-being.

P.S. Curious about hypnosis? You can get a free hypnosis mp3 from my website.

Focusing upon a symptom is easy but it's a cop out. Looking at causes may mean rocking the boat, but unless you do so, your boat is in danger of sinking.

With a degree in psychology and qualifications in hypnotherapy, NLP and sports psychology, Roseanna Leaton is one of the leading practitioners of self-improvement. Grab a [free hypnosis mp3](#) from <http://www.RoseannaLeaton.com> and peruse her extensive library of [hypnotherapy health downloads](#) for well-being

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The Facts Behind Law Of Attraction

by Sean McView

Why do every individual on this planet think that the goal they have set in their life is always just out of reach? It is because they do not understand the Law of Attraction. This universal law is based on the premise that the universe is a mass of energy and we are all a part of it, a view also shared by the subject quantum physics.

We are not separate from the universe; we are all as one with the universe. It is through our thoughts that we take this energy and manifest it into reality. This law gives you everything you can imagine, big or small. It does not matter what you want. Focus your thoughts on what you want and you will get it, every time.

Thus, it works just as well against you. If all you have is a mindful of negative thoughts, thoughts about poverty or debt, feelings of anger, revenge or despair, then these are what will get attracted from the universe and manifest more in your life.

It works the same with the law of attraction whether you are using negative or positive thought patterns. When you focus on the things you do not want, you will only get more of them. This can include cycles of bad relationships, debt, and poverty and so on.

Hence, the sensible way to go would be to only have positive thoughts in your mind. That is, think about what you want, not what you don't have. If you want money or say a new home, don't think about how much less money you have for it. Think about the home per se. Visualize that you owe it already and then let the feeling and emotions flow.

Focus your thoughts on how wonderful you will feel living in your new home and decorating it. Don't spend your thoughts worrying about where the money will come from or feeling bad you don't already have it. Don't focus on your struggle with money, just think about the good feelings a new home will bring.

Right now, feel your desires being your reality. Think the thoughts and feel the emotions of living in your new home. The energy you send out with these thoughts and feelings will attract the house to you. Always be open about the way the house comes into your life. Do not put any limitations on how you get it.

The usual mistake that people do is to go for this law with a feeling of need. That is, they need money to pay bills, hence they go for it. But one must understand that in that case, it is the emotion of need that becomes paramount here.

Hence, the way to go would be to think that your bills are already paid. Instead of thinking about the lack of it, visualize yourself as a relaxed and debt free individual who have already paid all his dues.

Another problem is that the people wrongly feel that they themselves have to work out how to achieve everything.

They don't understand that the only thing they should figure out is their object of desire. Thereafter, they should intensely focus all thoughts and energies on the same. The universe will take care of the rest.

It is not that you should not take action; you can take the action when you are inspired. When you use this law, then it will bring you various nudges and the ideas that you can get.

If we are talking about manifesting money, then the universe will inspire you towards an opportunity of making money. What you have to do is to identify and act on these little nudges from the universe. Don't go for each and every opportunity of making money that you see but the only one that you feel is right from the core of your heart since that is the one which the universe has sent for you.

While working towards the law of attraction, it is a good idea to be grateful for what you already possess in life. These may be your health, family, children, etc.

Reflect upon the fact that these good things came to you as a result of your previous thoughts and the Law of Attraction.

The things that you are experiencing right are that you have done the residual effect of what you have thought on earlier. If you are not happy with your life, then you should make some positive thoughts.

By doing this, you are leading the universe in sending you those things which you want. Simply put, you would be writing your own destiny. ###

Discover the amazing experience of manifesting all you want in life from the popular <http://www.abundance-info.com> site. Visit here to find out how you can make fantastic changes to your life with the [Law Of Attraction Forum](#). The amazing [Secret Law Of Attraction](#) video on this site explains all of the secrets!

Using The Law Of Attraction And Manifesting Abundance by Sophie Jones

Financial hardship is the reason many people eventually stumble onto the Law of Attraction. Almost everyone intuitively realizes that some aspect of our inner persona plays a significant role in our financial condition. It might be difficult to acknowledge, but for better or worse you've manifested your financial situation through one of the Laws of the Universe: the Law of Attraction.

