

Cultivate Life!

MAGAZINE

ISSUE 52



Cultivate Life! magazine

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Affirmation for Fearless Living:

Finding the true power needed to take control of my life begins with understanding the false powers now in charge of my life.

—Guy Finley

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Finding Peace of Mind in the Here and Now **by Guy Finley**

Our present nature believes that everything worthwhile, i.e., pleasurable, has to do with what we can extract from our relationships, business, money, powers, etc. We look into this world that we see as being outside of us, hoping to find something in it to complete us. What we don't see is that the nature that searches the world outside of itself -- to make itself feel whole and real -- has set itself apart from that which it hopes will heal it. It divides to conquer; but this level of self can never overcome the unhappiness that is born of its own divided state!

The "healing" we need, the sense of wholeness for which we search, has nothing to do with adding anything to ourselves. This needed healing comes from recognizing that the pain we have -- along with the suffering inherent in being negative over this pain -- is born out of participating in a series of illusions that have been handed down from generation to generation!

Who in their right mind would educate anyone -- let alone their children -- that the answer to their heartache is to further stress themselves by struggling to control conditions outside of themselves -- especially when the only thing anyone "wins" for such effort is to become the inadvertent slave of what he hoped would free him? Or what about trying to distract ourselves from what "dogs" us in life -- as if running toward a pleasure changes the fact that something is barking at our heels, making us run away from its unwanted presence?

We are divided within. We serve two masters: what we don't want, and its opposite -- the desire of the moment produced by resisting what life has brought to our door. Being split this way keeps us from knowing the peace of mind and fullness of heart that is the same as being whole in the here and now. So this is the first illusion, and in a sense, the first and last lesson in true self-liberation: the real world *is not* what our thoughts and feelings would have us believe it is.

We must begin the necessary work of welcoming the Light that leads to letting go; our soul task is to release ourselves from an unconscious relationship with a false self whose imagined conclusions -- about how to find lasting peace and contentment -- are the secret source of conflict on this planet. Then, liberated by the light of understanding, we will enter and know -- as our own -- a brand new world in which happiness and wholeness are one and the same.

Excerpted from ***The Essential Laws of Fearless Living*** by Guy Finley

BONUS: Guy Finley interview

How to Use the Power of Inner Storms to Live Stress Free

A Dialogue between Letting Go author Guy Finley and psychologist Dr. Ellen Dickstein

Guy Finley is the founder and director of the non-profit Life of Learning Foundation. He is author of *The Essential Laws of Fearless Living* and *Let Go and Live in the Now* plus 30 other books and audio programs in the field of self-transformation. For more information on Guy Finley and to sign up for free weekly email Key Lessons visit www.guyfinley.org

Dr. Ellen Dickstein earned her PhD from Johns Hopkins University and was a tenured professor of psychology at Southern Methodist University. She is a leading authority on stress and anxiety in today's busy world and is the co-author with Guy Finley of *The Intimate Enemy*.

ED: Guy, it seems like there are many paradoxes in the spiritual path, and I think there is a lot of confusion because we don't understand our role in the grand universal scheme of Life. One of the paradoxes that you write about quite frequently is that we can learn to use the power concealed within inner storms — negative psychological states, like anger, worry, and fear — to free ourselves from the stress that fills our modern-day lives. To be able to use negativity to end negativity sounds like a skill that would be extremely helpful for most people. Can you explain how a person can use negative states to find the peaceful, successful, stress-free life that we all long for?

GF: We are presently unable to tap the power contained within interior storms for one primary reason: When we are enveloped in an interior storm, we mistakenly believe that there is no difference between ourselves and the negative thoughts and feelings surging inside of us. But the fact is, who we really are — our true Self — sits above the storms that pass through it.

Let me ask you a question: if you throw paint into the air, does the air get painted?

ED: Of course not.

GF: Right. Because air and paint have two totally different natures. Another example is light shining from a lighthouse on a dark, stormy night. The higher nature of the light allows it to pass right through rain and wind to ensure the safety of passing ships. In the same way, our true Self cannot be "made" stressful even through stressful thoughts and emotions may be passing through us.

Herein lies a powerful lesson: any time we feel angry, frightened, worried, or stressed, we can realize that we are not the negative thoughts and feelings passing through our minds

and hearts. We can awaken to the understanding that our true Self has a different nature and exists in a higher world than those negative energies. And we can use this simple truth to begin to examine exactly how negativity justifies its existence within us.

ED: Can you explain that further?

GF: The first thing we need to understand about interior storms is that they are produced by what I will call "unnatural" opposing forces.

Natural storms are formed on Earth (and in space) when two opposing energies collide with one another. For instance when warm air from the tropics meets a chilly arctic air mass over the North Atlantic, a storm is formed as the two systems exchange hot and cold air and moisture creating wind, waves, clouds and rain. The storm is the evidence of an imbalance that is created as the two systems strive to find equilibrium. In nature, storms are always resolved in a relatively short time because the energies that cause the storm in the first place just plain wear themselves out.

The beauty of natural storms is that they are always positive. Everything that comes out of the natural reconciliation of their forces serves to produce something new — a new form, a new possibility, a new life. Natural storms freshen the air. They nourish trees and polish mountaintops. They wipe clean and renew what was soiled and aged.

ED: So what does all of this have to do with interior storms?

GF: As above, so below.

ED: Can you explain?

GF: Sure. When someone doesn't share our values or ideals related to a particular subject, isn't it our tendency to see that person as being a problem, meaning he or she obviously lacks our level of wisdom, i.e., he's an "idiot", or worse!

ED: Right.

GF: So the values I hold collide with the values they hold. Do you know these moments, Ellen?

ED: Yes. Quite well.

GF: Right, we call it an argument. But isn't an argument just a collision of forces? Isn't an argument a storm? And here's the amazing part: unlike storms in nature, storms inside of human beings aren't always positive — and don't always get reconciled.

Any form of resentment for example (which all of us harbor in some degree) is proof of an unnatural, unreconciled storm that serves nothing but negativity.

Another example would be getting stressed over living up to our own, or someone else's expectations. All stress does is make us hurt, and steals the creative energy we need to accomplish whatever it is we have set out to do. Yet, especially in today's world, everyone is stressed out. The inherent power contained in colliding energies — i.e. our wish for excellence and the forces that stand in our way — is wasted by our own minds resisting the storm.

This is where it gets exciting. When we see this action at work inside of ourselves, we begin to ask the question, "Why doesn't that storm inside of me produce exactly the same outcome as does nature when she brings opposing forces together to produce new clarity, purity, freshness, and perfection?"

ED: So the answer to the question is that in nature, opposing forces aren't resisted, which allows them to be reconciled so that something positive and new can be created. But the human mind resists the healing energy of storms and continues in a cycle of negativity.

GF: Yes. Exactly. We are subject to these storms because there is a part of us — our lower nature — that defines who we are, and how life should go. This lower nature is the cause of our stress because it creates images, clings to them, and works to protect them in spite of how they cause harm to ourselves or to others.

ED: So the very things that we think are valuable and make life valuable — our dreams of how life should go — are the very things that are preventing us from living a true and valuable life.

GF: Yes and the "paradox" isn't that there is anything wrong with one's wish to achieve, to be excellent, to want to develop his or her mind. There is a natural upwelling inside of a human being to pursue excellence. It is natural to want to understand ourselves, deeply and through as many avenues as possible. But at a certain point in our lives we can start to see that there is an inherent limitation in wanting to know ourselves through the world outside of us. And this limitation begins to become clear when we see that all of the storms in our life are connected to our ideas of how we think life should go.

And then one day it dawns on us that these "storms" we experience aren't coming to take something from us; they are evidence of Life trying to show us where we are resisting Its infinite intelligence. You see, the storms of life and the immense creative energies contained within them, are always producing forms. After all, what is life but energy producing form after form — in an ever more perfect upward transformation?

ED: So, when we begin to see that we suffer from these storms because of all these ideas we hold of ourselves, and we realize that being in a storm — if we deal with it properly — can actually begin to wash away these images and give us something new and beautiful, then we can actually begin to welcome storms.

GF: Yes. Most of us have heard the passage attributed to St. Paul: "I live and die daily." This statement speaks to an order of ourselves waiting to be realized that doesn't just "live" moment to moment, but that "uses" each and every event in life to die to what is old so that something new and better can be born. All of these ideas we are discussing point to the possibility of a completely different order of relationship with life — where instead of fighting with storms, we learn to use them to wake ourselves out of the dream that is the cause of our conflict with reality — which is the cause of all useless human suffering.

So, instead of allowing the lower self to justify its stress, to blame others, or to judge itself, all of which only accelerates the effect of the storm, we can do something all together new and different: we can expose the whole of our Self to the whole of the storm, and then let the natural, beautiful Intelligence that actually produces these storms, do what it will with us, which is to lead us through a process of transformation into a new and more perfect creature ... and that is quite literal!

ED: You've said that every storm passes, and it's true. Even in the unconscious person, eventually they get worn out and the anger, or worry, or resentment goes away (at least for awhile). The real issue seems to be, what am I doing in the moment of the storm to allow it to do its work of transformation?

GF: Yes, that's the whole thing. If we can learn to be storm watchers instead of storm fighters, we have a chance to let the stress in that storm do in our soul what it was always intended to do, which is to strengthen and renew us, to produce inside each of us a whole new Life. ###

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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.

~ **Secrets of Spiritual Success** ~
The Lost Elements of Enlightenment
by Guy Finley

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Destiny is not a matter of chance, it is a matter of choice **by Chuck Gallozzi**

The American Lawyer and Politician William Jennings Bryan (1860~1925) wrote, “Destiny is not a matter of chance, it is a matter of CHOICE; it is not a thing to be waited for, it is a thing to be achieved.” By “destiny” he meant our future. In other words, our future doesn’t come about by chance and isn’t something that happens to us.

It doesn’t happen to us because we create it. We do so with the choices we make. Each choice leads to a consequence. And each consequence is one strand in the fabric of our life. Since I am the weaver of the fabric that makes up my life, I cannot blame others or events for what ‘happens’ to me. Some find it difficult to grasp the idea that we are responsible for what ‘happens’ to us.

“Look,” Barbara says, “I didn’t choose to be poor.” “And I didn’t choose to be sick,” adds Christopher. “Neither did I choose to be lonely,” chimes in Neil. Yes, I’m sure Barbara didn’t want to be poor, but she CHOSE to spend more than she earns and she CHOSE to waste money on frivolities.

True, Christopher didn’t want to be sick, but he CHOSE to eat junk food; he CHOSE to avoid exercise, and he CHOSE to spend time with friends until the wee hours of the morning instead of getting a good night’s sleep. And what about Neil? No, he didn’t want to be lonely, but he CHOSE to criticize others, become argumentative, and spread gossip. Is it any wonder he has no friends?

Admittedly, it may be difficult to recognize that we create what happens to us by the choices we make, but if we wish to make the most of life, we must understand this truth. Once we accept it, we become empowered. We wake up each day with the realization that what happens during the day is the result of the choices we make. It is empowering to know that at any moment we can continue doing things as we always have, resulting in more of the same, or we can choose to act differently. We can choose to be grateful instead of resentful, kind instead of nasty, and helpful instead of mean. As we change our ways for the better, our lives will improve immensely.

Another fact many find difficult to accept is that happiness, too, is a choice. Yes, no one chooses to be unhappy, but they do choose to do what makes them unhappy. For example, no one chooses to become obese, but many choose to eat too much fatty food. Since it is impossible to escape the consequences of our actions, choosing the means to an end is the same as choosing the end itself.

