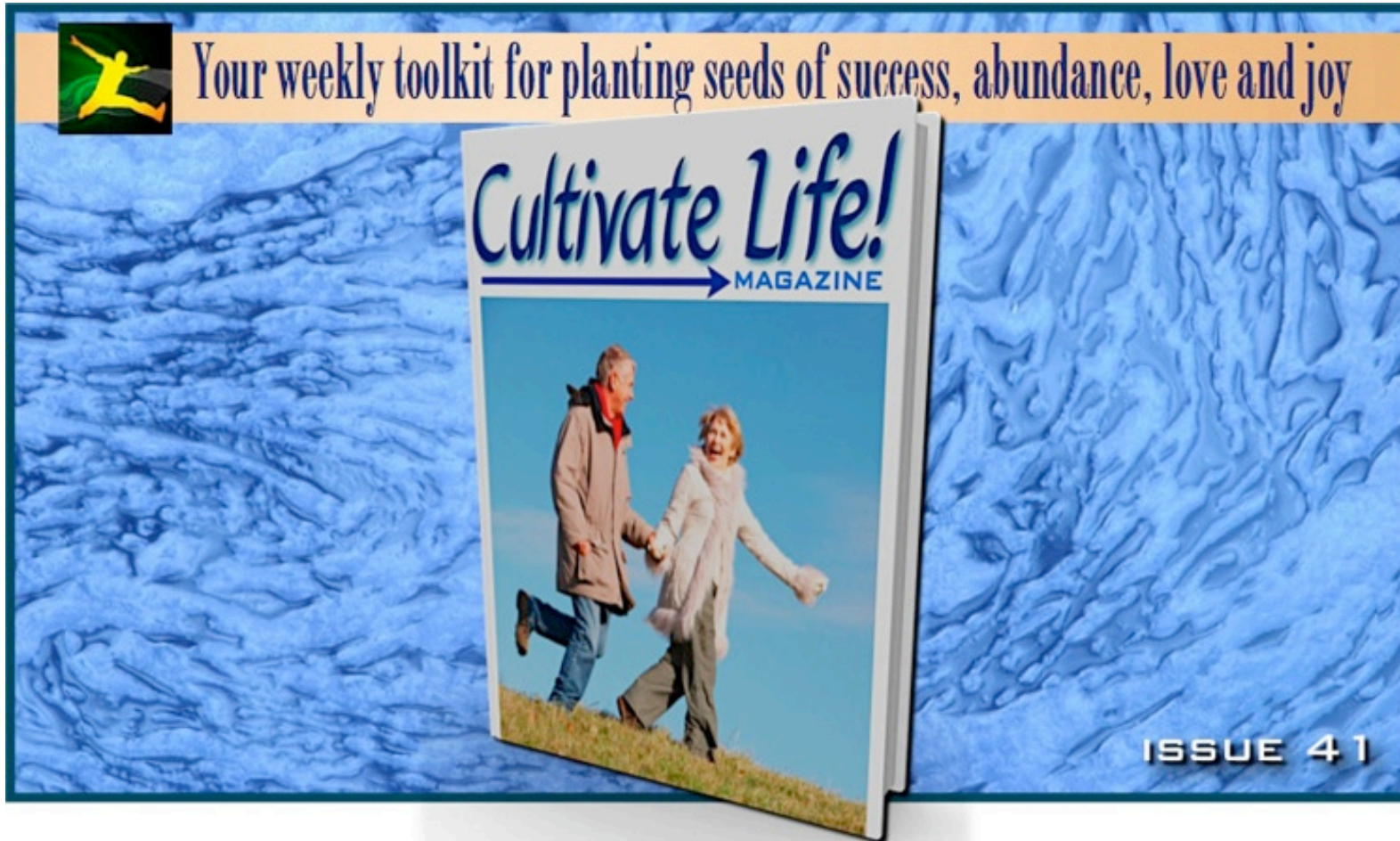


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Cultivate Life! magazine

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Heart to Heart Coaching:

Coach Doris Jeanette, replies to the question:

I want to learn how to make a commitment to a girl for love and marriage and overcome my fears of failure, regret and resentment if it goes wrong.

Link: <http://www.trans4mind.com/life-coach/life-challenge20/question266.html>

Philosophy: raised Lutheran, now agnostic but agree there is some kind of higher power.

Hopes and aspirations: find a girlfriend, travel, marry, settle down, and focus on academic research writing and painting and drawing.

Question: I've led a bohemian lifestyle all my life. Lived in Japan teaching English for 10 years, tried to repatriate to homeland USA, but did not find a niche, now teaching English in Korea. I have had some serious girlfriends and dated, but all never produced good results. Now I think that maybe I have a phobia of making a commitment to one girl because of a fear of failure and regret. So, although I feel like committing and settling down, the reality is much different. I have been single all my life and have learned to live alone, its not very much fun, but its simple and easy. I want to learn how to make a commitment to a girl for love and marriage and overcome my fears of failure, regret and resentment. Is there some proper training with which I can learn to live with a female partner? How can I feel good about committing my life in a marriage relationship?

Answer:

Thank you for a delightful Valentine's Day question. It is the age-old question of how to keep your independence so you can self-actualize while being in a loving, committed relationship.

The word marriage, in its traditional form, brings up images of control, self-sacrifice and boring lifestyles. It also brings up images of Prince Charming and Cinderella living a life of happiness that he and she quickly discovers--does NOT exist!

Is it possible to be yourself and allow your partner to be free to be herself? What does it take to surrender to love and trust that she will love you for who you are--a creative, free spirit? Is it even possible to be true to yourself and your soul and live in a committed relationship?

Checking out the spiritual leaders, such as Jesus and Buddha, the answer is "No." Even Gandhi thought it best to say goodbye to his marriage even though he was already committed. He did not think he could fulfill his marriage responsibilities and fulfill his purpose in life.

However, I never agreed with the idea that I had to give up my need for emotional love, physical love and sexual love in order to fulfill my purpose in life. After spending five years alone, healing my broken heart, I began to experience a deep desire that would not go away. My heart and solar plexus were opening and finally--I felt emotionally secure.

I began to feel an unbearable longing to connect in an intimate relationship with another human being. This deep human need seemed to be a longing from my soul. My desire to know, and to be known, was so strong and magnetic, I could not resist. This longing, pulled me toward a partner, even though I was afraid to surrender to love... once again.

It sounds as if you have not surrendered your heart, soul and body to love for the first time. So, let me tell you something that may help you let go of control so you can love freely and fully. When you surrender to love, you are surrendering to the divine love of the universe. You are not surrendering to another person.

Love is bigger than your current identity. It is scary to surrender to anything that is bigger and stronger than that which you think you are. This is why the ego cannot surrender to love. Your image ego will do everything it can to keep you in a state of control, which will keep you single forever.

The only part of you that can surrender is your heart. Your heart is the part of you that knows love, needs love, creates love and is love. However, your emotional self is afraid to love and be loved. In reality, there are some very good reasons for your fear.

The traditional relationship patterns you learned from your parents did not foster self-realization. Therefore, you are not sure you will be loved for who you are because this did not happen in your past relationships. As a result, you have a phobia of commitment and a fear of intimacy.

There is a bottom-line fear inside each of us that comes from our learning history. We are afraid that no one will love us for our real, authentic self. We think we have to be perfect and please the other person in order to be loved. This is not a surprise because we were trained to please others, take care of others and negate our own needs.

This old relationship model is based on a sexist value system in which one person takes care of the other. This unhealthy, relationship is called care-taking. It is also called a co-dependent relationship. Traditionally the woman takes care of the man and the children. Then in turn the children are taught to take care of their mother and father.

If you try to break out of this unhealthy, care-taking relationship pattern you are guilt tripped back into behaving, as "they want you to behave." "They" may be your parents, your religion or your government. If you leave your mother like the bohemian Jesus did, you are called, selfish and narcissistic.

This care-taking pattern has continued throughout the centuries keeping women and children trapped in a subservient position across the globe. However, care-taking is unhealthy for both people involved. Even if you are the one who is controlling the other person, you are weak. Look at the sexist societies where the men control the women. The men are insecure, frightened and terrified to lose control.

Men have yet to become conscious of the fact that they are subservient to the women in terms of real power. Real power is healthy energy flow, which makes one potent. Healthy energy flow does not occur in a care-taking relationship. Healthy energy flow occurs in a loving relationship where both people are free.

This care-taking pattern exists even in alternative lifestyles and same sex relationships. Therefore, it is not always gender based. In some families, the man is the primary caretaker. Let me define care-taking so

it is clear exactly what this unhealthy relationship dynamic consists of and how it makes you weak. Care-taking has been given the name the "Messiah Complex" because it is based on thinking and acting like the other person cannot live without you. You act like the other person needs you to SAVE them and rescue them. I do not have room to explain all the dynamics.

The major point is the act of care-taking cripples the person being taken care of as well as the person who is doing the care-taking. A caretaker relates to her partner as if he is a victim. This is the reason the men who have been taken care of by their wives, end up being impotent, sick and puny.

The end result is that the two people are codependent and engulfed with each other. This means their energy fields are intertwined, weak and lack luster. They pull and push each other energetically. Neither person has a radiant energy field, so they are both crippled.

The analogy I like to use is, plants growing in flowerpots. Care-taking occurs when two people are trying to grow in the same flowerpot. To be healthy each person needs his or her own flowerpot. When two people live in their own flowerpot you have a healthy, loving relationship.

Click here to see a table clearly delineating the huge differences between an unhealthy, care-taking relationship and a healthy, loving relationship. Please read this before reading further. <http://www.drjeanette.com/care-taking.html>

In summary, with care-taking you feel victimized and unable to fulfill your purpose in life. In a loving relationship, you feel empowered and able to enjoy your moments and self-actualize.

The care-taking model is based on control. Each person controls the other one. The woman controls the man by treating him like he cannot feed himself. The man controls the woman by demanding that she wait on him. As a result, both are weak.

The current divorce rate does not reflect an unhealthy movement. Instead, divorce in many cases is breaking up old unhealthy

relationships patterns. Men and women are seeking new, healthy models of how to relate to each other. We need new ways of being in relationship to each other.

The new forms will come from alternative lifestyles such as your bohemian lifestyle. You and your future partner can create a committed, loving relationship that is not based on control and care-taking.

New relationships models are also coming from the gay and lesbian lifestyles. Psychological research since the 1970's has shown that lesbian and gay parents raise children who are more comfortable being who they are in the world. One of the reasons this is true is because the two adults relate more equally to each other than traditional relationships. Therefore lesbians and gay parents do not force their children into as much care-taking and guilt tripping as the traditional model.

Dr Abbie Goldberg author of [Lesbian and Gay Parents and Their Children: Research on the Family Life Cycle](http://erclk.about.com/?zi=17/2yji) published by The American Psychological Association concludes, " Lesbian and gay parents divide up housework, paid work and child care more evenly. So they're modeling less traditional gender norms, more egalitarian."

If you want a relationship where both you and your partner can flourish, you need to relate equally to each other. Then you will create a healthy, loving relationship that meets your needs and encourages both of you to flourish.

An equal exchange of energy is satisfying and fulfilling. It does not define you or control you. It allows you to grow in your own flowerpot as you nourish, share and love each other.

"Is there some proper training with which I can learn to live with a female partner?"

Yes, you need to unlearn your old way of relating to women and learn to relate to women equally. The way to do this is to look inside your own heart and become emotionally secure so you can face your real fears.

Your emotional self knows your needs, desires and fears. Your real fears need to be faced so you can slowly and securely enter a loving relationship. You will do this as you open your solar plexus and heart. The process of opening your heart makes you emotionally secure enough to love with self-confidence.

"How can I feel good about committing my life in a marriage relationship?"

Commit yourself to personal growth and you will have many exciting, rich and real adventures. Surrender to love and trust the natural process of loving.

Follow your emotional self; he is the one who will fall in love and you will never be the same.

Action Steps to a Healthy, Loving Relationship

- 1. Be realistic.** Know that perfect people and perfect relationships do not exist. Real people have real relationships and they are good enough. Give up fantasies and self-righteousness any time you find yourself thinking unrealistically.
- 2. Stop care-taking others and don't let others caretaker you.** Become conscious and aware of when you are care-taking so you can stop these ego states from controlling you and ruining your life. Working with the source is extremely helpful. Get to know the patterns you learned from your parents and separate from these unhealthy patterns. Read the article, "How Not to Lose Yourself in a Relationship" in the free library: <http://www.drjeanette.com/losingself.html>
- 3. Be brave and creative.** Continue to be a free spirit and create a loving, soul committed relationship where you and your partner can flourish. Break all the rules and enjoy the new ways of be-ing. Get in your own flowerpot and make sure she stays in hers.
- 4. Become emotionally secure so it is not so scary to love fully and freely.** Read past columns for more information about emotional maturity and ego elimination. Work with an emotionally mature professional who can teach you how to open your solar plexus and heart. I also recommend the self-help emotional guide "Opening the Heart," eBook and audio. <http://www.drjeanette.com/>

emotionalhealthaudio.html, which guides you inside your own heart and shows you how to become emotionally secure so you can face your real fears.