You may scoff that you would create a life of scarcity and struggle when it comes to money especially when events seem beyond your control like loss of a job. However, abundance is simply an outward manifestation of our inner landscapes. That is also why when many people set out to manipulate the Law of Attraction to bring more money into their lives, they often fail.

You may wonder why, if the Law of Attraction is truly a Universal Law, it doesn't work the way you want it to. First of all you must understand the Law is always at work whether you realize it or not and whether you believe it does or not. It is one of the immutable laws of the universe. The problem lies in our understanding and manipulation of the Law.

The Law has been garnering a lot of recent attention, a trend that may have started due to popular books and films such as The Secret. However, the Law of Attraction is one of the most stable things in the universe and has been known to exist for hundreds of generations. It forms the basis of many philosophies and some religious beliefs.

So, don't dismiss the Law of Attraction as some pop culture fad and don't abandon it if it doesn't seem to work for you. If it doesn't work for you, you haven't yet learned its true essence. Some people even have the experience of it seeming to work in reverse. Instead of an improvement in matters of financial abundance, they spiral even further into financial ruin.

This is an important thing to remember when you're learning the way the Law of Attraction operates. You can't just manifest abundance by

forcing yourself to focus on it and saying affirmations several times a day.

The Law of Attraction is based upon vibrations and the fact that like vibrations attract. So while you may be diligently saying your affirmations each day, what are you feeling? Do you feel financial desperation? Do you feel hopelessness? If so, you are sending out vibrations of despair and hopelessness tied to money. The Universe receives those vibrations and sends like vibrations back to you that will bring you more situations where you feel desperate and hopeless.

This situation can be a Catch-22 for many people. A Catch-22 is a dilemma where a person needs something, but can only get it by not wanting it. This might sound unattainable, but if you understand a few techniques related to the Law of Attraction it is possible to willfully use the Law to your advantage and turn your finances around.

First of all you must be acutely aware of your feelings. Your emotions are what constantly send out vibrations to the universe. Emotions can be difficult to control as you well know so don't expect manipulating the Law of Attraction to be an easy job. It will take effort on your part just as the ancient initiates had to work on it while undergoing esoteric training.

Understanding that simple fact and being able to act on it gives you an advantage over many others when you're trying to increase the abundance in your life by manipulating the Law of Attraction. It's impossible to fool or trick Universal Laws like the Law of Attraction, because your emotions are what emit vibrations, not your conscious thoughts.

When you're saying affirmations, you need to always control your emotions. Avoid doing affirmations if you're depressed or feeling some fear about your finances, because you'll be creating additional situations that could cause financial havoc.

When your heart is carefree and you have hope, that is the time to work with the Law of Attraction. When you combine your positive emotional vibrations with the conscious mental intent of manifesting

abundance you will set loose a power in the universe that has no choice but to bring you positive financial occurrences in return.

The Law of Attraction is aptly named. It is one of the immutable Laws of the Universe. Learning the properties of this law is important to being able to skillfully use it. It is always in force. It is not something you can switch on and off or call upon when it is convenient. It is working twenty four hours a day to bring you circumstances and experiences that are a vibrational match for the emotional vibrations you emit. The areas of concern that occupy your mental plane, like finances, are where these events will manifest.

To use the Law of Attraction to manifest abundance, you must do more than merely send out positive vibrations relating to finances and money. Skillful use of the Law also requires you to keep your negative feelings in check; when you don't the positive and negative vibrations will clash and cancel each other out. It is not a task that's impossible, so don't give up. Be appreciative of the things you already have, because this will help you stay positive. When sincere gratitude is regularly felt, it's a powerful mechanism that will help you manifest abundance by using the Law of Attraction. ###

Explore the phenomena of creating abundance by visiting the popular <http://www.abundance-info.com> website. You really can have [abundance for life](#). Get a FREE [abundance definition](#) video and audio DVD Package when you visit here.

The Spiral of Successful Habits by Leo Babauta

Many people have so many things they want to change about their lives they don't know where to start.

It's overwhelming: you might smoke and eat junk food and need to exercise and want to be more productive and eliminate debt and start doing work you love and simplify your life to find time for your family and find things to be passionate about ...

Where do you start?

