

Cultivate Life!

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Cultivate Life! magazine

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When frightened or worried, simply come as awake to myself as I can, and see what I'm giving myself to look at in that moment.

—Guy Finley

15 Natural Strategies to Overcome Stress and Anxiety

by Wee Peng Ho

Don't let chronic anxiety cripple your life and sap your energy. Reclaim your vigor today by following these natural, drug-free ways that work.

Are you perpetually anxious, exhausted and burnt-out? While occasional anxiety over a person you care about or an upcoming event is normal, recurring anxiety that gets out of control is certainly not.

If left unchecked, anxiety can literally cripples lives. People suffering from chronic anxiety are often plagued by all sorts of possible worst case scenarios which in turn trigger secondary symptoms like panic, fear, worry, anguish, stress and chronic fatigue that threaten to incapacitate them.

They become anxious about getting out of bed in the morning, about going to work, about meeting other people, about staying alive, and even about anxiety itself.

Healing Your Anxieties Naturally

If you are experiencing some form of anxiety, it is important to acknowledge the condition. Denial can only delay proactive actions to address your condition and potentially compound the intensity of your next anxiety attack.

Perhaps some areas of your life that have been neglected for sometime need your attention, and anxiety is your body's way of getting your attention.

No matter what is the source of your anxiety, pick up some simple and natural ways below to rule your anxiety before it rules you.

Back to Basics

1. Return to Nature. Separation from Mother Nature coupled with constant bombardment with urban stress, electromagnetic radiations and poor nutrition can induce anxiety response. Our body has a primordial need to be nourished by nature and when this deprivation becomes chronic, physical and mental ailments occur. Replenish your manna reserve by scheduling regular breaks to spend time at the seaside, forest, or nature reserve alone or with your loved ones. Even a fifteen-minute walk through the park after a dinner can be invigorating to the body, mind and soul.

2. Feed on Wholesome Foods. All living things are meant to be sustained by whole living foods, not highly processed foods, drugs, synthetic preservatives or man-made additives, which may cause anxiety, insomnia and restlessness. Introduce as much fresh whole foods into your diet as you can to supply your body with essential nutrients. They may require more time to prepare, but the extra time you put in will mean spending lesser time in the clinic and more quality time with your loved ones.

3. *Learn the Art of Resting.* Each night we need at least seven hours of sleep, and we perform and learn better when we take a 10-minute break for every sixty to ninety minutes of concentrated work. Depriving yourself of rest can easily induce stress, irritability and anxiety. Do not brush aside any sleep problem that lasts for more than a week. Pick up at least one form of self-help relaxation technique that works well for you, such as yoga, aromatherapy, meditation or Tai Chi.

4. *Manage Modern-Day Stimulation.* People in the past may not have TV, radio, mobile or the Internet. But they also have less anxiety attack cases. These communication channels have a role to play in our modern life. But most of us abuse the use of them and just can't turn them off when it's clearly time to do so. With the ever-increasing stimulation and information we get on a daily basis, it's no surprise that many of us suffer from anxiety. Allocate time for selected media that really matter to your work and your well-being, and stick to the scheduled time.

5. *Let Go and Stop Worrying.* Are you trying to control and perfect everything in your life? If this sounds like you, check your rationale and assess your results so far. Are you trying to satisfy your own selfishness in the name of service to others? Are you happier by being a control freak? Many things in life are out of our control and therefore are pointless to worry about. Learn to recognize things that are within your control and those that are not. Then cut your anxiety by at least fifty percent by letting go of those in the latter.

Habits that Eliminate Anxiety

1. *Tune In to Life.* Anxiety is caused by the interplay of our dreadful thoughts about the future and unpleasant experiences of the past. It disconnects us from the now and disassociate us from our body. Cure this disengagement by learning how to tune in to your surroundings completely, rather than taking a detached stance which we often assume for most things in life. Live passionately! Unfurl your dormant senses as if you're using them for the first time and really look, hear, smell, taste and feel the pulse of every moment.

2. *Watch Your Mind with Meditation.* Silent contemplation is another great way to learn how to stay in the now as it familiarizes you with your own thoughts and the feelings associated with them. Meditation can also help you to identify anxiety-inducing thoughts which you may not be conscious of, giving you a chance to let go of them and be freed from their grip.

3. *Think Positive Thoughts.* Anxiety may be a nasty experience but do you know that you can get addicted to it? Research shows that we unconsciously sought out familiar mental states and emotions even though they may be making us miserable. But the good news is you can rewire your mind to think and feel positively. Give your brain a daily dose of positive affirmations to replace anxiety-promoting thoughts and bolster self-

confidence. Remind yourself that you're equally cherished and sustained by the source of all lives, and you have the same inner potential and resources like everyone else.

4. Nurture Inner Peace. Cultivate the habit of nurturing a peace of mind in your everyday life. Telling lies and doing things that conflict with your conscience create huge emotional burdens and energy black holes that can eventually manifest as recurring anxiety. Do what's necessary to make peace with your heart and eliminate actions that will bring about more anxiety.

5. Move Your Body Everyday. You know that exercise produces chemicals in the body that melt stress and calm frazzled nerves. But you are not doing it because you thought you've got to work out really hard to reap the benefits. But contrary to common beliefs, you only require *moderate* physical activity, thirty minutes a day to stay healthy and anxiety-free. What's more, gardening and brisk walking to your grocer count!

When Anxiety Attack Strikes...

1. Breathe with Gusto. When you are anxious, breathing becomes short and shallow unconsciously. You start to gasp for air like a fish out of water, taking in less oxygen which your organs need for optimal function. This lack of oxygen hampers clear thinking which may explain why thoughts and decisions made during anxiety usually perpetuate nervousness rather than relieving it. You can reduce the effects of anxiety and calm yourself down by breathing consciously. Take slow and gradually deep breaths like the way you do when you are up on top of a mountain. Feel your anxiety dissolving as you focus on your breathing.

2. Take One Step at a Time. When anxiety strikes, we are often derailed from our intended course and start making choices based on fear. Instead of allowing anxiety to run your life, why not put your trust on what is happening and live life one step at a time? Have faith in nature and let it unfold itself. Regardless of what is going to happen, rest in the belief that everything happens for a purpose.

3. Melt Your Anxiety with Visualization. Imagine someone who possesses strong inner strength transferring his or her power to you, while at the same time condensing your anxiety to the size of a frozen pea. The person can be Jesus Christ, Buddha, or even your favorite celebrity if inner strength is what you associated with him or her. Now with the frozen pea in your palm, throw it to the furthest corners of the universe as far as you can and see it disappear with a glimmer in the horizon.

4. Laugh Your Anxiety Away. When you feel an anxiety attack is imminent, faking laughter may fool your body into creating feel-good chemicals that can counteract with the anxiety's fight or flight response. Watch a funny video clip or read a couple of jokes can make laughter easier if you find it hard to fake a laugh. [Click here](#) if you need more ideas on how to use humor to cure anxiety.

5. Pour Out Your Anxiety with Free Writing. Bottling up all your emotions during an anxiety attack only creates an infinite loop that can get out of hand. Take out a few pieces of paper and pour out your anxiety with free writing. When you free write, you let go of your usual inhibitions, disengage from your inner critic and give your anxiety an outlet to express itself.

Wee Peng Ho conducts mindfulness-based business transformation training as well as stress reduction classes for companies and organizations. To learn more about how to better manage stress and anxiety, do check out the library of [Stress and Anxiety Resources](#) on his website, and sign up for his [free newsletter](#) for monthly tips.

For a stand-alone PDF or ePub download of this article go to: <http://bit.ly/gi2qOI>

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Letting Go of the Little Things in Life by Guy Finley

We have all been through those telltale moments in our lives when, due to a crisis of some kind beyond our control, we are momentarily able to see where we had lost sight of what was really worthwhile.

Maybe we think that we are the only one on earth who suffers emotionally in the way that we do, and then comes that moment when, in lashing out at someone for being so uncaring about our situation, we not only see that he or she is suffering as well, but also that we are the cause of it. Or maybe we're lucky enough to meet with someone who has less in life than we do, but who is willing and happy to share what little he or she has in spite of what tomorrow might bring. In such moments, if we still have a human heart, we realize in humility that we have been blind to the existence of our own greater estate.

In moments like these which, truth be told, are too far apart for our own spiritual good, we make this shocking but wonderful discovery: we have been lost in some little part of ourselves, unconscious to the influence of our own self-centered desires, as well as of the cost this unsuspected selfishness exacts on everyone around us.

Even more important than this initial revelation is the following one that appears within our new awareness. We can now see, by the faintest light, that *we had mistaken ourselves for someone we are not!* And in this same self-awakening we are granted that first priceless glimmer of self-knowledge that is sought after by all who would uncover the truth of themselves: we are beginning to see that we have been playing host to an unconscious nature that is not only blind to the world that it binds us to, but also that would have us believe that its little selfdom is the same as the actual great estate of our True Nature.

How can such a deception take place in us and go undetected? We would never willingly agree to be the blind agent of that which makes another human being ache, let alone hurt our own chances to grow into a kind and compassionate being. And yet the evidence reveals that we are indeed living under the sway of self-compromising influences that are invisible to us.

Our True Nature is not some static line drawn upon a horizontal plane, where access to what we may become depends upon what is already known. The truth is far from this. We are at our core a creature of the stars: beings whose original and celestial stuff is not only born of light, but also intended to live unbound.

It is this higher, yet still hidden Self of ours that beckons us to realize and enter into a greater life. And though its whispered wisdom often gets lost in the din of all the other voices that tell us what we need and where to look for it, if we listen closely enough we

can hear what our True Self would have us know: *Whenever we start to feel small it's only because we have unconsciously identified ourselves with life's little things.*

This article is excerpted from *Let Go and Live in the Now* by Guy Finley

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.

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~ *The Secret of Being Unstoppable* ~ by Guy Finley

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20 Ways to Banish Boredom **by Chuck Gallozzi**

Since you are interested in personal development, there is little chance that you suffer from boredom. How do I know? Simply because if you are interested in anything, you are not bored. After all, boredom is the absence of interest and enthusiasm. The words of Blaise Pascal [1] were filled with passion when he described the horror of living a life of boredom, “Man finds nothing so intolerable as to be in a state of complete rest, without passions, without occupation, without diversion, without effort. Then he feels his nullity, loneliness, inadequacy, dependence, helplessness, emptiness.”

In unguarded moments, even the best of us can slip into a period of boredom; however, in such a state, we don't live, but merely exist. Each period of boredom is a fragment of our life that is wasted. Imagine what we could have done if we had chosen to do something rather than nothing. The only way we can become bored is by forgetting it is a choice. As Wayne Dyer [2] wrote, “Life is never boring, but some people choose to be bored.”