5. Celebrate Valentine's Day with clear, clean love energy. Be grateful for anyone you love and for anyone who loves you-- purely and cleanly.

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Kahlil Gibran describes how individual strength and mutual support can work so well together in a close relationship in these wonderful words from his book, *The Prophet*...

Then Almitra spoke again and said,

"And what of marriage, Master?"

And he answered saying:

You were born together, and together you shall be forevermore.

You shall be together when white wings of death scatter your days.

Aye, you shall be together even in the silent memory of God.

But let there be spaces in your togetherness,

And let the winds of the heavens dance between you.

Love one another but make not a bond of love:

Let it rather be a moving sea between the shores of your souls.

Fill each other's cup but drink not from one cup.

Give one another of your bread but eat not from the same loaf.

Sing and dance together and be joyous, but let each one of you be alone,

Even as the strings of a lute are alone though they quiver with the same music.

Give your hearts, but not into each other's keeping.

For only the hand of Life can contain your hearts.

And stand together, yet not too near together:

For the pillars of the temple stand apart,

And the oak tree and the cypress grow not in each other's shadow.

Doris Jeanette, Psy.D. is a licensed psychologist with 35 years of clinical experience helping couples, parents and children create healthy, loving relationships. It is never too late to start the journey inward to your emotional self so you can experience pure, clean love energy. Dr. Jeanette is available for phone and in-person sessions. In-person sessions are currently possible in Glenwood Springs, CO. To set up a session use contact information at <http://www.drjeanette.com/> and sign up for her free holistic psychology newsletter, "The Vibrant Moment."

What Does it Mean: To Take Responsibility? **by Dr. Alan Zimmerman**

"The reason people blame things on the previous generations is that there's only one other choice." —*Doug Larson*

Accountability is "in." It's one of the hot topics on the speaking circuit, and indeed, I often address that topic in my keynotes and seminars. If you're going to be an effective manager, you **MUST** hold your people accountable. Otherwise, your company may crash. After all, if an employee is paid \$200 a day to do a job but only gives back \$50 worth of effort, the economics simply do not work out.

The same goes for parenting. If you're going to be an effective parent, you **MUST** hold your kids accountable. When they violate the rules, mix with the wrong crowd, cheat on a test, stay out beyond their curfew, or do any other dumb things like drugs or alcohol, you **MUST** hold them accountable.

Of course, ineffective parents make excuses for not doing their job. They'll say, "By the time I get home from work I'm too tired to discipline the kids ... or ... I want them to have all the things I never had growing up." Your sincere but naive sentiment will simply turn spoiled children into spoiled adults ... who feel entitled to everything but responsible for nothing.

Holding people accountable may sound straight laced. Well, so is gravity. Practice prevention; build a fence at the top of the cliff, not a hospital at the bottom!

So I'm all for accountability. But there's another issue that may be even more important ... and that is ... people learning to take responsibility. It's one of the characteristics of EVERY truly effective, successful individual in any role or job.

Unfortunately, we're living in a time and a culture where many people don't know it means to take responsibility. After all, the "in" thing is to blame everybody else for what's not working.

To turn that around, we've got to start teaching people what "taking responsibility" is all about. Here are a few of the things I teach in my own programs...

1. Responsible people take responsibility for making things better.

As author Barbara Pletcher puts it, "The real winners in life are the people who look at every situation with an expectation that they can make it work or make it better."

That's tough. Anytime you try to make things better, you'll probably face naysayers who say it can't be done, roadblockers who try to stop you, and the very likely possibility you'll fail before you succeed. And who wants to go through all that hassle?

Winners! Responsible winners!

Responsible winners know it takes courage to leave their comfort zones, go through some tough times, and wonder if they're making any progress at all. But they try to make things better ... anyway.

It's a lesson that needed to be learned at a particular dog food company. At their annual conference, the sales manager asked his sales team how they liked the company's new advertising program. "Great," they replied, "the best in the business."

"What do you think of the product?" the manager asked. "Fantastic," they replied.

"How about the sales force?" he insisted. Of course, the sales team knew they were the best so they responded enthusiastically.

"Okay then," the manager said, "if we have the best brand, the best packaging, the best advertising program, and the best sales force, why are we in 17th place in our industry?" After an awkward silence one of the salesmen shouted, "It's those dogs. They just won't eat the stuff."

Guess what? Your problem is not the dogs, or your job, or your spouse, or society at large, or whatever. Be honest. Your biggest challenge in life is you. If life's not going the way you want it to, you are

responsible for making it better. And responsible winners do exactly that.

2. Responsible people take action rather than wait to be told.

In other words, they learn to self-motivate and self-manage. And over time, that builds tremendous character as well as great results. As Dr. Heartsill Wilson said, "The things you do that you don't have to do will always determine what you are when it is too late to do anything about it."

It's a lesson a wannabe sports reporter had to learn. As Gene Marine, the editor of the "Bellefontaine Examiner" newspaper in Ohio, tells the story, he sent a new sports reporter out to cover a big game. He returned to the paper without a report.

"What's the story?" asked Marine. "There is none," replied the reporter.

"No game?" What happened?" quizzed the editor. "The stadium collapsed." answered the reporter.

Unable to believe what he was hearing the editor asked, "Then where's the report on its collapse?" After a moment's hesitation, the reporter replied, "That wasn't my assignment, Sir." Needless to say, that was the end of his career. The wannabe reporter knew little or nothing about being responsible. He waited to be told to what to do rather than take appropriate action.

Max Steingart writes about that in his eloquent essay. He writes, "Success Requires a Willingness to Act..."

If you want to be successful, you can start at anytime.

But you must start.

Don't make the mistake of not doing anything because you can only do a little.

Do what you can do.

To be aware of what you want and not go after it,

To spend years wondering if something could have materialized,

And never knowing if it could have been, is a tragic waste of your life.

The worst thing you can do is not to try.

To reach a port, you must sail.

You must sail, not lie at anchor.

You must sail off in the direction of your dreams, not drift.

A journey of a thousand miles, begins with one step."

3. Responsible people don't expect somebody else to do it.

The greatest researcher on success, Napoleon Hill, commented on that. He said many years ago, "The best job goes to the person who can get it done without passing the buck or coming back with excuses." The responsible person just does what needs to be done instead of expecting someone else to do it.

Now I know there are some people who are aren't taking responsibility for making things better, who aren't stepping up to the plate, because they honestly believe there are others who are more qualified. Their intentions are good ... but they're wrong. Those who make a difference in life or at work are seldom the most qualified. More often than not, those that make a difference are simply the ones who decided to try.

At the University of Southern California commencement ceremony, that's what Chief Judge Alexander M. Saunders told the students. He said, "As responsibility is passed to your hands it will not do to assume that someone else will bear the major burdens, that someone else will demonstrate key convictions, that someone else will run for office, take care of the poor, visit the sick, protect civil rights, enforce the law, transmit value, and defend freedom. What you do not value will not be valued. What you do not remember will not be remembered. What you do not change will not be changed. What you do not do will not be done. You can, if you will, craft a new society. It's not a question of what to do, but simply the will to do it."

Perhaps you have a tough decision to make, and you've been putting it off and putting it off. Perhaps you've been waiting for someone else to do what needs to be done. If so, write down all the reasons you're not taking any action. And write down all the advantages of making the decision and taking the necessary action. Once you know in your heart

what you should do and why you should do it, go for it. It's what taking personal responsibility is all about.

Cowardice asks, "Is it safe?" Expediency asks, "Is it politic?" Vanity asks, "Is it popular?" But conscience asks, "Is it right?"

Long before the days of computers and long before such programs as Photoshop, people would say, "The camera never lies." And people would tend to believe that "What you see is what you get."

Well, some rather nasty characters took advantage of that belief to make themselves look more responsible than they really were. And no one engaged in more of that deceitfulness than Josef Stalin. He did everything he could to alter history and exaggerate his importance.

You see, Stalin was ruthless. Anyone considered a traitor disappeared in the middle of the night, was sent to a hard labor camp, or was executed. That made him extremely unpopular inside his own country as well as around the world ... so much so that he lived his life in fear of being overthrown.

The strange thing is, Stalin didn't change his irresponsible policies. Instead, he did everything he could to make himself "look" like the rightful, responsible leader of the Soviet Union. He added himself to photos of events at which he wasn't present. He forged photographs of himself standing alongside his revered predecessor, the God-like Lenin, while he removed pictures of his rivals or made them look bad. Stalin was even vain enough to make himself look taller ... and hopefully more powerful in the fake pictures.

So it's no wonder history has labeled Stalin as a very sick and highly immoral individual. Instead of taking responsibility for all the crimes he perpetrated, he simply pretended to be a leader with a lot of responsibility. As the old rock-and-roll song used to say, he was "The Great Pretender."

Well that's NOT what I'm talking about when I talk about taking responsibility. I'm talking about the things real champions do to ensure their success on and off the job.

4. Responsible people keep their focus.

They keep their eye on the ball. They know that without focus, it is difficult to hit a bulls-eye, make a touchdown, take a good picture, or avoid an accident on the highway. They know focus is an essential ingredient in the formula for success.

Responsible people are always asking themselves one critical question. They ask themselves if their present action will take them closer and closer to their goal. If so, they do it. If not, they skip it.

By contrast, irresponsible people are easily distracted. Unexpected events take them off course, and before they know it, the kids are gone or a career opportunity has slipped away. They spend too much of their time chasing the "urgent" things in life rather than the "important" things.

5. Responsible people practice self-discipline.

Responsible people know that responsibility is a CHOICE that only they can make. They know that their response-ability is the ability to CHOOSE a correct response in any situation they face. And as a result, they tend to be very successful. But just in case they aren't, they don't blame others. They take responsibility for their actions and attitudes.

Max Steingart wrote about the connection between responsibility, choices, and self-discipline. All of us would be wise to heed his words. He writes:

You Make Your Own Opportunities

Your destiny isn't a matter of chance, it's a matter of the choices you'll make in the coming year.

Success isn't something you wait for, it's something you must pursue in the months ahead.

Don't wait for extraordinary opportunities to be successful.

Seize common occasions and turn them into great ones.

Opportunities sometimes come disguised in the form of misfortune, or temporary defeat.

Start where you are.

You're at this moment, standing right in the middle of opportunity.

If you act on your dreams you can live them in the New Year.

You have a lot to look forward to.

To follow Steingart's advice requires a great deal of self-discipline. Every time you stop yourself from doing what you shouldn't (such as turning in a report that is less than professional or eating that extra sweet) and start doing what you should (such as turning in a polished professional report or eating a carrot instead), you become a more responsible person overall.

By contrast, irresponsible people play the blame game. Instead of being self-disciplined and making their own opportunities, they make excuses for their lack of success. The boss was being unreasonable; the customers expected too much; their kids wouldn't listen to them, and on and on and on.

6. Responsible people take care of the small stuff.

They know that the little things count, and they make sure they do the small things ... such as getting a card for an upcoming birthday or anniversary, attending their child's game, picking up the dry cleaning, straightening up the conference room after a meeting, or showing up at a company picnic.

Irresponsible people tend to dismiss the small things. After all, they got busy, simply forgot, or didn't think those small things -- that were big things to other people -- were really that important. All they offer is more of the same ... more excuses for their lack of responsibility.

7. Responsible people start what they finish.

Responsible people follow through. What they start ... they finish. In fact, they're often known by others as having this observable, admirable quality.

If this characteristic is a tough one for you, if you've got a tendency to quit before you finish, give yourself some relatively small goals that require you to stretch just a little. Start in some areas you care deeply about. And then with a few wins under your belt, start tackling some other more challenging areas. Nothing breeds success like success.

8. Responsible people give back what was given to them.

They know that everything they have ... whether it be possessions, knowledge, or talent ... is to be shared with others rather than stored and hoarded.

One such person was Elie Wiesel who spent a considerable amount of time in the Nazi concentration camps. He realized he was "given" an experience that "gave" him wisdom that he needed to share. So he traveled extensively after his release, talking to young people. He often asked young people, "How will you cope with the privileges and obligations society will feel entitled to place on you?"

As he tried to guide them he shared his sense of responsibility. He would say, "What I receive I must pass on to others. The knowledge that I have must not remain imprisoned in my brain. I owe it to many men and women to do something with it. I feel the need to pay back what was given to me."