It's doable — this is where I was five years ago. One by one I changed my habits:

- I quit smoking.
- Started running (eventually did a few marathons).
- Started eating healthier (I eat a whole-food vegan diet now).
- Started eliminating my debt and saving money (I'm debt-free now).
- Started simplifying my life.
- Found work I love doing.
- Started waking earlier and becoming more productive.
-

The [list goes on](#). I'm not trying to brag but to show it's possible. I did all this with six kids and three jobs (with tons of help from my wife Eva of course).

Many of you might be in a desperate place like I was. A reader named Craig recently wrote:

“The last 5-7 years have just been complete hell for me mentally, physically, and financially. Prior to then I was a confident young man who was able to do anything that he put his mind to. I'm not sure exactly how everything just seemed to go down hill for me, but now I have all but lost my self confidence, I suffer from stress and anxiety, I am probably about 30-40 lbs overweight, I'm a pack a day smoker, and to be honest I can't stand to look at myself in the mirror these days.”

He continued:

“Every morning I wake up with butterflies in my stomach because it's almost like I'm afraid to even face the day. I often sleep too late and I just all around feel like crap in the morning. I have tried all kinds of different things to try to fix this issue but nothing has worked. I just wish I could start my day off on a better note.”

He then asked the key question: “How were you able to kick start your life back in 2005 and begin your journey to a better more productive life? How are you able to get up in the morning, jump out of bed, and start your day on a positive note?”

In 2005 I was in a bad place in my life with so many changes I needed to make that it was utterly overwhelming and discouraging.

Then I made one of the smartest decisions of my life (aside from marrying Eva):

I chose just one habit.

The other habits would come later. Starting with just one habit accomplished four important things:

1. It became much more manageable. One habit is doable — 15 habits are too hard.
2. It gave me focus. I could pour all my energies into one thing. When you have too many habits you're trying to change it diffuses your energies and you most often fail.
3. It taught me how to change habits — and then I could apply that knowledge to the next habit change.
4. It allowed me to succeed and then use that energy and enthusiasm to succeed at the next thing.

Every single one of these is incredibly important. I won't go into much depth for the first three things because I feel they're self-evident. But the last one is so important that it deserves a little discussion (see below).

Which Habit to Choose

I started with quitting smoking because it seemed the most urgent to me. Looking back it was also the hardest habit to quit. I might recommend an easier habit to get started with.

But the truth is it doesn't matter much. If you have 15 habits you want to change and they all seem important then just pick one randomly.

Here's the thing: in the long scheme it doesn't matter a lick which one you started with. Five years from now you're going to look back on all the habits you've changed and the order you started with won't make a difference. Right now it seems to matter but you're not in this for just this month — you're in this for life.

Pick one. Any one. I'd suggest an easy one. The important thing isn't that you choose the right habit but that you start.

Spiral of Success

Picking one habit allows you to succeed and build on that success. That's more important than you might think if you haven't done that before.

I read a book by Bill Gates in the 90s where he talked about his "Spiral of Success". He built MS-DOS and that succeeded so he leveraged that success for MS-Word and then Windows and then Windows 95 and then Excel and Office and Internet Explorer and so on (the order might be wrong here but that's not important).

Now I'm not a big Bill Gates fan. But the concept is true not only in business but in anything you do: your success with one habit will make you feel great. You'll be so excited by that you'll want to try another. If you focus on just one habit you'll succeed at that too and you can then build on that and so on.

Soon you'll be rocking the world and people will ask you how you did it. You don't have to mention my name but you should mention Bill Gates' name — credit where it's due. ###

About Leo Babauta:

Leo is a best-selling author and creator of one of the most popular blogs in the world, Zen Habits. He's considered an expert in productivity and motivation, and has applied the principles in his own life: quitting smoking, becoming a runner and marathoner, losing 40 lbs., becoming an early riser, eliminating his debt, quitting his day job and becoming an entrepreneur, starting several successful websites (including zenhabits.net, writetodone.com, mnm1ist.com and others). You can [follow Leo on Twitter](#).

A Little Magic **by Rob McBride**

Magic surrounds us...

- * The flight of a bird
- * The petals of a rose just bloomed
- * The wind blowing through our hair

We all live in different circumstances, yet we are all the same. The way the human body works is magical and this magic is inside each and every one of us. Incredibly, this marvelous magical machine in which we all live continues to function most of the time with very little maintenance.

If we add a little more magic to what is already magical, there is no limit to what we can achieve. We need only believe and then take action to achieve what we want most.