Happiness is a state of well-being in which we are free from fear, resentment, anger, hostility, or any form of suffering. So, if we refuse to live courageously and choose to live in fear, we are also choosing to be unhappy. Likewise, if we insist on being angry, we are also insisting on being unhappy. When we choose to suffer, we are rejecting happiness.

Does it seem strange to say we choose to suffer? Well, suffering is nonexistent in the material world. It is not part of objective reality. It is purely subjective. That is, it exists only in our mind. It is a choice we make. When I speak about suffering, I'm not speaking about pain. Pain and suffering are different. Pain is the result of something that occurred. For example if my house is swept away by a typhoon, I will experience pain.

On the other hand, suffering is a reaction, a response to something that occurred. So, if two neighbours had their homes swept away by a storm, one of them may choose the path of self-pity: "Woe is me! Everything that I have worked hard to accumulate was lost. All my precious belongings are gone!" Yet, his neighbour may see things differently: "How lucky I am! The lives of my wife and children have been spared!"

One of the neighbours chose to look at the bright side; the other chose to focus on the negative. One choose to be happy, the other, to be miserable. "Wait a minute! That's not fair to blame the man who is suffering," someone may be tempted to say. "After all, perhaps he is a pessimist by nature. That isn't his fault, is it?"

Well, please understand that our nature is to be what we repeatedly think, do, and believe. So, if that man repeatedly thought and acted as a pessimist would, he would then become a pessimist. However, he is the one who chose to have negative thoughts, so he is responsible for what he becomes. When pessimists react to a challenge, such as job loss, they may have an automatic negative reaction. They may act without thinking. However, their automatic reactions are based on past choices, so they remain responsible.

Besides, those who are unhappy, always have the option of asking themselves, "What am I going to do about it?" Those who choose to look for a way to solve their difficulty will find a solution. Those who refuse to ask themselves that question have also made a choice. By deciding not to act, they choose to live in denial and choose to believe they are powerless to help themselves.

If we choose to live in awareness, we will realize that no matter how great our burden may be, there is always someone else with a far heavier load to carry. Therefore, we will always have a reason to be cheerful. All we have to do is be grateful for what we have.

Yet, if you try to explain this to a friend that is whining about their personal problems, his or her response will probably be something like, "Oh, that's easy for you to say. You don't know what it feels like to be in my shoes." Yes, it's true, you don't know what it's like for your friend, but neither does your friend know what it is like for someone with a far greater burden. That is the problem. Your friend can FEEL his or her pain, but cannot FEEL the pain of another.

Suppose you had a magical device and said to your friend, "I am going to rotate this dial, and as I do so, you pain will increase to the level of a man who is living in circumstances 10X worse than yours. Although he lives with his pain all day, I will force you to endure

his pain for only five minutes.” How do you think your friend would feel five minutes later, after lowering the pain to its previous level? Wouldn’t they finally feel thankful that things are not worse than they already are?

If you ever find yourself tempted to feel sorry for yourself, look for someone with a burden far greater than yours. Carefully note what you see and take in as much detail as possible. Then, when you have a quiet moment alone, take a few deep breaths, close your eyes, and picture what it would be to live as that other person. Think of everything you do during the day and imagine how much more difficult it would be for you as the other person. Place yourself in their body. Try to FEEL their pain. Finally, after doing so, open your eyes and be thankful for what you have.

Choose to be aware. Choose to be thankful. Choose to be happy.

How to Make the Right Choices

Be aware of where the road leads

Choose intelligence. Not every decision we make is a moral choice. Sometimes it’s just a matter of choosing between stupidity and intelligence. For example, if you are a young non-smoker and your friend offers you a cigarette, don’t take it. That would be stupid. If you’re looking for the path to happiness, it is easy to find. Just avoid the paths with signs that say STUPID and follow those that say SMART. Easy enough to do, but you have to remember to check the signs before you start down a path. As Harry Emerson Fosdick wrote, “He who chooses the beginning of a road chooses the place it leads to.”

Whenever we are at a fork in the road, we will find that one of the paths is easier to take, but that may be the only thing good about it. So, look carefully. You may find that one path tempts you and the other ennobles you. Choose the one that ennobles you. Learn how to withdraw from temptation.

Besides the paths of SMART and STUPID or GOOD and BAD, there is yet another road, and it leads nowhere. It is the road of non-action. It is the path of no-choice. Whenever we face choices and refuse to decide, that refusal is our decision. By refusing, we turn over control to the tides of fate, and instead of shaping our lives, we decide to drift wherever the tides and currents will take us.

2. Do what you can

Decide what you CAN do, not what you WANT to do. Our wants are insatiable. We want to do everything. But how can we become anything if we want to become everything? Choose worthwhile goals that you have time for. Set priorities and focus on the important issues. If you run out of time before getting to the minor tasks, at least you would have done the important ones.

Choose to carry out your responsibilities not because you HAVE to, but because you WANT to. Tasks that you HAVE to do create pressure and stress. Actions that you WANT

to do, lead to the joy of accomplishment and freedom from inner conflict. Choose to learn how to WANT to do those tasks that you should be doing. For in the end, you will do only what you want to do. Similarly, when you can't have what you want, choose to want what you have.

3. Look for the good

Some of us may be undergoing great hardships. But no life is so difficult that it cannot be made better by improving our attitude. No matter how dire the circumstances, if you look for some good, you will find it. But how can we find anything good if we occupy our time complaining? The rule to remember is that we are certain to find what we look for. If we search for good, we will find it. If we search for something to complain about, we will surely find it. Choose to search for good. And choose to believe something good can and will happen. Choose to live with hope, rather than despair. Don't be a dope. Learn to cope. Live with hope.

4. If you can't change the circumstances, change yourself

We cannot choose what will happen TO us, but we can choose what happens IN us. That is, we can choose to have the right attitude, one in which we view challenges as opportunities instead of problems. Choose to be positive. For example, although he became confined to a wheelchair after his accident, W. Mitchell (author, TV host, and businessman) said, "Before I was paralyzed there were 10,000 things I could do; now there are 9,000. I can either dwell on the 1,000 I've lost or focus on the 9,000 I have left."

5. Be aware of your choices

When we act out of habit rather than conscious choice, the path we're traveling on is a rut, perhaps even a slippery slope. If we don't want to end up at the wrong place, we have to be awake. We have to be aware and make our choices consciously. The best way to do this is to develop the habit of always looking for opportunities. Scout Cloud Lee (<http://www.scoutcloudlee.com/bio.htm>) also writes about conscious choice: "When we acknowledge that all of life is sacred and that each act is an act of choice and therefore sacred, then life is a sacred dance lived consciously each moment. When we live at this level, we participate in the creation of a better world."

Look around you. There are great people everywhere. Champions, victors. And they're all rooting for you. They are voting for you because they want you to win. Unfortunately, you are also surrounded by losers, people who want to drag you down. They are voting against you. Half are for you. Half are against you. How will this closely contested drama turn out? It all depends on you because you will be casting the deciding vote. The ballot is the choices you make. Be careful how you choose!

Some Steps To Take Or Avoid

1. Make conscious choices throughout the day to develop your power of choice. Resist the habit of acting automatically, without thought. You are the captain of your destiny, don't fall asleep at the wheel!

2. Monitor your actions. Each choice you make leads you closer to or further from your goals, dreams, and desires. If you're not making the right choices, now is the time to make corrections.

3. Remember, we become what we repeatedly do. If we repeatedly procrastinate, we become a procrastinator. If we repeatedly work hard, we become a hard worker. Since the outcome of procrastination and hard work are completely different (failure or success), we have to carefully choose what we do.

4. Don't give in to temptation. Instead control your feelings and desires. Heed these words of wisdom found in the Bhagavad Gita (Hindu scripture, c. 400 BCE), "Even as a tortoise draws in its limbs, the wise can draw in their senses at will." Here is more good advice, "Between two evils, choose neither; between two goods, choose both." (Tryon Edwards, 1809 ~ 1894).

5. You probably can relate to these words of author Sondra Anice Barnes: "It's so hard when I have to, and so easy when I want to." The lesson here is use empowering language. Don't use words like have to, must, should, ought to, or have got to because they create resistance. No one wants to do what they HAVE TO, but everyone is willing to do what they WANT TO. So, don't say "I have to study." Instead say, "I want to study because the material will be helpful for my career and is interesting." In a word, choose to use empowering language.

6. Sometimes, even if you use empowering language, you still won't feel like doing something. If so, welcome it because if you really want to be successful you will need to develop self-discipline. Doing things you don't feel like doing should be part of your daily routine. Remember, self-discipline is nothing less than the power to be, do, or have whatever you want in life. Another word for self-discipline is self-leadership. We need discipline not only to do what needs to be done, but also to avoid doing what mustn't be done, such as procrastinate. In this regard, here is a teaching of the Chinese philosopher Mencius (Mengzi Meng-tse, c.370 ~ 300 BCE): "Only when someone refuses to do certain things will he be capable of doing great things."

7. Ponder these words of Brian Tracy (www.briantracy.com): "It is not what you say or hope, wish or intend, but only what you do that counts. Your choices tell you unerringly who you really are."

8. Don't limit your choices to what only seems reasonable and possible. Stretch yourself. Ask yourself, "What do I want?" Ask again, "What do I REALLY want?" Choose to follow your dream.

Here's a poem by Edgar A. Guest (1881~1959) that neatly summarizes the point of this article:

You are the person who has to decide.

Whether you'll do it or toss it aside.
You are the person who makes up your mind.
Whether you'll lead or will linger behind.
Whether you'll try for the goal that's afar.
Or just be contented to stay where you are. ###

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>

~ *Daring To Be Yourself* ~

by Peter Shephard

You can create a new life. A life revised in small but crucial ways—or perhaps you will totally change the way things have been up to now. You choose, of course. But first you need to know just who you really are and to shed the conditioning imposed on you by decades of conforming to other people's expectations and other people's interpretations. This book—a blueprint to the life you really desire—has been developed by Peter Shepherd, author of *Transforming the Mind*. A step by step approach is followed throughout to help you uncover and remove the barriers to self-knowledge and freedom of expression and action.

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Revealing A View **by Beca Lewis**

While writing this I was sitting on a friend's wide and open porch in the Berkshires. In the distance, I could hear Del's chain saw as he worked at a client's home revealing their view.

Their home sits on a hill surrounded by trees. During the winter, while the leaves were off the trees, they noticed that they had a wonderful view of the top of a mountain. Once the leaves returned in the spring, their view was gone.

Enter Del with his artistic expertise with a chain saw and two days later their view emerged again. It is hard work. As he works he must be wise enough to choose which trees to remove and which trees must remain to perfectly frame the view.

The trees are not easy to reach. He has to go into the valley to find them. He can slip on hidden rocks or trip on hidden obstacles. Underbrush has to be cleared. Hundreds of little tree sprouts that grew unnoticed because no one was tending the forest, must be removed.

Most days Del is not in a forest cutting down trees to reveal views. Most days we are helping people reveal the view of their True nature and the possibilities of their lives.

So many things clog the view to each of our true selves. World events, daily activities, past events, current events, busy schedules, stress, planning and maintaining the minutiae of living.

Add to this the underbrush of old habits, points of view and states of mind, and soon we are not only unable to see the view, but we often forget that it exists at all.

