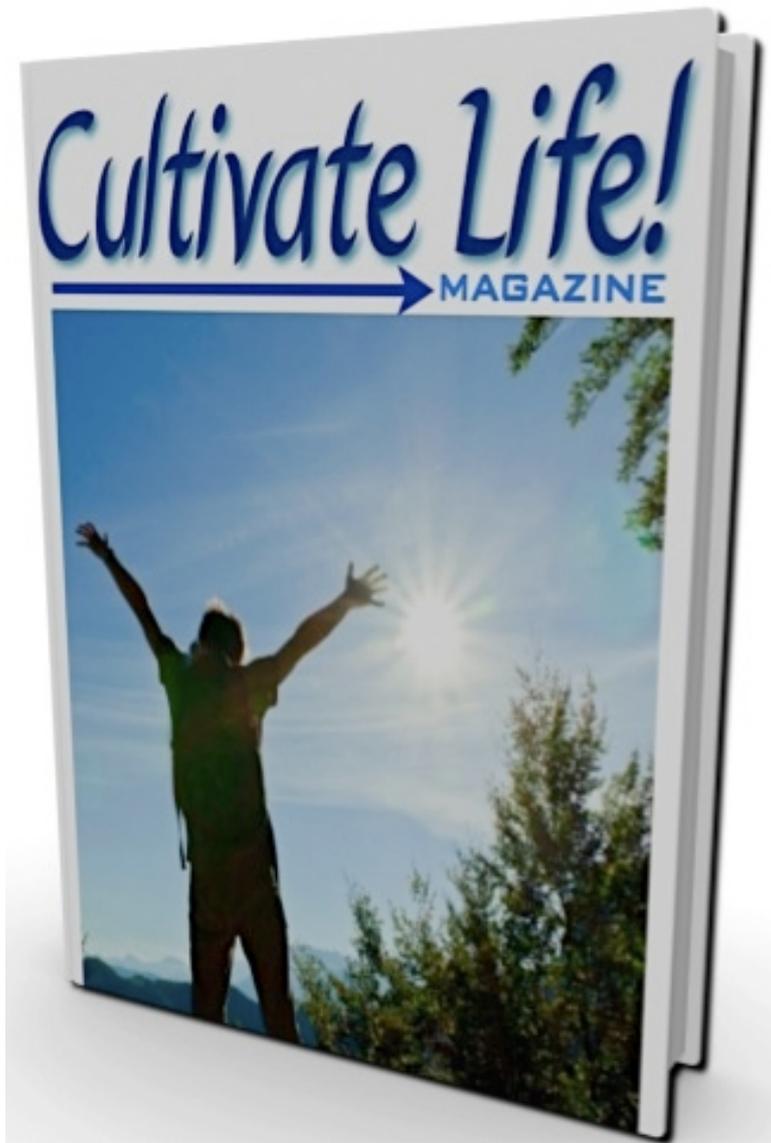




Your weekly toolkit for planting seeds of success, abundance, love and joy

Editors: Greg Willson and Peter Shepherd

~ Issue 45 ~



Please note:

The opinions expressed in any articles in this publication are those of the individual authors and may not necessarily be shared by the publishers of *Cultivate Life! magazine*.

Any financial or health advice given in *Cultivate Life! Magazine* may not be right for your particular case and you should seek your own profession opinion before acting on said advice.

Copyright © — The publisher, authors and contributors reserve full copyright of their work as featured in *Cultivate Life! magazine*.

No part of this publication may be copied or otherwise reproduced in any form or by any means without the written permission of the publisher.

Cultivate Life! magazine
is published every week

www.trans4mind.com



This is a 'text only' version of *Cultivate Life! Magazine*
For the full *Cultivate Life! Magazine* experience in html format
go to www.trans4mind.com

CONTENTS:

Heart to Heart Coaching:

Coach **Doris Jeanette**, replies to the question: I have put everyone and everything else before me, for so long that I feel as if I don't even know myself or who I once was.

Features:

Leo Babauta, Monk Mind: How to Increase Your Focus

Jeanie Marshall, Empowering Practice: Find the Power in Your Smile

Cultivate Life Weekly Writers:

Guy Finley, Step into an Unthinkably Confident Relationship with Life

Chuck Gallozzi, The Shortest Words — “Yes” and “No”

Beca Lewis, Out or In, Make A Choice

Steve Wickham, When We Need Not Respond

Cultivate Health:

Dale Miller, Children And Sleep

Trevor Dumbleton, Tips for Reducing Stress

Cultivate Personal Responsibility:

Gabriella Kortsch, Grow in Richness: Stop the Blaming

Rob Marshall, Accepting Responsibility, Without Taking The Blame

Cultivate Life Extras:

Linda Sapadin, Are You In A Rut?

Emotional Intelligence, The Emotional Brain

Debra Betterly, Choosing a Journey of Consciousness

Cultivate Life Partworks:

Pam Garcy, Part 20 —Importance of Reading

A Course In Miracles, Lesson 36 plus Commentary by **Allen Watson**

Charles F. Haanel, *The Master Key System*, part 20

Heart to Heart Coaching:

Coach **Doris Jeanette**, replies to: I have put everyone and everything else before me, for so long that I feel as if I don't even know myself or who I once was.

Philosophy: I would describe my philosophy on life as truly being from the heart, in all things big or small. Always help others anyway I can, treat everyone as a special being to which we all are connected, as one. Lovingly being all that I am to learn, grow, change, and make a difference in a huge way. Living my purpose, and searching for total oneness to all of humanity. Giving and assisting in way that's needed to make a difference; even if it's in a small way. It feels my heart with joy to be able to heal and help others. I am called towards the teachings of the Buddha.

Hopes and aspirations: To find myself, see myself, and obtain self-worth, and wholeness. To free myself from what ever it is that is keeping me from being a participant in my own life. From allowing myself to be free to be me just as I am creatively, unlocking my full inner potential for joy, love, and abundance. Ultimately finding myself and begin living my true self and discovering the path to soul purpose. And being, absorbing my life's purpose, so that I may give back and be the change I want to see in the world. Healing purely from the heart.

Question: Thank you so much for taking the time to allow me to express my feelings with you. Let me start by saying that currently I am experiencing a feeling of being consumed with sadness on all levels - spiritually, mentally, physically, and emotionally. I feel as if my heart has left my chest and moved into my stomach.

I have always had a heavy heart, its something I've had from the beginning, even before choosing to come to be born. I am completely lost, I have no direction. I have always put everyone and everything else before me for so long, that I allowed myself to fade away. In a way I feel as if I truly don't even know myself or who I once was. Possibly I never have known who I am. My whole life has been filled with feelings of being worthless, unlovable, and not really having anything to bring to the table. You know, never feeling that I'm good enough, or worthy enough for anyone or anything.

I have a 2 1/2 yr old little boy and I want so much to be full of life again. For so long nothing moves me, excites me, or interests me. I'm a single mommy and I live as though I am a hermit; always by myself, never leaving the house, or even dating or being in any relationships. I have fully stopped living if you will. I am so ready for change and the opportunity to pull myself out of this RUT! Just not sure how to go about it. I know I am a healer and a deeply spiritual person. It's just that when it comes to me, it just doesn't feel natural to put my needs or desires to attention. I feel selfish if I think about what I want or may desire to do. So it's me myself who allows such neglect of myself. I don't know how to free myself from this prison I've had myself in for so long. I'm ready to fully come into my own, and live every moment of everyday consciously and in the present. I have to find a way to allow myself the ability to LET GO!!

Do you think you could guide me and give me some insight as to your thoughts and feelings of my current situation. From the heart.

Answer:

Thank you for sharing how lost you feel and how much you put everyone else first. It is no surprise that you do not have direction and fulfillment. Read the columns on the good girl, depression and emotional maturity for additional information that can help you learn to cultivate more self-love.

The heavy heart is a closed heart. Your heart longs to be open and full of energy. Your heart longs to be used and enjoyed. Your heart is the most powerful part of your mind body energy field.

The human heart is where the light from above meets the fire from below. If it is not impeded, the pure spiritual energy that comes in automatically through your crown chakra goes through your head and spine until it reaches your heart. Once it enters your heart, the light transforms into fire. As fire, it moves down your body out of your root into the earth.

If you are grounded, this powerful energy is safe, solid and available for use to fulfill your purpose in life. The same transformation of energy happens from your root chakra upward. The fire of the earth flows into your body through your root until it reaches your heart. Your heart transforms your fire into light. Your light travels upward to the source completing the circle.

This means we are half physical and half metaphysical. We often call the metaphysical part spiritual because it is so much bigger than we are. As mortals, we worship that which is bigger than we. As well, we need to!

This river of energy is only one of the many natural flows of energy in your energy field. The reason this particular flow is so important is because your physical body needs to be "attached," to the earth for you to be safe. You cannot be physically secure on earth without your root being attached to earth.

In addition, your energy field needs to be "attached" to the source above you. Otherwise, you will not be receiving the light energy you need to give you power. Your body needs to be anchored above and below for you to be safe secure, effective and powerful.

Divine energy is automatically within you. You do not need to do anything to get it to work properly. It flows freely at birth and knows what to do on its own. In fact, you have to work hard to block this powerful energy from flowing through you. And hard does humanity work at blocking out the light from above and the fire from below.

Even though it takes a great deal of effort to stop a natural energy faucet, all of us block our divine energy in many places. As a result, humans are like little dots of "nonsense energy" darting all over the place, acting important and being nothing but "a minute before midnight" in the grand scheme of creation. "A minute before midnight" refers to how long humans have been present on earth in terms of evolution.

Alas, will we wake up in time? "Yes, there is hope. Some of us will let go of control and allow our energy to flow!"

To Help You Wake Up and Let Go

You mention you have had a heavy heart before you were born. I have never known a baby to be born with a heavy heart. If this were correct, then I would conclude that you absorbed this energy from your mother and your surroundings in the womb. However, it sounds like you have experienced an open, loving heart. Even if your heart was open for only for a few minutes, this is helpful. The real life experience of a loving heart is extremely important because this is the crack that opens your heart.

As Leon Cohen, a Canadian poet sings, "There is a crack in everything. That is how the light gets in. That is how the light gets in." So bless your cracks! I remember my first opening because it was a vibrant moment. This is the reason I call my free holistic psychology newsletter, "The Vibrant Moment." Being alive in the present moment will always be a full-body, vibrant moment.

The journey to opening the heart begins when you fall in love or otherwise open a tiny crack so love can seep in. You may have opened a crack when you fell in love with your son's father or when your son was born. To continue your personal growth, you must continue to open your heart through real life events.

As children, we closed our hearts when we were hurt and wounded. The scientific community reports that the thymus, which regulates the heart chakra, is atrophied by the time we are teens. This means our loving nature and our divine energy has been blocked.