But why would anyone choose to be bored? It's simply because we imagine it would take too much of an effort to break free of boredom. However, that is like saying, “It's too much of an effort to live, so I rather die!” Isn't that silly? It's worth whatever effort it takes to lead an exciting life. Besides, it's not difficult to get over boredom, and in a moment I will share 20 tools that will sweep it away from our lives.

But before I do that, I will make two more introductory comments about boredom. First, psychologists usually think of it as falling into three types. They describe boredom as the feelings we have when we are forced to do what we don't want to, are prevented from doing what we want to, or are uninterested in doing anything at a particular moment. It is the third type that this article is focused on because unless we remain wary, there is the danger of occasionally slipping into it. And if we allow that to happen, the periods of boredom may grow more frequent and longer.

My second point is that all our emotions serve a purpose. They can be positive and nurturing feelings that help our growth or they can be signals clamoring for our attention, trying to tell us it's time to make a change. In the case of boredom, our inner wisdom is shouting, “Hey! Wake up! There must be something else you want to be doing; start doing it!” Whenever we receive such a signal, here are 20 things we can do to turn it off and return to a life of enjoyment. We don't need all of the tools at once; one or two at a time should suffice.

20 Ways to End Boredom

1. To defeat your enemy, first get to know it. According to the Oxford Dictionary, BORED is an

adjective that means “feeling weary and impatient because one is UNOCCUPIED or LACKS INTEREST in one’s current activity. In other words, if we don’t have anything to do or we are not interested in what we are doing, we will be bored. The definition reveals the solutions to the problem of boredom.

For example, Tom says, “I get so bored sitting around and doing nothing (UNOCCUPIED) while I wait in the doctor’s office.” Well, do something! Read a book, magazine, or newspaper; do a crossword puzzle; write a letter; plan your schedule; work on your laptop; do something!

And Larry, a high school student, says “I don’t like math (LACKS INTEREST). It bores me.” Well, Larry, we cannot love someone or something unless we know about it. Since math is a required subject, get help if necessary and study it until you completely understand it; then you will grow to like it.

2. Take up a hobby or study art. Dean William R. Inge [3] explains, “Nobody is bored when he is trying to make something that is beautiful, or to discover something that is true.” So, get involved in painting, photography, poetry, or writing. Learn how to play a musical instrument or join a choir. Take up pottery, line dancing, or public speaking. Learn how to play chess, bridge, or mahjong.

3. Take a course. Learning new things makes life interesting. Try a cooking or computer course.

4. Meet new people, which is something you will do when you take a course or join a group.

5. Read interesting books, which is another way to meet interesting people (book authors, characters in novels, customers and staff in bookstores and libraries).

6. Listen to good music; it is relaxing, refreshing, rejuvenating, and uplifting.

7. See a good movie. You will become immersed in it and forget about boredom while being exposed to fresh ideas. You will enjoy it even more if you go with a friend or two.

8. Visit the park, for you’ll find ponds, gentle breezes, melodious birds, chirping insects, the scent of moist trees, the fragrance of blossoms, glittering streams, scurrying squirrels, the sound of children at play, inviting park benches, hot dogs, a canopy of trees providing shade, and much more.

9. Keep a journal to get the creative juices flowing and discover more about yourself. Creativity kills boredom. Oddly enough, writing on the subject “Why I am bored today” will become interesting. And writing questions and their answers provide us with solutions. Example questions include, “Why am I bored today? What am I doing wrong?”

What can I do to improve the situation? What do I choose to do? When will I do it? Why not now?"

10. Find something useful to do, such as cleaning a room, getting rid of clutter, washing dishes, or doing the laundry. Don't be fooled by unpleasant feelings that arise when it is time to do your chores. You see, it's not a matter of doing or avoiding something unpleasant, but a matter of doing what needs to be done now or growing unhappy with yourself later. And if you give in to the temptation to avoid your chores, your suffering is multiplied because not only do you fail to get things done, but you will experience boredom, regret, loss of self-discipline, a decline in self-esteem, a growing sense of helplessness, and more. Wow! That's a heavy price to pay just to avoid a little unpleasantness.

11. Choose a cause you believe in and dedicate yourself to it, for as Erich Fromm [4] wrote, "One of the worst forms of mental suffering is boredom, not knowing what to do with oneself and one's life. Even if man had no monetary, or any other reward, he would be eager to spend his energy in some meaningful way because he could not stand the boredom which inactivity produces."

Boredom is the failure to use our time in a fulfilling way. When we add meaning to our lives, when we have a purpose for being, we will live fulfilled lives and be free of boredom. What is your life purpose? If you don't know, you don't have to search for your 'true life's purpose.' All you have to do is pick a cause, any worthwhile one, and devote yourself to it. As you grow and evolve, you are free to change causes at any time.

A good place to begin is with a foundational cause that doesn't change. For example, your cause or purpose can be to DO GOOD. That purpose doesn't change, but how you express it, or what you specifically do will vary as you grow in knowledge and experience. If you choose to do good, you will look for ways you can avoid harming or causing pain to others, and ways of helping, inspiring, and encouraging others. You will also seek to give freely what others crave and need, which are love, attention, acceptance, understanding, patience. The wonderful thing about offering these gifts to the world is that the world will give back to you everything you give to it.

12. Here's good advice from Theodor Haecker [5], "The one sure means of dealing with boredom is to care for someone else, to do something kind and good." So, become a volunteer; help someone get over boredom; do something together; have fun.

13. Change the way you look at things. For instance, rather than thinking "work is something I have to do to make money to survive," think "work provides me with the opportunity to develop and practice skills, contribute to society, develop relationship skills, make money, help others, and find meaning in life." Negative thinking makes 'work' boring; positive thinking makes it exhilarating. As Wayne Dyer says, "When you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change."

14. Set goals; they give you something to plan, tasks to do, and the pleasure of looking forward to achieving them. Those who lead goal oriented lives are never bored and experience exhilaration with each accomplishment. Lou Holtz [6] concurs, for he said, “If you’re bored with life — you don’t get up every morning with a burning desire to do things — you don’t have enough goals.”

15. Learn meditation to discover yourself and practice mindfulness to discover the beauty and joy of the present moment. Your local library, bookstores, and the Internet have a plethora of information on meditation and mindfulness.

16. Boredom may be a sign that your body needs reinvigorating, so get up, get out, and take a walk! Exercise is critical. Don’t neglect it.

17. Don’t let your brain sink into the stupor of boredom. Reactivate it by challenging it with Brain Teasers, crossword puzzles, sudoku, and rebus puzzles. For fun, try creating your own rebus puzzles. To try your hand at some rebus puzzles now, visit [this web site](#).

18. Check your newspaper for a list of events, activities, and meetings you can participate in.

19. Get a pet; its care and companionship can offer many moments of pleasure daily. But don’t get one unless you have the time and willingness to properly care for it.

20. Whenever you are bored be thankful because it offers an excuse to visit weird, wacky, and wonderful web sites that are guaranteed to wash away your boredom and fill you with wonder. Start by visiting [here](#) or [here](#). And for some amazing videos, visit [here](#) or [here](#).

Now that you’ve been through my list, add your own ideas to it. And whenever you are beginning to get bored, pull out your list and choose your solution.

Caveats

1. You have to meet life halfway; you cannot just sit there and wait for it to entertain you. Take responsibility for your own happiness. As William C. Menninger [7] wrote, “The amount of satisfaction you get from life depends largely on your own ingenuity, self-sufficiency, and resourcefulness. People who wait around for life to supply their satisfaction usually find boredom instead.”

2. Awaken to the fact life is a gift. Unwrap it. How can you be interested in a gift you haven’t opened? If the gift is a toy, play with it! Awaken to the world around you; get out and get about. Breathe in the magic, mystery, and majesty of life.

3. Make time for self-reflection and self-questioning. Don’t be like the man who was so busy he didn’t have time to live; all he could do was exist. The purpose of life isn’t to

busy yourself today with the hope of becoming happy in the future; rather, it is to experience fulfillment and happiness each and every day.

4. Remain focused on the tasks at hand. If you allow your attention to drift, boredom will strike.

5. Ever see a cat stretched out in the sun? It isn't bored because it is content with what is. "Man is the only animal that can be bored." said Erich Fromm [8]. We are the only creatures that question what is and asks, "Is this all there is? You mean there isn't more to life?" In a word, we can fall into periods of ungratefulness. The cure to this is to practice gratitude, to count our blessings, to stop questioning and start enjoying. If I were a guest at a banquet, instead of wondering if this was all, I would rather enjoy what was available, wouldn't you? Remember, the more we are grateful for what we have, the more we will have to be grateful for.

6. Be willing to make an effort; be willing to pay the price for an exciting life. We already expect to pay for a ticket to gain admission to a major sports event or concert, so why do some expect to enter the greatest event of all, life, without paying a price; anything worthwhile has a price. And remember that "Only those who want everything done for them are bored." (Billy Graham [9]).

7. Eric Hoffer [10] admonished, "When people are bored it is primarily with themselves." And Dylan Thomas [11] said, "Somebody's boring me... I think it's me." So, ask yourself, what makes the people you like interesting? What can you learn from them and how can you make yourself interesting? For once you make yourself interesting, you will no longer be bored with yourself.

8. Allow yourself the luxury of occasionally doing nothing, just enjoy being, instead of doing. After all, our body needs moments of relaxation to refresh, rejuvenate, and invigorate itself.

9. If you find yourself bored, don't wait to become interested in something because interest doesn't come from waiting, but comes from taking action. So, act first by taking one of the 20 steps.

10. Boredom may be a boring subject, but it's an important one because it is the source of much misery. You see, it is accompanied by, or leads to, feelings of loneliness, emptiness, helplessness, inadequacy, sadness, despair, and even depression. When allowed to spin out of control, there can be serious repercussions. For example, some may try to escape boredom by turning to drugs, sex, and alcohol. Yet, all they succeed in doing is compound their problem. Faced with what they believe to be boring and pointless lives, some young people drop out of school and engage in violence, crime, and sexual promiscuity. Addictions trap them in a world of darkness from which they see no escape. So, you see, something as innocent as boredom can have severe consequences if it is not tackled early enough.