What reminds us that the view is there? Sometimes in the winter of a situation when all is laid bare, the view is revealed. Sometimes someone tells us what they have seen. Sometimes in quiet moments the vista clears before us. Sometimes a still small voice speaks and we hear.

In his client's forest, Del can cut down the trees to reveal the view, and even maintain it for them if they wish. However, in the forest of each our minds we must do the work for ourselves.

Each of us has to get to work cutting out those "trees of thought" that block our view. Each of us has to go down into the valley. Each of us has to clear out the underbrush. It's hard work. Sometimes we slip on hidden rocks and sometimes we trip on hidden obstacles.

As hard as the work may be no one can do it for us. The work is ours to do. The work can't be assigned to another. However, the process of the work can be shared. We can ask for guidance. We can seek out those who have been in the forest before to learn which trees should be removed and which ones can remain to frame the view.

Although there is work to be done in clearing our views, it is a glorious work. This work has a purpose, it has a reward, it has meaning, and it has equality. In fact, it is the only work worth doing. Work as defined by the worldview is about survival. Clearing work is about the celebration of Life and its unlimited abundance.

When Del is clearing a view he does not "hang out" in the underbrush he clears, or mourn the loss of the trees, because he knows that they add to forest floor which nurtures the next generation. Instead, he celebrates the view. As we do our own clearing work let's not become bogged down in the mess it initially creates. Instead, let's celebrate together the view of infinite abundant possibilities for all. ###

About Beca Lewis

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

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

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

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

~ Living in Grace ~
The Shift to Spiritual Perception
by Beca Lewis

We're the prisoners of our perception. "*Living in Grace: The Shift to Spiritual Perception*" is a profound, practical, thought-provoking and complete guide to shifting the perceptions that stop us from realizing the relationships, the love, the work and the joy we desire in our lives.

Chapter by chapter, the reader is taken on an inner journey that encourages her to achieve her goals, and in so doing, lead a spiritual life. The 7 Keys to Grace and an eight step-by-

step system based on the word GRACIOUS, along with worksheets, help the reader break out of prison into Heaven on Earth.

Find it at <http://bit.ly/f38V4T>

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Seriously Sorry — Really? **by Steve Wickham**

In so many instances of class action there's one party - usually an organisation, a government, or nation - that's taken unfair, even abusive or neglectful, advantage of other parties. Sometimes to the point of criminality.

It's amazing, then, how often these massive entities have shirked their moral responsibilities, not owning up to their mistakes - not apologising when they should. As a result they find themselves at the sharp end of dispute, bad press and legal action. They still refuse to admit they did anything wrong. Damage control ensues.

The 'victims' don't really need (or possibly even want) compensation, but they do need justice and closure. That's the reparation and restitution they require.

The morally adroit conglomerate will earn the respect of the masses; the lesser-so organisations will fall to a woeful peril.

THE GENERAL LESSON OF APOLOGY

Insincere apologies are fraught with danger.

Trust that is so abused won't be so easily persuaded the second time around. It's going to be wary, sceptical, even cynical. Apologies are necessarily swift and meaningful - with full depth of ownership taken for the negligent, thoughtless or vagrantly caring action.

Such a depth of ownership assumes, in the matter of taking it, an essence of vulnerability. In other words, it trusts the aggrieved party with the substance of the apology, even giving sufficient room for it to strike back to even the score - which rarely happens.

THE BLESSEDNESS OF VULNERABILITY

There is an unconventional wisdom involved in the idea that vulnerability - the courage to be openly vulnerable, in this case by admitting error - attracts grace. It runs against the grain of the litigious world.

Such a world is always running in fear from the truth it cannot control. Such a world seeks to gain control over everything it can. Then it denies the presence of the little it can't.

Such a world doesn't understand the power in the economy of trust.

The honest and quietly-confident-in-contrition vulnerable person, however, accept in courage whatever will come from their dealing in truth. They somehow know that safety is known at higher ground - the lapping waters of the tsunami just out of reach before they flow back from whence they came.

THE FREEDOM IN BEING RUTHLESSLY HONEST

There's nothing to be afraid of so far as the truth's concerned. Being able to be entirely truthful in our apologies is a massive freedom, for we're quickly able to be ourselves. Some of us, I venture to say, may've forgotten what truly being ourselves, in this way, is about. Living in fear is a one way ticket departing from the real self; there's no promise of return.

Yet, being humbly and vulnerably honest is that return - to ourselves and to God. It will be blessed.

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

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What You Need to Know About Home Remedies **by Piper Cox**

Natural health and home remedies have been around for ages. They were all our many of our ancestors had for health care. Most of them lived in areas where doctors were few and far between. So they learned how to care for their family's health with what they had on hand. Many of these old home remedies are still in use today, and many more are becoming popular. In fact, using home remedies is becoming something that many people are beginning to embrace.

Using home remedies began to fall out of style as new medicines were discovered and health care advanced. People started to rely more and more on the knowledge of medical doctors and less on the tried and true remedies of the past. But this is starting to change and more people are turning to natural methods of healing. They are learning that many of the home remedies are just as effective as the synthetic drugs that have replaced them. Why spend a lot of money on an expensive wart removal procedure when a cotton ball soaked in apple cider vinegar will take care of the wart just as effectively? Of course the apple cider vinegar method will take longer to work, but in the long run you will get the same result for less money!

There needs to be a balance between scientific medical knowledge and the home remedies that have been used for generations. Knowledge is power, and you need to know when it is time to stop trying to heal at home and let the trained professionals help. So here are a few do's and don'ts for using home remedies.

Do use a salt water rinse to promote good oral health. This is a good practice that dentists recommend. Gargling with salt water will kill the germs in your mouth and can help prevent you from getting sick or suffer from gum disease.

Do use hydrogen peroxide to disinfect toothbrushes and help promote good oral health. Hydrogen peroxide is something that everyone needs to keep in their home because of its many uses. For oral health, peroxide will kill the germs on your toothbrush, help whiten your teeth and keep your mouth clean and fresh!

Do use baking soda to help calm an acidic stomach or help prevent acne. Make a paste from baking soda and use it as a facial scrub. It will kill bacteria that can lead to breakouts and leave your skin feeling smooth.

There are many other 'do's' for home remedies. If something works for you, then keep on using it! However, there comes a time when home remedies need to be supplemented with standard medical care. When the remedy is no longer helping or the problem gets worse is one reason to call a medical professional. Here are a few others:

Don't try to cure cancer or other serious illness with home remedies alone. True, many natural medicines and treatments can help your body fight these illnesses. But you need to be closely supervised by a medical professional. If you really want to stick with natural methods, find a naturopathic medical doctor. These professionals are trained to use the body and natural healing agents to fight disease.

Don't continue using a home remedy if you have an adverse reaction. Even if the remedy worked great for Uncle Bobby, there may be something in your body that is allergic. Stop using it and see a medical professional if the reaction doesn't clear up on its own.

For the most part, home remedies are safe and helpful. They are definitely worth trying, but you need to know when it is time to seek professional advice. Let the nature and science work together to keep your family as healthy as possible. ###

Piper Cox is a freelance writer who enjoys fitness, and the outdoors. She loves to juice and has many great [juicing recipes](#) to help her make fresh healthy juice. She enjoys nature, reading and fitness

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~ The Essential Laws of Fearless Living ~
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by Guy Finley

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Navigating Your Path to Health **by Peter Games, L. Ac.**

Many new cars today are equipped with automotive navigation systems. These systems use satellite technology to locate the car and provide directions to a location of our choice. The directions are often provided by voice prompts, which describe the path to follow in order to reach our destination. Thanks to the wonders of modern science, we receive this information immediately. The voice prompts can also inform us that we have missed a turn or even taken a wrong turn. Again, we obtain this feedback right away. We have, in many ways, become a society of immediacy. We often expect immediate feedback or immediate gratification and anything less is seen as unfulfilling, slow, or outdated.

Now let's consider navigating our way to a different type of destination, a destination that most of us find vague and elusive. That destination is health. Imagine a health navigation system implanted in our bodies that is capable of directing us toward that goal. Perhaps it would notify us if our dietary choices are a deviation from the path we should follow. Perhaps it would inform us that our lack of exercise or our need for relaxation are thwarting our efforts to reach our ultimate goal. It may provide prompts in its monotone, mediocre, matter-of-fact voice such as, "To arrive at your destination, put that cookie down." It may also remind us of activities that we have neglected, such as, "You overlooked exercise again today. Engage in physical exercise at the next possible opportunity."

But alas, there is no health navigation system available at present. So, how can we find and follow our all-important path to health? One such approach makes use of an age-old, antiquated system. That is, we can measure our proximity to destination health by examining how we feel--physically, mentally, and spiritually. Yet, most of us rarely notice the feedback from this system immediately. It may take days, weeks, or even years before we see or feel the effects of our lifestyle choices, positive or negative. We may need to be hit over the head with a hammer before finally hearing the message. Thus, it would be wise to examine if we are listening to what our bodies have to say, while at the same time exploring how we can become better listeners.

One approach to increasing awareness and listening to our bodies is through receiving acupuncture treatment. As an acupuncturist, I am told by many patients that with regular treatment, they become more aware of their bodies and the way in which their bodies communicate with them. Many patients begin to see patterns that were previously not recognizable. These patterns may include vague low back pain due to lack of exercise, constipation during highly stressful situations, abdominal pain related to not expressing emotions constructively, or energy levels that spike and crash as a result of specific dietary habits. Even though patterns such as these may exist for years, many individuals fail to notice the connection. Once they finally choose to slow down and listen to their bodies, they begin to hear the subtle messages.

In many cases, acupuncture can help to treat these imbalances, but in some cases it may not. And when it cannot, most patients find that their problems are far more manageable with the knowledge of specific causative factors. They are pleased to learn that their lifestyle choices can directly affect how they feel, and that by making different lifestyle choices, as difficult as that may be, they can proactively choose to be healthier. I don't mean to imply that acupuncture is the only approach to increasing awareness and becoming a better listener. There are many such approaches. I believe that receiving massage or practicing meditation can be helpful for this purpose, as well as meditative activities, such as reading, conscious walking, gardening, or yoga. All of these modalities can help us learn to listen to the messages that our bodies are sending, until the day when we have our health navigation system implanted. ###

Peter Games is a Licensed Acupuncturist in the state of Idaho. Peter practices acupuncture in Boise, ID with his wife (who is also a Licensed Acupuncturist). To learn more about their clinic or the Boise acupuncturists at their clinic, including Peter, please visit www.acu Boise.com.

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Understanding Assertiveness

The dictionary defines assertiveness as, "confidently self assured" a fairly good description of what most of us hope to be, confident and self assured. The question always becomes am I assertive? Am I too assertive? Am I assertive to the point of being aggressive? No one wants to be known as aggressive just as they do not want to be known as a push over. The goal is to find that fine line in between too much and too little assertiveness. Balance if you will, so that you know when to let go or when to give a little bit.

The study of assertiveness has a lot to do with how you establish personal boundaries for yourself and for others around you. Most people fall into three categories the first being passive where they let people overcome their personal boundaries. If you are one of these people you probably find yourself saying yes to things you do not want to do or letting others take credit for your work. Most of the time you fall into these traps because you are afraid to speak up for yourself. This sort of behavior leaves you feeling manipulated and abused. If you see yourself as the victim in many scenarios then you might be too passive. The second type of person falls in that confidently self assured category. You are unlikely to let yourself be manipulated. However, you are also willing to take on extra work when necessary and let others have their way when it is appropriate. This type of person generally feels good about their decisions and in control of their own destiny.