That's exactly what Jeanne Joyce did, a teacher from the school system in the State of Nevada. She attended my "Journey to the Extraordinary" experience and found it so profound, so powerful, and so effective that she began teaching the skills and concepts to her students. When a few of her fellow teachers saw the transformation taking place in Jeanne's students, they wanted to learn what she was doing, so Jeanne took on the responsibility of giving back what was given to her. She began teaching them.

But that was just the beginning. Then Jeanne brought a whole team of teachers to my next "Journey to the Extraordinary" experience, and they went back to Nevada to teach more teachers the techniques they learned from me. And now the program is being taught and shared throughout the entire state. That's what responsible people do. They give back what was given to them.

9. Responsible people accept ultimate responsibility.

It's one of the constant, irrefutable characteristics of all successful people. They accept ultimate responsibility ... like General Eisenhower.

He was given responsibility for planning the D-Day invasion. Giving the okay was a painful decision, one he knew would lead to many deaths. Yet if it was a success, it would guarantee victory over the Nazis. In the hours prior to the assault Eisenhower wrote a press release that he would use in the event of the invasion's failure. It read: "Our landings have failed ... and I have withdrawn the troops. My decision to attack at this time and this place was based on the best information available. The troops, the Air Force and the Navy did all that bravery and devotion to duty could do. If any blame or fault attaches to this attempt, it is mine alone."

How refreshing, leader-like, and how uncommon. You seldom if ever hear today's "so-called" leaders take responsibility and say such things as, "It was my vote that is responsible for our current economic crisis ... or ... It was my legislation that lead to the crash in housing ... or ... It was my willingness to overlook the proper safety procedures that lead to our current disaster."

To wrap it up, responsible people are response-able. With that skill you'll reap more rewards than blame-gamers or excuse-givers ever will.

Actions:

On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means "always making excuses" and 10 means "always taking responsibility," how would you score yourself? What is your plan for increasing your score?

How good are you at starting what you finish? If you need to get better, write down the steps that will need to be taken to finish your project, and write down a deadline for the completion of each step. ###

As a best-selling author and Hall of Fame professional speaker, **Dr. Alan Zimmerman** has taught more than one million people in 48 states and 22 countries how to keep a positive attitude on and off the job. In his book, *PIVOT: How One Turn In Attitude Can Lead To Success*, Dr. Zimmerman outlines the exact steps you must take to get the results you want in any situation. Go to Alan's site for a [Free Sneak Preview](#)

It's a Simple Thing, Really **by Karen Wright**

CNN and Money magazine say the US has been in a recession since Dec. 2007. Three years and we're still holding our collective breath wondering when it's going to end so we can get back to normal. Will we be able to get back to normal? Or, as many are beginning to suspect, is this our new normal?

Economists define recession as a general and prolonged slow down in economic activity. But, when did we get to be so narrowly defined as human beings as by our economic state? We're more than our bank balances, for God's sake! It seems that when the economy slows we stop living altogether.

Perhaps we're not in a recession as much as we're in a retreat - the act of withdrawing from something hazardous, alarming, or unpleasant in order to determine a better path.

It's my opinion (is it yours?) that the lifestyle we've collectively bought is a dead-end - even within our own lifetime, let alone future generations. Here in the US, and many other parts of our interdependent planet, we've become users and consumers. Living as if our resources will last forever. Oblivious to the wake of waste we've spawned. We've grown so accustomed to having every fleeting whim satisfied that we've become truly numb to the sacredness of life and our individual responsibility to humanity's well-being.

We have so much, yet feel so empty. Can it be that this recession is a permanent correction, not a temporary nuisance? Are we being asked to wake up and re-vision the way we live? This isn't a time to duck beneath the covers and wait it out. This is a time to take accountability seriously and make conscious decisions about how to live a more meaningful, sustainable life.

Yes, it's going to hurt some - in the beginning. Our egos are going to feel deprived. Walking in our sleep is no longer going to be dreamy. We're finally being asked to grow up and own the fact that we aren't, and never have been, independent of others or our environment. The

air I pollute with my cigarettes, seeps into your lungs too. Rusty broken down cars littering my front yard, devalue your view and property. Water bottles I consume by the hundreds pile up in our landfills like translucent mountains of thoughtlessness.

We are eternally connected, you and I. There is nothing I can do in my life that doesn't, in some way, affect you too. Religion has taught this for eons and quantum science is confirming the physically inseparable oneness of humanity. My unconsciousness hurts others. End of story.

So, what can we do NOW to not only stop this dead-end existence and experience more meaning and real fulfillment each day? There are hundreds of websites enumerating countless ways to simplify, reduce, reuse, and recycle. But, unless we want our efforts to pass as swiftly as a New Year's Eve resolution, we must do one thing first - shift how we think about who we are, what's truly meaningful to us, and how to be part of the bigger picture and not just a mass of egotistical desires for more and more. Haven't we learned that we can never have enough of that which never satisfies?

For now (without considering accountability to anyone else), are you truly happy with the way you're living your life? I'm not just talking about being in your dream job or relationship. I'm talking about how you walk on this earth. Do you experience beauty in the way a flower sways in the breeze? Does the rain falling on your roof lull you into bliss? Can you smell the change of seasons coming? Can you hear your heart beat and feel the coolness of incoming air swelling your lungs? Are you awake?

When you eat, do you truly savor each delectable morsel? Or, are you shoveling another bite in even before you've swallowed the last? When you meet someone new do you really look at them and honestly hear them? Or are you so wrapped up in your own thoughts that you don't even remember their name? Are you awake?

Before we can find joy in this new way of life, we must first find a new way of thinking. A way that embodies a bigger landscape than our internal mental insinuations. We must begin to own our place in humanity. Take responsibility for the air we breathe and the space we

inhabit. We must stop being individually-minded consumers and begin to be mutually-minded contributors. To think beyond win-at-all-costs and instead think win-win.

The Great Law of the Iroquois <http://www.indigenouspeople.net/iroqcon.htm> required significant decisions to benefit seven generations (a couple hundred years) into the future. The good of the people today must also be good for the people of tomorrow. Do I live like that? Do I think only of my own self-interested needs or do I consider the impact my choices are having for humanity's days to come? And more importantly, does thinking of others when making choices feel like a personal sacrifice?

I've learned that real life is quite simple. I know today's reality feels anything but simple, but that's because we've believed that complexity meant progress - sophistication - intelligence. It doesn't. It just means complex. Love is simple. Truth is simple. Responsibility is simple. Simple is enduring and unchanging. It's what we can count on, no matter what particular complexity is distorting the truth.

This lifestyle retreat is an opportunity to become simple again. That doesn't mean giving up what brings us real joy. But, it does mean leaving behind all the empty promise that more equals better. More is just more. And if a little can't satisfy; more can't either.

From 1995 to 2000 I lived aboard a sailboat. Talk about simplicity! My accumulated life was pared down to a fraction of what I'd grown accustomed to (except for shoes, of course!). At the time, it was challenging to give up things I'd owned. To see friends take home my history of treasures and trinkets. I must admit that part of me felt less than as my 'net worth' was reduced to a few necessities. But, something of a miracle happened quite quickly. I didn't miss a thing. No sense of regret or sacrifice. Just a clean breathable simplicity.

Although no longer on the boat, and with a bit more baggage than then, I still find simple joy in paying attention to how, and how much, I use stuff. There's even a childlike bit of accomplishment in squeezing the last tiny little tad from the toothpaste tube and cutting open my moisturizer bottle to find another 3 weeks of product still left, after no

more would pump out. I not only feel I've gotten my true money's worth, I feel like I've cheated consumerism's hypnotic spell - buy more....buy more.

This simplicity thing has really gotten to me and I look upon the quality of my relationships with the same desire to keep things simple. Tell the truth. Ask the question that will clarify the confusion. Don't pretend to be what you're not. Feel what you feel - without excuse. Seek connection, not control. Breathe. Live. ###

Karen Wright is author of [*The Sequoia Seed: Remembering the Truth of Who You Are*](#), a great read for anyone who is seeking understanding or guidance, inspiration or clarity in his or her life. [*Waking Up*](#), the free bi-monthly ezine, was created to help you activate your natural motivation to move beyond mere existence and to really LIVE your dreams.

Find Freedom in the Principles of Invisible Justice by Guy Finley

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

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

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

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

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

of suffering upon him or her. This understanding is a gift of great freedom known only by the true few. And we can count ourselves among these liberated ones if we are willing to learn what we must. Here are a few vital facts about this unseen system that ensures equality for all.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.

“Guy Finley’s insights are an absolute goldmine of true wisdom and AH-HA moments. . . no wonder he is simply one of the best at describing the “inner game” and awakening to a higher level of self. He gently points a finger to our hearts and reminds us to seek within. Something about the passion in his voice as he talks and the way he describes everything makes it so clear that we actually can meet life without all the fears, stresses, anxieties, and worries.”

—Karen King

Co-Founder, InnerHealingCompass.com

Vicissitude, Victimhood, and Victory by Chuck Gallozzi

Life can be like a roller coaster, with its ups and downs. Because of these vicissitudes of fortune, we may feel like a victim one time and like a victor at another. A reader is now feeling like a victim and wishes to become victorious again. I'll call her Sophia, which means wisdom. She's a 42 year old European with a university degree in Classical Studies and has some questions and comments.

"I worked as a teacher, earning enough money to get along. But after the financial crisis hit my country, I found myself without a job or income. A year has past and I'm still without a job. I live with my parents to survive. I see nothing but a bleak future for me and am afraid I may have to depend on others to exist."

Sophia, as you walk the streets in search of work, you pass many of your countrymen and women who have also been battered by the economic collapse. They bravely wear masks, pretending to be hopeful while they live in anguish. Normally we wouldn't have access to their inner pain because they skillfully hide their suffering.

But you are now in a unique position because by joining their ranks, you now know their worries, fears, and concerns. It is natural to want to run away from pain, but this time stop and embrace it. Allow yourself to feel your pain. Then, change your focus and feel *their* pain. Sense their suffering. Understand their need for encouragement, hope, and relief. And resolve to yourself that you will do whatever is possible to relieve their suffering.

How will you do this? Not by sitting at home, but by getting out and finding a job where you can contribute to society, inspire others, relieve the burden of your parents, and find a meaningful life. But how is this possible in an economy that has no jobs? Well, it is incorrect to say there are no jobs. It may be true that there are no jobs *similar to* your previous one, but there are jobs. Restaurants need waitresses and hotels need cleaning ladies, for example.

But aren't their salaries too low? On the contrary, they earn far more than you are currently earning! It is time to reconsider the purpose of going to work. Sure, we have to earn money to survive, but the primary purpose of a job is self-expression and service. The jobs of a university professor and a waitress may appear very different, but they both provide equal opportunities for self-expression, growth, and service.

No job is beneath you, and each is an opportunity to uplift your customers, coworkers, and employer.

Be a beacon of light, a ray of hope, a fountain of cheerfulness. Whether one is an airplane pilot or airport porter, the job description remains the same: *do your best*. Why? Hans Christian Andersen explains, "To be of use in the world is the only way to be happy." Remember, Sophia, although we need money to feed our body, we also need an opportunity to serve and nourish our soul.

"Because of my depressed state, I don't look after myself. That is, I stopped trying to dress neatly or go out."

This is another reason to get a job. It will force you to go out, stick to a schedule, live up to responsibilities, and get along with others, all of which will help you to feel better.

"Because I feel depressed and sad most of the time, I don't take care of myself. I am tempted to wait until things get better. But I'm afraid this may keep me in a rut. What is the relationship between how we dress and how we behave?"

When you don't dress neatly, you will have little confidence and feel unhappy. It is not important to wear expensive clothing. As long as we dress neatly and are proud of our appearance, we can perform well.

"As for relationships, I adore my mother, but hate my brother and dislike my father. I haven't had many friends and now have none at all. I stopped seeing them when I realized they were not so honest and I don't have much in common with them. Of course I like having friends and want to make new ones, but more interesting ones."

Your once secure world was shattered by the economic collapse you had to live through. So, I understand why you feel disillusioned, disappointed, dissatisfied, dispirited, and despondent. But these feelings offer you no hope for recovery. To make a turnaround, reflect on the wisdom of the ancient philosophers and sages that played an important role in the development of your country. Their DNA is a part of you. Commit yourself to living up to your heritage. Ask yourself how they would behave if they were in your shoes and what kind of courage would they display. Emulate their greatness.

Sophia, can you think of anything more important than relationships? As your circle of friends grew smaller and smaller, did you grow stronger or weaker? When you can't get along with others, it is like being in a sinking boat and throwing away life vests because you don't like them.

If you want to get along with others, ask yourself what it is that you don't like about them. Be as specific as possible. The answers are important because *they reveal what you don't like about yourself*. Once you know what you don't like about yourself, change. Work on yourself until you are happy with the new you. Once you like yourself, you will find that you like others and they like you.

