

# Be Yourself

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Although many people have supported me, this book is dedicated to those who in being themselves have helped me become more of myself: Gary Stollman, Fred Lentz, Ed Smith, Shannon Wagoner, Judy and David Henryson.



## INTRODUCTION

True power lies within yourself. This book can help you tap into that power if you allow yourself to be open. Often we get in the way of our own understanding. Sounds a little odd—doesn't it? Why would we get in the way of what might help us? This is part of what the following pages help answer.

The more you put yourself into the experience of the book, the more you get out of it. Doesn't that make sense? If you put someone else through it, how much do you think you will get? The other person learns while you do not. You are the one who needs to do the work on yourself to become and better that self, not other people. Get whatever you can out of this book, and it will be well worth your time and energy. The work is work for yourself, and the rewards in becoming more of yourself are grand.

Ideally, the book should be read at a maximum rate of one section a day. This helps you because it gives you time to digest what has been said, put it into practice, grow, and become ready to accept more information the next day at an appropriate time.

Questions and taping exercises are included in the book to aid absorbing, understanding, and integrating the material, making it more personal. These exercises promote growth through becoming more aware of yourself. You can still benefit from just reading the book, but the exercises build upon this. They help you interact with the text, placing you deeper into the learning process.

Your self is more valuable than anything else. Where is this treasure? You don't need to go across the world to all sorts of exotic places to find it. It's right here, reading

this with me. Congratulations on taking the journey to a greater self-existence. Not everyone wants to take this risk. You may find parts of yourself you don't like, but the benefits of these discoveries far outweigh any risks. Trust me and yourself on this.

Imagine going through your whole life not knowing who you are, not manifesting the person you are supposed to be. The truth is all of us fall short of who we are to some degree. On the average, are you yourself 5%, 50%, 80%, or 95% of the time? Wherever your percentage lies, you can benefit from its increase.

Enjoy the journey.

Exercises:

- **Taping.**

As you read each section, tape any special thoughts, beliefs, and feelings: both things you like and dislike, agree with and disagree with, relate to and do not relate to, have strong opinions about and have no opinions about. There are no right or wrong thoughts, beliefs, or feelings. Tape what comes to mind without judgment or editing. Try to relate everything to your life, not to other people's.

After reading each part of the book (there are three), do the exercise in Appendix A. Then do the exercise in Appendix B. Only look at the appendixes after you have read one of the three parts of the book.

- **Questions.**

Write your answers to questions at the end of each section. All questions are in outline form, so the ones underneath and to the right of a question are directly related to it. Some questions may sound repetitious, but allow yourself to

answer them as if they were new because you may have gained new insight since the last time you answered.

- **Journal**

It is also a good idea to keep a journal of happenings, feelings, and thoughts from each day. Especially note how you deal with your and others' feelings. Keep in mind that nothing you write can be wrong; and in fact, what first comes to mind is correct, regardless of how it may sound to or be judged by other people. Just write. This is not a test, this is growth.

## PART I

### BEING YOUR SELF

THIS ABOVE ALL: TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE,  
AND IT MUST FOLLOW AS THE NIGHT THE DAY,  
THOU CANST NOT THEN BE FALSE TO ANY MAN.

—William Shakespeare (1600-1601)<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> from *Hamlet, act I, scene iii.*

## YOUR SELF

What is your self? What a strange question. We all know who we are—don't we? Who are you? What does it mean to be yourself? What is someone's self? Although we should know who we are, many people can only come up with vague ideas.

It is a good idea to know what your self is if you want to become more of it. Some people think you can never define the self. This appears to make some sense because your self always changes through growth in each moment. An ever-changing entity cannot be defined except the moment in which it exists, for even if we could define it in one moment, it would be different in the next. The definition is only elusive to us when we try to stop the self to determine what it is. When we maintain awareness of it in the continuous stream of moments it manifests itself in, we can embrace it and its definition.

Some people may claim they do not change. They say they feel like the same person they had been twenty years ago. However, we all are continually involved in the process of ourselves becoming. People may feel the same—themselves—even though their selves have been growing. The discrepancy comes from them having been there, feeling their selves, the whole time they have been growing. What they experience is their selves, selves which are in continual change; but the change is so small, moment to moment, that it does not feel like change at all. As we live each moment being ourselves, we gradually grow without notice of the change. If we could spontaneously become transported back into ourselves of twenty years past, then we would feel the contrast of change because the leap would be a twenty year span rather than just moment to moment.

So what makes you yourself? It has to be something unique because you are different from everyone else. Is it all the friends you have had, the different places you have lived, the education you have received, or the good and bad things you have done? Let's label all these simply as experiences. Is yourself, then, all the unique experiences you have throughout your life? What about the feelings and thoughts you have as you experience your life? Certainly experiences play a large part in who you are, but they are not part of yourself. Our experiences are something external to us. How we are affected by our experiences is through feelings and thoughts from experiences. Our feelings and thoughts are internal to us. Maybe they are closer to the essence of ourselves.

When you consider feelings and thoughts, you may question which of the two is more yourself. If we discover which one of these internal processes is more influential, maybe that one is also more of yourself. The one with greater influence would have to be one which occurs before the other in time. This follows the rules of cause and effect. One thing must occur before the other in time to be considered the cause of the other. Do you think first and then have a feeling? do you have a feeling and then thoughts spring from that feeling? or do both occur simultaneously?

Well, let's think about this issue for a moment. It requires some thought. By the way, why are we even concerned about it? What is motivating us to think about it? Were there some feelings that came first which motivated us to think, or did we just start thinking? Why did you even buy this book if you knew you would have to think? Were there some feelings you were having, motivating you? My guess is that you had some feelings that then motivated you to understand more of what being yourself is about. This whole book and all the growth necessary to write it were motivated by my feelings. I

wrote it straight from my heart, which means from my true feelings. My feelings came first, then thoughts, then this book.

Feelings come before thoughts. Think back to the last time you saw a new born infant. Does the thought that it is hungry come to its mind first, and then it feels hungry? Or does it feel hungry, and then it thinks about food? The infant feels first. It does not know what food is to be able to think about food. Thoughts of food—which kinds may be most pleasing, memories of different tastes—all develop later. The baby is just feeling hungry! If it has any thought, the thought would be *hurt* from being hungry. However, it does not even know the word *hurt*, so it could only sense the hurt as a feeling or develop its own thought symbol of what hurt is.

Let's consider the example of a baby that has reached a developmental level in which it can think about food. Let's presume it thought of milk first and then started to get hungry. Some adults may also have had this experience. Even though it appears differently, the baby and adults in these situations had been hungry to begin with. Because they were pushing hunger away, they were not feeling it. The thoughts of food only released the feeling that had already been existing, pent up behind a wall of suppression. This suppression may have existed as simply a busy activity. The adult may have been busily working and the baby may have been busily playing.

You are basically your feelings. This is why I can use the words *self* and *feelings* interchangeably throughout the book. Our thoughts are so close to ourselves that they may feel like a part of ourselves, but our feelings are more of ourselves. Thoughts are the closest expression we can have of our feelings, but our feelings are the expression of ourselves. If you feel only hunger, that is what your self needs at that moment, so that is

what you will be consumed with. You will use your thought process either to obtain food to satisfy the feeling or to suppress the feeling. The expression of your feelings is the window into yourself. This is why to be ourselves we cannot have only feelings; we must have feelings and at least one expression of them: thoughts.

-Try to define yourself in terms other than your feelings.

-Break down your self-definition into the simplest form possible.

-Can you do this without that definition somehow leading back to feelings?

-Have someone else test your definition to see if they cannot make it lead straight back to feelings.

### *Some Expressions and Suppressions of Ourselves*

Language is merely a symbolic representation of thoughts, and like thoughts, it is either an expression or suppression of feelings. When you were a baby, you mainly expressed your feelings of hunger, hurt, and anger through body-language. As you developed, you acquired the symbolism of verbal language to help express how you felt: "Ouch!" "I'm mad," "Stop doing that," "I want this," "I'm hungry." You also used thoughts and language to suppress your feelings: "That doesn't hurt," "I'm happy," "I don't care what you do," "I don't want pudding," "I'm not hungry." The symbolism of language helped define you through expressing and repressing yourself, getting much

more complex as you grew older. Though even in its complexity, it is still simply an expression or suppression of your feelings.

When you are hurt, speaking truthfully with someone who listens may make you feel better because you are expressing some of your feelings merely through honestly talking. Conversely, you temporarily may feel better when you strengthen the suppression of your feelings through speaking lies to someone who accepts the lies.

Watch people closely as they talk. They continuously have some feeling of some level. Look at them without hearing their words and just try to see a moment in which no feeling is being either expressed or suppressed through the act of talking. You will never find such a moment unless you are suppressing feelings, blinding yourself to their feelings as well.

Some thoughts are so abstract that they are difficult for our selves to relate with. It is when teenagers in high school have difficulty relating math to their lives that they have difficulty studying it. Abstract thinking, such as in mathematics, can be an expression of a feeling; yet if people cannot relate their feelings in such an abstract way, it is difficult to have motivation to use the expression. Math can be related to more personally by adolescents through relating it to their feelings, as parents often learn. A parent might say, "If you don't study, you will not be able to go dancing tonight."

Our actions are also expressions or suppressions of ourselves. When we go to a movie, read a book, or go out with someone, we express or suppress a feeling, perhaps emptiness, loneliness, or desire. Consider the situation of someone having punched you, leaving you feeling hurt. The hurt partially expresses itself through your thoughts of why he punched you, of whether you should punch back, and of what other actions can best

express the rest of your hurt without getting into more hurt. You might continue to express yourself by the action of calling the police and reporting an aggravated assault. As you talk with the police, your hurt may further release itself through that expression, making you feel better.

### *Feelings and Motivation*

People who are honest with their feelings have motivation to do what they want. They do not have a part of themselves they are denying, motivating them to do stuff they normally would not. Because they honestly face their feelings, they have the motivation their feelings offer to assert themselves and speak, giving them more opportunities of growth.

Your feelings are the force which brings passion and life into your life. Your sense of right and wrong, morality, opinions, and sense of self all come from having feelings. You learn that what is right is what makes you feel good and what is wrong is what does not. When you get hurt, you begin to have strong opinions about issues you normally would not have feelings about. Let's say you did not know what fire was and stuck your foot into it. You would quickly develop feelings, motivation, and opinions about this formally unknown entity. Your foot initially would feel pain from the heat. You then would gain motivation to move your foot out of the fire as an expression of the pain (perhaps accompanied by a grunt or two), gaining opinions of what fire is, of how close you want to get to it next time, and of whether you want your kids hanging around

it or not. Our feelings make it possible to gain knowledge and truth through motivating us to know about something. After we have felt the power fire has on us to distribute pain, we may explore the different possible uses of it, such as in war, ceremony, or healing.

Such motivation may also be observed when a group feels the burns of discrimination. The group develops opinions about itself and the groups which discriminated against it. If, however, people who are touched by fire do not listen to their pain, they may not have opinions with strong enough conviction and motivation to put out the fire. Denying the pain from discrimination fizzles motivation to stop the discrimination. Because the part of their selves is denied which could have grown through facing and integrating the pain, that part does not exist to fight against the discrimination.

Hurt and loss are extremely valuable assets to ourselves. They are the motivation for our growth. Without pain from the threat of our eventual death, we might just decide to sit on a couch and watch television for ten years. Without pain of hunger, we may not have the energy to peel ourselves off the couch to get food. Without pain of an empty life, we may not have the motivation to fill our lives with things that satisfy us and other people: work we enjoy, people we love, and things we like doing.

Positive feelings also motivate people (positive feelings generally can be defined as an absence of negative feelings). If you never experienced the joy of some activity, you may not have motivation to go through what is necessary to engage in that activity. Some people wonder why surfers get up so early on cold mornings and go into cold water. These people have experienced the enjoyment (lack of pain) surfing gives them, so they have the necessary motivation to repeat the activity, even in unusually unpleasant

circumstances. If they experienced no positive feelings from the activity, they would sit at home or be somewhere where they did gain positive feelings.