Your emotional wounds are deep and as a child you did not have the resources to take care of yourself. Therefore, you became anxious and scared. You stopped trusting and closed your heart. This conditioning happened automatically and you were not aware of closing your heart.

However, as an adult you begging to engage in personal growth and realize you must unlearn your unhealthy conditioning from your past in order to have healthy relationships. You discover you must open your heart in order to become more alive and vibrant. You become conscious that you are impeding your natural flow of energy by tightening up your body and squeezing everything tight. You know you are accountable and can choose what to do from henceforth.

Mental Concepts are Not Real

I have often commented on the vast distance between a person's philosophy and her behavior in the past columns. A mental concept is not the same thing as a real life experience.

Energy is everything. If you do not physically open your heart, your heart is not open. If you do not physically open your solar plexus, it is closed. Energy must flow between you and reality or you are just a mental concept. Being a mental concept is an image. Most people are stuck in this controlled, image, ego stage.

In an ego state your energy is frozen and does not move spontaneously and freely. You are controlling your energy and not allowing it to flow naturally and organically. Transformation is the act of letting go of your control over your energy and allowing it to flow.

Where to Start Transformation?

The only place you can start personal growth is by being fully present in your current reality. You need to become aware of who, what and where you are in the present moment. Look for physical, mental, emotional and energy facts.

It appears that your judgment is paralyzing you. For example, you call yourself "selfish" if you do something for yourself. This judgment stops you. The sadness and heaviness you report is a form of depression and helplessness. Depression is not an emotional state; it is a numb, mental state caused by judgment.

I suspect there is literally, dense, grey, judgmental energy sitting on top of your heart. This energy is composed of unhealthy energies like resentment, blame and guilt. These are nasty energies that you need to become aware of and learn to transform.

You will find underneath your heavy, judgmental energy, your real emotions and feelings. Emotional hurt is the first sign of life. To heal, you need to go all the way back to your original wound. There is a great deal of anxiety and fear to overcome in the healing process. This is the reason it is best to have a guide who knows the territory.

I am sure you will look inward and be honest about what you find. This will immediately allow your energy to flow. Learning to love your emotional self will give you direction and meaning.

Relax and enjoy your flow. You will hold your head high as your fears of being selfish are faced.

Action Steps to Take

Allow your energy to flow. Learn how to let go of control. Get outside of your comfort zone. Do new things. Travel. Read a holistic psychology article in the free library at [drjeanette.com](http://www.drjeanette.com) on how to let go of control: <http://www.drjeanette.com/lettinggo.html>

Get to know your judgment. There are so many mental judgments inside of you; it will blow your mind. Begin to write down, on a piece of paper, exactly what your thoughts are telling you. Write them down and own them, they are yours and you learned them. These thoughts paralyze you and keep you stuck. The online course, "Overcome Anxiety Naturally," teaches you how to tame your thoughts and transform self-judgment into self-acceptance. <http://www.drjeanette.com/anxietyonlinecourse.html>

Open your heart and feel your hurt. Work with a responsible emotional health guide who knows the territory and helps you open up to your energy instead of closing your chakras. Work on your own every day with the "Opening the Heart" audio or EBook. Three hours on feelings, fear and hurt teaches you how feel your real emotions, heal your original wound and flow: <http://www.drjeanette.com/emotionalhealthaudio.html>

Get to know your human energy and get grounded. Hang out with trees and nature. Study with energy teachers. Read books by Jack Schwarz and put what you read into practice. Come to Cape May, NJ on Saturday, April 30 and practice grounding your energy in a nature workshop. <http://www.drjeanette.com/natureworkshops.html>

Doris Jeanette closed her heart at six. The first crack was at 21 and her original wound was healed at 34. She continues to clear the debris from the back on her heart that still judges all the unfairness she sees in the world. Dr. Jeanette mentors and trains professionals in the art and science of opening up to natural energy flow. Find out more and sign up for her free holistic psychology newsletter, "The Vibrant Moment" at: <http://www.drjeanette.com/holisticpsychologyschools.html>

Monk Mind: How to Increase Your Focus

by Leo Babauta

I confess to being as prone to the distractions of the Internet as anyone else: I will start reading about something that interests me and disappear down the rabbit hole for hours (even days) at a time.

But my ability to focus on a single task has dramatically improved, and that one habit has changed my life.

While a few years ago I couldn't sit down to work on something without quickly switching to email or one of my favorite Internet forums or sites, today I can sit down and write. I can clear away distractions, when I set my mind to it, and do one thing. And that changes everything: you lose yourself in that task, become so immersed that you pour everything you have into the work, and it becomes a meditative, transformative experience. Your happiness increases, stress goes down, and work improves.

I know that lots of people have trouble focusing on one task for very long, and so I thought I'd share a few things that have worked for me.

Focus Best Practices

There is no one way to find focus, but what works for me is to clear everything away and create a little space of tranquil focus. Some tips for doing that:

- Close the browser and your email program. If you need to work in the browser then make sure no tabs or windows are open other than the one you absolutely need.
- Turn off all notifications. Trying to focus while something is notifying you of an incoming email or tweet or Facebook update is impossible.
- Turn off the Internet. Shut off your connection, unplug your router, or best yet, go to a place where there is no Internet (yes, those still exist). This is the absolute best way to find focus.
- Close all programs and windows other than what you need for this one task.
- Have a very important task to do. Not just "check email" but "write chapter in my novel" or "write that kick-ass blog post I've been planning" or "write that new Android app".
- Clear your desk. No need to spend all day on this — shove everything in a drawer or put it in a box to be sorted later. Don't fiddle with this now. In fact, don't fiddle with anything — don't worry about the perfect setup or perfect notebook for writing or the perfect anything.
- Plug in the headphones. If you have people around who might distract you, wearing headphones and playing some good, peaceful music is perfect.
- Use a simple program. For writing, I like plain text editors (TextEdit, TextWrangler) or writing programs that block everything out (OmmWriter, WriteRoom). No distractions.

Once you have this environment (and you shouldn't spend more than a few minutes setting it up), get going on your task. Do nothing but that one task. Don't switch to another task. Having trouble doing that? Read on.

How to Increase Your Focus Abilities

If you can't focus on one task for very long, don't worry. That's normal. Our brains have been trained by technology and society to switch tasks often.

One way we've been trained is that switching to check email or blog updates or Facebook/Twitter is rewarding — we are rewarded with a little nugget of satisfaction in that someone has sent us a message (social validation!) or we have something new and interesting to read (shiny and bright!). Switching tasks becomes a positive feedback cycle that is hard to beat by single-tasking.

The way to beat that is to set up a positive feedback cycle for focusing. Here's how:

Start small. You only need to focus for one minute at first. Clear everything away, pick your one important task, and just do it for one minute without switching. This is hard to do in the beginning but if you consciously focus on focusing, you can do it. It's just a minute.

Reward yourself. The reward for focusing for one minute can be one minute (or 30 seconds) of checking whatever you want. Email, Facebook, whatever. Or get up and take a one-minute walk. Stretch, drink some water, massage your neck, enjoy your small victory. Empires are created with small victories.

Repeat. Keep doing one minute focus, one minute reward (or 1 minute to 30 seconds if you like) for about half an hour (15 of each). You're done. Repeat that later in the day. Rejoice in how much work you got done! And notice how you've set up a positive feedback cycle for focusing.

Increase in small steps. Tomorrow, make it two minutes on, one minute off. Repeat that for 30 minutes, do it later in the day too. Feel free to go wild and do three focus sessions in a day if you like, but it's not necessary.

Keep taking baby steps. I think you can see the pattern by now. Make it three minutes on, one minute off on the third day, then 4:1, then 5:1. When you get to 10 minutes, be crazy and take a 2 minute break. When you get to 20 minutes, take a 3 minute break. At 30 minutes of focus, you've earned a 5 minute break. And once you're at 30 minutes, you can stay there. No need to become a monk.

Set up a positive feedback cycle for single-tasking focus and you'll reverse the years of training your mind has gotten to switch tasks. You'll get more important work done, and it won't seem hard. You'll find that focus becomes a form of meditation. It's a beautiful, beautiful thing, and you can thank me by sending me a craft beer from your hometown.

Or buy my book on this topic — called [focus](#) — and I'll use the money to buy myself a beer.

###

About Leo Babauta:

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

Empowering Practice: Find the Power in Your Smile

by Jeanie Marshall

Your inner smile is between you and yourself. Smiling at and with and for others is wonderful, too, but this empowering Practice is about touching the power of the smile within you.

This is a two-minute practice that you can do standing up, sitting down, or lying down. I encourage you to spend at least two minutes to fully embrace the experience. If you practice this regularly, you can activate your inner smile in seconds when you need to embody the essence of peace and joy.

Sitting on an airplane, waiting in a shopping line, or readying yourself for a meditation are perfect opportunities to practice this exercise. If you're really feeling good, keep the good feeling activated for as many minutes as you can beyond the suggested two minutes.

The Inner Smile Process

Be still, with eyes open or closed.

Honor where you are.

Start the smile wherever it begins most naturally.

Feel the energy move all through your body, radiating outward, downward, upward, inward.

As you activate your smile, let it have its own life.

Become the smile. Feel the good feeling.

Let your organs and cells open. Notice how one smile bounces off another.

Rest gently in your inner smile for as long as you want.

Move out into the world, smiling from the inside, radiating your essence.

The Inner Smile that Radiates to the World

I place a high value on smiling to and with other people, but that story is different from the one I'm telling here. This Empowering Practice is about finding, feeling, and opening to your own inner smile.

It's the smile you feel and express when no one else is around because you feel self-love and joy.

The starting place for your feeling is wherever you are in the moment: happy, sad, tired, angry, numb, playful, frowning, peaceful. Perhaps your face is in neutral or your heart feels empty or a little heavy. Start wherever you are. Honor your launching pad.

The smile itself may start anywhere; for example, at your mouth where you likely think of a smile, in your heart as a feeling, or in your head as a thought.

If you're sad and don't want to smile, you need to honor your feelings. If you're sad and want to smile, you may need to start slowly. By starting slowly you can begin to feel your smile activating and growing.

This is not a "fake it 'till you make it" exercise. Instead, it's an exercise of feeling yourself into the joy of the smile inside you. If, however, you must "fake" a smile to begin the activation, I wholeheartedly encourage you to do that. In other words, begin in your head with the intention or thought that you want to begin it, or even that you want to want to smile.

I have intentionally kept this process general so that you'll embody it in the way that's most meaningful for you. If you like the exercise, I hope you'll become interested in your own inner smiling process and refine it in a way that works even better for you.

You may find that you most benefit from approaching your smile activation in essentially the same way each time. On the other hand, you may find that your curiosity prompts you to experiment in different ways. Find your way.

When you have fully activated your inner smile, you'll feel the power of it in every cell of your body. This is not a grin on your face, but a feeling that emanates from your heart, radiating through your cellular structure. It glows from within, dissolving sadness and stimulating kindness. It keeps you youthful and curious about life.