- * To be useful in all we do
- * To be tenacious toward challenge so as to believe and achieve
- * To develop a deep desire to help others get what they want in life
- * To initiate new trains of thought to improve constantly how we do what we do
- * To eat fresh vegetables and fruit to sprinkle a little magic dust on our marvelous magical machines
- * A positive and enthusiastic attitude despite the knowledge that life is not always rosy and bright
- * To have confidence in ourselves - despite difficulties which will surely come - by knowing they will be an integral part of our experience
- * To be tolerant of others because no one is perfect, including ourselves
- * To develop a deep driving burning desire to achieve what we believe

Life is not as it should be, it is as it is.

There will be times when the curtain will fall on the magic at the end of the night.

We need only know that according to current forecasts, tomorrow will dawn with a new day - enabling us to go forth in a new way! ###

Rob McBride is an International Public Speaker who motivates, inspires and trains people. His keynotes, seminars and workshops enhance effectiveness and increase corporate productivity with concrete, dynamic tools which enable people to take control of their professional direction and destiny.

Visit his website at: <http://www.inspire.com.ve/rhm/>

Council of N: "Lava and you" **Channeled by Natalie Kimbrough**

Dear ones,

Let's take a look today at Mother Earth and some of her stuff. You know at her core Mother Earth is hot... smoldering hot... too hot maybe at her core for many of you to get too close... yet, the more we observe her and look at her upwards characteristics the colder, more embracing - maybe tolerant she gets... varied surfaces but inhabitable in most instances.. Even those places many don't consider that.

That said, at her core Mother Earth is hot... passionate...committed to her mission... yet, while dealing with humans, natural vegetation, and other species in and on her various layers she becomes seemingly less hot... easier to deal with in some instances, easier to approach.

Of course, you'll say "what?" and scream because you'll look at all the variety of places... you'll come up with all the different areas where Nature seems to make life impossible or is destructive and blame it on Mother Earth... than you'll want to "heal" her ... well, first: Nature Is not Mother Earth; second, don't try and heal Mother Earth she knows what she's doing and why.. she's on her mission with the highest degree of integrity you can imagine; stop questioning her!

When we say "highest degree of integrity" and words such as "passion" do you really understand? Where are you on that path? Well? Well? Well?

Do you even know your path? Your higher path? The one in which you commit to and fulfill your mission? You do? Congratulations!

Are you following your path? Are you? Congratulations!

How? In integrity? With passion? Or in the backroom, hidden away?

Either way... if you truly know your mission you are like lava... a ticking crater, a ticking caldera just waiting to release... with steam being

released all the time... yet, there'll be that time where the pressure has built up too much and you will erupt! You cannot deny your mission, your mission... yet you try.

You try and it's interesting to see... just like lava... there are those moments, tiny instances where you erupt... just a little bit but... within seconds you slow down, go back in hiding... like lava immediately turning black or silver so no one can see her bright red, passionate, hot side...

Yet, at some point.... All that disguise no longer works... the tunnels of passion and heat, the tunnels of love and commitment, the tunnels of knowing better than to lie.... They've been alone all this time and you'll erupt.... A major eruption... then you'll cool down... yet, those moments of eruption... those are those instances where you release, fight off, let go of all the social pressures, the "should"s" and the "why me's" and you just go with it... those are the moments where you are in integrity, showing your true color, not hiding the beautify and power that you are ...

When is the last time you erupted?

How did it feel?

Did you apologize after because you broke some social rules?

Is that your integrity?

Do you take or give in these scenarios?

Give integrity or lies?

Accept who you are or hide?

If you're hiding... well... your time will come, too.

These are the days where you're wondering what is happening... these are the days where you cannot explain that fluttering in your stomach area... these are the days where the Universe and Mother Earth have come together to help you take your spot, your place and move forward instead of hiding.

This is your time to decide... are you the one in integrity or are you the one in hiding? Are you the active volcano that doesn't erupt to often

because you know your power, path, and mission or are you the lava and the tunnels underneath trying not to be seen?

Find out and know how true you really are... then look around... how true are those around you?

Mother Earth shows you everything, shares everything... and demonstrates to you with plenty of examples the things you all do - just watch. Listen, see and learn The rest is your choice.