Feelings are not just motivational forces; they are yourself. The self has built into it motivation and energy to help it continue being itself. If the stream of your feelings were turned down, you would also have your motivation and energy turned down. Your life, self, and gifts to humanity would all be turned down as well. But if your feelings are allowed to exist—no matter what you are feeling, be it pain or joy—you have motivation and energy for growth.

-List some things you really enjoy doing.

-What feelings do you get from doing each activity?

-Would you continue engaging in the activity if you did not get these feelings?

-List some activities you don't like doing.

-What are some of the feelings that come from doing each activity?

-Do you find yourself having less motivation for the activity than for things you enjoy doing?

-If not, are you getting some positive gain, such as money, attention, security, sex, etcetera. Perhaps this sustains your motivation to continue the activity. If you think not, explain what gives you motivation to continue?

-Do you deny your negative feelings about the activity so that you can have motivation to continue in it?

-If so, do you notice yourself becoming more depressed, feeling bad about yourself, or thinking more negative thoughts?

-When have you been self-destructive?

-What do you think caused the motivation for this?

-What pain were you not admitting?

-What can you do differently to help prevent this self-destruction in the future?

-When has denying your feelings limited your growth?

-What can you do differently to help prevent this in the future?

## WHEN YOU STOP BEING YOURSELF

When you deny a hurt, you limit the process of your self-existence. This fuels anger which has been kindled within you from being hurt. If you continue to hold in your feelings, the anger becomes directed at yourself for keeping your self from yourself. This self-anger leads to feelings of guilt or depression (the cycle of feelings was conceptualized by David Viscott)<sup>2</sup>. The guilt is just anger directed at yourself and takes form as feeling bad or at fault. The depression is just the result of taking too much of yourself away, causing so much self to be gone that your energy drops.

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<sup>2</sup> David Viscott describes the feeling process and each feeling in detail in his book *The Language of Feelings*, (New York: Pocket Books, 1976).

Simply the act of holding your feelings inside consumes energy. This works similar to how a dam behaves. The wall of a dam exerts just as much energy on the water as the water exerts on the wall, keeping static equilibrium maintained between the two. In regards to your emotions, when you deny a part of yourself, you use up energy maintaining force on the wall that holds your feelings inside.

Your body likes to be as efficient as possible with the limited energy it has. So when you use up energy through being depressed for years on end, your brain may adjust chemically to that energy drain, establishing a new chemical equilibrium which makes the depression more easily attainable with less expenditure of energy. In other words, your body adapts to the depressed state by making it an easier process to engage in. Over extended time, the depression will be seen by your body as an adaptive process that is desirable for you to achieve. Your body wants to be in equilibrium not in a constant chemical struggle to hold back electrical impulses in your brain of stored hurt. Your body will adapt by trying to maintain this state of depression as if it were a natural state. The result is chronic depression that may need to be treated with antidepressant drugs as well as psychotherapeutic means.

The act of a person's self taking away from itself causes him to trust his self less. If you were around someone who took away from you, hurt you, and did not care for your feelings, you would learn to distrust him; so it is the same with your self. If you do not take care of your feelings by accepting, acknowledging, and giving voice to them in some form of expression, you will come to trust yourself less. You will come to believe you are not the best person for yourself.

When you do not trust yourself, you have good reason to walk around in fear. You are not able to trust your feelings because your feelings are the closest expression of your untrustworthy self. If you were walking on a narrow bridge, and you could not trust your eyesight, you would walk with much more anxiety, not being sure of yourself. Your eyes could deceive you, which would then cause you to fall off the bridge and hurt yourself. This is why anxiety is so common among depressed people. It stems from not knowing when they will hurt themselves again through denying their feelings.

The person who can live in the moment is most honest with themselves and lives most in reality. Living in the moment is done by being with your feelings and allowing them expression. If you only partially allow yourself to manifest itself in the moment, where is the other part? The other part is stuck in the past as the moment it belonged to passes. This part no longer belongs in present reality and thus has potential to give you a distorted view of the present. Extreme cases of distortion are when the self rejects itself so much that it lives in other realities, making you feel like you are “crazy.” It takes energy denying your feelings to maintain these other realities. Since the body wants to be as efficient as possible with its use of energy, over years of rejecting yourself, a chemical change may occur in the brain to make the rejecting process easier to uphold. The body will see your continual self-rejection as an adaptive process to your environment and will facilitate this adaptation.

The chemical developments which cause chronic depression and chronic psychosis, however, are not just a function of psychological and environmental influences. Genetic links place some individuals at greater risks to adapt through biological-chemical changes in the brain. Nevertheless, people who can spontaneously be

with their feelings at each given moment maximize their self-manifestation and are most free in being in reality as themselves.

When you have held in some painful feelings from childhood, that part of yourself is still a child as the old feelings of hurt resurface. The part which was rejected and not allowed expression is brought out when you finally embrace it. This explains why people begin to act, talk, and feel like a child when feeling old hurt from childhood. You need to embrace this part of yourself and not push it back down again, even though you may have falsely learned this part of you is bad. Allow the feelings to come forth to integrate back into yourself, so you can be more fully yourself. That part of you is not bad; it is you. You need to take that self back into yourself, so your complete self can fully connect into the present world.

It is not your feelings that are bad; it is holding them in that is bad. The extent you deny your feelings is the extent you have potential for what society labels as bad. This is because your feelings are what steer you to do good. If you have no feelings or decrease their volume, you have potential to act hurtful. You may act without feeling, being hurtful to people. You may explode at innocent people because you have pent up anger that seeks opportunities for release.

When holding in some of your feelings, all of your feelings get held in to some degree. The good feelings that come when you do something loving are not as strong, nor are the bad feelings of guilt when you are hurtful to others.

Your ability to empathize with people decreases because when others speak of their pain, you are reminded of yours. Since you are trying to deny your pain, you will tend also not to hear theirs.

Good and bad do not exist except through our definitions of them. We usually define love as good and absence of love as bad. What makes you more loving is good, and what makes you less loving is bad. The difference between good and bad in yourself is how you deal with your feelings: if you are open to your feelings, you have potential for good; if you are closed to your feelings, you have potential for bad.

-List some important times when you had stopped being yourself?

-What happened after you stopped being yourself?

-What feeling did you feel afterwards, if any?

-Were you more easily irritated?

-Did you feel more happy?

-If so, when did things begin to get worse?

-Why did they get worse? Did feelings come up from not being yourself earlier?

-Do you think things would not have been as bad if you had been yourself earlier? Why?

-What were other people's feelings who were around you?

-Did you feel like a bad person?

-Why?

*Self Realization*

Some people have not been being themselves for so long that they don't know they are not being themselves. They don't even know what being themselves is about. They are unable to tell when other people also are not being themselves, and when they are in the presence of someone being himself, they feel threatened. They have submerged into a safe niche which limits their self-existence. Out of fear and desire for stability they continue to cling to this niche.

Very few people, even those who claim commitment to truth, realize who they are. It is difficult to be aware of yourself even when you give it a hardy effort, so if you do not try at all, you easily get lost. As an evolving species, we have spent most of our time being self-ignorant, for we only recently have developed the intellectual capacity to be self-aware. Life has been evolving since around 3,000,000,000 years ago,<sup>3</sup> while humans capable of conscious thought probably have only existed in the last 3,000 years or so.<sup>4</sup> (Even if the date of conscious thought were earlier, in comparison to 3,000,000,000 years, it would relatively still be considered "recent".) We are still in the process of evolving a conscious sense of self.

Part of the difficulty in being aware of yourself is from you having to be the only one who can do the perceiving. It is like trying to look at your face: a mirror does not work because it reverses the image; a photograph does not capture the essence because it is only how you look as a perfectly still creature from one angle. These images are not really you. A videotape is more accurate but not 3-dimensional like yourself. Think about how difficult it is to truly see yourself just on the physical level! Now imagine trying to perceive yourself on an abstract, intangible level, such as the spiritual.

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<sup>3</sup> Irving Adler, *How Life Began*, (New York: The John Day Company, 1977).

<sup>4</sup> Julian Jaynes, *The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bimemal Mind*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1990), pgs. 68-69.

Let's say you were feeling good about yourself one morning and decided to look in the mirror. The image of yourself was pleasing to you. Later, while at school or work, someone you liked called you "big nose." You felt understandably hurt. This hurt quickly turned into anger, but since you feared rejection from this person, you didn't get angry at him. You denied your feelings and did not express yourself. The anger directed itself back at you because it was not going anywhere outside of yourself. This made you feel bad about yourself, your nose in particular. When you looked in the mirror that afternoon, your nose looked bigger! After having expressed your hurt and been loved by your family during dinner, you felt a little better, and your nose stopped appearing to be so big.

Can you relate to this? Have you ever had similar experiences where how you felt affected how you perceived yourself. If your feelings are you, and you are the one who is doing the looking, you can get in the way of seeing yourself. More specifically, how you deal with your feelings affects how you see yourself, both physically and mentally.

If you deal with yourself by denying your feelings, you do not see yourself correctly. When you deny your feelings, you are basically denying yourself. The self that is denied cannot be seen by yourself, and the self that remains distorts the view of the rest of yourself.

### *Knowing Yourself Is Safer Than Not*

When you do not know yourself, other people can use that blindness to manipulate you. If someone knows yourself better than you, he knows what makes you tick and what buttons to push to make you move. By not knowing a part of yourself, you

cannot be responsible for that part. Someone can take over the responsibility of yourself which you don't have, gaining power over yourself (see section on responsibility).

I personally have experienced such a situation. Before attending graduate school, I worked at a group home for abused children. I gave up my control there by denying my need to be seen as a good, loving person (this need stemmed from denying my hurt and anger from not being loved the way I needed as a child, resulting in feeling a deep sense of being unlovable). The children at the group home easily found my need and used it to manipulate me.

One such example was when a child climbed up on furniture. I sheepishly told him that he should get down and play on the floor. He responded by telling me I was being mean, so I turned away from him and focused instead on the other kids. I was setting inappropriate limits for his behavior, swayed by my hidden need. The influence of the hidden need, however, can not remain hidden. It's influence lead me to allow the child to do whatever he wanted so that he would not tell me I was bad.

This child kept climbing over furniture and got increasingly louder and more active. I became more uncomfortable with the situation and less able to keep my attention on the other kids, yet I still chose not to act. I demonstrated a temporary inability to love the children through the lack of my attention. More of the presence of myself withdrew as I was not acknowledging and expressing my uncomfortable feelings. Anger rose inside me. It shielded any love I could give the children in those moments. The child then began jumping off furniture, becoming a danger to himself and others. At this time my supervisor, a person open to her own needs (also open to her hurt and anger), walked into

the room and was able to take control of the situation. I was left feeling unlovable and bad, exactly what I had feared the most.

It is in your best interest to be open to yourself. By not knowing parts of yourself, you lack the self-protection feelings offer. If you do not know you are hurting as you place your hand on a hot stove, your hand will burn. If you do not know you are hurting from some life-experience, your soul will burn. When you choose not to know your feelings, you do not know a part of yourself that tells you to get out of situations which are bad for you. Since you do not have your whole self available to you, feelings that normally would have existed will not exist. When hurt is occurring or might occur, you will not receive the warning it offers. If you will not know yourself, you are choosing to be less responsible for yourself.

Battered women exemplify the above self-destructive dynamics. They have a need to be seen as lovable because they doubt they are lovable. Battered women do not know of this need and how it operates within their relationship. They do not see the influence of it, yet this does not stop the need from acting in their life. Since they do not believe they are lovable, they get into relationships that meet this expectation—becoming involved with people who do not love them. The doubt in their lovableness causes them to believe they are responsible for their beatings and that the beatings are their fault.

In truth, the beatings are their fault, but they believe so for the wrong reasons. They believe the beatings are their fault because they have not acted with enough love towards the batterer. The beatings are their fault because they have not been honest with their feelings. The anger they dismiss from being battered gets directed back onto themselves. Because they continue to feel unlovable from holding in so much anger, the

need to be loved by the abuser is reinforced, perpetuating the vicious abusive cycle. They feel guilty. They believe they have a chance at being lovable if only they act so the “loving” batterer could tolerate them.