Why do you dislike your brother so much? All of us are doing the best we can with what we have at the moment. Isn't that true of you? You're not a nasty person; you have a lot on your mind and are trying to cope as best you can. Don't you agree? Well, the same is true for your brother, father, and friends. It's time to change direction. Make it your goal to have a heart as large as the world; yet, too small to hold a single hurtful thought or memory.

Anger, resentment, and contempt will get you nowhere. But compassion, acceptance, and understanding will rescue you from pain, unhappiness, and failure. Treat the world as you wish to be treated, and all your cares will be resolved. Stop looking for things to complain about and start looking for things to rejoice in. Or, as the bible says, "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever

things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." (Philippians, 4:8)

"Although I had some boyfriends in the past, I don't have a romantic relationship at this time. Perhaps after I get over my problems, I will find a reliable and loving man."

Sophia, to find the man of your dreams, you'll have to become the woman of his dreams. And what kind of woman is the man of your dreams looking for? Oh, if you are a good cook, keep a clean house, can manage the family budget, and are attractive, it's bound to get some attention, but these are not the factors the man of your dreams is looking for. Because he plans to spend the rest of his life with you, what he really is attracted to is someone who is always cheerful, smiling, and has a delightful laugh. Someone who gets along with everyone and is admired for her gentleness, kindness, and generosity. Someone who makes a great friend, has a sense of humor, and is quick to praise and support those around her. Aren't these the qualities you would like the man of your dreams to have? Become what you wish to have and you will get it.

"My hobbies are reading, sports, painting portraits, and dancing (for which I have professional certification). However, at this time my only concern is with work."

Of course we have to focus on what is important. Yet, we shouldn't neglect recreation. Think about the word for a moment; the actual meaning is *re-creation*; that is, we need to take time to re-create, rejuvenate, and refresh our spirit. All work and no play makes us very dull indeed. Besides, our hobbies allow us to develop and express our creativity, as well as use both hemispheres of our brain for a more complete, balanced life.

Your hobbies can also offer an avenue for you to serve others. For example, you can paint portraits or teach painting at a home for the aged. The more good you do in the world, the more people and opportunities you will be exposed to, and who knows where you will

meet your future life partner? I know where you will not meet him: at home. So, get active.

“When I was 29, something terrible and something wonderful happened to me. I had a nervous breakdown. That was terrible. But I was treated by a kind psychologist. That was wonderful. When I told him my problems made it difficult for me to concentrate on my studies and I was fearful of failing upcoming exams, he said, ‘Don’t worry. You will manage everything.’ This gave me strength, so I pushed myself and passed.”

Sophia, you have experienced the value of encouragement. When you were down, your psychologist lifted your spirits and helped you overcome a crisis. Please remember the impact his words had on you. You are now in a position to pass the torch. You can kindle the hearts of others by uplifting their spirits with encouraging words. When you do so, you will be as important to them as your psychologist was to you.

“Sometimes I daydream about working for myself in another part of my country or even of moving to another country. But I don’t know if it’s worthwhile to engage in such fancy.”

Focus on what you need to do now and the future will take care of itself.

“For over a year I have been reading books and articles on psychology and NLP (Neuro-Linguistic Programming); yet, I still feel stuck and don’t know how to regain control of my life.”

You’ve been going through a lot, Sophia, so you’re exhausted and confused, which is perfectly understandable. All you need is to be led by the hand and given a roadmap to success. Because of your studies and intelligence, I know you will do very well. Here are simple, concrete steps for you to follow:

How to Get Unstuck and Regain Control over Your Life in 4 Easy Steps:

Step 1

[Click here to download your free Action Acceleration Sheet, which will help you plan and take your first action steps.](#)

Step 2

[Click here to download free audio files \(mp3\), which will teach you how to use the Action Acceleration Sheet and get unstuck.](#)

Step 3

[Click here and submit your email address to receive 20 more tools to help you solve your problems.](#)

Step 4

Become your own life coach. What is a life coach? It is someone who can teach you how to get from where you are to where you want to be. How do you become your own life coach? Study *365 Ways to Be Your Own Life Coach* by David L Preston. [Click here to read it online for free.](#)

[Or click here to buy the book.](#)

Optional Help 1

[Get support by joining this free online community.](#)

Optional Help 2

Discover how easy your life is compared to the life of Nick Vujicic. If he can become hugely successful, so can you! [Read his story or buy his book here.](#)

Well, Sophia, the ball is now in your court. You have received a helping hand, but you will soon discover the greatest helping hand of all is at the end of your own arm! Please remember that every unattempted solution fails. But if you follow steps 1~4, you will get to live the life of your dreams. So, what are you waiting for? ###

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>

Dissolving Life Jams by Beca Lewis

Have you ever been in a traffic jam? Once traveling from Connecticut to Ohio Del and I were in three of them. Two of them lasted long enough that we turned off the car and waited for an hour or more before being able to move on. In all of them, we never saw the cause even though the result was over 10 miles of stopped traffic. However, once the cause of the jam was removed the traffic flowed as if it had never happened.

Did you ever sit by a little stream of water after a rain and put sticks in it to watch the water back up? Of course, we have all seen big streams of water backed up as one log or other obstacle gets stuck and backs up more debris until the stream stops running and begins to flood.

Life jams work the same way. One thing gets stuck in your mind and a life jam begins. It can feel like nothing is moving in your life, or it can be an overwhelming flood of feeling that it's just "too much". We react to this life jam in many ways. We can feel angry, depressed, tired, manic, confused, or live in a state of "who cares". Since life jams are not visual like a traffic jam or a blocked stream we often don't understand what has stopped the flow, we just know that our life is not working.

The good news about all jams is that all it takes is the removal of the first obstacle for the traffic, stream, and our life to begin to flow again. However, how do you find the cause of our life jam?

Often we already know the cause, but haven't believed it could be so simple, or the problem could feel too hard to let it go. Years ago, I was in a life jam. Nothing I did worked. Nothing happened. I worked hard, tried hard, used all the ideas I could think of that always worked before, but they didn't work this time. However, all along I was hearing an inner voice telling me that I wanted to paint.

But since nothing was working in my life I had "reasons" why I couldn't paint. No money and no time – I had to get out of the jam I was living

in. Finally, out of ideas, I decided to listen to the inner voice again. It said, "Paint". I said "No money, no time". It said, "Paint".

I thought that meant I would have to buy an easel, paints, and brushes. Eventually it occurred to me that I could afford a can of wall paint and a brush so that's what I did. Within days of my beginning to paint my walls, my life started to flow again.

In this case my life jam began by my wanting things to go **my** way and by not honoring an inner desire that I had because I felt that I didn't deserve it. I was listening to a belief, a committed thought pattern, not intuition.

Life jams are also caused by not wanting to, or not knowing how to, do something. Or having too many things to do without knowing what to do first. The answer is again – listen. Perhaps the thing we feel we have to do doesn't really need to be done, or can be done a different way.

Ask for help for the thing you don't know how to do. Take one thing – anything – and lift it out of the jam by either doing it, or getting rid of it like a tangled knot in a necklace that unfolds by taking out one knot at a time, your life jam with loosen doing one thing at a time.

Sometimes it takes someone outside of ourselves to see the cause of our life jam. Often in speaking to clients, we hear them state the cause, but still can't see it themselves. Once we guide them in a way that opens their eyes to their committed thought pattern they can easily release that thought and the actions that follow from it, and let life flow again.

Spirit always flows. It's our thoughts and the perception that follows that cause life jams. Our belief systems past and present are as solid as matter. In fact, what appears as our life and matter is our firm commitment to what we believe to be true. To dissolve that stuck perception and let Spirit move our life we can do a few simple things.

Ask yourself as you think something, or react to something, "Is this true?" "Is there another way to look at this?" Still stuck? Ask yourself

if you would be doing what you are doing if you weren't looking for approval or acknowledgement.

Then listen.

If you are rationalizing why you believe or are doing something, you are listening to the wrong voice.

Listen again. You will hear the still small voice of Spirit's guidance that is often called intuition. Follow that guidance even when it doesn't seem to apply to your life jam. It will work. Your life will flow again and you can rejoice in the awareness and certainty that Life is always providing all that you need since you are the flow and song of Life Itself. ###

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>

Still Living! by Steve Wickham

To understand that we exist at the outer-most cusp of time - whilst that is indeed true, for tomorrow it mightn't be so - is blessing like nothing else in this world.

As if surfing the wave of physical existence, which is more than can be said for millions of others who've already passed, there's the opportunity we have at history. We're making it now.

Yet, before we plunge into the celebration that's the breathing, gasping life we must reflect on those who've not got it so good right now - they're all around us...

First, Thoughts of Those Gone - Paying Homage to Their Memory

This is no blight on those who've gone. We can think of them, and of those who mourn for a loss. That fact merely inspires people to live all the more, or it should - that's the theory, isn't it? No matter, it is still okay to miss them terribly!

What a confusing mess this place is; love of life that remains, yet a squalid sorrow that hangs in defiant listlessness. Or perhaps we don't even want to be here right now?

And then to 'celebrate' that we're still living... it's almost an insult to their memory. Whether it's 'what they would've wanted' or not is beside the point. The emotions felt by those left behind are surprising at their source and impact. So unexpected. That's grief.

Acceptance is a level playing field of the soul - you will get there.

Then, The Fact of 'Life' Comprising Purpose and Meaning — NOW

Not a second wasted, not one expired prematurely. And, yet, they're all evaporating as we breathe them out.

'Still living' is a magnificent reality that will waste to nothingness soon enough.

If that is not purpose and meaning enough I don't know what is. Why do we need an excuse to make the most of our moments? And this is nothing about achievement if not contentment.

As we reflect over our recent days and use these reflections to plan for our immediate futures there's a strange fact reconciled. Moments of history are being written by our every thought and act.

'Still living' is the tape ON RECORD - in the studio and ON AIR - and the world watching on with baited breath for our next move.

'Still living' can be likened to making differences whilst there is still time; not the least of which in our relationships and on our goals. Those lands lay captive upon the actions of history-making open to each of us.

'Still living' as a concept for the future is making life count - even the wasted moments for which we're all entitled. ###

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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/>

Pinpointing a Natural Pain Relief Option by Peter Games, L Ac.

Pain comes in many different shapes and sizes. Pain can rear its ugly head as mild discomfort that "comes and goes" or severe, excruciating agony that takes our breath away. Pain may be completely debilitating, interfering with exercise, work, sleep, and countless other activities or it may be a minor nuisance that doesn't slow us down at all. It can be the result of a specific incident or it can seemingly come from nowhere. Pain is even described with a wide range of terms, including soreness, aching, tenderness, burning, tightness, or throbbing.

We have all experienced some type of physical pain at one time or another. Yet, even though we all know what pain is, it can still be difficult to actually define. It is usually described as an unpleasant sensory experience and it is incredibly common in our society. Half of all Americans seek medical care for pain each year and it is the most common reason for visiting a doctor.

Despite our disdain for pain, it actually serves a purpose, and a valuable one at that. Pain is part of our body's defense system and its purpose is to help us avoid harmful behavior. In other words, it's your body's way of telling you that it doesn't like what you are doing and it would prefer that you stop doing it. Sometimes we choose not to listen to that message and other times we have no choice but to hear it and comply.

What are the common approaches for relieving pain? Drugs are very popular for pain relief and they can be very effective. Unfortunately, the adverse effects of numerous drugs have become known in recent years and many of us find the information troubling. Pain relief medications can lead to gastrointestinal complications, liver damage, or kidney reactions. In addition, some pain relief drugs have already been taken off the market because of an increased risk of heart attack or stroke.

Increasingly, people are looking for more natural approaches to help relieve painful conditions. Acupuncture is one natural approach that continues to grow in popularity in the United States. Acupuncture can be helpful for all types of pain, regardless of what is causing the pain or

where the pain is located. The theory behind acupuncture and Chinese medicine states that there is an energy that flows through the human body. This energy can become obstructed for a variety of different reasons. When this occurs, the obstruction results in pain or discomfort. This is summed up by the well-known Chinese saying: "If there is pain, there is no free flow; if there is free flow, there is no pain." The goal with treatment is to clear the obstructions by inserting extremely thin, sterile needles into certain specific points on the body.

From a more scientific point of view, acupuncture has been shown to trigger the release of endorphins and enkephalins, chemicals with pain relieving properties. Other theories propose that acupuncture needles jam the neuronal pathways and prevent pain signals from reaching the brain. The World Health Organization (WHO), in its 2002 report entitled *Acupuncture: Review and Analysis of Reports on Controlled Clinic Trials*, stated that acupuncture "can be regarded as the method of choice for treating many chronically painful conditions." This is not to say that acupuncture is a miracle cure for everyone. It is not. But it would be wise for all of us to become educated about available pain relief options, including non-drug options. Armed with this information, we can make informed decisions which are most suitable for our own unique situations.

