

Cultivate Life!

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Cultivate Life! magazine

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Affirmation for Fearless Living:

I must learn to reach, moment to moment, for what seems above and beyond me if I am ever to be touched by the light of my own True Self.

—*Guy Finley*

In this issue:

Free MP3 Guy Finley Audio Album for *Cultivate Life!* readers

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The Lightworker (excerpt)
Life's mysteries explored in a mystery novel
by David Thomas

Author's note:

I became interested in channeled material some years back, and found it transformational for my own life. Seeking to spread the word about this amazing information, I directed two well-received documentary films (tuninginmovie.com) and am considering doing a third.

Being an author and screenwriter, I felt the realm of channeling was ripe for exploration in a mystery novel. That book is now excerpted here and available for download on [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com).

We live in wondrous--though challenging--times and my hope is that fare like this book, and my films, will contribute to the light and help folks navigate the uncertain waters.

The Lightworker

ONE

When the call came in from the murder suspect, I had egg on my face. Not figuratively... real, yellow-yolky, dried-and-cracking grade AA large egg.

I was passed out cold in the chicken coop when my "Born to Run" ringtone nudged me from the torpor. I sat up, spidery light harpooning my eyes. Matted straw sticking to my face. Chickens clucking rudely in my ears. The inside of my beer-braised brain clapping like a shutter in a hurricane. I searched my pockets for the phone, found I was lying on top of it. I reached under, wiped egg yolk off its face with my filthy t-shirt, splotted with green-and-gray chicken syrup. I didn't recognize the number, idiotically answered anyway.

"Hello," I croaked, my throat a Brillo pad.

"Is this Huck Grayson?" asked a crisp female voice.

I sat up, the pungent aroma of ammonia from bird piss stinging my nostrils like perverted smelling salts.

"Yeah. Who's this?"

"I was a friend of your wife's."

The words were a Taser to my spleen.

"Are you there?" the woman asked after several seconds.

"Yeah. I'm here."

"What's all that noise?"

“Chickens.”

“Oh, still out on the farm?”

I scraped myself off the coop floor, sneezed, headed for the door, almost tripped over a plump-feathered Rhode Island Red, who emitted a scream-cluck and scampered off. I went outside, was blasted by the pizza-oven heat; felt like I was breathing through a towel. The arrogant California summer sun was already high in the sky and I figured it had to be close to noon. Wasn't exactly keeping farmer's hours.

“Yes,” I said. “The farm.”

“Must be nice in the country this time of year.”

“Just heavenly. I'm about to go plant a few thousand acres of corn. Is there something I can help you with?”

“I want to hire you.”

I hadn't placed an ad in the local paper or posted on Craigslist. The last thing I wanted was a job. “Teach you about organics? Help with your harvest?”

“No,” she said, a sudden hesitancy in her cool-creek voice. “I need someone to look into something for me.”

She was a circling hawk, couldn't come right out and say it, and she was already starting to annoy me. All I wanted was about a gallon of cold water and a couch, so I walked across the yard toward my ramshackle farmhouse, all peeling paint and slouching wood.

“Could you just tell me what you need... what's your name anyway?”

“Carol Weaver. Your wife: I was a friend.”

I walked in the house, snagged a dirty glass off the counter, filled it with water, chugged.

“Yeah, yeah, you mentioned that.”

“I've been charged with murder. But I didn't do it.”

I put down the glass, looked out the streaked kitchen window, saw barn swallows doing air pirouettes.

“Murder? So why call me?”

“You used to be a cop, right? In L.A. Right?”

I began picking at the dried yolk on my face, peeling it as if a bad sunburn. “That was 10 years ago. I'm a farmer now.”

“But...”

I flicked sad yellow paint fleck-like bits into the sink. “I'm not interested.”

“I really think...”

“Goodbye, Carol.”

As I refilled the glass and guzzled, Springsteen informed me that she was calling back. I clicked the phone off.

I plopped myself down at the kitchen table, stared at all the dead-soldier Coors cans. Must have been 30, an entire battalion wiped out; all killed valiantly in the line of duty. Was it one night's worth, or two? The very thought of beer made me retch. So I went to the fridge, extracted a Seagram's wild berry wine cooler, twisted the cap and let it drop to the grime-mottled floor.

I took a long slug, shuffled into the living room, collapsed like my bones had melted onto the red crushed velvet couch. It reminded me of my wife. Auction addict. Picked up this beauty for a hundred bucks, if I recalled correctly. It was in nice shape, too. "Was" being the operative word. In the recent past I'd sweated aplenty, spilled beer, oozed pizza sauce, puked, even pissed on it a time or two, if I'm being honest. Now we could add rancid egg yolk to the odious mix.

I peeled off my sweat-stained t-shirt, gulped more Seagram's. I smelled like chicken shit and corrosion. When was the last shower? Three days ago? A week? So I'd take one later in the day. That was the plan anyway.

I woke up at dusk with a clearly delineated choice: deal with a soul-quashing hangover, its fingers already scratching at my skin like thorns, or slip-slide, again, into the sauce. I slapped a Hungry Man turkey pot pie in the microwave, choked down two more wine coolers by the time the contraption beeped. Had another as I hovered the too-salty fare.

Shower, finally. I washed away days of caked sweat and failure's dust. I slipped on the least soiled of my jeans, a faded green polo shirt, and cowboy boots. I stared at myself in the mirror, wasn't adoring the reflection. I looked like a guy who wouldn't get buzzed in at a jewelry store: three-day growth, hazel eyes dull as grease, grim mouth turned down like a baby robin's beak. My coarse brown hair had gone bushy and badly needed pruning. At least 15 pounds had melted off my six-foot frame in the past couple months and there was little definition left in my arms. I'd been athletic my entire life, but was now a human husk. Doing a few can-curls would surely help.

I grabbed my last four beers from the fridge, went out, cracked open a coldy as I started my gimpy old Datsun 280z. She fired right up. A few dings and the paint, once deep blue but now faded to the shade of a bluejay, needed attention. Still a decent runner despite at least one failing valve.

I lived a couple miles outside Green Valley, 50 miles north of Los Angeles and a thousand light years away. One restaurant, one general store. Lifers and miscreants and big city refugees made up the eclectic population of 1,500 residents. Most hiding on the backstreets.

Odd name for the town since it isn't a valley at all, but a woodsy mountain enclave in the Angeles National Forest. If you had no clue where you were, you could easily mistake this place for Dog Fleas, Montana rather than a burg only an hour out of L.A. A couple ragamuffin kids on bikes were all I really saw as I drove through, on my way down the mountain, 18 miles to Santa Clarita, home of the nearest strip joint.

At the rough-hewn Kitty Klub, I walked straight to the bar, ready to get my roister on. I stared for a moment at the shrine of bottles, like an adult crayon array--my own private apothecary--behind the heavy-lidded girl bartender sporting a sleeve of tats on her left arm

and already work-worn at—what?—age 25. As she mixed my double Greyhound, I tried to smile at her, but maybe it came off as a grimace since her only reaction was to narrow her eyes slightly, a tight snake’s smile on her lips.

I walked away with the tall glass, cold and comforting in my hand, took a long slug, watched Stacy, nubile and lithe, with fresh stitches on her forehead, writhing onstage to the death waltz of a Journey song. I never used to be a titty bar kind of guy, but in the last year I had found myself going more and more despite the innate sadness and abject desperation of the place. Suited my mood.

Three drinks later and the walls were turning sugary. The brittle past and cloudy future melted into a fudgy swirl of Now. I loved getting drunk, sloughing off the dead skin of sobriety. The clink of ice in my glass. Feeling the vodka coat my stomach. Even gliding to the bathroom, staring at the wall, and pissing it all away. Drunk was the place to be and I went often. The incredibly lightness of getting trashed, veritably fist-bumping with angels.

I sat right up on Sniff Row, wad of ones at the ready, as Bruce’s “Dancing in the Dark” started and Wendy took the stage. At 32, she was a little older than most of the other dancers, but she had Springsteen-like commitment to her craft. Girl brought it and brought it every single night. She had long honey-blond hair, a sweet-but-strong face, like a Golden retriever, and a defiant attitude.

She whipped her hair about, prowled the stage like a feral ballerina. I wondered if I could make her pirouette. We locked eyes for a moment; she gave me a slight smile, a smile that said ‘hello’ and ‘be careful’ at the same time. I fished a few ones from my pocket, tossed them onstage. I wasn’t one of those barbarians who stuffed the money in their g-strings. I was classy.

A dancer with the flashing eyes of a coked-up psychobunny flounced over, placed languid arms around my neck, and suggested a lap dance would be in order. She wore jean panties. Sometimes I hated America. Her armpits, near my eyes, were adorned with small clumps of white deodorant. As I declined the dance, a piece fell into my drink. She left the table, I fished it out, flicked it to the floor, kept drinking.

As the song ended, my bar buddy Pups caught my eye from across the room and motioned me over. He had a pitcher of beer with an extra glass. I went. He was wearing his usual uniform--wrinkled camo cargo shorts, Oakland Raiders jersey, battered brown deck shoes—and his usual facial expression: disdain. What was his last name? Something odd... ‘Thook’ maybe. Rhymed with ‘kook.’

“How’s it goin’, Pups?” I asked.

“I’m walkin’ on fuckin’ sunshine,” he said flatly, every word dunked in fetid sarcasm. “Just like every single goddamn day of my life, cradle to grave, sperm to worm.”

Pups was slamming up against 40, nose splayed on his face like half a bell pepper, cropped turd-brown hair. Teen acne had mugged his face and left it looking like crumbled pie-crust. He was once a stout baseball catcher, but had peaked in high school and now gone to paunchy seed. The two halves of his mustache never quite matched. He was a true black-eyed pessimist, which somehow made me feel incrementally better about my own life. As I sat down and poured myself a beer, he launched his usual rocket of vitriol.

“Fuckin’ government,” he said. “Won’t even let me renew my license here in California until I take care of a DUI I got five years ago in Colorado. Five years! No tickets here. Nothing. Not a goddamn thing. But I have to pay a fuckin’ fine there before I can renew here. Where do they get the balls?”

“Brass ones, for sure,” I offered.

“Then the other thing is my car. Mechanic charged me 320 beans for a tune-up. A fuckin’ tune-up, dude! On a goddamn old Toyota! The world is a shit sandwich, man, and I take another big bite every single goddamn day.”

“Could be worse, I guess.”

“Really? How could it be worse? For you, for example. How could it be worse? Shitbag bankers taking your place. Wife and kids gone, all the way gone. You look like monkey shit stuffed in a sausage casing... no offense. Only way it could possibly get worse for you is if you got some fuckin’ rare form of ass cancer or somethin’, have to start shittin’ in a bag.”

When guttered, Pups often talked in paragraphs, as if being paid by the word. He finally stopped his rant, looked at my face, saw it was hard as Rushmore.

“Aw shit, Huck, sorry, man. I’m such a fuckin’ retard. You don’t want to talk about that shit. Sorry. Let’s just fuckin’ drink until we puke. Or almost puke, but keep it down. Then drink some more.”

If I’d heard a better idea that day, I couldn’t recall it.

“Did you see that one chick?” asked Pups, not waiting for me to answer. “Bush like a spoiled sprig of cauliflower. I’d still bang her, though.”

“You’d bang a handful of worms.”

“My cousin did that once, after a day of whiskey and fishin’.”

Pups nodded at a chubby dancer taking the stage.

“Her cooter should have caution tape around it.”

This sort of exchange must have been how Mensa started. I gulped my beer, and we kept knocking them back as if under the impression a new era of Prohibition was kicking in at midnight.

After closing, Wendy and I meandered toward my car. She smiled, pointed at the ground, said “That is so cool.” A gasoline rainbow shimmered under the amber streetlight.

We were in limbo land, twirling in the dusty field somewhere between customer and dancer, friends and acquaintances, bang buddies; sometimes we both just needed a little of that human touch. She insisted on driving me home, and Pups insisted on following us up the mountain road in his newly tuned Tercel. We’d all hung before, bound by the frayed filament of alcohol and loneliness.