Their belief that the batterer is loving is reinforced by their lack of awareness of their need to be lovable. The need causes them to see the batterer as loving so that the need can remain hidden without having to deal with it. If the batterer is loving—they reason—then he chooses a relationship with someone that is lovable. This is how they pacify their need to be seen as lovable but do not change it.

If you don't know yourself, you don't know what to work on to get stronger and become a better person. When you take risks, you don't know how to prevent the falls that are caused by your weaknesses. Knowing your weaknesses is part of being strong. How do you think a body builder with weak calves gets stronger and bigger calves? Does he work on his already incredibly big biceps? No, he builds his weak calves up by acknowledging they are weak and in need work.

Think about all the times you have sat there and complained about being weak. Well, you do not get strong by turning away from your weaknesses. You do not get stronger by focusing only on your strengths. Your chance to grow stronger is happening right now. Will you turn from this excellent opportunity only to complain and wish you were stronger at some later date?

Why have you held on to your needs and weaknesses for so long? Why have you been walking around in the dark for so long? Knowing yourself is like shedding light onto a darkened room so that you can find things, see where you are walking, and

discover what else needs to be in the room. Whom haven't you forgiven for not loving you to make yourself feel so unlovable that you will not grow stronger?

Be aware and understand when you allow your needs or weakness to dictate your behavior. This way you can grow. You need to be aware of your healthy self that already feels lovable, and acknowledge that self when it shows itself. You have to know yourself and maintain an openness to yourself in the continual stream of moments that make up your life.

Many people spend time hiding from themselves. Much of their time is spent trying to fill time up so that they don't have to think about themselves. This uses up time they could have had for their work, friends, and life. It devalues the value they place on time. If they need to spend their time hiding from themselves, what does that say about the value of their time? What does that say about their value of themselves? The value of their time and selves is less important than the need to hide! They may wake up someday and find all their hiding-time gone and their selves close to death. They will have never truly allowed themselves to become intimate with their selves. What they have lost can never be replaced.

They have lost their lives.

In knowing yourself you gain yourself. This is both lonely and fulfilling. When you look at the self that was previously being abandoned, you may feel its loneliness; yet, your being with that abandoned self is fulfilling, empowering, comforting, and self-securing. Knowing yourself may influence you to grow away from some people and grow closer to others who also know themselves. You may feel lonely because relationships that previously were perceived as intimate turned out to be empty. However,

since you have more of yourself, you become filled up with what you felt had mostly been missing in your life.

## *Suicide*

Although you may never have contemplated suicide before, if you hold in enough hurt and anger, there will come a time when you will.

There is no being yourself in suicide. You cannot be yourself by ending yourself; it is a killing of yourself. It may feel right at the time because you are expressing some anger against yourself that you have held inside. Because expressing yourself is the right thing, suicide may feel like you are finally being yourself and doing the right thing. But to express your feelings in a destructive way that causes you more *new* pain is never right or healthy.

A suicide attempt may result in temporarily strengthening your defenses. Because you learn that expressing yourself is hurtful, your motivation not to further express yourself may increase. You might even feel a little better after a suicide attempt. This is partly from punishing yourself for feeling like a bad person, and partly from your defenses getting a little stronger, causing denial of pain.

You may feel as if you are closer to yourself from having felt pain from a suicide attempt. This feeling stems from being reminded of the pain inside you that is being denied. During a suicide attempt, you might get a fleeting sense of control over your feelings, as your life ebbs away, and you lose all control. Some people think that because

they are the ones deciding who will end their life, at least they are in control of losing all control. The truth is they were always in control of where they were in their life.

People contemplating suicide have had a style of dealing with pain which was to end it or run from it. This is the reason they are where they are in their life. People do not end pain; they have to go through it to let it go. The way suicidal people cope with life no longer works, and they have to pay for all the running they have done by either dying or dealing with all their held in pain.

People decide to kill themselves because they have been holding in their hurt over many injuries. They do not decide to kill themselves for no reason. It takes some motivation to kill yourself, and feelings are the motivational force in everyone's life. A hurtful action from you directed towards yourself or others must come from an initial feeling of hurt inside you. You must be suffering from a great deal of hurt to feel like ending your life. But this hurt is not all from the present because you were created to be able to handle present hurt. It is hurt from the present resonating with hurt built up from the past, amplifying one another, creating overwhelming hurt.

A suicidal thought is just your own self telling you to stop denying itself or it will fuck you up! This part of yourself has been allowed to brood, and it is sick and tired of your choices not to deal with it. If it can't live, it will express itself by showing you the truth of where it is at by killing you.

Tell the denied part of yourself that you are in the process of accepting it. Because the pain is deep, vast, and old, it may take some time to embrace all of yourself. Vow to yourself not to begin denying pain again. Tell your self that it needs to give you some slack because this is a new process for you, but that you are growing stronger. Accept

truth on a daily basis, and do what you need to do to get back in touch with yourself: therapy, support from people, structure in your environment to contain overwhelming feelings (such as having friends call you at regular hours to check on you, following a consistent routine of self care, and in extreme cases the structure of a hospital setting may be necessary). Allow your pain to seep out of an expressive window, and use the motivational force that comes with it to grow, not to die.

Suicide is an act of cowardliness, an easy way out, available to all people. Being yourself is also available to all people, but it takes courage. Courage is doing what you know to be right despite pain or fear. The truth is that when you commit suicide you are trying to escape pain or fear, giving up on what you know to be right and doing something you know to be wrong. Part of doing something you know to be wrong may be to hurt other people that have hurt you. If you need to hurt them for hurting you, hurt them by expressing your how they have hurt you to them. Chances are, though, they do not care. In such cases the best way to hurt them is to release the hurt they inflicted and live your life.

Nature (God) did not give us our pain to die from it.

-Have you ever had a suicidal thought or inclination, or have you ever felt like hurting yourself (this forms from the same dynamics as a suicidal thought does, it is just less intense) in any way?

-What hurt or loss had you been holding inside that called out for expression through bringing you down with it?

-If you currently have thoughts of suicide, do you feel safe enough in your present environment?

-Do you need a more structured environment for a while that can keep you safe. (If unsure, talk with a professional.)

## TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOURSELF

Freedom and responsibility are intertwined in such a way that you cannot have one without the other. For example, if you—alone—were held responsible for the well being of an entire city, imagine all the freedom you would need so that you could do what you thought necessary. Now, think with all that freedom how much responsibility you would necessarily have. They go together—right? If you were given all responsibility for a city without freedom to do what needs to be done, how could you be responsible for the city? If you had freedom to control *everything* in the city, how could you not be responsible for what happens?

As adults we have freedom to do whatever we want, and we are held responsible for our actions. A burglar uses his freedom to break into people's houses to steal, risking freedom. He could be caught and sent to prison or hurt by the tenants. Since he uses freedom to steal, he also needs to take responsibility if he wants to continue having freedom. He needs to take responsibility to make sure he doesn't get caught, thinking of the best times, places, and ways to go about conducting his business. If he is not responsible, he will get caught. Someone can take his freedom from him because of his

lack of responsibility. However, even if he is responsible to avoid being caught, he lacks responsibility in respecting people, so he loses freedom to respect people—including himself.

As a child you had less freedom so also less responsibility. When someone responsible for you hurt you, that hurtful behavior was mostly not your responsibility. When you cried with hurt as a baby because your stomach was empty, it was not your fault; however, it was your responsibility to cry or make an expression of displeasure. A baby does not have freedom to go and get food out of the refrigerator. When you were abused (abuse is when you are not allowed to express yourself and be heard and respected; and since no parent is perfect, abuse happens to some degree in all families), even though it may have felt that you were responsible in some way, it was not your fault. As a child you don't have the power to stop abuse from older people. You don't have the financial freedom of moving out of the house. The only protection you may have had was to have cried, screamed, and yelled, if even that freedom was allowed. You probably used all the personal power you were free to use in your family, acting responsible given the freedom you had.

Your abusers acted irresponsible given the freedom they had. Know that they are suffering consequences from their irresponsible use of freedom. Denial, hurt and anger, weakness, irresponsibility, lack of personal freedom, abusive behavior—all are what they must live with. They must live their lives with themselves.

Perhaps you feel you had some responsibility for the abuse you suffered, for pushing the abuser's buttons to abuse you. This is untrue. If you were abused as a kid, even though you might like to think you had control, you didn't. Your abusers were like

time-bombs, just waiting to blow up. Instances in which you were being real, human, and a feeling person—yourself—was too threatening for them, so they abused. Your realness reminded them of their selves which they hated so much. They were sick. They wanted to have control of and responsibility for your emotions because they lacked control of and responsibility for their own. Each feeling that you showed stirred feelings inside them that they had buried and did not want to deal with. Invading your self, they tried to control their emotions through controlling yours.

They shirked responsibility for their selves and assigned it as yours, wanting you to be responsible for their feelings. They could not handle having responsibility for their own feelings. This stopped them and you from being yourselves. Being responsible for your parents' selves is an impossible task, destined for failure because that is why you are you: to be responsible/free for yourself. If you are responsible for your parents, you should be inside them. You should be the essence of their souls to have the freedom of their selves; you do not, although they may have made you feel as though you did. Their irresponsible assignment of responsibility was hurtful and was a significant factor in the family's emotional problems. They were acting irresponsible as loving parents, not you. You were just a kid.

If they allowed you to express your emotions from their abuse, you were lucky. If they did not permit that freedom, you had to deny hurt, giving up yourself. This act of suppression hurt you much more than the abuse. The abuse hurt, but it did not take away yourself. When you are not allowed freedom of self-expression, your hurt stays with you every single second of every single day. You lose yourself. If they demanded that of you, that was their ultimate abuse to you.

As you grew older, you gained more freedom so also more responsibility. The hurt which you carried with you, day in and day out, became more and more your responsibility. It became more your burden and choice, and less their fault and responsibility. Continuing to lie about your feelings from their abuse became your responsibility.

Do you ever find yourself saying, “If only he would . . . ,” “If they would just not do that . . . ,” or, “If she would change . . . ?” This places responsibility for your happiness with the other person—out of your hands. Why do you give responsibility for your happiness away to some other person? No, really, why do you give it away? If you take it, what will that mean for you?

If you accept responsibility for your happiness, you will have to accept responsibility for dealing with hurt from the past. This means you will no longer be able to blame your parents for your unhappiness. If you have not expressed hurt to your parents in a such way that is satisfactory, you will not want to let go of being able to blame them. You need to know that you will never be able to express it satisfactorily to them, having them receive it with love and understanding. They are not capable of that, for the abuse is too distant in their minds. You would have already been able to satisfactorily express yourself to them if it could be done. You may still chose to express yourself, but do so without expectation of being heard the way you want.

Accept that your abusers are not going to change. They may change, but accept that they will not. The time of greatest potential for them to change is when you forgive them and *truly give up hope of them ever changing*. This means that you no longer care if they change or not, no longer having their growth matter to you. By your release of

expectation that they will change, they lose the control they had over you from your expectation of them changing. As they learn they no longer have this control, they are freed to try something different, such as change. Their controlling behavior has also controlled them not to grow. Through your forgiveness, they will feel least defensive in looking at their past abusive behavior. Through your increase of responsibility for your pain, they can feel less responsible for your present hurt so more able to look at their abusive actions. They are afraid of hurt, including their hurt from having hurt you.

Their changing no longer matters to you! If it does, why do you still depend on them? How long do you have to be a child? Are you afraid of them growing and finally becoming loving people? Your attempt of controlling them not to grow into loving people is also controlling you by not allowing you to release your hurt. Do you want them to be unforgiven because they have inordinately hurt you? If so, you are not taking the responsibility you now have for your pain.

Be nice to yourself by letting go of the hurt. You are the one who is in charge of being the loving parent to yourself now. Do not allow their abuse of you to continuously repeat itself inside you by not forgiving them.

Through continuing to blame your parents for the way you are, you are saying that they are responsible for yourself. You believe falsely that you are powerless. Choose for yourself to take responsibility of accepting and manifesting your self yourself, so you can be empowered. You may have had help in the choice to reject yourself as a child while you were innocence and naive, but as you grew older, you came to take on the responsibility to reject yourself more than your parents did. You are the one who has carried that self-rejection over the years. You are the one who has rejected yourself even

while at a distance from your parents. All your adult experiences of self-rejection, while with friends and loved ones, has been your responsibility. You are the one who continues the cycle of damming up the flow of yourself. You must take responsibility for your choice because you are the only one who is responsible for that self. As a child it was yours and your parents' responsibility to help you take responsibility for yourself. Now it is *all* yours.

