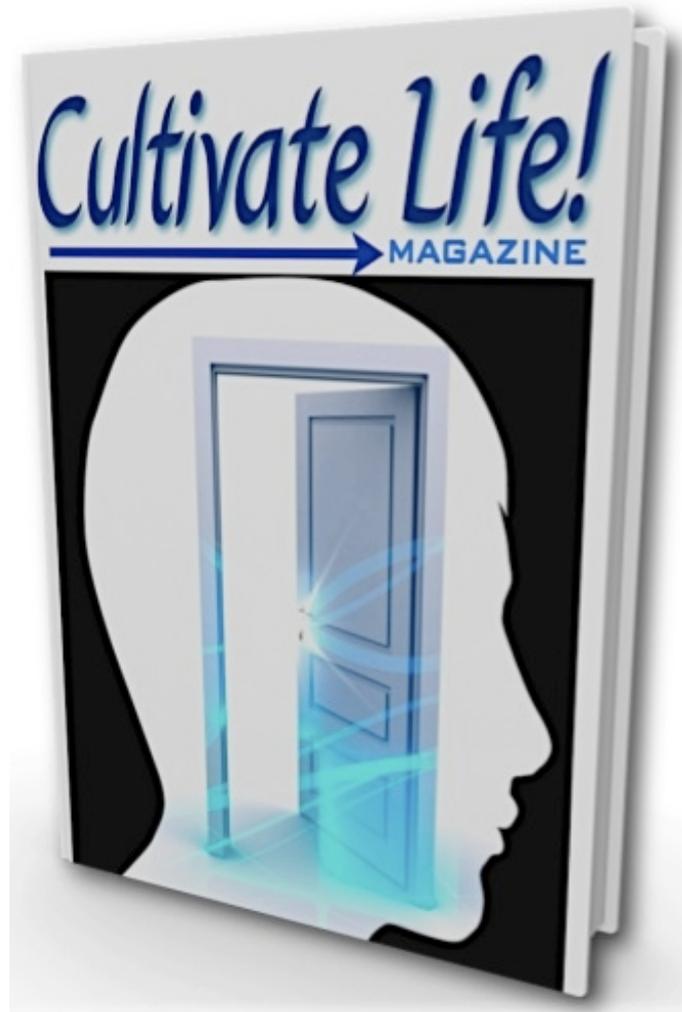




Your weekly toolkit for planting seeds of success, abundance, love and joy

Editors: Greg Willson and Peter Shepherd

~ Issue 42 ~



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Heart to Heart Coaching:

Coach Doris Jeanette, replies to:

I recently cheated on my boyfriend and it's tearing me apart inside.

Philosophy: I'm a Christian but I don't really embrace it much. I believe in God but I don't go to church regularly or pray very much.

Hopes and aspirations: I want to graduate from college and begin a career with music.

Question: I recently cheated on my boyfriend and it's tearing me apart inside. I love him with all my heart and I know what I did was my fault. I don't know how it happened, it just did and I regret it every day. I told my best friend and she told me that what I did was wrong but she would keep my secret. Next thing I know she hates me for some reason and starts telling all of our friends. I don't want to lose my boyfriend but I know if he finds out what happened he would leave me. I don't know what to do, someone help me?

Answer

Trust. Young love. Creativity. Sexuality. Acting out behaviors. Your question is full of the passion and intensity involved with young, emotional, sexual relationships.

Since you are a musician, I know you are creative. Creative energy and sexual energy are very good friends. Creative and sexual energy are extremely important and necessary for good health. "However, you need to learn how to handle these potent energies so that they are not out of control."

Throughout the centuries, creative men have been allowed the privilege of acting out their sexual energy without any great judgment from others. Whereas, creative women have not been allowed to act out their sexual energy even a little bit without suffering extremely negative consequences.

This observation is to raise your awareness of the double standard that exists, not to encourage you to act like Picasso. I am definitely, NOT suggesting that you act out your sexual, creative or emotional energy.

Acting out behavior is irresponsible and has many unhealthy results. It hurts you and the other people involved. My advice about sexual relationships is to be pure, clean and have your heart and body connected at all times.

However, in reality, there are no rights and wrongs. There are only consequences. If you engage in Mechanic Sex, which is what I call quick, unfeeling sex without love, your energy field will become weaker. This is because your energy field becomes saturated with the other person's unhealthy energy. For more about sexual energy read this free psychology article from one of my past "Sex and Love" Columns: <http://www.drjeanette.com/october2001.html>

Let me reassure you that having sex of any nature with a consenting adult is not on the same level as killing someone or harming a child. "Cheating" is a word that implies you had an agreement with your boyfriend that you would not be sexual with another person. You did not honor the contract; instead you broke it and had sex with another person.

Now you have huge regrets. Anytime you break a contract of any nature, you run the risk of destroying the trust you had with that person. This is one of the many reasons developing

yourself is so important. You need a valuable relationship education that will teach you the skills you need to create and maintain a healthy, loving relationship.

You were not born with the knowledge of how to create healthy emotional relationships. You were not born with the knowledge of how to create healthy sexual relationships. Instead, you learned unhealthy patterns from your parents. Now you need to unlearn these unhealthy patterns and learn new, effective relationship skills.

You are young and have much to learn. So my advice to you is forgive yourself and learn life lessons from this experience. If you do not know the reason you acted out sexually, you definitely need to get to know your motives, feelings, emotions and thoughts much better.

To help you know yourself better, ask yourself these questions:

1. What is the reason I acted out sexually with another person? For example, was it emotional? Sexual? Anger? Dissatisfaction?
2. What made me tell my best friend such a deep secret? For example, was I looking for approval? Forgiveness? Or was my judgment bad?
3. Am I repeating an unhealthy relationship pattern that I learned in the past without knowing it?
4. What is the best way for me to correct my mistake?
5. How can I forgive myself and move on?

You need to become honest, very honest, with yourself. When you can honestly answer my questions you will know yourself much better. You cannot be honest with yourself as long as you remain unconscious of your motives.

This is the reason I have always used excellent teachers, psychologists and mentors to help me become more aware. You need an outside person to help you become conscious of new information. In addition, since your conditioned responses are very ingrained in your nervous system and physical body, it is very difficult to unlearn these without expert help.

For me to discover the exact reason for your behavior, I would need to do a private consultation with you. There are many reasons people break contracts and cheat on the person they think they love.

The emotional, energy dynamics between two people are complicated and based on the past learning histories of the people involved. However, a skillful emotional-energy teacher can help you become conscious of how the energy is moving back and forth between you and your boyfriend. This is extremely helpful information to know.

I could imagine that you behaved this way because you are angry with your boyfriend and have not admitted this to yourself or him. You could be angry with him because he is not fulfilling your emotional needs. Perhaps he is not a sensitive, skillful lover. Maybe he is a premature ejaculator or very controlling.

I could also imagine if you admitted these truths to yourself, you would have great difficulty being assertive with him. It would be very hard for you to tell him your concerns, needs and fears. Perhaps my imagination is not exactly correct, but you can see what I am getting at here.

There are many emotional, energy dynamics that could be going on between you and your boyfriend. The same is true of the emotional energy between you and your girlfriend. These are yet to be discovered. What you need to know is your intimate relationships have real problems and real solutions.

One thing I know for sure is that you are acting out sexually. You are acting out your emotional feelings instead of feeling your emotions and expressing them in healthy ways. Therefore to become stronger you need to stop acting out your emotions and feelings. Instead, you need to discover what you really feel. If you are not aware of your feelings, you will continue to act them out like you are doing now.

Discovering what you feel emotionally is the work that you need to do.

Knowing what you feel and learning to stay with yourself in your feeling state will stop your acting out behaviors. When you do not acknowledge and express your feelings and emotions, you will either act them in or act them out.

Acting out behaviors occurs when you express an external behavior that is inappropriate due to the fact that you are denying your authentic emotions. For example, you feel anger toward your boyfriend. You do not admit you feel anger toward him. Instead, you deny this strong energy and as a result, you cheat on him.

There are many ways to act out. You can act out sexually, physically or emotionally. When someone hits another person, this is a form of acting out. Psychologists refer to these behaviors as reactions. Another example of acting out is when children have temper tantrums.

Acting out is a conditioned response. As a child, your parents and other adults in your life blocked your ability to express your emotions. You were not allowed to feel anger, hurt and fear. Consequently, you acted-this-strong energy-out by expressing an inappropriate behavior. You screamed. You cheated. You lied. You hit. You reacted.

Now, as an adult you continue to deny your emotions and feelings. If you become aware of what you really feel, you will know exactly what was going on inside of you that made you behave the way you did. Finding out this information is the number one priority if you want to stop acting out.

Let me explain acting in behaviors, which are the opposite of acting out behaviors. Acting in is when you turn against yourself and behave toward yourself in inappropriate ways due to your emotional feelings that have not been properly expressed.

Instead of hitting someone else, you hit yourself. Instead of blaming someone else, you blame yourself. Women often act in. You may have heard the joke. The wife says, "I blame myself for missing the road." The husband says, "I blame you for missing the road."

The woman gets it from both ways! You seem to have acted out sexually and then acted in, by blaming yourself. So you also received a double whammy!

Cleaning Up the Mess You Made

Can you be responsible and clean up your mess? Of course.

There is no need to torture and find fault with yourself. This does not help you or your boyfriend. You need to take responsibility for your behavior and do anything you can to correct the problem. You also need to learn from this experience so you become more skillful and effective in relationships.

If your boyfriend asks you about this event, you need to tell him the truth. These are the consequences I mentioned earlier. You have to face the music and hope that he is forgiving. If he is not forgiving, then you need to forgive yourself anyway. This will be a good lesson to learn.

If he does not ask you about this event, you do not have to tell him about it. Wait until you have forgiven yourself and feel stronger and more knowledgeable about your motives and emotions. Then you can have an open, honest, assertive talk about what is going on between you.

You also need to look at your best friend more realistically. She was not a good person for you to trust. This is also a helpful lesson to learn. Most friends are not trustworthy or skillful enough to be helpful in psychological situations.

You need to turn to people who you know you can trust. This means you need a psychologist who is confidential. You need a qualified person who can help you with your acting out behaviors by teaching you how to feel your emotional and physical feelings.

Know that you have a right to forgive yourself. Others need to forgive you. No one can throw the first stone for we have all behaved in ways that we felt bad about.

Hold your head high.

Know that you are learning what you need to learn to be a wonderful musician. You will play for us the wondrous sounds of life with deep feelings that touch our soul.