A third type of person is assertive to the point of aggression. If you are unwilling to compromise or let another persons voice be heard you are likely viewed by others as aggressive. You might have a "my way or the highway" perspective on life. It is quite likely that your social circle consists of a few close friends who view you as the big dog and you like it that way. The problem with this personality is that no one person is right all the time. You probably take advantage of and manipulate others without realizing it.

The goal of falling into the middle of the assertiveness scale is that you will be more successful in life and have better personal and work relationships. Being assertive simply means that you know how to express your feelings and how to assert your own rights while still being respectful of another persons rights. If you do this you will not have as much conflict with other people in your life. Both passive and aggressive people tend to live in a world that is filled with discord and drama. This is due to their inability to talk about their feelings and desires in a constructive way.

Some of the problems that come into play when we try to be more or less assertive have to do with social norms in our culture. Assertive woman are often thought to be overbearing or unpleasant while some men who are assertive to the point of aggressive are merely considered go getter's. Both of these depictions are damaging and difficult to overcome. Because these sort of opinions are so prevalent a female might be scared of becoming more assertive or as a male you might fear losing respect or status if you give in to the will of another.

The transition to an assertive person might be painful or scary. But, you will probably find that if you learn how to communicate your feelings properly people will be more receptive than you expected. For passive persons you might be surprised at how happy your spouse is when you decide which movie to see or where to go for dinner because it has taken the pressure off of them. Aggressive people will happily find that more people want to talk to them and share ideas because they are no longer scared of being disrespected for their opinions.

Both parties will find that they feel better because there is less conflict in their lives. Conflict leads to stress. Stress leads to a multitude of issues physically and mentally.

Your blood pressure and heart rate are affected when there is a lot of stress in your life. You might overeat or drink too much as a way to quell the conflicting emotions you experience. Many of these issues are solved by simply owning your feelings and learning how to communicate them to others.

We say simply, but we all know that communication is a difficult skill to perfect. The thing to remember is that communication is a two way street. You get to say what you want and how you feel and you must allow others to do the same. Even in disagreements, proper communication can allow both parties to leave the conversation feeling successful.

How Assertive Are You? 10 Questions To Find Out

Do you say yes even when you do not want to do something? For example, are you the mom who always volunteers even when you know you do not have time to make three dozen cupcakes? Do you then stay up all night even though you are bone tired making said cupcakes all the while feeling resentful of the other moms who said no and cursing them under your frosting laden breath?

Are you indecisive? Do you get to the point where weighing the pros and cons of a particular situation goes overboard and you just give up? When you make decisions do you find yourself considering every possible option and how it will effect everyone except you?

Do you feel guilty when you ask others for help? Alternately do you expect others to just do things for you that you could easily do yourself and get angry with them if they refuse?

When you are shopping do you find yourself getting sucked in to a sales pitch to the point where you feel guilty walking away without making a purchase? Even if you can not afford or do not want a particular item do you buy it just so the salesman will leave you alone?

What is your reaction if someone cuts you off in traffic or in front of you in line?

Do you blow up and yell, curse, or make rude gestures to them? Do you back off and turn your anger at them inward instead?

If someone disagrees with you do you make fun of them? Do you assume that they are crazy or uneducated because their opinion is different from yours?

When you make mistakes do you admit them? If you do not admit them is it because you are embarrassed or because you refuse to admit that you were wrong about something?

In your social circle are you the always the one who make plans or are you always following along whether the group is doing something you enjoy or not?

When you must talk to people in authority positions do you feel nervous or anxious?

When you receive a compliment does it make you feel proud or embarrassed?

How do you feel about giving someone a compliment?

The way that you answered the questions above have probably helped you to understand a little bit more about your assertiveness personality. You might have realized that you are passive in most situations and would like to change that behavior. Being assertive means getting the things that you want or doing the things that you want to do, with in reason, over the will of others.

Just the fact that you are taking the time to read about how to become more assertive is a step in the right direction. Being willing to help yourself become more assertive, and happier in turn, is a big step. Being comfortable and confident in the way you vocalize your opinions and desires can help you in each facet of your life. Whether you are looking to improve your communication skills at work, home, or with friends a little assertiveness goes a long way. ###

This is a direct excerpt from *Assertiveness*. The full ebook is available free to *Cultivate Life! Lifetime Members*. For full information of the great benefit to members visit www.trans4mind.com/contents.html

~ 7 Words to Turn Painful States Into Healing Powers ~

by Guy Finley

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Assertiveness Without Guilt **by Tim Arends**

Assertiveness is one of the most important tools for dealing effectively with others. But what is it? Assertiveness is simply standing up for yourself, speaking up for your rights, and effectively expressing your wishes, ideas and concerns.

Assertiveness without guilt is the right of every person who is asked to do something he or she doesn't want to do, or who wants to make reasonable requests of others.

Another type of assertiveness demanding situation that is often not considered is when people behave rudely towards you, try to put you down, or treat you in a patronizing manner. Assertiveness without guilt is not only possible, it is essential for dealing with some types of people.

Consider the example of someone who is interrupted by a telemarketer. "Will you buy this," "Will you contribute to that?" Perhaps the unassertive person will even agree to something they don't want just to get it over with. There might even be a little guilt. After all, the caller is just doing his or her job.

The key word, however, is "unreasonable." There is nothing wrong with doing favors for someone if you want to. But if you feel you must in order to be "likable" or "a nice guy" then something is wrong.

Gary Emery, a clinical professor at UCLA, once stated "We all want people to think were nice, but millions of people carry it too far. Every moment of their days is spent being nice -- and the damage it does them is enormous!" Some experts attribute being "too nice" to harmful frustration, anxiety, anger and depression.

There are those who always seem to desperately need somebody else's help, but assertiveness may be a particular problem for shy people, who may think that doing favors for others will make up for their lack of extroversion in getting people to like them.

Those who are unassertive often suffer from an excess of empathy. While empathy is normally an admirable trait, too much of it, as with anything, can be harmful. And some people, rather than admiring this trait, will look for ways to take advantage of it! If you feel resentful about a request after you agree to it, this is generally a sign that you were asked to do something unreasonable.

The flip side of assertiveness is the inability to make reasonable requests of others, something that can be even more difficult than turning down other people's unreasonable requests of favors from you.

Remember that you have the right to look out for your own interests. This is the key to assertiveness without guilt.

VISIT the Internet Shyness FAQ at [ShyFAQ](#) for more answers about assertiveness, and also obtain a FREE ebook, *How to Remember People's Names; the Master Key to Success and Popularity*. Tim Arends also offers his complete overcoming shyness system at Shy Facts

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Be a Doctor of Selling **by Brian Tracy**

Top sales professionals see themselves as "Doctors of Selling." They see themselves as professionals, well educated, acting in their "patient's" best interest, and bound by a high code of ethics. The medical process is the same everywhere. Whenever you go to any doctor, of any kind, for any condition, he will follow the three part sequence of examination, diagnosis and prescription.

Just as a medical professional would never think of treating you without following these three steps in order, you as a doctor of selling, would never allow a customer to force you to sell without your going through your three stages as well. This is as applicable to selling magazines door-to-door as it is to selling oil tankers to Exxon. In the examination phase, you ask excellent questions, carefully prepared, in sequence, which are geared to give you a thorough knowledge of the patient's condition, or the customer's situation. The second phase is that of diagnosis. In the diagnosis with a customer, you would repeat back the results of your examination and double check to be sure that the symptoms that you had detected were the real symptoms being experienced by the patient. You would ask additional questions to confirm and corroborate. You and the patient would mutually agree that this diagnosis seems to be an accurate description of the condition or problem. Once this mutual agreement has been reached, that a treatable condition exists and that you have identified it accurately, you can move on to phase three. This is the prescription phase, where you show the patient (customer) that your product or service is the best available treatment, taking all the factors of the patient's situation into consideration for the ailment that you have diagnosed. You show that, on balance, what you are suggesting is the best of all possible solutions.

Professionals who sell in the way that doctors treat patients find that their sales activities proceed far more smoothly and result in better sales in less time. Now, here are two things you can do immediately to put these ideas into action. First, take the time to do a thorough examination by asking excellent questions and by listening carefully to the answers. Second, repeat back and check your diagnosis with the customer so that you both agree on the need or problem before you recommend a solution. ###

About Brian Tracy

Brian Tracy is a leading authority on personal and business success. As Chairman and CEO of Brian Tracy International, he is a best-selling author of books and audio and video learning programs.

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Swatting at Hummingbirds **by Marlene Buffa**

Born and raised in Michigan, I knew the move to Phoenix would bring profound changes to my life. Accustomed to a lifetime in a state with beautiful lakes and lush landscape, I learned to live with the native insects and wondered about the types of critter-life I'd find in the desert southwest.

The first weekend after my arrival, my new relatives hosted a "welcome to the family" party for me. A bit nervous to meet a house full of new people, I went with excitement and a bit of apprehension to the party. Standing in the backyard, amazed by the "dry heat" in August, I watched in frozen fascination as a flying creature came from nowhere and buzzed my head! I swatted at it with such fervor that I spun myself around, lost balance and fell onto the lawn - in front of my new family! My husband ran over to me and as he helped me get up, asked what happened. "The biggest bee I ever saw just dive-bombed my head, so I tried to swat him away!" He broke out in laughter and pointed to the Hummingbird feeder, "You mean that?" Just then, I realized that swatting at a hummingbird taught me a profound lesson.

Where did it come from?

We can all agree that Hummingbirds are one of nature's phenomena. Like the bumblebee, its flight abilities mystify even the scientist among us and the color variation and nesting practices enchant us as well. My visiting hummingbird seemed to come from nowhere! I'd never seen a Hummingbird before, much less experienced a near collision with one.

In our lives, many times good things come to us in unexpected ways. Pleasant surprises, happy coincidences and even "dumb luck" impact our well being. As we grow older, we resign to expect negative events and occurrences, and when good things come to us unexpectedly or unknowingly, our spirits soar with delight. Often, we don't even know the gifts exist, much less do we hold any anticipation of receiving them, and consequently we travel through life unprepared to receive the good that comes into our lives "out of the blue."

What the heck is it?

Spiritual mentors relay a story that the natives on a particular island couldn't "see" ships arriving at their shores because they didn't know that sailing vessels existed and had no provision for them in any frame of reference of understanding. Approaching from the horizon, the ships made way to the dry land and the passengers and crew forever changed the lives of the aboriginal people. But it wasn't until the landing and disembarking that the inhabitants fully grasped the breadth of their *naïveté*; and the impact on their lives.

Often, our innocence endures challenges when both good and bad enters our life. Not aware that such circumstances exist, our first startled response strives to identify it. Like

my unknown hummingbird, we don't recognize beauty if we've never experienced it in our lives, or it never appeared in that form to us in the past and we have no awareness of it. Nonetheless, the Universe supplies us with endless encounters of good on a daily basis. We need only acknowledge it when it arrives!

How does it fit in my world?

My new avian friend held no space in my world until it came into my life. Only then did I understand how integral its role in the desert southwest natural habitat. When I grew to appreciate the desert in bloom, I realized the beautiful tiny bird's contribution to the delicate balance of the life cycle.

When new avenues of good and prosperity enter into our lives, we often wonder how they fit with our current perceptions and understanding of how life works. We try to assimilate the new found circumstance into the bubble of our existence and hope that the rest of our life adjusts accordingly to make room for the greater good. Instead of swatting them away, we can take a closer look at the blessings we receive and integrate them into our lives without forfeiting any other aspects.