Some people might have learned self-responsibility from the help of a loving person outside their family. They might have learned this despite their parents' need to keep them dependent. They had been shown another way, enabling them greater choice. *Now I am showing you your choice.* Hear it, and take your responsibility to find more choices to be yourself.

-What areas in your life do you have responsibility for?

-In these areas, do you have a high degree of freedom to do what you need to do to be responsible?

-Do you want this freedom?

-When has your freedom level gone down for something?

-Did you also notice a decrease in responsibility for that thing?

-What did you do with your feelings as a kid?

-Who was responsible for that choice?

-Do you still continue to deal with your feelings in a similar way?

-Who is responsible for that choice now?

-Whom do you want to be responsible for that choice now? Why?

-List positives of this.

-List negatives of this.

-Do you expect your parents to be different than they always have been?

-Why?

-Do you expect yourself to be different in your interactions with your parents?

-If so:

-How?

-What do you need to do for this to happen?

-If you don't see a need for you to do anything, how else do you expect your relationship with them to change?

-Is this realistic? Explain.

-Whom do you presently assign responsibility for your happiness?

-Why?

-If the answer is anyone but yourself, when will it be yourself?

-Have you accepted your responsibility for the pain you have carried and not expressed yet? (Your happiness depends on this acceptance.)

-If not, why haven't you?

-If you still want to blame your parents:

-List the positives of this.

-List the negatives of this.

-What has to happen for you to stop blaming them?

-Do you think this will really happen?

-What will you do if this does not happen?

## HEALING

Life becomes a greater struggle than it has to be when you are insensitive to your feelings. If you are not sensitive to your hurt, you will not be able to use that feeling as a guide to focus you in the direction you should be growing. When you are not growing in the right direction, your life fills with more negative stress, complicating any healing that needs to be done. If you are in a job you don't want, if you are in a marriage you are not supposed to be in, if you are doing things you are not supposed to be doing, life will be a greater struggle because *you are not in your life*. It is like trying to swim up a river that has a current too strong for you. The river has a strong current of stress that only can be dealt with positively if you know—like the salmon—that your home is upstream. You should not be swimming up a stream that your feelings do not direct you up. Regular life-stress becomes compounded with stress from things you shouldn't have accepted. You don't get the relief you should because you are not doing things which make you feel good. If you don't follow what you are supposed to be doing, nature will get angry at you and punish you by making things more difficult than things should be. This does not mean that you cannot grow from swimming up a “wrong” river; you may be growing

simply to become more sensitive to your feelings. Don't complain; start becoming what you are supposed to become. Get back into your river.

A powerful force that gets us off track is having never dealt with the pain we experienced as a child. This pain can become so old and deep that we forget it is even there. When it gets superimposed on the present, as it does despite the best attempts of our defenses to contain it, it makes us more needy and sensitive to present pain. This confuses us, and we may think we are going crazy because we don't know where so much pain and anger comes from. We don't know how to deal with the feelings because we have not placed them where they belong. The feelings cannot leave us until we attach them to where they belong. We may be afraid to look at the old, deep hurt. It may seem as an endless, dark space where we may never find light. After all, it must contain something scary for us to have been running from it our whole lives. In fact, it is the single most scariest thing for us to face in our lifetime, but we must in order to be healthy. And we must face it over and over again.

What helps you walk through this scary, dark space is knowing that you are in the process of embracing and becoming yourself. This is the little candle you can hold onto in the dark. You can stop looking for yourself outside: in other relationships, places, and in excesses of money or material objects. You are already complete in this moment. Other external things may come as they come, but you no longer need them. You are on the journey to yourself.

Stop running from yourself. It no longer makes sense. You are not bad; you are not powerless; you are not worthless; you only feel so when you do not face yourself, preventing yourself from being. Think about that. You should feel bad, powerless, and

worthless when you are not being yourself. That is where you should be. That is part of your healing process. Otherwise, it would be too easy and painless for everyone not to be himself. Humanity would stop existing. Why won't you take the next step into the darkness? It is through the darkness that you will find true light. Do you want someone else to take that step for you? That will *never* happen. The step is yours to take, so you must take it.

The darkness you hide from stands in your way. The old pain you hold on to is in the way of you being as loving, smart, and best as you can be. Negative feelings block positive feelings, such as love, joy, and contentment. This can make it difficult to forgive people for the terrible things they have done to us. We may fear that if we let go of the hurt, we will have good feelings towards the abusers. To feel good about them after what they have done is crazy, right? To feel good ourselves is crazy after what they have done to us, right? Yes, but to hold on to the hurt, further hurting ourselves, is even more crazy.

We have to forgive them. This does not mean we have to see them, love them, or forget what they did. It means we must feel the hurt they caused us, grow so that we can limit or stop that hurtful behavior, and release the hurt. The hurt was meant for the time it happened, not an entire lifetime. To hold on to it longer means we have not found a way to grow from it. Perhaps we do not want to make anything positive come from it. This means we give their abusive behavior control over our lives. Read the last two sentences again and find a connection between them in your life.

Do you want to justify your pain by keeping it alive, keeping yourself from becoming yourself? The only person you hurt is yourself. No one else really gives a damn, especially the people who hurt you. Accept that. There is power in that acceptance.

If they could care, they would have respected the expression of your hurt long ago. (It may sound as if I'm repeating myself, but you are repeating your mistakes and you need to hear this at different levels and in different contexts.) Even if they did care, it would not change anything. You still have to love yourself and let go of the hurt all by yourself. If you need them to accept the hurt, you have not forgiven them for not caring when you needed. Give up hope of ever being cared for by them; it is your turn to care. Take courage. Justify your pain not by keeping it alive but by expressing it through verbal communication. Stop communicating your hurt nonverbally by destroying your life, showing them how horrible their actions affected you. They don't care. And what is worse is that you are not caring.

You may have carried your old pain for such a long time that you feel as if it is a part of yourself. By letting go of it, you may feel as if you are "killing" yourself. Forgiving the people who hurt you may feel as if you will cease to exist. This is obviously not true; you will exist, but you will be a different person. You will grow and exist as a more powerful, responsible, healthy person. Through not allowing your old feelings to continue living inside, you may feel as if you are not treating them importantly. Those feelings are an important part of yourself, but they are only the part of yourself that was in the moment in which they first came up. When you continue to hold on to them, *you* "kill" yourself. Your old feelings are a part of you that needs to be accepted and integrated for you to continue your flowing self-existence. Otherwise, because old feelings block the route, your present feelings don't have the access they need to yourself.

The extent you don't forgive people who hurt you is the extent you are, in some way, chained to them. You seek out these kinds of people in your intimate relationships, behave like them, or become them. When you don't forgive people, you limit your self-existence by using up time reenacting scenarios similar to how you had been hurt. For example, a woman molested as a child might get involved with a man who is only interested in using her as a sex object. These reenactments are done as attempts to obliquely work out old hurt instead of openly expressing yourself. They do not work, and they cause you to share a perverse similarity with your abusers: your abusers were reenacting their own scenarios to obliquely work out their hurt when they hurt you.

As you grow older while hoarding your pain, you may gain feelings of empathy and relation with the abusers because you will be similar to them: a person with lots of old hurt. These feelings of connection and empathy make it easier for you to feel justified to continue abuse within yourself and with your spouse and children. If you do not find a better way of relating to people than the abusive way your abusers related, you may no longer perceive your abusers as abusive. You may come to believe that the ways your abusers acted were the best ways to handle the situations. You will become what you had hated by not acknowledging your hurt. Why do you think your abusers acted as they did? They were abused and were not open to their hurt.

Allowing old pain to dictate what happens in your life is not being the self you were created to be. Being that self means allowing your feelings from experiences help you grow as yourself. If you do not deal with old pain directly, you will bring negative consequences from it into your life, again and again. You will waste most of your youth in the suppression of the growth you should have actualized long ago. Face the entirety of

your pain now so that your kids will not be the tools you use to work through your old pain. Be truly different from the abusers who have used you in a failing attempt to work out their old hurt.

You also need to forgive yourself. You have not been perfect. So what? No one is, and the person who claims to be is someone no one wants around. We are human. We make mistakes because we are all in development, not because we are failures. What hurt have you caused yourself that you do not want to let go? Why don't you want to let it go? Your choice of holding on to it is getting in the way of your growth. This choice is in the way of yourself, and *it* will be the thing that you will have the most trouble forgiving yourself for in the future.

If you hold on to old pain in order to remain a victim, you are being victimized by yourself. Your anger from having been hurt becomes directed back at yourself so that you believe you are a bad person. Since you feel bad, you are afraid of being seen as the perpetrator, the bad guy, so you continue to choose to be a victim. This is an unhealthy, vicious cycle you need to break. Being a victim means you have no power to change. Be yourself, not a victim. If you feel like a victim, perpetrators will detect that and abuse you. Your life has more meaning in it than in being a victim. You were hurt during one time period by them, yet you continue to hurt yourself through staying a victim.

-In what ways are you swimming up the wrong river?

-What do you need to do to start doing what you are supposed to be doing?

-Have you dealt with all the pain you did not feel as a child?

-How do you know?

-Explain how your present problems and routes up the wrong river could be from old childhood pain (even if you do not believe they are).

-List everyone with whom you still feel hurt.

-What is the reason you are holding on to the pain?

-What positives are you getting from holding on to it?

-What negatives are you getting from holding on to it?

-What needs to happen for you to begin to integrate and release it?

-Why?

-What negatives would happen if you released it?

-What positives would happen if you released it?

-In what ways do you feel similar to your father? your mother? your siblings?

-Do you not like feeling that way?

-Explain.

-Have you held on to pain as they have done?

-Do you need to forgive yourself in any way (including for holding on to pain for a long time)?

-(Writing a letter to yourself about how you hurt yourself is a good way to express your hurt to yourself and release it.)

## *Change Your Perspective of Pain*

Gain a new perspective of your pain. Perspective is just perspective, yet it makes all the difference. It is the deciding factor of whether you will deal with pain rather than push it away. Use pain to give yourself motivation to gain a new perspective of pain. You will be empowered. No matter how many times you have been robbed, beaten, abused, raped, molested, you will die, they will die, everyone will die. You have to move on through the pain and not just live in it. Do you want to let those evil acts from those people have so much power over your goodness. Come on . . . take your life back. It is yours, but you must claim it as yours.

Use your pain to learn and know that just because you feel it now does not mean you will not feel more pain in the future. Expect to feel more. You will always be learning and growing. Do not say that you do not want to learn or grow anymore if it has to involve pain. Life is about waves of pain and pleasure (pain being the bottom of the trough, and pleasure being the top of the peak). If you stop one, you must stop the other in an equal amount because they are of the same wave. If you decrease your pain from an experience, you decrease the happiness and growth which follows. Life is too short to have yourself die through stopping your growth. Are you going to hide underneath a shelter while it rains all your life, only to find out that it will never stop raining? Your life will come to an end having spent most of its time sitting underneath a shelter, waiting for rain to stop, waiting for death! Welcome pain to go through it, so you don't dwell in it.

Really look at your mortality. Think about it long and hard because *you will die*. This is a significant event in your life. Are you doing what you want to be doing right now? because your life is just a string of *nows*, and then it is over. If you are not doing

what you want to be doing in your life, as you get closer to your death, you will feel like your life has been and is slipping away. That feeling is exactly correct, because you have been letting it slip away!

Do you think you are the only one who has lived with great pain? There have been generations after generations of people here before you who have lived through their pain. They have been young, grown old, and died, some having been themselves and more having not. All have lived in their lives, but the ones who were themselves brought meaning into their lives, because their lives were truly theirs.

Is your life truly yours? If not, when will it be? the last five years of your life? Will you allow pain and growth to occur during that time, winding up emotionally to be five years old when you die? Is that what you want? What are you waiting for? Do something about it. You are the only one to be yourself. Even if someone else could be you for you, you would be giving yourself over to someone who does not know how to be himself, for someone who takes over yourself does not have enough of his self. Start being healthy.