Action Steps to Stop Acting Out Behaviors

1. **Work with a holistic psychologist or qualified professional.** You need to do deep emotional awareness work to stop your acting out behaviors. You, as well as the rest of humanity, need to learn more effective relationships skills. For help picking out a good holistic health practitioner read this free psychology article: http://healing.about.com/od/uc_directory/a/pickpractitioner.htm
2. **Give up guilt.** Never make any life decision based on guilt. Guilt is a form of manipulation. Notice how often you feel guilty. Get to know the energy of guilt so you can eliminate it. Here is a free psychology article on guilt: <http://www.drjeanette.com/guilt.html>
3. **Forgive yourself.** Forgiveness is the only way to live a life that is meaningful and rich. You need to forgive yourself and others of all things. To forgive, stop making yourself wrong. Stop judging yourself or your girlfriend. For help with your judgmental thoughts study the audio, "Find the Peace Beyond Judgment and Guilt." Read more and order here: <http://www.drjeanette.com/guiltfree.html>
4. **Discover what you feel inside.** This means you must look inward until you sense and feel the energy of your authentic emotions. For an emotional health guide into your emotional energy study and work with the E-book and audio, "Opening the Heart," <http://www.drjeanette.com/emotionalhealthaudio.html>

Doris Jeanette is a licensed psychologist with 35 years of clinical experience helping people learn better relationships skills. She is currently available for in-person emotional energy sessions in Glenwood Springs, CO. If you are interested in private sessions, Energy Intensives or holistic psychology mentoring visit <http://www.drjeanette.com/privatehumanenergy.html> and sign up for her free holistic psychology newsletter, "The Vibrant Moment."

Are We All Born Equal?

by Peter Shepherd

The short answer: yes, but not the same, not by a long chalk.

All persons have the same qualitative make-up; we are born equal in this respect, as recognized in the values of 'Liberty, Fraternity, Equality.' All human beings have the same reflexes, instincts, drives, needs, capacities, and rights; all have the same powers of perception, discrimination, attentiveness, retentiveness, reasoning, and so forth.

The differences between persons are quantitative rather than qualitative. 'Equality' is to do with our qualities and our rights, which we all share, but not the degree to which they are developed or expressed.

Behavioral psychology has installed the idea that we inherit all of our traits, and besides the modifying effects of cultural conditioning that we stay basically the same as our genetic hard-wiring dictates. That's true if you don't do anything about making positive change, if you don't recognize the aspects of yourself that are more than animal. Recently many have recognized this possibility and they are looking for valid information that can help them make positive changes.

We each differ in the degree of our various spiritual, mental, emotional and physical abilities, and in the manner in which the amounts of the various traits combine in our individuality. A wide range of aptitude, personality, learning and intelligence tests will show differences as high as 25:1 from person to person, with a characteristic bell-shaped distribution curve, in much the same way as physical characteristics are varied.

It is these quantities, which are such an important factor in personal competence, creativity and ultimately our success in life, which personal development aims to increase. It is through our differences that we are able to express our individuality and achieve unique goals.

I feel that it is a mistake to belittle the differences between individuals due to a fear of being seen as judgmental or non-accepting of a person who has little of certain qualities. It is much better to be realistic (which is truly to be non-judgmental and accepting) and recognize the strength and weakness of our various qualities. Then we can take advantage of the opportunities which are available to develop and improve ourselves, toward the goal of fulfilling our potential.

This sets the stage for both mental and personal development, whereby we make a self-directed effort to improve our personal education, to learn new cognitive skills and to replace negative habits with positive ones. It's something we all can do, if we want. We are equal in that respect, in that we all have this opportunity.

The Knowledge Net

About sixty years ago educators came to the conclusion that rote learning was not a very efficient way of instructing a student. Rote learning was phased out and replaced with the modern method of instruction. Since the middle ages until about 1945, education was near synonymous with rote learning. Students may have gained something from the modern liberal approach, if they are fortunate to have excellent teachers, but all too often they have also lost something important, because the modern methods usually do not include adequate means for clarifying and memorizing information - all too often it is half understood and (post the exam) almost immediately forgotten.

Many of our parents went through the earlier strict type of education. As adults, they were able to quote verbatim from the Iliad, American and British Literature, History, Geography and General Science. This gave them in many cases a certain charisma; they could speak and write with impact and most importantly, they had a sense of certainty in a troubled and changing world. Later generations, to a significant extent, have lost this sense of certainty, achieved through having a wide and well-connected structure of knowledge.

Memory & Identity

Global structures of meaning play a primary role in the cognitive processes behind discourse. Furthermore, without a large body of secure data, individuals frequently have identity problems. Long term memory content therefore plays a crucial role in creating our identity. In short, without the capital of stable data standing behind us, in everything we are and do, we have a shaky sense of our identity and very little certainty.

According to Hunter in his classic book on memory, people with a poor long term memory are very easily socially conditioned. In modern terms, they are field-dependent and other-directed. To be Self Directed one needs a strong sense of identity, and memory is a crucial factor in this. We need to remember our beliefs and values; our methods for doing many tasks and learned solutions; our likes and dislikes; who we know and what we think of them; our personal history; and our learning of all subjects including our career skills. So a person's entire knowledge net is largely the structure of their character.

All memory is important, especially long term memory, and the most important part of long term memory is our knowledge net. Our knowledge net starts to expand from shortly after birth and in ideal cases continues to expand until shortly before death. An evolved knowledge net is a context in which all new information can be compared and evaluated, and hence valued and understood. Wisdom and charisma, through insight and certainty, result.

A minimal knowledge net results in a person who is like reeds in the wind, swaying in whatever directions the influences upon him dictate. Without our knowledge net, we would be like a goldfish; we would be nothing. Almost every facet of personality and consciousness stems from our knowledge net. Our character, the capacity to keep our head in a sea of troubles, the capacity to express ourselves and understand language, our identity and the well springs of Ego itself, stem from the knowledge net.

Most systems of brainwashing work at trying to break down this structure, so a person loses sight of who he is. A person with a poorly formed knowledge net, with only a limited content, has a weak Ego. He lacks presence and charisma. This may call to mind the type of school teacher who tries to give a lecture whilst he faces toward the blackboard. People with a limited data base are often full of opinions but unfounded ones, because they lack stable and well-connected data. An extreme example is that of a famous idiot savant who was taken to see a play. He was able to count the number of words spoken but the play went straight over his head. Without a significant and relevant data base he was unable to relate to the content of the play.

Self-Directed Education

Before Malcolm X went into prison he was street-wise and a natural leader. However, as he began to write letters to a wide variety of people, he became frustrated with the fact that he could not communicate with them as he wanted to. "It was because of these letters that I happened to stumble upon, that I started to acquire some kind of homemade education." He was frustrated because he

had been the most articulate hustler on the streets of Harlem, and could get anyone's attention with his words. He was not used to being ignored but now it was hard for him to communicate.

It was equally hard for him to keep up with events because he could never fully understand what he was reading. So he decided that he needed to learn how to read and write properly and that the best way to go about it would be to get a hold of a copy of a dictionary and study it. He decided that the best place to start would be at the beginning, with the A's. So he just started copying. He copied every word and punctuation mark on the first page. It took him the entire day, and when he finished he read aloud what he had written, over and over again. The next day he woke up thinking about the words that he had written and to his surprise, he even remembered what some of them meant. As his word-base broadened he was able to pick up a book and read it all the way through.

He went on to spend all of his free time reading, and acquired a much wider knowledge base. As he later said, "I had never been so truly free in my life." As a result he also became an articulate writer and was able to obtain a much greater world-wide influence, even from within prison, as a result of his own writing.

By the mid-twentieth century, scientific and technological knowledge far outstripped the ability of most people, even the moderately well informed, to comprehend it. The aim of most specialists is to know ever more about their own specific niche. However the corollary to a small minority knowing more and more about less and less, is a large majority knowing less and less about more and more. It becomes overwhelming to the average person and even the specialist may know little about his own colleagues' work. To turn this around we need an ongoing self-directed education, not attempting to know everything but to understand very clearly the basic principles of a wide range of subjects, so that the detailed information can be placed in a reasonable context.

It is only in the context of a wide knowledge net that intelligent and creative connections may be made between disparate information, and so we have the challenge of developing an encyclopedic knowledge that covers enough bases with sufficient depth, to be able to make sense of new information and to perceive the opportunities that arise thereby. The immense and ever-growing resources of literature and the Internet are only valuable to the degree that their data can be related to the knowledge net that already exists within our own minds.

The human brain has immense capacity for interconnectedness, far more than any supercomputer. It's pattern recognition capability enables us to perceive the connections between ideas, people and events - all the contents of our knowledge net - and to be able to know what is relevant and important in any particular context. That process, however, depends on our ability to remember.

Knowledge Itself Promotes Memory

Significant evidence demonstrates a superior memory in those experts and individuals who know a great deal about a specific domain of knowledge. Memory for a certain type of material improves with practice, such as with naturally reoccurring situations. To take a simple example, the amount of knowledge of soccer was found to be a powerful determinant of subjects' recall of newly presented scores for recent soccer matches. This can be attributed to improved organizational processing with a wider and more detailed context, and also to better recognition of the similarities and differences between the items in question.

Mnemonics

Through the use of mnemonics technology (devices for assisting the memory), in conjunction with a couple or three years of part-time study, we can gain the sort of data base enjoyed by our forefathers, in an expanded and modern context, and along with it a greater sense of certainty and a greater security in our identity.

The key is the use of visual images in an ordered, spatial arrangement that relate to the abstract ideas and enable us to remember them. Human memory recalls concrete images far more easily than abstract ideas, especially images with an emotional endowment, and it remembers an ordered chain of associations more accurately than a random assortment. By the use of mnemonics - using chains of association to connect one memory with another - new information is encoded in such a way that it is connected to previously stored data, such that it is not easily forgotten.

The wider the existing knowledge net, the easier it is to find such useful connections, so the process is cumulative and accelerating. However, modern mnemonics technology works so much better than the old ways of rote memorization, that even a little experience with these techniques can make a startling difference. One is on the way to acquiring a greater state of memory. The knowledge net is effectively a crystallized intelligence that acts as an expansive resource for the fluid intelligence of one's working memory.

Freedom to Change

Implicit in any concept of learning is the notion of change. If we learn something, we change some part of ourselves: our attitude, behavior, values, assumptions, or perhaps the amount of knowledge we have. The change may mean a rejection or an alteration of previously accepted beliefs or behavior, or it may mean an expansion or extension of them.

Change is often perceived as frightening as it threatens to rob us of the safety and legitimacy of our personal, often cherished, position and boundaries - especially since maintaining this safe space has helped us to survive as well as we have up to now (even if that's not as well as we could do).

When change is demanded by another person or new circumstances, we tend to feel threatened, defensive and perhaps rushed. The new learning is not perceived as something desirable and of our own choosing. Pressure to change, without an opportunity for exploration and choice, seldom results in experiences of joy and excitement in learning.

To turn this around, we need to be proactive in our learning, to expand our knowledge and abilities in advance of forced changes of circumstance. If there's one thing guaranteed in our lives it is that change will be upon us, sooner or later; usually sooner. If we are open to change, and are willing to learn whatever is necessary to predict and adapt to it, we can even become its master and control its direction. Self-directed learning is therefore key to mastery over life and to the creation of the life that we want.

Many people had bad experiences at school and perhaps later in life, when attempting to study a new subject. It is easy to quickly get bogged down with new terminology, and often new concepts and procedures seem unclear. This situation can quickly get out of hand as the student gets left behind and the subject either becomes an ongoing struggle or it is abandoned. But none of that is necessary; it is possible to succeed with the study of any subject.