Physical pain is incredibly common in our society, although its presentation can vary dramatically from one person to the next. There are many different approaches to relieving pain, each with their own advantages and disadvantages. Increasingly however, people are considering more natural approaches to pain relief. Acupuncture is one such option which can be helpful for a variety of painful conditions. ###

Peter Games is a Licensed Acupuncturist in the state of Idaho. Peter practices [acupuncture in Boise, ID](#) with his wife (who is also a Licensed Acupuncturist). They specialize in the treatment of [pain and infertility in Boise](#). For more information about their practice, please visit www.AcuBoise.com.

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Useful Information on Sleeping Disorders

by Richard Chapo

Anyone suffering from a related sleep disorder condition can find an immense amount of important information on sleeping disorders which can help them become familiar with their condition or that of a loved one's condition. For sleeping disorders the information is practically endless and essential for anyone who wants to be educated on the subject.

Main Types of Sleeping Disorders

The different types of disorders that are out there is the most important information on sleep disorders that you can learn. The most common disorders today are: sleep apnea, sleep walking, parasomnias, night terrors, sleep eating, restless leg syndrome, bruxism, narcolepsy, periodic limb movement disorder, delayed sleep phase syndrome, hypopnea syndrome, jet lag, insomnia, rapid eye movement behavior disorder, shift work sleep disorder and sleep paralysis [Soundsleeping Disorder](#).

When occurs physically during some of these more commonly experienced types of sleeping disorders is another important piece of information on sleeping disorders that is significant. A person with insomnia for instance experiences the inability to fall asleep or even rest for a decent amount of time. Typically it is considered that insomnia is as a result of emotional issues such as stress, fear, anxiety and nervousness. Insomnia can also be caused by an overactive mind or even physical pain. A negative situation isn't necessarily the cause - sometimes overexcitement can keep a person from getting a good night's sleep.

Clenching and grinding of the teeth during sleep is a disorder known as bruxism. This can result in chips in the teeth in addition to wear of the biting surface, along with fractures and cracks in the teeth. Before sufferers are actually aware of their condition, the effects of bruxism may be quite advanced which unfortunately means that by the time the condition is recognized significant dental damage is done.

Brief interruptions of breathing during sleep is the primary

characteristic of sleep apnea. During these interruptions, several entire breaths can actually be skipped which are referred to as apneas. A common form of sleep apnea is obstructive sleep apnea and it may result in upper respiratory infection that causes nasal obstruction or swelling of the throat including a case of tonsillitis that can temporarily produce enlarged tonsils.

A neurological condition is the basis for the narcolepsy sleeping disorder which is characterized by excessive daytime sleepiness. Cataplexy, sleep paralysis, hypnologic hallucinations and automatic behavior are the main symptoms of narcolepsy [Medical Conditions](#).

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Richard Chapo is an expert on the [Information on Sleep Disorders](#).

To find other health articles see [e-healtharticles.com](#)

Does Happiness Continue to Elude You? by Gabriella Kortsch, Ph.D.

When you finally go out to buy that product you've seen touted in magazine ads and TV commercials, or perhaps a friend has also recommended it, you actually go buy it because – or so our marketers tell us – you've seen it or heard about it a minimum of nine times. It's a bit like that when you decide to make changes in your life: you may see the value of doing so when you read an article or a friend tells you, but very possibly you don't in fact do so until you've heard or read about it quite a few times. That is why today I am writing yet another article about happiness ... the *elusiveness* of happiness.

Here are some of the main ingredients you will need in order to change your life from continually pursuing happiness and not reaching it, to a life where happiness simply *is*:

Loving Yourself: This is essential. Without this, nothing else will fall into place. And please, it's *not* about taking long baths with scented candles scattered around the tub (although that is a great thing to do). What loving yourself is about is the recognition that while you are not in a place of good inner well-being, you are *neglecting* to do something that shows you that you love yourself. It means that you can choose to take yourself to a better inner place *at all times, no matter what the circumstances*.

Developing Good Boundaries: This is also essential. How can you possibly be happy as long as your boundaries continue to be transgressed by others? How can you possibly be happy as long as you *allow* your boundaries to continue to be transgressed by others? Working on having good boundaries shows the inner self that you love it. So this one goes hand in hand with the first point.

Being Responsible for Yourself: So often people tell me they hate this. If you become responsible for yourself, you can no longer blame anyone or anything. Your external circumstances – no matter how *apparently* difficult they are – do not mean that you should blame them for how terrible you feel. *How you feel is your responsibility*. Full stop.

What you do – *at all times* – is your responsibility. How you react – *always*—is your responsibility. *No matter what*.

Making Healthy Choices: Guess what? This one is also essential and goes 100% hand-in-hand with the previous one. As long as you make choices that do not benefit you, you haven't much hope of finding that elusive quality you are searching for: happiness. So here's what that means: understand that at every moment of every day you are making choices (even if you choose not to make one). Those choices compose the sum total of your days, your weeks, and hence your life. So it is entirely up to you to make choices about everything that is going on that benefit you. If you find yourself in a terrible bind; a really challenging place, you can *choose* your thoughts about this challenge. You can choose where those thoughts go and hence you have a hand in deciding how you feel thanks to the thoughts you have chosen. And remember: *you always have a choice!*

Forgiving: Bet you don't like that one. But here's the thing: if you don't forgive, happiness *will* absolutely elude you. If you don't forgive, you'll continue to vibrate to past pain. It will eat at you – perhaps only every so often when you think of the past event – but it will corrode your happiness as surely as acid destroys metal. Deciding to forgive; *choosing* to forgive, is elementary to happiness. Forgiving does not mean condoning. It does not mean you have to love or hug that person that did whatever it was to you. It also doesn't mean that you have to have any kind of relationship with that person at all. You need not even let that person know that you have forgiven him or her. But forgiving him or her is one of the tasks you've set yourself in this life. Without it, your happiness will never be more than partial and temporary.

Being Aware: None of the above will work without awareness. So in fact, all of these elements are so intertwined, that by working on one you will also run face-to-face into the others. Leaving one out signifies that the work you do on the others is incomplete. Being aware means first and foremost standing in an engaged relationship with yourself. It means paying attention to what you're thinking and feeling. It means choosing to make better choices by taking more responsibility for yourself and loving yourself in ways that *show* you that you love yourself. You'll know when you're doing it because you will feel so

good inside, even if just for a moment. Even your body will give confirmation of that fact by how it momentarily feels.

There are also many articles directly about the subject of happiness both on my [blog](#) and on my [website](#) with much more information.

Remember: it's up to you whether you are happy, *not your circumstances*. ###

About Gabrielle Kortsch, Ph.D.

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

In Your Happiness lies My Happiness by Sushil Baboo

I had a happy childhood. As a youth and a young startup in the professional life, I was given into whatever life had to offer and my being was in a continuous state of bliss. Was I missing anything? No, none at all! I guess you are getting a picture of an indolently happy person, selfish and self centered. Yes, it was true in a way, how then, do you expect this person to opine a diametrically opposite view on Happiness. Let me lead you to this change.

Happiness I perceived in a singular way, I, me and myself. Pursuing professional success for a greater happiness, I realized, did not exactly make me comfortable as I was visualizing success as a sole venture, but a professional setup akin to the social structure has too many minds at play, each in pursuit of its own agenda and a scale of happiness strangely different, albeit from similar origins. My idea of happiness seemed to alter and shift gears and focus each time I was involved with changing personalities. It was tiring and made me quite disturbed with the plethora of situations I had to deal with in my understood sense of happiness. Happiness, my longing was somehow missing its beat and a sense of strangeness enveloped my ideology. A smallness in me set in with each passing day. What and why seemed my soul mates.

Where was my initial and much known 'feeling' of Happiness? Had it been lost in the labyrinths of professional and social structure or was it my sense of Happiness in singularity obscured in the multitude of the society. Was I alone in this state or was this the dawning of a new reality? A reality in personnel dynamics! In earnestness and with faith in the axiom 'A seeker will be rewarded', I set search for the now elusive Happiness.

My search led me to various aspects of personnel dynamics each leading to one common point and that was, life in duality, one dealing with I, me and myself and the other a step outside my personal confines, the ever changing and pulsating world encompassing everyone. The micro and the macro levels of life revealed that nothing

grows in isolation and our own identity was in the multitude to be Happy.

Personal agendas in all its diversity still has its links to a common desire, a desire to be Happy and contented. Exploring personal agendas revealed that my search and desire was in aiding others to succeed as well as gain much needed support for my growth and Happiness. Happiness, I now realized is an ethereal aspect of our own longings expressed in various ways.

A symmetry in reason and thought process seems to fundamentally envelope our co-existence in the social and professional tapestry of our lives. The picture does not form in the absence of either you or me and all and sundry. Much similar to the various planetary orbits that make up our skies, we too have to seek and form our own circle with various interloping circles from all in the same social structure. Most importantly is the reality that if any our circles do become askew, we are then in a stressed up situation evoking no feeling of Happiness. While assisting and correcting the skews in my or the others circles around me I found that my own circle of Happiness starting to radiate. With my personal agenda to improve my own level of Happiness in focus, I dwelt deeply on seeking the others agenda for contentment and realized that I was able to get the much needed support to enhance my personal and professional life and the resulting sense of Happiness.

Eureka! Was my impression, I had at last found a purpose and the elusive Happiness, whilst putting others personal agenda in front of my own expectation. Not only was I able to better understand what made them click, but also made me a better person. Everyone found me to be friendly and good natured. Yes, this is true, and this level brought with it a much needed respite from the normal hectic professional and personal lifestyle I wanted to lead with assured support and guidance from the many around me.

We are all born imperfect and in this imperfection, we had to seek perfection with inputs from others and the sum total result would always be perfect. Any company or society acquires perfection from the various hues contributed by all and sundry orbiting that plane and

real Happiness is not in a mono color but develops clarity and colorfulness in the multitude of hues that make up the feeling of total Happiness. From being a selfish, self-centered individual, I shared my knowledge and resources and in return I was rewarded with multifarious aspects, aspects both materialistic and holistic. I had grown in stature and maturity. The main changes I reckoned which would make my sense of Happiness a permanent part of me were, Only if I...

- * Could accept the fragility of my existence
- * Am prepared to see the reality of life
- * Can understand that I am the true meaning of my life and yours too
- * Can stake claim to my responsibilities
- * Can be honest to myself
- * Am willing to extend support to the next who is weak
- * Will look at life as a part of the society I live in
- * Accept that there is some meaning for which I am born to
- * Will let go of self pity
- * Will let go of my ego
- * Will accept the laws of nature
- * Will accept that there is no perfection in anything and anyone
- * Will accept the stumbles of life and still stand up
- * Will love others as I wish others to love me

Dear reader, you may ask and even doubt your own ability in the aspect of assisting others for a complete level of Happiness, but you must remember that you play an important role in substantiating the perfect society you live in and your contribution even if it is a speck will lend the true color to the ultimate society and your Happiness. Happiness, I had initially felt was due to materialistic gains I had made, but the deeper sense of Happiness I acquired was in amongst the multitude of people who made my world. Dwell deeply for a moment and ask yourself if you are complete without the others in your life and you will get the answer in a negative. Be open, friendly and have a sense of purpose and I am sure you will agree that Your Happiness lies in Others Happiness.

I now firmly believe that In Your Happiness Lies My Happiness. I am Happy because you are Happy. Be Happy, my friend, for I wish you well and may the Sun always ever shine brightly on you. ###

Happiness Is Your True Wealth by **Eve Achilleos**

"Happiness comes when your work and words are of benefit to yourself and others."

—*Buddha*

I've been studying the new field of Positive Psychology 'finally a psychology that is rigorously learning what's right with people. I'm excited to search out that this research points to what spiritual truths already tell us - you are meant to be happy, to live the life you select AND, your thinking influences your happiness.

No one involves me for coaching saying "help me be happier". However very 'that underlies each person's seeking new job, a higher relationship, more cash - the thought that if you had that you would be happy. Guess what? You are probably already pretty happy 'analysis shows us that almost all folks are mildly happy most of the time - we're wired that way. We have a tendency to are in a position to regulate to and overcome personal difficulties with inspiring levels of resilience. And, a overwhelming majority of folks are able to overcome distress, realize that means and look for out enjoyable experiences and relationships.

What is happiness? Happiness is often seen as trivial, lighthearted, and not nearly as important because the weightier matters of work and family. Researchers say that happiness is the "experience of frequent, mildly pleasant emotions, the relative absence of unpleasant feelings, and a general feeling of satisfaction with one's life." Happiness is a lot of more than a destination. Feeling positive is like having money within the bank that may be spent on the pursuit of alternative goals. Happiness is one in every of your greatest resources that you'll be overlooking.