11. When someone is bored, they don't like what they're doing, but don't know what else to do. The missing element is a good idea. So, when you feel the pang of boredom, it is a signal to stop and THINK. If you don't like what you're doing, shouldn't you STOP doing it? Boredom is a state of passivity and its opposite is a state of activity and creativity. For instance, imagine sitting in a park and just staring at the algae covering the surface of a pond. Just sitting there, watching it is boring, but what if I decide to write a poem about it? Perhaps I could call it, "Ode to Shapeless, Stagnant, Pond Scum." Once I start, the boredom will dissipate. Writing a poem about pond scum may be challenging, but that is just what is needed. It is our nature to rise to and thrive on challenges. What is boredom, but the absence of a challenge?

12. Boredom is not caused by a lack of things to do as much as unwillingness to do anything. So, develop your self-discipline by taking action. It's okay to feel lazy and bored, but choose an activity and do it anyway.

13. Boredom is also a call for a change, but not a petty or small change, such as switching from one TV channel to another. Rather, it calls for a significant change, such as replacing your TV viewing with a martial art class.

14. If you're retired, get a part-time job or become a volunteer. Don't sit around the house if you can be out, contributing to life. Maintain an active life. If it's rest you're looking for, you'll find boredom. If it's activity you're looking for, you'll find rest.

Don't be afraid of getting bored because it is delivering an important message. It is telling us that we have free time. And free time is a valuable resource that can be used to enrich our lives. It's time that can be devoted to friends, family, or personal development. When we're at work or in school, there are only a few ways to spend our time, but during our time off, we are free to use it as we see fit. We can use it to create meaning in our lives and experience greater fulfillment. But only if we take the time to stop and think before we act.

[1] Blaise Pascal (1623~1662, French mathematician and philosopher)

[2] Wayne Dyer (www.waynedyer.com)

[3] Dean William R. Inge (1860~1954, Dean of St. Paul's, London)

[4] Erich Fromm (1900~1980, American psychologist)

[5] Theodor Haecker (1879~1945, German writer, translator and cultural critic)

[6] Lou Holtz (born January 6, 1937, a retired American football coach)

[7] William Claire Menninger (1899~1966, co-founder with his brother Karl and his father of The Menninger Foundation in Topeka, Kansas, which is an internationally known center for treatment of behavioral disorders)

[8] Erich Fromm (1900~1980, American psychologist)

[9] William Franklin "Billy" Graham, Jr. (born November 7, 1918, an American evangelical Christian evangelist who has been a spiritual adviser to twelve United States presidents)

[10] Eric Hoffer (1902~1983, American author, philosopher)

[11] Dylan Marlais Thomas (1914~1953. a Welsh poet and writer)

About Chuck Gallozzi

Chuck Gallozzi lived in Japan for 15 years, immersing himself in the wisdom of the Far East. He is the author of the book, [*The 3 Thieves and 4 Pillars of Happiness, 7 Steps to a Life of Boundless Joy*](#). He is also a Certified NLP Practitioner, speaker, and seminar leader. Among his additional accomplishments, he is also the Grand Prix Winner of a Ricoh International Photo Competition, the Canadian National Champion in a Toastmasters International Humorous Speech Contest, and the Founder and Head of the Positive Thinkers Group that has been meeting at St. Michael's Hospital, Toronto since 1999. He was interviewed on CBC's *Steven and Chris Show*, appearing nationally on Canadian TV. Chuck is a catalyst for change, dedicated to bringing out the best in others and his main home on the web is at: www.personal-development.com.

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The 3 Thieves and 4 Pillars of Happiness: 7 Steps to a Life of Boundless Joy by Chuck Gallozzi

End confusion about the nature of happiness and discover how to lead a life of boundless joy!

Happiness is the natural state of infants. But, as they are raised in a cynical world, they grow into children, adolescents, and adults who become jaded. They grow to believe happiness is no more than an elusive dream. Yet, this need not remain so, for we can reclaim our natural state of happiness.

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Seeing What Can't Be Seen by Beca Lewis

I turned away from the bins of olives and sun dried tomatoes ready to put them into our shopping cart. As I placed them in the top part of the basket, I felt as if something about the cart was “off”, but since I couldn't see what it was, I simply rearranged the items in the basket and got ready to move on to the next isle.

It was then that I noticed that Del had a little smile on his face. I figured he was trying to tell me something, so I glanced at the cart again.

It still felt as if something was “off” about it, but I couldn't see anything wrong. However, Del still didn't move, and he was still smiling, so I thought, “Ok,” he has done something to the food in the cart.”

Once again I turned to look and “magically” right where I had looked twice before and saw nothing, right where I had rearranged the food, but saw nothing, was a big brown root. It was huge! I had never seen anything like it before.

Del had placed the root in the shopping cart thinking that I would enjoy seeing something I had never seen before. He couldn't help laughing as he watched me look right through it as if it was invisible.

Why didn't I see the huge root that took up half of the top of the basket the first two times?

Because I had no context for it, because it was something I had never seen before in my life, and because I wasn't expecting anything new in my cart.

Why did I see it when I decided to look again? Because I knew that there *must* be something different in the cart due to the effects it was causing, like Del smiling at me as if he had a secret, and things in the cart appearing off.

I was also willing for it to be something I had never seen before, all of which shifted my perception. The result; I saw something that had been there all along.

In 1840 two Newtonian mechanics, Urbain Le Verrier, and John Couch Adams, predicted the position of the then undiscovered planet Neptune. They didn't see the planet, but they did see the effects something was having on the orbit of the planet Uranus.

With the open mind that something must be causing these effects, they kept on looking for the cause. Eventually Johann Gottfried Galle discovered the planet Neptune in 1846. It had been there all along.

In the year 400 BC a Greek named Democritus came up with the idea that something could be cut into its smallest piece and it would still be the same object. He was also the first person to write the word *atom*.

Today we all accept that there is such a thing called an atom even though no one has ever seen one. We accept their existence based on the effects they have on other objects.

Think how this applies to our lives.

Imagine what we never see because we have no context within our lives to see it, or we aren't expecting it, or we aren't willing to see it in a different form. For example, if we have no context for the true idea of companionship, security, love or wealth, how do we know it is there?

We can look for their effects knowing there has to be a cause. We can begin with the point of view that they *must* be present. We can be willing to see what we have never seen before.

We can shift any situation that appears to be a result of lack into an awareness of wealth in whatever form will meet our need. We can accomplish this shift without effort and immediately experience the results, not because we create something, or will something into existence, but because we release the perception that blinds us and move to one that will allow us to see what has always been present.

The only thing required of us is to give up old points of view, and look again with a new point of view. We have to leave the standpoint and perception that all that exists is what we can see, and realize that what we see is the effect of a Spiritual Reality.

When I was eighteen, as I was walking down a flight of stairs, I glanced up through a skylight at the blue sky and white clouds and knew in that instant that the effect called *beauty* meant that there is a cause called Intelligent Divine Love.

We will never see that cause with our physical eyes, but we can always see its constant effect in our lives. We will see companionship, security, love and wealth as the effects of Divine Love in an infinite variety of forms, when we understand that they have always been and always will be present.

Check out your shopping cart of life. In this very moment there is more in it than you think! ###

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>

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~ 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.

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Feeling Good On the Inside by Steve Wickham

Faith speaks a language all its own.

It converts the will of the flesh to buckle into alignment with the will of the Spirit to secede from brokenness. Faith is the vehicle for overcoming.

Faith also provides the means for feeling good on the inside. But it's the wisdom of prudence that motivates a person to decide for it. The following three visceral targets are in sight:

1. PEACE OF MIND

Oh the price for peace between the ears! No more lying awake at night for thoughts whirring through the chastened mind. No more dwelling on matters we can't affect, or procrastinating over issues we can affect.

Peace of mind is a search. It's achieved in different ways for different people. But general advice still applies.

Perhaps it's a matter more of intentional focus, self discipline and the paradoxical ability to relax. Practical things assist. Not taking too much on. Agreeing to not stress or fret about tomorrow, but planning the best we can anyway; then leaving it at that.

For regretful or hurt pasts, we do all we can to deal with them in courage and truth, accepting that God's grace is sufficient in all these situations. God's with us and for us.

2. CALMNESS OF HEART

If the mind is the vestibule for thinking, the heart is the portent for feeling.

How do we calm our feelings when most of them occur involuntarily? The answer is we can influence our feelings by the way we think. Even better if we've achieved peace of mind!

Even though the mind can bring order to the heart, it's the heart that underpins our attitudes to everything. There's good reason to do whatever we can to establish and maintain calmness of heart.

Whatever we do in this area, and abiding to the truth as it's personally discerned is a big part of it, will be blessed as an investment for the rest of life. From the heart, "flow the springs of life" (Proverbs 4:23b NRSV).

3. SAFETY OF STOMACH

Most Westerners take for granted the very basic blessedness in having a full stomach. Our temptation is to overeat, or fill up on the wrong foods. Some of these make us feel sickly inside, whilst others do little for our energy and overall wellbeing.

Safety of stomach is a thing eluding most of us. We tend to put up with bloating and other temporary, but chronic, conditions. We practice the same dietary sins day-in-day-out, interspersed by fleeting 'diets' of discipline. Some of these 'diets' are over the top.

Feeling good on the inside, for me personally, is about eating three moderate sized meals a day and two pieces of fruit, to be had at snack time. The odd piece of birthday cake is then affordable.

Most of us don't connect spirituality with our stomachs. But there is a connection.

ORDERING LIFE BY ITS CONSEQUENCES

Wisdom must be about planning life around consequences.

If we want to feel well on the inside we'll be motivated to act in ways that achieves peace of mind, calmness of heart and safety of stomach.

The consequences have it. Life is very predictable regarding these innermost things. If we think, feel and eat well we'll enjoy preferable consequences.

To have the very best of life we should want to feel good on the inside. ###

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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~ 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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Kissing is Good For You!

by Amy, RN

Reasons Why Kissing is Good for You!

It helps prevent tooth decay (better than brushing your teeth?) Dr. Peter Gordon, Dental Advisor at the British Dental Association, explains. "After eating, your mouth is full of sugar solution and acidic saliva, which cause plaque build up. Kissing is nature's own cleaning process", he adds. "It stimulates saliva flow and brings plaque levels down to normal." I asked my dentist and after he blushed, he agreed.

It relieves tension. A passionate kiss is a great relaxation technique, says stress consultant, Michelle Kay McNabb. " When your mouth is in a kissing position, you are almost smiling and as our emotions and body language are so closely linked, it's almost impossible to smile and feel tense at the same time," she explains. "Also, your breathing becomes deeper and your eyes close when you kiss; that's what you do when you relax. It's a perfect way to shut out the world."