“So how drunk are you?” asked Wendy as we drove.

“Not too bad. Didn’t start ‘til like five.”

“Better way to put it: what do you think your blood alcohol level is?”

“Mmmmm... maybe .18.”

“But a drunk will always underestimate. So I’m saying at least .23. We should have one of those breath thingies.”

I held my alcohol well, leg hollow as a submarine. No matter how much I drank, I could usually pass for sober, and rarely did anything inordinately stupid, besides wake up in a nasty chicken coop on occasion.

“You’re a nice guy,” said Wendy. “And actually pretty cute. Did you know that?”

I looked at her flawless face, washed in milky moonlight and framed by a spill of ringlets. She was undeniably pretty, recognition of which for some reason sent a shiver of nerves from scrotum to scalp.

“No. But I always suspected.” I was uncomfortable with this line of interrogation, changed the tune.

“Did I ever ask you why you became a stripper?”

“You never did.”

“So... what made you choose this profession?”

“Cash-money. And I can’t stand going into an office every day. I’m always late and am told I say inappropriate things.”

I rolled down the window a crack to let in the brisk night air. “Since I’ve gotten to know you some I get, you know, concerned.”

“You do? Awww.”

“I’m fine. No worries. But thanks.”

I produced an airplane bottle of Smirnoff vodka from the front pocket of my jeans, unscrewed the cap, offered it to her first.

“Why the fuck not?” she said.

She took a slug, handed it back to me.

“Absolutely,” I said. “Why the”—I downed the rest of the little bottle—“fuck not?”

At the house, we polished off the 12-pack Pups had brought, tapped into the half gallon of Bacardi, at that moment valuable as the Hope Diamond. Baby, we were born to rum. Pups took a bottle of dishwashing liquid in his hands, looked at it intently as if examining the facets of a diamond. He announced he would drink the contents simply because he could. We finally dissuaded him, though, when he discovered no poison control centers were open at 3 a.m.

“I don’t wanna die right this minute,” he announced. “We all only got to 2012 anyway and the goddamn world is ending.” He downed a shot of rum. “God...,” he mumbled derisively. “I’d like to punch him in his cloud-sitting face, that’s what I’d like.”

Well-oiled Wendy suddenly also turned theologian. “Personally, I think he was stoooooopid,” she said. “He should have put a girl’s button on the inside, not the outside. Moron. I’mma write a poem about it.”

Poem. I liked the way she pronounced that word and looked forward to reading her masterwork.

“God is jus’ a rumor,” concluded Pups, every other word now sticking to the roof of his mouth.

No, he wasn’t a rumor. He was an asshole. I blamed Him for killing my wife and kids. That, combined with my recollection of the brutalities those evil chickens had foisted upon me the night before, forced me to snag a butcher knife from a drawer, and stumble toward the coop seeking my revenge.

Wendy and Pups stopped me, though, convinced me that they needed, no craved, my rendition of Bruce’s Dancing in the Dark, Wendy’s favorite stripping song. So we tumbled back into the living room, found the track and I belted. I had a singing voice that could stop a runaway train cold, but, in my falsely inflated drunken grandeur, screeched away.

By the end, we, drunk as Kennedys, were all caterwauling: “Radio’s on and I’m moving ‘round the place. I check my look in the mirror, wanna change my clothes, my hair, my face!”

I grabbed Wendy, twirled her. Too hard, combined with her drunken imbalance, and she went flying on top the coffee table, slid, bounced onto the floor. Pups took offense that a lady could be treated with such naked effrontery, staggered toward me with fists balled, his gravestone eyes now on fire.

He tried a slow, looping swing, grazed my chin. I rammed my fist in his gut, doubled him over. I put my leg behind him, body-slammed him so hard the walls rattled. I pinned him to the floor, yelled at his flushed face, now the color of chewed bubblegum. Don’t you ever do that! Not in my house! Not ever, you fuckin’ wasted piece of shit!

I rolled off, stumbled to my feet, stood over him like a jaguar, daring the wounded bunny to move. “Can’t start a fire, worrying about your little world fallin’ apart,” sang Bruce.

Chastened, drunk, or both, Pups stayed supine for several seconds. He tried to sit up, didn’t see the point, a rifle losing its erection. He curled into a hazy kitten-ball, muttered “Palmolive.” Thirty seconds later was snoring.

Testosterone and alcohol swirling, I put a clumsy move on Wendy, cupped her ass, zeroed in for a sloppy kiss. She turned her cheek, shoved me away, grunted displeasure. “The Mayans could have predicted you’d try that,” she slurred. She flopped on the stained red couch and drifted down into rum-sated dreams. Another debonair night at the Algonquin Roundtable.

I grabbed the entire half-gallon, heavy as a cannon ball, staggered out on the porch, took an angry slug. Beat my fists against the lumpy, snot-green moon.

TWO

Gentle slaps to my face. Harder. My eyes creaked open, focused on an apparition looming out of a shallow grave. Or no. It was a woman leaning over my body, a couple feet from my face.

“I knocked and knocked, but you didn’t answer,” she said, her voice a chainsaw to my hungover eardrums. “So I looked in the window and saw you lying there. Thought you were dead. But you weren’t. Just drunk.”

I crawled out from under the coffee table, got to my wobbly feet. I felt shaky as a newborn colt. No Wendy or Pups; must have made their escape. I instantly wondered if they’d pilfered the rest of my rum. I could hear crows cursing in the trees outside, and full-on Hamlet mode descended upon me like winter dusk.

“You from the bank?” I asked.

She winced slightly at my napalm breath. I felt like I’d been buried for a week and just dug up. “No. I’m Carol Weaver. We spoke yesterday on the phone.”

She was one of those Westside ladies, probably the Palisades or Malibu, maybe Beverly Hills. She had to be crowding 50, a good decade older than me, but twice as toned. Definitely well-maintained: Pilates, yoga, Botox, raw veggies, probably burned incense in the house. She and her dog, if she had one, were most likely both on Paxil. She wore an expensive white silk blouse, dark blue slacks and tasteful black leather flats. Freshly-washed silken hair the color of coffee framed a lineless face dominated by big, brown goblet-of-kahlua eyes. She was fit, even sinewy, so it was clear she got exercise, but it must have been the indoor sort, or she was a big sunscreen fan, because her skin was ivory, and certainly unsullied by a gauche fake-and-bake tan. She held herself with easy confidence of someone with a bulging bank account. No wedding ring. Maybe she’d made it on her own.

She followed me the kitchen as I grabbed a glass, filled it with water, pounded.

“Do you know how dirty that glass is?” she asked.

I said nothing as I finished it off, refilled, and drank more. I sat down at the kitchen table, so studded with beer cans you couldn’t even tell it was oak. I nodded for her to sit and she did. She stared at the cans, then gave the room a quick survey. I was surprised she didn’t plug her nose with a dainty thumb and index finger.

“Yes,” I said. “It’s a shithole. And I like beer.”

“On the phone—“

“...I told you I wasn’t interested.”

Her face remained placid as she studied me. She took a deep breath through her nose, exhaled out her mouth.

“I can’t say I totally understand this either,” she said, “but I’m being told you are supposed to get involved.”

“What are you talking about? Says who?”

“Your wife never mentioned me?”

“I vaguely remember the name. I think.”

“Jill was a client of mine. She had several phone sessions, a few in person.”

“A client? So, what... you are a psychologist or something? And you murdered someone? But of course really you didn't.”

She locked eyes with mine.

“I'm a spirit channeler. I go into a trance state and another entity, from a higher realm, speaks through me.”

Oh, fucking great. All I needed with my blasting hangover was a goddamn owl-shit-loony ghost-whispering murderer.

She continued: “This entity offers wisdom, profound insights, from a higher perspective. This sort of thing is happening all over the planet right now.”

“Uh huh,” I said. “So you talk to dead people.”

“It's actually quite profound. Spirits from higher dimensions are coming through now to help us humans awaken and take back our own power.”

She reached in her Gucci purse, handed me a paperback.

“This was channeled through me,” she said. It was entitled ‘Everyday Wisdom’ and her smiling puss dominated the back cover. “All sorts of helpful and amazing insights in there. Made the best-seller lists.”

I took it, placed it on the can-frosted table, knocked two empties to the floor. Rosalita, my goat, nudged open the back door, ambled into the kitchen. Rosalita was a docile Toggenburg, deerskin brown with two white stripes down either side of her face. Her coat was in dire need of a trim and cockleburs drooped like forlorn Christmas ornaments.

“What a cutie,” Carol said as Rosalita began lapping up stale beer from the floor.

“That's the thing, I have this farm to run. So even if I wanted to help, I'm just all plowed under here at the moment.”

I took my goat by the scruff of her neck, led her outside, shut the door. I kept standing, hoping the lady would get the hint, stand up and leave. But no, she remained seated like some potentate. I was feeling nauseous, so dropped back into my own chair.

“So how well did you know Jill?” I asked wearily.

“I wouldn't say we were great friends, but we were beyond being cordial. As I said, she saw me several times.”

Despite the thumping hangover, my interest was piqued. “Why? I mean, what sorts of things was she asking?”

“Oh, just general questions about life mainly,” said Carol. “The first time she came was after her mother had died.”

“Right. Cancer.”

“Yes, and she wanted some closure with that, wanted to ask about what happens at death, if her mom was okay. She found the answers intriguing and came back several times afterward. She was asking the big questions.”

“Big questions?”

“Why am I here? Who am I? Where am I going?”

“Oh. Those.”

Carol launched into a long soliloquy about how this spirit entity—who went by the name “Questus” apparently—had told her that she was to reach out to me specifically, that I had some “contract” to get involved with her and the case. It sounded absurd to me. Yet I didn’t throw her ass out.

I don’t know if it was her absolute commitment or those big cow eyes, but I actually started to listen, at least to most of what she was saying. She was accused of shooting a rival spirit channeler, the prosecution theory being it was a tiff over New Age turf. There was some circumstantial evidence, but no smoking gun, no murder weapon.

Prior to quitting to work the land, I’d been an LAPD robbery/homicide detective for six years, patrolman before that. I became a cop to try and help society—that old canard—but soon found it was too far gone to really be helped in any substantial way. Can’t say I ever truly loved the job, mainly because I had to rub up against lowlifes, creeps, wife-beaters, dope fiends, bangers, peds and thugs all day every day. When I killed a guy in the line of duty—it was ruled a “clean” shooting—I really lost my taste for the job, and was out six months later.

I yearned for a semblance of my Midwestern upbringing and bought the small farm. I found the fresh air and benign animals a balm to my soul, and I had a knack for farming. We raised a few cows, pigs, chickens, and goats, and planted several acres of vegetables. We were never going to get rich, but Jill, myself and the kids, Colleen and Tad, were very happy. Maybe Jill felt slightly stifled away from society from time to time and the kids could get bored, but mostly we knew how good we had it.

We would have stayed in our warm and velvety little groove. But they were all killed in a car crash one night as she drove them back up the mountain from soccer practice in Santa Clarita. No one hit them. No ice or snow or rain. No brake loss or mudslide or tornado. She just lost control on a turn that wasn’t even tricky and slammed into a tree. That was that.

I started the slow slide into the mucky pit where I was now rotting, and most days I wished I’d been in the car with them. Such a sob story, right? I should have just sacked up. They were gone and nothing was bringing them back. Yet my feet remained mired in this mud, sticky as glue.

Carol wore me down. I was too tired to say ‘no’ when she said, “Questus insists on speaking with you.”

“When?”

“Right here, right now.”

I realized I was never going to get rid of this insistent woman unless I acquiesced. And who was I to deny a request of the great and mighty Questus? So we went in the living room and I slid into an easy chair. She grimaced slightly when she saw the condition of the couch, found a cleanish throw pillow, placed it on the cushions, sat on it. She gave me a little smile, closed her eyes.

“It will just take a few minutes for me to go away and Questus to come through,” she said.

Alrighty then.

She rolled her neck. Took a deep breath. Then another. Her face twitched. A couple more times, then her back became straighter, her face came to attention.

“Hello, dear one,” came the voice. It was different than hers... lower and with a slight accent, like an English governess in an old movie.