In my own personal development consulting practice, I activate a powerful inner smile before each client session. Always, when I pick up the phone for a client, I have a vibrant and happy expression on my face which my words travel through. I also start every day with a smile.

The quintessential inner smile is the presence of a happy baby, unencumbered by the worries and other thoughts of adulthood. Pure joy. No need to explain, justify, or hide. It's the energy that you feel when you see the spontaneous wagging tail of a puppy that can barely stand or hear the melody of a purring kitten. Little children and animals know this joy without needing to practice an exercise. They are our best teachers because they teach us self-love.

If you practice this exercise regularly in the way that suits you the best, you'll find that you are calmer and more peaceful. Over time, you'll feel the youthfulness and vigor that keeps you healthy. This exercise can also help you to create or maintain your calmness even when chaos is all around you. ###

Jeanie Marshall, Personal Development Consultant and Coach with Marshall House, writes extensively on subjects related to personal empowerment, meditation, and effective use of language, <http://www.empowering-personal-development.com/>

Step into an Unthinkably Confident Relationship with Life

By Guy Finley

Looking to the past for guidance on how to make a new beginning is like asking an echo to show you where it got started. We do not need to think in order to know the right thing to do in the moment for ourselves, or for others! In fact, quite the opposite is true.

The amazing possibilities that appear with each present moment are literally beyond thought. After all, the best moments in our lives -- those priceless times when we feel most alive -- unfold without our taking a single thought about them. That unforgettable sunrise we shared with someone we love; some deep heartache released and our soul refreshed on the heels of some unexpected insight... at times like these, we are left, gratefully, in the living presence of a peace we cannot create.

This special feature of our consciousness -- that allows us to be in relationship with the Presence moment -- has many names, none of which really matter. For now, let's call it "conscious awareness." What does matter is to see that, when we are within the field of its active light, everything we are aware of is within us in the same moment. Moreover, our awareness of the present moment is one and the same as the Presence within us that grants us that awareness.

This revelation literally points to the entrance of an unthinkable confident relationship with life. The nearer we come to understanding the promise of this insight, the closer we are to knowing a self-command that can't be taken from us. Here's why: The awareness of our living relationship with the present moment -- our willingness to consciously practice its presence -- empowers us to know what's best for us without having to think about it.

This level of awareness sees what is real and what is not. Its power to command challenging moments derives from its complete innocence. Higher consciousness doesn't "try" to control events, because its timeless nature is already a partner in guiding creation itself, so what has it to fear? And the more we place ourselves in the presence of this indwelling light, the more we will see small miracles take place before our very eyes. Quiet command over all that unfolds becomes as effortless for us as it is for the spreading light of dawn to chase away morning shadows. An upwelling confidence in the secret goodness of life replaces conflict and self-doubt. After all, how can we fail to find the fearless life we seek when reality itself points the way! ###

*Excerpted from **The Courage to Be Free**, Weiser Books, 2010*

About Guy Finley

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

Guy is the acclaimed author of [*The Secret of Letting Go*](#) and more than 37 other books and audio programs that have sold over a million copies in 16 languages worldwide.

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

The Shortest Words — “Yes” and “No” — Are Those which Need the Most Thought

By Chuck Gallozzi

“Yes” and “No.” Two short words. Short but significant. They are like a railway switch that determines which way one goes. One student tells a companion, “Let’s steal that old lady’s purse!” If the companion says, “Yes,” he may be headed for a life of crime. If he says, “No,” he may be on the path to sound judgement, good decisions, and a bright future.

That’s the way it’s always been, so it’s not surprising that more than 2,500 years ago Pythagoras said, “The oldest, shortest words — “Yes” and “No” — are those which require the most thought.” And this theme has often been repeated. For example, in the seventeenth century, the Spanish philosopher and writer Baltasar Gracian wrote, “Yes and No are soon said, but give much to think over.”

Interestingly, unless we have the power to say “No”, we’ll never have the power to say “Yes.” After all, unless I say “No” to all all-night partying, I will be unable to say “Yes” to attending night school.

The Power of “Yes”

Every creation, every invention, every innovation came about because someone said “Yes.” The universe itself is one gigantic “Yes.” “Yes” to life; “Yes” to all that is, such is the power of “Yes.”

Far more becomes achievable when we remove the obstacle of fear, for when we become courageous, anything becomes possible. A dramatic example is the changes sweeping across the Middle East because of people saying “Yes” to freedom and “No” to oppression.

We cannot take advantage of the opportunities that come our way unless we say “Yes.” Whenever I am asked if I can do a seminar or speech on a particular subject, I immediately say, “Yes.” After doing so, I then figure out how to prepare and present the material. The important point is, had I not said “Yes,” I wouldn’t have looked for solutions and found answers.

Although Heather was 55, she had never been married. She worked in a lab and had little contact with people, and immediately after work she would head straight home to look after her invalid mother. The university she worked for had a budget crisis and had to let go of some of their high paid staff. Heather was one of them.

I was the manager of a department in a retail store at the time and advertised for some help. After losing her job, Heather lost no time looking for work. She came to see me. I loved her because she was bright, trustworthy, and kind-hearted, but I didn’t expect her to take the job because all I could offer her was minimum wages. Yet, Heather said, “Yes.” Little did Heather realize was she was saying “Yes” to.

Unlike a lab, she was now working in a busy environment, meeting more people in a week than she used to in a year. One of the customers she met was Satoshi, a Japanese widower,

who was as kind and generous as she was. He took a liking to her and asked her out to dinner. Heather explained that she didn't want to leave her invalid mom at home unattended. "No problem," said Satoshi, "instead of wasting time traveling by bus, I'll drive you home; we'll pick up your mom, and then drive to a restaurant where we will all dine together."

Love blossomed. When Satoshi proposed, Heather said she couldn't move away from her mom. "No problem," replied Satoshi, "I just bought the condo next door to mine for your mother. Now we will be neighbors and you can spend as much time with her as you would like."

Long ago, Heather had given up hope of falling in love, getting married, and living a luxurious life. But her life was magically transformed because she said "Yes." She is not the only one who succeeded by willing to do more for less. For instance, Peter Aceto, CEO of ING Direct Canada, had this to say, "I've put a lot of time in personal development, taking jobs I didn't necessarily enjoy or want to do or positions where I was going to earn less money so that I could get a better sense of how they worked. They've been some of the toughest personal decisions I've ever made, but also probably the most rewarding."

Heather and Peter Aceto said "Yes." Will you? What will you discover, become, and have when you say "Yes" more often?

The Power of "No"

To lead fulfilling and happy lives, we also need to learn how to say "Yes" to saying, "No." After all, saying "No" to one thing allows us to say "Yes" to another. Here are some examples. Saying "No" to apple pie is saying "Yes" to a healthy diet. Saying "Yes" to exercise is saying "No" to poor health. Saying "No" to smoking is saying "Yes" to good health. And John C. Maxwell of <http://www.johnmaxwell.com/about/company> makes a good point, "Learn to say 'No' to the good so you can say 'Yes' to the best."

Some people try to take advantage of us by making us feel guilty if we don't agree to their request. So, we need to defend our rights by saying, "No." Remember, saying "No" to manipulators is saying "Yes" to you. Besides, when you say "Yes" to things you don't enjoy, you're saying "No" to things you love.

How to say no

Because of our conditioning, we often find it difficult to turn people down, even when their requests are unreasonable and detrimental. Here are a few steps you can take to make saying "No" easier.

1. First decide what you want to say "Yes" to. If, for instance, you say "Yes" to a happy family life, then it's "No" to carousing every night with your office buddies. If it's "Yes" to night school, then it's "No" to overtime and late night TV. If it's "Yes" to saving for a vacation cruise, then it's "No" to eating out every night.

2. When someone asks you to do something you'd rather not do, you don't have to answer right away. You can buy some time by saying, "I need time to think about it (or review my

commitments). I'll get back to you." This is helpful because if you answer too quickly, you may cave in to the pressure. But by taking your time, you'll have a cooling off period and the opportunity to build your courage

3. It's easier to refuse when the first word out of your mouth is "No." For example, "No. Sorry, Bob, I can't help you at this time."

4. It's easier to agree when it is on your terms. For instance, Will says, "Harry can you help me move on Saturday? We can make a day of it, and I'll treat you to dinner." And Harry replies, "Sure, I can help you in the morning, but I have to quit at 12 noon sharp because I have an afternoon commitment."

5. It's easier when you are honest, for when you're telling the truth you have nothing to hide or be ashamed of. Just tell it like it is:

"Sorry, I don't enjoy that kind of job."

"Sorry, that doesn't work for me."

"Sorry, I'm not at ease with that."

"Sorry, I'm too busy at this time."

"Sorry, I need to pay more attention to my personal life."

6. Make it easier for the person you're refusing to understand you're serious. Do this by making your body language and tonality match your verbal message. That is, stand straight, speak confidently, and make eye contact while saying a gentle but firm "No."

Caveats

1. If you recognize someone is trying to manipulate you, be compassionate, for they are coping the only way they know how. By "be compassionate" I mean accept them and don't grow angry or resentful. But neither should you give in to unreasonable requests. Don't enable helpless behaviour. If you refuse to help, they will be forced to fend for themselves, which will help them become independent.

2. Although it is never necessary to give a reason for your refusal, a brief explanation can help to deflect resentment from you to the cause. For example, when you say, "I don't have any openings in my schedule," it will help deflect resentment from you to your schedule.

3. As suggested in the above point, you never have to explain your refusal. It is your life and you have a right to live it as you chose. When you respect your own right to privacy, others will come to respect it too.

4. Time spent devoted to others is time not spent devoted to you. So, always measure the importance of what you do for others against what you cannot do for yourself. Here's an example. Tom and Betty plan to paint some rooms of their house this weekend. But Tom's friend, Al, calls and asks Tom to help him move this weekend. If Tom says "Yes," Betty will be disappointed, and if Tom says "No," Al will be disappointed. Before Tom answers, he needs to consider which relationship is more important.

In conclusion, if you want to say “Yes” to a successful and happy life, the formula is a simple two-part process.

1. Develop the courage and self-discipline to say “Yes” and “No” to others and yourself.
2. Say “No” to whatever harms or hinders you and “Yes” to whatever serves or suits you. ###

Chuck Gallozzi lived, studied, and worked in Japan for 15 years, immersing himself in the wisdom of the Far East and graduating with B.A. and M.A. degrees in Asian Studies. He is a Canadian writer, Certified NLP Practitioner, Founder and Leader of the Positive Thinkers Group in Toronto, speaker, seminar leader, and coach. Chuck is a catalyst for change, dedicated to bringing out the best in others, and he can be found on the web at:

<http://www.personal-development.com/chuck-gallozzi-articles.htm>

Out or In, Make A Choice

Beca Lewis

Our third floor window looked out onto a stand of trees that during the summer provided a beautiful green curtain and in the fall a glorious riot of color. Then one day the leaves were gone and I could see what had been hidden behind them.