It helps you lose weight.-- just how long can you do that? You need use 3000 calories to lose one pound, i.e., 30,000 minutes, 500 hours... "A long kiss makes the metabolism burn up sugar faster than usual," says Claire Potter. "The calories burned depend on the intensity, but you can rely on 10 calories for every 10 minutes."

It slows the aging process. (That's important!) "Kissing helps to tone your cheek and jaw muscles, so they're less likely to sag," says Cosmo's Fitness Consultant, Claire Potter.

It increases fitness levels. (Okay, now there is really no reason why you can't start some exercise now). "Your heart is pumping, your pulse is racing..."If kissing is exciting, you release adrenaline into the bloodstream and your heart pumps more blood around your body," says Dr. Susan Hotchkies. "It's a great cardiovascular workout."

It's a good indication of what's to come. (Make sure he or she is not married, please). Kissing a new guy or gal gives you the perfect opportunity to check out his or her pheromones - the chemical messengers that signal sexual attraction. " The first kiss is always a good way to work out if there's any chemistry between you, "says Paul Brown, a sexual and marital therapist. " In humans, it's thought that smells plays a vital part in subconscious attraction, and if your pheromones aren't 'in tune', you're unlikely to hit off!

It boosts self-esteem. There's nothing better than a passionate kiss for a major dose of feel good factor. "In theory, when you're kissing, you're happy. And when you're happy, you feel good about yourself," says psychotherapist Paul Zeal.

Don't leave kissing out of romance. Kiss someone special today and see if your love life improves. ###

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Start a New Life! is based on principles which have helped thousands of people, endorsed by experts over the centuries. It is developed by Peter Shepherd, author of *Transforming the Mind* and *Daring to be Yourself* - the former is free to read online and the latter is a special bonus that is only available in digital format with **Start a New Life!** !

For full information go to www.trans4mind.com/new_life_course/

Fasting For Weight Loss - Why Is It So Effective?

by Alysse Addis

Fasting for weight loss is most definitely a hot topic. With everybody getting fed up with FAD diets something new and more effective is desperately needed. Diets almost never work for many reasons. One of the main reasons is simply because no one can stock with it for long enough to actually make it work. Diets also deprive your body of essential nutrients in a hope of enforcing weight loss.

This is why fasting for weight loss is so effective. Firstly, there's no dieting involved. You get to eat whatever you want and there are no restrictions like with ordinary diet plans. For most of us the mere thought of not being able to eat certain foods can instill a sense of depression at the mere thought of going on yet another diet.

The problem of willpower and sticking to a rigorous eating plan has many pitfalls - pitfalls that I'm sure you are well aware of. Sticking to any eating plan for a day or two is easy. Anyone can do it. The problem is with sticking to it over a longer period of time and this is exactly why fasting for weight loss is so effective. You only need to be able to stick to it for a day or two at a time.

Whilst dieting is designed to deprive your body, fasting is designed to cleanse your body. One of the reasons why so many people can't lose weight is because their systems are so clogged up that the natural process of eliminating fat is no longer possible. With poor digestion losing weight becomes an uphill battle.

When you are fasting for weight loss you do more than just lose weight. You cleanse your body and give your digestive system a well deserved break. If you look at the rate and quantity that most people eat, its no wonder we are an obese nation. Its estimated that the average person has 10 pounds of pure fat because of toxins. These toxins can be anything from preservatives and colorants to nicotine and alcohol that the body neutralizes by enveloping it in fat. This is the worse kind of fat and can be every difficult to lose.

Fasting for weight loss is not some miracle new diet or instant weight loss fix. It can be tough when you are first starting out, but as you get used to it you will soon see just how easy it really is to lose weight with this healthy and proven method. ###

Visit the author's website: <http://fastingtoloseweightblog.com>

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=====
Bruce H. Lipton on Sounds True

go to <http://bit.ly/h2bFTK>

The Importance Of Public Speaking Skills

by Alvin Loh

Public speaking skills are often overlooked by people as being unimportant or they may think that they will never be called to speak in public, that's why they do not bother to get themselves acquainted with any public speaking skills. Truth is, more often than not, it is these people that often get tongue tied and being in a state of total meltdown when faced with the possibility that they will be asked to present a topic in public, even a topic they know inside out.

To some people, they do not put high importance or regards to the importance of having good public speaking skills because they have an impression that good public speaking skills are only for people in sales or marketing. This is untrue. Good public speaking skills are also a hallmark of good communication skills and having good communication skills is essential for any career, unless you are the only person in the entire office. For example, if you are signing up for a new job, any job at all, you will probably need to go for an interview. During the interview, the interviewer does not just judge you based on your qualifications, your ability to communicate, both spoken and unspoken, also constitutes a part of the decision making process of whether you will be accepted or not. If you are a student in college, your ability to deliver a good public speaking session will also be tested on regular basis. An example of this will be the various class presentations that you need to do over the course of the semester and the grading criteria will almost certainly have an element of "clarity of delivery" in it. By not knowing how to give a clear and effective presentation using good public speaking skills will only disadvantage yourself because if you cannot communicate clearly to your audience, it is as if you have never learnt the subject at all.

This is one of the reasons perhaps why a lot of ideas by some of the most intelligent people on the planet are only discovered many years after their death. One of the possible reasons is that although they are highly intelligent and have written very useful information, they just cannot seem to put through to people what they are thinking about due to their lack of ability to communicate to a large group of people using public speaking techniques.

Public speaking skills are not only used in situation where you have to address a large group of people. Communication skills and public speaking skills are inter-related, hence, if you improve your public speaking skills, you also invariably improve your interpersonal communication skills with your peers and family.

Therefore, if you are ever presented with an opportunity to practice public speaking or learn public speaking skills, don't shy away from it. Whether you are in class, in the office or in any kind of setting that requires you to deliver a message to an audience, pick up your courage and go for it. Public speaking is a skill and the more you use it and practice it, the better you will become. To improve your public speaking skills or even if

you are a new beginner, there are a lot of public speaking audiobooks or guide books to learn from. By picking up a good public speaking skill, you will have an edge over others who don't. ###

Visit the author's website: <http://www.easypublicspeaking.info>

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Fear of Public Speaking

by Kevin Nyo

Do you have a **fear of public speaking**?

I would guess that if you are reading this, you probably do. For the longest time, I had the same fear. It's actually not that uncommon. In fact, various studies have shown that the fear of speaking in public is ranked higher than the fear of death. In other words, some people would rather die than have to speak in public. This may sound a bit extreme to many of you but if you get nervous, shaky, and sweat like crazy just at the thought of speaking in front of a group of people, then you can probably see that it's somewhat understandable, at least at the moment.

I remember I used to be deathly afraid of public speaking. My legs would get weak as I made my way in front of the audience. My mouth would tremble as I would begin to utter the first few words. I would sway back and forth or do some awkward things with my hands. I would avoid eye contact at all cost unless I find someone with a smiling face, then I would just stare at that person for the whole speech.

Have you experienced these things? It's not exactly the best experience to have is it? Fortunately, there is a way to overcome fear of public speaking. Just to give you my experience, I went from what I described above to one day being able to confidently get up in front of an audience. I'm sure there are plenty of ways of overcoming the fear of public speaking but what I will describe is what worked for me. Now for people with a severe fear of public speaking phobia, professional help may be needed.

How to Overcome Fear of Public Speaking

1. Understanding the cause of the fear.

The first step in getting rid of your fear of speaking in public is to find out why it's a fear in the first place. The main reason is the fear of being embarrassed. This includes being laughed at, messing up, or doing anything foolish and having the audience judge you. Do you get nervous when you are in a room by yourself? Probably not. It's only when there are other people, people who might judge you or think badly of you, that causes you to get nervous usually.

Knowing why you have this fear of being in front of an audience will help you figure out what to do to overcome the fear. Once the fear is revealed, it can be conquered. It could also be that you had a bad experience in the past that triggers feeling of fear. Either way, for most people, it comes down to the fear of what others might think of them.

2. Change your mindset.

In order to overcome the fear of public speaking, you need to be able to change your mindset. When you can go from thinking about yourself and what the audience might

think of you to thinking about the audience and how you can best deliver your message across, you will be able to conquer this fear.

3. Practice.

Although you may still get nervous even if you have done dozens of speeches, the more you do it, the easier it will get. When you practice, it's best to do it in front of a supporting group of people. This will not only make public speaking easier but it will also help you gain confidence. You can do things like join your local Toast Masters Club where you will get the chance to practice speaking in front of people who are all there to help you become a confident, well spoken speaker.

The way I was able to defeat my fear of speaking came in two phases. The first phase was the "I Don't Care" phase. In high school, in order to get an A in my speech class (we were required to take it), I had to join the speech and debate team. Since grades were really important to me at the time, I reluctantly joined even though at the time, I was still afraid of speaking in public.

Since my sole purpose was to get an A in the class, I didn't care about winning any debates or speech contests. Because of this attitude, when I got up in front of people to speak, I wasn't nervous. Even when I messed up and forgot what to say, I still didn't get nervous because I really didn't care since just joining the team was a guaranteed A for me.

Is this the best way, not care? Of course not but it helped me. This was the first phase. The next phase took place during my sales career as a trainer. I went from not caring to focusing on delivering my message across. My job was to motivate people. It's hard to do that if you focus on what people will think of you. So gradually, my focus went from thinking about myself, to not caring, and finally to thinking about my audience.

Instead of thinking, "What if I mess up?" I thought, "How can I best impact the people in my audience?" Those are two completely different questions. One question will put you in the mindset of fear while the other will put you in the mindset of power.

So overcoming fear of public speaking comes down to having the right mindset and practicing. Start practicing in front of supportive people. You can do this by joining Toast Masters. From there, as you get more comfortable, your focus will shift from you to the audience. Once your focus is on creating value for them, your fear of public speaking will be gone. Good luck. ###

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The Comparison Trap by Leo Babauta

I love reading about other people's work setups, I really do. It's one of my guilty pleasures.

I'll read about another blogger's computer setup, or what kind of notebook and pen he uses, or how he works standing up or on a treadmill or while doing handstand pushups and growing a vegetable garden.

And when I read about some cool setup someone else has, some cool new way of working, I inevitably want to try it. I'm only human.

You've done this too, probably. You might read a review of some new software that will help you create, or a new fashion style or some cool shoes or beautiful furniture or the newest iPad, or the latest iPhone app. Or maybe you're a minimalist and read someone's barefoot running article, or how they're living out of a backpack, and want to try that.

It's a trap.

We're endlessly looking at how others do things, for inspiration and ideas ... but we end up wanting to try those things too. That sounds harmless until you realize that you'll buy almost anything because someone wrote about it and made it sound amazing. You'll live a life of an endless series of purchases because of what other people are doing. And it never ends.