-What is your perspective on pain?

-How did you come to see it in that way?

-Is it a healthy perspective?

-Explain.

-If not healthy, why are you holding on to it?

-Be open to any old pain influencing your perspective of pain.

-What kind of perspective would be more healthy?

-What needs to happen for you to come to a healthier perspective?

## *Mourning*

All of our losses need to be mourned. No matter how big or small, they are all our feelings. Death of a loved one may be one of the bigger losses we experience, but the process of dealing with that loss is similar to smaller ones. With each loss, because of the pain, we have a tendency to deny. The more painful the loss, the more time and energy we may spend trying to deny it.

It may sound like I'm repeating myself in this section, but what has been said must be recapped, because so many people have trouble with this. *They just don't get it.* They can hear and read it, but still not apply to their lives.

The process of mourning means we accept our loss through feeling the hurt, allowing the hurt to pass so we can get on with our lives. When we feel hurt from the loss, our defenses well up to limit the hurt. This can lead to anger, guilt, and depression in varying degrees. Kubler-Ross describes four stages we go through in defending against pain before coming to accept it. These stages are denial, anger, bargaining, and depression.<sup>5</sup> We first deny the loss as if it did not happen. Then we may become angry, as we try to ascertain why it happened, bargaining in the process to try to reverse it. Depression comes when we give up on our anger and bargaining yet are still pushing away much of the truth and pain. Anywhere in these stages, if intense pain is being held

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<sup>5</sup> Found in Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, *On Death and Dying*, (New York: Macmillan, 1969).

back, we may feel like we are going crazy. As the truth of the loss can no longer be denied, we come to deal with the pain through accepting and integrating it. As we begin to accept the pain, we finally gain some peace. Mourning may vary in length for different people, though a year or two is an average time for the loss of a loved one. We may go through the stages a number of times during the mourning process, handling only portions at a time of large losses.

Accepting the reality of your feelings begins the integration of them, allowing your self the freedom to manifest. You gain a sense of ownership for those feelings you accept. They become evidence of your humanness and growth, and they help you to become a better person. If your perception of your feelings is positive, they will be accepted by you at a higher level, being more easily integrated. If you maintain a negative perspective of them, they tend to be pushed away so that they are not as fully integrated. Remember your feelings are your self's only way of expressing itself; if they are not accepted to some degree, you are not accepted to that same degree. If your feelings are integrated, they will no longer need to continue the overwhelming waves of emotion into your present moments. They may still continue in waves but, on the average, progressively smaller ones. Since you will be accepting each wave as it comes, you will be decreasing the energy of the loss which caused the waves. This allows you to change like a shoreline changes as swells break onto it. The majority of the integration process may take days or years, depending on the loss, on how many other losses you have failed to mourn, and on your honesty in feeling your feelings of each moment.

To gain growth from a loss, you need first to feel the hurt from the loss. If you start off feeling only good, you are skipping over the hurt and are not integrating it. This

is part of your defenses not to deal with the loss. It is part of your way not to feel the pain, and it denies your self-growth. The ideal place to be in at this time is to feel good about feeling the pain.

As you feel the loss, you must connect it with the event which caused it. Persistent connection of your feelings to the events which caused them allows them to exist where they are supposed to exist. "Oh, I'm feeling sad. It must be sadness because Billy died. Yes, I'm feeling sad because I miss Billy." This will help you attach the pain to the event so that the pain does not attach to you. It will facilitate the pain to leave you and give you motivation to grow in a positive direction.

The death of a loved one can help us grow to cherish moments we have with loved ones who still live. We may cherish our own life with renewed vigor and live each moment more fully and as ourselves. Gaining a sense of mortality might help us give what our heart desires. A positive perspective is what we must eventually acquire to fully integrate the painful feelings. We must make our pain our gain.

We see death (loss) and birth (growth) with each passing year, one feeding the other, both incomplete without each other, both necessary for life. Accept both so that you may deal with both. In some way they are the same.

-What losses do you need to mourn?

-Have you felt the pain of them?

-If not, you don't deserve to be feeling good yet. First just feel, and keep feeling until you get to the bottom of that wave. Then enjoy

whatever release it offers, and expect another wave at some point in the future.

-When you feel ready, for each loss or hurt, list something positive you may eventually gain from it.

-For each major loss that you have experienced in the past, list something positive you have gained with it.

-Anticipate some major loss you may experience in the near future. What is something positive you may gain from it as you integrate its waves of pain? Close your eyes now, and picture yourself mourning this loss and being there for yourself in your time of need. Store this picture in your memory and tell yourself to remember it when the loss does happen.

## LOVE YOURSELF

What do you think loving yourself is about? Not taking care of your feelings? Is that what loving people do with babies that need love? When babies feel tired, do we wake them up and play loud music? When they feel hungry, do we remove any bottles of milk close to them? These questions might sound silly, but *we do these things to ourselves*. When babies cry because they are in an uncomfortable position, unable to move themselves, do we allow them to suffer. No. Why? Why would you treat your feelings different from how you would treat a baby's feelings? Self-love is caring for your feelings.

Love is something we need from other people as a baby and something we need to give ourselves as an adult. Do not depend on someone else to love you as an adult. Someone else loving you as an adult will not be enough if you do not love yourself. Find love in yourself, and anything more you get will be “icing on the cake” so to speak. Do not say you are powerless to love yourself because then that will be exactly right. It will be your fault you are loveless, and you will deserve exactly what you get. This may sound offensive, but it is the perspective you need to acquire in order to stop your insatiable quest for love outside of yourself. I’m on your side.

If you do not believe you can love yourself unless someone has loved you before, you are absolutely correct. That someone is yourself. Guess what . . . you were born loving yourself. It has already happened! Someone has loved you in your lifetime. You have no more excuses not to start loving yourself. Think of an infant you know. That infant does not deny its feelings. It is able to express its feelings. If it denied its feelings, it could not be cared for by its parents; for the parents use the infant’s expression of feelings as a cue as to when and how to care for it. The infant could not be loved unless it was first capable of loving itself. It cries or gives some signal when it is hungry, and a parent feeds it. It smiles and giggles, and a parent encourages it. It shows an unhappy face when it needs to be held, and a parent picks it up and holds it. The baby feels, trusts, accepts, and expresses its feelings. It naturally loves itself, and you were that baby at one time.

Now, I’m going to drill home some points that have been covered before so prepare your heart.

You have to be yourself in order to love yourself. If you are not being yourself, your self is not existing for you to love. If you do not acknowledge your feelings, you cannot be loving yourself. If you are not caring for your feelings, what are you caring for? Nothing else about you needs caring except for your feelings. Think about it. Does your intellect need caring? Do your job-skills need caring? Does your body need caring? What for? What would happen if you did not care for them? You would have certain *feelings* if you didn't care for your intellect, job-skills, or body, perhaps discontent, hunger, or pain. What is really happening when you take care of your intellect, job-skills, and body is that you are indirectly caring for your feelings. What else could it be? Nothing else about you has power to motivate you.

If you still think something besides your feelings needs to be cared for, why can't your feelings be that important? What hurt are you suppressing in which part of the fabric of suppression is to believe feelings can't be so important. If the previous comment made you feel disturbed, what hurt could it have pricked and so released? Do you have a fear that you do not love all of yourself? What does that mean to you?

Being yourself takes energy, but if the energy you expend is with things you love, you will get back energy from having taken care of yourself. As you fill yourself up with love, the empty feelings inside you become filled, making you feel whole. A whole person has more energy than a half person. You please yourself when you do what you love. You may be tired after pleasing yourself from the work which goes with that, but you will feel better. It is like when you are hungry and eat a big delicious dinner, making you feel satisfied but perhaps tired. Later on, the food from that dinner gives you energy.

If you had not eaten, you would feel weak and unable to give all that you could. Pleasing yourself can give you more energy to continue doing things for yourself and others.

If you find that you are lacking the energy to take care of yourself, you need to act more loving towards yourself. You have not been “eating” enough self-love to nourish yourself and give yourself energy. You are being depressed from past unloving actions toward yourself, disrupting your present energy. Take care of yourself, damn it! You may have entered into a destructive, vicious cycle in which held-in pain decreases your energy level so much that you do not feel energized to care for yourself. Old hurt has turned into anger directed towards yourself, depleting your energy. This anger makes you feel that you don't deserve to be loving towards yourself or that you are not worthy of taking care of yourself. You don't deserve that punishment. You are not bad. Stop doing what you have been doing, for it has not been working. Start doing things differently. The motivation to help you move will come from being honest and acknowledging that you are a good person. You have just been through experiences which produced painful feelings. Accept the painful feelings lying underneath the depressed state. This will motivate you to love yourself. Openly state the truth out loud to yourself, "I feel down, like I have no energy today. I must be feeling hurt. I wonder what hurt I'm feeling that I'm not admitting?" Then allow the answer to come to you so relief can follow. If the answer does not come right away, continue to be consistently open with this approach, and *the answer will come*.

Love your self that exists in each moment. This means you need to get in touch with your feelings in the moments they occur. You have to stop denying their existence and start feeling them. That is what feelings are for, to feel. Why do you think we call

them *feelings*? You start loving yourself by asking yourself what feelings you have not been caring for. What feelings have you been pushing away? You care about these feelings which were so difficult to care for before. Whatever your feelings are, you care for them. Whether you are feeling happy, angry, depressed, guilty, anxious, or hurt, you care. You stop pushing them away and accept them. (The journal exercise discussed at the beginning of the book can help you become more in touch with your feelings.)

Knowing when a feeling first occurred helps you care for it. Consider the metaphor of a stranger. Because you don't know him, it difficult to care for him. As you get to know more about him, you are able to care for him at deeper levels, closer to the level of an intimate friendship. Make your self a friend not a stranger. The more you know about when you had a feeling, the more you can understand it and integrate it into yourself. When you know the time, you will know more of who or what was responsible for the feeling and in what way. If you don't know the time period of your feeling, you need to continue caring through finding approximately when it began.

Trust your feelings. Your feelings are not bad. Your choice of not expressing them is behaving badly towards yourself. If you cannot trust your own feelings, you cannot truly trust anyone. The greatest pain and punishment, no matter how much abuse you have experienced, was your choice to stop loving yourself as long as you have done. No one made that choice for you but yourself. When you took your self-love away, you became the abuser, which made it even more difficult to love yourself. Forgive yourself; you are not perfect; no one is. Grow, and start loving and trusting yourself.

Even if your feelings are old, are out of context, seem crazy and foreign to you, you need to accept them as yours. Perhaps they seem distasteful to you . . . guess what,

they are your feelings! You are the only one around to feel them and who is supposed to feel them. This is your chance to love yourself. Do you need to let yourself down again? Why? as punishment? Punishing yourself for having your feelings is not loving yourself. Punishment for your feelings is probably what the abuser did to you. If you feel you still need some punishment, "punish" yourself by facing the pain that comes with accepting painful feelings. It is easy to love and care for your comfortable feelings, now try caring for them all.

Caring for your feelings does not mean you need to keep them alive or dwell on them. Life will dish out plenty more pain to feel and deal with besides your present pain. Feel the pain, accept what you are feeling, and when the feeling has had enough time with you and desires to leave, allow it to leave. As you feel, give the feeling a name tag, "Oh, I'm feeling afraid of my old Mom's anger and rejection right now. That's what it is! Whew, I wasn't sure what was going on. I must not have felt it all as a kid, and so now it's coming back up for me to feel and grow." You might even add, "Boy, even though its painful, I'm glad I'm open enough to finally be able to experience it." In connecting these old feelings where they belong, they will make more sense. They will seem more familiar and justified, allowing you to trust and accept them with greater ease.

Labeling old hurt and anger where they belong will help keep you from overreacting in situations which bring those feelings up in the present. When you do find yourself overreacting to people you care for, declare the truth, "I'm sorry; I was feeling pain from when \_\_\_\_\_(past situation), and I projected it onto \_\_\_\_\_(present situation)."