Peace, Council of N ###

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Natalie Kimbrough is an intuitive medium, medical intuitive, Reiki Master Teacher, Akashic Records Reader, and spiritual counselor and teacher. She is dedicated to helping others on their life journeys with love and compassion. Always having felt a deep connection with the spiritual or metaphysical realms she is stepping forward in her own right, while being dedicated to her daily spiritual practices for an even deeper understanding the interconnectedness of all things. Natalie is available for talks, discussions, and spiritual & healing services upon request and she has a meditation CD available on her web site:
healingisis.com/cd/relaxing_clearing_reintegration.htm

Dreamer Personalities by Dr. Linda Sapadin

We hear so much about hard-working, hard-driving, enterprising personalities, that you may be forgiven for forgetting that there are also many people who are just the opposite. Yes, lots of people are easy-going and laid-back. This doesn't mean they're stupid or lazy or slothful. Indeed, they may be quite bright, creative, and even ambitious.

Dreamer personality types fall in love with an idea but don't fall in love with the work that must be done to make their ideas happen. Yes, they want to write the great American novel or make the next great scientific discovery. They may talk about writing, think about writing, even dream about writing. But they don't write. Their ideas may be magnificent. But they go nowhere because the execution of these ideas is minimal or non-existent.

So what can you do if you dream of going from A to Z, but hate dealing with the difficult details that you need to do to get there? Here are some suggestions:

Differentiate your goals from your dreams.

Dreams are usually loose-knit in structure. They may be visually appealing gossamer images: a gorgeous home, a major trophy, a professional award, a best-selling novel.

A goal, in contrast, is a more tightly knit enterprise, involving a plan with an explicit structure. It's best when a goal has:

- Objectives that are clearly defined;
- Steps you'll take to achieve those objectives;
- Specific time frames to meet each step;
- Resources you'll utilize as you work to meet your objective;
- A goal line to know when you've achieved your objective.

So, keep on dreaming. And enjoy your dreams. But whatever it is you're truly striving for, make it a goal. Then, map out the road you'll take to reach that goal.

Be mindful of the difference between "feeling good" and "feeling good about yourself."

Dreamers have a reputation for being overly passive allowing time, energy and goals to drift away as they watch TV, surf the net, or hang with friends. Being passive on occasion is fine, but if you remain in that state too often or too long, it will invariably be at the expense of your self-esteem and wellbeing.

Feeling good about yourself, as opposed to simply feeling good, has to do with taking pride in your accomplishments. On a short-term basis, you may not feel good as you push yourself to go to the gym or organize your stuff, or work on a complex project. However, on a long-term basis, the self-confidence and self-respect you'll gain from completing these activities will make you feel enduringly good about being yourself. So, as you get used to a more active lifestyle, don't be surprised if you keep racking up success after success

Guard against thinking of yourself as 'special'.

Resist the temptation to engage in self-stroking reveries of being smarter, more talented, more interesting, or more creative than others. This kind of fantasizing can usurp the action you need to take to cultivate the talents you do possess.

There are countless ways that you can go about creating troublesome, ultimately self deluding gaps between your private image of yourself and your public image. Hence, it's a good idea to stay on top of your thoughts by asking yourself questions like, "Am I inflating this story?" "Am I getting carried away here?"

For example, you may catch yourself revising an experience so that when you tell the story, you come off more favorably than what actually occurred. You may recreate the time when you failed an exam, as a time when you refused to take the exam seriously on principle, leaving the reluctant prof with no choice but to give you an F.

Or you may create an impression that is simply not true, such as, feeling at ease about a speaking engagement even though deep inside you're dreading it. Such discrepancies between your 'real self' and your 'dream self' undermine your belief in yourself.

Remember that no matter how smart you are, work still needs to be done. Even Albert Einstein did not rely solely on his super power brain. He attributed his success to his work habits, saying:

"It's not that I'm so smart, it's just that I stay with problems longer."
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Linda Sapadin, Ph.D. is a psychologist in private practice who specializes in helping people enrich their lives, enhance their relationships and overcome self-defeating patterns of behavior. For more information about her work, contact her at lsapadin@drsapadin.com or visit her website at <http://www.psychwisdom.com/>.