The problem

A large number of individuals are limited by their cognitive development to a "concrete" level of thinking, in which they can only think usefully about actual physical objects and events. Outside of a particular context the underlying principles do not transfer. Abstract reasoning is beyond them, or uncomfortable for them, so they are unable to fully participate and profit from education at a higher level. These are the people who cannot apply what they have learned, because the abstract and the concrete are two unconnected things for them: the result is a mind-body split.

The value of reading

Why has this occurred? Young people read far fewer serious books today and spend less time in intellectual discussion; in contrast, they spend many more hours in watching TV programs with little or no intellectual content: MTV, soaps and sport. Many young people have been brought up on the 30 second sound bite and pap, so their attention span is shorter than it was before, their vocabulary is much reduced, and many fail to achieve communication competence and literacy. The pleasure principle has taken over from the reality principle; immediate gratification rules supreme. Those who depend on TV and video games for stimulation do not have the disposition to think abstractly nor the training to do so well; they are on the receiving end and have no chance to think creatively. They do not benefit from the stimulation of imagination that reading provides.

What used to be an exaggerated concentration on left-brain education in Western countries - written verbal and mathematical skills - has switched over to under-development of left-brain skills. We need both left and right brain developed and functioning in a mutually supportive role. We need both knowledge and intuition - mind, body and spirit in unison - in order to be a self-directed, open-minded and free person.

Our left-brain skills need to be developed in an active manner. As we write creatively, we express our feelings, and we develop an witnessing viewpoint, as with the benefits of mindfulness meditation. As we read or listen actively, our imagination is given full expression; we gain understanding of others and empathy with their differing views and feelings. We develop a long attention span: long enough to achieve great things. None of these benefits obtain from the passive process of watching TV and the accompanying adverts. Instead our minds switch off, we lose discernment and become wide-open to hypnotic suggestion. The cultural trance sets in.

A hard time at school

If one gets behind in studying a subject, it becomes harder and harder to keep up, until the teaching becomes incomprehensible. In the case of reading, this also has a carry-over effect on the other subjects, for which reading skills are pre-requisite. This is called the "Matthew Effect" by psychologists. If a pupil has reading difficulties at the start of his education, he will fall further and further behind through the years of his education at junior school. His or her brain may have been slow to develop, maintaining the dream-like Theta brain waves of infancy at a high level, making it hard to focus on learning.

Unless he has individual remedial support, the pupil will probably give up studies altogether at secondary school, and his IQ will drop by more than twenty points - even though it may have been well above average when tested as a small child. As our reading course will teach the basic and advanced reading skills that few students ever fully acquire, this makes it possible to accelerate in learning skills as an adult, and overtake those who had moved ahead back in school days. As a consequence, this course can increase a student's IQ by ten points or more, which makes a great deal of difference in real-life aptitude and career opportunities.

Even for those of us who had a good education, if we forget all that we learned and never exercise our mental skills with new and challenging tasks, our reasoning ability and effective IQ will deteriorate. We may have an established expertise at work but for most of our time make the minimum mental effort. It is a fallacy that IQ and mental capacity is inbuilt and unchanging. Like physical fitness, if you don't use it you will lose it!

As yet, this downward trend continues and the situation deteriorates with each year that passes. Ultimately, this could even spell the end of our free democracies, which require participants to have an aware and critical mind. Can anything be done about it?

The Mind Development Courses

The renowned [Mind Development Courses](#) are now freely available online here at Trans4mind! They provide the tools for a re-education of your cognitive skills. Literally, you can transform your mind!

Over the course of many years Gregory Mitchell, one of the world's foremost experts on brain processes and body-mind integration, has refined techniques for helping individuals to achieve their potential mental capacity. The techniques of **Mind Development** make the mind much more efficient because they open up the pathways of left-right brain communication and assist the person to regain all of their positive mental energy. They can then obtain the goals they want and take control of their destiny.

* [Super Vision](#) demonstrates the amazing changes in mental capacity that can be created by effective techniques training perception, and illustrates how closely mind and body function in coordination.

* [Effective Communication](#) is a practical course to help you transform your personal relationships through improving your communication skills.

* If you are concentrating you are awake and aware - your mental life is both intensified and broadened. Are there are ways to improve your concentration directly? Yes, and this course teaches the best of them: [Concentration: Educating the Will](#).

* [How to Study](#) presents the foundation skills necessary for mind development. Learn how to study with maximum comprehension, recall and ability to apply what you have learned effectively.

* With the [Power Reading](#) course you can double your reading speed and be able to evaluate what you have read with clear and incisive intelligence... essential ingredients to success in your profession and in your continuing education.

* Memory is key to cognitive enhancement. To memorize easily, we need to restore and integrate our creative right-brain processes. With Ken Ward's [Creative Memory](#) course you find out how to learn facts, figures, names - anything you need - and be able to easily and quickly recall them. ###
<http://www.trans4mind.com/mind-development/>

Peter Shepherd (co-editor of this magazine) is a psychologist and writer, who works particularly in the field of personal development and runs the web site, Trans4mind.com. Born in London in 1952, he spent most of his life in England before moving to France to be with his wife, Nicole. Trained both as a rational-emotive and transpersonal psychotherapist, Peter combines these techniques in his own system of transformational psychology, applied to personal growth rather than therapy.

For several years, Peter worked with Gregory Mitchell, running the Mind Development Courses in London. Peter's book, *Transforming the Mind*, widely influenced by Gregory's mentorship, was the foundation of the Trans4mind web site, which over 10 years has expanded to become one of the top personal development portals on the Internet.

More recently, Peter wrote *[Daring to Be Yourself](#)* — a "best of" selection from the Trans4mind site - which gives the reader the tools to turn their life around.

"My Child's Behavior Is So Bad - Where Do I Begin?"

by **Carole Banks**, Parental Support Line Advisor

My child misbehaves so much that I don't even know where to start!" This is one of the most common things we hear on the Parental Support Line, and it's an understandable problem. Many parents tell me they feel overwhelmed, frustrated and anxious when dealing with their child or teen's acting out behavior; they wonder how they'll be able to tackle so many issues at once. But here's a secret: thinking about the problem in this way will only make you feel defeated before you even start.

James Lehman says: "Start where your child is and coach them forward." In other words, build on your child's strengths and keep your expectations reasonable. We also recommend that you not try to tackle everything at once, but pick one or two behaviors you want to change and then move on from there. Remember, your overall goal is to see your child make improvements--it's not simply to have your child do what you tell them to do.

If you feel completely overwhelmed by your child's behavior problems, here are 8 tips to help you focus on changing your child's behavior, step by step.

1. Try to Have Reasonable Goals

I think that many times instead of trying to make gradual changes, parents expect that all the inappropriate behavior will stop immediately. The truth is, you might see certain behaviors stop right away, but it doesn't necessarily mean your child will never act out again. It's not going to be instantaneous, and it will take just as much practice on your part as it does on your child's part. Change takes time. It's not just you who needs time practicing new techniques. Your child also needs to practice so he can learn by repetition. The reason you want to ask for reasonable change is because your child cannot make major changes all at once.

2. Coaching Your Child Forward: Know What His Strengths Are

It's important to have a good idea of what your child is capable of doing. Here's an example: Some kids have an issue like ADD or ADHD. It's important to get a really good understanding of what ADHD looks like in your child. Is it hard for him to focus and stay organized? Maybe he daydreams when he's supposed to be working. Every child is different, and it's important for you to modify your expectations accordingly. It's also important for your child to know what his strengths and weaknesses are so he can recognize when he's getting off track and learn how to get back on. After determining what your child's strengths and weaknesses are, understand that he will make improvements from that starting point.

I've seen kids who are defiant or oppositional completely throw in the towel because they're not capable of doing what you're asking, particularly in relation to school work. That's why it's extremely important to find out what your child's abilities are and begin right there. That's one of the most important steps in making sure your expectations are reasonable.

3. Keep in Mind That Your Child is Working Toward a Goal

Accept that your child is working toward a goal. In other words, your child is probably not going to be able to stop his inappropriate behavior on a dime. If your teen is in the habit of getting his way by intimidating others in the family with his angry outbursts, understand that this behavior is not going to go away immediately. Work with him on making small steps toward good behavior. You might say, "You need to give me your cell phone for the next two hours until you can behave and talk appropriately." The key is that during that time, your child is practicing this new skill. You're not

saying, "That's it--you've lost your phone all day." Many kids struggle with punishments that last too long and end up giving up halfway through. Instead, you want to have short-term goals throughout the day. Work toward short-term accomplishments and successes all day long.

4. Pick One Behavior to Work on at a Time

When I ask parents what they'd like to start working on with their child, many say general things like, "I just want my kid to listen to me," or "I want my teen to do what I ask him to do when I ask him." I think it's very important to pick a specific behavior to start with and a time of day when it should be accomplished. When you're just beginning to use the techniques in the Total Transformation Program, it's important to put some structure in your child's schedule or else you're too likely to get into a power struggle with him each time you ask him to stop what he's doing and do what you want. Choose a concrete behavior, such as doing homework daily, or being home at curfew, instead of working on your child's attitude. You might feel concerned because you're letting other behaviors slide when you focus on just one, but realize that your child is actually learning skills when he changes one behavior at a time--skills that he will be able to use in all situations going forward. Primarily, he is learning how to do what he doesn't feel like doing, and that there will be a consequence if he behaves inappropriately. Make no mistake, a lot is happening when you choose one behavior at a time and work solely on it.

5. Start with Physical Behavior

Many parents ask, "Where do I start?" I always recommend that you begin with physical behavior first. It could be a safety issue, like your child sneaking out of the house at night. Many parents will say that back talk is the biggest thing they're dealing with. It's really hard for them to tolerate, and that's natural. But if your child is not coming home at night, I suggest putting backtalk aside for a bit and focusing on making sure he's safe and complying with house rules regarding curfew.

Physical behavior can also apply to kids who act out and are destructive or abusive at home. If your child is punching holes in the walls or intimidating his siblings physically, you want to start there. We recommend that you adopt James' philosophy of, "There's no excuse for abuse" in your family. Let your kids know there will be stern consequences for their actions and follow through on them.

A lot of parents will avoid tackling these big issues because it's easier to pick something small than it is to address the big scary things. But if it's a health or safety concern I don't think you have any choice--that should always come first.

6. Can't Decide Which Behavior to Tackle First? Get Some Help

There are some instances where you may be forced to deal with two behaviors at the same time. Let's say your child talks back to you while you're trying to help him complete his homework assignment, and you're not sure which behavior to address first. This is where the Total Transformation Parental Support Line can be really helpful. We can help you determine, based on your child and what his overall behavior is like, what the best issue is to address first. We can tell you what technique to really focus on and which ones to set aside for later--and we'll help you come up with a practical strategy.