“I am very pleased to be with you today and indeed feel this meeting has import for you,” continued this Questus thing. “I will be happy to answer any question you may have, but first would like to share a few things with you, if you don’t mind.”

“Knock yourself out.”

“What an odd saying. You humans can be so clever with your language. I sense that your energetic field is low and you perhaps require sleep, so will get right to the matters at hand.

“You are a beautiful being of light and powerful beyond your human imaginings. You have poured a tiny sliver of your greater self into this bubble of biology in order to have a human experience. You in a sense pinched yourself off from all-that-is, from what you would call “God,” for a couple of reason. One, to find out how far free will could take you in being a creator in physical form. Two, for the sheer joy and adventure of the experience.

“But, you may say, ‘Questus, I am having anything but fun in my human costume. In fact, many days I wish to slip it off and return home.’”

“Yes!” I found myself blurting.

Questus offered a mirthful smile. Carol seemed to have disappeared completely. Of, if she was acting, wasn’t thrown off track by my outburst.

“Dear one, that is because you have taken the game far too seriously, like most of the other humans. You truly have forgotten that this is to be a journey of joy and that life truly can be a big sandbox for you. Yes, you have forgotten many things. And this was part of the plan you had for yourself before you incarnated. You would place yourself behind the veil, you would find out just how far you could sink into this third density, the physical world.”

A peach-colored band of sunlight poked through the smudged window, dappled Carol’s face.

“You have done this over and over, lifetime after lifetime, and you’ve had thousands of them on this planet. You have been slayer and you have been slain. You have been benefactor and been beneficiary. You have been rich and poor, have had every illness,

inhabited almost every profession. You have truly done it all, as have most other souls on earth.

“So now you are starting the game called ‘Waking Up.’ Now it is time to integrate spirit and flesh, dear one. You are going to begin remembering that you truly are a piece of God in this Universe, that you do have power over your own life, and that ultimately you are nothing but love.”

I fidgeted, suddenly finding his encounter—especially the words “God” and “love”—annoying.

“You wish to comment?”

“Yeah. It sounds like a pile of bullshit, to be honest.”

“An appropriate term, I suppose, coming from a tender of animals. Which part?”

“All of it. You sound like you should be writing bumpersticker slogans for a living.”

Questus chuckled softly. “You of course are free to believe or disbelieve whatever you choose. I am not here to convince you of anything. But rather to offer another, broader perspective.

“You are awakening. And that is why we are having this conversation right now. You have had enough of the dark and now are ready to immerse yourself more fully in the light.

“If you take this case, you will be lead down corridors you can only imagine, and your heart will begin to blossom again. You will synchronistically meet others on a similar path of awakening and you will all begin rubbing the sleep from your eyes together.”

My five-alarm hangover, strangely, was receding. I felt a surge of energy in my body and saw goosebumps on my arms.

“Yes, those physical reactions are your higher self and guides telling you that this is the path to take,” said Questus. “Whenever you have that sort of reaction in the body it is always a sign that you are onto something good.

“So, I have offered some insight and information for this day. If you choose to ignore it, there is no karmic penalty or ill circumstance that will befall you. Except perhaps the ones you continue to create for yourself. You will awaken. That is a given. It may be now, it may be later in this life, it may be in another incarnation. There is no judgment in this.”

The latent cop in me had a question bubbling to the surface.

“Hold on,” I said. “If you have this broader perspective and know so much, can’t you just tell us who the real killer is right now and get Carol off the hook?”

“Oh, what a delightful linear human question! Of course I could. But the answer to that query is totally beside the point.”

“I doubt if even Carol would say that. She could go to prison for the rest of her life.”

“Anything is possible. But she has faith it will work out for her highest good and the highest good of all involved. Do you have such faith? That is all for this transmission. I bid you a fond and exciting ‘good day.’”

Carol's face twitched several times. She rubbed her eyes, then opened them and gave me a little smile.

"So," she asked, "how did it go?"

I felt energized, but also oddly numb, as if I'd just spent two hours in a turbo Jacuzzi. I couldn't deny that something had just happened in that room, but I wasn't sure exactly what.

"It was... something else," I offered without commitment.

"So are you in?" Carol asked.

I considered her a moment. "I'll have to think about it."

"Fine."

She got up, grabbed her purse, headed for the door.

"I'm really sorry about Jill and the kids," she said. "A year now?"

"Thanks. Yeah, about that."

She gave the room a once-over, as if mine-sweeping.

"I took all the pictures of them down," I said quietly. "Just..."

"I understand."

"So," I said. "I guess I'm still curious to know a bit more about why Jill was coming to you."

"Insights. Clarity. Nothing too earth-shattering."

My look indicated to her I wanted more. "Maybe we can get into detail about that another time," she said as she took a step toward the front door. Was this a tack to hook me into the case?

As I walked her to her silver Lexus, I spotted two men in suits at the edge of my property. There was no mistaking them: fucking barracuda bankers. I'd seen the short, ashen one before, but the tall bald one was new. The land they were surveying was technically now the bank's so they had every right to eyeball it... but they knew by now it was best not to engage me directly. Carol noted my disdain.

"Of course the job I'm offering pays," she said.

"All the land is already gone, foreclosed on," I found myself telling her. "Only thing left is the house. A month, maybe two."

"It's rough all over. Even in Pacific Palisades." I had been right... only the tony Palisades for this one. "I'm out on a million dollars bail, all our investments are way down. Having money isn't what it used to be." I wondered who the "our" referred to. Children? Maybe she did have a husband after all. Then again, she could be the type who would use the royal 'our' in certain situations. I wasn't interested enough to ask.

Was this poor-mouthing a lowball tactic from Miss New Agey? I shot her a dour 'so-how-much?' look.

“I can give you a thousand a week with a 50k bonus if you find out who really did it,” she said. “The trial starts in a month, though, so only the four weeks are guaranteed.”

“It starts that soon?”

“Well. I did have another man working the case. A Brentwood P.I., highly recommended. But he didn’t come up with much. Then Questus revealed that I should contact you.”

She must have seen the incredulity on my face because she continued. “I do know it’s hard to believe, a so-called spirit sending me to you. But all I can do is tell you that this is indeed the case.”

“So you went to another guy first. Second stringer... story of my life.”

“Yes, well, be that as it may...”

“Two thousand a week, plus expenses. The 50k bonus is fine.”

“Let’s make it 1500, and reasonable expenses.”

She extended her porcelain hand.

I shook it.

###

The above is an excerpt from *The Lightworker, Life's mysteries explored in a mystery novel* by David Thomas.

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About *The Lightworker*

When a trance spirit channeler is accused of murdering a rival, ex-cop Huck Grayson finds himself reluctantly sucked into the case. He hasn't done detective work in years, but when the accused says the entity she channels has specifically said he should be involved, Huck is intrigued. When the channeler reveals Huck's dead wife had been a client, Grayson is hooked. The result is a thumping thriller with Huck attempting to find the true killer while beginning to heal his own tattered life with the aid of channeling.

David Thomas is an author and screenwriter in Los Angeles. This is his first novel.

Contact David at thomasdj99@aol.com.

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Let Go and Flow with Real Life

by Guy Finley

Real life is not static. Its only rule is change; so, it should be clear: either we agree to participate in the process of this eternal renewal, or we will feel punished by it. This means it's impossible to be someone who knows how things "should be"--and share in life's ceaseless newness at the same time. Yes, we may be able to devise a formula for a prescription drug, or create a new recipe for vegetable soup--but no system of thought that can stand up to the ever-shifting changes of real life, let alone meet those same changes fearlessly. Regardless how sophisticated its knowledge, the self that knows itself only through its own conditioned thinking can never develop beyond the content of itself, any more than a math equation can suddenly outgrow the line of symbols responsible for its form.

The truth is we can't know what to do in advance of any given moment. When we meet life with pre-conceived ideas about how to respond to what unfolds before us--we are like downhill skiers trying to know when and where to make turns before it snows. Add to this idea the fact that whenever socially contrived ideals go before us as measuring sticks, they are too soon turned into some form of self-righteous judgment--making us quick to punish anyone found guilty of not doing what we think ought to have been done.

Knowledge, regardless of its sophisticated nature, is a tool. It arises from and belongs to what has passed. As such it embodies, defines, and relates us to life through what we already know is true about the world around us. By definition, this kind of understanding is limited. But real life is not limited to what was; it is always new because it's the expression of a compassionate and living intelligence that actively shapes whatever it touches, as well as whatever reaches out to touch it. You could say that each moment appears, as it does--in whatever its form or color--hard or soft, dark or light-- to reveal us to ourselves. How can we hope to learn from such moments, to be transformed and perfected by them, if we meet them with hardened biased views about how they should unfold? No form is free.

And just as one wouldn't mistake the ladder he must climb for the rooftop from which he hopes to view the stars, neither should we confuse even the most sophisticated spiritual knowledge for those innermost revelations that can come to us only through living in the now. Genuine self-knowledge is one and the same as being fully self-aware in the present moment. As such, it is never static. This fluid level of Self places no demands on life, therefore it fears nothing that life may reveal. Being fearless, it never has to imagine a freedom "to come," any more than a river needs to imagine how to flow.

When you are present to yourself, quietly watchful of the relationship that is always unfolding in the present moment, then you have no more need to prepare for what life will bring than a newly opened rose needs to ready itself for the warmth of the sun that comes to release its fragrance.

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

Read more articles by Guy Finley:

<http://www.trans4mind.com/counterpoint/index-authors/index-finley.html>

Guy Finley is the bestselling author of *The Secret of Letting Go*, *The Courage to Be Free*, and 40 other works that have sold over a million copies in 20 languages worldwide. His newest book, *The Seeker; The Search, The Sacred* (2011, Weiser Books) reveals the common thread that runs through every human heart: the wish to unite with the Divine. The book is part of a larger project to share this healing message with the world. Visit www.onejourney.net to learn how you can help change the world.

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We are proud to introduce a brand new website with one of the most amazing messages ever! It's all about who we really are – at our core – and our true purpose in life. Just spend a few relaxing moments there, and not only will you understand yourself better – and feel better about yourself – but you'll have more understanding and compassion for everyone else.

We urge you to visit www.onejourney.net and see for yourself. There's a breathtaking, deeply moving 3-minute video montage on the homepage that stirs, We think that when you see it, you'll want to share it with everyone you know.

About the OneJourney Project

Human beings must find a common ground if our battles are ever to end. Remarkably, that common ground lies at the very heart of the spiritual traditions that currently divide us. By observing the testimonies of individuals across time, distance, and religious tradition, we see that we are all on the same journey to awaken the soul. The essence of this journey has been described the same way time and again over millennia, revealing there is just one seeker and just one search leading to the discovery of just one sacred. The evidence is presented in self-realization author Guy Finley's book, *The Seeker, The Search, The Sacred*.

The clearer the truth of our common spiritual bond, the greater the possibility of a new understanding that can help heal our planet. The OneJourney Project aims to spread this important message worldwide. Other interfaith and peace organizations are joining this effort, and a portion of the author and publisher proceeds from this book are being donated to a wide range of nonprofit groups.

We are all one. If we all knew it, we could not hurt one another. By sharing this message, perhaps we can change the world.

Special Offer:

As part of the worldwide release of Guy Finley's new book *The Seeker; The Search, The Sacred: Journey to the Greatness Within*, we've made special arrangements for you to receive over 108 free gifts from leading authors and experts. There is one overwhelming desire that lies at the heart of every human being. Now you can know it and fulfill it. Start the search that leads not only to the fulfillment you seek, but ultimately can help heal our world at the same time!

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The Nine Gifts of Christmas

by Chuck Gallozzi

Sometimes the people we have to work with give us a hard time instead of their full cooperation. Our tasks become more difficult when the people we're counting on give us a headache instead of a hand. Wouldn't it be nice, though, if everyone we dealt with not only gave us a smile, but gave us a gift? Of course, we cannot control the thoughts, feelings, and actions of others, so the only gifts that we can be sure of are those that we give to others. Since the joy is in the giving, why not become a bearer of gifts? As Christmas approaches, let's think about nine gifts we can offer to others, gifts that won't cost us anything, yet are worth more than gold.