The Hummingbird symbolizes something new and beautiful entering into our lives. If we've never experienced or perceived a type of positive energy flow before, we may not recognize it when it shows up. Our first instinct may be to push it away because its something new and different. Denying a gift from Spirit in whatever form it takes because we can't accept something we've never experienced before results in a shallow life filled with predictable outcomes.

When we can figure out what the new good looks like and means to us, then we can embrace and appreciate the gift and include it in our daily enjoyment. Adding positive elements to our world excludes nothing, but rather makes the flight around the sun that much more enjoyable! ###

Marlene Buffa

Taking a quiet sideways glance at life, Marlene offers insight through her words from experiences. . A student of new-thought teachings, Marlene finds practical spirituality around every corner and seeks wisdom through observation of life's inter-relationships. Sometimes playful, sometimes poignant, always thought-provoking, her writing inspires readers in meaningful ways.

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A Majestic Heart - Leadership with Soul **by Debi Hebel**

"Drink from the chalice!" her voice boomed as she pushed the vessel toward me. There I sat staring at a beautifully ornate gold goblet that had what appeared to be steam running over the sides. I took the chalice into my hands, my heart was pounding in my chest, and I could feel the eyes in the room on me as I raised the goblet to my lips. I could not stop the thoughts rushing through my head about how fortunate I was to have the opportunity to drink from the same goblet and the same potion that gave people like Nefertiti and Cleopatra and many others their great self-confidence. I tipped the chalice and felt the cold liquid inside rushing toward my mouth and then came a piercing noise... startled I jumped... and sat straight up in bed. I reached over and pushed the snooze button. Laying back down I tried desperately to get the dream back; to no avail. This is when I began my quest for answers to what was weighing so heavily on my heart and mind. With much determination, I set out to bring to light the remedy that leads to sustainable, genuine high self-confidence that the greatest leaders in history have possessed.

When researching great leaders of the past, one of the characteristics that they exemplify is self-empowerment. When we think about great leaders, they are people who have a center of power not from the material things that they have gained and triumphs they have made in their lives, but a power that seems to come from within their core and radiates outward. This power is generated by the feeling of self-efficacy. We too are able to supply ourselves with everything we need to keep us thriving by voltage of our own power. This energy comes to us as a result of accepting complete responsibility for everything that has happened in our lives; past, present, and future. This step can be a very difficult one for us to accept. We are typically raised to believe that many of the things that occur in life are beyond our control. When we change this belief to a new understanding of how everything that has happened in our life had occurred because we allowed the circumstances, then we are placing the power of choice and ultimately our destiny within our control. This means that both the positive and negative experiences have happened as a result of choices that we made. Even with the negative outcome we have had, the power was ours by the choice we made. Knowing this grants us complete power over our past, complete power over our present, and complete power over what happens in our future. This results in a sense of total self-empowerment.

Authentically self-assured leaders have mastered the art of self-forgiveness. The acceptance of responsibility over our life circumstances naturally breeds feelings of guilt over what we should have done differently. This guilt could hold back our newly found sense of self-empowerment. Additionally, it is the main reason why many are resistant to accepting this level of responsibility. Leaders that are secure with themselves exhibit freedom from this self-confinement. Forgiving ourselves for decisions and actions that we have made in the past frees us from the anvil that was weighing us down. Forgiving ourselves means understanding that when we made decisions or took action in a way that we are presently perceiving as negative, we did it based on the experience, knowledge,

and abilities we had in that moment. We should make ourselves conscious of the fact that we cannot possibly hold ourselves in a state of guilt for what happened back then based on the experience, knowledge, and abilities we presently have. We need to take solace in knowing that we did what we had to do at the time based on the best of what we possessed in that moment. This results in the releasing of guilt and the loosening of the ropes that confine our feelings of self-empowerment.

Leaders with great inner strength understand that there have been no negative experiences in their past. This is an immeasurable conversion that takes place which shifts our thinking from seeing some of our past as being negative to having been constructive. We shift this pattern of thinking because we now comprehend that without having had these beautiful and perfect experiences, we would not have become the person we are today. Every experience has given us a golden gift that as a result has made our lives richer. These gifts are the lessons that we have attained from each and every experience we have had. Therefore, the lens we looked through to see some of our past as regretful now changes to a lens which has a clearer vision filled with gratitude for all of our experiences and lessons that have created who we are. We become whole-heartedly appreciative for where we have been, what we have in our lives, and who we have become.

The antidote that was the answer to sustainable, genuine high self-confidence had revealed itself. I had been on a journey that took years... discovery after discovery. I realized that what I had been developing along the way for myself was in fact self-empowerment, self-forgiveness, and self-gratitude. It was then that I came to an awakening: the combination of all of these creates self-love. This self-love is the potion that fills the golden chalice. Once we have a complete and whole love for where we have been, what we have done, and for the person that we have become we are awakened to a love that resides in the core of our being and illuminates outward spreading light to all those we encounter. Self-confident leaders have this virtue and it attracts others to them. We want to know what these leaders know, we want to be where these leaders have been, and we want to be around them because when we are, we feel good. Now it is your turn. Drink from the chalice and go forth, living a life of love that beams with extreme self-confidence. ###

Debi is a Certified Master Coach, focusing her efforts on helping clients raise their level of life-satisfaction. As a coach, she has been able to follow her passion of inspiring people to uncover their individual greatness allowing them to grow in self-confidence, self-awareness, and ultimately life happiness. In her coaching practice, [The Human Factor](#), Debi offers programs that take the most appropriate theories in psychology, life coaching, and emotional intelligence and uses them to help her clients advance and deepen their understanding of themselves. To contact Debi please email her [here](#).

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The Secret of Personal Magnetism **by Owen Waters**

When people open their hearts to unselfish, unconditional love, a whole new world of possibilities opens. Rather than spending effort avoiding the selfishness of others, they focus on making sure that the way they choose to serve society is done in the best way possible. When people can trust others to treat each other with love and respect rather than as competitors, then everyone gains.

As heart-centered awareness grows and blooms within society, people's primary focus will shift away from service to self and towards service to others. When it does, the world will transform out of all recognition.

But you don't have to wait for all of society to catch up. In both your personal and professional dealings with people, you have a reputation, and it is fed by word-of-mouth recommendation. Build your reputation as someone who tends to give more than is expected of them, and you will find yourself becoming increasingly popular in both your business and personal lives. People respond to heartfelt action and, as they say, what goes around comes around.

Action and reaction are opposite and equal in all types of thought and action. Your heartfelt action, by automatic reaction, will create a heartfelt reality among you and the people who are attracted to your energy. When you operate mainly out of a heart-centered frequency, you will notice that people are attracted to you in all aspects of your life. Friends, lovers, professional associates; everyone will be attracted to your magnetic personality.

Personal magnetism has been one of the great mysteries of life simply because, in the past, so few people have operated from that heart-centered frequency of awareness on a routine basis. However, it's really no secret. It's just one of those common-sense facts of life.

The secret of personal magnetism is that the more you unconditionally love people, the more they love you.

You don't have to make a big deal out of it. You don't have to stand there like some transmitter beacon, radiating huge amounts of heart energy. Top stage performers do, but you don't. You can be very quiet about it and everyone will be quietly drawn to you. Everyone of a similar nature, that is. Everyone who appreciates kindness and a truly warm, genuine smile.

In other words, you'll attract the very best of friends.

There's nothing more attractive than a warm smile from a person who quietly radiates a sense of unconditional love for themselves and all others.

Owen Waters is editor and cofounder of Infinite Being LLC. He promotes a philosophy of spiritual empowerment through inner connection to the source of your ultimate potential. For more Spiritual Words of Empowerment subscribe to his [free weekly newsletter](#). For the full picture, read Owen's book, [The Shift: The Revolution in Human Consciousness](#).

This was an excerpt from Owen Waters' book, *Love, Light Laughter: The New Spirituality*, which is available both as a paperback and a downloadable e-book, at: <http://www.infinitebeing.com/ebooks/love.htm>

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The Lost Elements of Enlightenment
by Guy Finley

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Mind Weeds Will Strip You of Your Dreams **by Lisa Whatley**

Many years ago when I first began my search for truth - before I knew that we are the creator of our lives - I sought advice from psychics; seeking what my future would hold, hoping they would give me a glimpse at some sort of fantasy life, perhaps wave a magic wand and create a deliciously new life for me; a life that I myself hadn't even had time to envision!

(Side Note: Psychic says: Ah yes Lisa, let's see what we can do here: how about Mr. Millionaire rides up in his stretched limo and sweeps you ... ok, ok, so I didn't completely comprehend at the time they have no power to do this! Hmm perhaps I watched one too many Harry Potter movies? Naw, just wishful thinking. LOL)

Hello?! I mean in all honesty I spent a hundred percent of my time trying to figure out how I, an unemployed, high-school drop-out, single mom was going to put food on the table for my four young children, keep a roof over our heads, clothes on our backs, the heat and hydro running, where the next dollar was coming from, noses wiped, bottoms dry, bath and story times, laundry, dishes, cooking meals, house chores, yard work and a million other worries not to mention thinking about ways at preventing all the disasters that were inevitably going to strike me down!

Seriously, who has time to dream about laying pool-side, being served margaritas and getting a manicure when your mind is completely overtaken with thoughts about, oh I don't know, how to survive in a material world when you don't have the material you need to make it through the day!?

Manicure, yeah whatever! Back then just two minutes to myself alone would have been complete and utter bliss!

If only I knew then what I know now, I would have definitely found that two minutes of time to dream large because my life would have been filled with abundance, happiness and peace rather than stress, sorrow, pain and poverty! You see, I held a strong belief that life was a struggle, a battlefield and if there was anything bad that could happen; it would definitely find me! Every tragedy that I continually focused upon eventually happened! I was always right!

Seriously, time after time it was proven to me, so why should I believe anything different?

It is that exact type of thinking, that lack of knowledge, which brought on all my problems to begin with.

This negative way of thinking is what continually creates the same life problems for millions around the world because it is our thoughts and deeply embedded beliefs that create every moment of our lives. It is so important not only to eliminate negative thinking

and think only the highest and best thoughts that we possibly can in order to create positive and loving change within our lives, it is extremely important to take the time to imagine the kind of life that we would like to have. Mind power is our creative life power!

The mind is our slave but many of us live our lives as a slave to our mind. We allow our mind to take over, run rampant, feeding the weed seed and controlling our lives. Our fears, our happiness, our emotions, our relationships, our lack, our health; everything is controlled by our mind power. It is when we learn to harness the power of our mind that we begin to create the miracles in our life; we put our mind to work for us in a positive way and unleash the positive creative power within.

Each and every one of us is an unlimited, creative source of consciousness that HAS the power to dream HUGE and ACHIEVE those dreams ... when we BELIEVE in being unlimited.

What happens when we place limits on ourselves?

What happens when someone puts limits on us that we believe?

We live our life according to the ideas of others and we struggle unhappily, marching along like little robots with no minds of our own. We live below our potential just to fit in and like little puppeteers following the masses we bounce along afraid to be different, to afraid to step out of the confining four sided little box that we have been programmed to live within.

We not only allow their limits to strip us of our identity of who we truly are but we allow them to strip us of our dreams.