Even if you don't buy stuff, you'll change your life endlessly, based on what others are doing. You'll give up your couch, you'll stop buying Ikea furniture, then give up your cell phone, then give up your computer, then start doing yoga, then become a Zen monk, then create a tech startup. Those things are amazing, sure ... but when does it ever end?

When do we ever feel content with the life we're living?

If you look to the lives of others,
you'll always find yourself lacking.
Look instead at what you have,
and be grateful.
Reduce your needs,
and be content.
And your life of striving
for perfection, for the future,
will become a life of balance,
of the moment, of inner peace. ###

About Leo Babauta:

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

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by Guy Finley

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There is the Pot of Gold at the End of the Rainbow! **by Sushil Baboo**

What an affirmation, what a belief, a paradox to reality, you might say. If you are willing to read further you might just as well believe in this truth, that there dwells the pot of gold at the end of the Rainbow.

Are you willing to reach for it or just hope that it may be true?

The proverbial statement made many generation back, might have proven itself untrue to many who first heard it and believed it, but somehow just did not make it to the end of the Rainbow.

Who is this insane person, you might ask, who says that there exists the pot of gold at the end of the Rainbow. But I say dear reader, that it is true, not just a fanciful statement made to raise our expectations by some philosophical guy.

The Gold can be anything that you might consider just as precious to your very being. It is the value that you attribute to your desire, which turns it to Gold. Your consideration of value is what is important. The Key words are attaching importance, your being and the value attributed.

Just as much as a seeker of change see and undergoes a series of differences that makes him/her a more complete being, so does the journey to the end of the Rainbow, bring forth various changes to the explorer in his/her journey to success.

This brings us to the next word, Success. What is success? A belief of conquest, a surmounting of odds to reach a desired goal, a state of happiness, What ever it can be termed, there is but a Desire, a Want, a Willingness to Achieve, which forms in the person a feeling of having reached his/her level of goal.

In the earlier times when a person had to leave the convenience of his home, his hearth to fend for his family, he did walk many miles, sometimes alone, sometimes in the company of his family, when he did find what seemed comfortable, he did pitch his home and begin a new life. What and how much, in the new surroundings, if his desires were met, was the Gold at the end of the Rainbow.

You may go forth and chase a Rainbow, but before long, you will find yourself in an entirely new area, new surroundings. May be it would be too late in the day to retrace your steps, you may want to call it a day in your new surroundings, and when the new day dawns, you will see the new area in an entirely different way. Maybe the new surroundings will throw up limitless opportunities that would make you feel Great, Happy or just about make you an Adventurer, an Explorer.

That feeling of happiness or successfulness is the Gold at the end of the Rainbow.

This brings us to the statement made earlier in the article, Why do so many lose faith in this proverb. Why do people seem critical in their later years to this proverb, what they did consider, at one time of their life as true.

The difference is in the Determination.

A baby learns to turn on its side, to crawl, to stand, all on its own. There is an inborn virtue of determination in each of us. As we go through life, taking and absorbing all that life gives us, we are prepared and are determined in our exploration, but so long as the ground is even we accept our determination to succeed, however, when the incline to make it to the top of our goal starts, we seem to lose our determination to reach our desired goal.

Success is not external to us but very much a subject, internal to our very being. Determination is what is needed to succeed in what we perceive as Gold. The value system is what we have attributed to our desire, a culmination of our efforts.

Why then, do we settle for a poor bargain of what we set out to achieve.

In earlier times when the population was not so large as today, we do find very few people who voiced their opinions to our quest, our desire. They did not weigh the alternatives that may have been present, but looked at their dreams, or desires in isolation. This attitude did bring forth many discoveries, new insights, new achievements and success. Today, we sacrifice our desires by putting it for evaluation to many who may be not judicious enough to appreciate our desire and the more number of changes or evaluations that we carry out, our dreams and desires just about gets knocked out of our scope of determination to succeed.

Take a look at another proverb that brings forth this truth. The Road To Hell Is Paved With Stones Of Good Intentions. Note the two words in this proverb, Hell and Good Intentions. Strange and paradoxical you may feel. How can there be Hell when there is Good Intentions.

Oh! Yes it is true. We all have dreams and did some work on its achievements with determination but then as life and age progresses we start to evaluate them through others whom we see as more competent and then discard the very desires that had much meaning to each one of us. These then form the stones of good intentions.

But why Hell you might ask. Isn't Hell supposed to be a bad place you might say? Hell is more a figurative word in this proverb. What do we do with the desires that we could not succeed; we throw them out. Out were? Hell! Hell meaning, the internal bin in each of us, which stores the waste, the bad, the rotten things that we discard.

When determination to success is lost, we are left with discarded dreams. Sometimes, even the best of desires are skewed in our search for success that we go awry and reach Hell instead of a successful life. It is important that not only the desire to succeed is kept in focus but also the result of our success that should be beneficial to humanity in general. This is what it takes to make a recipe for a successful pot of Gold.

The pot of Gold need not be, at a distance, it can be anywhere, right next to you, but, yes, it is at the end of your enterprise, the Rainbow. It is not the journey what counts, but the outcome of your determination that is important. Look at the number of successful leaders, leaders in any form of enterprise, be that politics, corporate, education, science or may be just about any form of vocation. What do you find in them, a steady unwavering focus, a desire that is not diluted, and a hard determination to succeed?

Keep the focus on your desire, absorb the various alternatives, amend the paths to reach your goal, but do not change the basic desire. Be determined in your search for your pot of Gold, you will surely find it, next to you or anywhere, just as the rainbow which has a start and a finish. Reach for your Gold! it is there for each one of us. The area of our activity and the span of the rainbow is not what the gold is, but it is the fruit of our determined effort that is waiting for us when we succeed.

You have the capability with which you were born, a virtue that has been instilled by nature, nurture it and you will find the Pot of Gold at the end of your Rainbow. ###

sushil.baboo@yahoo.com

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We are Energy Beings!

Excerpt from *Sleep Well, Be Healthy*, by John Living

The Human Being

We believe what we can see. When we see another human being we see their face, their clothes, and other parts of the body that are not hidden. We see movements and expressions which we can interpret as signals.

But our sight is limited to a small range of the electro-magnetic spectrum, that which includes the colours of the rainbow; we cannot see infra red or ultra violet light, although the effects of light in these colours can be observed.

Some people can see more - and they report that our bodies are surrounded by auras, and that there are flows and patterns of different colours in the various parts of our auras.

Western medicine considers the body to be a bio-electro-chemical system, with various organs that can be dissected and sometimes exchanged, like using spare parts to repair an automobile or computer.

Eastern wisdom accepts that there are systems that cannot be seen, but are crucial to a person's health and well-being.

Both are correct - but the body is more than even the combination of these views. Life force is recognized as existing, but has never been examined; and many religions believe that we 'have a Soul' without being able to describe it completely. Perhaps it is more correct to know that we are Souls that are having experiences in human bodies.

We are Energy Beings !

Physicists have shown that each atom is made of sub-atomic particles, all of which are forms of energy; and the nucleus seems to be surrounded by electrons, which are the basic form of electricity with its associated magnetism.

Such atoms combine to form molecules - and the properties of molecules differ from that of their components.

For example, hydrogen and oxygen are gases - they combine to form water which has different freezing and boiling points from the constituent elements, and can be drunk and used for cooking. When combined with other elements the properties can change to be acidic or alkaline.

The cells of our body are made from molecules - and controlled by the molecular structures that form our DNA; viruses are tiny sub-sets of DNA portions that can interfere with our own DNA in cells and cause sickness.

It seems that for animate life to exist, a form of DNA is required; conversely the DNA structure itself has a form of life - and this is so for even the submicroscopic sized viruses.

Our body cells form all our bones, flesh, organs, nerves, neurons, and blood - our physical Being is all made of these energies doing different jobs, like teams of dancers making different dance patterns at varying speeds.

A body may have its full complement of DNA and cellular structures, but may not be alive - so there is more to life than just energy cells and electro-magnetism. This is confirmed by the auras of people; a person whose aura is badly damaged, misshapen, extremely dark, or missing probably has little 'life force'.

Edgar Cayce was about to enter an elevator, when he noticed that he could not see any aura around any of the other people waiting to descend. He stood back, and so did not get killed with those who rode the elevator to their death when it crashed. Cayce's record in distant Healing of people that he had never met personally also proves (to all except those who rely totally on the 'must be repeatable' proofs of non-spiritual science) that energies are involved that are not of the physical dimension, although they may operate in it.

Some people, such as Cayce, may be able to see some of these energies some of the time. Most of us do not have this ability - but we cannot see radio waves either, yet know that they exist, because we can hear their effect on a radio receiver.

Currently people know much more than those who lived a hundred years about the cosmos, this earth, health, and how electro-magnetic energies work.

But we do not know it all ! And the biggest gap in our knowledge concerns other dimensions of existence.

We have a choice - we can believe that the physical dimension is the total of all creation, or we can accept that other dimensions exist - perhaps with life forms unknown to the physical world.

If we choose to have an open mind, we can endeavour to improve our knowledge and understanding of such other dimensions, and find ways to work with the various energies that operate in them. ###

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Irrational Love **by Dr. Linda Sapadin**

It makes no sense.

Some people, like Sandy, crave intimacy. Yet, the things they do to obtain it have just the opposite effect. Their behavior drives people away, even the most patient of people. Here, an example of how it works:

Sandy has a new boyfriend. He seems to be everything she ever wanted. He, handsome, cool, suave, and in love with her. The more time she spends with him, the more she wants to spend with him. She admits she has developed an *insatiable hunger* for this guy. He fills her every need.

Sounds like a great whirlwind romance until Sandy admits that, on occasion, she lashes out at him with fury. What does he do that is so awful?

Last week, he went out with his friends rather than be with her.

This felt treasonous to her. How could he choose to be with his stupid guy friends over being with her? How dare he? Who does he think I am? Just somebody who could be disposed of like that? No way! I'll make him pay.

She made him pay, all right. She accused him of being selfish and mean and miserable. She chewed him out with choice curse words. Doesn't he know he should not hurt her *ever*? Her needs should come first. He should think of her before he thinks of his friends.

It only took a short time for Sandy's anger to escalate into red-hot rage. When the embers finally began to smolder, Sandy's fury turned to another target *herself*.

"I can't believe how I acted. I was out-of-control. How could I have cursed him out like that? I'm so embarrassed. I wish I could crawl into a hole and die. How could I make it up to him?"