Some of it was pretty like the paths below the trees, previously hidden plants, and animal homes. One day I even saw branches in the middle of a tree forming a heart and blowing in the wind.

Some of what was uncovered wasn't pretty at all. I could see the electric wires and the generators of the electric plant. I could see the lights from the parking lot next door that shone in our window at night.

Without leaves on the trees lining the highways, I could see the river that has been beside it the whole time, but I could also see the strip malls, rows of homes, and factories.

Perceptions are like the leaves of our thinking, when we lose them, the view changes. We love the glorious changing of the leaves, but are often afraid to change our perceptions.

Perhaps it is because we know what to expect when the leaves change. We know it is time to get out the winter clothes and put ice scrapers in the car. We know we can decide to either enjoy the coming season or fight it.

On the other hand, we never know what the results will be when we shift our perception and this can be frightening, because as surely as the falling of leaves are the beginning of a season shift, so the changing of any perception is the beginning of a life shift.

We may resist the fall season, and we may resist changing perception, but that won't change their arrival. The question is, what perception do we choose and how often do we choose it.

There are only two perceptions: the worldview perception and Spiritual Perception and they are entirely different.

One begins on the outside and one begins on the inside. One promotes the game called "there is never enough" and one declares the Truth that "infinite abundance is now." One says, "Work to get what you want, but when you do, it won't satisfy you." One says, "Start within and be satisfied."

One says, "It's everyone else's fault that you haven't succeeded," and one says, "Success is the outward appearance of your inner knowing and living of Truth." One says, "Fight for what you want" and one says "Rest in Truth and forgive." One says, "Be afraid" and one says, "Be at peace."

Whichever perception we choose produces an outside experience that we call our life. The worldview begins with the outside experience. Spiritual Perception begins within. Spiritual Perception doesn't need us to choose it to exist. It is. Worldview perception needs us to choose it to maintain its presence in our lives.

This is why the worldview perception is so aggressive. It needs us to remain within its prison in order to maintain its illusion of power. It does everything to distract us from Spiritual Perception.

It uses fear, entertainment, advertising, and friends. It uses family, obligations, necessities, money, health, social rules, business rules, hate, separation, wars, and even love to distract us from maintaining and living in Spiritual Perception.

The only power we have is in our choice of perception. This is a stunningly simple and beautiful Truth. The basis of our perception builds the outcome.

When I was a child running in and out of the screen door my dad would always say, "Out or in – make a choice." This is the same choice we have now. Out or In? The worldview, or Spiritual Perception? Whichever perception we choose, it will make all the difference. ###

About Beca Lewis

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

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

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

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

When We Need Not Respond

by Steve Wickham

Times when outcomes are known and all that can be ventured is innuendo and judgment, for nothing's changing that outcome, there is nothing to be gained and much potentially lost in responding to a jibe.

Some people exist for that very moment - to wave the red rag about another's face and spit into the face of retort. Why satisfy them?

It is much wiser for us to consider how things might turn out as we prepare to expel our response. Whilst this is not always easy, it's made easier for the emotive toughening; the jettison of all sense of competition or comparison; a decision made.

Objectivity the Means - Peace the End

Objectivity is the golden mode as others are picking away at emotive seams. They shall be surprised that we can shelve our want just about at our will. They shall see what self-control is available as we trust in the Spirit to gain for us peace in the moment of torment.

The real game isn't this thing that appears to wrangle with our hearts just now. Knowledge is space; giving us over to a grace that's externally internal, something quite beyond understanding.

Vindication of Faith

Added to the peace that's felt but by how we do not know is the witness of faith. This method of waiting upon, but over, temptation to respond actually worked! They were crushed, not us.

We knew that this method was a winner when their crushing brought us no joy at all - just understanding of the Spirit's power to vanquish an enemy without even thought of a blow. Victory for inaction... now that's power!

A Response That Works So Often

Wisdom is so often the matter of doing little to achieve a significant result; a little yeast works its way through all the dough.

With some people there is no winning, and that's okay because winning is not our objective - it's theirs. Why do we play a game beyond our intention and for another's sadistic gain?

No, it just won't do.

As the moments of inaction-as-response prevail we're found thanking God, because it was a position of elevated, patient thinking - not of ego - that saw us through.

The response that doesn't respond shows us how to deal with the next situation and the next and so on. It only has to work once; then we're inspired to use it again.

This is tantamount to taking active control over our God-blessed destinies as fear about others that tease is swamped by an underpinning confidence in the Spirit that overwhelms the dark fight.

Better the counterpunch by different and unexpected tack - one that surprises as it overwhelms... one that takes surprisingly little effort... one that proves power of right over wrong. ###

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/>

Children And Sleep

by: Dale Miller

Healthy sleep patterns are important for people of any age. However, when it comes to kids, instilling the right habits in them from the start can save them and you a whole host of future problems. Sleep is of vital importance for all of us, but it is particularly so for growing babies and children. Making sure that your kids get the sleep they need is an extremely important part of parenting.

Sleeping is one of the most important and pleasant activities of human life. Waking up feeling refreshed makes the whole day much better. It is vital for our health, mental, emotional and physical. Circadian rhythms are regulated by the light and dark, however these rhythms actually take time to develop. Usually, by six weeks old babies are beginning to develop such sleep-wake cycles.

It has been shown that by the age of two, most children have actually spent more time asleep than awake. Most kids will spend about forty percent of their childhood asleep. Babies, spend about fifty percent of their time in each of the states of sleep REM and non-REM. By about six months of age, REM sleep accounts for approximately thirty percent of sleep.

Newborns sleep on average a total of 10-18 hours of the day sleeping. These sleeping periods may range from only a few seconds to a number of hours at time. The sleep of newborns is interspersed by their need to be changed, nurtured and fed. But even at this early stage developing good sleep patterns is essential.

Babies should be put down while they are sleepy rather than once they are asleep. In this way, experts say that they will learn to fall asleep better on their own. As a parent, being aware of your baby's sleep signals is very important.

Some babies rub their eyes, while others might fuss or cry. These signals will let you know that they should be ready for a nap. Another important point is to help them get used to the circadian rhythms by keeping them more awake during the day with light and some noise and making nighttime dark and quiet. This can help encourage night time sleeping.

For infants from 3-11 months, nighttime feedings may become increasingly unnecessary. By 9 months, seventy-eighty percent of infants will be able to sleep through the night. Naps will become less frequent throughout the day as well. Again putting infants to bed when they are drowsy will help them become self soothers. Developing regular daytime and bedtime schedules will help ease the transition as well being consistent about these routines. Making the sleep environment as friendly as possible for the infant will also go a long way to helping with sleep.

From ages one to three, kids need about 12-14 hours of sleep a day. One nap a day lasting about one to three hours for those aged 18 months or older is fine, but these should not occur too close to bedtime. Many toddlers do experience some sleep troubles at this stage including separation anxiety, night fears, and/or getting out of bed as part of their newfound

independence. Some tips to help deal with these issues include: making the bedroom environment the same every night including the bedtime schedule. Setting limits that are consistent and encouraging the use of a security object, be it a blanket or stuffed animal.

Once your child is a preschooler, from age 3-5, they will typically need between 11 and 13 hours per night. Children at this stage may still be experiencing nighttime fears and thus may be having trouble sleeping.

The same principles here also apply. Consistency, friendly environment, and security all help establish good habits. As your child gets older you will be able to explain in more detail the importance of sleep and of regular sleeping schedules for their health and wellbeing.

Once a child reaches the prepubescent years, TV, video games, internet and other media as well as caffeinated beverages all may contribute to sleep disorders. Making sure that a calm, cool and dark environment are available and that TV and other such media is limited especially before bed will all help you child achieve a better nights rest.

Teenagers need a great deal more sleep than adults do. As we get older we need less and less sleep. According to the American Sleep Disorders

Association, teenagers on average need about nine and half hours of sleep a night. Most interestingly, researchers have found that teenagers need about two hours more sleep a night than their siblings of eight to ten years. This is in contradiction however to how parents usually organize sleep routines. Parents most often allow their teenagers to stay up later than younger siblings.

Because of the growth rate and hormonal changes occurring to teenagers, more sleep is needed. A lack of sleep at this juncture can result in a variety of ill effects. Poor school performance and mood changes can be just some of the most immediate consequences. Car accidents and depression can also be contributed to by poor sleep habits.

In order to tell if your teenager is not getting enough sleep you can check for some common symptoms. Is your teen having difficulty getting up in the morning? Is he or she irritable in the afternoons? Does your teen fall asleep during the day or oversleep on weekends? Does he or she wake up during the night and have trouble getting back to sleep?

If youve answered yes to some of these questions then your teenager might not be getting enough sleep. Be sure to follow some of the guidelines listed above and/or talk to your health care professional about how to start instituting better sleep regimes.

By following these guidelines early on you will have a better chance of preventing later sleep disturbances. Good sleep habits begin at a very early age. If you are just starting out though remember the above suggestions. Teens taught about healthy sleep patterns. Beginning a discussion with your child about the benefits of sleep will help them understand why you might be implementing some of the less well received rules. For instance, if you explain to your child

that engaging with media right before bed can have a negative consequence on proper sleep, than he or she might be more inclined to obey such suggestions.

As with younger children, sleeping spaces should be dark, quiet and inviting. Comfortable beds and a good room temperature are also important. Following a regular schedule rather than trying to make up for lost sleep on weekends is also important. All of these solutions will help children of all ages develop healthy sleep habits. We cant live without sleep, so make it is well worth the effort to make sure that your children are getting enough. ###

Dale Miller is a health, sports, fitness and nutrition enthusiast. He operates <http://centurysupplements.com/> and writes a blog at <http://centurysupplements.com/blog/>

Tips for Reducing Stress

by Trevor Dumbleton

With the hectic life that most people lead in today's world, reducing stress has become a vital skill. With work stress, school stress, family stress, teen stress, parent stress, and a whole host of other kinds of stress continually knocking on the door, it has become vital to manage stress in order to keep up with everything needs to be done. Though reducing stress is difficult, it can be done with a little effort and a little dedication to improving yourself.

The first thing to do when reducing stress is to get enough sleep at night. Yes, there is always something that needs to be done and there are projects that need to be taken care of and there is always something that should get done before you go to bed and there is still one more television show to watch, but that is exactly the problem. By spending too much of the evening worrying about everything that needs doing and trying too hard to get it all done right now, you are not helping yourself. Rather, you are increasing your stress to an alarming level. If you need to get things done, then do yourself a favor and just get them out of the way before you sit down in front of the television. When they are done, then you can relax and not worry about everything that needs to get done after the show is over.