There are various benefits to being happy. Happiness is related to better health, a lot of creativity, higher income, and better workplace evaluations. Happy folks are more useful, inventive, charitable, altruistic and healthier. They live longer, are more doubtless to marry,

tend to remain married longer, tend to possess more friends and actually earn additional money.

How are you going to be happier? What is it that very happy people truly do differently than the remainder people? Are they smarter, or additional energetic or kinder? There is a robust genetic part to happiness 'regarding fifty% of our levels of happiness are genetically based mostly, life circumstances like economic standing, race and sex account for concerning 10% and the nice news is that the other forty% is personal choice.

Set a realistic expectation about happiness 'mildly pleasant as a rule is simply fine. We are not meant to be wildly euphoric all the time. One in all the foremost powerful ways in which to extend happiness is to not expect achievement to be extremely intense or permanent.

What is the optimal level of happiness? Most of us are within the mildly positive range. If you imagine happiness on a scale from 1 to 10, then the bulk people would level off somewhere within the vi, 7 or 8 range. We have emotional highs and return back to mildly pleasant rather quickly.

Happy people have a trinity of happiness habits: they set goals, have rewarding social relationships and apply positive mental habits. These three practices can maximize your ability to measure the life you want.

1. Set goals that are attainable, time certain, concrete, which work your values. You would like to be moving towards something positive with your goals (for example, offer a presentation that is well received) rather than avoiding one thing negative along with your goal (do not embarrass myself when giving the presentation). Goals that request out a fascinating outcome instead of avoiding negative consequences will give you satisfaction.

Happiness could be a process rather than a destination. People who achieve goals that are important to them tend to savor the accomplishment and then move on to soar to new heights. The satisfaction that comes with achievement can be looked at as an

emotional paycheck for employment well done. That paycheck will then be spent as a resource to work toward alternative new goals. During this approach, happiness is a cup that really overflows.

2. Happy people tend to their relationships as if they were gardens. They have an inclination to the weeds with forgiveness and gratitude and offer tons of nourishment. Listen to the current: the one quality shared by the happiest people is that they have a tendency to own an abundance of rewarding social ties.

Use caution about putting too much weight on luxury, cash and material goals. One amongst the most toxic aspects of materialistic values, psychologically speaking, is that these pursuits can steal time and attention off from nurturing relationships.

Practicing gratitude can help maintain close connections with others. Gratitude is linked to additional helping behaviors, high positive emotions, life satisfaction, increased hope and lower feelings of hysteria and envy.

3. Happy individuals use positive thinking habits to take care of a way of well being. They are less prone to self reflection (particularly rumination concerning negative past events), less possible to interact in negative comparisons with peers, and are more probably to think about events completely (minimize daily hassles and savor the pleasure of successes). Research shows that anyone will get into the habit of "thinking happy." Where is your attention targeted? Target your personal wins, compliments, encouragement. Look for and appreciate the bright aspect of life. The manner you think concerning the future - having an upbeat outlook is a vital predictor of future success. Train your mind 'you'll see the leads to your outer world! ###

Maintaining Balance: Children and Technology **by Annie Burnside, M.Ed.**

In the modern age of texts, tweets, and status updates, it is of utmost importance that parents maintain open lines of face-to-face, soul-to-soul communication with their children. This does not mean resisting a highly technological world that is not going away, but rather continually exploring new ways to connect with one another both on and beyond the keyboard. The new technology in and of itself is not detrimental to children and can be quite useful to them in many ways, but it must be coupled with daily opportunities for personal reflection, creative inspiration, and heart connection with others. It becomes the parents' role to both monitor technological use as their children's sole means of communication and to provide the space and encouragement for life-affirming communication and choices.

Today's children often become immersed in a world of technology and friendships that may seem quite foreign to parents. The more attuned parents are to their children's interests other than technology, the better able they are to utilize those interests as opportunities for expanded connection. Parents can view all interests as possible pathways to enhance real life interactions. Parents must observe closely what truly brings their children joy, where they are most authentic, and what makes their eyes sparkle. To light the path of infusing deeper meaning into everyday life, parents must continually assess whether they are offering a true understanding of core concepts like authenticity, self-love, connectedness, gratitude and presence in tandem with their children's inevitable foray into a fast-paced and ever-changing technological world. Parents must not only teach these concepts but also model ways for their children to integrate them into life experiences and relationships.

The invitation for all parents is to actively participate in as many areas of their children's lives as possible without decreasing their natural move towards independence. Children's passions when viewed from an expanded perspective offer rich material and opportunity to connect with them in deep and joyous ways. Songs, movies, and all veins of creative expression (even technology) provide optimal entry points into daily conversation and in-depth discussion. Parents can utilize

everyday life to dissect and review the core concepts mentioned above to expand perspective and enhance the parent/child bond. The space and opportunity to discuss the touchstones of the day can be created through a weekly family discussion, a nightly chat at bedtime, the family dinner, or time spent together in the car with technology off. Parents must be continually on the lookout for a bridge into their children's world, while at the same time enforce time-outs from computerized communication.

Due to the fact that the new technology is here to stay, to resist it outright will create a backlash for parents and children alike. Instead, the best strategy is to discuss often and enforce expectations regarding appropriate use. Parents must explain to their children why balance in this area is vital to their overall well-being. The capacity to be inspired to create in any venue requires downtime, reflection, openness, and connection to the deeper space within. It is important for children to understand that there is a place for multi-tasking and technological communication, but it is the relationship with their own interior and life itself that ignites their highest potential.

As parents give their children permission to be authentic in their choices, they must also offer them the parental insight that there are multiple angles to every choice. Parents can encourage transparency and honesty by creating a family structure that helps children monitor their choices—such as computer use on the first floor only and no hand-held devices allowed during meal times, family outings, or after 8pm. Parents should not be afraid to expect and enforce accountability, while at the same time remain open to the child's new world. It is imperative that parents take the time to teach children that current choices affect future reality. In other words, parents should assist them in coming to understand that they are the source, not the effect—joy begets more joy, inspiration begets more inspiration, and also the opposite.

Conscious parenting requires active participation in all aspects of family life including the explosive use of technology. Parents must remain extremely aware of their own technological use and their presence within the family. As parents feel their way in regards to their own relationship to technology, they can begin to intuitively reach for

the openings to interact richly with their children that occur naturally rather than push too hard at the wrong time. The teenage years are fast and fleeting. There is much sharing, laughter, togetherness, and JOY to be had. As parents model balance, authentic living and deep connection, their beloved children will follow suit in their own way, through not only their face-to-face, soul-to-soul interactions, but through their inevitable online interactions as well. ###

Annie Burnside, M.Ed., is a soul nurturer, author, public speaker and teacher specializing in conscious relationships and spiritual development. Her book *Soul to Soul Parenting: A Guide to Raising a Spiritually Conscious Family* (Wyatt-MacKenzie, June 2010) offers everyday mediums and universal, life-affirming themes to those families seeking to expand spiritual awareness. Annie resides in Chicago, IL with her husband and three children. www.annieburnside.com

The Sound of Silence **by Miles Murphy**

The other morning during my meditation, I suddenly noticed how quiet things had become. What had, a few moments earlier, been quite noisy, was now suffused with a blanket of silence. It led me to wonder what all the noise had been. And then I realized, in a brief epiphany - for all this was quite immediate and took no more than the fraction of a second, between inhalation and exhalation - that the noise was merely the sound of my own thoughts, a background of white noise, like the hum of an air-conditioner, or an out-of-tune radio. This ever-present chatter or buzz, that had previously gone unnoticed, was now noticeable by its absence, replaced by the rising and falling of my breath and a feeling of lightness as if a great and heavy weight had been lifted and I was finally free.

My brother travels frequently in his job and spends a lot of time in noisy airplanes. He bought himself a set of noise canceling headphones that electronically cancel out the background noise and practically eliminate the roar caused by the plane's engines.

The difference is quite spectacular. The headphones, by eliminating the noise, allow him to really hear the music. I think this is what meditation does. Meditation allows us to calm ourselves and quiet our thinking. The purpose of this, in Buddhism, is that when our thinking is quieted, we can really hear the Dharma, and through listening to the Dharma, attain enlightenment.

Listening is a difficult undertaking. The following humorous anecdote illustrates this difficulty:

As the Jodo Shinshu Priest spoke, those in attendance began taking notes, busily scribbling away. The Priest admonished them, saying, "Don't take notes; just listen!" But moments later, again they started to jot down notes. Finally, the Priest stopped and said, "If you take notes, you'll go straight to Hell!" Just then, he noticed a listener in the front row writing, "If you take notes, you'll go straight to Hell!"

—From *JODOSHINSHU BUDDHISM* by Tetsuo Unno, 1980

The problem with being able to listen is that we are so distracted by our own internal noise, that we don't really hear what the other person is saying. Like the person in the story, we are too busy taking notes to listen to the message.

The Buddha attached a great deal of importance to listening; so much so that one of the words he used for his disciples was *savakas*, meaning 'hearers' or 'listeners'. According to the sutras, one of the conditions for becoming an Arhant (enlightened one) is "Listening to the Dharma" (*dhammasavana*). But in order to listen, we must first dispense with the clutter of unnecessary thoughts and quiet our minds, to "Sweep away the dust and remove the dirt".

One well-known story of the Buddha involves a young man named *Ksudrapanthaka*. When the Buddha first encountered the distraught *Ksudrapanthaka*, he enquired as to the nature of his distress.

Ksudrapanthaka replied that he was a slow learner. No matter how hard he tried he was unable to remember the simplest words of scripture. Because of this, his brother and the other *Bhikshus* had labeled him stupid and told him that his vocation was hopeless. The Buddha reassured him by saying that those who know themselves to be stupid are really wise, and those that think they are wise are truly stupid. He also promised to help to teach him. After a number of failed attempts, the Buddha taught *Ksudrapanthaka* to recite the phrase: "*Sweep away the dust and remove the dirt*", and, in order to reinforce this, he assigned *Ksudrapanthaka* the task of cleaning the shoes of his fellow *Bhikshus* and sweeping the floor of the monastery. As he swept and cleaned, *Ksudrapanthaka* repeated to himself the phrase, "*Sweep away the dust and remove the dirt*", until after many days, he realized the truth -- that the dust and the dirt that needed cleaning were not on the monastery floor and the *Bhikshu's* sandals, but were the grasping and clinging thoughts in his own mind, the three poisons of greed, anger and ignorance. It was this truth that the Buddha was pointing to, and understanding this, *Ksudrapanthaka* attained enlightenment.

To listen, we need a clear mind, a mind free of clutter. We also need to be able to listen with our hearts. To be compassionate is to truly enter

into the suffering of others, to understand them, to be able to help them. It is difficult to be compassionate when we are distracted by our own muddy thoughts and turbulent emotions. Even when listening to someone speaking we are often too pre-occupied with what we are going to say or reacting to the emotional content of what was said to really give ourselves fully to the other person. Listening means giving ourselves up to others, not being distracted by our own noise, in order to be in the moment for them.

Our world is so noisy: The sounds of war, cries of hunger, voices raised in anger against injustice. Our televisions blare with bad news, worse news, products we can buy that promise to make us happy, meaningless and trivial melodramas. Traffic noise assaults our ears, pollution stings our eyes and we surround ourselves with images of ugliness. We long with all of our hearts and all of our minds for a quiet place where we can be at peace. Yet when we find ourselves alone, away from the crowds and the clamor, we are nervous and uncomfortable. The refuge that the Buddha offers is a retreat from the racket and the uproar of the world. The practice that the Buddha offers is not always comfortable: In the universal place of meditation, in the infinite space between breaths, our true selves confront us. This is indeed a lonely and dangerous practice. No wonder we need to come together, to be together, to take refuge in each other.

When I am disturbed in my meditation practice, when I am distracted by ten thousand wandering thoughts, when I can't count to one, let alone to ten, when my knees ache and my legs become numb, I wonder if maybe I am just wasting my time, or maybe, I'm just not very good at this. I always think that others are much more accomplished than I am. When I can't control my anger, when I am unable to curb my desires, when I can only think of my own wants and needs, I wonder if I am, perhaps, not worthy of this undertaking. Yet, each day, doubt and cushion in hand, I return to my sitting, my prayers, and my practice. Each day I arise, set my square mat against the noise and the chaos, and launch myself into the turbulent current of the mind. Every once in a while, I feel a cool wave wash over me, a ripple of joy run through me, or a patch of calm appear in the midst of the mad roar of rushing thoughts. Then I know I am home, and this is exactly where I was meant to be.