7. If Your Child Doesn't Seem to be Making Enough Progress...

A common stumbling block for parents is when they feel as if their child isn't making enough progress. But remember, the goal is that your child improves--not that they will listen to you 100% of the time. It's very different.

Sometimes you can change that by changing your parenting techniques and the house rules. Power struggles between you and your child will usually cause him to dig in and not cooperate. Putting more structure into place is sometimes necessary. You might say, "You have to do your chores Saturday morning if you want to go out Saturday night. Get started at 10:00 a.m."

At other times, your child might be having real difficulty making improvements. James Lehman says we have to "parent the child we have and not the child we wish we had." He reminds us that our kids are unique individuals. This brings us back to the importance of determining your child's capabilities--again, be sure that what you're asking of your child is reasonable.

8. Don't Take It Personally

Many parents also get trapped in wanting their kids to feel a certain way. They want their kids to care about cleaning their room or to care about the effect doing homework will have on their future. The truth is, it's not your child's fault; he's really not wired to feel that way yet. The important thing is not that your child cares, it's that he learns how to do things even if he doesn't feel like doing them. This is a huge life skill.

When you're working to have your child's behavior change, try to pay attention to what it looks like rather than what your child is saying. James says to ask yourself, "What would I see if I were watching this on television with the sound turned down? What would my child's behavior look like right now?" I think this is a really good way to visualize what behavior is when you're having a hard time separating it from what your child says or feels. Just ask yourself, "What is my child doing?"

Let's say the sound is turned down and you see your teenager fighting with you, then he's stomping off to clean his room. He may be sullen and have a bad attitude, but he's also doing what you asked. Work on the behavior first, and the attitude will come. James says, "Don't feel your way to better behavior; behave your way to better feelings." And that's exactly what you want your child to do.

Sometimes in parenting, it really is "two steps forward, one step back." But remember, even if that's the case, you are still moving forward. Yes, your child will challenge you. He'll come back and test you to see if things have really changed; he'll see if he can get you to go back to the way you used to be, particularly if he was calling all the shots. But stand your ground and eventually his behavior will change. One way to stay encouraged is to remember where your child started and compare it to the progress he's made. It's also important to encourage your child when this happens. Keep saying things like, "I know you can make improvements because you have already done it. Keep at this."

Carole Banks, MSW holds a Masters Degree in Clinical Social Work from the University of New England. She has been with Legacy Publishing Company for four years working on the Parental Support Line and writing for [Empowering Parents](#). Carole has worked as a family and individual therapist for over 10 years, and is the mother of 3 grown children and the grandmother of six.

Choose to Remember the Light

by Guy Finley

Have you ever had appear in your mind the image of someone who hurt you, or run a whole mental movie about something that didn't work out, so that in recalling the event you actually relived the sense of loss? How does such a painful image seem to stay in the mind, especially given the fact of how much we struggle to make it go away? We all know how it feels to try and "fix" such visitations, where we dream up a new solution, tell ourselves what we should have said, hope that something we can think of will make it go away. Of course none of these answers work for one very good reason. Here is the key to unlocking this continuing conflict.

These unwanted images return again and again as they do because something within us keeps recalling them and drawing them to the forefront of our mind. Perhaps your reaction to this lesson is something like: "Impossible! How can that be true since all I want is to free myself of their painful presence?" The answer is self-evident, even though our present senses dictate otherwise.

Since the truth is we do not have to share a single moment with the memory of anything that we don't want to, this means there is something in our present nature that *wants* to recall painful past experiences. Such new self-knowledge lends us the light we need to make higher choices for ourselves, based in conscious awareness. Now we can choose to remember what it is that we want to! In other words, rather than allowing ourselves to be drawn into battle with unwanted thoughts or feelings that appear by themselves within our heart and mind, we can do something completely new. We can choose not to focus on what these troubled states want us to; we know that's the road to ruin. Instead we will choose to remember what it is that we want above all else -- the Light of Truth that not only reveals what has been hurting us, but that frees us from these unconscious conditions at the same time.

The Wise Ones have always taught the great gift of remembering the Living Light and the practice of placing ourselves in its presence before we embrace anything else. Of course the elevated nature of this kind of remembrance in the face of our trials requires our deliberate and conscious willing of it; but, to paraphrase St. Augustine, "My remembrance of thee is really an effect of thee remembering me." Which means that everything about Reality is already set up to help us succeed with our new aim.

So, in that same moment when you realize that something painful from your past has again pressed its way into you, holding you hostage to a hated image or painful regret, here is what to do: right there, right in that Now, instead of capitulating into that familiar state of feeling yourself to be a captive of what this pain tells you that you must remember (along with all of its suggested solutions for ending the suffering), you choose to remember the Light. Here is a quick look at what this new inner action entails.

Instead of being drawn into a struggle with that unwanted sense of conflict, complete with its cast of supporting characters drawn from your past, intentionally withdraw your attention from that stage show. And at the same time as you close the curtain on it, bring all of your reclaimed attention into the Now. Come awake to the sense of your own physical body. Observe what thoughts and feelings are pressing themselves into your awareness and, while working in the Now like this, welcome into you a conscious remembrance of the Light, of God's Life, of the whole truth as best you understand it.

For instance you might work to remember that the Living Light that has no burden, as opposed to identifying with an old bitterness that is itself the burden that it always blames on others. The key, regardless of one's individual approach, is to make interior effort based upon bringing your new self-knowledge into a willing watchfulness. To help get you started, here are a few other suggestions. When an angry thought flashes in your mind, accompanied by the fiery sensations born of recalling some injustice done to you in the past, instead of remembering the resentments this little image stirs in you, turn the tables on it. Bring its little troubled life into your remembrance of that greater presence within you that dwells well beyond its punishing power. Work like this whenever you can and, like a pebble tossed into a deep pond, the ripple effects of that past pain will simply disappear into the healing nature of the Now. Instead of a life of endless resistance, you will learn the timeless secret of how to replace any form of darkness with the Light you have chosen over it.

Choose to remember the Light. Let it fight for you. Not only will this Living Intelligence lift you above the fray of all that should be forgotten, but it also will guide you back home to a timeless place in yourself where the past no longer dwells. ###

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

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.

Becoming Better by Chuck Gallozzi

“He who stops being better stops being good.)

—*Oliver Cromwell*, 1599~1658

We have within ourselves an innate need to grow. We want to become more than we are today. Simply put, we want to become **better** human beings. When we are confused about how to become better, we may find ourselves wanting to own more possessions or earn more money. True, greater power and wealth makes us **more** (more wealthy and more powerful), but not necessarily **better**.

Unless we satisfy our thirst to become **better**, we are bound to experience frustration, dissatisfaction, and regret. Conversely, when we consistently work on improving ourselves, we feel fulfilled, so a self-improvement regimen is in our best interest. What follows are a few ideas on the art of self-improvement.

Embarking on self-improvement is a noble task, for when we improve ourselves and encourage others, we make the world a better place. Our role, then, is an important one. After all, self-improvement is nothing less than world-improvement! Never underestimate your power to make things **better** or worse in the lives of the countless number of people you will meet in your life span.

Many of us could be doing far more good than we are at the moment. What is holding us back? For the answer, let's consider the five basic needs we have, as outlined by U.S. psychologist and philosopher Abraham H. Maslow (1908~1970). In his theory of self-actualization, Maslow taught that we have five basic needs, each of which must be satisfied before we can move up to the next level.

The first need is **physiological** (food and water). A person who is starving doesn't have the leisure to think about becoming a better person. All he or she can think about is survival.

The second need is for **safety** (freedom from danger). It is hard to think about becoming a better person when bombs are continually exploding in your village.

After our needs for food and safety have been met, we can move up to our need for **belonging** (love, cooperation, and acceptance).

It is only after our first three needs have been met that we are ready to work on satisfying our need for **esteem** (achievement, power, and prestige).

Finally, at the pinnacle is the need Maslow calls **self-actualization**. Maslow describes some of the characteristics of self-actualized individuals as acceptance of oneself and others, developing strong ties to others, and transcendence (being committed to a cause greater than oneself).

Now we are ready to return to the question, “What is preventing us from moving forward, reaching our potential, and becoming **better**?” It is because most of us get stuck in needs #3 (belonging) and #4 (esteem). You see, in trying to fulfill these two needs, we allow our emotions to take over. Beware: emotions make good servants but bad masters. Love and compassion can propel us forward, but envy, resentment, and anger can bog us down. So, be aware of your feelings and think before you act. When an emotion bubbles up to the surface, ask yourself, “Is this emotion helping me to become **better**?” If it is, use it as motivation for growth. But if it isn't, ask yourself, “How can I change this negative feeling into positive energy?” When we look for solutions, we will find them.

If we wish to improve, we have to distinguish between **assertions** and **assessments**. Assertions are statements of fact. For example, Tom is five feet eleven inches tall, Mary weighs one hundred thirty-five pounds, or Mario is an immigrant from Italy. However, the statements, “Tom is stupid,” “Mary is lazy,” or “Mario is narrow-minded,” are assessments. They are conclusions I have reached. More accurately, they are opinions. Also, more than likely, they are opinions based on false assumptions, misunderstandings, and prejudices.

If I say, “Tom is stupid,” I am effectively saying, “There is nothing I can learn from Tom.” That is a serious error since everyone can teach us something. So, when I base decisions on negative assessments, I am closing the door to opportunity and personal growth. Consider this, when I say that Mario is narrow-minded, the only thing I prove is that *I am narrow-minded!* Instead of looking for faults in others, I should look for traits I admire. Then, I should emulate them. By becoming like those I admire, I will come to admire myself.

I often hear people commenting on the perceived weaknesses of others. Examples of such comments are “Betty is always trying to change others.” and “Why is Richard always criticizing others?” If I were to say that, wouldn’t I be guilty of the very things that I complain about? That is, my comments would reveal that I want to change Betty and I am criticizing Richard. Such comments are wasted energy. What do we accomplish by uttering them?” The answer is nothing. Yet, if we used that energy by directing the comments at ourselves, we could begin to make genuine progress. Discontent can be a valuable tool, but when we direct our dissatisfaction at others, it is misdirected. When, however, we direct it at ourselves, miracles can happen. After all, it is only at the moment we are dissatisfied with what we are that we can begin to become what we are not.

If we wish to improve but cannot think of a place to begin, all we have to do is list the things we do not like in others. For what we do not like in others tells us what we do not like in ourselves. We see what we feel. If I feel good, I see goodness. If I feel lousy, I see a miserable world. So, the world is a mirror. If all I see is good – guess what? – I’m good. But if all I see are mean, nasty people... Well, I’ll let you figure that one out for yourself.

If I still can’t find ways to improve, I might want to question my motives and desires. I may convince myself that I don’t need improving because I’m already doing many good deeds. But if I am doing so, what are my motives? Is it because of compassion? Or am I driven by self-aggrandizement? If I wish to get married, is it because of a wish to help create a better world? Or is it because I wish to have a servant who will cater to my every whim?