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

From the Shelf

The Power of Less: The Fine Art of Limiting Yourself to the Essential...in Business and in Life

by Leo Babauta

With the countless distractions that come from every corner of a modern life, it's amazing that we're ever able to accomplish anything. The Power of Less demonstrates how to streamline your life by identifying the essential and eliminating the unnecessary – freeing you from everyday clutter and allowing you to focus on accomplishing the goals that can change your life for the better. The Power of Less will show you how to:

- Break any goal down into manageable tasks
- Focus on only a few tasks at a time
- Create new and productive habits
- Hone your focus
- Increase your efficiency

By setting limits for yourself and making the most of the resources you already have, you'll finally be able work less, work smarter, and focus on living the life that you deserve.

From Publishers Weekly

According to Babauta, employing the power of less will propel readers from chaos to blissful and productive minimalism. Learning to set limitations, such as penning a three-item Most Important Task list every day and restricting e-mails to five lines, is a cornerstone for the authors plan for increased simplicity and satisfaction. With new boundaries in place, readers can discover flow, become wholly absorbed in tasks and live the paradox of doing less and achieving more.

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About the Author

Leo Babauta has been a reporter, editor, speechwriter, and freelance writer for seventeen years. Babauta lives in Guam with his wife and six children, where he posts regularly on ZenHabits.net.

LEO BABAUTA is one of the world's leading productivity experts. He founded ZenHabits.net in January 2007, and within a year it was one

of the Top 50 blogs on the Internet. The site now boasts more than a million unique monthly visitors and more than 80,000 daily subscribers. He's also the author of the Internet's leading productivity ebook, *Zen To Done*. He lives in Guam with his wife and six children.

Reader Reviews:

How to have more with the Power of Less

My copy of Leo Babauta's new book, Power of Less, The: The Fine Art of Limiting Yourself to the Essential...in Business and in Life, arrived Friday evening, and by late Friday I'd read it cover to cover. Now, on Sunday, I'm starting it again. It may be about "less", but it contains more than my brain could take in with a single read.

Leo, the owner of the wildly popular ZenHabits blog, has written one of those classics that apply to both our business and personal lives. In brief, The Power of Less is a treatise on the small steps (see my blog post on the Kaizen way) we can take to simplify our lives and in the doing find far more joy and success than all of our manic behavior could produce.

The book begins with Leo's own story of being an debt, overweight, smoking, workaholic who rarely saw his family. His life was chaotic and he never had time for the things and people he loves. (Sound familiar?) Then, he made the choice to simplify his life in small continuous ways; first he quit smoking by focusing all of his energy on that one goal.

Then, he attacked other goals, one at a time, like becoming a runner, eating healthier, starting a successful blog, and getting out of debt.

One by one the goals were met (and exceeded). Leo has run two marathons, has doubled his income, became a vegetarian, decluttered his home, lost 45 pounds, and spends quality time with his family. Today, Leo's blog is one of the top 50 blogs in the world, with more than two million readers a month. If that doesn't make you want to adopt his principles, nothing will!

The Six Principles of Simple Productivity

The Power of Less is divided into two sections; the first walks readers through the six principles of simple productivity:

1. Set limitations
2. Choose the essential
3. Simplify
4. Focus
5. Create habits
6. Start small

Part II details practical tips for implementing the six principles in key areas including e-mail, health, time management, filing, Internet, and decluttering your work space.

Simple Doesn't Mean Easy

While the principles are simple, it doesn't necessarily mean they're easy to implement. Anyone who has started a new habit (like a diet) knows that for sure. However, with small continuous improvement, the principles are achievable.

For example, Leo has weaned himself off e-mail to checking only twice a day. I probably check e-mail 100 times a day - - and just as a nutritionist wouldn't ask us to cut out every unhealthy food in one day, they would encourage us to cut-back. For me, that would mean (first) KNOWING how many times a day I check e-mail, and then (second) cutting back a little, then a little more, and then a little more. Until I reach a point that e-mail doesn't rule my existence.

The Principle of Choosing the Essential

While all of the principles serve as stepping stones to a life of more, the one that hangs me up the most is the principle of choosing the essential. And it's a bugaboo that's been with me life-long. As Leo says, once you know the essentials you'll be in a position to eliminate the chaos of incoming information, commitments, and clutter.

Thankfully, the section on choosing the essential has a series of questions to help define what's essential - and this is the section I'm

currently re-reading - because it's the most difficult for me. I know absolutely that once I have those essentials defined, the remaining principles will be far easier to integrate.

