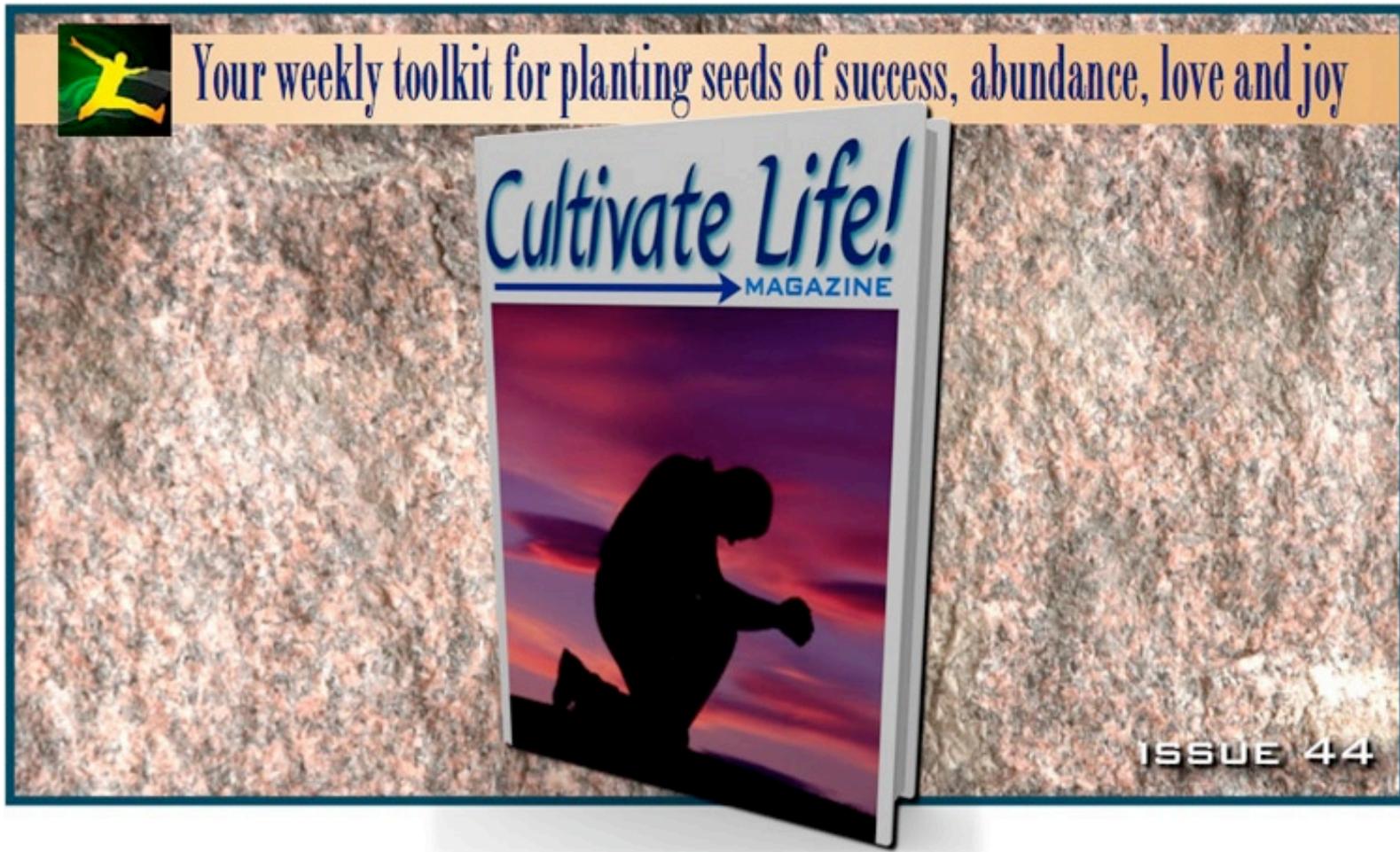


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Cultivate Life! magazine

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Heart to Heart Coaching:

Coach **Doris Jeanette**, replies to the question:

How do I find my passion in life, and my one niche topic to write a book about?

Philosophy: I am a non-denominational Christ-centered Believer. I have spiritual insights and discernment for others and me.

Hopes and aspirations: I want to write books, an e-book, just cannot find my ONE thing to write about. I am very talented, intelligent, Sagittarius, analytical - who knows that knowledge is Power. I have a hard time narrowing down my niche to write about.

Question:

1. How to find my one niche topic to write about?
2. How to find my passion in life?
3. Should I be doing something else with my life, in this economy, even if others say it's bad?

I am a motherless daughter. I recently worked as a barber, which I have most experience in. I owned and operated my barbershop for 12 years closed it in 2007. (I saw this state of economy coming spiritually). I was able to support me and my daughter as a single mom on what I made until 2007. I then job-hopped and hated it. I was financially devastated and lost my job and got evicted with my boyfriend out of a rental house we loved in Feb 2010. We had nowhere to go. We put our possessions in storage and also gave the rest to Salvation Army. We moved an hour away to my hometown - which is blacks and Mexicans- not what I am use to, into a hotel that had bugs and mold for three months and three days. I was a paralegal at that time. He got a job in security full time near by; I do it Sundays only but hate the job. I want to make passive income writing books. How? On What?

ANSWER:

Thank you for your many questions. You have real concerns, all of which have real answers. I know multitudes around the world are struggling with similar money issues, home issues and stress issues.

As I read your question, I felt overwhelmed. Therefore, I suspect you also feel overwhelmed. This feeling of being overwhelmed is an important human experience that needs to be recognized, understood and addressed in a way that is helpful.

When you are overwhelmed, you do not know where to begin. You do not know what to do. Everything in your life feels like it is bigger than you. The events are too much, too fast and too confusing. This means the energy in your life is moving too fast.

You are overwhelmed because most of the energy in your life is out of control. This is the reason you are getting the results you are getting. When energy is out of control, nothing can take hold and grow in a healthy, natural fashion. It is remarkable how well and long you have lived in an out of control state.

Look around the world and notice the out of control energy. Some people live from one crisis to another crisis; yet, they manage to live a long life. Look at the countries where the leaders are out of control and the countries exist for a long time. So it is possible to live and function in an out of control state. However, this is not desirable. You will continue to get unsatisfying results and your body will continue to send you signs that it is stressed. So it is best for you to learn to bring your energy into balance.

Overwhelming Energy is Learned

My guess is you grew up in an environment where out of control energy existed all around you. Therefore, you do not notice that out of control energy is unusual. To you, it appears to be normal because

that is what you know. Out of control energy is not healthy, but you are used to it and familiar with it. As a result, out of control energy is your default. This needs to change.

You need to learn to observe out of control energy objectively.

Let me define out of control energy so you can begin to recognize it as separate from your authentic self. Overwhelming energy moves too fast. It is irritable, scattered and jerky. It is out of balance, unpredictable and frightening.

Out of control energy flies around all over the place without being grounded. It does not have any flow. There is no rhythm, calmness or security. Out of control energy is not connected to the earth. It appears in the nervous system as anxiety and static. Anxiety can cause acne and many other serious physical problems.

Out of Control Energy is Not Connected to Nature

In the physical world of reality on planet earth, out of control energy does not exist. If energy gets out of control for a few seconds, it is immediately grounded. For example, lightning. Lightning is out of control for milliseconds before it is immediately grounded.

Nature does not allow energy to exist in an out of control state. To do so would disobey the laws of physics. Energy is in a constant state of transformation but it does not fly all over the place and scared everyone to death. Earthquakes, tsunamis, storms and hurricanes peter out and get grounded in due course.

Only the human mind allows energy to become out of control and continue to be out of control over long periods of time. This means, your thoughts are the problem. Your thoughts are overwhelming you. You have too many thoughts, moving too fast and they are often scaring you to death.

For example, let's take the positive thought that you want to write an E-book. You begin with a positive, healthy thought and it quickly

becomes an out of control situation where you do not know what to write about. You begin to think there is one thing that you need to write about and you do not know what that one thing is.

This happens because your thoughts are jumping all over the place. So no matter how positive your thoughts are--they are out of control. Out of control energy does not grow corn. It is like you are planting a seed and as soon as you plant it in the earth; you pull it up out of the ground. As long as you do this, there is no way your seed can become a tiny sprout and grow into a healthy planet.

Just like a farmer, you need to learn how to grow corn. If you do not give a corn kernel what it needs, it will not grow into delicious corn on the cob for you to eat. Growing as a person is the same. If you want to grow into a healthy, happy person, you must give yourself what you need in order to reach your goals.

You cannot balance your energy without learning how to balance your energy.

You mention that you are smart but you do not mention the actions you have taken to develop yourself. Reading is one way to learn something new, but reading books is not enough. You want to take courses in the areas you need to learn. You want to work with a therapist, psychologist, mentor or coach. It is required that you listen to audio, take online courses and have real life experiences that teach you what you need to know.

For example, taking an affordable course on anxiety reduction, assertiveness training or money management would be a wonderful place to begin. However taking the course is not enough. It is required that you put what you learn into daily practice in your life. You have to take care of what needs to be taken care of in the physical and emotional areas. You must stay with the tasks and continue to learn new things as you go along. After considerable experience, then you

will be able to write authoritatively about one of these topics, and you will have discovered your own unique insights to present to readers.

Meanwhile, it is clear you are educated since you were a paralegal. This is a productive way to make a living in the USA. Being a barber is also a valuable skill. What is the reason you are not using these skills to be financially secure in this recession? My guess is you repeat your overwhelmed pattern so effectively that you sabotage yourself. This means that no matter what you accomplish, you cannot hold on to it and enjoy it. As in, pulling up the plant before it has time to produce what you need.

Out of control energy is irrational and always results in a lose-lose situation. You will never win. This is the reason you need to learn how to balance your out of control energy whenever it appears in your body, heart, energy field or life.

You can learn to feel, sense and know when your energy goes into this unhealthy out of control state.

Once you know when you are in an out of control state, then you can stop your anxiety from doing its usual harm. To stop your out of control energy forming creating chaos you need to bring it into a healthy flow.

You do not want to control your energy because this will result in rigidity, which also has devastating results. Read last week's column for more information about unhealthy, controlled energy and the column on Obsessive Compulsive Disorder.

Flowing energy is the only energy that is healthy, strong and resilient. Your energy is balanced when you allow it to flow. Both controlled and out of control energy are unhealthy. Only flowing energy is in harmony with you and what you need.

In order to get your out of control energy into a healthy, flowing state you must learn how to ground your human energy. When you are able

to ground your energy and keep it grounded, you will not experience being overwhelmed.

Your results will be totally different from the results you are getting now. You will be moving toward your goals in a step-by-step fashion. You will find real answers to all your real problems. You will feel in charge of your life because you will be responsible for your results. You will be grounded and secure.

Practical Human Energy Advice:

From now on, when you experience being overwhelmed, stop and get in balance. Do not continue in an out of control state.

"I am a motherless daughter." You can find your "motherless daughter" who is your wounded emotional self and heal her. Creating a loving relationship with your emotional self is the pathway to your healthy, flowing, energy. Your flowing energy will lead you to your purpose in life and you will know exactly what you need to do each moment of the day.

Strong, loving mothers are grounded. You can become a daughter with an emotionally strong "Inner Mother" who takes care of herself. You will know you have reached this state when you keep your energy grounded and do not allow yourself to be out of control.

Then, you will be able to use your "spiritual insights and discernments" for your highest good as you grow into the creative, grounded writer that you are.

Action Steps to Balance Out of Control Energy

- **Learn what out of control energy is so you can bring it into balance.** Contrast out of control energy with controlled energy and flowing energy until you know the difference. Study with energy teachers so you can read your own human energy.

Work with teachers who are very, very grounded. Study the "Opening the Heart" audio and eBook to learn to tell the difference between out of control, controlled and flowing energy.

<http://www.drjeanette.com/heartanswers.html>

- **Stop being out of control with money.** Learn how to make money, save it and help it grow for your old age. Take money classes and take action. Here is a free special report called, "16 Ways to Relax During a Recession." Down load it here. <http://www.drjeanette.com/recession.html>
- **Ground your energy and keep it grounded.** Get out of tennis shoes and plug your human energy into gravity. Connect your feet to energy of the earth. Lay around on the earth until you can feel her energy moving through you. Take the "Overcoming Anxiety Naturally" online course, which step by step teaches you how to step out of your thoughts and ground your out of control energy into the earth. <http://www.drjeanette.com/anxietyonlinecourse.html> Sign up for the Nature Workshop at the Beach in Cape May, NJ, April 30, 2011. Get in-the-flesh grounding exercise as you play and have fun. <http://www.drjeanette.com/natureworkshops.html>

Doris Jeanette grew up with bare feet in the earth. She has spent 35 years teaching people in groups, workshops and conferences how to get grounded. Working with Dr. Jeanette, on the phone or in-person, is a very grounding experience. Sign up for her free holistic psychology newsletter "The Vibrant Moment" and join one of her many holistic psychology training programs at <http://www.drjeanette.com/aboutus.html>

Awakening is Endless

Tami Simon speaks with Gangaji

Tami Simon: You're listening to *Insights at the Edge*.