I'd like to share a little life story with you so you can see how I allowed the power of my mind to strip me of my dreams and then made an amazing return when I finally had my "a-ha" moment. This one experience, which appeared to be extremely negative in the beginning, was actually a major blessing that began my journey in learning how to change the way I used my mind. I know that you too can change any situation in your life once you harness your positive mind power.

Back in 2004 I was in the very beginning stages of building my energy healing business. I was excited because I was actually making money doing something that I absolutely loved doing! It wasn't a lot of money but I felt great because I was able to stay home and raise my kids while beginning to financially make ends meet without a lot of excessive worrying.

Finally things definitely appeared to be going well in this area of my life.

It was then that I was introduced to a woman who did "Angel Readings." It was reported from people in the community that she was an incredible reader so I made the decision to go see her.

I went to the reading filled to the brim with my bubbly personality, very happy and extremely excited! Within minutes of being within this woman's presence my happy, upbeat personality took a major dumper. That should have been my first clue to jump up and leave but I didn't. I stayed as I asked the question that I wanted to know. "Would my business expand?" She asked what I was doing (hmmm that's odd; I thought she was supposed to be reading me?) I told her energy healing. She immediately said, "You will not make any kind of living or money with 'this kind' of business. You need to stop doing it right now; you are wasting your time. It is best that you get a 'real job' and leave this behind you."

Those words felt like someone just hit me in the heart with a sledgehammer!

I stammered, "But I am making money right now. I'm supporting myself and my four children doing this work." She looked shocked as she raised her eyebrows and said "You're actually making money?" I said, "Yes I am and I'm supporting my four children all by myself with no outside help." (I was so proud of myself too!) She immediately said, "It will end, that type of business is a flop, go get yourself a 'real job' and fast. This is just a side gig, something to fill your time with."

Wow, that was a tad brutal don't you think!?

When I left the reading I was numb; I was in a state of shock. I was so afraid of going back to living in poverty — (I was still living in poverty just not as bad as I previously had been.) — worrying how was I going to keep not only a roof over our heads but how was I going to continue to supply the basic necessities of life to my children. The thoughts were racing through my mind faster than the tears were rolling down my cheeks.

Where was the money going to come from now?

How was I going to do this?

How could we continue living like this?

Why does everything have to fail?

Why does life have to be so freaking hard!

Why does my life always suck so bad?

I hate this shit! I quit. I'm so done I'll just curl up and die, no one will care.

(Dang, sounds like I be needing some cheese with that whine! LOL)

On and on my negative mind ramblings went.

Needless to say I went home completely defeated, discouraged and confused. It was the most disempowering reading I have ever had in my life!

She planted a seed within my mind; it was a negative weed seed, one of doubt but the worst part is; I began to feed it! I watered it by starting to BELIEVE her negative words. Those seeds she planted within my mind were 'mind weeds' and just like that I gave my

power away to her and believed what she said! I nourished those mind weeds like they were my babies and they grew and they grew and they grew!

(Side Note: Huge mistake silly moi, but empowering life lesson was eventually learnt!)

For an entire month I battled all those thoughts and feelings. I couldn't shake them; I just became more and more depressed. I couldn't do anything other than worry and grumble to myself. Each day that I was engulfed in this energy - that my own mind created, that I myself was continually feeding - my business suffered. The orders came in less and less until they finally stopped coming in altogether.

Each day as less and less money flowed through my business, I gave more and more creative energy to that woman's discouraging words; I watered and nourished my mind weeds. I kept thinking, "She's completely right! I'm failing; it's flopping just like she said it would!"

Within one month of continually feeding my creative power the opposite of what I truly wanted, my business was gone!

Do you see how powerful our minds truly are when we fully believe in something?

I believed she "saw" that my business would fail. In truth this woman didn't "see" squat about my business! My business went belly up all because I believed the weed she planted within my mind! I put my creative power directly into her words and molded that energy into making it become my reality!

Ah yup, stup I was!

One month into this major pity-party I began to get really pissed off and that's when I realized that my business was successful up until the day of the reading with her! Just like that my "a-ha" moment came and oh my gawd what a relief! It struck me like lighting! The cloud of depression vanished and for the life of me I could not stop the tears of joy as I scooped up my little ones and began dancing around our tiny living room to a favorite Shania Twain tune! I knew as soon as I had that realization that I was going to make a major come back!

I finally realized that I allowed someone else's own ego based opinion to penetrate my mind and begin growing. I allowed her to take, hell no let's rephrase that, I handed my enthusiasm, my passion and my business all to her on a silver platter!

Thank goodness for "a-ha" moments!

I realized that the information that she shared with me did not come from a higher source at all; it came from her own lower self and her own belief system. Not only did she unknowingly teach me that it is my thoughts that create my reality, she also taught me that just because a person has their psychic gifts opened doesn't mean that they are spiritually

advanced or evolved nor does it mean that the information they share is truly coming from a higher source! Shall I say this is also where I learnt about discernment? LOL

(Side Note: For the record, there are a lot of truly gifted psychic readers out there; unfortunately this particular woman was not one of them.)

My business flourished as soon as I made the connection and this time my orders tripled because my mind was filled with the unlimited potential of what my business would become; which was fueled by the joy within my heart knowing that I could achieve anything as long as I combined the power of belief thought with the power of love.

When you mix these two babies together, nothing, absolutely nothing can stop you!

It is my hope that you can see from the story that I just shared from my own life experience the power that you have also. When you begin to change your negative thinking into positive thinking you then have the power to begin changing your life. Using affirmative statements is a great way to begin reprogramming your mind!

Remember back at the beginning of this article I stated I didn't have time to imagine sitting poolside, sipping margaritas while getting a manicure? That thought of "not having the time" was a HUGE mistake on my behalf! You must make the time if you want to see real results form in your life.

Visualization is one of the key ingredients in our ability to manifest or create what it is that we desire to bring into our life experience. It is highly important that you envision what you want because this is how you begin to draw or magnetize your future to yourself. You have to know what you want and if you can see it, you can bring it into reality as long as YOU BELIEVE in it!

You are the master of your mind, no one else.

You are the creator of your experiences, no one else.

You have the right to choose whatever it is you wish to create...then believe it can be so.

No one can steal your dreams unless YOU LET THEM!

Regardless of what people about you are saying or doing, dream big and let the miracles flow!

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<http://www.InfinityLightHealing.com> - Lisa Whatley is an International Miracle Mind Mentor and Self Help Empowerment Specialist, Energy Medicine Healer and Published Writer specializing in personal transformation growth programs.

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Thinking Outside the Box **by Miles Murphy**

It's been about a year now, I think, since I gave up my television set, and so far I haven't suffered any adverse effects. There weren't any big moral reasons behind my decision to leave 'fantasy land' behind. Rather, there was no good reason to keep that monstrosity of techno-furniture; it was taking up valuable real estate in my living room - room that was better occupied by... well... nothing, actually. And that's just the point, really. A cup or a bowl, after all, is only useful because of its emptiness, what it can contain. The mind needs space too, to expand and to grow, to rest and to quiesce.

Friends tell me there are some very good things on TV and I have no reason to disbelieve them. Lest you think I'm a Luddite or a technophobe, let me tell you that I would have a difficult time being separated from my computer and the Internet or my Smart phone. And I have nothing against entertainment. I enjoy movies and music and drama. On the other hand, I also enjoy reading and quiet contemplation. Television is too all-pervasive I think and it doesn't leave much room for the individual. It's a passive medium and really doesn't require anything of the recipient (we talk about the proverbial 'couch potato' who 'vegges out' in front of the tube). I remember growing up in an era where we went from no TV to where the television became the focal point of our household. The family gathered around the TV where we were bewitched and bedazzled (or "Whiplashed" or "Leave it to Beavered"), but I don't remember a lot of interaction around the electronic hearthside. (Where there was discussion and interaction was around the family dinner table). My foster-mother spent most of her time planted in front of the TV. She was a shut-in and for her it was her connection to the world, her constant company (She loved the owl wrestling). It may have been her refuge, her safe haven, but it was not a peaceful place. It was a world driven by excess, by the constant clamour of the pitchman, by the trivial, by false gods and false prophets. Television promised much, but delivered very little. Even at its best, television represents a poor reflection of the human condition.

The Buddha describes Nirvana (Pali, "Nibbana"), not so much by its substance, as much as by its absence. It is not a place, but a state - a state of complete joy and peace, free from suffering, free from attachment, free from hatred, free from illusion. I think most of us come to Buddhism looking for peace, looking for refuge, looking for freedom from desire. The word Nirvana, in Sanskrit, means, "to blow out" or "extinguish" and refers to the elimination of ignorance, the alleviation of suffering. The Buddha said that Nirvana was ineffable, that it could not be described, but could only be experienced. It was the state of 'being awake'. And how do you describe that awakened state, except to say that you are no longer asleep.

Like the empty bowl and the empty cup, there is no room for Nirvana in a space that is perpetually filled.

There is the story of the professor who went to see the Zen master. The Master poured tea. He kept pouring tea until the exasperated visitor could stand it no more and exclaimed, "Stop! The cup is full! No more can go in." "Like this cup", the Master said, "You are filled with your own ideas and opinions." "How can you learn Zen, unless your cup is empty?"

It is important for us to create spaces in our lives, whether in our homes, outside our homes (in the wilderness and green spaces), in the mind, through meditation or contemplation or mindfulness... The absence of the television is only a metaphor for emptiness and the need for space and the desire for peace to inhabit our everyday lives.

Are we ready to accept this space? Are we able to tolerate emptiness? Can we allow this peace to enter our lives? Twelve months down the televisionless road, I can say with confidence that I have no need for the multi-channel universe to re-enter my life. The best kind of mirror we can bring into our lives is one that gathers no dust. ###

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

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

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How Do You Define Success? by Stephanie Marston

To a great extent the way we act and what we invest our time and energy in is based on how we feel we can achieve success. But what is success? Please spend a few minutes and consider how you define success. Without too much thinking write down your answers to the following questions:

How do you define success?

What are some of the accomplishments you have had in your life?

Now compare your definition of success with your list of accomplishments and ask yourself:

To what extent do my answers describe success in my career?

To what extent do my answers describe success in my personal life and family relationships?

To what extent do my answers describe success in my Self?

If you're like most people you probably defined success in terms of your achievements in your career. When we think about success we tend to focus on how we are viewed as an employee, boss or coworker rather than on as a spouse/partner, father/mother, friend or sibling.

In order to create greater work-life balance we have to shift our thinking and rebalance our definition of success to include our personal and family relationships.

Now spend a few minutes and answer the following questions:

I am happiest when...

I want to be a person who...

At the end of my life I want people to describe me as...

Now compare these answers to the previous answers about success. Notice how your answers to these questions have redefined success in terms of your personal relationships and a deeper sense of meaning.