The reason this principle is so important to me is that in knowing the essentials, I'll know which projects or tasks have the highest priority - because they're the ones that will have the biggest impact on the essentials. For me, this is the key to having the life of what truly IS more.

Putting the Principles Into Action

As a life-long "clean desk" advocate, I was ahead of the game on the decluttering principle, but way behind on e-mail, Internet, commitments, and health.

Fortunately, simplifying these areas are a matter of making small continuous changes (the Kaizen way), instead of radical ones. For instance, one of the life issues discussed is making time for what we love. As a self-employed person, I get so caught in the flow of work that I forget what I really love.

However, once prompted by The Power of Less, I really thought about what I love - then I made a list, and one-by-one will begin implementing them in my life.(and being a true Kaizen-ista) will NOT try to take on all of them at once!) By the way, my list includes learning to kayak, to play the harmonica, and hiking.

A Perfect Time for a Perfect Book

As I wander the Internet, I hear over and over the desire for simplification. The entrepreneurs I know have all hit the wall at the same time - - they're on information overload, have massive (and unattainable) to-do lists, poor health, wretched time management, cluttered desks and minds, and no fun.

If ever there was a time for The Power of Less, it's now.

This book is great -- but zen habits is great AND free

First, let me say this: The content in this book is worth 5 stars. Leo is

the absolute best at making anyone realize what is important in the world, and act on it. If you've had it with other self-empowerment books, the kind that use phrases like "thrive off of synergy" and "discover the true version of yourself" and "unlock the millionaire within you" and other absurdities that clog the self-improvement industry of books, then *The Power of Less* will be an absolute relief. The general mantra is easy to swallow and understand: focus your efforts on one thing and you will be more effective.

The book is simple and direct with little fluff. It's aimed at everyone, not just the big-time business managers and the yuppie type. As a student and writer, I find that *7 Habits and Getting Things Done* and the like, while they're great, just don't feel like they're aimed at me. *The Power of Less* is, though. And it's undiluted greatness. There's no New Age-y stuff in here, nothing really abstract. Just solid, practical approaches to the problems that everyone faces.

Here's the one catch, though: at least 85-90% of the content in this book is fundamentally equivalent to what's been posted on his blog, *Zen Habits* ([zenhabits dot net](http://zenhabits.net)). Leo's techniques rely on simplicity so much that there are really only so many ways you can spin it.

There are a lot of reasons to buy this book: it goes a little bit deeper in its explanations, it is a great summary and introduction to everything on Leo's site, it supports Leo after all of the hard work he has put in to helping your average Joe like me make his life and his world a little bit better, and it introduces his ideas in a logical order.

But you can get explanations the same fundamental approaches and set of tips for free on *Zen Habits*, so if you're looking to pinch pennies while still taking serious steps forward in your life, you might instead just want to go through his site.

This review is not a knock on the book at all. It's just a reminder that there's a free digital alternative. That's a tip Leo himself would approve of. ###

[Get You Copy Here](#)

Pam Garcy

Part 15. Your Word: Keep your appointments, commitments and promises

Just a little secret you might like to know. Your outward behavior affects your ability to access your inner wisdom. This may seem a bit surprising and even odd.

Let me explain a little more. When you make an appointment, commitment or promise, it is best if you will do what it takes to keep the appointment as often as you can. This applies to the appointments, commitments and promises that you make to others--and those you make to yourself (for example, if you tell yourself you will take a walk after dinner, do what you can to keep that promise).

Why? Because when you keep your appointments, commitments and promises, you show yourself that your promises mean something. Like the old expression, "Say what you mean, mean what you say."

This is the basis of integrity.

Integrity helps to activate your inner guidance! When you operate in a position of integrity, you can trust yourself more fully, and this allows information to flow to you more easily and readily.

When you fail to operate in a position of integrity, you lose trust in yourself and this blocks your ability to turn inward for answers. You will get the interference of inner chaos instead.

So, if you're not sure if you can keep your word, what can you do? One option is to refrain from making the appointment until you know that you will do all you can to honor it.

What if you find out that you cannot keep your word? Let the other person know what is going on and then do the best you can to make it up to the person in some other way.

Remember this: Integrity in living creates congruence, and congruence opens you to your inner guidance.