The first gift is compassion. It is more than mere caring or concern. It is love in action. For example, someone at work is stymied by a problem and you have a spare moment, so you immediately jump in, without being asked, and offer a helping hand. Other examples include offering our seat in the train or bus to another, holding the door open for a young mother with a baby carriage that is trying to enter a building. Yet another example is guiding an elderly or disabled person safely across a large street. Imagine the surprise and delight of others as we offer them these much needed gifts.

A moment's reflection will reveal many other ways we can express our compassion. For instance, when someone else is trying to speak, we can offer the gifts of silence and a listening ear. Or when others are trying to express a dissenting opinion, we can agree with their right to have such a view, and use it to expand our own understanding, rather than try to convert them to our way of thinking.

The second gift is honesty. If it were a commodity exchanged in the Stock Market, its price would be on the rise because of its scarcity in the business world. We can make a big difference by helping to restore it. If we're in sales, instead of trying to sell a bill of goods, we can sell service, support, and knowledge. That is, we can be a help, rather than a hindrance. If we're asked about something we don't know, we can be honest and admit our ignorance. And if it's within our capacity to find the answer, we can make the effort to do so.

In our personal relationships, honesty means keeping our word, avoiding gossip, not exaggerating our accomplishments and recognizing the achievements of others. It also means being true to ourselves or practicing integrity. In other words, we align our actions with our values. For instance, don't you think it's strange that we sometimes hurt those we love? To do so is dishonest, for it is not how we feel in our heart. Don't you agree that honesty is healing and dishonesty is hurtful?

The third gift is recognition. People are criticized more often than they are recognized. As a result, they are starving for recognition. Because sincere praise is as rare as diamonds, it has great value. Thomas Fuller wrote in 1732, "He injures a fair lady that beholds her not." That is, he that doesn't admire a beautiful woman insults her! After all, if she took the time and effort to look good, shouldn't we acknowledge that?

When we offer praise, congratulations, and admiration, we are offering the gift of recognition. We are effectively saying, “The world is better off because you are here. You have value. I am honored to know you. You make my life more enjoyable.” How often do we express these sentiments to our family, friends, and coworkers? Isn’t true that if we are silent, we are both dishonest and unloving?

The fourth gift is interest. What do you imagine is the worst thing you can do to someone? It is not to hate them, for hate is sparked by jealousy or fear. Although highly negative, such feelings at least recognize them. No, the worst thing you can do to others is to ignore them. To deny their existence. To have no interest in them..

While the gift of recognition honors others for what they have DONE, the gift of interest honors others for what they ARE. And what are they? They are fellow travelers on the journey of life. They have as much right to be here, as much value to the world, and as interesting a story to relate as anyone else. All we have to do is give them an opportunity to tell their story. Each person is but one facet in the gem we call life. When we express interest in them, we give them the opportunity to sparkle. Be especially aware of those diamonds in the rough that you have at home and call your children.

The fifth gift is sincerity. When we act compassionately, we grow joyful. When we are honest, we are at peace with ourselves. When we shower others with recognition, they recognize us for our kindness. When we express interest in others by asking them to tell us about themselves, we discover the wonder and beauty of the world. So, each gift we offer has its own reward. But one of the greatest gifts of all is that of sincerity, for it is a beacon. When we act out of sincerity we act without desiring a reward. We offer each of the above gifts with no motive other than it is the right thing to do. Sincere people do not try to improve others, they just try to better themselves, but in doing so, they improve the world. Rather than trying to grab from life as much as they can, they try to add whatever they can.

The sixth gift is time. It is a priceless gift, for it is the only one that is a nonrenewable resource. In each of our lives, there is a limited allotment of time. Once used, it is gone forever, never to be replaced. Since time is the stuff our lives are made of, when we spend it with others, we are giving the greatest gift of all, ourselves. When we encourage others and cheer them on, we infuse their life with meaning; we make their life worthwhile. What greater gift can we offer?

The seventh gift is magnanimity. The word comes from Latin and means great soul. Here’s how the 1828 Webster’s dictionary defines the term, “Greatness of mind; that elevation or dignity of soul, which encounters danger and trouble with tranquility and firmness, which raises the possessor above revenge, and makes him delight in acts of benevolence, which makes him disdain injustice and meanness, and prompts him to sacrifice personal ease, interest and safety for the accomplishment of useful and noble objects.” In simpler terms, a magnanimous person is bighearted, generous, and forgiving. Such people act as a balm soothing the pain of those around them. Confucius (circa 551~478 BC) believed that magnanimity is also one of the five things that makes up a virtuous life (the other four are earnestness, sincerity, kindness, and gravity {solemnity, seriousness})

The eight gift is altruism, an unselfish concern for the welfare of others. Volunteers working at food banks and homeless shelters are examples of altruistic people. Altruism is

something we all need to practice because we were born selfish. Yet, it should not be done at the expense of neglecting one's own spouse, children and obligations. A major point to consider is what we do for ourselves dies with us, but what we do for others remains as our legacy.

The ninth gift is service. By service, I simply mean helping others. It is appropriate that this gift comes last because it is the bow that wraps around the other gifts, holding them together. This gift is the reason why we are here. We are here to serve one another. Here's how Khalil Gibran (1883~1931) describes this gift, "I slept and I dreamed that life is all joy. I woke and I saw that life is all service. I served and I saw that service is joy." Noble as service is, here again balance is called for. After all, isn't it better to teach someone how to fish than to make them dependent on your occasional handouts? So, the best way to help others is to help them become self-sufficient.

By the way, the nine gifts I have mentioned are easy to remember, for when we take the first letter of the gifts of Compassion, Honesty, Recognition, Interest, Sincerity, Time, Magnanimity, Altruism, and Service they spell out C.H.R.I.S.T.M.A.S. Each gift is not meant to be thought of in the abstract, but is meant to be lived. Not in the future, but now. Their primary purpose isn't to help those in desperate need thousands of miles away, but to lessen the fear and pain of those in our immediate circle of family, friends, acquaintances, and, yes, those strangers we meet each day as we go about our daily business. We have good reason to act, for we will never be what we ought to be until we help others become what they ought to be.

As you go along freely distributing your gifts to all you meet, you may occasionally run into an ungrateful, rude, or mean person, but don't let that upset you. We need troublesome people, for how can we practice forgiveness unless we interact with people needing it? Finally, paraphrasing Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882), let your life be an opener of doors for those who come after you.

Wishing you the blessings of the season and the nine gifts of Christmas,

Chuck Gallozzi, Mississauga, Ontario, Canada

Chuck 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.

Read more articles by Chuck Gallozzi at:

<http://www.trans4mind.com/counterpoint/index-authors/index-gallozzi.html>

Easy Does It

By Beca Lewis

"To attain knowledge, add things every day. To attain wisdom, remove things every day."
—*Lao Tzu*

Once I was riding a little metro bus to my destination while daydreaming about doing a charcoal drawing. Since this was not something I usually did, charcoal drawing not day dreaming, it briefly passed through my thinking that if I were going to do the drawing it would be good to have a charcoal pencil.

I reached my destination and stepped off the bus. As the door began to close one of the other passengers stopped it and leaning out said to me, "Is this your pencil?" She held out the exact charcoal pencil I was thinking I would need to buy. "No," I said marveling at what she held in her hand. "Well," she said, "I think it is because it was on your seat."

Of course, I took the offered pencil thinking that is was perfect evidence of the Truth that all we need is always present, as clearly seen this time in the form of a charcoal pencil.

Thinking back on this I wondered, "Why was this so easy?"

Here's another story. I was having a technical problem with our phone system. I had an idea what would work to fix it, but didn't feel like doing it. Why? Because for some reason the idea seemed hard even though it involved only one-step.

I think I was irritated that I even had to stop and fix it. The company should fix it not me.

So instead of doing the simple thing, I spent time writing to the company and trying out their very complicated ways of trying to fix it. I answered lots of questions, unplugged things, rebooted computers; it was a many step process for every idea. None worked. Finally, one of technicians suggested the very idea I first had, I tried it, the one-step process, and yes, it worked.

Hello – why did I make it so hard?

Have you ever had someone ask you a question you answered in a message to them, and you could tell they never read the message to the end so it involved many more minutes of both your time to get the information to them that you had already provided?

On the other hand, have you ever done this yourself?

Have you ever called a company saying what you ordered was never delivered, argued with them, and then cleaned off your desk and found it there?

Or, have you ever looked for something like your glasses to find them perched on your head, or your pen and found it tucked in your hair, or your keys and found them where you left them?

Making the simple complicated. This is the human habit. It's the worldview training. Let's give it up for lent and never take it back.

I have an idea why the charcoal pencil appeared so quickly. There was nothing complicated about it.

I didn't get caught up in the details of ideas like this, "I have to go buy it, or I need a whole set of pencils just in case, or where will I get the money, or what's the best place to buy it, or should I actually bother to do the drawing, or I don't have enough time" ... ok, I could go on but I am sure you get the picture.

It was a simple idea, I felt complete with it, and in this case, the pencil appeared as the perfect symbol of what is always present, everything we need.

I'm thinking we could all get a good idea of what "Easy Does It" feels like if we stepped outside and did something basic and simple. Breathed in, breathed out, and watched what is already present without any work on our part, everything. What more is there to want?

Maybe we should give up something everyday until we are back to the easy living we remember as children as we lay on our back in the grass and watched the clouds go by.

Maybe we should make it a law that everyone does this. Naw, then we would be back to complicated. Let's live as an example instead. ###

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>

Read more articles by Beca Lewis at:

<http://www.trans4mind.com/counterpoint/index-authors/index-lewis.html>

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Whose Problem Am I?

by Steve Wickham

A play on The Motels' song, Whose Problem (1980), we have the opportunity to ask ourselves a most important question: Whose problem (presently) am I? Am I the cause of any unnecessary burden? Does anything remain unresolved because of, or despite, me?

One way we practically love people is by relieving any sense of difficulty, that we can, which might affect the rapport we would otherwise mutually enjoy.

THE MOTELS' SONG ORIGINAL INTENT

"Whose problem am I, if I'm not yours?"

That was the original crux of the song, and it utters a certain truth. We all want to be called someone's son or daughter, wife or husband, partner etc. We all, of the sense, want to be 'owned' by somebody - in the way of their care. We want to be cared for by other, or another, human being(s).

In a weirdly ironic way we want people to check up on us; to prove that they care about us, what we do, what we are about. There is a need in many of us to be 'a problem' (in this way) for someone or some people. We want to be their concern.

TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE PROBLEMATIC NATURE OF CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS

Of course, many close relationships will be intentionally, and permissively, problematic. It's the nature of love; when we are fully vested and sown into relationship we assume a certain level of care will produce a certain quantity or quality of problem.

We go into these relationships with our eyes open. We know the price of love is a modicum of suffering, grief, risk of betrayal, disappointment etc.

There will be conflict; nothing surer.

The mere fact of intimacy suggests we must risk something, via the glittering facets of trust, to establish love. Love is a messy thing; essentially it's problematic. We don't have a choice, many of us, because we are wired to love and be loved.

SOME BURDENS NEED TO BE TACKLED

There is still the opportunity, however, to reflect: Am I being especially burdensome?

Only we, by our observations and perceptions, can make that call. Only we have the capacity to right any of these wrongs that occur in our lives because of us, personally.

We can all be overly burdensome from time to time, and though our loved ones know us and love us dearly, in spite of our quirks, it's our responsibility to amend problematic behaviour.

Whose problem am I? It's a decent enough question. Knowing the answers to such questions is our social responsibility.

A significant part of loving one another is not just acting in love, but it's also not acting in abusive and neglectful ways. Relationships blossom when problematic issues are tackled head-on. ###

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/>

Read more articles by Steve Wickham at:

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Number Your Days and Name Your Blessings

by Joyce Shafer

Do your days feel ordinary? Do you feel there are too few blessings in your life? Maybe you'd like to shift this.