The bright moon shines in the early morning

Who am I to say

What casts the shadows that dance upon the walls ###

Miles Murphy works in the field of learning and professional development. An independent scholar, he has a wide range of interests including the humanities of East and West. He is a devotee of Buddhism and a t'ai chi ch'uan enthusiast. His poetry and other writings endeavour to poke about in the rich soil and empty sky of the human condition.

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

The Landscape of Consciousness

by Robert Darby

Most of us make the mistake of taking consciousness for granted as we do so many other things. The act of taking things for granted can have really bad consequences because it affectively limits the possibility of achieving a deep understanding of a given subject because we simply don't investigate the things we take for granted. One of the consequences of taking the landscape of consciousness for granted is the shallow superficial world we live in today.

How many of us even give a moment's thought to the idea of consciousness? We assume that we are conscious if we have thoughts, perceive the world around us, perform actions and are not knocked out and rendered unconscious. Scientifically, mind and consciousness are little understood and currently these concepts are only clearly perceived through the means and methods of mediation.

Exploring the Unknown

Even without getting into the world of meditation, it doesn't take a rocket scientist to realize that the average person today isn't very enthusiastic about exploring the reality of consciousness. It's almost as if we intuitively know that this is scary ground, and given the fact that we are a civilization long accustomed to self deception and denial, then exploring our consciousness could easily reveal the mechanisms that underlie our strategies for avoiding personal responsibility. Exploring the unknown territory of our mind means risking self realization and an encounter with the truth.

This kind of activity is not likely to become a popular event at the Olympics, the possibilities are much too scary. But even though we work hard to avoid becoming awareness of our weaknesses, we occasionally somehow accidentally encounter moments of clarity in which we suddenly see ourselves as we truly are, and it during these moments that we are presented with an opportunity to make a different choice. Instead of flight, we can choose to stand our ground and fight or ourselves and our freedom from the tyranny of fear and ignorance.

Consciousness

When we do find the courage to take a stand, one of the first things we discover is that we don't have a clue what mind and consciousness are about, which also makes us aware of the extent of our ignorance of these matters. Once we get passed the idea of how scary it might be, exploring the idea of consciousness is fascinating. For example; we begin to realize that there are levels of consciousness, there are types of consciousness. In a typical meditation session where the person is focusing all their attention on the experience of breathing, certain question may arise, such as "if I am aware of the feeling of breathing, is this consciousness or direct experience? Who experiences our experiences? And once we are thinking thoughts about the experience, is this consciousness? And who is able to be aware of the activities of the mind such as thinking about what we are experiencing as well as the sensations of our experiences?"

I am conscious of the experience of the feelings of my breath going in and out of my body through my nose. I am now conscious of the thought of breath and breathing. I am now conscious of being conscious of the thoughts regarding the sensation of what I am conscious of experiencing. Time is involved in the types of consciousness as well. I can be conscious of what I am experiencing in the present moment and suddenly, often without realizing the shift, I am now conscious of thoughts related to the future such as what I must do later today, or the past as I rerun the experiences that I had earlier today.

The Present Moment

The truth is that there is only one time and place where the real world is just that, real and actual. That time and place is right here and right now. The Buddhist philosophy calls this the present moment and holds it in high regard. Any consciousness can only happen in the present moment, but if we are now, in the present moment, conscious of thoughts of the past or future and we are not conscious of what our mind is actually doing, then we will fall under the oh so common delusions that our minds are susceptible to and we will no longer be experiencing life in the present moment, but a conceptual representation of reality created by the thoughts of our mind, and

usually designed to distract us from being aware of what we need to be aware of in the present moment.

Developing conscious control and discipline over our mind is not a high priority educational goal in today's civilization and in fact, there are forces in our world that would not find such an agenda in their best interests. However, this is a personal life goal and is associated with the knowledge and skills of personal power. The choice of whether to travel this path depends on whether you want to continue to be a slave to the random activities of your own mind or set yourself free from the tyranny of a life that is not really experienced because there is no real consciousness with which to do so. ###

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

From the Shelf

The Art of Happiness, 10th Anniversary Edition: A Handbook for Living

By Dalai Lama

An updated edition of a beloved classic, the original book on happiness, with new material from His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Dr. Howard Cutler.

Nearly every time you see him, he's laughing, or at least smiling. And he makes everyone else around him feel like smiling. He's the Dalai Lama, the spiritual and temporal leader of Tibet, a Nobel Prize winner, and a hugely sought-after speaker and statesman. Why is he so popular? Even after spending only a few minutes in his presence you can't help feeling happier.

If you ask him if he's happy, even though he's suffered the loss of his country, the Dalai Lama will give you an unconditional yes. What's more, he'll tell you that happiness is the purpose of life, and that "the very motion of our life is toward happiness." How to get there has always been the question. He's tried to answer it before, but he's never had the help of a psychiatrist to get the message across in a context we can easily understand.

The Art of Happiness is the book that started the genre of happiness books, and it remains the cornerstone of the field of positive psychology.

Through conversations, stories, and meditations, the Dalai Lama shows us how to defeat day-to-day anxiety, insecurity, anger, and discouragement. Together with Dr. Howard Cutler, he explores many facets of everyday life, including relationships, loss, and the pursuit of wealth, to illustrate how to ride through life's obstacles on a deep and abiding source of inner peace. Based on 2,500 years of Buddhist meditations mixed with a healthy dose of common sense, *The Art of Happiness* is a book that crosses the boundaries of traditions to help readers with difficulties common to all human beings. After being in

print for ten years, this book has touched countless lives and uplifted spirits around the world.

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to sit down with the Dalai Lama and really press him about life's persistent questions? Why are so many people unhappy? How can I abjure loneliness? How can we reduce conflict? Is romantic love true love? Why do we suffer? How should we deal with unfairness and anger? How do *you* handle the death of a loved one? These are the conundrums that psychiatrist Howard Cutler poses to the Dalai Lama during an extended period of interviews in *The Art of Happiness: A Handbook for Living*.

At first, the Dalai Lama's answers seem simplistic, like a surface reading of Robert Fulghum: Ask yourself if you really need something; our enemies can be our teachers; compassion brings peace of mind. Cutler pushes: But some people *do* seem happy with lots of possessions; but "suffering is life" is so pessimistic; but going to extremes provides the zest in life; but what if I don't believe in karma? As the Dalai Lama's responses become more involved, a coherent philosophy takes shape. Cutler then develops the Dalai Lama's answers in the context of scientific studies and cases from his own practice, substantiating and elaborating on what he finds to be a revolutionary psychology. Like any art, the art of happiness requires study and practice--and the talent for it, the Dalai Lama assures us, is in our nature. —*Brian Bruya*

From Booklist:

The Dalai Lama's most salient traits are his great beaming smile and hearty laugh, spontaneous expressions of happiness that inspired Cutler, a psychiatrist, to initiate what evolved into a long and productive series of conversations about what aspects of Buddhist thought could help non-Buddhists achieve a sense of fulfillment. Their discussions ranged far and wide, revealing many differences between Eastern and Western thought. When Cutler asks the Dalai Lama if he is happy, the answer is "Yes"; when he asks if he is ever lonely, the answer is an unqualified "No." How can that be? Because, the Dalai Lama replies, he always looks at others positively and experiences a "feeling of affinity, a kind of connectedness." Over and over again, Cutler poses

complicated psychological inquiries only to have the Dalai Lama offer responses that reach far beyond the parameters of the self. There really is such a thing as an art of happiness, and this is one of the best how-to books a reader will ever find. —*Donna Seaman*

Reader Review:

The Source of Happiness is Within You

I have always had a lot of respect for the Dalai Lama and admired the fact that he radiates so much genuine compassion and tolerance despite the many hardships that he has faced in his lifetime. I believe that this book is the essence of this man's being and his outlook on life. It encompasses many of his core beliefs and serves as an inspiration to everyone, irrespective of religious affiliation or spiritual belief.

This book is not written by the Dalai Lama himself, but by Howard C. Cutler, and is based on his numerous conversations with His Holiness. Dr. Cutler provides the "western", science-based perspective on the buddhist monk's teachings. While his naivete gets to be annoying at times, he helps relate the Dalai Lama's teachings to our everyday lives by making them less abstract, more practical and actionable.

"I believe that happiness can be achieved through training the mind... Generally speaking, one begins by identifying those factors which lead to happiness and those factors which lead to suffering. Having done this, one then sets about gradually eliminating those factors which lead to suffering and cultivating those which lead to happiness." These words contain the essence of the entire book. A premise so elegant and simple that it might be easy to dismiss at first, and yet so powerful. The more one thinks about their true meaning, the more one begins to understand that these words, in themselves, hold the answer to the purpose of our lives.

The idea that happiness is the product of our mind, rather than of our objective situation, is hardly new. Yet, this book is able to explore this notion to the depths that I had never comprehended before. In particular, the distinction the Dalai Lama so eloquently makes between happiness and pleasure is especially enlightening. After all, it's the very

things that bring us pleasure, that cause us unhappiness in the long term. Therefore, His Holiness says, one ought to always ask oneself before making a choice: "Will this bring me happiness?" I performed this simple practice for just a few days, and noticed immediate results. While I normally would do certain things without thinking, I have now become quite conscious of the effect that my own actions will have on my life down the road. Even such a simple thing as doing the dishes, or making that unpleasant yet necessary phone call, or buying something that we don't really need - each one is a choice that, once made, reverberates through our life and either brings us happiness or discontentment. This simple shift in perspective is a very powerful tool in bringing about real, positive change in your life through small, yet deliberate actions. It is by making these actions a habit that one is able to truly achieve happiness.

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Of course, in order to be able to work towards happiness, one needs to understand what it is that will bring them happiness in their personal life. This can be likened to having a "mission statement" that encompasses many different areas that, when all balanced and fulfilled, lead to a happier life. These ultimate goals, the Dalai Lama teaches, should be used as a compass to align your daily choices with in your pursuit of happiness.

In addition to these very powerful meditations on the nature of happiness, the book stresses the importance of "human warmth and compassion" as integral components of achieving happiness through increased intimacy and deeper connection to others. The book also explores the "demons" that often prevent us from finding happiness, such as pain and suffering, anger and hatred, anxiety and low self-esteem. While you may not necessarily be afflicted with all of these "demons", reading this book will help you avoid them or enable you to help others who are suffering from them.

Overall, I would wholeheartedly recommend this book to anyone on a spiritual journey, in search for a meaning of life, or simply looking for simple words of wisdom in our increasingly complicated and materialistic age. This is one book I know I will personally refer back to again and again for inspiration and guidance.

Pam Garcy

Part 16. Taking daily action

When you set a goal that is consistent with your purpose and you develop a clear vision of your goal, you will probably feel very empowered.

Jenna visualized herself flying an airplane. She'd always wanted to learn how to fly.

This tends to be especially true when you develop an image of your goal as already achieved, and if this image includes emotion. Once you charge your image with emotional fortitude, it is likely that you will feel quite motivated to start taking action!

She imagined the feeling of soaring, gliding and floating. She imagined the color of the sky and the clouds as she looked through the cockpit window. She could envision the tops of homes and buildings, which looked like miniatures from her plane. She saw little cars driving on tiny highways. She felt exuberant, joyous and harmonious!

It is precisely at this point that your inner guidance will be super-activated, and you will likely experience a flow of inspired thoughts. These thoughts, if healthy and rational, will lead you and guide you and push you as you work toward your goal.

The next day, Jenna was playfully baking cookies when a thought flashed into her head, as clear as day. "Call Claude." Claude was a friend from the past who'd taken flying lessons. She could ask Claude about the experience and learn about what her next step might be.

IF you work toward your goal, that is.....

It is important to act upon these inspired thoughts (assuming they are healthy and rational).

Jenna picked up the phone and had a great conversation with her old friend. She also got the phone number of Claude's flying instructor and learned more about what she could expect.

As you encounter that which you perceive as obstacles, you might want to run the other way! You might think that your goal is too lofty for you, or that you are not enough. Your insecurities will come to the surface.

She was just about to pick up the phone and call the flying instructor. For a moment, Jenna stopped herself. Why did she think she could do this? Besides, what if she crashed? She'd also have to save the money. And that meant no more extras. Her family would call her silly and childish. Her friends would say that she was just trying to get attention.

The healthiest thing to do here is to recognize that these insecurities are a part of most people's normal experience. Whenever you stretch beyond your comfort zone, these insecurities will emerge, just as your muscles feel uncomfortable when you are stretching beyond your normal range of motion.

In order for you to reach your goals, you will begin to see that stretching becomes important and at times, essential.

A lot of people run away from stretching beyond, and they don't want to take action because they fear discomfort or embarrassment. Dr. Albert Ellis wrote about discomfort anxiety and ego anxiety.

If living in this manner becomes a pattern of behavior, what psychologists call avoidance responses, then you will get comfortable "hiding." Contraction, rather than expansion, has been said to lead to unhappiness. Our natural tendency is toward growth, and growth requires expansion. Eleanor Roosevelt said that you must do that which you fear.