The next things you need to do are to eat right and exercise. No, it doesn't seem like taking care of physical needs with help with a mental issue such as reducing stress, but there is a connection. After all, the brain is part of the body and when the body is working right, the brain will be more effective. By putting the right nutrients into your body, you will be feeding the brain as well as the muscles and you will be able to think clearly and concentrate more effectively. As well, when you are getting all your fruits and vegetables and whole grains, you will have more energy and be less susceptible to fatigue. After all, fatigue clouds the mind and a cloudy mind is a mind that tends to wander. And, when your mind wanders, you will not be getting things done. Thus, projects and tasks will pile up, giving you even more to be stressed about.

Additionally, exercising routinely will help you keep stress at bay. When you exercise routinely, you are more aware when you are awake and you sleep better at night, both of which are very good for reducing stress. This is because exercise helps you release hormones into your body that make you feel better, both mentally and physically. And this effect is not limited to the time when you are exercising. In fact, these hormones stay in your body even after you are done exercising, so that you will feel better all day. If you can, try to work out in the morning to get that hormonal burst before you begin your day. Or, if you cannot work out in the morning, at least exercise in the early evening so that you will at least have a body that will be ready for a good night's sleep and ready for the following day.

Another great technique for reducing stress is through proper time management. Let's face it, most people spend most of their day spinning their wheels as they move from one project or task to another, making them incapable of focusing on what they are doing. However, with a time management system in place, your day can be mapped out in the morning so that you are able to complete tasks one at a time. Then, with each little success, you will be able to feel the relief of knowing that there is one less thing to worry about.

Finally, you can help lower your stress levels by taking regular vacations. The best advice is to take one week off every year so that you can recharge your batteries and face the world again. By getting away and traveling, you can feel the relief of simply leaving it all behind. Getting out of the house, the city, or even the country is an excellent way of reducing stress and, when you get back, you will come back refreshed, rejuvenated, and ready to get back to the tasks of daily life.

By reducing stress, you can feel better, work better, be more sociable, and improve your health. Stress is very hard on the body and the mind, so managing it should be a priority. Thus, with a little effort, a little time, and the dedication to do the right things for yourself, you can keep your mind clear and keep yourself moving forward. Then, once you have mastered the art of reducing stress, you will also have the pleasure of not having to worry about stress.

###

LowerYourStress.com: for everything to do with stress. Get a free ebook to help with your stress levels: <http://www.loweryourstress.com/stress-book.html>

Grow in Richness: Stop the Blaming

by Gabriella Kortsch, Ph.D.

You make me get so angry

I could be so happy if only he/she would stop telling me what to do

I get blue when it rains like this

When my mother blames me for not getting into an Ivy-league university, I feel worthless

I get absolutely furious when careless drivers put my life in danger

I can't work efficiently when my supervisor gives me deadlines...she is so pushy

When you give me that look you make me get so upset

I get very nervous when people are watching me

If my wife stopped nagging me, I would stop spending so much time with my friends

He/she stopped loving me and I just don't believe I can go on living anymore

The Roles People Play...

Isn't it incredible how other people play a role in the way our lives don't work out properly? *If only they would not be how they are, or do what they do, because then things would be so much better for us!*

You don't really think I'm serious when I say that, do you? Not if you've been reading these monthly articles all along over the past few years.

So what is it? Why do other people play such a role in our unhappiness or our lack of success or our endless procrastination, or our utter desperation? *What can we do* to make less of our lives depend on the attitude or behavior of others, so that the way we feel and the results we have on all levels *have more to do with us than with what others say or do?*

Controlling Others

That is actually the point. *What can we do?*

Perhaps we could attempt to control others better. Or perhaps we could get others to understand more clearly the negative effect their behavior has on us, so that they would make a decision to be more considerate. Or perhaps we could move to a country where it doesn't rain or get foggy or cold. Or perhaps we could give others a more stringent ultimatum, so that they would realize how much they would lose if they did not adhere to our request.

You begin to see that it may be necessary to look at the dilemma from another angle; that perhaps by *blaming* something or someone external to yourself is not where the answer lies.

Diminishing Your Experience

Abraham puts it like this: *If you decide to make someone the enemy and you're pushing very hard against them, you don't affect them at all, but you disconnect yourself from the Stream. If someone cheats you, they cannot diminish your experience. They only diminish their experience. You cannot be diminished by someone cheating you unless you get all upset about being cheated and push against them and use that as your excuse to disconnect from*

the Stream. (Understand *stream* as that which impels you forward on an energetic level, i.e. when you are feeling low or depressed, you would be *going against* the *stream*, or you would be *disconnected* from the *stream*):

Carlos Castaneda would put it this way: *"To be angry at people means that one considers their acts to be important. It is imperative to cease to feel that way. The acts of men cannot be important enough to offset our only viable alternative: our unchangeable encounter with infinity"*.

Here's Looking at Me, Kid

Clearly the alternatives offered above for controlling others or bypassing the weather or blaming others are sadly lacking in efficiency, even ludicrous in nature. So back to the point: *what can we do?*

First we look inside.

First we check out our own inner climate, because we clearly are in no position to check out another person's inner climate. If you think you can, or that by doing so you will be able to *consistently influence* how that person behaves with you, you are probably either very young, or you have led a very sheltered life. In other words, it is by checking out your own inner climate that you can actually begin to find the *richness of yourself* that the title of this article refers to.

Next, we look inside.

Yes. Same thing. Again. And again.

Because it *is* the only game in town. At least it's the only game if you really want to have an influence and any measure of control over how well your day goes, or how good you feel, you have to begin to realize that it all starts with you, it continues with you and it ends with you.

The Consistent Warrior

That doesn't seem right, you say. Look at how many people move on to success in life thanks to a mentor, or a lucky break, or a great opportunity. If that is so, much of what happens depends on others. While it is true that others can indeed play a great role in the evolution of our lives, careers, relationships, feelings, etc., it is nevertheless *also* true that *our own role* in this is even larger.

Zen Buddhism has a wonderful concept I have written about before called Wu-wei ... being in flow ... being in the right place ... creating opportunities by being still within yourself and open to them, so that when they arrive, you not only see and understand them, but are also ready and able to act on them.

Pandora's Box

Looking inside of yourself for the origin of whatever it is that seems to be keeping you from wherever it is you want to go, or however it is you would like to feel is somewhat like opening Pandora's Box, with the difference that although what emerges may surprise you due to its

unexpected nature, it will not, however, be something that will bring you pain and sickness or hopelessness. Quite the contrary. By focusing on yourself in order to *make of your life what you want*, you take the first step towards accomplishing precisely that, because you place the responsibility for whatever happens in your life squarely on your shoulders.

Responsibility for what happens in my life? That's not possible. I'm not responsible for the hurricane that destroyed my home. I'm not responsible for the war that killed my family. I'm not responsible for the mugger that attacked me and left me blind in one eye. I'm not responsible for the cancer that is eating away at my partner. I'm not responsible for the business failure in the company I work for that resulted in the loss of my job. I'm not responsible for the sudden thunderstorm that ruined our Sunday picnic.

Of course not. That's right. You are not responsible for that. *But you are responsible for how you react to it. For what you do next. For what you think about it. And that is where you can make all the difference. By choosing how you react in each situation you do take control of your life.*

The validity of that statement can only be experienced by those who give it a try. The next time someone does something that you are on the verge of getting angry about, give it just a few seconds of thought. And your thoughts might go like this:

Not again! Every time he/she does this I just want to strangle him/her.

Wait...here's where that psychologist said I have a choice.

The choice has to do with taking a moment to realize I have a choice.

To ask myself in which direction I actually want to go right now.

I could go down the road of anger against this person and wind up where I always wind up...even angrier, or I could decide to go on an altogether different road.

So I can choose not to be angry

I can choose to say to this person that what has just happened is not acceptable.

And then to leave this place...even if it's only for an hour until I feel more calm.

Doing that makes me feel in control of myself, not losing it the way I normally do.

Another way of stopping the blaming is asking yourself why you feel the way you do. So, for example, in the instance above at the beginning of this article, where you think: "*I can't work efficiently when my supervisor gives me deadlines...she is so pushy*", you might ask yourself another set of questions:

Why do I feel she is pushy?

Why can't I work efficiently under the pressure of deadlines?

Is there too much work? Am I getting more than my fair share?

In that case I need to discuss the matter in a calm, courteous, and prepared fashion.

Or is it because I let things pile up? Do I need to set more efficient priorities and work more quickly?

Or is it because I feel nervous when I am being observed? Does that have to do with me or with the observer? Do I need to work on my self-esteem or self-confidence about that, or do I need to request that I be given more autonomy and less supervision? If so, what is an effective way of doing so?

Do you see how this works? Because you are going inside of yourself to look for control, rather than fruitlessly wishing you could control your external world, you not only will eventually have greater control, but you will – in the process – *discover the richness of your inner self*. This is where you gain so much by merely stopping the blaming. This again, as so many of the suggestions made in these articles, takes you further down the path to inner freedom. ###

About Gabrielle Kortsch, Ph.D.

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

Accepting Responsibility, Without Taking The Blame

by Rob Marshall

There's no escaping the truth. As Winston Churchill once said, "The truth is incontrovertible, malice may attack it, ignorance may deride it, but in the end; there it is."

And when it comes to our lives the simple truth is that we are where we are in life because of the choices we've made. Some of those choices may have been unconscious ones, things that we didn't really consider or analyze, but we made the decision, took the action, and here we are.

Zig Ziglar often asks his audience the question: Is there something specific that you could do in the next week that would make your life worse? Everyone in the audience will admit that yes, there is something that they can think of that they could do that would make their life worse.

He then follows it up with the question: Is there something specific that you could do in the next week that would make your life better? The audience will again realize that they can think of things that would make their life better.

Zig then lets them know that they just stated that they have the power to make their lives worse or better. For them, as well as for us, it's a matter of our choices. Even if our lives are not the best, even if they are total disasters right now, there are things that we could all think of that we could do that will either make things worse or better.

For most of my life I have been pretty much on autopilot. My decisions were based on what seemed to be right, or at least convenient, in the moment without any real thought as to why I felt the way that I did or if convenience was the best course. I made a lot of decisions and did things that weren't always the best. As a matter of fact, some of them were really stupid and I regret the things that I have done that caused pain and problems for others and myself.

But it doesn't do me any good to look at my life and get bummed out about it. Spending a lot of time feeling sorry for myself and beating myself up with blame and guilt won't fix anything. And when I finally accept all the responsibility there's some very good news that comes out of that realization. The truth is that if it really is all about my choices, then I can start making better ones.

If I've been running on autopilot, pretty much ignorant of the power I have to take control of my own life, I can change that. I can stop blaming my parents for how my life turned out. They are just people and so they are just as flawed as the rest of us, and even if they contributed to some of the wrong beliefs and thinking that I developed as a child, it's time for me to question those ideas. I especially have to start questioning the ones that may be limiting what I think I'm capable of doing with my life.