Let's look at the second part of the article title first. We tend to put a lot of energy into naming what we want (often stated as "don't have") and not a lot of energy into naming what we have. We are surrounded by people and advertising—obvious and subtle—that promote this as a natural or expected way to be and feel. The result is that **we wake each morning, go about our days, and go to sleep with very little appreciation for what we have** and may, in fact, dwell on the opposite.

We believe—which is really mimic others and repeat behaviors we learned—that it's natural or responsible to focus on what's "wrong" with us, everyone else, and in certain areas of our lives or life itself. This is so prevalent that we miss or discount what is right in us, others, and life. We learned to think about what's "wrong." We learned to complain (rather than occasionally vent) to anyone who'll listen or happens to be where we are, maybe about the same things over and over. We're so focused in this way that often **our perspective about "what is" gets skewed, and our ability to be creative about solutions, resolutions, or improvements gets diminished.**

Kurt Wright explained in his book, *Breaking the Rules*, that we use our rational minds to judge, to assign value as right/wrong, good/bad rather than use that part of our mind as it was designed: To convey "facts into and back out of our intuition," so that we use our whole-mind function rather than just the analytical mind, which has been scientifically proven unable to discern fact from fiction. The result is that we disallow "good judgment" to happen. Judgment, in its most beneficial form, is there to help us figure out what fits and doesn't, in an ongoing, ever-evolving assessment of a desired ideal. **When we go straight into right/wrong, good/bad judgment, we block our intuition's ability to respond to beneficial questions** like, "What else might be going on here? What might the bigger picture be? What feels appropriate for me, or inappropriate? What would have to happen for me to feel head and heart alignment about this?"

Recognizing what you have doesn't mean you aren't aware of what you'd like to shift so that you have more desirable experiences and results. In fact, **the greater your appreciation for what you have, the greater your ability is to solve, resolve, and make productive shifts.** We want more "blessings" in our life, but do we notice (name) the ones we have? To those who have appreciation, more to appreciate is given.

One way to name your blessings, as wisely stated by Joel Osteen, is to **as often as possible, exchange the words HAVE TO with GET TO.** Think about what this really means in the greater scheme of life around the world. You don't have to go to work, you get to go to work (you're able to receive income). You don't have to do your studies, you

get to do them (education is available). You don't have to wake up, you get to wake up (you're alive another day, with its opportunities). You don't have to interact with your children or other family members, you get to (your loved ones are still with you). You don't have to work with clients or customers, you get to (people want what you provide). Recall the last thing you said you had to do and use "get to" instead of "have to". How does that feel? Example: I have to grocery shop vs. I get to grocery shop, which means I get to walk into a store and easily reach for what I want or need rather than have to grow, raise, process, or preserve all of it.

What else in your life do you say you Have to do that, with a perspective shift, you realize you Get to do? See? Hear? Breathe? Feel? Think? Love? Appreciate? Pay for products and services that benefit your life? Use your limbs? How many things do you experience that go unnoticed or unappreciated by you?

This leads to the first part of the article title: Number Your Days. The quote comes from the Bible, Psalm 90:12 – "Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom." This is about appreciating each day. **It's about realizing what author Dan Millman realized: "There are no ordinary moments." I add: only ordinary perspectives.**

We are so involved with our thoughts about matters and things, mostly negative thoughts, that we miss the fact that every moment we have is extraordinary—and numbered. None of us know the number of our days or the days of others. It's not that we're to use this as our motivation to behave better, but to let awareness of this motivate better behavior and deeper appreciation—to place greater value on our moments and blessings than we have been. I'm not saying we should appreciate anything that's intolerable or inappropriate (though, we can appreciate that we can discern this and make a choice in favor of our well-being); this is about the gifts in our life that we don't recognize and name as such.

You woke up today. It's likely you were able to get out of bed without assistance—same for going to the bathroom; or if you needed assistance, it's likely you had it. It's likely you showered or bathed inside, with water you could adjust temperature-wise to suit you. You probably had coffee and food in your kitchen or easy access to someone who provided them. Maybe you drove, rode a bike, used public transportation, or walked to work—even if that's in the next room. Maybe you interacted with a loved one or will during the day. The list can go on and on. **It's up to you to practice naming your blessings, small and large. It's up to you to practice seeing your days and moments as numbered and, therefore, not in the least ordinary.**

Today, and everyday, take time to appreciate what you have, especially what you usually don't think about, or often take for granted. Consider the habit of not getting out of bed until you find at least one reason to feel deep appreciation, rather than start your day with grumbling. **Make** a moment to state appreciation to someone—it matters. It makes a difference—for them and for you.

Practice makes progress. ###

About Joyce Shafer

I help women 45+ get their Awesome back! **Love Who You Are, Go for What You Really Want**—a life-changing online coaching course with **Joyce Shafer**, life coach; author; and publisher of **State of Appreciation**, a free weekly online newsletter that blends practical & spiritual approaches to life for personal development & self-realization. Terrific empowering gifts available when you subscribe free at <http://stateofappreciation.webs.com>

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Think More Positive Thoughts ... and Get Better Results

by Dr. Alan Zimmerman

"Remember, happiness doesn't depend on who you are or what you have; it depends solely on what you think." ~*Dale Carnegie*

Even though Carnegie wrote those words about a 100 years ago, they still ring true today. Your happiness ... and dare I say, your success ... depends almost entirely on what you think. Indeed, I've worked with happier people living on the streets of Los Angeles and living in the refugee camps of Thailand than some of my acquaintances who live in mansions in Naples or Palm Springs.

As study after study continues to confirm, there is very little connection between the things you have and the happiness you experience. Happiness is an attitude or "head thing," not a "possession thing." That being the case, HOW can you think better, stronger, healthier, more positive, more success-producing thoughts?

1. Become a persevering optimist rather than a deadline optimist.

It's easy to be optimistic ... if things are going your way. And it's easy to be optimistic ... just as long as things are happening on your timetable.

But that's not good enough when your business continues to scrape along or your marriage seems to be on its last breath. You've got to find a way to stay optimistic IN SPITE OF the tough times at work or at home. You've got to be a persevering optimist, who keeps on keeping on, instead of the deadline optimist, who only hangs on for a given amount of time.

In his classic book, "Good To Great," Jim Collins called it "The Stockdale Paradox," a phenomenon named after Admiral Jim Stockdale, who was the highest ranking US military officer in the "Hanoi Hilton" prisoner-of-war camp during the height of the Vietnam War. Tortured over 20 times during his eight-year imprisonment from 1965 to 1973, Stockdale lived out the war without any prisoner's rights, no set release date, and no certainty as to whether he would even survive to see his family again. He shouldered the burden of command, doing everything he could to create conditions that would increase the number of prisoners who would survive unbroken, while fighting an internal war against his captors and their attempts to use the prisoners for propaganda.

So how did he survive this hell on earth. Stockdale said, "I never lost faith in the end of the story. I never doubted, not only that I would get out, but also that I would prevail in the end."

Of course, some of POWs did not get out. They did not prevail. When asked who didn't make it out, Stockdale replied, "Oh, that's easy. The optimists."

Of course most of us would be puzzled by that answer ... as Jim Collins was. So he asked the Admiral to elaborate. Stockdale said, "The optimists. They were the ones who said, 'We're going to be out by Christmas.' And Christmas would come, and Christmas would go. Then they'd say, 'We're going to be out by Easter.' And Easter would come, and Easter would go. And then Thanksgiving, and then it would be Christmas again. And they died of a broken heart."

After a long pause, the very insightful Admiral added, "This is a very important lesson. You must never confuse faith that you will prevail in the end ...which you can never afford to lose ...with the discipline to confront the most brutal facts of your current reality, whatever they might be."

Stockdale finished with a piece of advice we all need to grasp ... if we're going to be persevering optimists instead of pie-in-the-sky, happy-face optimists. As Stockdale told his men, "We're not getting out by Christmas; deal with it!"

Your business may not turn around tomorrow. And the same may be true of many other situations in your life. But keep the faith ... that you will prevail in the end. Deal with it.

And then, to think better, stronger, healthier, more positive, more success-producing thoughts, get a copy of my book called "PIVOT: How One Turn In Attitude Can Lead To Success." Samantha Brown writes, "Just wanted to thank you for this incredible work. I purchased 'PIVOT', and both my husband and I read it. I can honestly say it changed our lives. Now I'm recommending the book to all of our family and friends."

You can get your copy of "PIVOT" (audio book only available, hard copy on back order) by clicking here: <http://www.drzimmerman.com/tools/productinfo/pivot.htm>

Until then, another strategy to improve your positive thinking processes ...

2. Go on a "good" hunt.

Back in the 1900's, William Feather wrote "Plenty of people miss their share of happiness, not because they never found it, but because they didn't stop to enjoy it."

He was right. So take some time to look for the "good" in you and all around you. It will focus your thoughts on more of the positive things in life.

You could, for example, start a success journal. Each night before you go to bed, write down the one best thing about your day ... that great conversation, that accomplishment, or that win you are most proud of. Record your wins, breakthroughs, and the things you appreciate about yourself. Focus on your success, and you'll look forward to creating more success tomorrow.

You could notice the "good" things happening around you. Take a moment to savor them. Soak up the happiness you see. Take the "good" experience in and feel it ... really feel it ... rather than make a quick, hasty observation and move on.

You could also find the "good" funny things that pop up in your world. There's nothing better than a big laugh or even a little chuckle to turn your thoughts to the positive. That's why I go to card shops to read the humorous cards or go to flea markets to read the funny bumper strips that various vendors offer. I buy a few, but I also take a note pad along so I

can write them down and think about them in the future. On a recent "hunt," I came across these. They made me laugh. Maybe they'll do the same for you...

=Going to church doesn't make you a Christian any more than standing in a garage makes you a car.

=To steal ideas from one person is plagiarism. To steal from many is research.

=A bank is a place that will lend you money, if you can prove that you don't need it.

=A diplomat is someone who can tell you to go to h_ll in such a way you look forward to the trip.

=I discovered I scream the same way whether I'm about to be devoured by a great white shark or if a piece of seaweed touches my foot.

=I always take life with a grain of salt, plus a slice of lemon, and a shot of tequila.

=Some people hear voices; some see invisible people, others have no imagination whatsoever.

Change is inevitable, except from a vending machine. So open your eyes. Go on a "good" hunt. Find "good" things to feed your mind and you will be thinking more positive thoughts. And finally, for today's purposes ...

3. Praise others.

Of course it's tough out there. It has been for a few years and may be that way for a while. And tough times are an especially fertile ground for the growth of negativity in your organization or the people around you.

That's a cause for concern ... because negativity ... or your attitude ... will defeat you faster than the economy, the competition or anything else.

So you've got to be especially careful of hanging around negative people. Their negativity can and will rub off on you ... unless your mind is filled with the positive. You've got to be careful of conversing too much with colleagues who say such things as, "I've just got 7 more years, 2 months, 3 weeks, and 4 days, and I'm out of here."

You've got to be careful of getting too close to employees who simply "get by" and do work that's merely "good enough." Again, their negativity can and will rub off on you if you're not constantly feeding your mind a steady diet of positive input.

And if you personally are getting more than your share of attacks, you might follow comedian George Burns' advice. He said, "When you think you're right, stick to your guns, no matter how much opposition you have to put up with. As Gracie said on one of her shows, 'They all laughed at Joan of Arc, but she didn't care. She went right ahead and built it'."

Of course, there are times you simply cannot avoid the negative people or the negative attacks. You have to work together. That's just the way it is. You have to work with some people who have already retired; they just haven't told the personnel department yet.

BUT, there's one thing you can do to turn that around ... or at least minimize the damage to your own positive thought process. You can get in the habit of praising others more

often. Instead of complaining about what others are doing wrong, start focusing on what they are doing right. Praise them more often ... sincerely, honestly, genuinely ... and their negative behavior will recede. Praise them more often and your colleagues will exhibit better behavior, and they'll even be less critical of you. They'll be more focused on creating success than havoc.

In a time when companies can no longer guarantee lifetime job security, when pay raises are becoming less likely, and when promotion are coming less often, the old, traditional "motivators" of money and security are somewhat gone. That's why praise is more important than ever.