One way she could make it up to him was obvious. She could be sexy. She could be seductive. She could tell him how much she loves him and how sorry she is. And it works. Pretty soon, he comes around. He forgives her. He even tells her how much he loves her passionate nature.

And all is well with the world *until* the next time. And there is always a next time.

Sandy desperately wants to have love in her life. Yet, she can act so unloving. She's not stupid. Nor uneducated. How could someone so smart act so completely irrational? She feels confused.

It doesn't seem to make sense.

One thing she does know, however, is that in those crazy out-of-control moments, she's feeling totally abandoned. It's like she's being tossed about and battered by a huge wave that crashed down on her. No sense of self to turn to. No safe harbor. No sanctuary. Nothing she can rely on. Nobody she can count on.

How can Sandy tone down these powerful feelings of abandonment? The answer does not lie outside of herself (with the perfect lover), but inside of herself. She needs to develop a stronger sense of self. And learn how to modulate her feelings and calm herself down. And be there for herself when others disappoint her.

The road from irrational love to mature love is a long, hard road.

But is it worth all the effort? No question. Ask anyone who has made the journey. ###

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

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~ **It's About Time!** ~

The Six Styles of Procrastination and How to Overcome Them
by **Linda Sapadin, Jack Maguire**

Overcoming procrastination is one of those things we'll get around to--eventually. *It's About Time!* goes beyond time management books on this eternal problem by tracing procrastinating behavior to personality traits and early family dynamics. Using quizzes and case studies, psychologist Linda Sapadin helps readers find their own personal style and then helps them tailor an individual program for change.

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"Loser!"

How Labels Stick to Your Child, and Affect Behavior

Empowering Parents Interviews Josh Shipp

"Freak. Loser. Idiot. Geek." These are just some of the ugly labels kids throw around every day at school. Chances are, your child has been called names even worse than these. The sad fact is that the more times your kid is called a hateful name, the more he'll start to believe it's true.

EP: Josh, you say that you were given a lot of labels growing up. How did that affect your behavior?

JS: I was a so - called "prom baby," so from the time I was born I had a label. As a foster kid, I was destined statistically to fail, and people treated me that way. The fact is that most foster kids don't graduate from high school. And believe it or not, a huge percentage of homeless people--some studies say as high as 50 percent--are former foster kids. If you have a learning disability or if you have ADD, the prevailing attitude is that you are destined to fail at certain things. So as a child, I felt like most people had already written me off and given up on me simply because of these labels.

The problem is that if a child hears these things over and over again, he's going to begin to believe it. He buys into the label he's been given, ultimately acts it out and starts to perceive himself that way.

EP: Why do you believe that to be so?

JS: I believe it's because you come to a point where you say, "All right, fine--you think I'm a rebel, I'll show you a rebel." It just gets so repetitive and beaten into your brain that eventually you fold and you accept it. I believe this is why identity is the number one problem facing teens; how we see the world determines how we interact with every other part of it. To give you an idea of what I'm talking about, when I was 15 years old and moved in with the family who eventually adopted me, I went to an eye doctor for the first time. He told me I had horrible vision--something I hadn't realized. I got glasses and immediately, I saw the world differently. In fact, I could not believe how different everything in my world looked to me. I didn't know that all that time, I should have been able to see the fine details in the clouds or the grass or in paintings. I didn't know that you should be able to read a sign or recognize someone from 20 feet away.

The same thing is true with your identity as a person--you just don't realize it's an issue until you've dealt with it. And after the fact, you say, "Oh my gosh, it didn't always have to be this way; the world is really not the way I thought it was. I've been banging my head against the wall for no reason and fighting against the wrong people all this time." Many people are blind to this as an issue in their lives. They write it off, as opposed to

taking responsibility for themselves, instead of saying, "The issue lies within me and how I'm viewing the world." Again, this comes down to identity.

EP: What do you think happens to teens--and their sense of identity--when they're labeled?

JS: I'll give you an example. We had a kid in school who everyone called "Stinky." At first I thought it was funny, but ultimately I thought it was sad, because he began to own that name. He would actually put it on his papers at school as if that was his real name. He heard it so much that eventually he just folded and said, "I guess that's who I am."

Here's what every kid needs to learn: if you don't identify yourself--decide who you are--other people will do it for you. When kids get called a loser by a few people, they begin to believe they're losers--and then they start to act like losers. The thing is, just because you've failed doesn't mean you're a failure. I've been to Taco Bell, but that doesn't make me a taco. It's almost funny because of how ridiculous it is, but sadly, kids don't see the ridiculousness. They think, "Wow, I've failed two or three times at this; that must mean I'm a failure." But it doesn't mean they're a failure--it just means those times didn't go as well. So instead of caving in and saying "Screw it; I'm a loser," what your child needs to say is, "Well, this is how I can approach it differently next time." Or "I wasn't as prepared as I should've been. Next time I'll try harder." The trick is for your child to focus on how he can improve, instead of on giving up.

EP: That makes a lot of sense. When a kid starts to believe the labels they're given, it sounds like it can show up in their behavior in all sorts of ways.

JS: Absolutely. One of the things they do is shut down. So many kids have these enormous brick walls built around themselves because they've been labeled. Often, they're just trying to protect themselves. Many lash out and bully others. Personally, I believe that if kids knew who they were and felt good in themselves, they wouldn't be bullies because there would be no need for it. When you bully others, what you're really trying to do is siphon some energy and self - esteem off of other people, because you yourself are lacking it in yourself.

EP: In that case, how can you as a parent help your child to find their "core identity" so that labels don't affect them? As a parent, I think I'd have a tough time finding the right words to talk about this.

JS: I believe it's a repetition and consistency thing. As often as possible, tell your child, "We believe in you; we see the best in you." You never know when these words are needed and where they're going to land. In fact, I believe it's particularly important to be positive if you have a child who isn't opening up to you. Maybe your teen comes home after a nightmare of a day at school. You have no idea what went on and don't understand why your child is so moody and irritable. That was me ten years ago. I will tell you that those little chats my parents had with me made all the difference. They kept

saying, "Josh, you're not a problem, you're an opportunity." They said it millions of times. Some days, it just bounced right off of me but there were some days I really needed to hear it, and it got through when it needed to. I want to stress that my parents were ordinary--they didn't have exceptional skills or advanced degrees in child psychology. But they were loving, positive and consistent--and they believed in me. What they said wasn't anything other than the right message at the right time. In a way, you can think of it like real estate: location, location, location. They were just in the right place at the right time. And I needed to hear what they said and I was eventually able to believe it. I knew it wasn't garbage--I knew they meant it, and that allowed me to own it. So never underestimate the value of repetition--it's huge with kids, especially at this age.

EP: What do you do with the kid who has already given in and accepted the label he's been given? Is it too late to reach a child like that?

JS: Definitely not--it's never too late. However, understand that reaching that child is going to be that much harder. You have a lot of barriers to break through and a lot of time that you're trying to make up. You're trying to break through a lot of hurt, and you might not know exactly what that hurt even is. So it's going to be more of a process for you as a parent to get through to a child who has already accepted defeat. Saying that, it's not impossible. I've seen kids do complete turnarounds. It's especially effective when they hear it from someone who's been through it themselves. They start to realize, "Hey, if he can do it, I can do it--I can turn this around. It's not too late. Forget what those other kids said about me. From now on, it's going to be different."

And that's the key. The beauty of life is that you can wake up each day and decide exactly who you are. You can wake up and say, "You know what, I'm going to be a jerk. I'm going to believe that everybody has it out for me and I'm going to be defensive. I'm not going to meet new people and I'm not going to try new things, because there's no point." Or you can wake up and say, "All right, it's a little bit scary, but I'm going to go out there and I'm going to be who I really am, not who others want me to be. I'm going to be open to opportunities and I'm going to be cool to people and treat them the way they should be treated. I'm going to listen and I'm going to try things and I'm going to do my best." Every day you have that opportunity, so it's never too late. Ultimately it comes down to a choice.

EP: Josh, what would you say to parents out there who want to talk to their teen about the problems they might be having, but are worried they're going to say the wrong thing?

JS: I believe it's important to realize that number one, you don't have to be perfect to talk about something with your child. Personally, I think if you wait until you're perfect, you'll never do anything in life. If you wait until you're a perfect writer, you're never going to write anything. If you wait until you're the perfect guitar player, you're never

going to perform. I believe it's better to have an awkward and tricky conversation with your teen than to wait until you've had 12 years of training.

By the way, I believe that if you as a parent are struggling with the same issues or doubt yourself, the best thing you can do is talk to your teen about it. This will encourage your child to open up about things he's struggling with. It makes you a human being who cares about him and not the robot that's just an authority figure. I'm not suggesting you need to be your child's friend. You don't--you need to be their parent. You need to be an authority figure, but showing vulnerability makes you human and people want to open up to humans. I think that people who are flawed and who still deal with things to the best of their abilities make the best role models.

I believe you should use every resource you have available that will help you get through to your teen. I recommend using movies to bring up different issues with your child. Once you have your teen in the right mindset, it's easier to ask questions and have that difficult conversation. You can say things like, "Where would you like to see yourself this time next year? What does Josh 2.0 look like?" or "What does the new Ashley look like?" I think it's also effective to say, "Let's not judge where you are right now; let's just remove that from the table. I'm not going to yell at you and say you need to improve your grades, lose weight, or be more positive. Let's focus on what could be, not what isn't. So where do you see yourself in five years?"

And then more importantly, talk about what those first steps are toward making it happen. Everybody has a dream of something they want to do. Why do most people not do it? Because they never take the first step. Martin Luther King, Jr. started with a dream, but it only became a reality because he woke up and did something about it. Everybody's got ideas, but most people don't do anything because they get overwhelmed and say, "It's too hard. It's going to be this big, enormous process. I don't know where to start. "

If your child is down on himself, this will help him see himself in a new way. And kids think that's fun because they see it as a do-over.

EP: As a do-over? What do you mean by that?

JS: Think of it this way. We all love make-over shows where the nerdy librarian is turned into a beautiful woman. We are drawn to this because they're redefining themselves. And when kids believe they have that opportunity, they're really open to talking about it. They'll say, "Here's what Connor 2.0 looks like. I'd like to be more of this, less of that and I'd like to be involved in these sorts of things." And that's where you as a parent come in and say, "All right, cool, what are your first steps?" And you're on your way.

Most people see the final product; they don't see the first step. People look at Michael Jordan and say, "I could never be as talented a basketball player as he is. "Well, he

wasn't always that good. In fact, he got cut from his high school basketball team but he didn't give up. What's unique is that he was willing to put the time in and take those first steps. That's where your child needs to start, because if he's not careful, you can check out and say, "Well, Michael Jordan is talented and blessed and born with something I don't have. That person who is confident and has good self esteem is born with something I don't have." But I don't agree. I think it's about discipline. It's about making a plan. It's about taking those first steps.