Today I speak with Gangaji. Gangaji is an American-born spiritual teacher dedicated to sharing the path of freedom through simple and direct self-inquiry. This year marks her twentieth year of teaching, as she continues traveling the world speaking to people with whom she shares her direct experience of the essential message she received from her guru, Papaji, on the banks of the Ganges in 1990. She is the author of the Sounds True book *The Diamond in Your Pocket: Discovering Your True Radiance*.

I spoke with Gangaji about what she learned while going through quite a difficult time in her life--the challenge as well of working with difficult emotions like fear, anger, and jealousy; the power of humiliation; and the endless nature of spiritual awakening.

Tami Simon: Welcome, Gangaji.

Gangaji: Oh thank you. I am really happy to be here, Tami.

TS: Gangaji will be offering a three-part online series with Sounds True called *Facing Everything: Meeting Your Life without Resistance*. And that begins on March 9th. And I think many Sounds True listeners know that in your own life in the past five or so years, you have faced a lot of things--things that maybe people may think that somebody who has had a great spiritual awakening in their life wouldn't have to face. You know what I mean by that. And I think you know that it became public that there were difficulties with your husband, Eli, and that he had had an extramarital affair with a student and the complexities that go with that in terms of your long-term marriage. And I'm curious, to begin, if you could tell us a bit about what you learned about facing everything from this experience.

G: Well, I learned a lot. Because until this happened, things had been relatively smooth. I mean I am a human being, so there are ups and downs and I think we all have to face small things that are unpleasant, too, in different ways--whether in our body or just our environment or politics or whatever. But this was deeply personal, and I've been in this marriage for over thirty years now, and it was quite a shock to find out that my husband was deeply in love with another person and had been for three years.

It was a shock and it was really a good shock, although it felt horrible at the time, and I would have given anything to not have it. I'm a human being and I went through what we go through as humans. Shock is a kind of paralysis state, and then emotions arise. And I had all the emotions. I'm an emotional being. And I was furious and angry and I left my husband. And I was jealous and hurt and couldn't believe it had happened. And I also recognized that it had happened and that there was choice in that. And then I could actually open to all those feelings and recognize that in the midst of all that, there was this untouched love for my husband, for the other woman, for myself. And just love for love. And that love was really untouched. And yet it wasn't separate from the emotions. It wasn't that the love took precedence, but it was there as silent awareness. It was the presence. And we made it through it. We did split up and then we reconciled. And then a year later, there was a public outcry and a scandal and so there was another level of facing everything that had been deeply personal and then this other was profoundly public and there was lots of negativity coming my way.

But you know, for years I've been saying to people that if you accept the negative as you accept the positive, that it's just energy coming toward you. Then you recognize what's untouched. This was a good testing ground for me. I had to see...how true is that? And I discovered it's completely true. It was a very unpleasant time, but it doesn't touch the truth of oneself. And from that came this phrase, "facing everything." We actually offered a group a weekend or five-day with that title, "Facing Everything," and the realization that if we have to be human beings, since we are human beings, rather, and we want to be awake human

beings, really the only choice is to face everything. Otherwise we live in little bubbles. And some are pleasant and some people live in their unpleasant bubbles. But to face everything is to be willing to acknowledge that whatever arises can be met. No matter what we tell ourselves about what arises. Or no matter how much we like or dislike it, it can be met.

And when I use the word "meet," or met, I mean, when we meet someone, we really are something, some emotions, some person, some state. We have to leave behind all definitions of what we think that person or state or emotion is and simply meet it as energy. And it's a fire then. And it actually deepens. So I can say, now, on the other side of this, that was three years ago, well four years ago, and I discovered that affair. Our marriage is deeper and sweeter than ever. And I wouldn't say my skin is thicker. It is actually more transparent. And I still have the capacity for heartbreak, but there is also a deeper recognition of the presence of love and silence that can really handle anything, and is really my invitation to anyone who is interested in this series. That is what we will be dealing with, ruthlessly and eventually, effortlessly. Meeting what arises in one's life. I bring to that my own experience; it's not just a theory. I've been through the testifier with this one.

TS: It certainly sounds that way. So let's take the example of meeting anger. I mean, the anger that anyone would feel in a situation like this. How do you actually meet anger? Anger takes us over. We go off on our rants and stuff. What does it mean to "meet" it?

G: Well, I definitely felt really angry, so first of all, feeling it. Anger is such a powerful emotion that it just empties the mind of any thoughts of "this should be here or this shouldn't be here," which is just really raw, naked anger. You know, I did my share of yelling and screaming and saying, "This shouldn't be." And then the anger is spent. Because even though anger is the most powerful perhaps of the emotions, or of the outward-going emotions, it is also superficial. Because under that anger was this despair that I had been living with someone whom I thought I knew profoundly but it seemed that I didn't know. But I had been living a lie.

And so there was a deep despair and, in a way, the choice then was do I stay in this anger, or do I actually open to meet what is underneath the anger?

And I just had enough experience to know to open to the despair. And the shock of that and really, the beautiful part of the shock of it is the humbling of it. That it doesn't matter how enlightened you are. I mean the experiences of awakening that you've had. We are subject to heartbreak and that's not a bad thing, because it humbles the mind. And whatever the latest incarnation of self-definition may be. And so I was humbled by this despair. And I often knew that I had a choice with despair. I could indulge it and dramatize it, or I could just really open to it. In opening to despair without following the tendencies of my mind, which absolutely did arise, to write myself out of a dramatic scenario about how this shouldn't have happened to me and how bad they are to doing this to me, to not follow that. And just to return to my own pain. Then that pain itself is not the enemy. It is just an animal pain of hurt. And when that hurt is met without the addition of the dialogue of the story of what caused it, even though that dialogue may be legitimate, it may need to be addressed. But in that moment, just to open to the raw, naked heart, then there's a discovery of what is unhurt. In the core of the wound, there is perfect wholeness. As I recalled just a moment ago, just the love was untouched. And from that space then, I could actually speak to my husband. I could actually speak to this other woman and say, "How did this happen?" You know? What part did I play in this? And as a human being, start to unravel how this could have come about, to take responsibility. But first I had to take responsibility for my own reaction, my own emotions. And then a response, a true response, could come.

TS: You've mentioned a couple times that there are choices--that you saw that there were choices that you could make at different points. I'm curious about that emerging of a choice point, if you could describe that more.

G: Well, I haven't always been aware of choice in my life, of course. Over the course of my spiritual search there were certain pivotal moments where I recognized I was choosing to suffer. And then really when I met Papaji, my teacher, my guru, he said, "Stop!" At first I didn't know what he meant, and I could have a whole internal conversation about how it was impossible to stop. But he was so clear in his saying, "Stop and choose to be free." that I stopped telling my story about what I could choose and what I couldn't choose. And so I had experience of choice.

And then when I got pushed, as life will push us all in one way or another, either in our relationships or just in the very fact of the ending of life. It's really death that we are always shocked about, death that we are avoiding, death that makes us angry, and death that makes us despairing. But Papaji had invited me to face death. And so I had actually opened or met, if we are using the word, "met," I had met my own death. And so I recognized that I had this choice to open. Before that, I would have said there was no choice, just the anger or the jealousy or the despair would just have to play itself out. And I had lived a life, much of my life, actually as an emotional person then, as an emotional type, in emotionality. And feeling it was choiceless, and I would have defended the choicelessness of it. And that was my identity.

But in meeting my teacher, he had just suggested that I inquire into stopping and opening. And I found that it's here, that opportunity is here. So when these very strong emotions would appear, that choice was not present in saying that now this emotion won't appear, it was choiceless when they appeared, because things were triggered in my subconscious or in my habit of habits or my fixation. For me, it wasn't choices, they appeared. But at that moment then, I knew from my own past experience that I could just stop talking to myself about how wronged I had been. And that was actually easier than meeting the pain, it seemed. So it was a hard choice, or a ruthless choice. But in the willingness to make that choice, then that is what I mean when I say, "open." So it's not choosing what arises; it's choosing what you do with that.

TS: So when something difficult is happening and an emotion that seems like it's sweeping us away is arising, and we're hooked in the thinking, thinking, thinking, the story that "I'm going to kill him," or, you know, "I'm so afraid, " over and over. How do we break that sort of record player in our mind that is just going over and over and we're in the feeling?

G: Well, that's the essential question. I think the first thing is that you have to be willing to hear yourself, or to overhear yourself. You have to be willing to at least recognize, my god, I'm having the same conversation with myself that I've had a hundred times today about how horrible it is or how horrible he is or they are. And that there is some juice from that conversation, even some sense of power in that conversation because it generates this very strong emotion, anger. There's no sense of power in despair. And we would often rather feel angry for the sense of power it gives us than the despair. So in overhearing myself, and you know, I'm not saying that immediately I would feel this choice, I would yell and scream and then I would hear myself. This is so familiar. And it was not just familiar from this particular horror that had happened in my life, but it was familiar from all I can remember of my life. What I'd said to my mother, what I'd said to other lovers, what I'd said to the world, what I said to my government when it had betrayed me. So it was this righteous anger. And the choice was then the willingness to lie down, and just feel that. Not even try to change the anger. But just to feel it without the dialogue. And that is the choice.

The how-to is just to first recognize that there is a dialogue and it's not a creative dialogue; it's the same old dialogue. So it's really keeping one stirred-up without resolution appearing. Once you overhear yourself, then there is a possibility. That in itself is humbling.

TS: Okay, so I hear myself, I'm sick of it, I'm humbled. I lie down. I'm still with you. I lie down, and I'm still hearing myself and I'm more humbled. But what breaks that?

G: So if there is no notion of it being broken, you know, you're not trying to get on the other side of it. If you're lying down so you can get finished with it, that's not really meeting it. That's actually making some kind of subtle war against it. So you're sick of being sick. But what I'm suggesting is that there's a possibility to just be sick, to just lie down and to die to a future and die to the dialogue of the past. And in that, the meeting is just here. And the outcome is the discovery rather than a decision, "This will be the outcome. I will lie down. I will meet this, and I will be done with it." It is more, "I will lie down and I will meet this and I will discover what is here." And maybe it's more anger. Maybe it's more despair, more fear.

But whatever is here is an opportunity then to discover what this is. What is here? When we're attached to this outcomes, "I will get rid of this; this will never happen again; I'll get to peace and love," then we're being led by our thoughts, rather than letting our thoughts follow the direct discovery. And that's really the whole point of this series: that we can have profound understandings, but if those understandings then start to direct our lives, then they actually limit our lives. The capacity to discover then makes way for more profound understanding. But then it's not the understanding that is leading; it's the capacity to discover. So we don't know what would happen.

Let's say when you lie down, you're having this conversation; you're sick of it. You don't know. And the willingness to not know is really the willingness to have an open mind. Let us see, maybe you'll still be sick at heart when you get up, but you're just seeing, you're discovering without a preconceived outcome on the other end. And that's essential with anybody or anything.

TS: That's very helpful. I want to go back to something you said in your meeting with Papaji, your teacher, that in that experience of being with him, and the exchanges that you had, that you met your own death. Can you give me little bit more about that? Help me understand what that was like, meeting your own death?

G: Well, you know, it seems to me that everything we fear is death of some kind. Whether it's the ultimate death of the body or it's the death of health or the death of a relationship or the death of my latest inflated self-definition, the death of our planet. It's the ending and that's what we fear. I met Papaji; he really invited me to let everything die, which was really an invitation to let my identity die. We fear that if our identity dies, who we are is no longer here. Because it's true that when we let our identity die, who we think we are is realized to not be here. It's just an illusion. It's held together by thought energy and it's powerful and it's a lens for viewing the world and there's even really nothing wrong with it. It's just not the truth of who one is.

So to me, death is really essential to discover what it unaffected in the death of who you are. So in my case, by meeting the death of this relationship and the death of my illusion of how our relationship is going, I was actually forced into a real moment of fighting that, of not wanting that to happen and despairing over the reality of that, that it had happened, and then surrendering to that. It was over, and in that moment of surrender, there is just a lightness of being, this freedom. And that what's I had experienced with Papaji. It's not really a moment that can be remembered. But it's a moment that when life presents you with particular circumstances you can discover.

You can stop generating the story of the past and stop generating the outcome for the future. And in that moment, there is just lightness, there's just beauty, with no notion of you as separate from that and no notion of you as anything other than that.