But you don't have to be working or living in a tough negative situation to find benefit in this third strategy of "praising others." It can help others and reinforce your own positive mind set even in the best of situations. I learned that lesson on Thanksgiving day.

After I finished the meal with our friends and family, I couldn't get Carl off my mind. Carl is the guard at the gate of my gated community where I sometimes live, and no matter what is going in the world, Carl couldn't be nicer. He's always got a smile, a good word, and a hearty welcome for everyone he encounters. And I knew Carl was working the gate on Thanksgiving rather than be at home with his family.

I just felt I had to reach out to Carl and praise him. So I excused myself from our Thanksgiving festivities, got in the car, drove the 4 miles to the gate, and waited for Carl to come out. He greeted me with his normal enthusiasm, but I said, "Carl, now it's my turn. This is Thanksgiving Day and I wanted to thank you for warmth and kindness every time I see you. You always make my day better. Thanks for your dedication to the job and your caring for the community. I really appreciate it."

Carl teared up a bit, thanked me for my comments, and mentioned how much he liked his job and serving people. That's was it. I don't know the impact it had on Carl, even though I meant every word of it, but I know it added a huge amount to my Thanksgiving Day. My taking the time to praise someone else had impacted my own attitude for the better.

In closing, if you want more success, it starts with thinking more positive thoughts. And here are three ways you can do exactly that.

Action:

Go out of your way to praise others this week that you normally don't praise. Give them sincere appreciation ... for their good as well as your own. ###

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

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Sweating Bullets

by Dr. Linda Sapadin

Imagine that you're taking a stroll in a wooded area. The trees are in bloom; the sky is clear; the cool breeze is refreshing; you're humming your favorite tune. You're doing just fine when suddenly you hear a blood curdling scream EEEEEOOOWWWW!!!!

Out of nowhere a repulsive creature has stepped into your path. His body is grotesque. His face is hairy. He's got horns on his head. You freeze in terror as its hideous face stares into yours!

Though you desperately wish to flee, you find yourself hopelessly frozen. Your heart is racing. It feels like a hammer is pounding on your chest. You can't catch your breath. You feel lightheaded. You're afraid you might faint or die right there on the spot.

Now imagine feeling this very same terror even though there's no creature in your path. Would you feel like you were going crazy? Or losing control? Would you be embarrassed by your reaction?

This is the experience of those who suffer from panic attacks. Many people keep their experience secret, not knowing what has come over them, not having the words to describe their reaction. They feel isolated believing that they're the only ones who experience such reactions. Panic attacks, however, are more common than many believe.

The word "panic" comes to us from the ancient Greeks who were said to experience overwhelming terror when they encountered Pan, their god of nature. Half man, half beast, Pan had a scream so intense, that it was believed that terrified travelers who happened upon him in the forest died from fear.

In today's world, many people are so apprehensive that they avoid being in places or situations where there is no quick or easy escape. Their life becomes increasingly restricted, as they use avoidance to manage their fears. Seeking safety above all else, they shy away from situations in which they'd be alone, with strangers, or with crowds of people. They may become phobic about traveling away from "safe areas" or attempting a new activity. Even just thinking about such events can precipitate a panic response.

Though not all panic responses are so debilitating, they can still get you sweating bullets as zero hour draws near. Students panic before a test; hosts panic before their company arrives; actors panic before the curtain rises; working people panic before an evaluation. Panic is a daily occurrence for those who have difficulty leaving the house in the morning. Anxiety mounts as they think that their house is a mess, they don't look right or they've forgotten something significant.

When family and friends notice what's going on, they often offer well-meaning advice, such as "just relax," "roll with the punches," or "chill out." Such advice is rarely effective, however. Many then seek out medical advice and are prescribed anti-anxiety medication. If pills don't do the trick, the dose is increased or another drug is added to the mixture. If

there's not much relief, patients feel more perturbed that the medication has added to their problems by making them sleepy and lethargic.

Too bad. For panic attacks should be treated with a combination of cognitive therapy (learning to change your thought patterns and internal dialogue), behavioral therapy (gradually exposing yourself to more scary situations), body therapy (learning how to control your breathing and other bodily reactions) and possible adjunct medication to help calm your body down.

If you (or someone you know) is frequently dreading the day, sweating bullets over an event or in a frenzy about the future, don't think that this is the way life needs to be. There is treatment that can help you get beyond your fears. ###

Dr. Sapadin is a psychologist, success coach and media guest. She specializes in helping people enrich their lives, enhance their relationships and overcome self-defeating patterns of behavior.

She has appeared on the Today Show, Good Morning America, and National Public Radio. Her work has been featured in *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, and *The Washington Post*.

Reporters seek out her expertise for articles on a variety of psychological and relationship topics. Her work has been featured in *Psychology Today*, *Men's Health*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Prevention*, *Redbook*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Men's Health*, *Lifetime TV.com*, *WedMD.com* and many other print and on-line publications.

Program director of the Smithsonian Associates, Pam Weyman, calls Dr. Sapadin an example of "the best standard of instructors here at the Smithsonian, an institution that seeks out only the most qualified in their field."

Announcing a new book by Dr Sapadin, [How to Beat Procrastination in the Digital Age: 6 Unique Change Programs for 6 Personality Styles](#)

Brief description of the book:

Because procrastination is driven by strong emotions and tenacious personality traits, it's tough to change! If it were a simple matter, like "making resolutions" or "just doing it," surely mom's nagging or your teacher's scolding would have cured you of it years ago. To change an embedded habit, you need to implement skills and strategies tailored to your personality style. Since one size does not fit all, this book delivers 6 Unique Change Programs for 6 Personality Styles

So, whether you (or your favorite procrastinator) are A Perfectionist, Dreamer, Worrier, Crisis-Maker, Defier, Pleaser or a combination thereof, a valuable program in this book awaits you. In each program, you'll learn empowering thinking, speaking and action strategies, inspiring do-to exercises, creative guided imagery, and unique game plans to use technology to boost productivity rather than having it suck up your time.

See Dr Sapadin's website www.BeatProcrastinationCoach.com for more information

15,000 Years of Success!

by Philip Humbert

This week I re-read Jared Diamond's remarkable, Pulitzer-winning book on the rise and fall of human societies. The book caused quite a stir because he examined over 15,000 years of history to understand why some peoples succeed while others advance slowly and die quickly. Unfortunately, I suspect the book also caused a stir, in part, because of its title, "[Guns, Germs and Steel](#)."

I mention this for a very, very important reason that has everything to do with success and failure in life. In the preface, Diamond writes, "History followed different courses for different people because of differences among people's environments, not because of biological differences among people themselves" (p. 25). Think about that!

The greatest predictor of success is not the people, but their environment! As a coach and Psychologist, I've long known that our Personal Eco-Systems, the micro-environment we create around ourselves every day, is the best predictor of our long-term success, health, wealth and happiness.

Many people have noted that "you are the average of the five people you spend the most time with." I suspect there is truth in that.

I also suspect that if I look at your library, your home, your office, your car and the music you listen to, I can predict with some accuracy how well you're getting along in life. How could it be any other way?

We constantly interact with our environment. When we are surrounded by sights, sounds, textures and tools that stimulate or motivate us, we become energized, creative and productive. Conversely, when we are surrounded by things that annoy or distract us, we quickly become discouraged. There is no surprise in this!

Charlie "Tremendous!" Jones was famous for noting that, "Five years from now, you will be the same person you are today except for the books you read and the people you meet." Environment matters! And, regarding Jones' observation, I would add that you will be the same person you are today except for the books you read and the people you meet, along with the programs, classes and workshops you attend and the challenges that enrich your life. But the principle remains.

The fact is that we change because of our environment far more than we change because of conscious decisions or will-power. The Law of Homeostasis says we tend to remain the same. We like our habits, our traditions and routines. We say we "want to change" but over the long-haul, we rarely do. We all know this.

Here are two powerful steps to achieve change in your life or circumstances:

1. Decide exactly what you want. This is called goal-setting or personal honesty. It's about dreams and desires, about values, priorities and having the courage to choose. Be clear about what you want!

2. Create an environment that pulls you forward. Surround yourself with people, books, situations and activities that reflect your desires. Talk with experts. Listen to the programs and music they listen to. Take the classes, read the books, dress and talk and think like they do. It'll rub off on you!

As Diamond notes, the difference between success and failure has little to do with talent, ability, or even interests or intelligence. The key to achieving the things you want in life is the environment in which you live. The good news is you control this! The bad news is that few of us do.

Fortunately, it requires little or no money to change your world! A library card is free. Inspiration and information on the internet is free! Exercise is free, and an apple costs less than a burger. Posters, pictures, good music and an organized office cost very little. Having lunch with successful people costs a few dollars. The bad news is that so few of us rigorously monitor these things. We're "too busy" and they are "too small" to be worth our time and effort.

To change your life, change your world. Change your personal environment, the little habits and daily activities that fill your time, and your life must (and will!) change for you. Will-power won't do it. You are largely the product of your environment, so make sure your world nurtures the person you want to become tomorrow even more than the person you are today. ###

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

~ 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.

To purchase as Kindle format go to <http://bit.ly/fmOtZe>

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Never Underestimate the Power of Your Original Self

by Charlie Badenhop

We increase our suffering by failing to appreciate the opportunities and learning our current challenges offers us. There is no life without challenges.

When we attempt to escape from what we find unpleasant, we miss out on the possibility of learning life affirming lessons, and achieving what we most desire. Attempting to move away from what we don't want leads us to settle for the scraps of life instead of feasting on the meal.

Indeed the more you try to avoid suffering, the more suffering you'll wind up experiencing. The same is true of illness.

You'll improve the quality of your life by striving to better understand what's confusing you, rather than looking to escape from your turmoil.

Solution and *problem* are two sides of the same coin. With a solution in hand, there is no problem. Look for the solutions inherent in your current situation, rather than looking to fix what you perceive to be wrong.

Instead of fighting against the seeming competing desires you have, use your whole self to stay cooperatively engaged in your struggle and you'll find something within you shifts. Over time your struggle will be transformed into a life affirming lesson.

Wanting to experience peace of mind is a fine goal to have, if you also realize you'll sometimes have little choice but to feel distressed. In fact, much of life happens in between the two.

Nothing stays the same forever and thus change is inevitable. Today's suffering will turn into tomorrow's happiness, and eventually you'll surely suffer once again. That's just the way life is.

Accepting that change is inevitable helps you move with life rather than attempting to hold onto either the *bad* or the *good*. As you open up to the need for change, you'll find yourself suffering more effectively. Peace of mind is sure to follow!

In Aikido we understand that if we follow the direction of an attack without impeding the attacker, the confusion being expressed will be fully expended and a new, more life affirming relationship can then begin to emerge.

You need some silence and solitude in your life so that you can begin to hear the inner voice of your original self. This is not the voice of your internal dialogue. This is the voice that's hidden in the depths of your soul, and it speaks to you without words.

It's your internal chaos that destroys your capacity for inner peace, and not the world around you. It's your internal chaos that weakens the root energy of your life force and the wisdom of your original self. You need to strive to know yourself as you were in the

beginning of your life. Know yourself as you were as a very young child— Filled with amazement and curiosity.

A happy life is not built upon understanding why. A happy life requires that you live in the midst of uncertainty and do so gracefully. When you,Äôre graceful there's a beauty that exudes from the way you move and carry yourself, because you do only what's necessary. Nothing more and nothing less. When you're graceful there's a sense of proper proportion, an ideal relationship, between yourself and the rest of life. Between your happiness and your sadness. You sense your life is *just right* as it is, and thus there's a stillness that permeates your being.in the midst of the unknown.

When you experience grace in the midst of illness, defeat, or other suffering, you're able to appreciate the small pleasures of life, and each challenge you face serves to strengthen the dreams you hold in your heart. ###

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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A guide to the process of adaptation

by Jahiel Yasha Kamhi

Every year, people get new jobs, become new immigrants and enter into the matrimony, just to mention a few of life's major adaptations.

But are they ready for the journey?

It depends on their attitude, their personality and their perception.