Why did my parents help me change my life? They saw an opportunity and they took action. They didn't start with the final step; they started with the first step. It got the ball rolling--and that's what you need to do. Seize an opportunity to make your kid's life better. Do what you can as a parent to give him a foundation and a positive sense of self - esteem, and help him learn how to decide on his own who he is. ###

Empowering Parents is a weekly newsletter, online magazine and parenting blog published by Legacy Publishing Company. Our goal is to empower people who parent by providing useful problem-solving techniques to parents and children. For more information, visit www.empoweringparents.com

Josh Shipp has established an international reputation as a teen communication expert. Abandoned and abused as a child, Josh was able to triumph over the tragedy and positively influence the lives of the countless adolescents he's coached. He is a recognized authority on teens for such media outlets as MTV, CNN, and FOX. Josh has spoken at Harvard, M.I.T., UCLA, and Stanford on the science of getting teens to listen. He is also the creator of the Identity Program.
Vist author's website: www.joshshipp.com

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Koans, Paradox and Prayer by Charlie Badenhop

Do you know what a "koan" is? Here's what the dictionary has to say.

“Koan (noun)?A paradoxical anecdote or riddle that has no apparent rational solution or meaning. These anecdotes can though, be understood by the intuitive mind.”

When practicing Zen, students are given koans to ponder. They're meant to absorb themselves in the seeming paradox of a koan via meditation and everyday life, until such time that an "alternative truth" emerges. Koans are meant to help make clear, that at times the rational mind impedes the process of understanding.

One well known koan is, "What is the sound of one hand clapping?"

Since "koans" and "paradoxes" are so related, let's also have a look at "paradox" in the dictionary.

“Paradox (noun) A statement or proposition, that despite seemingly sound reasoning, leads to a conclusion that appears senseless or self-contradictory.”

For instance: "The slower you go, the sooner you'll reach your destination."

Now, let's stretch a bit and see how the terms koan and paradox, relate to prayer.

“Prayer (noun) The act of communicating with a deity (especially as a request for help, or in adoration, contrition, or thanksgiving.)”

So far so good??

Are you wondering why I'm talking about koans, paradox and prayer in the same conversation? Here's a story that will hopefully make the direction of my thinking clear:

Mother Teresa was a Catholic nun who gave her life to helping the sick and poor of the world. She was interviewed countless times, and once she was questioned about how she prayed.

The interviewer asked, "Mother Teresa, when you pray, what do you say to God?"

Mother Teresa replied, "I don't talk, I simply listen."

Believing he had understood what she just said, the interviewer next asked, "Ah, then what is it God says to you when you pray?"

Mother Teresa replied, "He also doesn't talk. He also simply listens."

There was a long silence, with the interviewer seeming a bit confused and not knowing what to ask next.

Finally Mother Teresa broke the silence by saying, "Sorry, but if you can't understand the meaning of what I've just said, I won't be able to explain it any better." To me, this story is a Christian koan!

In fact I think you can extract two koans from the wisdom of the Mother Teresa story.

The first koan is: "How can you offer up a prayer to your concept of a "higher power" without talking?"

The second koan is: "What does one attend to when praying, given that God doesn't speak?"

Most every morning and evening, I take some time to communicate with my concept of "God." I ask for help for myself and others, give thanks for my life, and acknowledge my many shortcomings and my inability to understand the true meaning of my life. In doing so I concede the inadequacy of my logical reasoning and attempt to temporarily render useless my cognitive mode of processing information, so that an "alternative reality" can emerge.

You see, for me, life is very much like a Zen koan. An absorbing paradox that has no apparent solution. In times of brief clarity I recognize that much of the time I don't understand what is meant to happen and why, and I realize that my logical reasoning does not help me feel at peace with myself and in the world. When I pray I give my Zen koan over to God, realizing my cognitive mind on its own is not enough to fully understand and appreciate life.

From time to time,
And not directed by me
There are moments of utter stillness,
When nothing is said,
And yet everything is communicated and understood.
The blessings of life are given and received.
And all is just as it should be.
Nothing more, nothing less.
Ah, if only I did nothing more often! ###

Charlie Badenhop is the originator of Seishindo, an Aikido instructor, NLP trainer, and Ericksonian Hypnotherapist. Benefit from Charlie's thought-provoking ideas and various

self-help Practices, by subscribing to his complimentary newsletter "[Pure Heart, Simple Mind.](#)"

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What Are You Made For? **by Laura M. Turner, M.Sc.**

Often society dictates our thoughts, our wardrobe, our style, even our weight. But, what happens if we're not perfect in "their" eyes? In my mind, there's two choices: 1) Spend endless hours chasing images of what we "should" be or, 2) Spend time discovering the answer to the question: "what's perfect for me?"

If you've ever found yourself struggling with your image of self as it pertains to your peers, consider this your freedom ticket. Here, I'll outline several ways to enhance your personal beauty and self-worth. Further, it won't cost you anything more than your time and focus. It may even liberate you and empower you to be free to be who you are and become more of who you want to be. Here's three of my favorite ways to get you moving toward the "you" you desire to become.

Take Time To Discover Your "Self":

In effort to find ourselves truly and authentically, we need to first do what my favorite spiritual guru, Dr. Wayne Dyer says: "leave the tribe." This does not mean moving to a remote area of the country, nor does it mean ex-communicating yourself from friends and family. Simply, taking time to dream and imagine who you'd like to be authentically can create a foundation for true self-definition.

Dr. Dyer also tells us that the tribe need not know we've even left! He explains: You are the only one who needs to know you are working toward establishing yourself away and apart from the masses. Again, this does not mean selling off worldly belongings and moving to the woods. Perhaps it simply means turning off the tube for a week and spending down-time being quiet. Or expressing your creativity through the art of writing, drawing or doing something of your choice that you love to do. The list is endless. You will know when you've found your own piece of nature if the place or activity gives you peace and quiets the world around you.

Take Responsibility For Your Gifts:

We have all been given gifts by the universe, but here's the challenge: It is up to us to use them! We know that our gifts were given to us for a reason, to use, explore, enjoy and share with others. As my friend tells me: When we use our gifts, God smiles. It pleases God when we use our talents and when doing so we are blessed.

Listen closely to your intuition to find what gives you energy. Follow this path toward your gifts. I truly believe If we each learn to live more authentically, share our gifts with the world and focus on the positive - we will be shown more ways to express our talents and serve the greater good. In my mind, it cannot happen any other way. What we care about and place our attention on expands. Take some time to observe yourself closely: Do you have an ear for music, eye for art, literature? What's your gift? Ask yourself are you taking absolute responsibility for it (them)?

Create a Personal Mission Statement:

If you are with me so far, you'll be taking time out of your busy schedule to find and nurture the God given gifts bestowed upon you. In addition, once you've identified your talents or dreams, try one of my favorite siren songs to the universe: create a personal mission statement. This is a technique I like to use and my contribution to the notion of discovering yourself.

Pause for a moment and ask yourself what you'd like people to remember about you. What do you believe you are here to do? In other words: What do you stand for? As Martin Luther King tells us: "If you don't stand for something, you'll fall for anything." It need only be a short statement. Here's mine: To inspire. It's that simple. Identify your mission (or choose one) and put it in pen - you'll be amazed at what develops. Each day I look carefully for ways to use my gifts in concert with my personal mission statement.

In Conclusion:

In *Conversations With God*, the author Neale Donald Walsch teaches us that life has no purpose save the one we give it. What's your purpose? It's a simple, yet thought provoking question. Give it some thought. If you need help sorting out your ideas, check out the classic: *What Color Is Your Parachute?* By Richard Nelson Bolles or my personal favorite: *Finding Your Own North Star* By Martha Beck. Most of all, be brave! Declare you mission, identify and take responsibility for your gifts. Let them expand and contribute them to the world. Your positive energy will become contagious. And when evaluating your self-image remember: it all begins with you. ###

Laura M. Turner is a 15-year veteran fitness instructor, fitness trainer, journalist, author and natural health practitioner. She hosts <http://www.beauty-and-body.com> a website dedicated to inspiring all to stay healthy, disease free and youthful both inside and out. Visit today to receive *Laura's Latest eBook Retro-Aging and her Take Charge Of Your Health eCourse, FREE!* While you're there, check out her latest book *Spiritual Fitness: The 7-Steps to Living Well*: http://www.beauty-and-body.com/Spiritual_Fitness_Info.htm

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Creation, or What/Who is God? **by Sam Krause**

Harry: What's green, hangs on the wall, and whistles?

Stanley: I don't know. What's green, hangs on the wall, and whistles?

Harry: A herring.

Stanley: But ... a herring isn't green!

Harry: Nu, so you could paint it green.

Stanley: But a herring doesn't hang on the wall!

Harry: Nu, so you could hang it on the wall.

Stanley: But a herring doesn't whistle!

Harry: Ok, so it doesn't whistle.

God, the Creator of the universe, is limitless, formless, all-knowing and all-present. We refer to God as "He," because that is how the neutral gender is rendered in Hebrew, the language of the Torah. To reinforce God's genderlessness, there is a feminine aspect of God called Shechinah, which comes from the root word "to dwell" and denotes God's transcendent presence as it dwells in the physical world.

God is, was and always will be. He is known as the Ein Sof - "Never-Ending One" - and is also called, "The Primary Being" of the world according to Kabbalah, the body of Jewish mystical thought. In fact, "God is all there is."

According to the famous kabbalist, Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch (the "Tzemach Tzedek") (1789-1866), it is only God's existence that has no beginning. All other existence, in contrast, is comprised of new creations that did not exist before they were brought into being by Him. He alone existed, before time was created. When He created the world, He also created time. To say that God has "always" existed would limit the expression of God, because "always" is an aspect of time, above the entire framework of chronology. "Time" is relevant only to created beings.

I told you all that, hoping you would ask what our herring joke has to do with God, or even if it is a joke. Whether you think it's a joke or not, if you delve into the words a little deeper, you will discover a parallel with how God created the world, according to Kabbalah...

God looked to see what He wanted to create, and then He created the thing He desired from nothing, from no previous existence.

Just as Harry, the joke-teller above, could set up his punch line any way he wanted – while Stanley tried to poke holes in the logic of it – so too, God is not limited by a linear or logical way of thinking. We may not understand God's ways, but that doesn't

invalidate them. All it means is that we are limited in our ability to grasp. But in His great mercy and love for us, God patiently allows for and invites our questions.