TS: One of the things that is curious for me, and I'd love to know what your take on this is: which is you and Eli both have experienced in your life these dramatic spiritual awakenings. And Eli wrote a book on sudden awakening, and we're hearing about your own experiences with Papaji. And yet, after these experiences in awakening, events happened in your life where there was clearly at least some level of not truth telling, or not paying attention, or you can go on and on. Not that the details matter, but something that someone from the outside will say, "That doesn't look very enlightened," or something like that. So how do you understand that? What is awakening if after awakening such ignorance, for lack of a better word, is prevalent, is there?

G: Well, Papaji said, "Vigilance is necessary until our last breath," because there is a power of mind that is huge, and that power is a power to deny or to inflate or overlook and so many other powers. And when Eli and I got back together and actually began to deconstruct our marriage of thirty years. We had been together many years before we met Papaji and during Papaji and after Papaji, and in our teaching, separately and together, we could see that underneath there was this ground of absolute and love and commitment to love and commitment to truth. And on top there was this companionship and deep empathy for each other and understanding each other and liking each other. And in the middle of it there was a very subtle war that had been going on, and had been started, really, at the initiation of our relationship back in the 1970s. And that war, because we were ignorant of it, even when we began to deconstruct it and look at it, I saw that there were signs of it all the time but I had rationalized it. I thought, "This is just the way he is, this is just the way it is." And the truth is that I was deeply fulfilled in my life so it didn't matter to me that there were rough edges. And I overlooked them. And they began to fester.

And so in this middle area, the area of relationship, the area of the world, we weren't enlightened. We were both enlightened in the most profound and deep way, we were both fulfilled. And yet there was a way that had not risen to the surface to be met. And that's what had to be

seen. We had both individually and together prayed for anything that was left to come forward. And it did. It came forward. It hit us in the head to get our attention. And it wasn't good news but it is good news. At least the invitation was answered. And so when you say how do I understand that? I would say that I understand that awakening is endless.

I'm not particularly psychologically oriented but in the willingness to tell the truth and then finally tell the truth where you have been lying, where I had been lying, there's a deeper and deeper clearing out of the lies, whether they are subtle or gross, ignored, or denied. I had done that with so many aspects of my life, but I hadn't done that with my relationship. I had made a truth with my relationship because I was happy in my life. I didn't need my relationship to give me anything. But that relationship was still flawed in certain ways that needed to be exposed.

I mean, I can't say I was thrilled that they were publically exposed, but that was part of it too--because there was a public persona that also had to be met. So I had to meet within myself a kind of public humiliation and disgrace and hatred from people and lies that people would say about me. So to meet that was deeply strengthening. And so I would never wish it on anyone, and I don't think it was a good thing. It's like cancer or something. You don't need it to wake up to the preciousness of life, but when it comes, you do wake up more deeply to the preciousness of life as well as the possibility of mind and thoughts to co-opt and twist understanding--so that my fulfillment, which was true and hadn't shifted at all, was a way I actually used to look at what was not working in my personal life.

My teacher didn't ask me to be a *Sadu* or to be on a mountain. He pushed me back into the world and to live the life of a regular person. To do my own grocery shopping, to make my bed, to walk down the street by myself. So in that, so many aspects of my life have come up to be examined. Examined first cognitively with the thinking mind--but then finally examined by what I mean by an inquiry or meeting, which is simply opening to it. And I would say with myself and with most people,

it's really some form of self-hatred that we're running from. Some form of the sense that at the core we are worthless and unlovable. And so, you know, when this marriage crisis happened, there that was, waiting for me. I had messed up my marriage somehow because I didn't believe this happened in a vacuum. I knew I was a part of it in some way. For me I had to be willing to discover how I was and what deals I had made with myself to overlook this. And so, it's endless. And vigilance is necessary until the last breath.

TS: This idea that awakening is endless: not all spiritual teachers who talk about spiritual awakening or enlightenment...it's described that there is the before and there is the after. And you know, even in your story with Papaji and meeting your own death, it seems like there was a kind of before and after but then there is after the after and after the after and after the after. I'm wondering what you might have to say about that, that there was some kind of fundamental change but yet it's an ongoing process at the same time.

G: Yes, I think that's really well said. You know, we think it's one or the other but it's a whole, and so it's both. And I'm sure most of us can look in our lives and see that there had been at certain points, certain crossroads, that had been fundamental shifts in our lives. And when I met Papaji, that was the most fundamental shift that had ever occurred to me. It turned everything right side up. And then there was more; there is more. I know someone asked me, a couple of years after I was teaching, "Are you fully realized?" And I said, "I haven't found the end of realization." So I would have to say that there is always room for more. And really, I like the way you said it; it's both.

It's a fundamental shift and it's a before and an after and then there's an after and an after. And even, I've heard that Jane Dunn, whose son was with Nisargadatta and did some translations for him said that, on his death bed, he was saying, "Forget those books I wrote; they're nothing. I've really discovered it now," because our discoveries are enlightenment. Our experiences are just so profound at the moment and then the next discovery makes that discovery seem more superficial

because there isn't an endless depth. And that's really good news actually. It's startling news.

For many years after Papaji, I didn't have a sense of my self, as person. There was no one here and then I had sense of reincarnating into this body as a wife, and part of this crisis was, it seems to me, part of that reincarnation, to see how is it as that a wife, a mother, and a woman and an aging woman. Even though I don't identify myself a woman; I am in a woman's body. I am living that life. And so to find what's true, in the midst of that is the after, and the after and the after.

TS: I want to try a kind of working investigation on you, and see what you have to say about this Gangaji, which is: as we've been talking in this conversation about emotions and all these various emotions that come up and how to work with them and meet them, it seems to me, more and more, that from spiritual practice and from the spiritual life, the ability to be an intelligent emotional being, a fluid emotional being, is one of the greatest capacities to come and if that's not there, then I kind of wonder what's happening with the person's spiritual practice. I kind of relate it to this, as it seems to me that in our culture, even with people who are profound spiritual practitioners there's a lot of confusion about emotion. I guess that's what I've been observing. And I've been observing that other people seem to really have a fluidity or facility with working with their emotions. And there are only a few people who seem to fit that category. So I'm just curious what you have to say about this.

G: Well, I believe in different points of view. I mean, I've heard certain teachers say that they no longer have emotions. And I have to assume that that is legitimate if that's true. And there's room for that.

TS: See, I don't presume that there's room for that.

G: Well, okay. As a working presumption, I would presume that, okay fine, that person doesn't have emotions and it's not my experience. But I know that there are realms of experience maybe I haven't touched on.

So I know for myself, there are emotions present. And I also know for myself that there's no problem with that. That they don't have to change; they don't have to go away; they don't have to transform. And I have the capacity to just meet them as they are without judgment, without the need for them to change. Then in that there's a discovery of this beautiful world, the natural fluidity of all phenomena. And then emotions are just more phenomena.

I've used the analogy of weather before, and they are like that. They can be huge, or they can be calm and sublime, and they are associated with certain events in our past and certain events that occur to us. But they are moving and they are moving in the field of what is always here. So we can, from my point of view, allow everything, since everything is here. And then discover what's in the core of everything and then the emotions no longer have the power to tyrannize us. That can make us uncomfortable, but they are not in charge then. And they can still be in charge if we are fighting them and denying them and associating them, because they are still the object. But if they are just this fluid movement of sometimes pleasant, sometimes ecstatic, sometimes nothing much, sometimes horrific, then it is part of the mystery and wonder of our lives, of incarnate beings.

TS: Now I want to ask you a question about the theme or one of the themes of the new book that I know you're working on. The subtitle of the manuscript is "Uncovering the Truth in Your Life Story." And this was very curious, because of course, I've heard you and other non-dual teachers talk about, "Drop your story; there's no need for your story. Your stories are just your thoughts about what's happening. Just drop your story." And now we're finding the truth in our life story.

G: Yes. That was fun. Yes, I really...this book is just coming out of me. And I realized, over these twenty years of speaking to people, how there's been an institutionalization of this "drop your story," and for me that was the most profound thing that Papaji said. And in saying that, I realized what was absolutely true and alive of my story was myself.

But if we didn't make an institution of that, it becomes deadened. And so, I'm living a story. We're living stories as human beings; that's how we communicate; that's the way we pass on knowledge; and that's our experience. And the planet has a story; the cosmos has a story. And in the core of each aspect, each minute aspect is the essence that the story comes from. And so, in the midst of our story, if we stopped telling the story, just in the midst of it, we discover the essence. And then the story actually contributes to that discovery. So my intention of this book is that it support the dismantling of this institution of "drop your story" and have that be an aliveness. That in the midst of your story, you stop for a moment and you are still and you experience what the emotions that your story had generated and you experience what's present as a result of your story. And then discover where that takes you, if you need it, because we're back to meaning, again, of course.

TS: Now you use this phrase in the manuscript that we can see our life as a "teaching story." So how do I do that? How do I see my life as a teaching story?

G: Well, you take it where it is, without wanting it to be different. Maybe even you don't even have to do that. So even wanting it to be different, that's a part of your story. But you enter it objectively. I think I said earlier that you overhear yourself. In this sense, you detach enough that you see that you have perspective on your life story. And you see what it is teaching. Is it teaching "yearning for truth?" Or is it teaching "denial of truth?" I know everyone listening to this has a story of searching for truth. And that's a beautiful story. And then, if you're willing to look at that story, you can see at the very beginning of the arising of the search for truth that was actually the result of truth.

The truth was here at the beginning. And then the story itself can show you, in its different aspects, the different phases of truth or the different opportunities in that moment to realize truth, and even how you have realized truth. And either perhaps as we habitually categorize that or deny that or trivialize that in some sense. But to be willing to incorporate

that into the *sutra* of your life, then the teaching is here. Life is the teacher. And with human beings, with our capability for language and storytelling, it teaches through story. But we have to be willing to hear and receive it.

TS: Well how do I relate usefully and intelligently to my life story without falling into a bunch of abstraction and imagination, you know, just living in story land? Which is what you previously advised against?

G: Well, it's really, how do you fall in to that abstraction and the distancing? It's one of the tools for separation. If the story is intense, usually we want to escape it. We want to get away from it and that's natural, that's human, so that doesn't have to be made wrong. But there's a possibility of actually not escaping for a moment and it might even be appropriate to escape, to change your life story, to leave your life story, but for a moment, to not escape, to simply open to the totality that is present. There is a possibility, then, to experience what's at the core of every moment of your story. However it changes, negative or positive, there is this living presence of silent awareness. And then the story is actually a pointer back to that rather than the way we normally use it, which is a distraction away from the discomfort, or a dramatization of the discomfort. So it's a willingness to use it to point back, to be a pointer of inquiry. Where does it come from? Where did the story start? Well, what's the field it grows in, rather than what are the fruits, what is its origin?

GS: And of course, if we were to take your story, we need specifics. And that's also what I hope with these three sessions that we have that people will participate, and this will be concrete and not abstract so that we will have conversations or dialogue with people so that their particular life story, how is it a teaching story? I mean, I've just shared how this very painful aspect of my story was a deep teaching story for me. And I would hope that everyone would be willing to share in that way because it supports us all.

TS: You know, I notice, Gangaji, sometimes when you talk and you point to meeting an experience or going right to the core of something, that it's almost like this explosion happens in me when I listen to you. Do you know what I mean? Kind of like some kind of explosion. And I wonder if you have any reference point for that or if that makes any sense to you?

G: Well, it sounds very good to me. It sounds like that you aren't listening abstractly, that you're actually listening from some deeper part of yourself. And it does explode. It's a hard listening, then. You aren't listening just from your powers of cognition and categorization and understanding. You're listening from a deeper place. And that's the mystery, that's how we can all serve one another. And actually not just sharing our stories, but sharing the possibility of the resolution of our stories so that whatever substories appear in the broader story, it's all serving this whole story of the human species and the story of ourselves on this planet at this time, and this crucial time of our very shaky existence. So I count that explosion as very good.

TS: Okay. I just have one final question for you, Gangaji. I know 2010 marks the twentieth year that you've been teaching.

G: Yes.

TS: And I'm curious when you think of this arc of twenty years, how your teaching is different now than when you started. What might be a few different characteristics of how you are as a teacher?

G: That's interesting. Someone was just speaking to me about hearing some of the early recordings from the tapes and they said my voice was very different, that I was much firmer. And my explanation to her was that when I first started teaching, people were saying, "Who are you? What are your teaching credentials? Who are you to say that?" And there was a way that I was sort of, not forcing myself onto the scene, but saying that I have something very important to say. And as a way, I sense, in my voice, in my presentation, and in my offering, I really just relaxed more.