If you've been operating without integrity, see what making this change does for your life. You might be very surprised at the results. Just to be straight with you, though, this is a long-term behavior, not a short-term one. So, if you think everything will change in one day, think again. However, if you give it the time it deserves, you'll reap great rewards.

Let me know how it goes! ###

A Course in Miracles

Lesson 31

I am not the victim of the world I see.

Today's idea is the introduction to your declaration of release. Again, the idea should be applied to both the world you see without and the world you see within. In applying the idea, we will use a form of practice which will be used more and more, with changes as indicated. Generally speaking, the form includes two aspects, one in which you apply the idea on a more sustained basis, and the other consisting of frequent applications of the idea throughout the day.

Two longer periods of practice with the idea for today are needed, one in the morning and one at night. Three to five minutes for each of these are recommended. During that time, look about you slowly while repeating the idea two or three times. Then close your eyes, and apply the same idea to your inner world. You will escape from both together, for the inner is the cause of the outer.

As you survey your inner world, merely let whatever thoughts cross your mind come into your awareness, each to be considered for a moment, and then replaced by the next. Try not to establish any kind of hierarchy among them. Watch them come and go as dispassionately as possible. Do not dwell on any one in particular, but try to let the stream move on evenly and calmly, without any special investment on your part. As you sit and quietly watch your thoughts, repeat today's idea to yourself as often as you care to, but with no sense of hurry.

In addition, repeat the idea for today as often as possible during the day. Remind yourself that you are making a declaration of independence in the name of your own freedom. And in your freedom lies the freedom of the world.

The idea for today is also a particularly useful one to use as a response to any form of temptation that may arise. It is a declaration that you will not yield to it, and put yourself in bondage. ###

Commentary by Allen Watson

As you must have noticed when you read today's lesson, there isn't a lot of metaphysical thought in it. In fact there is almost none, except in the lead thought quoted above. The rest of the lesson is practice instructions. So I'll weight my comments in approximately the same way.

The one sentence that heads the lesson is plenty in itself, however. If you think about it, it is amazing how many ways we see ourselves as victims of the world. We go through life feeling like victims-of the weather, of the jerk who cuts you off in traffic or swerves into the parking space you were aiming for, of your computer disk when "it" loses your file, of your housemate who uses the last of the hot water just before your shower, of the slow service in the restaurant, of the traffic that makes you late for your appointment. Then, of course, there are the people who may deliberately and malevolently terrorize you in our cities (or perhaps in your home).

To assert that "I am not the victim of the world I see" can be liberating and empowering. It is remarkable how these simple words can cause feelings of weakness and helplessness to wash away. Try it! You'll like it.

Oddly enough, we also feel victimized by unseen enemies and even our own thoughts. Ever have an anxiety attack? Or find yourself feeling gouged by the IRS? A victim of an unfair "system"? Plagued by self-doubt? You are not the victim of your inner world any more than of your outer world. "You will escape from both together, for the inner is cause of the outer".

This lesson introduces what will become the basic practice outline for most of the Workbook, and for ongoing practice for Workbook graduates:

1. Two longer practice periods, morning and evening, in which you apply the idea for the day on a sustained basis.

2. Frequent repetitions through the day, as often as possible (a study of other references to this indicates that four or five times per hour is intended).
3. Using the idea as a "response to temptation" whenever it arises.

The only element of Workbook practice not present in this lesson is specific hourly or half-hourly periods of shorter practice, in length somewhere in between #1 and #2 above. That appears as the Workbook goes along to build a habit of practice on the structure of the clock, and then is gradually phased out as the habit (presumably) has been established. The three elements presented here in Lesson 31 are retained in recommendations for post-Workbook practice given in the Manual for Teachers (see Section 16, "How Should the Teacher of God Spend His Day?").

Make a point of taking those longer, three to five minute periods morning and evening. This is the first time for them. You wouldn't practice the piano by playing only half the scales, so don't stint here, either. From this point on in the Workbook the practice is going to intensify; like me, I'm sure you'll find it more difficult to maintain and to actually carry out. Remember:

You are merely asked to apply the ideas *as you are directed to do*. You are not asked to judge them at all. You are asked only to use them. It is their use that will give them meaning to you, and will show you that they are true. (emphasis mine) ###