A person's ability to achieve satisfaction with adaptation to a new chapter in life is a function of a number of things, including flexible skills, strong system of beliefs, positive feelings about the transition and solid set of values.

Everybody has their own expectations and fears. It is a part of being a human, after all, to possess a collection of beliefs and feelings that is unique to each of us. But it's tricky business, for one reason: Beliefs and feelings are not always accurate.

Maybe one person walks around convinced that "It's impossible to find a decent job" or "Nobody wants to hire me" or "My spouse is ..." But these statements are just perceptions —not absolute truths.

What do we need to know about perceptions?

Are they always true?

Each person needs to understand the importance of perceptions, since success depends on them.

What is a perception, anyway?

A perception is a personal opinion about an event, good or bad. It is the product of a range of personal characteristics, including self-respect, self-acceptance and self-confidence, just to name a few. We, as individuals, colour an event with our perceptions about it.

Usually, any process of adaptation comes with emotional pressure. It's important to acknowledge that a stressed-out mental state may encourage an individual to misrepresent fact, and to render perception of an event even more complicated than it is.

Each person has own mental filter through which interprets the events with which comes into contact. We cannot help but regard those things around us through that filter, positive or negative. A stressed-out person has a stressed-out mental filter. Under such duress, he will naturally focus on any detail of an event that proves that things are, in fact, as he perceives them.

Now you know why it is so important to have a positive approach to any life situation.

Surviving any adaptation is a challenge.

Generally speaking, human beings don't like change. We prefer to play safe, and stay in our own comfort zones. But change can be good, and staying close to home where it feels the most comfortable is not always the best solution.

What do we need, then, to endure the challenge of life's adaptations?

Above all, we need the right attitude and perception. These essentials will ultimately determine whether our journey of adaptation is a success or a failure.

Practically speaking, a person will choose to respond to influences according to own system of beliefs and perceptions. If he sees an event as positive, his response will be positive. If he sees it as negative, so will his response be.

When a person changes perception, he also changes mental filter, and this change will determine the final result.

The process of successfully adapting to some life change requires a certain amount of mental and emotional preparation. This is crucial for overall success.

Viewing the whole thing with a positive perspective is a healthy way to live. As such, changing negative perceptions is a *must do* for everybody if they want to enjoy success with their journey. By doing that, they will save their mental energy, health, relationships and maybe even their job.

But who is going to teach them? ###

Jahiel Yasha Kamhi holds a degree in Medical Biochemistry and a Bachelor's degree in Chemistry. Jahiel writes regularly for www.personal-development.com and other magazines. He also delivers presentations that inspire others to find more meaning and balance in their lives. He is passionate about writing, and conveying positive ideas that help people live life with more passion and purpose.

Jahiel's mission is to promote a good mental and physical health.

Email at: jasakamhi@hotmail.com

~ The Essential Laws of Fearless Living ~
Find the Power to Never Feel Powerless Again
by Guy Finley

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For more information go to <http://bit.ly/gYTTNU>

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Love & Gratitude are on Your Road to Freedom

by Gabriella Kortsch, Ph.D.

Here we are near at the beginning of another New Year...and I'd like to suggest one simple two-pronged resolution for all my readers to keep for the entire year...in order to prove to yourselves what a difference it will make in your lives. One small resolution...a very different life.

Be grateful every day for five different things or qualities in your life that have been there on this day.

Be grateful every day for five different people that have been in your life on this day and have somehow added to the quality of this day.

What would happen if *furthermore* you made the decision to be grateful for something... even the smallest little something... *every single time a negative or worrisome or stressful thought or feeling entered your mind or heart?*

Can you imagine what a difference that would make? It would mean that instead of spending a major portion of your thinking time on things that bog you down, you would be spending it on things, or people, or qualities you are grateful for. Don't misunderstand me: I don't mean to imply that you should not spend time on solving your problems, but I do mean, that that only requires a certain amount of finite time every day, week, or month, depending on what the problem is. *Once that portion of time has been used to try to solve the problem to the best of your ability, go elsewhere with your thoughts and feelings.*

As this is quite difficult for many people, simply because it is not a habit, and simply because so many of us believe that if we don't think about our problems all the time, we are not being serious about our lives, what I am suggesting here is even more simple.

Rather than trying to figure out how to think of something that makes you feel good when the worrisome or negative thoughts hit, *be grateful for something.* This is very easy to do, once you get the hang of it.

- Did the doorman smile as you stepped out of the building? *Be grateful for that.* Be grateful for the smile and be grateful for the doorman's presence in your life.
- Did you catch a glimpse of brilliant blue sky as you opened your curtains this morning? *Be grateful for that.*
- Did you enjoy the smell of your coffee perking as you were drying yourself off after the shower? *Be grateful for that.*
- Did you enjoy the hot steam of water all over your body as you stood in the shower? *Be grateful for that.*
- Did you enjoy the softness of your towel as you dried off? *Be grateful for that.*

- Did you enjoy the immenseness of your oversize bath towel as you dried off? *Be grateful for that.*
- Did you enjoy your pet's happiness at seeing you up and about? *Be grateful for that.*
- Did you enjoy the clean freshness of your mouth after brushing your teeth? *Be grateful for that.*
- Did you enjoy sinking your teeth into a freshly toasted bagel? *Be grateful for that.*
- Did you enjoy your early morning jog around this familiar area where you live? *Be grateful for that.*
- Did you enjoy the brief and friendly exchange with the newspaper vendor at the kiosk? *Be grateful for that.* Be grateful for the exchange and be grateful for the vendor's presence in your life.
- Did you enjoy the crisp sound of snapping open a fresh newspaper to read as you have your coffee at your neighbourhood café? *Be grateful for that.*
- Did you enjoy the sunshine in smile on the waiter's face as he took your order for coffee and a bagel? *Be grateful for that.* Be grateful for the friendliness of the waiter and be grateful for the waiter.
- Did you enjoy your partner's touch on your skin in bed before you got up? *Be grateful for that.* Be grateful for the touch and be grateful for your partner.
- Did you just start worrying about paying the bills at the end of the month? *Be grateful for one of the above items.* It will help keep you in a better energetic frequency in order to make better decisions about the bills
- Did you just get angry once again because the elevator still isn't fixed? *Be grateful for one of the above items.* It will help keep you in a better energetic frequency, so that the problem elevator doesn't ruin the next 30 minutes or 3 hours of your day by continuing to dwell on it.
- Did you just feel low as you woke up and looked out of the window and saw the grey skies? *Be grateful for one of the above items.* It will help keep you in a better energetic frequency, so that you will be able to start looking at your day more positively.

The second prong to this resolution is just as simple, although just as unaccustomed, and thus will also require a bit of practice to make it a habit. Remember, *once it's a habit, you'll do it without needing to remind yourself, and new habits can be formed in as little as three weeks, if you keep reminding yourself to do the new thing.*

Send the intention of love from somewhere inside of you to at least five different people every day that do something to annoy you, make you impatient, anger you, etc. Instead of thinking (or speaking) the invectives you normally would, ask yourself to intend love for that person. You might say something like this in your mind: *May love fill your life.* Or: *Go in love.*

That's it. If you still need to speak to this person about something, do so only after having gone through this nano-second exercise in your mind. Your words will generally come out differently than they might have if you had not done this first.

- Did someone get in line in front of you at the supermarket? *Send them love.* (You can still speak up for your rights in a pleasant manner)
- Did someone cut you off in traffic, almost causing you to have an accident? *Send them love.* (Why waste time on getting angry about them?)
- Did your partner again forget to take out the garbage or wash the car? *Send him/her love.* (Maybe it's a good time to revise who does what around the house *based on each individual's choices rather than on what should be.*)
- Did your daughter scream at you? *Send her love.* (Yes, healthy boundaries and civilized manners must also be established, but her scream is most probably fueled by an underlying cry for help).
- Did your boss ask you to come in on Saturday? *Send her love.* (But also give some thought to the frequency of Saturdays you are spending at the office, and consider having a talk about it with your boss, based on your productivity, sales, efficiency, know-how, etc. with a view to either increasing your salary, benefits, or curtailing such extra hours)
- Did your neighbour criticize the state of your lawn? *Send him love.* (You don't have to agree with him, just let him have his opinion, period.)

I hope you understood that the purpose for this is first and foremost your own inner state of well-being and balance. In other words, although you are sending something positive to the other person, which will translate into an energetic transmission that is beneficial to them, it is, in actual fact, destined to make *you* feel better, rather than how you would feel, if you gave in to your primordial instinct to snap at them, or send them invectives from car to car, etc. (*Before you pooh-pooh this, remember how much you can feel if you enter a room full of hostile people, or happy people, or worried people...most of us are able to feel what others are feeling in certain circumstances*).

Furthermore, this is not about you being a wimp. It is not about you *not* speaking up for your rights. But it *is about you being – living – taking yourself into a higher energetic frequency simply by the way you react to situations* and by the two-pronged resolution you make.

1. GRATITUDE

- Be grateful every day for five different things or qualities in your life that have been there on this day.
- Be grateful every day for five different people that have been in your life on this day and have somehow added to the quality of this day.
- Find something to be grateful for (*to move your thoughts or feelings toward*) every time you feel a negative emotion or have a negative thought.

2. LOVE

- Send the intention of love from somewhere inside of you to at least five different people every day that do something to annoy you, make you impatient, anger you, etc., *no matter who these people are, or what your relationship to them is.*

Remember, the more you do this, especially during the first 21 days, the more it will become a habit.

Once it's a habit, you will want to have the benefits of this process, and you will find it harder and harder not to do it, i.e., you will eventually do it automatically.

You can choose to ignore this, ridicule this, or decide that it is not for you, because it simply doesn't apply to your life, or *you can choose to do this*. This much I can guarantee you: if you choose to do this, your life will alter dramatically and for the better. The energy inside of you, and the energy you will attract towards yourself will increase in your benefit. Such a decision also forms part of your journey towards inner freedom. ###

Gabriella Kortsch, Ph.D. (Psychology), author of [*Rewiring the Soul*](#), is a practicing psychotherapist who works with an international clientele in Marbella, Spain using an integral focus on body, mind and soul. She has published a newsletter in English and Spanish since 2004, facilitates monthly workshops and broadcast a weekly radio show both locally in Spain, as well as on the internet for seven years. Prior to her work in private practice she was Director of Sales & Marketing at several luxury beach properties in Spain and Mexico and was married to a diplomat. She has three sons.

Blog: <http://www.RewiringtheSoul.com>

Website: <http://www.AdvancedPersonalTherapy.com>

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What's Really Happening in Our World?

by Sol Luckman

In recent years, mainstream news has become such a laughing stock to anyone with any knowledge of the real story of what's going on in our world that many people have turned to alternative media sources for guidance and inspiration.

Keeping one eye on the corporate-sponsored doublespeak of the big news outlets to stay abreast of the next official scam, from swine flu to 'healthcare' legislation to quantitative easing, our other eye has sought to make sense of an increasingly nonsensical world that appears to teeter on the brink of collapse.

Change can be a scary thing—and change on such a monumental scale can strike those without an understanding of these extraordinary times as proportionately terrifying.

A natural response—one observed a great deal in alternative media—is to hole up in fear and, as our little fires cast spooky shadows on our cave walls, imagine all kinds of horrifying scenarios for our planet and ourselves.

Pole shift. Planet X. Asteroid hit. Plague. Famine. FEMA camps. Yellowstone Caldera. New Madrid Fault. Pacific Ring of Fire. Extinction Level Event.

If you have so much as dipped your toe into Internet media, you've probably read enough of such dire prognostications for a lifetime of twisted dreams.

Of course, the so-called Elites behind the mainstream media have both fostered and capitalized on the tendency, so prevalent in those just awakening spiritually, to nose-dive into the negative—rendering everyday news coverage every bit as frightening as the cinematic horror and violence they unceasingly fund.

Many movies and TV shows in particular these days, such as 2012 and V, have virtually become self-parodies of 'doom-and-gloom' Internet 'conspiracy theories.'

The single biggest problem with such theoretically possible, but statistically improbable, scenarios is that they all really have nothing whatsoever to do with what's actually occurring in our world to initiate so much wondering uncertainty and wild speculation.