Papaji told me that the people who were ready to hear this will hear it in some mysterious resonance, and that that's trustworthy. And I had discovered that more and more over the years, and with that, that I really have nothing to teach. It really is support. There's certainly no dogma to what I have to say and no particular thought form that has to be followed. It's really always an invitation to inquire and discover for yourself. And I've discovered, in my teaching, that that is trustworthy and that people have that capacity. And if they have the interest for it, then it is endless and it is such great joy. So I'm attending *satsang* or I've been giving *satsang*, as we are all attending.

TS: Wonderful. Thank you, so much, Gangaji, for talking with us here on *Insights at the Edge*.

Gangaji, again, thank you so much.

G: Oh, I totally loved it. Thank you. Wonderful interview.

TS: And you were so vulnerable and straightforward. And real. I really appreciate it.

G: Well, what else?

TS: Thank you. ###

Gangaji is the author of the Sounds True book *The Diamond in Your Pocket*. And she'll be hosting a three-part, online event where you can call in and ask your questions and dialogue directly with Gangaji. It begins on March 9th, and it's entitled, *Facing Everything: Meeting Your Life without Resistance*. And the first part is on meeting fear. The second part is on the heart of self-betrayal. And then the third part is on letting the world into your heart. And if our listeners would like more information about Gangaji, they can visit her website at www.gangaji.org. And of course, for the book, *The Diamond in Your*

Pocket, or to sign up for the online event, please visit us at SoundsTrue.com. SoundsTrue.com: Many Voices, One Journey. Visit <http://www.gangaji.org>

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

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

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Retreat To Advance Into A New Decade by Eileen McDargh

From my second floor bedroom, I look out at a massive 150 year-old eucalyptus tree that almost overpowers the expanse of the Pacific and the Channel Islands. Starlings, crows, doves, and woodpeckers dart among the withered arms of ancient oaks. My window opens with a rusted hand crank and a hand-hewed teak starburst looks down from the ceiling.

Started in 1920 from stone quarried in nearby San Ysidro Creek, this graceful house has seen citrus growers, Wall Street investors, famous musicians, and novices preparing to enter the religious life. Today, the Immaculate Heat Community Center for Spiritual Renewal is the main house for a 27-acre retreat facility known as La Case De Marie. It is a nourishing place of peace for people of all faiths and persuasions.

For 15 years now, this has been where I come to begin each year: to think, to write, to read, and to hike the steep trail of El Camino de Cielo that zigs and zags four miles from sea level to the top of the mountain.

For so many of us, the decade that has just passed has been filled with 9/11 horrors, wars on too many fronts, natural disasters, job losses, bankruptcies and stalwart companies crushed by anything from years of inept leadership to downright thievery.

Foolishly, many of us expected that years of bad decisions could be turned around in one year, rescued by hope and a "we can" mantra. Don't we love the quick fix, the instant gratification, the miracle move?

Time to get real. I've come here to learn what is in my sphere of influence. What actions can I take to help myself and others move forward as a community inhabiting one tiny planet. How do I refocus on what matters most for me rather than on the "most" that media thinks matters? As a teacher and student of leadership, where does one begin to reclaim that which feels lost?

Retreat. Come away. Really away. Away from electronics that call out for attention. Few decisions come clear when surrounded by ding of IMs, the ring of cells, the buzz of meetings and the blasts of bombastic politicians and preachers.

It has only taken me 15 years to realize there's a five-step process to retreating so that you might return, ready to advance:

(1) SILENCE. No talking. No television. How can I speak with my mind and my heart if I have no time to figure out what either is saying? The great discoveries of the ages were not done with jabbering but with gathering one's thoughts.

(2) SOLITUDE. Don't take your best beloved or your dear friend with you. A step into self-mastery and self-leadership is the ability to be alone but not lonely.

(3) SURRENDER. Sounds like the white flag that follows retreat on a battlefield. Not so, this is the surrender of courage-the surrender that faces reality rather than exerting effort wishing life was not as it is. To surrender is actually a move in aikido, the martial art in which one accepts and moves with whatever energy an opponent offers. It is a place of fluid strength.

(4) SERENITY. When I stop fighting against reality, when I listen in silence and marshal my intentions, there's a peacefulness that comes. It's not an easy step and one I too frequently fail. Think of the Dali Lama. Despite the oppression, grave concern, and weight of his people on his shoulders, his face radiates a serenity and joy. Of course, he's spent a lifetime cultivating it. I'm a beginner.

(5) SYNCHRONICITY. When seemingly unrelated events and/or people occur to bring about a desired result, some call it "a miracle". Carl Jung called it synchronicity. When I leave this place of retreat, if I have been faithful in my quiet and alone time, surrendering to what is currently in my work and life and prepared to state my intentions aloud to myself

(and later to trusted others) I know that all manner of unforeseen incidents and material assistance will rise. I can advance. And so can you.

As Goethe wrote, "*Whatever you do or dream you can do, begin it. Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it.*" ###

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Professional speaker and author, **Eileen McDargh**, is ranked in the top 100 thought-leaders in leadership development by Executive Excellence. Contact Eileen today at <http://www.eileenmcdargh.com> if you are dealing with work and life challenges or if you need a speaker or facilitator who engages the minds and hearts of your group through extensive preparation & involvement in your entire event.

Your Attitude Determines Your Altitude

by Guy Finley

Rebecca had decided that her best chance of getting hired by a company doing geological survey work in the Alaskan wilderness was to earn a private license to fly twin-engine planes. A few days later she began taking lessons from a wise old bush pilot, highly respected throughout the region for his cool and collected ways of dealing with the worst possible situations.

After the mandatory ground schooling, at which Rebecca excelled, and during her fourth lesson in the sky, the flight instructor gave her what she thought was a special treat: Taking his hands off the yoke, he turned the flight controls over to her. There she was, just as she had dreamed, sitting tall in the co-pilot's seat with the flight stick firmly in her hands.

Rebecca felt as though she was literally on "cloud 9"--at least, until a scant moment later when she found herself rudely awakened from her dream. She tried shaking her head to get rid of what was before her eyes, but that did not work. In the distance, through the windshield, she could see something rushing toward her faster than what she could think to do about it!

Right in the path of the plane, and seeming to have appeared out of nowhere, a huge snow-capped mountain lay dead ahead. Transfixed by its sheer mass, Rebecca found herself as frozen at the stick as were the iced and craggy peaks stretched out before her. And she was headed straight for them! A deep chill came into the cabin.

All along the wise old instructor was watching her closely, studying her reactions. Of course, she didn't know it, but he had turned the controls over to her for just this test now taking place. He waited until the last moment he could, and was just about to take over again, when Rebecca

snapped out of her fear-induced trance. She looked away from the mountain and turned to face him.

Then, in a voice so trembling and timid that it even scared her, she broke the tense silence of the moment. "Sir," she said, "please take over the controls. I'm afraid we are about to crash!" His reply stunned her. "No," he spoke quietly, "I don't think I will. After all, it's your flight."

It was getting harder for her to take in a whole breath, as if she were standing in the oxygen-thin air atop the great, white mountain before them. Struggling to control her voice, she dug down into herself and managed to ask one more question of her teacher: "Then what should I do? Please, tell me what to do!"

She looked over at him again, and was surprised to see virtually no worry at all upon his face. His calm demeanour helped to steady her nerves. She took a deep breath and relaxed her hands that had just about choked the life out of the control yoke. The next moment he gave her a short three-word instruction, and she knew everything would soon be all right. He simply said, "Change your altitude."

"Of course," her own mind echoed back to his command, and a split second later she pulled firmly back on the yoke; the craft responded by rising, and mere moments later the icy peak passed beneath her and out of sight.

As Rebecca sat there, relieved by the results of her actions, she was struck by two things at once: How could she have forgotten that the controls were in her hands, and at least as important, why had she been unable to remember this on her own? At that moment, soaring at ten thousand feet above the ground, she made a silent vow never again to forget the lesson of this day: *She could choose her own altitude.*

Doesn't this short truth tale remind you of a certain kind of spiritual strength that you know belongs to you but that you have somehow forgotten or misplaced? It ought to; after all, how many of us look out ahead of ourselves at some unwanted event that looms too large and find ourselves feeling out of control . . . headed for what seems an unavoidable collision?

Wouldn't it be nice to be able to reach down inside of our selves, grab hold of the controls of our own consciousness, and pull ourselves up? To quietly watch that would-be mountain of a problem, whatever it is, pass by harmlessly below us, even as we reach ever-higher and happier skies?

We can learn to do this. Such a power is not just a pipe dream; ours is the ability to take conscious control of our spiritual altitude. But this greatest of gifts is given to us only in proportion to our willingness to awaken from those unconscious parts of ourselves that not only become transfixed before challenging events but are the secret creators of the very things into which we crash! This is why we must work in every moment to remain inwardly awake--to be aware of our attitude toward our life as it unfolds before and around us: so that whenever we find a negative attitude in ourselves--some form of dark thought or feeling trying to drag us down--we don't say "I" to it. In a manner of speaking, we pull up and away from that part of ourselves by withdrawing our consent to be confined by how it would define us. This kind of conscious action on our part changes not only what we perceive as being possible in the moment, but it also empowers us--in the same moment--to see and make new and higher choices.

Seen or not, our attitude determines our altitude in life. The "low" life comes by default. Gravity guarantees we will reach the bottom. To go higher begins with *choosing to be* higher. Realizing that the power to leave dark states beneath and behind us begins with recognizing that who we really are--our True Nature--has as much in common with self-limiting thoughts and feelings as does a shark with a star!

Remember this one great lesson: Do the moment-to-moment work of dropping anything that wants to drag you down, and Truth itself will see to it that you rise.

Excerpted from *The Essential Laws of Fearless Living*, Weiser Books

About Guy Finley

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

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

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

Guy's career reached this point through a circuitous path. Born into a successful show business family, he is the son of Late-Night TV and radio pioneer Larry Finley. His childhood friends were the sons and daughters of the most famous celebrities in the world. As a young man

Guy enjoyed success in a number of areas including composing award-winning music for many popular recording artists including Diana Ross, The Jackson 5, Billy Preston, and The Four Seasons, as well as writing the scores for several motion pictures and TV shows. From 1970 - 1979 he wrote and recorded his own albums under the Motown and RCA recording labels.

Throughout his youth, Guy suspected there was more to life than the type of worldly success that led to the emptiness and frustration he saw among his own “successful” friends and colleagues. In 1979, after travels throughout North America, India, and the Far East in search of truth and Higher Wisdom, Guy voluntarily retired from his flourishing music career in order to simplify his life and to concentrate on deeper self-studies.

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

Every Path Has Puddles and Every Life Has Problems by Chuck Gallozzi

Life and problems, they seem to go together. Well, that's not always true, for although some people find a problem with every opportunity, others find an opportunity in every problem. But for now, let's call the obstacles, challenges, and difficulties we have to face 'problems.' How should we deal with them? Here are ten tips.

1. Be aware of your problems. Don't live in denial. The problem very often isn't that people can't solve their problems, but that they are unaware of them. Be alert. If you're frustrated, something is blocking your way. Find out what it is and what to do about it.

2. Every problem contains the seeds of its own solution. Seeds represent growth. We need them. And as Norman Vincent Peale (1898 ~ 1993) wrote, "If you don't have any problems, you don't get any seeds."

3. The easiest way to quash problems is to solve them, so once you are aware of them, don't avoid or try to go around them. Time and effort spent dodging problems is much better spent seeking solutions. Someone who was more familiar with problems than most of us, Helen Keller (1880 ~ 1968), had this to say, "The best way out is always through." So, work through your problems.

4. Rise above your old limited thinking. Examine your problem from a new perspective, for as Albert Einstein (1879 ~ 1955) taught, "Problems cannot be solved at the same level of awareness that created them."

5. What exactly is your problem? State it clearly and write it down. These two simple steps will bring you closer to a solution.

6. We don't find anything until we look for it. So, start looking for a solution. We always find what we look for, so if you carry out this step, you are guaranteed of success. I'm not suggesting that you will

experience instant success. Rather, I'm saying that you should keep looking until you arrive at a solution. In other words, patience and perseverance are also called for.

7. Spend your time wisely. Most of it should be spent on discovering and developing solutions. Be solution-oriented. Spend as little time as possible on problems, and quickly move on to solutions.

8. Don't allow the size of your problems to overwhelm you. The biggest of problems becomes manageable after breaking it down into the small steps that need to be taken.

9. Develop the right attitude by understanding that we don't have any problems; we just have learning experiences and opportunities.

10. Don't see problems where none exist. Use the power of your imagination to find problem solutions; don't use it to imagine problems that don't exist.