Jenna remembered her uncle, who had always wanted to be a singer. Although he had a great voice, he never pursued his dream. In fact,

the more he avoided his desire to sing, the more he hid his talent. It was the strangest thing to Jenna, who loved it when she occasionally heard him sing. He could have used his voice to bring joy to so many, including himself. But, instead, he chose to run away from the work involved. When she asked him about it, he just said, "That's kid stuff, Jenna. I'm too old for that." Jenna noticed how a part of him seemed to sink as he said this, and she wondered whether part of his depression might have been due to him stopping himself from living fully.

In my experience, taking daily inspired actions toward your goals, however small those actions are, will help you to stretch more easily and fearlessly. Just as we would stretch our muscles only a little bit at a time (not too much all at once), we can stretch our behaviors a little at a time.

*Jenna decided that it was time to grow! She chose to live a fully expressed life, so she called the instructor and she felt everything inside of her saying, "Yes!" Of course, Jenna continued to read her *Cultivate Life! Magazine*, surround herself with motivational people and reward herself. Each day, she checked in with her inner guidance and she took a little step. Sometimes reading, sometimes learning, sometimes trying, and often doing. Before she knew it, she was living her dream and flying high!*

Little by little, you can learn what it feels like to walk upon your path, if only you will allow it to be so! ###

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

A Course in Miracles Lesson 32

I have invented the world I see.

Today we are continuing to develop the theme of cause and effect. You are not the victim of the world you see because you invented it. You can give it up as easily as you made it up. You will see it or not see it, as you wish. While you want it you will see it; when you no longer want it, it will not be there for you to see.

The idea for today, like the preceding ones, applies to your inner and outer worlds, which are actually the same. However, since you see them as different, the practice periods for today will again include two phases, one involving the world you see outside you, and the other the world you see in your mind. In today's exercises, try to introduce the thought that both are in your own imagination.

Again we will begin the practice periods for the morning and evening by repeating the idea for today two or three times while looking around at the world you see as outside yourself. Then close your eyes and look around your inner world. Try to treat them both as equally as possible. Repeat the idea for today unhurriedly as often as you wish, as you watch the images your imagination presents to your awareness.

For the two longer practice periods three to five minutes are recommended, with not less than three required. More than five can be utilized, if you find the exercise restful. To facilitate this, select a time when few distractions are anticipated, and when you yourself feel reasonably ready.

These exercises are also to be continued during the day, as often as possible. The shorter applications consist of repeating the idea slowly, as you survey either your inner or outer world. It does not matter which you choose.

The idea for today should also be applied immediately to any situation that may distress you. Apply the idea by telling yourself:

I have invented this situation as I see it. ###

Commentary by Allen Watson

If I'm not the victim of the world, what is my relationship to it? I've invented it. If I've invented it, if I made it up, how can I possibly be its victim?

Now, saying that I've invented the world is a pretty heavy statement. Saying that I can give it up as easily as I made it seems even more improbable. Yet that is what the practice of the Workbook is setting out to prove to us, not by rigorous logic but through experiences that demonstrate that it is true. That's what miracles are. Miracles demonstrate that "the world you see outside you" and "the world you see in your mind" are "both...in your own imagination".

This lesson is simply introducing the idea, not trying to prove it. The Text discusses the same thought in several places, the most telling of them being:

What if you recognized this world is an hallucination? What if you really understood you made it up?

It isn't a concept you can easily avoid if you study the Course; the Course insists on it.

All that is really being asked here is that we open our minds to the idea that we have invented the world we see. It is a concept that can throw our minds into turmoil because it flies in the face of our fundamental beliefs about the world. The world has a few nice things about it, but also a lot of ugly junk. And being told I am responsible for it, I made it up, doesn't sit easily with my mind.

If it raises all kinds of questions in my mind, fine; let the questions bubble up. For today, for the practice periods, just apply the idea as

given. It's okay if part of your mind is kibitzing in the background saying, "This is nuts! I don't really believe this." The introduction warned us we might even actively resist the ideas. It said: Whatever your reactions to the ideas may be, use them. Nothing more than that is required..

It may be difficult to see at first, but we really only have two options. Either I made up the world, or I am its victim. Either I am the cause, or the effect. There aren't any other choices; think about it. Either I am the dreamer, inventing the whole mess, or I am part of someone else's dream (maybe God's). If I am not the cause, I am at the world's mercy. But if I *am* the cause—there is hope! I can change the dream, and perhaps, eventually, stop dreaming altogether. ###

The Master Key System by Charles F. Haanel

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

Part Eighteen

In order to grow we must obtain what is necessary for our growth. This is brought about through the law of attraction. This principle is the sole means by which the individual is differentiated from the Universal.

Think for a moment, what would a man be if he were not a husband, father, or brother, if he were not interested in the social, economical, political or religious world. He would be nothing but an abstract theoretical ego. He exists, therefore, only in his relation to the whole, in his relation to other men, in his relation to society. This relation constitutes his environment and in no other way.

It is evident, therefore, that the individual is simply the differentiation of the one Universal Mind "which lighteth every man that cometh into the world," and his so-called individuality or personality consists of nothing but the manner in which he relates with the whole.

This we call his environment and is brought about by the law of attraction. Part Eighteen, which follows, has something more to say concerning this important law.

PART EIGHTEEN

1. There is a change in the thought of the world. This change is silently transpiring in our midst, and is more important than any which the world has undergone since the downfall of Paganism.

2. These present revolution in the opinions of all classes of men, the highest and most cultured of men as well as those of the laboring class, stands unparalleled in the history of the world.

3. Science has of late made such vast discoveries, has revealed such an infinity of resources, has unveiled such enormous possibilities and such unsuspected forces, that scientific men more and more hesitate to affirm certain theories as established and beyond doubt or to deny other theories as absurd or impossible.

4. A new civilization is being born; customs, creeds, and precedent are passing; vision, faith and service are taking their place. The fetters of tradition are being melted off from humanity, and as the impurities of materialism are being consumed, thought is being liberated and truth is rising full robed before an astonished multitude.

5. The whole world is on the eve of a new consciousness, a new power, and a new realization within the self.

6. Physical Science has resolved matter into molecules, molecules into atoms, atoms into energy, and it has remained for Mr. J. A. Fleming, in an address before the Royal Institution, to resolve this energy into mind. He says, "In its ultimate essence, energy may be incomprehensible by us except as an exhibition of the direct operation of that which we call Mind or Will."

7. And this mind is the indwelling and ultimate. It is imminent in matter as in spirit. It is the sustaining, energizing, all pervading Spirit of the universe.

8. Every living thing must be sustained by this omnipotent Intelligence, and we find the difference in individual lives to be largely measured by the degree of this intelligence, which they manifest. It is greater intelligence that places the animal in a higher scale of being than the plant, the man higher than the animal, and we find that this increased intelligence is again indicated by the power of the individual to control modes of action and thus to consciously adjust himself to his environment.

9. It is this adjustment that occupies the attention of the greatest minds, and this adjustment consists in nothing else than the recognition of an existing order in the universal mind, for it is well known that this mind will obey us precisely in proportion as we first obey it.

10. It is the recognition of Natural Laws that has enabled us to annihilate time and space, to soar in the air and to make iron float, and the greater the degree of intelligence the greater will be our recognition of these Natural Laws and the greater will be the power we can possess.

11. It is the recognition of the self as an individualization of this Universal Intelligence that enables the individual to control those forms of intelligence which have not yet reached this level of self-recognition; they do not know that this Universal Intelligence permeates all things ready to be called into action; they do not know that it is responsive to every demand, and they are therefore in bondage to the law of their own being.

12. Thought is creative and the principle on which the law is based is sound and legitimate and is inherent in the nature of things; but this creative power does not originate in the individual, but in the universal, which is the source and foundation of all energy and substance; the individual is simply the channel for the distribution of this energy.

13. The individual is simply the means by which the universal produces the various combinations which result in the formation of phenomena, which depends upon the law of vibration, whereby various rates of rapidity of motion in the primary substance form new substances only in certain exact numerical ratios.

14. Thought is the invisible link by which the individual comes into communication with the Universal, the finite with the Infinite, the seen with the Unseen. Thought is the magic by which the human is transformed into a being who thinks and knows and feels and acts.

15. As the proper apparatus has enabled the eye to discover worlds without number millions of miles away, so, with the proper understanding, man has been enabled to communicate with the Universal Mind, the source of all power.

16. The Understanding which is usually developed is nothing more than a "belief", which means nothing at all. The savages of the Cannibal Islands believe something; but that proves nothing.

17. The only belief which is of any value to anyone is a belief that has been put to a test and demonstrated to be a fact; it is then no longer a belief, but has become a living Faith or Truth.

18. And this Truth has been put to the test by hundreds of thousands of people and has been found to be the Truth exactly in proportion to the usefulness of the apparatus which they used.

19. A man would not expect to locate stars hundreds of millions of miles away without a sufficiently strong telescope, and for this reason Science is continually engaged in building larger and more powerful telescopes and is continually rewarded by additional knowledge of the heavenly bodies.

20. So with understanding; men are continually making progress in the methods which they use to come into communication with the Universal Mind and its infinite possibilities.

21. The Universal Mind manifests itself in the objective, through the principle of attraction that each atom has for every other atom, in infinite degrees of intensity.

22. It is by this principle of combining and attracting that things are brought together. This principle is of universal application and is the sole means whereby the purpose of existence is carried into effect.

23. The expression of growth is met in a most beautiful manner through the instrumentality of this Universal Principle.

24. In order to grow we must obtain what is essential for our growth, but as we are at all times a complete thought entity, this completeness makes it possible for us to receive only as we give; growth is therefore conditioned on reciprocal action, and we find that on the mental plane like attracts like, that mental vibrations respond only to the extent of their vibratory harmony.

25. It is clear, therefore, that thoughts of abundance will respond only to similar thoughts; the wealth of the individual is seen to be what he inherently is. Affluence within is found to be the secret of attraction for affluence without. The ability to produce is found to be the real source of wealth of the individual. It is for this reason that he who has his heart in his work is certain to meet with unbounded success. He will give and continually give; and the more he gives, the more he will receive.

26. What do the great financiers of Wall Street, the captains of industry, the statesmen, the great corporation attorneys, the inventors, the physicians, the authors -- what do each of these contribute to the sum of human happiness but the power of their thought?

27. Thought is the energy which the law of attraction is brought into operation, which eventually manifests in abundance.

28. The Universal Mind is static Mind or Substance in equilibrium. It is differentiated into form by our power to think. Thought is the dynamic phase of mind.

29. Power depends upon consciousness of power; unless we use it, we shall lose it, and unless we are conscious of it, we cannot use it.

30. The use of this power depends upon attention; the degree of attention determines our capacity for the acquirement of knowledge which is another name for power.

31. Attention has been held to be the distinguishing mark of genius. The cultivation of attention depends upon practice.

32. The incentive of attention is interest; the greater the interest, the greater the attention; the greater the attention, the greater the interest, action and reaction; begin by paying attention; before long you will have aroused interest; this interest will attract more attention, and this attention will produce more interest, and so on. This practice will enable you to cultivate the power of attention.

33. This week concentrate upon your power to create; seek insight, perception; try to find a logical basis for the faith which is in you. Let the thought dwell on the fact that the physical man lives and moves and has his being in the sustainer of all organic life air, that he must breathe to live. Then let the thought rest on the fact that the spiritual man also lives and moves and has his being in a similar but subtler energy upon which he must depend for life, and that as in the physical world no life assumes form until after a seed is sown, and no higher fruit than that of the parent stock can be produced; so in the spiritual world no effect can be produced until the seed is sown and the fruit will depend upon the nature of the seed, so that the results which you secure depend upon your perception of law in the mighty domain of causation, the highest evolution of human consciousness.

There is no thought in my mind but it quickly tends to convert itself into a power and organizes a huge instrumentality of means.

—Emerson

Study Questions with Answers:

171. How is the difference in individual lives measured?
By the degree of intelligence which they manifest.

172. What is the law by which the individual may control other forms of intelligence?
A recognition of the self as an individualization of the Universal Intelligence.

173. Where does the creative power originate?
In the Universal.

174. How does the Universal create form?

By means of the individual.

175. What is the connecting link between the individual and the Universal?

Thought.

176. What is the principle by which the means of existence is carried into effect?

The Law of Love.

177. How is this principle brought into expression?

By the law of growth.

178. Upon what condition does the law of growth depend?

Upon reciprocal action. The individual is complete at all times and this makes it possible to receive only as we give.

179. What is it that we give?

Thought.

180. What do we receive?

Thought, which is substance in equilibrium and which is constantly being differentiated in form by what we think.