An indirect route and a great way to improve ourselves is by helping others. What better way to learn than by teaching others? What better way to grow in power than by empowering others? What better way of increasing our income than by helping others increase theirs? Finally, what greater use can we make of our incredible gift of awareness than by using it to improve ourselves? ###

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>

Wherever I Look There Is Light

by Beca Lewis

Del does this weird thing to tease me. It is something he learned in grade school and continues to this day with anyone that will fall for it. For some reason it is called “maypo”. It consists of him trying to get me to look at a circle that his fingers are making and if I look I “lose”.

It’s silly; it means nothing, except I look almost every time! Why, because he asks me to or intends me to.

I realized that the worldview does the same thing to me. It plays a silly, meaningless game called “look at this”. What it wants me to look at always involves lack of some kind, like time, patience, or money. Or it asks me to pay attention to, and focus on, something that isn’t working, which actually is still a lack of some kind.

It is silly, means nothing and yet I look almost every time. Why, because it asks me to or intends me to.

Now, it may be excusable that I look when Del invites me to. After all, I trust him and know that he always loves and cares for me. Actually he is simply trying to make me more aware of what I am looking at!

What is not excusable is that I look, without awareness, at what the worldview is saying to me. After all, why would I trust something that I know does **not** love and care for me? It is habit only. I could attempt to break the habit. Or perhaps there is something else I could do.

When the worldview asks us to look at something it is actually asking us to look into the dark. Have you ever sat in the dark and felt fear because of strange noises or shapes you heard or saw? What we feel when we sit in the dark are our own fears and beliefs projecting back to us.

This is the same fear that we feel when we look at the worldview of what is not working and not available to us. What we feel when we look into the darkness of the worldview are our own fears and beliefs projecting back to us.

When Del works in the woods he leaves our house while it is still dark and often arrives in the forest before the sun comes up. In the past he would either have to wait until it was light enough to see, or do some of the work in the dark, which obviously limited what he could do. For him, however the darkness is never scary. He knows that what appears to be strange noises and strange shapes are the familiar shapes and sounds that he loves, just misperceived.

Have you ever seen those really cool spotlights that attach to your head? We purchased one for a gift for someone and since it was so cool, Del got one for himself too. For a few months after he purchased it he forgot all about it and it sat in his closet. One day he thought about wearing it into the woods. When he came home that afternoon he said, “ It was wonderful. Wherever I looked there was light.”

I started thinking about the many tools we have for seeing what is already present for us that we leave in our closets. If we used any one of our tools, it too would shine light on everything, and we would be able to say the same thing that Del did, “Wherever I look there is light.”

In the light produced by a perception shift, we can clearly see that what were strange noises and strange shapes are familiar objects and sounds, simply misperceived. What was scary dissolves into the nothingness that it always was. We see the world and its abundance as always present, just as the abundance of the forest is always present.

We don't need to create something to fill our needs. The lack that we pay attention to, and the fear we feel, is a misperception of what is already present. What we need to do is shine our light, and the darkness will disappear, revealing what is the truth of any situation, which is always a practical fulfillment of a current need.

Remember where Del looked it was light. Where he didn't look, it was still dark. Doesn't this help explain why problems get better when we shine our light upon them, but where we are not shining our light there still appears to be the darkness of lack, fear, and doubt?

If we all took our perception shifting tools out of the closet, and used them, there would be so much light everywhere the darkness of lack, fear, and doubt would vanish for everyone, revealing the truth that what we need now, is present now. ###

About Beca Lewis

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

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

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

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

Defying 'Little Bird' Conditions of Blackmail and Manipulation by Steve Wickham

A little bird told me last night that if I hold my breath and do everything right you might come back.
~Kasey Chambers, Little Bird.

Human beings can be manipulative creatures; blackmailing those they're in cahoots with at the slightest hint of not getting their own way. Of course, it's the rampant co-dependency of a threatened person who'll say, "A little bird told me to tell you to do/not do [the condition]."

The main trouble is most of us don't want to go against convention and we only need one piece of negative feedback before options are seriously reconsidered. This is even against those whom may not think that way - the silent majority.

Identifying Those Prone to Placing Conditions

Blackmail is a kind of manipulated extortion, though it's generally not illegal; but it is immoral. And blackmail might even be too strong a word for how subtle people's manipulation is... that fact, however, makes it all the more insidious.

Many of the ones resorting to manipulation or blackmail aren't even aware of it, and they'll be quick to deny the charge as it comes. This further threatens our confidence as it becomes their word against ours.

The test is does it feel like *secretive* manipulation? Proper disciplinary action is not underhanded. It can be accounted for and is considered 'just' by the prevailing majority. Cases of manipulation tending toward abuse, on the other hand, major on secrecy.

It's important for us to *identify* those influences and influencers over our lives that choose such tactics. Once identified there can be boundaries placed around them and their relationship with us. But it's often not easy to do this; it will take much trial and error in designing these boundaries. In a small number of cases it might be wisest to end relationships that involve significant cases of manipulation.

Where we want to get to in relation to advice is the seeking, consideration and taking of advice from trusted advisers.

Trusted Advisors and True Success

Without counsel, plans go wrong,
but with many advisers they succeed.
~**Proverbs 15:22** (NRSV).

Unlike the aforementioned advice - veiled as threats for non-compliance - plans made with trusted advisers are secure. Not only do we feel at ease, they tend to work out. And even when they don't it's not the end of the world. Our trusted advisers are there to help us pick up the pieces and they won't be telling us, "I told you so!"

Each of us is less experienced than some that are close by, and besides, we just don't have the perspective that others have, especially as we consider issues close to the emotive bone.

A trusted adviser is going to give us their advice for free. And they're not going to be offended if we don't take it or if we modify it - both through the use of our discretion - for all who wish to grow in wisdom are compelled to practice their discretion. How else are we to learn from our experiences?

Life gets easier and more peaceful when we have more trusted advisers and less manipulating influences in our court. ###

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[1] The "[Boundaries](#)" series of books by Drs. Henry Cloud and John Townsend are very good in helping us understand the value and practice of boundaries in protecting our relationships. ###

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/>

What is Agoraphobia?

by Stephen Price

Most people have heard of most phobias. Mention claustrophobia, social phobia, or arachnophobia and everyone pretty much knows what you are talking about. Mention agoraphobia, and most people will just shake their heads.

Because of this, many people who get agoraphobia often take a year, and in some cases, many years, just finding out what is wrong with them. Since the panic and anxiety symptoms that come with agoraphobia are so physical, people who get agoraphobia commonly visit a succession of doctors trying in search of a diagnosis. Since medical doctors are not usually trained to diagnose agoraphobia, let alone anxiety disorders, agoraphobia has had time to become deeply rooted in most people before they know enough about the disorder to seek the proper treatment and being recovery.

In light of this, here are some basics about agoraphobia:

Agoraphobia is "anxiety about, or avoidance of, places or situations from which escape might be difficult (or embarrassing) or in which help may not be available in the event of having a panic attack or panic-like symptoms." (DSM-IV)

Agoraphobia is a type of anxiety disorder. The term "agoraphobia" comes from the Greek words "agora", meaning "marketplace," and "phobia", meaning "fear." Literally translated as "fear of the marketplace," people with agoraphobia are afraid of open or public spaces.

In reality, most people with agoraphobia are not so much afraid of open and public places as they are afraid of having a panic attack in these settings, especially settings in which there may be no one to help in the case of a panic attack or actual emergency.

The most common symptoms of agoraphobia are:

- 1) Panic Attacks: Periods of intense fear, usually lasting about ten minutes or so (but sometimes longer).
- 2) Avoidance Behavior: Avoiding places and situations that are hard to escape from or that might be embarrassing to have to suddenly leave. Most commonly, this is because they fear having a panic attack or unexpected catastrophe and not being able to get help or get away.
- 3) Developing "Safe" People: People with whom the agoraphobic is highly familiar with and feels emotionally close to. "Safe" people are usually parents, spouses, children, or close friends and relatives.
- 4) Developing "Safe" Places: Places in which the agoraphobic feels psychologically comfortable. The most common safe place for someone with agoraphobia is his or her own home.
- 5) Scanning: Obsessive monitoring of one's own body for strange or unusual symptoms.
- 6) Fear of being alone: This is related to the fear of having no one to help in the case of a panic attack or real emergency.

If you suspect that you or someone you know might have agoraphobia, don't waste any time in learning about the disorder. Research has shown that the sooner you start the recovery process the more likely your chances of a successful recovery are. ###

Stephen Price is a recovered agoraphobic who has devoted himself to the study of agoraphobia and to helping others overcome the disorder. Since his recovery, Stephen has earned masters degrees in psychology and counseling and has published original research on anxiety.

You can learn more about agoraphobia online at the Agoraphobia Resource Center website. The site was started by a recovered agoraphobic with the intention of helping others learn about and recover from agoraphobia. You can find it on the web at:

<http://www.agoraphobia.ws>

Night Eating Syndrome and Sleep Walking

by Nishanth Reddy

Eating while sleeping? It's probably a disorder.

Has this happened to you?

You woke up one morning, and you found that there were wrappers of candy bar all over your kitchen. Incidentally, your stomach aches and you see that you had chocolate smudges all over your hands and face. Your parents or your husband tells you that you are up all night long eating, but surprisingly, you don't recall that you did so. Your parents or your husband seemed serious telling you that you actually ate all those chocolates. Is there an inside joke?

Probably not, In fact, the symptoms show that you probably have a night eating syndrome.

Night eating syndrome, also known as sleep-related eating, is considered by medical doctors as a parasomnia. It is not a frequent sleepwalking type. People suffering from this disorder have experiences of recurrent eating episodes while asleep, without actually being aware that they are actually doing it. This nocturnal eating syndrome might happen most of the time that it would show significant gain in your weight. Although this disorder can affect people in all ages and sexes, the sleep-related eating affects young women more than men.

What is night eating disorder?

Also known as nocturnal sleep-related eating disorder or NS-RED, night eating disorder is not an eating problem strictly speaking. It is known as a sleep disorder type that enables people to eat while seemingly asleep. While sleeping, they could eat while in bed, or in some cases, roaming around the house or staying at the kitchen.

The people suffering from this disorder are not conscious during NS-RED episodes. That is why night eating disorder is always related to sleepwalking. Being asleep, they do not know that they eat and cannot recall any incident of eating the night before. If at all, they can only remember in fragments. The NS-RED episode more or less occurs somewhere in a state between sleep and wakefulness.

When people suffering from night eating disorder learn that they have such a problem, they feel ashamed and embarrassed. Some, even with evidence presented by his or her family members, deny that they did that. They cannot believe that they could do such a thing and cannot admit to themselves that they could not control themselves.

The food consumed during the disorder periods are most likely to be high-sugar, high-fat food that people usually avoid when they're awake. In some cases, there are those who eat bizarre food combinations, such as raw bacon partnered with mayonnaise, or hotdogs being dipped in a peanut butter. Some even eat non-food items such as soap in the same way they slice cheese.

How can you get NS-RED?

According to recent statistics, about three to nine people or about one to three percent of the total population are most likely to be affected by the disorder, with up to 15 percent of those who have eating disorders affected by night eating disorder.