What we have in today, the results and conditions that exist in our lives, are neither good nor bad, they just are. It's what we've been able to do based on what we believed up to this point.

There's no point getting bogged down in guilt, we have to accept that our life is the way it is because of what we believed, thought, and did. The past is just exactly that, the past. We can accept both the responsibility for where we are and for where we are going.

If we look at our lives and see that we haven't created the kind of financial results that we would like, the first step we have to take is to accept that we created our current circumstances. Then we have to also accept the responsibility to create the new beliefs and plans and to take action on them so that we can have the kind of bank account, and investments, we really want. If we're in debt, we have to acknowledge that we put ourselves there and we can find the answers to get ourselves out of it.

The Bible says that the heart, or the subconscious, is deceitful and wicked and that no one can fully know what is in it. But it also tells us that our hearts are exposed by the words we say and the results that we get in life. So while we may not be able to figure out exactly what is lurking in the dark recesses of our minds, we can begin to understand some of it out by looking at the current state of our lives.

But once we examine our lives, then the hard part begins. Because once we look at, acknowledge and accept what we've created so far, we have to make some decisions. Do we want things to continue as they are? Or are there things that we would like to change? What do our results tell us about what we currently believe?

Some of you may be wondering, "But what about events that happen in our lives that are beyond our control?" It's just a fact that those kinds of things happen to everyone. How we choose to react to those events is what will make the difference for us. The same event can be a tragedy for one person and a triumph for someone else. The deciding factor isn't the event but the reaction to it. It's the choices we make that determine whether something will hold us back or help us move forward.

As we accept the responsibility for everything in our lives we may initially feel a bit overwhelmed. But it's not about blaming ourselves, or anyone else, for our results. It is really all about realizing that we have had a lot more influence than we might have thought. And by recognizing that fact, we can take full responsibility, and therefore also greater control, over where we go from here.

The only way to overcome our circumstances and take charge of our lives is to accept full responsibility for them. But we shouldn't spend all our time blaming ourselves for our problems. When we accept responsibility we actually regain control of our lives and can begin to change them. ###

The same faith that helped David defeat Goliath is in everyone of us. In *Taking On Goliath - How To Unleash The David In All Of Us*, author **Rob Marshall** shows you how to unleash your faith, overcome any obstacle, and live your dreams. Get two free chapters at: <http://www.TakingOnGoliath.com>

Article: <http://www.positivearticles.com>

Are You In A Rut?

by Dr. Linda Sapadin

You're in a groove. You're on track. You're inspired. You're confident.

And then you're not. It's over - at least for now.

You're out of your groove. You're off track. You're discouraged. Your commitment wavers.

What's happening? You've lapsed into a rut. These times may come as part of a general slump in your life or as a response to a challenging situation that's pulling you down.

Whatever the cause, the solution is to view any setback as a temporary one.

*Nix the guilt. Guilt undermines your ability to bounce back.

*Nix the shame. Shame undercuts your value as a human being.

*Nix the punitive words. Encourage yourself with gentle words to get back to where you were.

Here are some ideas to help you get out of your rut:

*Visualize a hero of yours. Male or female, alive or dead, real or mythical. Imagine your hero cheering you on. What does he say to you? How does he motivate you? What would she advise you to do? What would she do in the same situation? Soak up his words. Marinate in her caring. Feel your hero by your side as you go about your day.

*Recall how you behaved when you were in your groove. What good ideas did you have then? What was important to you then? How did you feel about yourself then? See yourself beaming with delight. Remember what it was like when you felt inspired. Stay as long as you like in 'groove-land'. Soon you will be taking up residence there once again.

*Remind yourself that you're in it for the long haul. Don't let the first hint of frustration sap your energy or sabotage your goals. Even if your confidence is waning, hang in there. Give yourself a breather. Take time to rest, eat, pray, heal, love. Then when you're ready, pick yourself up, dust yourself off and get back on track.

*Monitor your momentum. Don't push yourself to move faster than you can. Quantum leaps are not required. Baby steps are okay, just as long as you're moving forward. If you find yourself falling behind, take an action. Change your scenery. Seek out a friendly face. Clean up a mess. Do something that gets your energy going.

*Think - even if you don't feel like thinking. Working out, as I'm sure you know, is the tried and true road to a buff body. True for your mind as well. Utilize your gray matter, even when you don't feel like it. Start with something fun and enjoyable. Play a video game, tackle a crossword puzzle, read a how-to article. Then get back to business with a fresh attitude.

When you're finally back on track, smile. Praise yourself. Reward yourself. And notice what worked for you this time, for there will be a next time. It's the norm, not the exception, to lapse into a rut. ###

Linda Sapadin, Ph.D. is a psychologist in private practice who specializes in helping people enrich their lives, enhance their relationships and overcome self-defeating patterns of behavior. For more information about her work, contact her at lsapadin@drsapadin.com or visit her website at <http://www.psychwisdom.com/>
Visit her newest website www.sixstylesofprocrastination.com which is devoted to understanding and overcoming debilitating procrastination patterns.

The Emotional Brain from *Emotional Intelligence*

The emotional brain (EB) is that part of the human brain that generates emotions. The EB operates subconsciously, processing the same information that enters the conscious thinking brain (TB). Because the EB responds more quickly, we can find ourselves acting before we have applied any logic to our actions. That is left to the TB once the action has passed, and it may have no answer to give because gut reactions, despite their misnomer, originate in the emotional brain.

In the last few years there has been an explosion of interest in the emotional functioning of the brain, and the areas responsible for the brain's emotional responses have been termed the limbic system. The very term indicates that study of this sort remains on the periphery of accepted science, since "limbic" comes from the word "limbus", which is Latin for "edge". However, limbic also describes where these areas are believed to reside.

The term "limbic system" was first used in 1952 to describe a set of functionally-related structures in the brain that border the midline and inner surface of each cerebral hemisphere. These structures were also called the "visceral brain", as they were believed to be ancient parts of the brain inherited from lower mammals that primitive man used to mediate his behavior. Although this link with other species is now rejected, the concept of the limbic system controversially survives.

Although there is no agreement over exactly which structures make up the limbic system, most researchers consider it to be various parts of the cerebral cortex (the layer of the brain often referred to as "gray matter" – the outer portion of the cerebrum) that are linked to a central core of structures lying below the cerebral cortex. These various sub-cortical areas then extend down through the core of the brain to the upper part of the brain stem.

There is also disagreement over what function the limbic system has. Early notions relating it to emotion and motivation have been expanded to include the processing of sensory and cognitive information, learning and memory, sexual function as it relates to a reward system serving emotional reactions, and motor functions. It is also suggested that the limbic system is concerned with mentally integrating all functions that relate to our personal "experience" – what makes us who we are.

Most modern brain research focuses on sensory and cognitive functions, because these processes are more amenable to objective study in the laboratory. It is clear, however, that the brain is far more than this. The goals, hopes, desires and fears that we have all originate in the brain, and our ability to express emotions is a fundamental form of behavior. It is equally clear that our "emotional brain" influences the decisions made by our "thinking brain", and vice versa.

With this in mind, neuroscience is taking an avid interest in the emotional brain. Studies cover all areas, including genes and their molecular products, cellular physiological properties of neurons in dishes as well as in living brains, pharmacology of synaptic transmission,

behavioral processes, computer simulations of brain function, and imaging of normal subjects alongside neurological and psychiatric patients.

It is now known that the amygdalae – part of the limbic system and considered to be the emotional center of our brain – perform a primary role in the processing and memory of emotional reactions. The amygdalae are almond-shaped groups of nuclei located deep within the medial temporal lobes of the brain in complex vertebrates, including humans.

Why do we Act Emotionally?

Neuroscientists have recently discovered that much of what we see and hear goes directly to the amygdala without passing through the neocortex where logic and rational decision-making occurs. This means that we often feel and act before we think.

One of the easiest ways to study responses within the amygdalae is with Pavlovian fear conditioning. Research indicates that sensory stimuli during fear conditioning reach the central nuclei of the amygdalae where they form associations with memories of the stimuli.

The more often the synapses are affected, the quicker they will trigger a response, such as freezing (immobility), tachycardia (rapid heartbeat), increased respiration, and stress-hormone release.

It is only through exercising emotional intelligence that we are able to manage these responses more rationally, although we should not forget that some of our emotional responses – such as our fear response – happen for very good reason, and ignoring or damping them too quickly could lead to our succumbing to a dangerous situation.

The important point is to differentiate between “acting” emotionally, and “reacting” emotionally. If we take the obvious connotation of the word “acting”, then this implies that our *acting* emotional is quite within our power to control because it is simply that: an act. Although the stimulus may have been very real, and the *reaction* to it genuine enough, our *continued* display of emotion is now being falsely perpetuated since the thinking brain has had ample opportunity to analyze the situation and factor in some sense of calm. Being able to rationalize our emotional reactions and not have them create an unnecessary ongoing drama is the essence of emotional intelligence.

The simple advice often offered to individuals who are prone to flying off the handle is to take a deep breath before reacting. This makes perfect sense when you consider how our emotional responses can fire up before our rationale has had a chance to moderate the situation.

What Is Emotional Hijacking?

Emotional hijacking is when your emotional brain takes control, subverting your rational thinking responses. The term first appeared in Daniel Goleman’s *Emotional Intelligence Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*.

Extremes of emotion can trigger emotional hijacking, such as a panic attack in which your emotional response actually bypasses your thinking brain and produces a super-quick instinctive response. Whilst this is happening, it is very difficult, even impossible, to think straight because the part of the brain you think with is inhibited.

These are your amygdalae at work, behaving in their primitive way to protect you. They are designed to ensure your survival, rather than for problem-solving in complex situations. People who experience panic attacks are well aware they are not acting rationally, and this causes further upset, but there is little to be done to forestall a panic attack because it's not the rational part of the brain that deals with this emotional response.

Emotional hijacking happens to people every day to varying degrees, and it does not have to manifest itself so obviously as a panic attack or a loss of temper. Our society and the frantic way in which so many of us live our lives mean we are often “living on our nerves”, and can therefore be teetering on the edge of being emotionally hijacked for hours at a time, especially when we are in stressful or potentially aggravating situations that have gone awry in the past. In this situation, our emotional synapses can be firing in preparation for a major attack.

In the workplace, emotional hijacking can cause all sorts of problems. Relationships can be damaged and productivity halted. Confidence in one's own abilities can be undermined, or in that of our working colleagues.

You can tell when you are experiencing an emotional hijacking because you start to feel drained, frustrated, irritated, angry, sad, fearful, or any emotion that really has no place within a professional working environment. It can happen quite subtly, even as you are talking to someone who appears not to be listening.