We need to redefine success. Not to exclude career success, but to include success in our relationships, with family members and our personal life. Success with our family and personal relationships needs to become a new way of evaluating how we see our accomplishments and ourselves and to be fully integrated with our success at work. ###

Stephanie Marston is an acclaimed speaker and author. She speaks from experience. Stephanie is the go to expert for those who seek to create quality driven lives. Stephanie is America's foremost life balance expert. Her new CD program, 30 Days to Sanity contains powerful, innovative, practical tools to reduce stress, balance work and family and make

time for what truly matters. Stephanie is the author of *Chicken Soup for the Soul's Life Lessons for Women: 7 Essential Ingredients for a Balanced Life, If Not Now, When? Reclaiming Ourselves at Midlife* and *Life Coaching for Parents: Six Weeks to Sanity*. For more information and a free Sanity Saving Solution visit <http://www.30daystosanity.com>
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Oneness and the Family **by Annie Burnside, M.Ed.**

One of the most important aspects of life that parents can teach, model, and crystallize for their children is both a theoretical and a practical understanding of Oneness. The expanded perspective that they are indeed an integral aspect of a divine whole, so vast, so loving, so pure, and so unbelievably multi-dimensional that it is almost too difficult for the mind alone to grasp is imperative in paving the way to raised spiritual consciousness within a family. This divine whole, fully a part of them, invites us not to suppress our individuality, but rather to express it in whatever way we choose. Oneness from this vantage point is both singular and multi-faceted in nature, like a beautiful diamond, a divine paradox, to be sure. In fact, use of the divine paradox, which can be noted everywhere in life, is a parent's greatest tool for teaching the all-encompassing aspect of Oneness that can be quite difficult to comprehend for both adults and children alike, until it becomes no longer an outer mental concept, but instead an inner spiritual knowing.

Offering children the vision of an enlarged perspective in relationships, life situations, and all circumstances assists them in experiencing the power of Oneness as a means rather than as simply an end. When analyzing any subject, the wider the scope, the more the reality of Oneness can be perceived and integrated by the individual. For example, when viewing a child's thumbnail with him or her, one can look very closely and only see the small nail or one can continually enlarge his perception to include the actual thumb, the entire hand, the long arm, the whole body, everyone else in the room, all persons in the neighborhood, the population of the large state, and on, and on, and on. Similar to flying high up in the sky on an airplane, the farther up you go, the more the land below can be viewed and perceived in its entirety. The individuation of each unique aspect of the land below can no longer be perceived by the naked eye, even though one understands the details to remain. A new expanded vision is born and changes the vantage point to include a much larger slice of reality. The same is true for all aspects of individuation; it simply depends on how you look at it.

There are many other analogies that parents can utilize to explain the all-encompassing, multi-faceted aspect of Oneness, all extremely beneficial in solidifying the concept in a child's mind. While the ocean/wave, leaf/tree, brick/house, and sugar/ cake analogies are all quite useful for the mind's comprehension, the most empowering aspect of Oneness will blossom for your children when they can apply this newfound mental understanding to their thoughts, words, and deeds in relationship toward all else. When knowledge becomes heartfelt and integrated into life experience, it creates actual change, change that is purposeful, uplifting, and inspiring. The goal for parents is to move beyond simply teaching the concept of Oneness and into a lifestyle that supports the inner knowing that there is really no ultimate separation between anything. Everything that exists is part of the divine whole, and the divine whole is part of everything. When this understanding becomes embedded in both heart and mind, life choices will reflect this viewpoint.

Tolerance, patience, acceptance, non-judgment, unconditional love, compassion, and empathy, all virtues religions implore us to embrace, take on a whole new meaning for a child when he comes to understand the paradoxical meaning of Oneness. The other, while in a different physical form than him, is actually, in the largest of perspectives, a part of him. Both individuals are unique, luminous facets of the same diamond, being called to shine their light and express their diamond qualities in their own singular way. Every individual expression affects the whole diamond on some level, for the two can never be separated. An individual facet may perceive himself to be separate, focused only on the thumbnail that is his solitary life, so to speak, but a mere change in perspective, an expansion of perception, will always lead him back to his true relationship to the whole diamond.

Encourage and support your children to express their individuality in ways that truly please and serve them. Help them to decipher an inner desire to express that comes from the part of them that remembers their connection to the purposeful, all-encompassing, multi-faceted whole versus an ego-oriented desire to express that needs validation from an exterior world that sees them as separate and solely singular in nature. The time is now to ensure that our children become conscious, global citizens who will reframe what it means to be a human being for future generations. Our world depends on a deeper understanding of Oneness, an expanded view of reality, to thrive for the centuries to come. As the spiritual leaders of our families, it is not only teaching, but also modeling the application and relevance to daily, modern living that will most help our children in living as both individuals and as a divine whole. ###

Annie Burnside is an author, educator, parent, and soul nurturer specializing in conscious relationships and spiritual development. As a soul nurturer she helps others awaken to their *own* truth in all aspects of life by providing the tools and encouragement to experience direct divine connection in everyday reality. As a means to share her own spiritual evolution, Annie created a spiritual support practice in 2005 where she supports others in balancing the exterior world with an interior focus. Annie's recent book [*Soul to Soul Parenting: A Guide to Raising a Spiritually Conscious Family*](#) (Wyatt-MacKenzie, June 2010) inspires parents to utilize everyday mediums to infuse greater spiritual awareness into daily family life. She also writes the *Soul to Soul Perspective: A Little Bit of Soul Goes a Long Way* blog for the Chicago Tribune and the family consciousness column for *Evolving Your Spirit Magazine*. Besides writing, Annie speaks publicly and teaches workshops. She lives with her husband and three children in Chicago, IL. More information about Annie can be found at.

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A Course in Miracles Lesson 43

God is my Source. I cannot see apart from Him.

Perception is not an attribute of God. His is the realm of knowledge. Yet He has created the Holy Spirit as the Mediator between perception and knowledge. Without this link with God, perception would have replaced knowledge forever in your mind. With this link with God, perception will become so changed and purified that it will lead to knowledge. That is its function as the Holy Spirit sees it. Therefore, that is its function in truth.

In God you cannot see. Perception has no function in God, and does not exist. Yet in salvation, which is the undoing of what never was, perception has a mighty purpose. Made by the Son of God for an unholy purpose, it must become the means for the restoration of his holiness to his awareness. Perception has no meaning. Yet does the Holy Spirit give it a meaning very close to God's. Healed perception becomes the means by which the Son of God forgives his brother, and thus forgives himself.

You cannot see apart from God because you cannot be apart from God. Whatever you do you do in Him, because whatever you think, you think with His Mind. If vision is real, and it is real to the extent to which it shares the Holy Spirit's purpose, then you cannot see apart from God.

Three five-minute practice periods are required today, one as early and one as late as possible in the day. The third may be undertaken at the most convenient and suitable time that circumstances and readiness permit. At the beginning of these practice periods, repeat the idea for today to yourself with eyes open. Then glance around you for a short time, applying the idea specifically to what you see. Four or five subjects for this phase of the practice period are sufficient. You might say, for example:

God is my Source. I cannot see this desk apart from Him.

God is my Source. I cannot see that picture apart from Him.

Although this part of the exercise period should be relatively short, be sure that you select the subjects for this phase of practice indiscriminately, without self-directed inclusion or exclusion. For the second and longer phase, close your eyes, repeat today's idea again, and then let whatever relevant thoughts occur to you add to the idea in your own personal way.

Thoughts such as:

I see through the eyes of forgiveness.

I see the world as blessed.

The world can show me myself.

I see my own thoughts, which are like God's.

Any thought related more or less directly to today's idea is suitable. The thoughts need not bear any obvious relationship to the idea, but they should not be in opposition to it.

If you find your mind wandering; if you begin to be aware of thoughts which are clearly out of accord with today's idea, or if you seem to be unable to think of anything, open your eyes, repeat the first phase of the exercise period, and then attempt the second phase again. Do not allow any protracted period to occur in which you become preoccupied with irrelevant thoughts. Return to the first phase of the exercises as often as necessary to prevent this.

In applying today's idea in the shorter practice periods, the form may vary according to the circumstances and situations in which you find yourself during the day. When you are with someone else, for example, try to remember to tell him silently:

God is my Source. I cannot see you apart from Him.

This form is equally applicable to strangers as it is to those you think are closer to you. In fact, try not to make distinctions of this kind at all.

Today's idea should also be applied throughout the day to various situations and events that may occur, particularly to those which seem to distress you in any way. For this purpose, apply the idea in this form:

God is my Source. I cannot see this apart from Him.

If no particular subject presents itself to your awareness at the time, merely repeat the idea in its original form. Try today not to allow any long periods of time to slip by without remembering today's idea, and thus remembering your function.

Commentary by Allen Watson

All of what we call "seeing" is perception; it is not knowledge. Perception does not show us the truth; at best it shows us a clear symbol of truth. "Knowledge" in the Course is something that belongs to the realm of perfection, of Heaven; it is not possible to have knowledge and to be in this world, because this world is not true. The entire aim of the Course is to move us from false perception to true perception; when our perception has been cleaned up, we will be ready for the transfer to knowledge.

Without the Holy Spirit, perception would have remained false. But because God has placed this link with Himself in all of our minds, perception can be purified so that it will lead us to knowledge.

In Heaven or in God, there is no such thing as perception, only knowledge. Perception requires two, a perceiver and the perceived; that is duality and does not exist in truth. Yet "in salvation," our experience in this world, "perception has a mighty purpose". Although we made perception for "an unholy purpose", to make illusions that we think are real, the Holy Spirit can use it to restore our holiness to our awareness.

Remember Lesson 1? "Nothing I see means anything." That is because "perception has no meaning". All of perception is essentially meaningless, "yet does the Holy Spirit give it a meaning very close to God's". Rather than trying to understand what we see, we need to step back and let the Holy Spirit write His meaning on it all. Seen with Him, everything reveals God to us.

Without God, we think we see, but we really see nothing. We see nothing that looks like something and we attach our meanings to it all, meanings which deceive us. "I cannot see apart from Him." I may think I see, but what I seem to see is not seeing; it is hallucinating. With God, I can see truly. With God, I can perceive a clear reflection of truth in everything I look upon. It is that perception of truth that is the means by which I can forgive my brother. If I ask, I will see it.

So I cannot see apart from God. But that's a no-brainer, because I cannot *be* apart from God, so the truth is I can't do anything apart from Him. It's like saying, "My hand can't do anything without my body." Of course not; my hand is not separate from my body. "Whatever you do you do in Him".

To achieve true vision I do not need to *become* part of God or to join with Him, as if I were making a transition of some kind from a separated condition to a unified condition. No, all I really need to do is acknowledge or recognize that I am already one with Him. As I accept that reality about myself, vision is already mine. It is inherent in my natural condition.

What I see when I think I am apart from God must not be sight, because being apart from God is illusion, so the "sight" must also be illusion. "I cannot see this desk apart from Him".

Once again we are led into a period in which we let relevant related thoughts arise in our minds. The Course is clearly encouraging us to put its ideas into our own words, and to extend them and embellish them for our own personal use. Sometimes, the "altered" form of the lesson will prove more effective for your practice than the original version. We should feel free to do this kind of personalizing in all of the Workbook lessons. It is a tool we are meant to use to make the lessons more personally meaningful. ###

~ The Journey Home ~
(Course in Miracles)
by Allen Watson

A Course in Miracles teaches that the whole spiritual journey is a journey home, home to God whom we have never really left. Allen Watson describes this spiritual journey, as seen in the Course, identifying the stages we pass through as we move from fear to love, escaping from darkness and emerging into the light. Watson presents a map that we can look

at as we set out, giving us an idea of the spiritual destination the Course is taking us to, and what we must go through to get there. This map helps us be aware of and prepared for the pitfalls and detours that occur along the way. "The Journey Home" also offers Course guidelines and instructions for dealing with some of the difficult passages on this journey.

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~ Course In Miracles ~

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The Master Key System **by Charles F. Haanel**

Part Twenty-Four

Enclosed you will find Part Twenty-four, your final lesson of this course.