Many of those affected by the syndrome diet (or at least try to) during the day, leaving them hungry and very weak to binge eating during the night when their control to achieve weight loss gets weakened by sleep. Some people have medical histories of drug abuse, alcoholism, and other sleep disorders such as restless legs, sleep apnea, and sleep walking. They often get tired upon waking up due to fragmented sleep. Many NS-RED cases seem to run along family lines.

How can you eat and unable to remember doing so?

Actually, that could really happen. While research on this disorder is still not that comprehensive, there is a high probability that there are parts of the brain that are truly sleeping even though some parts stay wide awake. Also asleep are the parts that regulate your waking consciousness, so it is no wonder that you cannot remember any memories of gorging on food on the night before.

Is NS-RED curable? What should you do if you have it?

Thank god, treatment is available for your night eating disorder. Treatment starts with a medical interview as well as spending a night or two in a good sleep-disorders center where you brain activity can be monitored. Medication is sometimes helpful, but you should avoid taking sleeping pills as they can aggravate your sleep disorder by adding to the clumsiness and confusion upon waking up and may cause you injury as can regular use of these pills.

Yes, there is treatment. It begins with a clinical interview and a night or two at a sleep-disorders center where brain activity is monitored. Sometimes medication is helpful, but sleeping pills should be avoided. They can make matters worse by increasing confusion and clumsiness that can lead to injury. Regular use of sleeping pills can also lead you to dependency. It would be better that you ask a doctor on what medication to take. ###

Nishanth Reddy is an author and publisher of many health related websites. Visit his website to know more about other Sleep Disorders like insomnia, sleep apnea, snoring, restless legs, narcolepsy. <http://www.sleepdisordersguide.com>

To find other health articles see e-healtharticles.com

The Difference Between Information and Disinformation

By Kenneth J.M. MacLean

In these times of information overwhelm, and the plethora of internet sites, how do you determine the truth?

For example, what is happening in the Gulf of Mexico after the oil spill? I have heard (1) That the oil is still gushing out and that the media and authorities are covering up, (2) The whole thing was overblown to scare people to death, (3) people are getting sick in the Gulf when it rains from the Corexit oil dispersant dumped in the water, and (4) most of the oil that came out of the Gulf was a natural phenomenon.

None of us have the time to research every subject under the sun, so how do you sift the propaganda and misinformation from the truth?

Well, there is really a simple answer, based on the powerful principle that we are all spiritual beings temporarily occupying physical bodies. Very simply, it doesn't matter what you know, it matters how you feel. Obviously this idea is no good when you are at work writing a computer program, or trying to fix your washing machine. But it does work when you are trying to sort events in the public arena, or make an important life decision.

Does it make you feel better to think that the Gulf will not be polluted, and that people aren't dying? Then that is your truth. And frankly, it is a good truth, for the simple reason that with this truth, you help to create a positive reality. If every person on the planet believed that the Gulf was in good shape, it would be, for the simple reason that the vibrational templates of thought associated with the Gulf would dictate actions that would keep the Gulf in good condition. If you don't believe that there are vibrational templates of thought, then ask yourself how bodies form. Dr. Bruce Lipton, in *Biology of Belief*, says, "The first big-deal insight is that...computers and cells are programmable. And the second corollary insight is that the programmer lies outside the computer/cell."(p/. 61) Of course it does! DNA is itself programmable, otherwise the millions of different species on our planet could not exist, because each species needs a different biological structure. The science of epigenetics has shown that "...information can be transmitted to descendants in ways other than through the base sequences of DNA" (Lipton, quoting Jablonka and Lamb 1995, p. 42). Lipton says that the information comes from "the environment," and surely it does. It is not such a leap of the imagination to understand that the "environment" also contains templates of thought (precursor templates, according to Dr. Tom Bearden) that contain this programming information for biology, just as the programming for the computer resides in the head of the computer programmer. Only if you believe in the Man Is Meat Theory - the theory of biological determinism, itself a deluded and inverted philosophy--can you reject the idea that what is going on in the computer programmer's head is THOUGHT.

Because thought is invisible and not measurable, science rightly does not consider that it exists or has a function. However, as I have said in previous newsletters and on the Interview With Spirit show, only when you get beyond the five human senses can you begin to make sense of nature's complex and beautiful dynamics.

The human race creates templates of thought, which affect our actions and our behavior. These templates of thought, when agreed upon by billions of people, become attractors. In a previous newsletter I described how these attractors might work. If you don't believe that preponderance of

agreement is a force, then you have never been in a situation where a group of people have one opinion and you have another. Ladies and gentlemen, thought has force, and that force can be felt!!!

Contained within the planetary envelope are grids of thought, containing templates for the programming of each species, and their behavioral programming as well. These biological imperatives are often called INSTINCT when referring to animals. The human species also has biological programming that programs our DNA, but because we are thinking creatures we also have BELIEF SYSTEMS. These belief systems determine what is important in our culture, and how we interact with each other. Belief systems are on top of instincts - and the more consciously aware a being is, the more beliefs he or she has!

Patterns of thought are called MEMES, which are also units of information. These memes form around attractors. The old paradigm of thought was based around the attracting memes of scarcity and unworthiness, which bred belief systems that created what we see on planet earth today: problem resolution through conflict and war, hierarchical political and economic organizations based on the idea of domination and control, and the idea of victimization. Poverty, injustice, psychosis, aberrative behavior; all of these behavioral phenomenon result from the basic attractor memes of scarcity and unworthiness.

The human race creates and maintains the fundamental attractors that create human behavioral patterns. Because the human race is an adolescent species that has not even attained the first basic prerequisite for a civilization - species-wide cooperation--we don't understand the WE create the conditions we see on planet earth. If there are evil masters who psychologically program humanity, we have created them and we maintain them. When we change our beliefs, we create a different vibrational pattern that will make human victimization impossible.

The species grid of humanity--the set of attractors and beliefs that in general program human behavior and emotional responses -- underlies and affects all other species grids. We see nature programs where animals eat and kill each other, and we think "this is natural, it's the way things ARE." No, it is not natural for species regulation to occur through predation and death. On earth it is, but look around people!!! Do you see sane societies or nutty ones on planet earth? Are people and animals valued in our human organizations, or are people looked on as merely as economic units? And animals merely as food to be butchered.

Our species is, collectively, nuts; and the ONLY reason for that is because we have nutty belief systems.

On other planets (my guidance tells me) species regulation is accomplished through a rational process of regulation of the precursor templates of thought. I have talked about this on the Interview With Spirit radio program. This can only occur when a species becomes sane and understands that individual physical personalities are a reflection of a spiritual personality. Really, it's quite simple! And so species regulation does not have to be accomplished through the birth of millions so that a few may survive a harsh environment, and other predators. That primitive and barbaric idea stems from a lack of understanding of COOPERATION. Does it seem crazy to say that a species can cooperate with each other instead of killing each other, and trying to "get an edge"? I'm sure a little killing is quite exciting, but the mass murder of species that occurs on planet earth is simply insane.

All right, I've gotten off the subject a little but I wanted to introduce the idea that precursor templates of thought contain the programming for biology, and also for animal instinct, and human activity and

relationships. These templates of thought are invisible to the human senses and to instrumentation, but they are required to program biology. They exist on a subtle level that the human race is slowly waking up to.

If you operate on the idea that what makes you feel good is more important than what you know, then you create thought templates that are motivated by well-being. And that not only benefits you, it benefits everyone else as well. And it benefits the planet, and other species on the planet. Because we are NOT separate, we are all interconnected.

Only a materialist, or other deluded dupe, believes in the idea of separation. Separation consciousness is what has caused the compartmentalization of our societies, has placed devices and profit over human beings, and life, and has continued to keep the human race at an adolescent level of consciousness.

Believing in what makes you feel good is the best way to sort out information from disinformation. Disinformation is deliberate obfuscation of the truth. Disinformation contains extra data that is itself unstable, and which lacks integrity (see my blog post, "Is Honesty Really the Best Policy?" on the kjmaclean.com website). And that is the thing that makes you "twig" on disinformation. It just doesn't feel right, but you can't quite pin it down. This feeling may also be accompanied by a feeling of unease, or a feeling that there is something wrong with the data.

Most people believe that what is true is what is real, but what is real is just CREATED truth. We create the templates of thought that then drive our behavior, which then create the "facts" and the reality that we observe around us.

Disinformation must of necessity have a hidden component, and it must lack integrity and wholeness. That's because the truth IS wholeness without hidden meaning or intent. And you can always pick up on that hidden intent. You feel that there's something wrong, even if you cannot factually identify what is wrong. But that, of course, is precisely the intent of disinformation - to confuse you and make you feel less. That is why choosing the alternative that makes you feel good is always the right choice, because it is vastly more likely to represent wholeness and integrity.

Believe in what makes you feel good, and don't worry about the pronouncements of science, which is itself mired in materialism, or the memes that are circulated by the mass media, or on the internet. If you live your life by believing in the things that make you feel good, you will end up with a life where you are doing the things that make you feel good. And that is the best way to live my friends.

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The Power of Thought

by Roger Ellerton PhD

Look around you. Perhaps you see a chair. This chair is real and exists in time and space. Yet before it came into being, it first existed as a thought. In fact, everything in the room existed as a thought at some point in someone's mind. Who you are today and the reality you have created are a result of your thoughts - your thoughts about what is possible and what's not. These thoughts are influenced by your spirituality – your purpose - who you see yourself being, and your beliefs and values.

It is said that a person has over 60,000 thoughts every day. That's over forty thoughts a minute! Yet, of the 60,000 thoughts you have today, ninety percent of these are the same as the 60,000 you had yesterday and the day before, leaving little room for new thoughts. No wonder life can seem tedious at times. Unless you start to think differently, you are destined to continue to create and repeat the same old reality every day. Is it not time to change your thoughts, live your dreams and let reality catch up?

Most of our thoughts and actions are habits, and we go through the same motions each day, with little change in our behaviors or outlook. What would happen if you challenged these habits or customs? If you were to step out of your comfort zone and explore new ideas or new ways of doing things? Would your life not change as a result?

Often our thoughts are about not measuring up, being incapable or inadequate, avoiding failure or beating ourselves up because we did not say or do the right thing. Just as thought preceded the creation of the chair, your thoughts precede the reality that you create for yourself.

The future lies ahead of you, determined by your current thoughts. These are the only thoughts over which you have any control. What thoughts will you choose for yourself that will be the cause of a different future for you?

Thought is a form of energy. Does this energy propel you forward or hold you back? You have a choice about the thoughts you think. How many times in the past have you chosen to disregard your positive thoughts and focus on your negative thoughts? At this moment, if you were to be at cause and to focus on your positive thoughts while discounting your negative thoughts, how would your life change?

“You become what you think about.”

– *Earl Nightingale*

To realize your dreams, pay attention to what is happening around you. Be curious. Notice how your thoughts about yourself, your thoughts about others and your thoughts about what others may be thinking of you influence what you are able to achieve. Start to think, see and experience things, people, places and events in new ways. Recognize what happens when you begin to think differently about yourself and what you are capable of achieving.