That mounting sense of frustration that you feel means you are already being hijacked by your emotions. It may never lead to an emotional outburst as such, but if you are feeling any emotion where you know you shouldn't be, you've been hijacked.

What is especially telling is how long it subsequently takes you to return to a normal state of mind where your professional activities can carry on unimpeded. As long as your mind keeps returning to the cause of your upset, you have still not been fully released from the emotion.

One of the best ways of being able to reclaim your equilibrium is to be aware of what is happening. The best way to ward off a hijack in the first place is to spot potential triggers the very second they appear. If a colleague has a habit of winding you up to the point that you feel emotionally hijacked, you have to learn to condition your response back down. Replacing anger with humor can help.

The following three simple steps can help fend off emotional hijacking in the workplace:

Manage yourself – Take a few deep breaths and face your anxiety, anger, frustration, or whatever emotion you are feeling. This provides the opportunity to practice your emotional

response ability. Think about how exactly you would prefer the situation to progress, and make sure you keep that as a focus. Try also to understand where your colleague is coming from, so that you can anticipate the worst they can throw at you, and also try to understand their point of view so that you can establish some common ground.

Manage your team – Make sure you ask for clarification about any matter you have to deal with. Lack of understanding, or being confused, can cause immense frustrations. Make sure all parties know how you want to be involved and that you want your input to be valued. Don't be shy about asking questions and challenging ideas and methods you object to. This may cause a little friction initially, but is preferable to your being emotionally hijacked by regret once the moment has passed. Regret or shame at not taking appropriate action can lead to an emotional hijacking that can last for days, and that may even negatively color the way you view yourself on an ongoing basis. Some people spend their entire lives emotionally hijacked.

Enlist support – If you really feel that you are making every effort but are being consistently undermined, take it up with your superiors. Bring everything out into the open. Remember that, by their very nature, hijackings are sudden events. Scheduling time when the problem can be addressed can help to remove the surprise element from the situation. You are taking control.

###

This excerpt is from the ebook, *Emotional Intelligence*. The full ebook is now available free to *Cultivate Life!* members. Secure your lifetime membership now at <http://www.trans4mind.com/contents.html> As a Lifetime Member you get exclusive access to the World of Inspiration eLibrary. This is an astonishing resource, with hundreds of quality ebooks, audios, courses, websites and full-length books - many made specially available for the library. It's hosted online and further new resources are added each week.

Choosing a Journey of Consciousness

by Debra Betterly, PhD

Every day you have a choice. Imagine your life as a journey, day by day, you are traveling toward a destination which represents your dreams and goals. Your destination is your desired future. Imagine also that your thoughts, feelings and behaviors are your map, your guide to your destination of choice. How you choose to think, feel and behave creates your journey and ultimately your destination. If you choose to travel unconsciously, without any real awareness of where you want to go or end up, you will keep getting lost, taking detours that lead to undesirable locations, and finding that, over time, you never arrive at the place in your life you really want to be or worse, never enjoy the journey.

But, when you take conscious control of the "wheel" of your life and become fully aware of your patterns of reaction, you can begin to feel certain that you will arrive at your desired outcome while fully enjoying the trip! This will require practicing full awareness of your mental and emotional responses to life. When a boulder gets thrown in your path, instead of retreating, complaining, giving up, or just sitting there feeling sorry for yourself, you can make a more enlightened choice to find a new way, via higher thoughts, feelings and behaviors.

To become more aware of your thoughts, you must first be open to examining your feelings and emotions. When you notice along the way that challenges do come up, and some of those challenges will produce an uncomfortable or negative feeling, you'll find the source of those feelings and behaviors is directly connected to what you are thinking. When you find your journey is being fueled with unwanted feelings and behaviors, and discover the thoughts behind them, consider the positive thought options available to you and ask yourself: "Why not take the positive route instead?"

If you find yourself continuously choosing a route that takes you further away from your goals and dreams, in other words, making choices that dishonor or disempower you, decide that you can consciously make the choice to release those habits and make a choice to change your thoughts.

The road to your destination will never be perfect. You may miss your turn, run into a roadblock or encounter bad weather, but that is part of the adventure! By "course-correcting" your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, one day at a time, you will consciously reach your destination and have a whole lot of fun along the way! The choice is always yours. ###

Debra Betterly is a metaphysician, Universal Law and Law of Attraction coach, and online entrepreneur. Debra is the Chief Inspiration Officer at Amazing Journey Life Coaching Services, a personal and spiritual development coaching company started in 2004. Her work as a coach, metaphysical educator and entrepreneur combines her love for personal development, Metaphysics, Quantum Physics, Universal Law, personal freedom and travel with practical, easy to use tools, advice and coaching for people who want to take their lives to "the next level" spiritually, personally and financially! She is the author of the free

downloadable e-book *Awakening the Power Within to Create Your Best Life*, which you can get by going to her website <http://amazingjourneycoach.com>. She is also the creator of the Be Certain of Success membership program for women who are ready to turn their dreams and goals into reality at <http://becertainofsuccess.com> . You can also visit her blog at <http://effortlessmanifestingnow.com>

Pam Garcy

Part 20. Importance of Reading

This is Part 20 of a multi-part article by Pam Garcy. Each week Cultivate Life! Magazine will bring the next section until the article is complete.

Have you ever been in a crummy mood, then you picked up a book and everything seemed to change for the better?

Have you ever noticed how you're drawn to certain books at just the right times in your life? Did you ever notice that a book won't judge you, demean you, or force you to do something you don't want to do? Ever notice that a book is just "there for you"; it is just there to give to you--and not to take away from you?

Reading is a wonderful gift--for many it has been the road through tragedy, into survival and finally into a thriving life. If you're able to read, you can shift your consciousness and raise yourself up from your lowest points. You can learn new skills as well as gain valuable insights.

When an author writes a book, they've usually been thinking about a topic that is "near and dear" to them for many months, if not years. When the urgency to write strikes an author, it is because something has gelled for them and they want to share the ideas with others. When you read a well written book or article, you are receiving wisdom at a faster rate of speed than if you had gone through the learning, trial and error, thinking process and experiences yourself. You are receiving the consolidated version of the information--in less time and with less effort, cost and energy. So, if you really think about it, reading is a bargain!

How can reading help you to tap into your inner guidance?

It can give you new skills which relate to your ability to fulfill yourself.

It can diminish a low mood, so that you'll be more receptive to the inner truth you already hold.

It can provide a role-model which encourages you to continue walking upon your path.

It can provide hope, where once there was none.

The cumulative value of the above allows you to position yourself in a manner that is receptive to your inner guidance and to the abundance life has to offer.

There is value--enormous value--in reading.

It is important to be selective about WHAT you read. When you read higher quality works, you will either learn something new or you will leave the work feeling enriched in some fashion. While it is good to read about tragic issues that others are facing, it is important that you not limit yourself to negativity, pessimism, gossip or other negative writings. These writings, without balancing input, can actually become so disturbing that they detract from your ability to

be helpful and productive. It goes back to what one of my dear supervisors told me years ago, "Words Have Power. Don't you forget it."

If you have not already done so, I hope that you will pick up, read and digest *The Power of Inner Guidance: Seven Steps to Tune In and Turn On*. The book is paperback, lightweight to carry and not costly. However, its message is heavy and of great value, in my humble opinion. I've gotten feedback that this book has saved a life & has completely improved the course of another life. This alone made the work of it worth it for me. But, what if it can help you or someone you love to--so, I keep telling you about it--not to be obnoxious, but just in case it could help you. You can buy it used on e-bay for a fraction of the cost. It is not where you buy it that matters to me, but that you get it into your hands & read it.

I would also recommend books by Jack Canfield and Stephen Chandler--they are very positive, informative and uplifting. If you are into psychology, any books by Dr. Albert Ellis are certainly worth your time. Periodically, I send e-mails to my subscribers recommending the works of other lovely people who have shared their wisdom in helpful ways.

It is also good to get the same message from different authors. Each time you hear the message you value, it will become stronger and more alive for you. ###

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 36

My holiness envelops everything I see.

Today's idea extends the idea for yesterday from the perceiver to the perceived. You are holy because your mind is part of God's. And because you are holy, your sight must be holy as well. "Sinless" means without sin. You cannot be without sin a little. You are sinless or not. If your mind is part of God's you must be sinless, or a part of His Mind would be sinful. Your sight is related to His Holiness, not to your ego, and therefore not to your body.

Four three-to-five-minute practice periods are required for today. Try to distribute them fairly evenly, and make the shorter applications frequently, to protect your protection throughout the day. The longer practice periods should take this form:

First, close your eyes and repeat the idea for today several times, slowly. Then open your eyes and look quite slowly about you, applying the idea specifically to whatever you note in your casual survey. Say, for example:

My holiness envelops that rug.

My holiness envelops that wall.

My holiness envelops these fingers.

My holiness envelops that chair.

My holiness envelops that body.

My holiness envelops this pen.

Several times during these practice periods, close your eyes and repeat the idea to yourself. Then open your eyes, and continue as before.

For the shorter exercise periods, close your eyes and repeat the idea; look about you as you repeat it again; and conclude with one more repetition with your eyes closed. All applications should, of course, be made quite slowly, as effortlessly and unhurriedly as possible.

Commentary by Allen Watson

I've always had a fondness for this lesson, because the first time I did it I had a very real sense of how holiness was emanating from me and surrounding everything, first in my room, then my town, then the world, and finally the universe. For a very brief moment I felt like a Buddha, sitting and blessing the entire world (that's tomorrow's lesson, by the way). The result was so effective for me that often, when I am simply sitting in meditation and not practicing any particular lesson, I think of this one and allow that sense to steal over me again.

Not everyone responds to every lesson, but everyone responds to some of the lessons. Notice the ones that seem particularly effective for you, and remember them. Lesson 194 in the Workbook speaks of building a "problem-solving repertoire" of things that we find helpful:

If you can see the lesson for today as the deliverance it really is, you will not hesitate to give as much consistent effort as you can, to make it be a part of you. As it becomes a thought that

rules your mind, a habit in your problem-solving repertoire, a way of quick reaction to temptation, you extend your learning to the world.

In yesterday's lesson the focus was on the perceiver: "I am very holy." Today the holiness extends to what is perceived. Because I am holy, my perception must also be holy. And I am perfectly holy because God created me that way. Holy means "sinless," and you cannot be partly sinless any more than a woman can be "a little" pregnant. The logic here is quite simple and plain: If I am part of God I must be sinless, or part of God would be sinful. If I am without sin I must have holy perception as well.

How I see myself affects how I see the world. My holiness envelops the world if I see myself as holy. My awfulness envelops the world if I see myself as awful. If I am willing to see the world enveloped in holiness, I can learn to see myself that way.