If you have practiced each of the exercises a few minutes every day, as suggested, you will have found that you can get out of life exactly what you wish by first putting into life that which you wish, and you will probably agree with the student who said: "The thought is almost overwhelming, so vast, so available, so definite, so reasonable and so usable."

The fruit of this knowledge is, as it were, a gift of the Gods; it is the "truth" that makes men free, not only free from every lack and limitation, but free from sorrow, worry and care, and, is it not wonderful to realize that this law is no respecter of persons, that it makes no difference what your habit of thought may be, the way has been prepared.

If you are inclined to be religious, the greatest religious teacher the world has ever known made the way so plain that all may follow. If your mental bias is toward physical science, the law will operate with mathematical certainty. If you are inclined to be philosophical, Plato or Emerson may be your teacher, but in either case, you may reach degrees of power to which it is impossible to assign any limit.

An understanding of this principle, I believe, is the secret for which the ancient Alchemists vainly sought, because it explains how gold in the mind may be transmuted into gold in the heart and in the hand.

PART TWENTY-FOUR

1. When the scientists first put the Sun in the center of the Solar System and sent the earth spinning around it, there was immense surprise and consternation. The whole idea was self-evidently false; nothing was more certain than the movement of the Sun across the sky, and anyone could see it descend behind the western hills and sink into the sea; scholars raged and scientists rejected the idea as absurd, yet the evidence has finally carried conviction in the minds of all.

2. We speak of a bell as a "sounding body," yet we know that all the bell can do is to produce vibrations in the air. When these vibrations come at the rate of sixteen per second, they cause a sound to be heard in the mind. It is also possible for the mind to hear vibrations up to the rate of 38,000 vibrations per second. When the number increases beyond this, all is silence again; so that we know that the sound is not in the bell, it is in our own mind.

3. We speak and even think of the Sun as "giving light." Yet we know it is simply giving forth energy which produces vibrations in the ether at the rate of four hundred trillion a second, causing what are termed light waves, so that we know that what we call light is simply a form of energy and that the only light there is, is the sensation caused in the mind by the motion of the waves. When the number increases, the light changes in color, each change in color being caused by shorter and more rapid vibrations; so that although we speak of the rose as being red, the grass as being green, or the sky as being blue, we know that the colors exist only in our minds, and are the sensations experienced by us as the result of the vibrations of light waves. When the vibrations are reduced below four hundred trillion a second, they no longer affect us as light, but we experience the sensation of heat. It is evident, therefore, that we cannot depend upon the evidence of the senses for our information concerning the realities of things; if we did we should believe that the sun moved, that the world was flat instead of round, that the stars were bits of light instead of vast suns.

4. The whole range then of the theory and practice of any system of metaphysics consists in knowing the Truth concerning yourself and the world in which you live; in knowing that in order to express harmony, you must think harmony; in order to express health you must think health; and in order to express abundance you must think abundance; to do this you must reverse the evidence of the senses.

5. When you come to know that every form of disease, sickness, lack and limitation are simply the result of wrong thinking, you will have come to know "the Truth which shall make you free." You will see how mountains may be removed. If these mountains consist only of doubt, fear, distrust or other forms of discouragement, they are none the less real, and they need not only to be removed but to be "cast into the sea."

6. Your real work consists in convincing yourself of the truth of these statements. When you have succeeded in doing this you will have no difficulty in thinking the truth, and as has been shown, the truth contains a vital principle and will manifest itself.

7. Those who heal diseases by mental methods have come to know this truth, they demonstrate it in their lives and the lives of others daily. They know that life, health and abundance are Omnipresent, filling all space, and they know that those who allow disease or lack of any kind to manifest, have as yet not come into an understanding of this great law.

8. As all conditions are thought creations and therefore entirely mental, disease and lack are simply mental conditions in which the person fails to perceive the truth; as soon as the error is removed, the condition is removed.

9. The method for removing this error is to go into the Silence and know the Truth; as all mind is one mind, you can do this for yourself or anyone else. If you have learned to form mental images of the conditions desired, this will be the easiest and quickest way to secure

results; if not, results can be accomplished by argument, by the process of convincing yourself absolutely of the truth of your statement.

10. Remember, and this is one of the most difficult as well as most wonderful statements to grasp... remember that no matter what the difficulty is, no matter where it is, no matter who is affected, you have no patient but yourself; you have nothing to do but to convince yourself of the truth which you desire to see manifested.

11. This is an exact scientific statement in accordance with every system of Metaphysics in existence, and no permanent results are ever secured in any other way.

12. Every form of concentration, forming Mental Images, Argument, and Autosuggestion are all simply methods by which you are enabled to realize the Truth.

13. If you desire to help someone, to destroy some form of lack, limitation or error, the correct method is not to think of the person whom you wish to help; the intention to help them is entirely sufficient, as this puts you in mental touch with the person. Then drive out of your own mind any belief of lack, limitation, disease, danger, difficulty or whatever the trouble might be. As soon as you have succeeded in doing this the result will have been accomplished, and the person will be free.

14. But remember that thought is creative and consequently every time you allow your thought to rest on any inharmonious condition, you must realize that such conditions are apparent only, they have no reality, that spirit is the only reality and it can never be less than perfect.

15. All thought is a form of energy, a rate of vibration, but a thought of the Truth is the highest rate of vibration known and consequently destroys every form of error in exactly the same way that light destroys darkness; no form of error can exist when the "Truth" appears, so that your entire mental work consists in coming into an understanding of the Truth. This will enable you to overcome every form of lack, limitation or disease of any kind.

16. We can get no understanding of the truth from the world without; the world without is relative only; Truth is absolute. We must therefore find it in the "world within."

17. To train the mind to see Truth only is to express true conditions only, our ability to do this will be an indication as to the progress we are making.

18. The absolute truth is that the "I" is perfect and complete; the real "I" is spiritual and can therefore never be less than perfect; it can never have any lack, limitation, or disease. The flash of genius does not have origin in the molecular motion of the brain; it is inspired by the ego, the spiritual "I" which is one with the Universal Mind, and it is our ability to recognize this Unity which is the cause of all inspiration, all genius. These results are far

reaching and have effect upon generations yet to come; they are the pillars of fire which mark the path that millions follow.

19. Truth is not the result of logical training or of experimentation, or even of observation; it is the product of a developed consciousness. Truth within a Caesar, manifests in a Caesar's deportment, in his life and his action; his influence upon social forms and progress. Your life and your actions and your influence in the world will depend upon the degree of truth which you are enabled to perceive, for truth will not manifest in creeds, but in conduct.

20. Truth manifests in character, and the character of a man, should be the interpretation of his religion, or what to him is truth, and this will in turn be evidenced in the character of his possession. If a man complains of the drift of his fortune he is just as unjust to himself as if he should deny rational truth, though it stand patent and irrefutable.

21. Our environment and the innumerable circumstances and accidents of our lives already exist in the subconscious personality which attracts to itself the mental and physical material which is congenial to its nature. Thus our future being determined from our present, and if there should be apparent injustice in any feature or phase of our personal life, we must look within for the cause, try to discover the mental fact which is responsible for the outward manifestation.

22. It is this truth which makes you "free" and it is the conscious knowledge of this truth which will enable you to overcome every difficulty.

23. The conditions with which you meet in the world without are invariably the result of the conditions obtaining in the world within, therefore it follows with scientific accuracy that by holding the perfect ideal in mind you can bring about ideal conditions in your environment.

24. If you see only the incomplete, the imperfect, the relative, the limited, these conditions will manifest in your life; but if you train your mind to see and realize the spiritual ego, the "I" which is forever perfect and complete, harmonious; wholesome, and healthful conditions only will be manifested.

25. As thought is creative, and the truth is the highest and most perfect thought which anyone can think, it is self-evident that to think the truth is to create that which is true and it is again evident that when truth comes into being that which is false must cease to be.

26. The Universal Mind is the totality of all mind which is in existence. Spirit is Mind, because spirit is intelligent. The words are, therefore, synonymous.

27. The difficulty with which you have to contend is to realize that mind is not individual. It is omnipresent. It exists everywhere. In other words, there is no place where it is not. It is, therefore, Universal.

28. Men have, heretofore, generally used the word "God" to indicate this Universal, creative principle; but the word "God" does not convey the right meaning. Most people understand this word to mean something outside of themselves; while exactly the contrary is the fact. It is our very life. Without it we would be dead. We would cease to exist. The minute the spirit leaves the body, we are as nothing. Therefore, spirit is really, all there is of us.

29. Now, the only activity which the spirit possesses is the power to think. Therefore, thought must be creative, because spirit is creative. This creative power is impersonal and your ability to think is your ability to control it and make use of it for the benefit of yourself and others.

30. When the truth of this statement is realized, understood, and appreciated, you will have come into possession of the Master-Key, but remember that only those who are wise enough to understand, broad enough to weigh the evidence, firm enough to follow their own judgment, and strong enough to make the sacrifice exacted, may enter and partake.

31. This week, try to realize that this is truly a wonderful world in which we live, that you are a wonderful being that many are awakening to a knowledge of the Truth, and as fast as they awake and come into a knowledge of the "things which have been prepared for them" they, too, realize that "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man," the splendors which exist for those who find themselves in the Promised Land. They have crossed the river of judgment and have arrived at the point of discrimination between the true and the false, and have found that all they ever willed or dreamed, was but a faint concept of the dazzling reality.

Though an inheritance of acres may be bequeathed, an inheritance of knowledge and wisdom cannot. The wealthy man may pay others for doing his work for him, but it is impossible to get his thinking done for him by another or to purchase any kind of self-culture.

—S. Smiles

Study Questions with Answers:

231. Upon what principle does the theory and practice of every system of Metaphysics in existence depend?

Upon a knowledge of the "Truth" concerning yourself and the world in which you live.

232. What is the "Truth" concerning yourself?

The real "I" or ego is spiritual and can therefore never be less than perfect.

233. What is the method of destroying any form of error?

To absolutely convince yourself of the "Truth" concerning the condition which you wish to see manifested.

234. Can we do this for others?

The Universal Mind in which "we live and move and have our being" is one and indivisible, it is therefore just as possible to help others as to help ourselves.

235. What is the Universal Mind?

The totality of all mind in existence.

236. Where is the Universal Mind?

The Universal Mind is omnipresent, it exists everywhere. There is no place where it is not. It is therefore within us. It is "The World within." It is our spirit, our life.

237. What is the nature of the Universal Mind?

It is spiritual and consequently creative. It seeks to express itself in form.

238. How may we act on the Universal Mind?

Our ability to think is our ability to act on the Universal Mind and bring it into manifestation for the benefit of ourselves or others.

239. What is meant by thinking?

Clear, decisive, calm, deliberate, sustained thought with a definite end in view.

240. What will be the result?

You will also be able to say, "It is not I that doeth the works, but the 'Father' that dwelleth within me, He doeth the works." You will come to know that the "Father" is the Universal Mind and that He does really and truly dwell within you, in other words, you will come to know that the wonderful promises made in the Bible are fact, not fiction, and can be demonstrated by anyone having sufficient understanding.

Temples have their sacred images, and we see what influence they have always had over a great part of mankind; but, in truth, the ideas and images in men's minds are the invisible powers that constantly govern them; and to these they all pay universally a ready submission.

—Jonathan Edwards

NOTE: This has been the final part of *The Master Key System* in *Cultivate Life!* magazine. All earlier parts are available from the *Cultivate Life!* magazine archives: www.trans4mind.com/news/archives.html

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