You may choose to experience old hurt and anger as if watching a movie, feeling along with the movie, but knowing you are not in that situation. You really are no longer in the situation of your past-self anyhow; you are just feeling the feelings of that past-self. Using this movie watching paradigm gives you more distance from the potency of your old feelings. The distance puts you more at ease so that you feel freer to feel the feelings to a greater extent. This may not sound like an authentic way to be yourself, but it is. Any replay of your past is no longer real except for the feelings you have from it. Similarly, a movie is not real except for the feelings you have as you watch it.

No matter how painful your feelings are from past horrible experiences, your feelings are exactly right. Your feelings are not horrible; the experiences that brought them on were horrible. Your feelings were just your self existing in those horrible situations, a self that cannot be denied. Love your self; it deserves to be loved, if not for just being you, then for what you had to go through. Embrace your feelings to release the destructive power that denying incurs.

In feeling the depths of your old feelings, you may become inspired to express yourself. This expression may consist of confronting someone who hurt you with your hurt, then releasing it so that you feel better. This process—making something positive out of something painful—is essential to integrating feelings. It is your job to find an expression that gives your painful feelings a positive impact in your life. Come! Your self is calling you.

Take responsibility for the integration of your old feelings, and get to work. It is your life, not your mother's, your father's, or anybody else's who have hurt you. They

are not responsible for you anymore, no matter what they did in the past. You are the one who has to live with yourself now.

-List times you have loved yourself that really stick out (if you feel you never loved yourself, there are times when you liked yourself more than others; list those times).

-What was special about these times.

-What was happening then that was different from other times.

-How can you make something like that happen again?

-How can you stop something like that from happening?

-Which of the last two answers are you presently doing more of?

-What feelings or behaviors do you have that you are uncomfortable with?

-Chances are you have some hurt behind these uncomfortable feelings or behavior. What hurt is underneath the uncomfortable feeling or behavior? (Even if you don't believe there is any, answer the question as if there was.)

-What comes to your mind as you answered?

-When are you going to allow yourself to feel deserving enough to love all of yourself?

-If it is anytime but the present, why are you waiting?

-How is waiting going to help you?

-What and who is in the way of accepting yourself?

-Explain how.

-What helps you to accept yourself?

-How can you accept yourself more in this moment?

### *Respect Yourself*

Loving yourself means respecting yourself, doing things that are respectful to yourself. This can be hard for people who feel guilty. Because of their guilt, they do things that make themselves feel bad to punish themselves. Doing good things for themselves goes against the grain of what they want for themselves. Since they feel bad for doing anything for themselves, their life fills up with self-disrespect. If you feel guilt when doing something good for yourself, you need to ask what hurt you are experiencing that has turned against yourself. Acknowledge the hurt from where your guilt comes from.

You are not supposed to do things that make you feel bad (unless the bad feeling is just from an old hurt, as discussed above). If you do, caring for other feelings becomes harder and your self-esteem becomes lower. Because you don't feel so good anymore, it is easier to continue doing things that make you feel bad. Ask yourself why you do things that make you feel bad.

-When do you do things that are respectful to yourself?

-What positives do you get from doing this?

-What negatives do you get from doing this?

-Why do you do this?

- Make a list of things you can do that are good for you. Do at least one of these each day this week, and observe how you feel.
- When do you do things that make you feel bad?
  - What positives do you get for being bad?
  - What negatives do you get for being bad?
  - Why do you do this?
- Make a list of things you do that make you feel bad. Cross out ones that may be a result of old anger turned against you.
  - What is the feeling you have right before you do each of the remaining things on the list?
    - Is there a pattern?
      - If so what does it mean?

## *Truth*

Be honest with yourself. Lies will always catch up to you and break down your self-existence. When you accept lies, your feelings and growth are steered in a direction different from where you need. The feelings you would have had in the light of the truth do not exist. Without these feelings, your self will not grow to the next place in your life it needs to be. The truth is what brings back yourself. Let truth soak your soul, it deserves it. It is in truth where your self flourishes.

If you have doubts about the healing power of truth, try the following exercise. When you feel bad, tell people you feel good; and when you feel good, tell people you

feel bad. Whatever feeling you have, tell the opposite: joy—hurt, excited—tired, hate—love, depressed—happy, guilty—innocent, etcetera. Remember to follow your feelings so that if one changes after you speak it, you speak dishonestly about the new feeling. Try this exercise for three days, and do not tell anyone what you are doing until you are done.

I really would not recommend the above exercise unless you have serious doubts about the healing effects of truth. If you do have serious doubts, you probably live somewhat dishonesty anyhow, so you would not experience much of a change with the exercise. An honest person would feel hurt from the exercise, whereas a dishonest person may be amused at how "strong" he appears to be. Because the dishonest person is simply acting how he was acting before the exercise, he does not lose as much as the honest person. The honest person experiences a loss of something highly valued to himself: honesty. The exercise may generate negative responses from people who have potential to love you. It may generate positive or neutral responses from people who are not capable of loving you.

Try the same experiment as above except now be honest with all your feelings. I recommend this exercise for everyone. Every time you feel a good or bad feeling, tell the person what it is. The dishonest person will now feel more hurt than the honest person because the dishonest person experiences the most loss in this exercise: losing dishonesty. If you are around people who love you, then you will see mostly a positive response. If you are around people who do not care for you, that is exactly what you will see. This reality may be painful, but it is important information to know so that you can grow and make your life better. It may help you face a weakness, desperation, or part of yourself that you have not been willing to face. In the above experiments you can speak

truth or lies of your opinions and beliefs (which are wielded by your feelings anyhow) to create similar effects as feelings, but perhaps not as intense.

You gain power in being truthful to yourself. It allows you to be free to continually manifest the spirit of yourself. You are also enabled to perceive other people's true selves. Since you are truthful with your own feelings, you will be able to see when and how others fail in that truthfulness. You will know this from the feelings you have while with another person. You feel something is not quite right or feel somewhat confused when he is not being himself.

When you hold back a present feeling, denying its existence, you interfere with your perceptual process. This interference occurs even if you have been honest with yourself up until the present dishonesty. The current you is not being allowed to be fully there to integrate present situations. If a part of you which you cannot face is also in someone else, you will not be able to see that whole other person. You must deny this part in him because seeing what you deny in yourself in him is too close to what you cannot face in yourself.

-If you had spoken the truth about your hurt in past experiences, would you have felt better about yourself today?

-Why?

-Why did you not speak the truth in each of these past experiences?

-What is different about yourself now which would allow you to speak the truth if a similar hurt occurred in the present? (given that the person is someone you care about and who cares for you).

-If nothing is different, you still need to grow to be able to speak the truth.

-Have you felt and released the pain from the hurtful experience?

-If not, how else do you expect to be able to grow?

-In what areas in your life are you experiencing hurt now?

-Are you being honest with these?

-What are you doing to make sure you are acting honestly?

-When are you being dishonest? (It's impossible to be honest all the time, but to acknowledge when you are not helps you become more honest.)

### *Keep Your Head Up*

Even though you are going through a tough time, even though it hurts so much that you cannot stand it, even though it feels as though you are falling apart, endure...endure. Keep you head up, maintaining courage and belief in yourself. You are one of the few who have chosen to be themselves, to be true to yourself, to go where others fall down and never get back up. It may feel as though you have fallen on the ground, but you keep moving. When you are being yourself, you will at times get overwhelmed with emotion. This cannot be helped. You might feel as though you are a little kid again. At these times you might feel desperation.

If you rush yourself, you will slip and fall. Don't rush. When you rush, you have a desperation, causing yourself to be in an inferior position. What would happen if you just went at your own pace? Try it. Allow silence to exist to feel what you are feeling. Hear your self, and give it time to speak its feelings so you can know what direction to take next. If you rush, you have a need. What is that need? It can trip you up and make you fall. Lose the need. You are fine the way you are, at the pace that best suits you. Desperation makes you rush over feelings and is part of your defense not to deal with them. Feelings cannot be cared for while you are feeling desperate unless you care for the desperate feeling. Ask yourself what you feel so desperate about, and speak openly about it so that you slow down the process to meet your self where it is at.

If you are in a situation where you need to rush, such as work, this is incorrect. The person who put that idea into your head does not know how to work effectively and is just trying to control you. You don't *need* to do anything, and you cannot do anything but move at your own fast pace. If that pace is not good enough for your work, you can try to grow to increase your pace, but if it cannot increase without you rushing, you do not belong at that pace. Do not be afraid of rejection or of being fired. If it happens, you are being supported because you did not belong there to begin with, and they are helping you to get where you belong. Remind yourself that you can only be you, you are good, and you being where you do not belong is bad.

Even though you may be going through a tough time, you are at least being yourself. Take strength in that, knowing you will grow from being yourself. Just because you are feeling low, rejected, and like the worst person around, does not mean that it is true. The opposite is true because you are dealing with yourself. Got it?

- When do you feel like you can't hold your head up?
  - Why?
    - What hurts?
      - Take courage and belief in yourself; just do it.
- When do you feel a calmness and security?
- When do you feel desperation or a need to rush?
  - What is the difference between the last two answers?
    - How can you bring about more of this calmness and security to the place where you feel desperate and rushed?
    - Do you find you make more mistakes when you are desperate and rushed?

## EXPRESS YOURSELF

We are always communicating something to another person, even when we are not overtly communicating. When we are not talking to someone, we are communicating that for some reason we are not talking. As long as we live, we cannot stop communicating.

All communication can be categorized as either self-expressive or non-expressive. Non-expressive communication is an attempt to deny our feelings (our self), whereas self-expression is communication of our true feelings. Both use some medium to achieve

their goals. The medium of our mind is one which is required, as it is the one that expresses or suppresses feelings via thoughts. All other mediums are secondary, but we usually need at least one of them for full self-expression. These mediums may include language, body-language, art, sports, and work.

Language and body-language are mediums available to almost all of us. They both are natural forms of communication in human beings. However, some people may need practice using them in a truthful manner. They almost always are used together, but sometimes you need to increase the emphasis of one or the other. Such an instance might be when speaking the words *you hurt me* is not enough, so emphasis on body-language becomes necessary by actually moving your body out of the situation, communicating that the person cannot be trusted at that moment. Body-language can be quite extensive, involving the bat of an eye, the swing of a hip, the turn of a head, the movement of one's body away from another, the tears you shed, the tone of your voice, your facial expression, the direction in which you cough, etcetera.

Being open to your feelings and stating them is *not* a position of weakness. Others who perceive it as weak are afraid to be vulnerable, for they are weak and do not face their feelings. When you face your feelings, you remind them of their weakness and how they cannot face their feelings. How other people react to your feelings tells you enough about them to see their weaknesses, provided your eyes are not clouded by your own emotions.

When you speak your feelings, do not expect a reaction of understanding from other people; there are too many people hiding from their feelings to have that expectation fulfilled. Expect them to be wherever they are at in being able to hear your

feelings, and you can state where they are at. This allows you to be where you are at while they are where they are.

Using work as a medium of communication might involve a painter hearing his thoughts and feelings through his paintings. This self-expressive communication may not only show his self to himself but also to other people. The mathematician might communicate through teaching or solving formulas, expressing love by helping society function at higher levels. A journalist might express feelings of being unfairly treated as a child by reporting on people who are treated unfairly in our communities. A therapist or teacher might express love by verbally communicating with others to help them grow.

Each person has special talents which they can communicate through. You should know yours so that you can develop them further. These talents are invaluable outlets for self-expression onto the world. It is in these outlets that you are able to best communicate. As a talent grows, you increase the opening of your window for self-expression. This allows you to be and feel more whole. Work hard at your unique gifts of expression so that your self-expression can expand, effecting yourself to grow more fully.

Your career should be one where you can express yourself best, furthering your talents. This way you have an excellent resource to rely on for relieving excess hurt, anger, and stress. Consequently, you will have more love and energy for the world. The more you love the work you do, the more you support your feelings by satisfying them through the love of the work. You are able to take care of yourself as you work. The accomplishments in your work eliminate negative feelings that would come from lack of accomplishments in work you love. Since the self is better taken care of, it is free to work

harder and is capable of spilling out more love towards others, for it is so much more full of itself.

Doing what you love is an excellent resource of self-expression. Think about what you love. Now think of what happens when you are involved in that activity. Do you feel an expansion of yourself? Do you feel something greater? These feelings come because you are growing, and your self only grows when it can express itself. Think of people you know who are not happy. Are they using adequate resources to express themselves?