Now, let's study an actual case of life problems. Here is an email sent in by a reader, a few details have been changed to protect her privacy

"I am a European lady that moved to another European country, where the cost of living is lower. For over 50 years I have been battling with a lack of self esteem and I have explored all the possibilities that I can think of.

"I have read all your articles and studied under people like Jim Rohn, Tony Robbins, and others and have improved tremendously.

"I am 61 and still alone. I have spent my life blaming it on my upbringing, even though I realize that it is up to me to change my way of thinking.

"I have just watched a film on the TV, a true story, about a professor who was schizophrenic and who imagined people and circumstances that were really not there. The story goes on to say, that, with help from his wife, he went on to become a renowned professor in his field and is supposedly still alive today.

"I have had a problem for many years, i.e. talking to myself (as if I saw people) and I have been extremely strict in my handling of this. I cannot seem to stop myself, no matter how hard I try. I am very worried about talking to myself. I've always done it. I know lots of people that do it, but now I actually am having conversations with myself all the time (out loud). I have tried everything I can think of - rewarding myself when I'm quiet, punishing myself when I catch myself doing it. I have put an elastic band round my wrist and snapped it every time I catch myself talking - but to no avail.

"I am wondering if I have the same problem that this professor had, and if there is anything I can do about it - short of seeing a psychotherapist (here where I live, there are none). The doctors here are very basic and even if I could find a psychotherapist, I am sure that they would not understand a problem that doesn't really exist here.

"I live in a very small town where there is very little that is 'up to date' and where I have few friends. Here, if you don't have family, then you don't get to go anywhere much. They are very family orientated.

"I am not able to sleep nights and the older I get, the worse it seems to be. I feel 'totally' lost. I know that if I immerse myself into helping others that I should feel better - but somehow, I'm not getting there. I am willing to do whatever it takes, but I don't know where to start.

"When I meet up with people, even though I tell myself not to say too much, I always seem to gush. Maybe it's because I am lonely,

but I feel that it's more than that. I physically can't seem to stop myself.

"Until last year I had my own business selling real estate and did quite well. However, the market crashed and so I decided to try and retire. Not possible, I'm afraid - I'm too active. So I am now going to be teaching English.... I leave for another European country in the near future, with a 3 month teaching contract - so I shall be busy for awhile (thank goodness - I hate doing nothing). I'm looking forward to it because I will be working and meeting new people. But there my problem starts again. I will talk too much and probably spoil any chance of making good friends. I also have been interested in Volunteer Teaching in South America, but I don't have the money to go.

"I am up every morning before 8 o'clock. I spend a lot of my day on the computer, and I try to go out walking for at least an hour. Until last month, I went to an exercise class 3 mornings a week and then on to breakfast with the girls from class.

"I have joined the local Volunteer Association; but they are just here in name only really (here, everyone's family helps out - there are very few old peoples homes, or voluntary organizations). I am an 'on-line' member of Amnesty International; I write appeal letters when they are needed.

"My pension is very limited and because of the current financial situation, I don't go out much. I watch a lot of TV, not because I like it, but because there is nowhere to go in the evenings. I go to bed around midnight - and don't sleep well.

"My main aspirations are: 1. I would like to be in a relationship (but this is not as easy as it sounds) 2. I would like have more to do with my time 3. I would like to be able to afford to visit a family member in the U.S.

"If this email makes me sound like a whiner, really I'm not. I'm a very strong, very capable and extremely positive person which is why I am now at my wits end. It seems as if I'm losing my grip and this, I cannot afford to do - as I have no one to fall back on. It must be something quite simple; I just need a push in the right direction."

Let's look at our reader's 'problems' one at a time as I make some comments and suggestions, trying to nudge her in the right direction.

1. LACK OF SELF-ESTEEM

Self-esteem is the image we have of ourselves. It is our own opinion of our worthiness. If we were raised as children with comments such as "You're a bad boy" or "You're a naughty girl" we come to believe we don't deserve to succeed because we are bad. Once we believe we are undeserving of success it becomes difficult to succeed because our subconscious works on the assumption that what we believe is what we want. In other words, our beliefs become self-fulfilling prophecies.

Our reader writes about "battling" low self-esteem for 50 years. Now, here is what she and most people don't realize: we don't have to battle our weaknesses; we can just accept them and do what needs to be done in spite of them. For example, let's say I'm unemployed and looking for a job. My friend knows of an opportunity and tells me to apply for it. But because of low self-esteem, I say to myself, "There's no point in applying because they are going to reject me."

But even though I have low self-esteem, I don't have to think that way. I can ACCEPT my weakness and interrupt my feelings with rational thought. That is, I can say to myself, "Because of my low self-esteem, I may FEEL like they won't give me the job, but I DESERVE to succeed and WANT to succeed, so I am going for the interview."

By changing my thought I have introduced the possibility of success. And if I don't get the job, all I have to do is continue going to job interviews UNTIL I SUCCEED. Thus, with a change of thought and

persistent action I will bring about the certainty of success. And as I experience one success after another, what do you suppose happens? Yes, my self-esteem grows!

One of the 'problems' our reader complains about is talking to herself. Although I will write more about this later in the article, for now note that she can turn this 'weakness' into a strength by using positive self-talk instead of negative self-talk. Instead of saying, "I can't do that" she can say, "I may feel that I can't do that because of low self-esteem, but I want to do that, so I will try to, and will continue trying until I succeed."

How prevalent is low self-esteem? Dr. Joyce Brothers writes, "Psychologists estimate that 85% of the population suffers from low or weak self-esteem, which is generally caused by a poor self-image." If you are looking for some help in overcoming low self-esteem issues, one book I recommend is "[SELF-ESTEEM: A Proven Program of Cognitive Techniques for Assessing, Improving, and Maintaining Your Self-Esteem](#)" by Matthew McKay and Patrick Fanning, New Harbinger Publications, 2000.

2. NO LIFE PARTNER

Although it's possible to lead a fulfilling life without a partner, there's no question that a partner can significantly enhance one's life. But beware; the opposite is equally true; meaning that a peaceful solitary life can be transformed into a living hell if one picks the wrong partner.

But nothing comes in life without risks, and the risk of entering into a poor relationship can be minimized by applying commonsense. Three simple rules are:

a) Don't rush into a relationship. Be rational, not emotional. You cannot get to know someone in a few weeks or months. Ideally, date about a year.

b) Don't allow the person you are dating to convince you to marry or commit in a short period of time. If he tries to rush you, end the relationship unless he allows you to take your time.

c) Make sure you respect and admire the person you're dating. If you don't, stop seeing him.

Now, how do you find your life partner? Since you are computer literate, a good way to start is by visiting senior dating sites, which are quickly growing in number on the Internet. It may cost a bit, but isn't it a good investment in your future?

A less expensive approach would be to start your own senior dating club. All it takes is a small newspaper ad or note on a bulletin board that says something like, "Starting new senior dating club. Single men and women invited for get-togethers. For information call Mary at (telephone number)." You can meet in parks, at museums, galleries, or famous landmarks.

An important point in your quest for a partner is to begin with the right attitude. Do not think in terms of what you want, but in terms of what others need. Imagine a woman that has these thoughts: "I am lonely. I need a man. Why can't I find a man? I want to get married." How will that woman appear? She will look and act desperate, which will scare men away.

Now imagine a woman with the following thoughts, "There are lonely men. That can be painful. I hate to see people in pain. I am single and can help some man find happiness. If I meet a decent, available man, I am willing to become friends, and if our relationship blossoms into romance, I am willing to get married." How would a woman with such thoughts act and look? Wouldn't she appear to be kind, gentle, and understanding? Wouldn't that attract men?

As long as you have the right attitude, anywhere you are may prove to be the place you meet your life partner.

3. TALKING TO HERSELF

What do we mean by "talking to oneself?" All it is, is THINKING OUT LOUD. Everyone does it. It's perfectly normal. Sometimes we talk to ourselves silently, at other times we do it aloud. We may even speak to someone who isn't there. For example, I may want to ask my boss for a raise and practice asking him in my imagination. Someone watching me may think I'm crazy because it looks like I'm talking to someone who isn't there.

After seeing the movie "A Beautiful Mind," our reader grew fearful that she may have a symptom of schizophrenia. Schizophrenia is a complex illness that takes on several different forms. In one form the victim hears voices in his or her head. For instance, they may 'hear' God telling them to do something. They may also experience a hallucination (see someone that isn't there). So, if I'm asking my boss, who isn't there, for a raise, that's quite normal. But if I SEE my boss and he isn't there, that may be a symptom of schizophrenia.

Also, schizophrenia is quite debilitating, interfering with everyday activities. Yet, our reader remains quite busy, and until recently ran her own successful business. Conclusion? Her suspicions about being schizophrenic are highly unlikely. However, if our reader wants additional assurance that she is not schizophrenic, she can seek the opinion of a qualified professional. But when it comes to such a suggestion, how does she respond? She says, "Even if I could find a psychotherapist, I am sure that they would not understand a problem that doesn't really exist here." What is her conclusion based on? Not reason, but distorted thinking. It's just her low self-esteem telling her, "What's the use of trying to find a therapist, I won't succeed."

She incorrectly claims that schizophrenia is not a problem in the country she is living in. How do I know her claim is incorrect? Well, according to government statistics, the total medical and nonmedical costs of schizophrenia in the country she lives in were estimated at 1,970.8

million Euros. Obviously, the country she lives in has schizophrenics and is treating them.

Another mistake our reader makes is putting so much effort in trying to stop talking to herself, for the harder she tries, the worse it gets. Psychologists call this "the law of reverse effort" and New Agers express the same idea when they say, "What we resist, persists." In other words, stop fighting it. The more attention you give to it, the worse it becomes, and the less you think about it, the less of a 'problem' it will be.

Our reader needs to think with reason, not with feelings. An excellent tool for eliminating distorted thinking is "[Thoughts & Feelings: Taking Control of Your Moods and Your Life](#)," by Matthew McKay, Martha Davis, and Patrick Fanning, New Harbinger Publications, 2007.

4. HELPING OTHERS, BUT NOT FEELING BETTER

Shouldn't we feel better when we help others? Our reader wonders why it doesn't seem to be working for her. It's true that if we sow seeds of kindness, that is what we will reap, many times over. But it doesn't necessarily mean if I am kind today, others will be kind to me today. It may take time to work. You see, when we sow seeds, some will fall by the wayside, others on rocks where they will wither and die, some will be eaten by birds, and others choked by weeds. And those seeds that do take root and grow cannot do so in a single day. It takes time before we can reap what we sow.

Also, this law of life works only when we are sincere. Suppose you are at a restaurant and a waiter fawns over you, not out of kindness, but because he hopes that you will give him a big tip. Will his insincere behavior impress you? Probably not. The good deeds we do work in the same way. If I act kindly merely because I wish to be treated kindly, people will realize I am insincere and treat me accordingly.

5. SLEEP PROBLEMS

How long should you sleep: 6, 8, or 10 hours? It is not the number of

hours you sleep, but how restful you feel after awakening that determines whether or not you had a good night's sleep.

To get into the habit of sleeping soundly, try to stick to a schedule, sleeping and awakening at the same time each day. If the time you go to bed and awaken keeps changing, your body will be unable to develop a natural sleep cycle.

When you feel drowsy, your body is speaking to you. Don't set its message aside and postpone sleep, for if you do so, you could throw your body out of balance. Conversely, don't go to bed before you're sleepy. That is, don't go to bed just because you are bored or can't think of anything to do; wait until you are sleepy. If you can't think of anything to do, take a walk or read a book.

Start winding down an hour before sleep. Just as foreplay should precede intimacy, a gentle slowing down of all activities should precede sleep.

Insomnia can cause insomnia. That is, if you find you can't fall asleep on a particular night, you may interpret that as insomnia, and anxiety of that happening again causes you to remain awake, and that, in turn, causes insomnia. Our reader is prone to this type of behavior, so she needs to avoid falling into this trap.

Anxiety and other forms of stress are the enemies of relaxation and sleep. So, to reduce stress, practice relaxation and meditation techniques.

If your bedroom is too noisy or bright, use ear plugs or eyeshades. Also, you're not going to be able to get a sound night's rest on an uncomfortable mattress. If it's not comfortable, change it.

If none of the above or nothing else works, you may have a sleeping disorder. Since there are 70 kinds of sleep disorders, visit a sleep clinic,

where they will be able to tell you exactly what the problem is and how to solve it.

6. WANTS THINGS TO DO

One of the most exciting things we can do is solve our personal problems and discover our strength. Here are three things our reader can immediately do: a) Study the recommended or similar books, b) Study and practice relaxation and meditation techniques to reduce stress and improve sleep, c) Use her gift of talking to herself to transform her thinking by practicing positive self-talk. By the time she completes these tasks, she will find she has plenty to do and enjoy.