The simple fact is that the earth and all her inhabitants, including ourselves, are being exposed to a very rare frequency increase that is in the process of evolving everything: our way of thinking, relationships, monetary systems, governments, and even bodies.

As our entire solar system orbits into a zone of enhanced energy, which has been identified through a groundbreaking reinterpretation of red shift science, everything we have thought of as immutable is rapidly undergoing an ultimately favorable transmutation to a higher order of being.

This fact is strongly supported by recent paradigm-shaking research conducted at Purdue and Stanford proving that the supposedly fixed decay rates of radioactive elements are actually changing through some kind of novel physics.

This is evolution. And the process guiding it is decidedly intelligent, or conscious, and has no intention of destroying us or anything else unnecessarily. This would be just plain stupid and tragic, like burning fields ripe for harvest.

To the contrary, our personal and collective body-mind-spirit is being nurtured through a painful, but fortunately brief, birth process into a type of ascended reality.

Native peoples and ancient wisdom traditions worldwide agree that we are being prepared—vibrationally, as it were—to enter a new world, one the Hopis called the Fifth Sun.

As many scholars agree, this vibratory increase was tracked in minute detail by the Mayan calendar, which actually envisions this time period as one of birth, or rebirth.

Whether you prefer the interpretation put forward by John Major Jenkins, or that of Carl Johan Calleman, both are in agreement that the Mayan calendar tracks a series of energetic upgrades with significant potential for altering human consciousness for the better.

My own research into this subject, detailed in my book *CONSCIOUS HEALING*, supports the even more radical notion that these upgrades are not just energetic, but genetic as well, leading to the actual, physical birth of a new genus of human.

The fascinating likelihood that humans are on the verge of transmuting into a new species is also explored by David Wilcock and William Henry, whose work I encourage you to investigate.

While Henry focuses largely on mythological and scriptural evidence of the innate human ability to evolve the body into a 'lightbody,' Wilcock's approach is rather more scientific, with an emphasis on 'torsion' energy and its impact on physical reality.

Leading-edge scientists writing about torsion energy and its relationship to human transformation include author and researcher Richard Merrick and physicist Nassim Haramein.

I believe it's important to do your own homework as to what's really happening here on and to our world. And I urge you to use discernment when evaluating any information.

My cardinal rule for discernment is:

If something feels strongly fear-based (or a close cousin, hate-based), at best it can provide only a distorted interpretation of current events and situations.

Better in most cases to click and move on, rather than risk getting caught up in someone else's illusory drama.

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Sol Luckman is a prolific visual artist and critically acclaimed author of fiction and nonfiction. His numerous books include the international bestselling *Conscious Healing: Book One on the Regenetics Method* and the newly released *Potentiate Your DNA: A Practical Guide to Healing & Transformation with the Regenetics Method*. For information on the “revolutionary healing science” (*Nexus*) of the Regenetics Method, check out www.PhoenixRegenetics.org. Sol is also author of the *Beginner’s Luke* Series of seriocomic novels that hilariously foreground the role of imagination in creating our individual and collective reality. Characterized by Reader Views as a “modern-day *Alice in Wonderland*” and by Apex Reviews as a “mind-bending journey through the mind of the ultimate iconoclast,” *Beginner’s Luke* is also, as literature professor Niama Williams has written, a “spiritual journey that you do not want to put down.” Share the Adventure of an imaginary lifetime by visiting www.BeginnersLuke.com. View Sol’s paintings and learn more about his work at www.CrowRising.com.]

~ ***The Secret of Being Unstoppable*** ~

by Guy Finley

If you are one of the rare few who are NOT content with "life as usual," and you long to better yourself, your loved ones, and the world at large, then this message was meant just for you.

The *secret of being unstoppable* is only revealed to human beings who long to go beyond who they have been...it is reserved for those rare individuals who are weary of limitation, and who instinctively know — deep down inside their heart — that they were meant for an ever-expanding life filled with Peace, Love, Mystery, Success, and Freedom.

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Love the Opportunity

by Jim Rohn

Somebody said you have to love what you do, but that's not necessarily true. What is true is that you have to love the opportunity. The opportunity to build life, future, health, success and fortune. Knocking on someone's door may not be something you love to do, but you love the opportunity of what might be behind that door.

For example, a guy says, "I'm digging ditches. Should I love digging ditches?" The answer is, "No, you don't have to love digging ditches, but if it is your first entry onto the ladder of success, you say, 'I'm glad somebody gave me the opportunity to dig ditches and I'm going to do it so well, I won't be here long.'"

You can be inspired by having found something even though you are making mistakes in the beginning and even though it is a little distasteful taking on a new discipline that you haven't learned before. You don't have to love it, you just have to learn to appreciate America, appreciate opportunity and appreciate the person who brought you the good news; that found you.

Appreciate the person who believed in you before you believed in yourself, appreciate the person who said, "Hey, if I can do it, you can do it."

If you will embrace the disciplines associated with the new opportunity you will soon find that your self-confidence starts to grow, that you go from being a skeptic to being a believer. And soon when you go out person to person, talking to people, you will find it to be the most thrilling opportunity in the world. Every person you meet - what could it be? Unlimited! Maybe a friend for life. The next person could be an open door to retiring. The next person could be a colleague for years to come. It's big time stuff. And sometimes in the beginning when we are just getting started we don't always see how big it is.

So, before you are tempted to give up or get discouraged, remember all success is based on long term commitment, faith, discipline, attitude and a few stepping stones along the way. You might not like the stone you are on right now, but it's sure to be one of the stones that lead to great opportunities in the future. ###

About Jim Rohn:

For more than 40 years, Jim Rohn honed his craft like a skilled artist-helping people the world over sculpt life strategies that have expanded their imagination of what is possible. Those who had the privilege of hearing him speak can attest to the elegance and common sense of his material. It is no coincidence, then, that he is widely regarded as one of the most influential thinkers of our time, and thought of by many as a national treasure. Jim authored countless books and audio and video programs, and helped motivate and shape an

entire generation of personal-development trainers and hundreds of executives from America's top corporations.

Born to an Idaho farming family in the mid-1900s, Jim was ingrained with a work ethic that has served him well throughout his life. At 25, he met his mentor Earl Shoaff. And over the next six years he made his first fortune, yet didn't get into speaking until he moved to Beverly Hills, California, when a friend at the Rotary Club asked him to tell his success story, which Rohn titled "Idaho Farm Boy Makes It to Beverly Hills."

His speech went over so well that he received more invitations to share it, and better yet, they started paying him for it. In the beginning, he spoke in front of college and high-school classes and at service clubs, before moving on to seminars in 1963, which launched him into the personal-development business. From then on, Jim Rohn became a trailblazer in the self help and personal development industry, impacting the lives of millions through his life-changing material.

Jim Rohn focused on the fundamentals of human behavior that most affect personal and business performance. His is the standard to which those who seek to teach and inspire others are compared. He possessed the unique ability to bring extraordinary insights to ordinary principles and events, and the combination of his substance and style captures the imagination of those who hear or read his words.

To subscribe to the Free Jim Rohn Weekly E-zine go to www.jimrohn.com

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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.

Chapter by chapter, the reader is taken on an inner journey that encourages her to achieve her goals, and in so doing, lead a spiritual life. The 7 Keys to Grace and an eight step-by-step system based on the word GRACIOUS, along with worksheets, help the reader break out of prison into Heaven on Earth.

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

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A Course in Miracles

Lesson 57

Today let us review these ideas:

(31) I am not the victim of the world I see.

How can I be the victim of a world that can be completely undone if I so choose? My chains are loosened. I can drop them off merely by desiring to do so. The prison door is open. I can leave simply by walking out. Nothing holds me in this world. Only my wish to stay keeps me a prisoner. I would give up my insane wishes and walk into the sunlight at last.

(32) I have invented the world I see.

I made up the prison in which I see myself. All I need do is recognize this and I am free. I have deluded myself into believing it is possible to imprison the Son of God. I was bitterly mistaken in this belief, which I no longer want. The Son of God must be forever free. He is as God created him, and not what I would make of him. He is where God would have him be, and not where I thought to hold him prisoner.

(33) There is another way of looking at the world.

Since the purpose of the world is not the one I ascribed to it, there must be another way of looking at it. I see everything upside down, and my thoughts are the opposite of truth. I see the world as a prison for God's Son. It must be, then, that the world is really a place where he can be set free. I would look upon the world as it is, and see it as a place where the Son of God finds his freedom.

(34) I could see peace instead of this.

When I see the world as a place of freedom, I realize that it reflects the laws of God instead of the rules I made up for it to obey. I will understand that peace, not war, abides in it. And I will perceive that peace also abides in the hearts of all who share this place with me.

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

As I share the peace of the world with my brothers, I begin to understand that this peace comes from deep within myself. The world I look upon has taken on the light of my forgiveness, and shines forgiveness back at me. In this light I begin to see what my illusions about myself kept hidden. I begin to understand the holiness of all living things, including myself, and their oneness with me.

Commentary by Allen Watson

The review today echoes with the word "freedom." (Emphasis in following quotes is my own.)

My chains are loosened. I can drop them off merely by desiring to do so. The prison door is open. I can leave simply by walking out.

I made up the prison in which I see myself. All I need do is recognize this and I am free.

The Son of God must be forever free.

I see the world as a prison for God's Son. It must be, then, that the world is really a place where he can be set free. I would look upon the world as it is, and see it as a place where the Son of God finds his freedom.

When I see the world as a place of freedom, I realize that it reflects the laws of God instead of the rules I made up for it to obey.

The beauty of acknowledging that I have invented the world I see is that it affirms my freedom to see it differently. Recognize that I have made up my prison, and I am free. And I am already free; all of us are free, now, in our own minds. The prison is an illusion. I can choose my thoughts, and that is the ultimate freedom. I can choose to look upon the world as a place where I can be set free, and where you can be set free. I can choose to see the world as a prison, or as a classroom. How I see it is my choice-my choice! I am free to make that choice.

I can see peace any time I choose to. I am free to do that. These moments I spend in quiet each day, practicing these lessons, are showing me that. I can create peace in my mind any time I choose to do so. To choose peace of mind is the ultimate freedom, and depends on nothing outside of me at all.

I begin to understand, as I share this peace with my brothers, that the peace is not coming from outside, but "from deep within myself". As my mind changes, the way I see the world changes with it. It witnesses peace back to me. And so "I begin to understand the holiness of all living things, including myself, and their oneness with me".

Years ago, when I had only begun to study the Course, I sat down one day and tried to answer a question: "What have I learned about life? What am I reasonably sure of?" And the answer that came to me was very simple: "Happiness is a choice I make." I had begun to realize the freedom of my mind to choose. I had begun to realize that my mind was truly autonomous in this choice. It needed nothing from outside to make happiness possible; it was purely a choice. And nothing outside could impede that choice.

I am still learning that lesson, building on it, solidifying it within my experience. That is what this review is telling us. We are free to choose. We really are free, right now. Our minds are all-powerful in this choice. They lack nothing to make it, and there is nothing that can stop us from making it. What is more, God wills that we make it because His Will for us is perfect happiness.

Today, let me remember that I want to be happy, and I can choose, in every moment, to be happy. I want to be at peace, and I can choose, in every moment, to be at peace. Happiness is peace, for how could I be happy if I am in conflict? Today, I will make this choice!
###

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

A Course in Miracles teaches that the whole spiritual journey is a journey home, home to God whom we have never really left. Allen Watson describes this spiritual journey, as seen in the Course, identifying the stages we pass through as we move from fear to love, escaping from darkness and emerging into the light. Watson presents a map that we can look at as we set out, giving us an idea of the spiritual destination the Course is taking us to, and what we must go through to get there. This map helps us be aware of and prepared for the pitfalls and detours that occur along the way. "The Journey Home" also offers Course guidelines and instructions for dealing with some of the difficult passages on this journey.

To secure your copy go to <http://bit.ly/fYi7Z3>

~ Course In Miracles ~
by Foundation For Inner Peace

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by Guy Finley

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