You cannot rely solely on your work, hobbies, and life-passion for all your self-expression, just as you cannot rely solely on speech and body-language. Life gives us too many feelings to express in only a limited number of channels. Whatever mediums which might best offer relief at the time are the mediums you should use. We must have both some kind of work in our lives and some people with whom we can communicate. Through expressing ourselves in these ways, we can see ourselves; others can see ourselves; we exist.

If people want to control someone, they take away his channels of self-expression, taking away his self. Once his self is gone, it is not entirely there to protect him from people who want to control him. The wife-batterer takes away his wife's friends, work, and other channels of expression, including honest communication, so that her self is gone. He can then use her as an object, and she is much less capable to defend against his controlling behavior. Communication can never be stopped, but self-expressive communication can. It is when people allow their self-expressive communication to be reduced that they get themselves into trouble.

Some individuals and cultures limit self-expression. These may include a boss, a dangerous stranger, the specific culture of a work environment, the culture of a group, and the culture of a prison. In some jobs, if you bring up your feelings about the boss, you will get fired. Some people you stumble upon in the everyday world are dangerous, causing any self-expression with them to also be dangerous. If you deal with clients at your work, it may not always be appropriate to verbally express yourself to them. In some prisons, you will get badly hurt or killed if you express yourself. With these kinds of people and cultures, you may need to find other ways to channel the expressive energy of yourself so that you can still grow.

One non-threatening way of expressing yourself is to use the closest expression of feelings you possibly can: thoughts. You can use feelings to motivate you to increase your understanding. However, only rely solely on this method when you are in difficult situations such as those discussed above, and when less hurt (I am speaking of present hurt, not of old hurt resurfacing) will befall you from doing so than from expressing yourself in a secondary expressive medium. Otherwise, you will be sacrificing your growth from the present hurt not appropriately being expressed.

You express yourself using your thoughts by being a learning sponge. Soak up learning from everything that happens to you and from everyone around you. Watch other people, and see how they are not being themselves. Make up stories about what they must be afraid of to not be themselves. What part of themselves are they rejecting and why? Ask yourself if and when you would ever do what they are doing. If you were their lover, what would you do with them? how would you act? Make up what might happen to their selves as a consequence of their present actions. If you were them, how

would you feel? When are you like them? (we are all like each other at some time or another, if only for a moment). Use their difficult behavior to learn how to deal with difficult people in that environment while still maintaining self-respect. If you were them, what would make you tame? Allow their suppressed pain to be a springboard which you use to help yourself grow. Use them! They may be in a position that is more powerful than yours, for the moment, but that does not mean they are powerful. Watch them and see what people who feel powerless do when they have some power. Picture what would happen if they had more or less power. More power isn't enough for them is it? Less power would make them look like a baby, wouldn't it? Picture them as a baby! They feel powerless themselves anyway because their self is powerless. What would you do if you had more or less power? Why? How is that different from them? Do not hate them because they already hate themselves enough. If you need to hate them, you need to express yourself by finding a way out of there, for your hate hurts you more than them.

You gain in any situation if you are learning. No matter how painful it is, you can use that invaluable, hard-earned knowledge at a less painful time to do wondrous things for people. In learning from a difficult boss, you may become the boss that can treat his employees with respect and dignity, even the difficult employees. Who would have thought that when my self was rejected as a child, I would later be writing a book to help people find and accept their selves.

You should not look at your pain as an isolated incident. It is a necessary part to make you who you are. It is part of the flow of life. It is something to get you to another step in your life. The experience may be a negative force, but your pain is not (even

though it does not feel good). It is only a negative force in your life when you perceive it in that way.

-Are you using enough self-expressive pathways?

-Which ones do you need to use more?

-How can you help yourself to use them more?

-What are your talents that you love to do?

-How can you further the development of them?

-Try this as a homework assignment for self-expression. When you have a feeling with someone you care about, use language to express yourself by following the format below. Fill in the blanks with the appropriate words:

-“I feel \_\_\_\_\_, when you \_\_\_\_\_, because \_\_\_\_\_.” (Make sure you *only put a feeling* in the “I feel” blank, not a statement. Also do not make the “because” blank longer than a few sentences.)

## USING YOUR FEELINGS

Feelings used in combination with cognition can be an extremely strong force within you. When both are allowed to exist openly, they speak truth and define the essence of the person you truly are. It is when they are held back that they speak falsely and take away the spirit of yourself.

The composite of all your self-growth can be tapped into quickly and easily through being open to your feelings in the moments they occur. Think about it. When you

really get good at some craft or skill, having learned all the details and techniques, you begin to operate more by feeling than thinking. This is true even in a field that you would expect feelings to be useless, such as mathematics. A master mathematician takes a certain direction in solving complex mathematical problems not because that is the way he was taught, but because it feels like the right direction. If you haven't gotten to this point of excellence in any craft, you may not understand what I am talking about.

People who begin to master their craft begin to get a feeling sense which suggests directions. Look at the masters of different crafts and how they operate. One such genius was Einstein. Gardner proposes that Einstein developed the general theory of relativity and the special theory through using his intuition as a guide.<sup>6</sup> Intuition is just a feeling about something. As you gain mastery in a craft, you are learning less so that the mind has greater freedom to operate in other ways. It is as if the mind can use an automatic pilot, enabling you to do other stuff while still flying. Because your mind is freed from thinking so much, it has energy to focus on other things. The noise of your thinking is turned down, allowing you to hear the fainter volume of your feelings. At the same time, the volume of your feelings increases within your craft through having experienced the pains involved in learning the craft. You become much more sensitive to nuances which previously would have been overlooked but are now highlighted from having felt pain of many mistakes made. You have grown from the mistakes so that your feelings are sensitive to greater detail. The littlest blemish, which beginners completely lack sight for, creates intense feelings within you. At this point, you have developed to a higher level than when you still needed your mind's energy to gain the basic knowledge of the craft.

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<sup>6</sup> Howard Gardner, *Creating Minds*, (New York: Basic Books, 1993), pg. 122.

Your feelings are guides. They direct you to being yourself. It is as if we are masters of ourselves—not having to think about being ourselves, just needing to follow our feelings. There is a master of yourself inside you; after all, who else has been with you every single second of every single day of your life. If you allow yourself to be sensitive to your feelings, you will get invaluable clues. A blatant example of such guidance is the clue your body offers so that you do not starve: hunger, telling you that you need nourishment. A less obvious example is when you feel on-guard around a particular person (as if it is difficult to naturally be yourself). This means that the person is trying to control you. Controlling people want your life in their hands so that they can control your love because they cannot stand rejection.<sup>7</sup> If your life is in their hands, it is out of your hands. So the feeling of being on-guard is correct. You are guarding yourself from their controlling behavior.

If you have some old hurt that you have not resolved, it gets in the way of the guidance of present feelings. You have not been being a master of yourself. You have not been being with yourself. Your old feelings block messages that the new feelings want to tell you. Because two messages are trying to speak at once, you cannot hear any message. And when you do make something out of the jumble, until you untangle the jumble, it guides you in false directions.

Let's say you have not dealt with hurt from a controlling person in your past. The hurt directs you to meet a controlling person in the present. Because this person reminds you of the hurt you have been denying inside yourself, you feel a connection with him. This feeling of connection really has nothing to do with him, but is just a feeling of

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<sup>7</sup> Character types of dependent, controlling, and competitive are described in depth in David Viscott's book *Emotionally Free*, (Chicago: Contemporary Books, 1992).

connection with the denied hurt he brings back out from within you. His controlling behavior, no matter how slight, will hurt and remind you of the denied deeper hurt. So you are drawn to him, naturally, as if guided by a feeling. You need to get back in touch with your old hurt, and accept its message that you were suppose to receive long ago. This will help you integrate the hurt to free yourself from the confounding effects it creates from mixing with present feelings.

As a master of yourself, you are able to tap into guidance which present feelings offer. For example, when you feel pressure from someone to take control of him, you can almost be certain that you are dealing with a person who has a dependent nature.<sup>8</sup> He wants someone to do things for him and take control. He acts in a manner that call out for someone to save him. This creates the feeling of pressure you feel to take control of him. You are feeling exactly the truth. Because the person seems so fragile, you may also feel as if you cannot speak freely. This is his dependency acting on you to control your actions from a passive position. You may feel somewhat suffocated and tied-down around him. Since a dependent person relinquishes control of his life, he needs to control others to give him at least some sense of self-control. In other words, he needs to expand his self to include other people as part of his self to feel complete. The feelings of suffocation and being tied-down may also come up with controlling people, but because they usually have more external power to use against you, you would also feel threatened.

When you feel that your worth as a person is being tested, feel that you are being judged, or feel that you are in a competition, someone is needing to compare themselves

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<sup>8</sup> Character types of dependent, controlling, and competitive are described in depth in David Viscott's book *Emotionally Free*, (Chicago: Contemporary Books, 1992).

with you. This is a competitive person who doubts his worth.<sup>9</sup> He needs to know your worth to outdo it or to show it as lower than his. This way, he reasons, he is at least better than someone; thus, he masks his feelings of worthlessness.

Allow your feelings to tell you something about the other person:

-What are you feeling when you are with the other person?

-What does that feeling want to be telling you?

-If you have this same feeling no matter who you are with, your feeling is coming from the past. It is telling you that you never heard, felt, and integrated it.

-If you do not trust your feelings, how have you not been being a master of yourself?

-What hurts? (Some hurt is in the way of your present feelings, making them less available and trustworthy. If you don't know, guess.)

-Have you been open with that or been denying that?

-Whom does the person remind you of? Do you have similar feelings while with each of these people?

-Are some of your present feelings old, coming from someone in your past?

-What are the similarities between these people?

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<sup>9</sup> Character types of dependent, controlling, and competitive are described in depth in David Viscott's book *Emotionally Free*, (Chicago: Contemporary Books, 1992).

-In what other circumstances do you feel the same as when you are with the person?

-What is similar about these circumstances with the person?

-What does this tell you about the relationship between the person and the circumstances?

-What does this tell you about the person? about the circumstances? about yourself?

### *Hurt as Guidance*

Your hurt is there to tell you that something is wrong. It tells you that a part of yourself is no longer being properly cared for and that something needs to change. This change can be something outside or inside of yourself. Internal change can be suppression or growth, the former being change atrophying to the self, the latter being change empowering to the self. You are not supposed to act by pushing hurt away. That simply is pushing the message away, not the problem.

Keep the feeling long enough to feel it. Although it feels painful, do not push the moment away, running into the next, just so it appears as if you are freed from the hurt. Freedom comes in facing yourself. Once you have felt the hurt, found its source, discovered its message, you become free and able to express yourself.

To use your feelings you need to acknowledge and accept them. Then you need to ask yourself what they mean. What are they telling you? What is yourself telling you? The following questions can help you find some meaning and direction from hurt. They,

as well as the questions from the next five sections, are meant to be used whenever you are struggling for the meaning of feelings.

-What hurts?

-When were you hurt?

-How were you hurt?

-Were your expectations unrealistic so that you set yourself up to be hurt?

-How so?

-Is the reasoning in your last answer realistic, or are you being too hard on yourself?

-Do you need to give up something, someone, or some belief and move on?

-What can be a first step in giving this up? a second? a third?

-What did you do with the hurt?

-What would you have liked to have done with it to feel better about yourself today?

-Did you turn it inward towards yourself?

-If so:

-Tell how this affects you in a regular day of your life. Be specific, listing behaviors that are destructive towards yourself.

- Tell how this affects others who are close to yourself.
- What can you do with the hurt now?
- When else were you hurt in a similar way?
  - Are some of your present feelings from that past situation?
  - Recall the earliest similar situation you can remember. Are some of your present feelings from then?
- Are you in a situation you should not be?
  - What needs to be different?
  - What, realistically, can get you to that different place?
  - Have you done something you regret doing, betraying yourself?
- What is your self telling you through its current feelings?
- What do you want out of the situation which caused the hurt?
  - Are you expressing that want?
    - If not, how are you expecting to get it?
      - Is this expectation realistic?
        - What can make it more realistic?
    - Do you feel you don't deserve it?
- Does your hurt ask you to change your perspective on something? What?
- What truth comes out of feeling your hurt?
  - How may that truth help you grow?