7. TALKS TOO MUCH (GUSHES)

Talking too much or gushing is caused by low self-esteem. Your inner child is crying out for recognition and attention and is afraid that if you stop talking, the other party may walk away.

But the problem is this behavior results in just the opposite of what you want. Instead of winning recognition and making friends, you drive people away.

Try this approach. Before you speak to someone, say to yourself, "I wonder what interesting thing I can learn from this person. This forces you to ask questions and listen. When you do this two things will happen: a) You will marvel at the interesting things you learn, b) People will enjoy your company.

8. NO MONEY TO TRAVEL TO SOUTH AMERICA FOR TEACHING

Teaching English as a Second Language can be a lot of fun and lead to an adventuresome life. Your present teaching opportunity is too short (3 months) and you can't afford to go to South America. Try Japan. They offer one year renewable contracts and pay all transportation costs. There are also opportunities in Korea.

9. CAN'T AFFORD TO VISIT FAMILY MEMBER IN THE U.S.

Telephoning is a lot cheaper than traveling to the United States. And this is a good time to remind ourselves we cannot have EVERYTHING we

want. We have to learn to do the best with what we have. Let's be thankful for what we have instead of regretting what we lack.

10. SHE HAS NO ONE TO FALL BACK ON

I can't agree with this. After all, our reader is SOME ONE. She can fall back on or rely on herself. Like everyone else, she comes packaged with powerful inner resources. But as long as she says, "I have no one to help me," the door to her inner treasure will be locked. But as soon as she says, "I know what I want and I am willing to do whatever it takes to get it," the door to the treasure room will open and the answers will appear. She may not get what she wants instantly and easily, for it may take time and effort, but she will get it. Listen to what Earl Nightingale (1921 ~ 1989) has to say about our inner resources, "If the average person realized the power he wields over his life and destiny, he would live in a perpetual state of wonder and thanksgiving."

I'll end with two more quotes to ponder. First, "Conquering any difficulty always gives one a secret joy, for it means pushing back a boundary-line and adding to one's liberty." (Henri Frederic Amiel, 1821 ~ 1881). Second, "Understand that most problems are a good sign. Problems indicate that progress is being made, wheels are turning, you are moving toward your goals. Beware when you have no problems. Then you've really got a problem.... Problems are like landmarks of progress." (Scott Alexander (American screenwriter, director, music coordinator)).

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House Lessons by Beca Lewis

Isn't it amazing how the little things that happen in life point the way to the Truth of our being? Once the house we were living in taught me three lessons.

The first lesson began with winter as we started the process of trying to get and stay warm. When our first gas bill arrived we were amazed to discover how much money it cost to warm a small home. As a result, we decided to turn the heat way down at night and then back up in the morning to a reasonable temperature. However, when our next bill arrived it cost a 1/3 more than the previous bill.

My first thought was that there was a mistake with our bill. However when I called the gas company and explained what we were doing I learned that turning the heat off at night and then attempting to warm the whole house the next day cost more than a steady heat at all times.

Of course, this made so much sense once we thought about it. Where is the lesson? It's the way we do many things isn't it? When we don't need it, we turn it off. We turn off our spiritual awareness until an emergency strikes. So much easier and "less expensive" in both instances – really they are one and the same – to maintain an even heat, an even awareness, then to "warm" it up when we need it.

The second lesson came through our landlady. One afternoon the doorbell rang insistently and when Del investigated, he discovered Conchetta frantically trying to deal with a deluge of water pouring into the basement. She pointed out the water valves and Del waded through water and turned them all off. However, the flood continued. As Del tried to understand what she was saying about what had happened he realized that she was telling him the flood began when she was washing clothes. At his request, she took him upstairs to show him. Right by the

washing machine were two valves. Del turned them off and the flood was over.

The lesson here is clear. We often frantically try to fix the problems in our life at the effect of the problem rather than going back to the source and turning it off there.

The third lesson began in my closet. I was trying to find the mate to a black shoe. After a few minutes of searching and wondering how I could possibly lose a shoe in a closet, I realized that I couldn't see well because there were clothes blocking the light. When I pushed the clothes to the side and the light poured down, it revealed the other shoe right by my hand where it had been all along.

This lesson is obvious too isn't it? We all know that there is only one cause and one creator. We all agree that this One is Love. We know that perfect Love would only be able to provide all we need, even before we need it, yet we continue to search in the dark. When we bring the light of awareness – the one that we haven't turned off for lack of use, or been distracted from by the flood of problems, or allowed something to block it – we see clearly that what we need is at hand.

Perhaps a simple pause before each day begins, before we start a task, before we complain, before we worry, perhaps a pause is all we need to do. A pause to remember the truth of being, stoke our spiritual perception into life, a pause where we ask ourselves "what's True" and rejoice in the abundance that results from the answer: Omnipresent Love. ###

About Beca Lewis

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

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

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

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

Indebtedness - Cogent Elixir 'Curing' Self-Pity by Steve Wickham

Self-pity in its early stage is as snug as a feather mattress. Only when it hardens does it become uncomfortable. ~*Maya Angelou*.

It's a sneaky thing; pity of the personal kind. Beyond the empathy expected of genuinely caring others it's taken along the continuum of calamity and strains respect for common rapport. No sound-minded person enjoys a pity-party in full swing.

Indebtedness, on the other hand, is the heart heavy amid not concern but thankfulness.

It is a generous portion of life, full of hope and poise. Indebtedness is solemnity at the darkest hour and it is also ready to run fully braced with conviction in the race for moral unity. It has the sacrifice of others ineradicably front of mind.

Indebtedness is a mood beyond the insult that is self-pity.

Excused for Self-Pity

Of course, we're all excused for motives and acts of self-pity. It will happen. We will fall for it. And, indeed, it will even be *consciously* undertaken - more times than we'll be able to count.

Temptations to seek for ourselves are wired into the temperament of the human spirit.

It's forgivable that normal persons are given to behave in ways that they feel. The brain, such as it is, is capable of so much more, but alas it's most instinctively given to the ease of self-pity, to guilt, and to flash responses that are usually regretful.

Nobody is immune. All are imperfect and stand before God blemished if not for the love of a Saviour who imputes perfection over them. And still we will sin. The indebtedness we might strive for will constantly elude; but we must continue to chase hard after it, not becoming frustrated and overwhelmed, just accepting of our innate flaws and continuing to strive anyway.

Sowing *into* Indebtedness

The more we invest ourselves into the gravity of life, the more God will bless us with reflections warranted of truth, light, hope and maturity.

Never will we be healed of our selfish desires; they so creep up when we're unconscious of them. This is why it is all the more important to be determined to do better - to not be perfect - just to do better.

Rather than spinning our wheels in frustrated impotence, jaded at instances where self-pity gets the better of us, it's better to sow positively into a gentler indebtedness. That is, learning the depth of capability available to human thought and experience in a realm of existence created by God.

In indebtedness we have a word that will resound through space and time, to capture a flavour of capacity knowable to humankind. There are no depths that can be plumbed, but the deeper we go the farther consciousness of self-pity is.

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Acknowledgement: This article was written as I watched the full inspired eulogy of President Obama at the Tucson Memorial Service, January 12, 2011.

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/>

Anxiety and Panic Help, Understanding Feelings Of Unreality/ depersonalisation

by: Paul David

Depersonalisation

In the process of writing this book I covered the feeling of detachment from oneself, otherwise known as depersonalisation: an emotional disorder in which there is loss of contact with your own personal reality accompanied by feelings of unreality and strangeness, also a sensation of ones environment looking or feeling 'strange' and unusual

This one question kept coming up more and more as I was writing this book, so I decided to add an extra chapter on this annoying, yet harmless, symptom.

D.P., as I will refer to it, is a common and understandable offshoot of the anxiety condition. I can also tell you that it is in no way a mental illness. It is not serious or harmful in any way and has a totally logical explanation. It is temporary and, with patience and understanding, eventually passes like any other symptom.

The key to recovering from this feeling of detachment is to surrender to this strange feeling, to pay it no respect and realise it is just the product of an over-tired mind, fatigued by your constant worrying thoughts and the constant checking in to how you feel. This symptom relies on your fear of it to keep it alive.

When people are caught up in the worry cycle, they begin to think deeply and constantly. They study themselves from deep within, checking in and focusing on their symptoms. They may even wake in the morning only to continue this habit, "How do I feel this morning? I wonder if I will be able to get through today". What's this new sensation I feel?" This may go on all day, exhausting their already tired mind further. This constant checking in and constant assessing of their symptoms then becomes a habit, but like all other habits this one can also be changed.

All this worry is bound to make your mind feel dull and unresponsive. Is it any wonder you have come to feel so distanced from your surroundings? Is it any wonder you find it so hard to concentrate? Some people, when studying for exams for hours on end, get to the point where they can no longer take information in, so they take a break and carry on the day after. For you, there are no breaks and no time outs.

As I have already mentioned earlier, your body has a safety mechanism that protects it from all this worry and slows the mind down to safeguard itself. It takes a step back from this onslaught, which can then produce your feelings of detachment and the world around you may become hazy or out of focus.

Once you understand this symptom as being caused by an over-tired mind, exhausted through worry, that you are not going mad and these feelings can't harm you in any way, it makes sense. With the fear factor taken out of this symptom, it can start to hold less power over you and affect you less than it did before. Although still annoying, you now know why you feel these feelings. Once you learn to accept them and stop adding worrying thoughts to the mix, this is another symptom that you will be able to overcome in time. Taking a step back and giving up the worrying thoughts, gives your mind the chance to rest, rejuvenate and refresh.

When it happened to me, I recognised and understood what was causing it. I realised that I was checking in and worrying about it and I did fear this sensation, so I just stopped doing it. I also learnt to get busier and stop brooding on this and other symptoms. Being active gives you another focus. Having too much time on your hands can open the door to too much needless thinking. With less worry and fear of this harmless but upsetting symptom, I was eventually able to overcome it. It merely became a nuisance and because I knew the reason for its existence, it no longer held any power over me.

When a worry or fear loses its importance, it loses its power and that is why it is essential to realise these symptoms are neither harmful nor

serious. Gradually, without all the checking in and worrying, this symptom that so dominated my life began to diminish and eventually disappeared completely.

This symptom is like any other all symptoms are still being fuelled by your fear of them. As long as the fear continues, so will the symptoms. When we start to understand why we feel like we do, we automatically fear them less and they start to lose their edge and importance, this is when symptoms gradually start to fade. ###

Paul David spent years after his own recovery studying the whole subject in full so he could go on to dedicate his life to helping others. He then went on to write a book entitled *At Last a Life*[™] telling his own story of recovery and what took him there. For more information and better understanding of the subject visit his website at: www.anxietynomore.co.uk

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Aromatherapy for Headache

by Janet Cohen

Headache is a condition of pain in the head sometimes neck or upper back pain may also be interpreted as a headache. Most people with headaches can feel much better by making lifestyle changes, learning ways to relax, and occasionally by taking medications. There are two types of headaches: primary headaches and secondary headaches. Primary headache accounts for about 90% of all headaches. There are three types of primary headache: tension headache, cluster headache, and migraine. Tension headache is the most common type of primary headache. Episodes usually begin in middle age and are often associated with the stresses, anxiety, and depression. Cluster headaches occur daily over a period of weeks, sometimes months.

Migraine headaches are the second most common type of primary headache. An estimated 28 million people in the United States (about 12% of the population) will experience migraine headaches. Migraine is a neurological disease that can cause a wide range of symptoms during an attack. Attacks are often recurrent and tend to become less severe as the migraine sufferer ages. Secondary headaches are caused by associated disease. The associated disease may be minor or serious and life threatening. When headaches occur three or more times a month, preventive treatment is usually recommended. Regular exercise, such as swimming or vigorous walking, can also reduce the frequency and severity of migraine headaches. Aromatherapy is an alternative treatment for reducing any type of headaches.

Essential oils such as Camomile, Rosemary, Peppermint and Lavender are used to treat symptoms of headaches. Use lavender and rosemary oils in a blend to relieve the stiff neck so often associated with a headache. Apply massage oil to the forehead, to the base of the skull and to the both sides of temples using circular pressure with fingertips. One must massage with rose oil in facial oil to lift the spirit, relieve from a headache and calm the nerves. The essential oil from ginger is useful

in fighting the nausea of migraine headaches. Never rub the eyes after using any essential oils. If one gets essential oil in the eye, rinse them very well with cold water. Use rose oil in your next facial oil to calm your nerves, lift your spirit and relieve your headache.

Headache is a condition of pain in the head sometimes neck or upper back pain may also be interpreted as a headache. ###

Juliet Cohen writes articles for [skin care blog](#) and [hairstyles picture](#).
Article Source: <http://www.positivearticles.com>.