I know, that sounds like I have it backwards; the order "should be" that I see myself holy first, and then the world. The thing of it is, what keeps me from seeing myself as holy is my unwillingness to see the world that way. From within the ego mindset, it seems as if seeing the world as holy will make me unholy by comparison. The ego always thinks in terms of comparison. The fact is that as I see the world, so I see myself, and as I see myself, so I see the world.

The ego mind will insist it must be one way or the other because it operates on a presumption of separateness. The Holy Spirit presents it both ways at once because He operates on the presumption of unity. There is no separation between myself and what I see; there is only the one. ###

The Master Key System

by Charles F. Haanel

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

Part Twenty

For many years there has been an endless discussion as to the origin of evil. Theologians have told us that God is Love, and that God is Omnipresent. If this be true, there is no place where God is not. Where, then, is Evil, Satan and Hell?

Let us see:

God is Spirit.

Spirit is the Creative Principle of the Universe.

Man is made in the image and likeness of God.

Man is therefore a spiritual being.

The only activity which spirit possesses is the power to think.

Thinking is therefore a creative process.

All form is therefore the result of the thinking process.

The destruction of form must also be a result of the thinking process.

Fictitious representations of form are the result of the creative power of thought, as in Hypnotism.

Apparent representation of form are the result of the creative power of thought, as in Spiritualism.

Invention, organization and constructive work of all kinds are the result of the creative power of thought, as in concentration.

When the creative power of thought is manifested for the benefit of humanity, we call the result good.

When the creative power of thought is manifested in a destructive or evil manner, we call the result evil.

This indicates the origin of both good and evil; they are simply words which have been coined in order to indicate the nature of the result of the thinking or creative process. Thought necessarily precedes and predetermines action; action precedes and predetermines condition.

Part Twenty will throw more light upon this important subject.

PART TWENTY

1. The spirit of a thing is that thing; it is necessarily fixed, changeless and eternal. The spirit of you is -- you; without the spirit you would be nothing. It becomes active through your recognition of it and its possibilities.

2. You may have all the wealth in Christendom, but unless you recognize it and make use of it, it will have no value; so with your spiritual wealth: unless you recognize it and use it, it will have no value. The one and only condition of spiritual power is use or recognition.

3. All great things come through recognition; the scepter of power is consciousness, and thought is its messenger, and this messenger is constantly molding the realities of the invisible world into the conditions and environments of your objective world.

4. Thinking is the true business of life, power is the result. You are at all times dealing with the magical power of thought and consciousness. What results can you expect so long as you remain oblivious to the power which has been placed within your control?

5. So long as you do this you limit yourself to superficial conditions, and make of yourself a beast of burden for those who think; those who recognize their power; those who know that unless we are willing to think we shall have to work, and the less we think the more we shall have to work, and the less we shall get for our work.

6. The secret of power is a perfect understanding of the principles, forces, methods and combinations of Mind, and a perfect understanding of our relationship to the Universal Mind. It is well to remember that this principle is unchangeable; if this were not so, it would not be reliable; all principles are changeless.

7. This stability is your opportunity; you are its active attribute, the channel for its activity; the Universal can act only through the individual.

8. When you begin to perceive that the essence of the Universal is within yourself -- is you -- you begin to do things; you begin to feel your power; it is the fuel which fires the imagination; which lights the torch of inspiration; which gives vitality to thought; which enables you to connect with all the invisible forces of the Universe. It is this power which will enable you to plan fearlessly, to execute masterfully.

9. But perception will come only in the Silence; this seems to be the condition required for all great purposes. You are a visualizing entity. Imagination is your workshop. It is here that your ideal is to be visualized.

10. As a perfect understanding of the nature of this power is a primary condition for its manifestation, visualize the entire method over and over again, so that you may use it whenever occasion requires. The infinity of wisdom is to follow the method whereby we may have the inspiration of the omnipotent Universal Mind on demand at any time.

11. We can fail to recognize this world within, and so exclude it from our consciousness, but it will still be the basic fact of all existence; and when we learn to recognize it, not only in ourselves, but in all persons, events, things and circumstances we shall have found the "Kingdom of heaven" which we are told is "within" us.

12. Our failures are a result of the operation of exactly the same principle; the principle is unchangeable; its operation is exact, there is no deviation; if we think lack, limitation, discord, we shall find their fruits on every hand; if we think poverty, unhappiness or disease, the thought messengers will carry the summons as readily as any other kind of thought and the result will be just as certain. If we fear a coming calamity, we shall be able to say with Job, "the thing I feared has come upon me"; if we think unkindly or ignorantly we shall thus attract to ourselves the results of our ignorance.

13. This power of thought, if understood and correctly used, is the greatest labor-saving device ever dreamed of, but if not understood or improperly used, the result will in all probability be disastrous, as we have already seen; by the help of this power you can confidently undertake things that are seemingly impossible, because this power is the secret of all inspiration, all genius.

14. To become inspired means to get out of the beaten path, out of the rut, because extraordinary results require extraordinary means. When we come into a recognition of the Unity of all things and that the source of all power is within, we tap the source of inspiration.

15. Inspiration is the art of imbibing, the art of self-realization; the art of adjusting the individual mind to that of the Universal Mind; the art of attaching the proper mechanism to the source of all power; the art of differentiating the formless into form; the art of becoming a channel for the flow of Infinite Wisdom; the art of visualizing perfection; the art of realizing the omnipresence of Omnipotence.

16. An understanding and appreciation of the fact that the infinite power is omnipresent and is therefore in the infinitely small as well as the infinitely large will enable us to absorb its essence; a further understanding of the fact that this power is spirit and therefore indivisible will enable us to appreciate its present at all points at the same time.

17. An understanding of these facts, first intellectually and then emotionally, will enable us to drink deeply from this ocean of infinite power. An intellectual understanding will be of no assistance; the emotions must be brought into action; thought without feeling is cold. The required combination is thought and feeling.

18. Inspiration is from within. The Silence is necessary, the senses must be stilled, the muscles relaxed, repose cultivated. When you have thus come into possession of a sense of poise and power you will be ready to receive the information or inspiration or wisdom which may be necessary for the development of your purpose.

19. Do not confuse these methods with those of the clairvoyant; they have nothing in common. Inspiration is the art of receiving and makes for all that is best in life; your business in life is to understand and command these invisible forces instead of letting them command and rule you. Power implies service; inspiration implies power; to understand and apply the method of inspiration is to become a superman.

20. We can live more abundantly every time we breathe, if we consciously breathe with that intention. The IF is a very important condition in this case, as the intention governs the attention, and without the attention you can secure only the results which every one else secures. That is, a supply equal to the demand.

21. In order to secure the larger supply your demand must be increased, and as you consciously increase the demand the supply will follow, you will find yourself coming into a larger and larger supply of life, energy and vitality.

22. The reason for this is not difficult to understand, but it is another of the vital mysteries of life which does not seem to be generally appreciated. If you make it your own, you will find it one of the great realities of life.

23. We are told that "In Him we live and move and have our being," and we are told that "He" is a Spirit, and again that "He" is Love, so that every time we breathe, we breathe this life, love, and spirit. This is Pranic Energy, or Pranic Ether, we could not exist a moment without it. It is the Cosmic Energy; it is the Life of the Solar Plexus.

24. Every time we breathe we fill our lungs with air and at the same time vitalize our body with this Pranic Ether which is Life itself, so that we have the opportunity of making a conscious connection with All Life, All Intelligence and All Substance.

25. A knowledge of your relation and oneness with this Principle that governs the Universe and the simple method whereby you can consciously identify yourself with it gives you a scientific understanding of a law whereby you may free yourself from disease, from lack or limitation of any kind; in fact, it enables you to breathe the "breath of life" into your own nostrils.

26. This "breath of life" is a superconscious reality. It is the essence of the "I am." It is pure "Being" or Universal Substance, and our conscious unity with it enables us to localize it, and thus exercise the powers of this creative energy.

27. Thought is creative vibration and the quality of the conditions created will depend upon the quality of our thought, because we cannot express powers which we do not possess. We must "be" before we can "do" and we can "do" only to the extent to which we "are," and so what we do will necessarily coincide with what we "are" and what we are depends upon what we "think."

28. Every time you think you start a train of causation which will create a condition in strict accordance with the quality of the thought which originated it. Thought which is in harmony with the Universal Mind will result in corresponding conditions. Thought which is destructive or discordant will produce corresponding results. You may use thought constructively or destructively, but the immutable law will not allow you to plant a thought of one kind and reap the fruit of another. You are free to use this marvelous creative power as you will, but you must take the consequences.

29. This is the danger from what is called Will Power. There are those who seem to think that by force of will they can coerce this law; that they can sow seed of one kind and by "Will Power" make it bear fruit of another, but the fundamental principle of creative power is in the Universal, and therefore the idea of forcing a compliance with our wishes by the power of the individual will is an inverted conception which may appear to succeed for a while but is eventually doomed to failure - because it antagonizes the very power which it is seeking to use.

30. It is the individual attempting to coerce the Universal, the finite in conflict with the Infinite. Our permanent well-being will be best conserved by a conscious cooperation with the continuous forward movement of the Great Whole.

31. For your exercise this week, go into the Silence and concentrate on the fact that "In him we live and move and have our being" is literally and scientifically exact! That you ARE because He IS, that if He is Omnipresent He must be in you. That if He is all in all you must be in Him! That He is Spirit and you are made in "His image and likeness" and that the only difference between His spirit and your spirit is one of degree, that a part must be the same in kind and quality as the whole. When you can realize this clearly you will have found the secret of the creative power of thought, you will have found the origin of both good and evil, you will have found the secret of the wonderful power of concentration, you will have found the key to the solution of every problem whether physical, financial, or environmental.

The power to think consecutively and deeply and clearly, is an avowed and deadly enemy to mistakes and blunders, superstitions, unscientific theories, irrational beliefs, unbridled enthusiasm, fanaticism.

—Haddock

Study Questions with Answers:

191. Upon what condition does power depend?

Upon recognition and use.

192. What is recognition?

Consciousness.

193. How do we become conscious of power?

By thinking.

194. What then is the true business of life?

Correct scientific thinking.

195. What is correct scientific thinking?

The ability to adjust our thought processes to the will of the Universal. In other words, to cooperate with Natural laws.

196. How is this accomplished?

By securing a perfect understanding of the principles, forces, methods and combinations of mind.

197. What is this Universal Mind?

The basic fact of all existence.

198. What is the cause of all lack, limitation, disease and discord?

It is due to the operation of exactly the same law, the law operates relentlessly and is continually bringing about conditions in correspondence with the thought which originated or created them.

199. What is inspiration?

The art of realizing the omnipresence of Omniscience.

200. Upon what does the conditions with which we meet depend?

Upon the quality of our thought. Because what we do depends upon what we are and what we are depends upon what we think.

The Master Key System, Part twenty-one will be included in Cultivate Life! magazine issue number 47 in two weeks.