Who you are today and the reality you have created are a result of your thoughts - your thoughts about what is possible and what's not. These thoughts are influenced by your spirituality – your purpose - who you see yourself being, and your beliefs and values. ###

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The Quality of Life Depends on our Thoughts

by Jahiel Yasha Kamhi

Recently, my neighbor asked me to come with him to a meeting of his support group. The group has no professional facilitator and everyone was welcome to attend and to present a personal opinion on the current topic.

As a guest at the meeting, I didn't say much on the topic of "the process of the thinking," but during the conversation with members, I expressed my view with this statement: "The quality of our life depends on many things, but most definitely depends on our thoughts, as well."

My intention was clear: to comment on how important our way of thinking is and how big of an influence our thinking process has on our lives. I just wanted to state the well-known fact that thoughts shape our lives, yet recognizing the fact that our lives are also shaped by many other things.

Unfortunately, I had a tough time making myself clear, and I got no support at all for my statement. I didn't have a chance to explain my view to the members of the group.

This article is for my friends from the group, with the intention of explaining why our life, among other things, depends on our thoughts.

My comment was correct and would have been very familiar to people who know how the process of thinking "works."

Thoughts and our ways of thinking influence life and there is no doubt about that.

Everything starts with a simple **thought**. The thought could be a positive one or a negative one. All thoughts together make up the process of thinking. A single thought is the very first step in the chain of explaining why the quality of life depends on our thoughts.

The process of thinking will shape our core **system of beliefs**. If we have positive thoughts and positive experiences in life, our system of belief will be positive, and vice versa.

Why is the core system of belief so important? It's important for many reasons, including our level of **expectations**. There is strong correlation between a core system of belief and one's expectations. Expectations are very tricky. Why? Expectations that are too low or too high could ruin our life! Therefore, choose your level of expectations carefully. Pay attention to how high and how realistic your expectations are. They will determine your **attitude**.

I like the definition of the word "attitude" from *The Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*: "a way of looking at life; a way of thinking, feeling or behaving." Accordingly to this definition, can we say that attitude is simply the result of the way we think, feel, and do?

Now, next in our chain of explanation comes **behavior**. How can we explain behavior? Maybe the best explanation could be this: "Behavior is the expression of attitude" (<http://library.thinkquest.org>).

Naturally, behavior is influenced not only by attitude, but by emotions and genetics as well. Our behavior is our way to say to the world: this is my attitude in action; this is who I am.

We are not here in this world to show only who we are, but also to exercise what we can do or perform. Yes, the **performance** depends on the behavior.

If one has a positive thought and belief system, and realistic expectations, including a good attitude and behavior, the performance will be good.

Understandably, a good performance will produce a good **result**.

When you are involved in a project, what does your boss expect from you? He expects a result. Attitude and behavior are important, but at the end of every job, people expect only a positive result. The result is the last word in the chain of explanation, showing the way we shape our life.

Did I forget something here?

No, I didn't. I covered the chain: a thought, a system of beliefs, expectations, attitude, behavior, performance, result. And with positive results from the performance, the quality of your life will be exceptional.

Next time if someone asks you: "What is the best way to get the best result?" just answer simply: "The very first thought."

If that person thinks that you are a little bit....., show him this article. The very first **bold** word in the chain of explanation was: **thought. ###**

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Relationships in the New Energy

by Stefanie Miller

Everything in creation holds an energy frequency. It seems so obvious to many of us. Yet, so many have not embraced that philosophy. There are those that still choose to live unconsciously and make choices that are not in direct alignment and in harmony with their lives. Living, as well as non-living objects, hold resonancy, the frequency to which they vibrate.

All of our relationships are undergoing a massive shift. As we are clearing out the old within, we can expect how we relate to others would need to change as well. In order for us to transition to the next level of conscious awareness our relationships need to be in harmonious balance.

The first relationship we must work on is the one we have with ourselves. Making sure we are honoring our body and taking good care of ourselves. I'm finding I need much more rest, exercise, good nutrition, fun, fresh air, pure water and supplements than ever before. Clearing out clutter from my environment has been extremely important as well. I have taken the time to give to myself what I need. Our energetic body easily becomes depleted in this intense energy, especially for the highly sensitive ones. I can feel the sticky, slick energy of the oil spill in my energy field at times. Clearing out what we each hold within, assists in the purging of negativity from our planet. Individually we are doing the work that benefits the collective.

In our intimate relationships with our long term partner or in beginning a new one, we are yearning for a partnership that is in balance with what we want and need. In the past we searched for someone specifically to raise a family with, financial security, companionship, and sexual fulfillment. While of course all of those reasons are still pertinent in what we need in a relationship in the new energy, the most important thing is resonancy, which is feeling a deep, fulfilling connection in a relationship. I call it a familiar, someone who feels familiar to me. I can be myself around them, not having to make idle chatter and connect with or without words. Oftentimes we connect with a soulmate, which is not always the easiest relationship. Some soulmate relationships come to teach us things about ourselves. A familiar is someone whom we can breathe easy around and feels like home.

We have a yearning to be seen and accepted for who we truly are. We cannot fix or rescue someone else that cannot or will not do it for themselves. Seeking a partnership based on a respect, trust, kindness, love, intimacy, passion, and joy brings true fulfillment. We are beyond settling in order to have the status quo. We instead seek relationships that are nurturing, giving, and make us feel good. If it causes us an uneasy feeling inside, than our intuition tells us to get out. New energy relationships bring out the best in us, not the worst.

Rather than be in an unfulfilling relationship its best to work on ourselves until we the right person comes along. When we are in alignment, and in balance the pathways to the next step of the journey become very obvious and illuminated.

Our relationship within our family is shifting as well. Whether it is with our children, parents, siblings or extended family. We can no longer tolerate any behavior that does not honor our divinity. It's important to have healthy boundaries and honor how we deserve to be treated. We are setting the standard to demand respect and kindness from others. When we treat ourselves the way in which we wish to be treated it sets the tone of how things must be. No matter how the interactions in the past were with certain family members, it is no longer acceptable or tolerable in the new energy. It

doesn't take a lot of drama to change the dynamics, but it does take consistency, patience, and perseverance.

We must have self worth and self love in order to know what we want and deserve in our relationships. Being gentle and kind to ourselves is so necessary at this time. Do not overextend or overexert your time or energy. Realize your needs matter and in order to be present, open, and connected to others we must first be connected with ourselves. In order for us to have a true connection within, we need to be in alignment with Source and all that is.

PRAYER

Dear God,

I honor my divinity. I love, respect, and nurture myself in many ways. I choose relationships that make me feel good. I am in direct alignment with the highest and greatest potential for my life. Please help me heal any relationships in my life that are out of balance. I open my heart to letting love in. I choose the path of love. May I attract only loving, kind, and respectful relationships.

And so it is.

Amen.

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Power Representations: Vision Board and Shrine

by Rhett Bise

I have been thinking a lot about representations lately and how important they are in our journey, mostly because I have been spending a lot of time in front of my shrine lately, to retain my center.

Creating Representations

Representations are a way to physically create the new reality you want, to help train your unconscious mind to move toward those things you want in your life, and to make those good, centered feelings your "normal state" of being. The two I recommend, the Vision Board and the Shrine, create anchors, positive mental patterns to attract those things you want, and attract those powerful states of being into your reality. These are visual/ sensory anchors to serve as reminders to your mind of your journey and to help your subconscious mind create the life you want.

Vision Board

The Vision Board is a visual representation of the things in your evolved self and your evolved life. It is a large picture comprised of many smaller pictures of things that represent what you want in yourself and your life, the life of your life as a hero.

In the old days, people would cut pictures out of magazines and paste them to poster board. If you desire, you can still do that, but in the age of technology, this is not necessary. Mine is on PowerPoint and I access it periodically on my computer and also through my iPhone. In addition, I printed out color copies of my vision board which I can keep with me and access wherever I go.

You can obtain images of just about anything you would want to put in your vision board from Google Images, plus some of your own pictures you can upload. You can use software like PhotoShop, PowerPoint, or numerous others to arrange the pictures as you like.

There are not a lot of "rules," except that this board will need two things - an image of you and an image of your evolved self. Make sure those pictures are somewhere on the board and bordering each other so you know it is you evolving into the image of your ideal self.

Other than that, put in pictures of whatever is important to you, things you want in your life, representations of your way of being, whatever works for you. I have images of my family, my hobbies, my goals, such as writing, subtle energy, Tantric images, and pictures that represent the peaceful, grounded, present, carefree, confident state of my evolved self.

You might find yourself moving and changing pictures. Maybe part of your board represents the "to do" section, and another the "done" section, and you move images as you grow, adding new "to do" images along the way.

One suggestion, if you want to attract women in your life, have the images of women around the image of you and your evolved self, so it's clear it's you with these women and not just girlie pinup artwork.

Have this board so you can access it daily, preferably several times throughout the day. Use it as part of your meditation; maybe begin by looking at the vision board, then holding that image as you begin your meditation.

Obviously, use your judgment at work. Some vision boards are not appropriate for cubicle land. You can explore creating two vision boards, one for work and one for home, or ways to access your vision board at work without getting you in trouble with the boss (or sued by your employees, if you are the boss).

What is the value in this? It creates a picture for your subconscious mind, which will begin drawing those things into your life. You don't have to consciously think about what you're looking at, in fact it works better if you just look at it and allow yourself to "zone out" a bit, just let it drop into your subconscious.

Make your vision board a daily part of your life, even if it's just a few moments a day. Your mind does not need to see it for hours on end, and the last thing you want is your mind creating resistance to your vision board by seeing it as work. So see it as a way to relax and go to your good place. Make it something you genuinely enjoy looking at and try "feeling into" your vision board when the opportunity presents itself, feeling the images and the overall impression of how it feels to be in that life. See if you can make your vision board come alive for you in your mind and know it will come alive for you in your life.

Shrine

Lately I have been spending a lot of time in front of my shrine. It has elements - visual and scent (in the form of aromatherapy) - that help bring me into that calm, centered, empowered state which is my source of personal power and positive growth.

A shrine is your physical anchoring spot, a place where you can feel grounded in something that represents YOU. This is not about changing your religion or anything like that, although you can make it as spiritual as is right for you. This is a place where, when you are here, it is your space, with things that inspire you and make you feel good about yourself. Looking at your shrine, you feel like a hero.

So find an area in your living space. It can be a shelf, a mantle, a part of a bookshelf, the top of your dresser. Find items that make you feel good, that represent you, that inspire you. It does not have to make sense, it does not have to fit the décor of the rest of your place (unless you are so aligned that your entire home at this moment is a perfect reflection of you, in which case a shrine might be redundant), it does not have to be a "shrine" in the classical sense. Just start finding things that either have great meaning to you or inspire you, and arrange them in a way that, when you look at this, it feels like your space, and only your space.