Benjy was asked by his mother what he had learned in Hebrew School.

"Well, Mom, our teacher told us how God sent Moses behind enemy lines on a rescue mission to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. When he got to the Red Sea he had his engineers build a pontoon bridge, and all the people walked across safely. Then he used his walkie-talkie to radio headquarters for reinforcements. They sent F-16s to blow up the bridge and save the Israelites."

"Now, Benjy, is that really what your teacher taught you?" his mother questioned.

"Well, no, Mom," said Benjy, "but if I told you what she really said, you'd never believe it."

Can God fit an elephant through the eye of a needle? This is a famous riddle posed by the Talmud. The answer is yes! But how? Would He make the elephant smaller? Would He make the eye of the needle bigger? He would do neither. The elephant would be unchanged, as would the eye of the needle. With that exact set of circumstances, God would fit the elephant through the eye of the needle.

If you say this makes no sense, you are right, but having created that set of rules called "logic," the Master of the Universe is certainly entitled to ignore them.

In the beginning, God created Heaven and Earth. Immediately God was faced with a class action suit for failure to file an environmental impact statement. He was granted a temporary permit for the project, but had trouble complying with the Cease and Desist order.

Appearing at the hearing, God was asked why He began the project in the first place. He replied that He "just liked to be creative."

Then God said, "Let there be light." Officials immediately demanded to know how the light would be made. Would there be strip mining? What about thermal pollution? God explained that the light would come from a huge ball of fire. He was granted provisional permission to make light, with the proviso that no smoke would result from the ball of fire, that He would obtain a building permit, and, to conserve energy, would have the light burning only half the time. God agreed and said He would call the light "Day" and the darkness "Night." Officials replied that they were not interested in semantics.

God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation, seed-yielding herbs and fruit trees producing fruit according to their kind...." The EPA agreed as long as native seed was used. Then God said, "Let the waters swarm a swarming of living creatures,

and let fowl fly over the earth, across the expanse of the Heavens." Officials pointed out that this would require approval from the Department of Game.

Everything was OK until God said he wanted to complete the project in six days. Officials informed Him it would take at least 200 years to review the application and the environmental impact statement. After that there would be a public hearing. Then it would be 10-12 months before... At this point God created Hell.

Kabbalah speaks of four worlds:

(1) Atzilut, (the World of Emanation), is the "highest" world. It contains the revealed potential for further creation. possesses no perceived existence independent of God.

(2) Beriah, (the World of Creation), is the second "highest" world. It holds the beginnings of creative potential, born of Atzilut, which begin to take on the perception of "form" or independent existence. The higher order of angels dwells in Beriah as do created souls and the "upper" Garden of Eden, where certain privileged souls journey as a reward for their meritorious conduct during their lifetime on earth. The Divine Throne also resides in Beriah. the concept that the Divine begins to "lower" itself in order to "touch" the lower worlds.

(3) Yetzirah, (the World of Formation), is the next highest world, where the "blueprints" are drawn up for final creation and where specific steps are taken to bring them to fruition. The lower order of angels - those with a specific mission - reside in Yetzirah, and the "lower" Garden of Eden abides here as well.

(4) Asiyah, (the World of Action), is the fourth world, the world in which you and I live. In Asiyah, we witness the most convincing representation of independence from God. Sadly, this is because in Asiyah we are the most removed from Him, and it is here where the dazzling radiance of God is the most concealed. This total concealment gives rise to "free choice," such that a person is permitted to choose whether or not he will serve God according to His will.

Asiyah embodies the ultimate purpose of creation, where God has provided us both the map and the guidebook so we can actualize that purpose: to make our world an abode in which He will desire to dwell. From "free choice" springs the notion of Evil and the threat of Hell.

According to Kabbalah, Evil was created from the sitra achra, the "other side," of God. In other words, it originates from God, so it must have hidden elements of Goodness, but not in the way you may think.

Evil is a way that God tests humanity's actions. It may be compared to a king who sends a temptress to seduce his son, the prince. The temptress must follow the king's orders and do everything in her power to seduce the prince, all the while hoping that the prince

will not succumb to her allure. So, too, Evil, in the form of our Evil Inclination, entices us with all sorts of worldly attractions, hoping that we will reject them.

Kabbalah teaches that God's sole purpose in creating Evil was to transform it, one day, into Goodness.

God said to the Devil, "I'm considering having some repair work done on the pearly gates, and I think you should pay half."

"Oh, really?" replied Satan. "And how do you figure I owe half?"

"Well, I do My best to keep folks from ending up in your place," God answered, "and let's face it, there is a certain amount of wear and tear from the clawing and scratching of your people."

"That's outrageous," the Devil objected. "I won't pay."

"Then I'll sue," God threatened.

"You'll sue?" repeated the Devil, smiling. "Just where do You think YOU'LL ever find a lawyer?"

We've all read parodies of God arguing with Satan, but Kabbalah teaches that Satan has no independent will, as it is entirely a creation of God's, meant to challenge us and give us the opportunity to exercise our free will and assert our inherent goodness. Remember, God is all there is, and there is nothing besides Him. ###

"Hey Waiter...There's God in My Soup!" Learning Kabbalah Through Humor - by Sam Krause - see: www.hey-waiter.com

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A Course in Miracles

Lesson 45

God is the Mind with which I think.

Today's idea holds the key to what your real thoughts are. They are nothing that you think you think, just as nothing that you think you see is related to vision in any way. There is no relationship between what is real and what you think is real. Nothing that you think are your real thoughts resemble your real thoughts in any respect. Nothing that you think you see bears any resemblance to what vision will show you.

You think with the Mind of God. Therefore you share your thoughts with Him, as He shares His with you. They are the same thoughts, because they are thought by the same Mind. To share is to make alike, or to make one. Nor do the thoughts you think with the Mind of God leave your mind, because thoughts do not leave their source. Therefore, your thoughts are in the Mind of God, as you are. They are in your mind as well, where He is. As you are part of His Mind, so are your thoughts part of His Mind.

Where, then, are your real thoughts? Today we will attempt to reach them. We will have to look for them in your mind, because that is where they are. They must still be there, because they cannot have left their source. What is thought by the Mind of God is eternal, being part of creation.

Our three five-minute practice periods for today will take the same general form that we used in applying yesterday's idea. We will attempt to leave the unreal and seek for the real. We will deny the world in favor of truth. We will not let the thoughts of the world hold us back. We will not let the beliefs of the world tell us that what God would have us do is impossible. Instead, we will try to recognize that only what God would have us do is possible.

We will also try to understand that only what God would have us do is what we want to do. And we will also try to remember that we cannot fail in doing what He would have us do. There is every reason to feel confident that we will succeed today. It is the Will of God.

Begin the exercises for today by repeating the idea to yourself, closing your eyes as you do so. Then spend a fairly short period in thinking a few relevant thoughts of your own, keeping the idea in mind. After you have added some four or five thoughts of your own to the idea, repeat it again and tell yourself gently:

My real thoughts are in my mind. I would like to find them.

Then try to go past all the unreal thoughts that cover the truth in your mind, and reach to the eternal.

Under all the senseless thoughts and mad ideas with which you have cluttered up your mind are the thoughts that you thought with God in the beginning. They are there in your mind now, completely unchanged. They will always be in your mind, exactly as they always were. Everything you have thought since then will change, but the Foundation on which it rests is wholly changeless.

It is this Foundation toward which the exercises for today are directed. Here is your mind joined with the Mind of God. Here are your thoughts one with His. For this kind of practice only one thing is necessary; approach it as you would an altar dedicated in Heaven to God the Father and to God the Son. For such is the place you are trying to reach. You will probably be unable as yet to realize how high you are trying to go. Yet even with the little understanding you have already gained, you should be able to remind yourself that this is no idle game, but an exercise in holiness and an attempt to reach the Kingdom of Heaven .

In the shorter exercise periods for today, try to remember how important it is to you to understand the holiness of the mind that thinks with God. Take a minute or two, as you repeat the idea throughout the day, to appreciate your mind's holiness. Stand aside, however briefly, from all thoughts that are unworthy of Him Whose host you are. And thank Him for the Thoughts He is thinking with you.

Commentary by Allen Watson

The lessons are trying, in a way, to cause extreme disorientation in us. Our real thoughts "are nothing that you think you think, just as nothing that you think you see is related to vision in any way". If my thoughts aren't real and what I see isn't real, what do I have to hold on to? Not much at all. This can seem quite frightening, almost what it might be like if I were one of those characters in a suspense thriller who is being attacked by someone trying to drive them insane, causing them to believe that they are hallucinating and imagining things that are not there.

Actually, although the attempt to break our mental orientation is similar, the Course's intent is just the reverse. It is trying to drive us *sane*, not insane. We already are insane. We *are* hallucinating and imagining things that are not there, and the Course is trying to break our obsessive belief in their reality.

Underneath the protective layer of delusion we have laid over reality is a wholly sane mind thinking wholly sane thoughts and seeing only truth. Our real thoughts are thoughts we think with the Mind of God, sharing them with Him. Thoughts do not leave the mind, so they must still be there. Our thoughts are God's thoughts, and God's thoughts are eternal. If these thoughts are there we can find them. We can push our feet down through the mushy ooze of our thoughts and find solid bedrock. We may be almost totally out of touch with these original, eternal thoughts, thoughts completely in accord

with the Mind of God, but God would have us find them. Therefore we must be capable of finding them.

Yesterday we were seeking the light within ourselves, a very abstract concept. Today we are seeking our own real thoughts. That brings the abstract a little closer to home; not just "the light" but my own thoughts, something that is part of me and representative of my nature.

What would a thought be like that was in perfect harmony with the Mind of God? That is what we are trying to find and experience today. And if we are honest, we will have to admit that the thoughts of which we are mostly aware are not in that league at all. Our thoughts are too riddled with fear, too uncertain, too defensive, too anxious or frantic, and above all too changeable to qualify as thoughts we share with God.

A thought we share with God must be one of complete harmony, absolute peace, utter certainty, total benevolence, and perfect stability. We are seeking to locate such a thought-center in our minds. We are seeking to find thoughts of this nature *within ourselves*.

Once more we practice the quiet sinking down, going past all the unreal thoughts that cover the truth in our minds, and reaching to the eternal that is within us. This is a holy exercise, and one we should take quite seriously, although not somberly, for it is a joyous exercise. Within me there is a place that never changes, a place that is always at peace, always brilliant with love's shining. And today, O God yes today, I want to find that place! Today I want to touch that solid foundation at the core of my being and know its stability. Today I want to find my Self. ###

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