Self-Esteem and True Power

by Annie Burnside, M.Ed.

To be passionate about the intricacies of our life without being attached to specific outcomes, while simultaneously living true within our own skin, is a sure sign of self-esteem and authentic power. When we attach to labels, narrow scopes and rigid perspectives, we give away our power to an external source slowly, but surely. With each need for a preferred singular outcome and the masks that we use to maneuver it, we lose a piece of our soul's creative impetus always aimed at serving the highest good for all and resist the multi-faceted outcome, often hidden yet available. This is a life lesson that I have been working on continuously for the past few years, and one that I hope to offer my children to propel them forward towards a life whereby they can consciously access inner power and creative freedom.

Every individual matters as we seek to evolve the entire planet to a higher consciousness. Parents must participate fully by uncovering their own wounds and threads of resistance through inner work—meditation, counseling, anger processes, forgiveness exercises, healing modalities, twelve-step programs, solitude, journaling, gardening, bowling, exercising, dancing—WHATEVER it takes to open to your own infinite and true internal power source so that through parental leadership future generations learn to deal with “psychic debris” as it occurs rather than at a later date after much unnecessary damage has been done to self and others.

True power stems from allowing interior and exterior balance as the path to harmonic living. Teach and model for your children the subtle, yet highly beneficial balance of inner focus—contemplation, observation, reflection, receptivity and awe—with the outer focus of pro-activity and productivity. If we can teach our children to utilize this continual ebb and flow of their own energies, they will be able to become the powerful conscious creators that they are meant to be. This interior/exterior

harmony, coupled with authentic living that bathes us in intoxicating freedom, gratitude and joy to be fully ourselves will change our world. Wars, morality laws and restrictions on personal freedom are simply band-aids to the issues of our day that no longer serve our species. The call now is to harness our own power and become increasingly comfortable in our own skin as we begin to see ourselves in a new light —powerful, eternal, intuitive, creative spiritual beings who flow with life rather than force life through rigid, outdated expectations and hidden agendas that life show up in only one way.

If we begin to create from both the heart and an inner knowing of who we really are as integral, powerful aspects of a divine whole so magnificent that we cannot fully wrap our minds around it, we become higher versions of ourselves, live up to our full potential and fulfill our soul's intended mission. The time is NOW to snap out of a victim/blame mentality to take full responsibility for both our interior and external world and teach our children through our example to do the same. I encourage all parents to take the time to do the inner work that on some level we deeply understand must be faced. Resistance to personal truth and power no longer serves parents, children, or the world at large. The time is NOW first to discover our true personal power within and then to offer it passionately up and out to all... ###

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

How to Raise Someone's Self-Esteem and Productivity by Dr. Alan Zimmerman

In October of 1987, the first national conference was held on self-esteem. In January of 1989, the Gallup Poll found that the second-most important thing to Americans was a good self-image. And ever since that time, the evidence has been mounting that self-esteem is one of the keys to employee engagement and productivity ... not to mention personal happiness and professional success.

Of course, Dr. Maxwell Maltz was preaching that same message some 30 years earlier when he wrote his classic book, "[Psycho-Cybernetics](#)." He said high self-esteem is THE key to success. The person who "sees" himself as a winner almost always does better than the person who "sees" himself as a loser. In fact, the person who sees himself as a "failure" will find some way to fail despite his good intentions and natural abilities.

The good news is self-image can be changed. Self-esteem can be built. And the more you do to raise the self-esteem of others, the more you get from those other people.

Unfortunately, the whole task of motivating others or improving their performance has often seemed liked a daunting task ... because our change efforts have been misdirected. Workshop after workshop has focused on peripheral skills and concepts, but very few of them have focused on actually changing the center -- which is the other person's self-esteem. As a result, many workshops don't produce lasting results.

If you focus on raising the other person's self-esteem, however, you release amazing potential. The other person's performance is easily and automatically increased.

So that begs the question... how can you raise another person's self-esteem? I spend a few hours answering that question on my 6-pack CD

album, "The Relationship Factor." <http://www.drzimmerman.com/tools/productinfo/relationship.htm> It all comes down to planting and nurturing a few self-esteem seeds. As novelist Robert Louis Stevenson said, "Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap, but by the seeds you plant." Let me go over a few of those seeds right now...

FIRST, believe in the other person.

More than anything else, it is your attitude toward the people in your office, classroom, or family that will determine the success or failure of your attempts to increase their self-esteem. If the other person knows you expect good things from her, she will in most cases go to great lengths to live up to your expectations.

It's like that banker who often dropped a coin in the beggar's cup. Unlike most people, the banker would insist on getting one of the pencils the beggar had with him.

The banker would say, "You are a merchant, and I always expect to receive good value from the merchants with whom I do business."

One day the beggar was gone. Some years later the banker walked by a shop, and there was the former beggar, now a shopkeeper. The shopkeeper said, "I always hoped you might come by some day. You are largely responsible for me being here. You kept telling me I was a merchant. I started to think of myself that way. Instead of a beggar receiving gifts, I started selling pencils, lots of them. You gave me self-respect and caused me to look at myself differently."

So ask yourself, "Do you believe in others? Do you see the beggar or the merchant in those around you?"

SECOND, believe in the other person's drive.

You see ... everyone has a drive to achieve something. It may be buried under piles of mental garbage, and it may be hard to see. But deep inside, everyone has a passion to be a somebody.

If you tap into that drive, that desire to succeed, you will find people working harder for you than anyone else. As Jennie Jerome Churchill, the mother of Winston Churchill put it, "Treat your friends as you do your pictures, and place them in their best light."

THIRD, accept the other person.

Of course, you may be saying, "Whoa! Hold it, Dr. Zimmerman. How can I possibly accept some people whose behavior is simply not acceptable?"

Good question. I would never suggest that you "approve" of inappropriate or unproductive behavior. But I would advise you to "accept" the person behind those behaviors. As author and speaker Dr. Blaine Lee would say, "You can't change people with mega doses of information. People change themselves after mini doses of acceptance from people who care. Acceptance is harder to give than advice -- but infinitely more valuable."

The key comes down to one point: Accept the person. Correct the behavior.

And no one did it better than Coach John Wooden. He would say, "A coach is someone who can give correction without causing resentment." And as a result, he became one of the winningest coaches of all time ... pulling remarkable abilities out of his athletes. They knew they were accepted even when they were corrected.

To walk that fine line, to give acceptance as well as correction, to raise self-esteem at the same time you're trying to change someone's attitudes and behaviors, make sure you do some of the following:

Begin with praise and honest appreciation.

Call attention to people's mistakes indirectly.

Talk about your own mistakes before criticizing the other person.

Ask questions instead of giving direct orders.

Let the other person save face.

Praise the slightest improvement and praise every improvement.
Give the other person a fine reputation to live up to.
Use encouragement. Make the fault seem easy to correct.
Make the other person happy about doing the thing you suggest.

Conclusion:

The research is in. Self-esteem is a really big deal ... because people perform exactly as they see themselves. Help your people to "see" themselves more positively, and they will perform more effectively.

Action:

What are you doing ... directly or indirectly ... to let your people know you BELIEVE in them? ###

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

Abundance: The Three Core Truths
by Larry Crane

Here's an example of some common "I can't" feelings experienced by people who struggle endlessly with abundance:

- "I always have to work hard to make money."
- "No matter how hard I work... or how positive I try to be about my financial situation... I never seem to have enough."
- "It's not fair. Other people always get the lucky breaks. If only I had a quick windfall of money all my problems would disappear."
- "Money always goes to money. There's no point trying to think differently. I see it everyday. I suppose I should just be happy with what I've got."

- "I'm not the kind of person who makes a lot of money. I never have - so I guess I never will. I can never achieve abundance on every level"

And on it goes.

If you can relate to any of the above... or... you're struggling financially...it's a sure sign that you have subconscious "negativity" programs running "on the turn table of your mind"... and therefore... you NEED The Release Technique. You see, when it comes to abundance, there are three core truths:

CORE TRUTH #1: It is our own suppressed feelings that are the root cause of all our problems (including financial problems). It's our own suppressed feelings that keep us broke... bind us in chains of misery... and make us suffer in every way.

And...

CORE TRUTH #2: All of us have the inborn, natural ability to "let go" of our suppressed feelings that have a negative "hold" over our lives.

And...

CORE TRUTH #3: The more we "pull up" and "let go" (or release) our suppressed feelings (subconscious programs)... the lighter, happier, healthier... and...more abundant we become.

Look, here's the best way I know how to describe it... *The Mind Works Just Like A Computer!*

And, your suppressed feelings (subconscious programs) are like a virus interfering with your success - sabotaging every effort you make to change your life and to create abundance.

That's why traditional "success techniques" to achieve abundance rarely [work](#) as well as they should for most people.

See, what traditional techniques have in common is they're all about flooding your mind with positive words and images.

Nothing wrong with that.

But here's the problem: Since the age of about 5-years old, we all get into the unconscious habit of suppressing our feelings. These suppressed feelings (subconscious programs) then act like a virus that "eats up" all the positives you put into your mind.

So until you learn how to "pull up" and "let go" (release) your suppressed "hidden" negativity... you have an "anti-success /anti-money virus" inside you that will forever keep you struggling with your finances and won't allow you to achieve financial freedom.

However, the good news is - once you learn how to use The Release Technique to "pull up" and "let go" of your suppressed negativity (mind viruses)... you naturally have a positive state of mind... and therefore... you effortlessly "pull" abundance into all areas of your life.

Because once you learn to "let go" of all your subconscious programs (mind viruses) "hidden away" inside you - guess what?

Suddenly, as if by "magic," the damn will break and an avalanche of abundance will start pouring into your life from all directions. You WILL achieve financial freedom, and the independence that goes with it.

You'll Wonder Where The Abundance Has Been Hiding All These Years!

It may come slowly at first. Then faster and faster the more you use The Release Technique.

Also, it will give you... another... big and unexpected advantage.

Namely...

You'll Have A New Feeling Of Solid Confidence, Peacefulness

And Sheer Joy Flooding Into Every Area Of Your Life!

In other words, using nothing more than The Release Technique to "let go" of suppressed "negativity"... also... acts as a foundation for supercharging every other area of your life.

It's as if learning how to "let go" of your limiting subconscious programs... is... a springboard... that can send you rocketing to a whole new level of satisfaction and pleasure you could never get before.

Look, here's the bottom line: With this admittedly unusual process of "letting go" of suppressed "negativity" stored in your subconscious...

Its Utterly Impossible For You To Remain Stuck In Your Financial Quagmire and Impossible NOT to Achieve Abundance!

This is no joke.

It WILL Show Up... Often From Unexpected Sources!

And it doesn't matter if you don't have a high paying job either. It doesn't even matter if you have no job. Or, no current income.

You CAN achieve Abundance! ###

Your Inner Compass

by Owen Waters

One constant that you can count on in life is change. Change exists because life is in motion, and motion is one of the three aspects of the original consciousness that underlies all of Creation. Everything in the universe springs from two complementary aspects of consciousness - thought and feeling - set into motion.

The existence of motion as one of the fundamental components of Creation guarantees that change is continuous. The point of life is to experience infinite variations of expression of the one underlying consciousness, Infinite Being.

Changes in Your Life

Major changes in life are rarely easy, but our very reason for being is to work through changes and experiences in life.

Today, changes are being accelerated by our being in the global transformation called The Shift. Many would say that today's changes are intense to the point of becoming chaotic. In physics, chaos is a temporary phase between one natural state of harmony and its transformation into a higher form. The transition phase between the two states becomes very choppy until the higher form is reached.

Today, we are in the storm before the calm. We are so beset by change that it can become hard to discern what changes are important and what changes are just societal noise which has little bearing on the real paths that we need to tread through life. It is here that a sense of inner direction becomes an exquisite asset.

Navigation Through Life

Your purpose in life is an ever-unfolding saga. Like a journey across the seas by boat, your journey through life is made safe and direct by the

use of a compass. In this journey, you have a built-in compass that helps you navigate in the most appropriate direction.

That compass is your sense of innermost joy. As an expression of your inner being, like a compass, your innermost joy points the way. When you think about the one action you could take right now which would move you towards the most long-term inner joy, you are seeing that course of action which is most connected to your inner being.

Because destinations in life are reached in steps or stages, your inner compass can actually point in seemingly different directions on different days. The key is to realize that the one task you can best address at any given moment is the one which is most aligned with your innermost joy.

Each step on a journey is different; yet, all steps lead to the final destination. If you are inspired to do one thing today and to do something different tomorrow, it is because those tasks are both steps along the pathway to the desired destination. Trust in the timing of your inner guidance. It's wisdom comes from the part of you which is your connection to the universe and to Infinite Being.