One recommendation is to try to include the four elements in your shrine - water, fire, earth and air. Air can be accomplished by placing the shrine by a window, but you can play with this as you see fit, if it interests you. Tantric practitioners make a point of involving the four elements. If that is something you would like in your life, this is a good place to start.

Mine is this old, ratty bookshelf I bought at a yard sale for a buck from this Irish guy who was moving to Japan, so there is even a story behind the bookshelf. It sits on my porch (air). It has this little bamboo plant (earth, water) and lots of candles (fire). It has a collection of items that either mean something to me, represent a good time in my life, or look awesome and inspiring. I also have my aromatherapy water diffusers there, and two drawers to hold my aromatherapy oils. I have arranged it so it just feels like me when I am there, and it feels big and calming and spiritual. It even smells awesome. It is a corner of the universe that is mine and it feels great being there.

This shrine is a way to remind yourself of your greatness, to deepen your self-love and find a place of grounding, to find your center. I recommend you add and change it periodically as things come in and out of your life, and that you consider having something living in it, to represent life energy.

How Do You Know These Are Working?

There are really only two ways you know these representations are working for you. First, looking at them makes it easier for you to access your peak state. In other words, you feel good, empowered, centered in the presence of these representations. And every time you visit them, it gets a little easier to access that state, and the state gets a little more powerful, a little more clear.

Second, you find yourself drawing the things you are asking for into your life. What you have put into your vision board and shrine start appearing, either as things in your life or feelings and experiences. It is important to focus on the things you are wanting as if they have already happened. If "nothing happens," you will want to evaluate. Perhaps you are not being clear or honest with what you truly desire in your life. Perhaps the representations are not powerful or positive enough. Perhaps your mindset is negative when you look at your vision board and shrine. Keep refining and adjusting until it "clicks" for you. And know that it will. ###

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Change Strategy For Success

by John Doidge

A personal change strategy for success in life and business. The requirements for embracing change as fresh opportunities rather than as something to fear.

Mankind's ability to adapt to change has made us the most successful species on this planet. Without this ability we would not have the technology and industry that we have and are continually developing.

Change is a part of living and without it we would stagnate. We shape the environment, in an attempt to make life safer and more comfortable, at an ever increasing pace. This creates new challenges to overcome with new opportunities enabling us to develop as a species. For the external world there are plans and models put into practice at the organisation level for controlling change. There are change strategies in place. Individually we must adapt to follow external changes, but are we aware of our own change strategy?

The successful person is always willing to adapt and change with the world around them. The really successful person is one who is able to create change in the world around them. An aware and inquisitive mind is essential. Therefore, the successful person must be sensitive to the world around them. A top businessman, for example, needs to be conscious of gaps in the market that they are ready to exploit. He needs a change strategy and to be aware of it and when to use it.

A positive frame of mind will form the base of a can do attitude. People who think positively are far more likely to see challenges rather than problems or opportunities rather than difficulties. The positive mental attitude of the successful businessman means that opportunity becomes a reality because they also have the drive and motivation to succeed and make their dream come true. So as you can see there is much to be gained from developing a state of optimism in your character with regard to change. The problem for a lot of people is in developing this optimism and overcoming bad habits of pessimistic attitudes. In essence, a confidence is required.

One of the reasons top businessmen are able to adapt and change so readily is because they remain optimistic in their appraisal of change. Rather than running terrified of the unknown successful business people are eternal optimists and embrace the unknown. A change means a fresh opportunity. It is no surprise that the most dynamic and successful people are those who change and adapt accordingly to the environment and the situation. It fits in with Darwin's 'survival of the fittest'.

Develop optimism. Develop a change strategy in your mind to maintain the habit of confidence in your ability to regard change with interest, fascination and excitement.

Optimists are self-disciplined and persistent in what they want to achieve in their life. Optimists plan and take action to move forward. They constantly learn about how to get better at their skills. Their self-confidence helps them to look for solutions and lead them to success in their goals. If you are pessimistic it is time to shed your pessimistic attitude and develop optimism in its place. There is no place in the world of success for negative attitudes. Think about what you can do rather than the normal trend of what you cannot. Focusing on deficiencies is certainly important for self improvement but being overly critical and analytical is not. The trick is to find the balance, it is important to remind yourself what you are good at if you are to have the confidence to tackle new things.

Having the courage to learn and change may not necessarily make you a happy person, but it will help you negotiate hard times more smoothly and successfully as well as learn from these experiences. Understanding how your mind works helps you to know when and how to manage your mind to make the process of adaptation happen more smoothly and perhaps more quickly. It also helps you monitor both the conscious and unconscious spheres of your mind and gives you feedback about whether you are adapting successfully. It gives you a change strategy. ###

John Doidge has a science background leading him to a fascination and curiosity about the whole package of the universe and how the mind interacts with the physical within it. By understanding our relationship with nature the aim is to aid our mental development to fulfilment, with belief through knowledge. If you wish to continue your journey of exploration into developing your mind visit <http://www.killnegative.com>

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100 Words

Who Is Swati Chopra?

Swati Chopra is a writer based in New Delhi, India. She focuses on spirituality and religion in her work and is author of [*Buddhism: On the Path to Nirvana*](#). For her book project on women and spirituality, she has received a fellowship from the Foundation for Universal Responsibility of H. H. the Dalai Lama. Swati's writing has appeared in journals in India and abroad, including *Resurgence* and *Tricycle: The Buddhist Review*. www.swatichopra.com

Five books that have affected Swati's life:

[*I Am That*, Maurice Frydman](#)

[*Siddhartha*, Hermann Hesse](#)

[*Freedom in Exile*, H. H. the Dalai Lama](#)

[*Bhagavad Gita*](#)

[*Old Path White Clouds*, Thich Nhat Hanh](#)

Insight of Swati Chopra

Of the many hopes that light up my heart when I think of our collective future, I choose one—an end to the suffering of duality, of otherness. Those who have glimpsed its true nature describe Reality as an uncompromising whole. An intermeshed network, a mass of interconnections. In our beings we carry the spark that links us with everything else. Looking at a world that fragments anew each day into boundaries between self and other, one hopes for a radical realization of connection, of shared humanity, of the oneness that embraces us all and is the ground upon which our common destiny unfolds.

Zen Stories

Great Waves

In the early days of the Meiji era there lived a well-known wrestler called O-nami, Great Waves.

O-nami was immensely strong and knew the art of wrestling. In his private bouts he defeated even his teacher, but in public was so bashful that his own pupils threw him.

O-nami felt he should go to a Zen master for help. Hakuju, a wandering teacher, was stopping in a little temple nearby, so O-nami went to see him and told him of his great trouble.

"Great Waves is your name," the teacher advised, "so stay in this temple tonight. Imagine that you are those billows. You are no longer a wrestler who is afraid. You are those huge waves sweeping everything before them, swallowing all in their path. Do this and you will be the greatest wrestler in the land."

The teacher retired. O-nami sat in meditation trying to imagine himself as waves. He thought of many different things. Then gradually he turned more and more to the feeling of waves. As the night advanced the waves became larger and larger. They swept away the flowers in their vases. Even the Buddha in the shrine was inundated. Before dawn the temple was nothing but the ebb and flow of an immense sea.

In the morning the teacher found O-nami meditating, a faint smile on his face. He patted the wrestler's shoulder. "Now nothing can disturb you," he said. "You are those waves. You will sweep everything before you."

The same day O-nami entered the wrestling contests and won. After that, no one in Japan was able to defeat him. ###

Pam Garcy

Part 17. The art of Self-reinforcement--giving yourself pats on the back

Do you drive your car around, never refueling or getting tune-ups?

Do you spend the money in your bank account without making deposits?

Do you ask your friends for favors, never giving back in return?

Usually, taking requires replenishing. We inherently know this when it comes to our cars, our bank accounts and our friendships. But, when it comes to ourselves, we often forget to give ourselves the necessary pats on the back that we deserve after working hard.

I remember that when I was in graduate school, I often pushed myself and wouldn't take time to replenish. I didn't know that I needed to do this for myself. All of a sudden, one day, I felt burnt out. I didn't know why. This is when I began to study the process of burnout. I learned that burnout sometimes happens when the level of output greatly exceeds the level of input.

As I was learning, one of my grad school buddies talked to me about taking breaks. "It's a good thing to take breaks," she said in earnest, attempting to convince me to do so. She explained that when she took 3 or 4 hours off of studying, she would return refreshed and could accomplish her work in half the time. "So, it is like I'm accomplishing two things in the same amount of time--fun and work, instead of just work." She was right.

I started to take breaks and realized how important and valuable these were.

Breaks became a type of reward for me. I found that during these breaks I could return to enjoying my life and refueling.

What is rewarding for you? Do you take the time to replenish and reward yourself?

Give it a try and see what happens.

For many people, it is good to take small breaks every few hours. Optimally, it is also good to take one full day off each week, simply to rejuvenate. When you can, it is important to take vacations as well. Although work is a great part of life, it is also important to make time for other things, such as loving, laughing, seeing new places, exploring, remembering, learning and renewing.

Taking breaks and reinforcing yourself with pleasure-filled moments are like making deposits in a bank account. The more you do this, the more resources you'll have when you need them. So, don't be stingy!

When you are stepping away from the hustle and bustle of your daily life, you can also take the time to tune into your inner guidance. Breathe deeply and reconnect with yourself, what you have been doing, what you are going to do, your direction, your values and the meaning that you want to live.

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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 33

There is another way of looking at the world.

Today's idea is an attempt to recognize that you can shift your perception of the world in both its outer and inner aspects. A full five minutes should be devoted to the morning and evening applications. In these practice periods, the idea should be repeated as often as you find comfortable, though unhurried applications are essential. Alternate between surveying your outer and inner perceptions, but without an abrupt sense of shifting.

Merely glance casually around the world you perceive as outside yourself, then close your eyes and survey your inner thoughts with equal casualness. Try to remain equally uninvolved in both, and to maintain this detachment as you repeat the idea throughout the day.

The shorter exercise periods should be as frequent as possible. Specific applications of today's idea should also be made immediately, when any situation arises which tempts you to become disturbed. For these applications, say:

There is another way of looking at this.

Remember to apply today's idea the instant you are aware of distress. It may be necessary to take a minute or so to sit quietly and repeat the idea to yourself several times. Closing your eyes will probably help in this form of application.

Commentary by Allen Watson

This lesson asserts the power of our minds to choose how we see the world. We can shift our perception of the world! That is not only a personally empowering concept, it is, quite literally, a world-changing realization.

As we begin to examine our thoughts, we will be amazed at the number of situations in which the idea of "another way" of looking at it has simply never occurred to us. With some things, the idea that we could see them differently may actually be offensive. Without realizing it we may be saying, "My mind is already made up; don't confuse me with facts."

That is why following the practice instructions with these lessons is so important. It isn't just the longer five-minute times in the morning and evening: "The shorter exercise periods should be as frequent as possible" (3:1). The more often we bring this idea into our awareness during the day, the more we will become aware of areas of thought that we are protecting from change. ###