Be attentive to your inspiration and the ideas that it brings. Make a note of these ideas as they occur and, in retrospect, you will be amazed as to how insightful they were. ###

Owen Waters is the author of "Freedom of the Spirit: Four Powerful Steps to Spiritual Freedom". This deeply insightful e-book combines some of today's most proven and time-tested spiritual practices into one powerful and effective package. Available now for immediate download at:

www.infinitebeing.com/ebooks/freedom.htm

Good and Bad by Rob McBride

The concept of Yin Yang captures the essence of what normally happens in life. In all that is good, there is a little bit of bad and, in all that is bad, there is a little bit of good. When we understand the best and worst of times will come to an end, we can look at life from a different perspective.

In the sea of dark
There is a spot of light
And, in the sea of light
There is a spot of dark

When we analyze our most memorable moments, they generally come from one of these two extremes, good or bad. Nevertheless, right now the great majority have changed in some way, shape or form. The most intense feeling of happiness has changed into something steady or, has disappeared completely. At the same time, the most uncomfortable circumstance has also diminished or been completely resolved.

The phrase, "The only thing constant is change," promises each and every situation will change. Although the change is not always for the better in the moment, everything will indeed change for nothing stays the same forever. When we focus on what we can control, we influence the intensity and frequency of the majority of what happens in life.

If we are happy and content, we know change will come. The magnitude and direction depends entirely on us. If we notice this pleasant sensation is diminishing, we can do everything possible to maintain the energy and positive vibration. Instead of lamenting what might possibly happen, we can construct an environment where our actions and attitudes steer us toward what we most desire.

If we are down and despondent, we know also change will come. If we keep doing the same things and do nothing to improve the situation, things will more than likely get worse before they get better. On the contrary, if we begin to change what we do and how we do it, we begin to attain different results. While they may be the same or worse in the short term, with perseverance we will achieve new destinies.

What is "good" and "bad" depends not on what happens, rather on our interpretation of what happens. We can consider the good which comes from even the most difficult of circumstance. While not everything is rosy and bright, we can extend and magnify the magical moments in our lives. When clouds come to conceal the sun which previously shone upon us, we can find comfort knowing the same wind which brought the darkness will also whisk it away.

Life is to live and part of "living" is to take the good with the bad. When we do our best to accentuate the positive and diminish the negative, we begin to live with intention instead of slowly dying through distraction.
###

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

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

How to Live a G.R.E.A.T. Life!

by Philip E. Humbert, PhD

There are lots of ways to maintain a positive attitude. Personally, I love humor and a bit of mischief, great books, exercise, time with friends (and my dog!), and I listen to good audio programs almost every day. I find journaling helps, and of course my coach keeps me focused and productive. You probably have your own "best practices." Remember to use them!

But a vital basis for all positive motivation is the deep-down certainty that you are building and living a GREAT life. I'm convinced a great life is no accident. It's not about "luck" or good genes, or money or education or any of that. A great life doesn't "just happen" for a few while others are condemned to mediocrity. A GREAT life is the elegant and delightful result of doing certain things, in the right way, at the right time.

I've come up with a 5-step process that turns a G.R.E.A.T. life into an acronym:

1. A GREAT life begins with GOALS. Few things in life are as meaningful, exciting and powerful as the progressive accomplishment of goals we truly desire. Powerful, value-driven goals get us up in the morning, keep us focused, and push us forward all day long. Whether it's a teenager's desire for a date or a driver's license, a young couple's desire for children, or the dream of starting your own business, goals push, pull and drive us forward.

All of us have goals, whether we realize it or not. Winners select their goals carefully, and write them down. They develop specific plans for their achievement. Their goals are well-thought-out and reflect the deepest desires of their hearts. For many people, goals have a logical quality, while for others goals are more about "direction" or "purpose" or

a general "vision." However you do it is fine! The key is to know where you're going and how you'll get there. A GREAT life starts with GOALS.

2. A GREAT life is focused on RESULTS. A great life doesn't worry about whether things are easy or difficult. It's not about the approval of others. A great life is focused on getting important things done! It's about using your time, skills, tools and talents to create the life your truly want. It's about achieving the RESULTS that are important to you.

3. A GREAT life is about EXCELLENCE. A great life is not about being average. It's is not built on mediocrity or settling for second-best. A GREAT life is about having the life, the relationships, the environment and circumstances that make you feel fantastic! It's about being excellent in every thing you do, every day. It's about being a person of integrity, honesty, skill and achievement. Whether your goals relate to parenting, business, fame or fortune, it's about being a person of EXCELLENCE.

4. A GREAT life is based on ACTION. Nothing gets done until something gets done! I know, that's a solipsism, but it's also true. A great life is built! Clear thinking, careful planning, and superb strategies are helpful, but in the end, a great life is based on action that moves you in the direction you want to go. Even poor or inefficient action will move you forward. Take action! Take action every single day that moves you toward the life you desire and deserve. Take ACTION!

5. A GREAT life takes TIME. How much time depends on the goal. Meditation can bring peace of mind in moments. Training to run a marathon may take months, and building a great marriage may take years. All goals require some level of persistence over time. We are impatient creatures. Americans are famous for our desire for "instant" solutions. But the truth is that important goals, and a GREAT life, are built over TIME.

Set it as your minimum standard to have a G.R.E.A.T. life! Set appropriate, value-driven Goals, measure your Results and demand Excellence in all you do. Take the best, most strategic Action you can, and repeat it over Time. You deserve a G.R.E.A.T. life! Accept nothing less. ###

Dr Philip Humbert is a Success Strategist, author and popular speaker. Imagine what's possible! To inquire about having him speak to your group or organization, or to schedule an initial consultation, contact him or visit his site at <http://www.philiphumbert.com/>

Pam Garcy
Part 19. Days of Rest

Do you take a day off every week for R&R?

Some of the folks I've seen have the attitude that the world will fall apart if they take time off. They are afraid that their families won't function, their jobs won't produce, their friends will melt and their communities will dissipate! What is this all about? This is about getting so used to your routine, that you think that your routine is all there is AND therefore you forget to cross-train others to take on aspects of your roles.

But, did you ever stop and consider that you might be a better worker, parent, partner, friend and citizen if you took the time to replenish and rejuvenate? Did you also stop to consider that others might benefit from trying on the hats that you wear, even if only for a little while?

Knowing how to stop and how to relax is an effort for some of you. Some of you have spent your lives in the fast lane, and you're worried that you won't know how to drive slowly. I remember a radio interview when the host said, "I actually hate taking trips and hate taking time off. I feel like I'm going crazy if I'm not working."

While it is wonderful to love your work (I'm obviously all for that), work isn't all there is. Remember that. Remember it before it is too late.

I love the saying, "On your death bed, no one is going to ask you why you didn't work harder and clock in more hours."

So, stop scaring yourself into thinking that you can't take a day off, for Pete's sake!

Just as you once trained for your job, you can train yourself to take time off and relax! You can train yourself to benefit from the contrast between

work and play, between intensity and calm, between isolation and connection. Contrasts make you more aware of each side of dialectics; they make life more interesting and rich!

If you already are taking days of rest, then you understand their value. To those of you who do, I want to congratulate you! Continue to do this, as it will strengthen you upon your journey. It is a healthy and balanced approach to your life! ###

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 35

My mind is part of God's. I am very holy.

Today's idea does not describe the way you see yourself now. It does, however, describe what vision will show you. It is difficult for anyone who thinks he is in this world to believe this of himself. Yet the reason he thinks he is in this world is because he does not believe it.

You will believe that you are part of where you think you are. That is because you surround yourself with the environment you want. And you want it to protect the image of yourself that you have made. The image is part of this environment. What you see while you believe you are in it is seen through the eyes of the image. This is not vision. Images cannot see.

The idea for today presents a very different view of yourself. By establishing your Source it establishes your Identity, and it describes you as you must really be in truth. We will use a somewhat different kind of application for today's idea because the emphasis for today is on the perceiver, rather than on what he perceives.

For each of the three five-minute practice periods today, begin by repeating today's idea to yourself, and then close your eyes and search your mind for the various kinds of descriptive terms in which you see yourself. Include all the ego-based attributes which you ascribe to yourself, positive or negative, desirable or undesirable, grandiose or debased. All of them are equally unreal, because you do not look upon yourself through the eyes of holiness.

In the earlier part of the mind-searching period, you will probably emphasize what you consider to be the more negative aspects of your perception of yourself. Toward the latter part of the exercise period, however, more self-inflating descriptive terms may well cross your mind. Try to recognize that the direction of your fantasies about yourself does

not matter. Illusions have no direction in reality. They are merely not true.

A suitable unselected list for applying the idea for today might be as follows:

I see myself as imposed on.

I see myself as depressed.

I see myself as failing.

I see myself as endangered.

I see myself as helpless.

I see myself as victorious.

I see myself as losing out.

I see myself as charitable.

I see myself as virtuous.

You should not think of these terms in an abstract way. They will occur to you as various situations, personalities and events in which you figure cross your mind. Pick up any specific situation that occurs to you, identify the descriptive term or terms you feel are applicable to your reactions to that situation, and use them in applying today's idea. After you have named each one, add:

But my mind is part of God's. I am very holy.

During the longer exercise periods, there will probably be intervals in which nothing specific occurs to you. Do not strain to think up specific things to fill the interval, but merely relax and repeat today's idea slowly until something occurs to you. Although nothing that does occur should be omitted from the exercises, nothing should be "dug out" with effort. Neither force nor discrimination should be used.

As often as possible during the day, pick up a specific attribute or attributes you are ascribing to yourself at the time and apply the idea for today to them, adding the idea in the form stated above to each of them. If nothing particular occurs to you, merely repeat the idea to yourself, with closed eyes.

Commentary by Allen Watson

The Text tells us that "you do not understand how lofty the Holy Spirit's perception of you really is.". In the following section of the same chapter, it says:

You did not establish your value and it needs no defense. Nothing can attack it nor prevail over it. It does not vary. It merely *is*. Ask the Holy Spirit what it is and He will tell you, but do not be afraid of His answer, because it comes from God. It is an exalted answer because of its Source, but the Source is true and so is Its answer. Listen and do not question what you hear, for God does not deceive. He would have you replace the ego's belief in littleness with His Own exalted Answer to what you are, so that you can cease to question it and know it for what it is.

As the lesson points out, we do not normally think of ourselves in terms such as "lofty" and "exalted." Notice, though, that the Course is saying this is true of us, not because of anything we have done, but because of our Source (3:2). What makes us what we are is not ourselves, but God. That is why the Course lays so much stress on the idea "I am as God created me." Our little view of ourselves comes from our attempts to create ourselves; our true grandeur derives from the fact that we are God's creations. Our unwillingness to recognize this connection with our Source is what keeps us locked in our smallness. We resist acknowledging God as our Source because it seems, to our egos, to put us in second place and to make us dependent. It does not *make* us dependent—we *are* dependent. That is not our shame; it is our glory. It is what establishes our grandeur.

We have difficulty believing that "I am very holy." Our refusal to believe it is why we are in this world, in this environment we think we want. We want it because it supports our image of ourselves as separate beings, independent of God.

When we look at the world, and look at ourselves living in the world, the things we see do not support the idea of this lesson. And yet the eyes, ears, nose, and touch we use to gather evidence are part of the very image of this world. They exist within the constraints of the world's image which we have constructed, very carefully, *not* to show us our union with God. Of course, they bring us very little evidence to contradict the ego's image of us; we made them to function that way.

One very strong emphasis of the Course is on looking directly at our darkness and confronting our fears. The more we look at fear, says the Course, the less we will see it. Simply bringing the darkness into the light dispels the darkness. Looking at our ego, and even the full extent of our hatred, is crucial to our growth, it tells us. This lesson reflects the other side, which is sometimes neglected when looking at the ego is overemphasized. The other side is reminding ourselves, firmly, of the truth of our exalted reality: "My mind is part of God's. It is very holy." In the Text we are told:

Whenever you question your value, say:
God Himself is incomplete without me.

Remember this when the ego speaks, and you will not hear it.

Reminding ourselves of the truth about us is another powerful technique the Course recommends for transcending our egos.

The list of attributes and terms we use to describe ourselves given in the lesson is just a sample. As you practice the lesson today, try to notice how you think about yourself, and how different all of those thoughts, good and bad both, are from the lesson's statement about you. I could add some of my own terms to the list: forgetful, disorganized, intelligent, clever, falling behind, skillful at what I do. What terms do you think of?

You should have noticed that the lessons are now calling for three longer practice periods of five minutes each. We are getting into heavier

practice. Some of us, if we have not meditated previously, may find it difficult to sit for five minutes with our eyes closed doing these exercises. I encourage you to do them anyway. Anything new is difficult at first, but becomes easier with practice; that is what the practice is for.

###