*Anger as Guidance*

Anger can come quickly after you feel hurt in an attempt to change the circumstances which created the hurt. Anger's message is that you have been hurt, have not done something you need to do about the hurt, and need to act faster. Since you feel angry because you have not dealt with hurt properly, answer the questions from "Hurt as Guidance" section for each angry feeling you have. Then answer the following questions:

- Why haven't you been able to express the hurt yet?
- Is this a common pattern?
- What needs to happen for it to change?
- When have you been able to express the hurt instead of the anger?
- What was different about this situation?
- What can you do to increase this expression in your life?

### *Guilt or Depression as Guidance*

If your anger fails to remove the hurt, brings about only more hurt, or is denied along with the hurt, the anger will be directed at yourself. This self-anger is called guilt. When you feel guilt, you feel as though you are the one to blame for what happened, so the original message of the hurt becomes lost. You may become depressed if you continue holding in hurt without finding an appropriate outlet for its expression.<sup>10</sup>

The message from guilt and depression is that you have not been dealing with your feelings effectively. You have been sacrificing yourself in some way. You either

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<sup>10</sup> David Viscott, *The Language of Feelings*, (New York: Pocket Books, 1976).

hurt someone so also hurt yourself, or you were hurt by someone. Your hurt was denied resulting in guilt and eventually depression.

Feeling depressed tells you that you have been feeling guilty too long. This may sound too simple, but it is true. What hurt are you suppressing? Finding that hurt is the hard part.

Allow the pain from guilt or depression to motivate you to find what you are suppressing. What is underneath the depression? Of course you probably think nothing; otherwise, you would not be depressed. Seek and find it. Trust me and yourself, it is there. You can make it more difficult if you choose, but that is just part of your defenses standing in the way of yourself. Since guilt and depression are both just old hurt and anger, answer the questions from "Hurt as Guidance" and "Anger as Guidance" sections for each guilty or depressed feeling you have. Then answer the following questions:

- Why did you deny your hurt?

- What can you do in the future to prevent this from happening again?

- How are you going to make sure you follow through with this?

- What clues can you gather to let yourself know you are denying hurt and anger before guilt or depression sets in?

- Do you get any sensations in your body that might help clue you in as to when you have been hurt? (Empty feelings or heaviness in chest, headaches, stomach turning, difficulty breathing, tightness somewhere in you body, etcetera.)

- Next time you get hurt, notice how you feel it in your body, so you can use that as information to help identify when you get hurt in the future.
- What clues can help you identify when you just start feeling guilt or depression?
  - Do you get any sensations in your body or repetitious thought patterns that might help clue you in as to when you begin feeling guilty or depressed?
  - Next time you feel guilty or depressed, notice how you feel it in your body. This way you can use that information to help identify when you begin feeling guilty or depressed in the future.

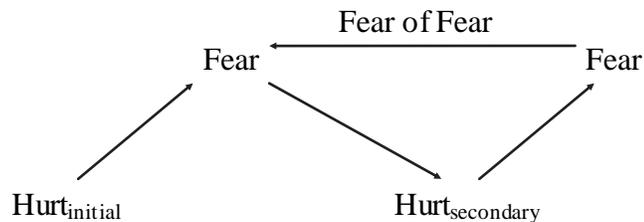
### *Anxiety as Guidance*

When you do not accept your fears, you stop the message your self is trying to give you. This message is important enough for you to be blessed with the feeling of anxiety, a danger signal. The feeling tells you that you might feel hurt at some time in the near future. This message needs to be read not denied.

The hurt you might feel will be either new or old. In the former your anxiety tells you that something is going to happen that could hurt you. In the latter your anxiety tells you that old hurt might break through your defenses and be felt by you, felt as if you were being hurt in the present. It is from this possibility of feeling the old hurt that causes the anxiety; and when the existence of the old hurt is denied, you can only believe that you might be hurt by something that is going to happen to you rather than something that has already happened.

If you do not face fear, it will continue trying to gain expression anyway. When a situation comes up resembling the situation from which the denied fear originated, you will be reminded of the fear. It will begin slipping out, causing you to feel anxiety even though the situation does not have the feared consequences of the original situation. Because you never accepted, understood, and integrated what might have been dangerous about the original situation, safe similar situations are erroneously perceived as dangerous. You generalize the anxiety for your safety, but this safety mechanism interferes with the flow of yourself because now you get false messages of fear when there is no real danger. As the truth of the hurt behind the fear is accepted,

Figure 1  
Fearing Fear.



An initial hurt that is suppressed can lead to a perpetuating cycle of fear if the secondary hurt is also suppressed.

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the mind becomes able to differentiate between the original situation which caused the fear and similar situations which lack the feared element. You will know better, and your fears will diminish.

By denying the hurt that causes fear, you can become anxious about getting anxious. Having fear does not feel good—it hurts. When you fear being hurt from having

fear, fearing fear results (see figure 1). However, this can only result when you are not facing a hurt. This happens in the following way. When you are not facing a hurt, it is feared; consequently, you are hurt anew from living in fear. As you deny this secondary hurt, you create a fear of it so that you establish a fear of fear. The fear of fear feeds off of itself and can escalate into the form of panic attacks. The fear of fear cannot continue to exist if you accept the initial anxiety by accepting its message and growing from it, thus allowing the anxiety to leave. When you don't permit this, you have everything to fear.

You need to face the original hurt that lies behind the initial anxiety. This way you gain control over the anxiety and won't have to fear it. Once you face the original hurt, it no longer makes sense to be afraid of being afraid, whereas before, it made complete sense. You will know that you are causing the fear so have control over it, being able to stop it. If you have control over anxiety, it is not that scary. What is scary is when you are anxious and feel like you have *no control*.

If you have suppressed hurt causing you to live in fear for years, anxiety may come up time and time again. Integration of the long standing fear is necessary through acceptance and acknowledgment of the truth behind it *every time it comes up*. This frees yourself to flow rather than get stuck on trying to push the anxiety away. At some point in your life you will have repeated the truth and accepted it so well, it will have integrated into yourself. You will have grown from it. At this point, when the fear does infrequently come up, it will last only for a moment as you quickly accept its message, continue to grow, and move on to the next moment without the anxiety.

-For any hurt that you uncover in the following questions, also answer questions in the “Hurt as Guidance” section.

-List everything you have feared during this last week. (It may help to look at your journal.) Acknowledge the anxiety, and accept it as a message from your soul.

-Is there any pattern or commonality in what you fear?

-What might you lose, or in what way might you feel hurt?

-If each anxious feeling could speak, what would it say to you? Is there a general message they all speak?

-If any of the messages are derogatory or self-disrespecting, they are not the true messages; they are simply old hurt speaking. The messages from your heart are good: believe in yourself, accept yourself, you still need to accept an old hurt, be your best, validate yourself by yourself, etcetera. What are the true messages your heart is lovingly trying to give you?

-Is there real danger in each?

-Does the danger roughly match with the level of anxiety felt?

-If it doesn't match, your anxiety is probably coming mostly from an unmoored hurt of your past. What is that hurt?

-If you are afraid of most everything:

-What situation do you remember having the fear in first?

-How did you deal with the anxiety?

-Were you able to listen to the sign?

-Why or why not?

-What hurt might you have experienced?

-Have there been previous situations before this one that were similar in some way?

-Is it possible that one of these situations is when the original fear occurred?

-What else makes you anxious, and when else do you get anxious?

-What are these instances trying to tell you?

-If you fear being afraid or panicky:

-What hurt are you not facing?

-What are you afraid of losing? Why?

-What is so scary about feeling the hurt that is worse than your current condition of living in anxiety?

-Do you feel you will lose yourself and drown in the pain?

-You cannot lose yourself by feeling it, for it is yourself. Embrace it. You have already lost yourself by pushing your pain away. Feel the hurt despite the fear, for your fear of it is doing more damage than the hurt could ever do, despite its uncomfortable feel.

### *Guidance from Other Feelings*

Feeling jealous means you are feeling bad about yourself. You feel that you are not worth much and that someone else could be better than you or replace you. This feeling tells you that you need to accept and love yourself more. You cannot be replaced by someone else.

If people you love think someone else will treat them better and can replace you, you have no control over that. Even if you did have control over their thoughts, these people would not be right for you. Allow them to be free to be themselves; you do yourself a disservice to try differently. Their choice is not a reflection on your worth as a person.

If these people love you, you had better start feeling better about yourself. Your loved ones can sense your low self-worth and do not like it. It pushes them away. Change it. Accept the message of your jealous feelings so that you can grow. What are you doing that is making you feel bad about yourself? You are your worst enemy here, not other competition. If you feel good about yourself, you will be around for people who love you. Otherwise, you will not be being, you will be hated by yourself, people will have

difficulty loving you, and you will feel as though you need their love even more desperately. You need your love.

-What hurt are you holding in that is creating anger directed at yourself, making you feel bad about yourself? (For each hurt, answer questions in “Hurt as Guidance” section.)

If you feel envious, you need to be more of yourself in your life. You do not have enough of yourself, so you have an envious feeling, desiring more of something or someone. If you had all of yourself, you would not have this envy. The feeling tells you to look more honestly at yourself to find out what more of yourself (not material things) that you want in your life.

-What more do you need of yourself in your life?

-What should you be doing?

-What should you be giving?

-How should you be being?

-Why are you not doing the above answers?

When you feel relieved, you are telling yourself that something which has been constricting yourself has been removed. You are freer. Your energy and spirit are less constrained. When you feel embarrassed, you are not wanting to show some part of yourself to someone. This is okay. You do not need to show all of yourself to everyone,

just yourself. When you feel interested, you have something to gain from the experience. When you feel curious, you want to explore. When you feel . . . (you finish the rest). There is a master of yourself inside you.

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Other people are not you for good reason. They need their own self to guide them through their different world. And you need your self (feelings) to guide you through yours. Let that be validation enough for your feelings. Keep your feelings. They are yours for good reason.

## THE WAKE OF YOURSELF

To be yourself, you need to accept leadership of that self. This means you need to be the person who is sensitive to yourself and who takes action for yourself in your best interests. You need to create your own wake in your life. This wake is raised by your unique feelings. Your work and relationships are all part of the wake you have made. Create what you need and want for yourself; don't wait for someone else to do that for you. Don't make someone else more powerful for your life than yourself, or you are giving up your freedom and deserve your imprisonment. Make your life the place where others have the chance to use the momentum of your wake, rather than you just relying on other people's wakes to bob you along.

If you would rather not be playing bingo on Saturday nights with the neighborhood girls, create your own life. Your life is telling you that bingo on Saturday nights is not the wake of your life. Find out what you love. Get into your favorite hobbies, spend time in a club which you have been wanting to join, or form your own club. It's okay to use another person's wake if it is also part of your own, but when you just ride his wake because you have nothing else to do, you need to look deeper inside yourself. You need to find out what you are telling yourself to do in your life before your life is over. Some projects will take an entire lifetime just to get the momentum of them into motion. You had better find out what you want in life now, and get going at your life projects.

It is never too late to at least start on something you love. You may want the world to be without war. This is a process that will probably take more than one lifetime to achieve, but you can be the part of humanity which begins where other people have left off to help effect a closer realization of the goal. You must play your part in life; that is why you are here. If that part is something you cannot become due to a late start (such as becoming a ballet dancer), you can at least start on something closely related to it. Perhaps you may choose to teach children ballet. Choose something that will bring you as close to the thing you love in life as possible. That is your goal.

In actuality, we never achieve what we want in life; we only strive to bring what we want closer to existence. If in one moment we achieve what we had wanted from a previous moment, our hearts already call for something more. This is because as we grow, our goals also grow.

You have to do whatever you can in order to make your life worth living. This is your life, and you need to come as close as possible to your heart's desire to give back to the world the most you possibly can. People who don't like the work that you love cannot possibly give the way you can because they lack the motivation that you possess. Their passion and attention of detail cannot be as great as yours. You can breathe your work, while they must suffocate in it.

You have an advantage over other people in doing what you love. Be kind to others and yourself by taking that advantage. Other people will sense your love for the work and will be pleased that they are being served by someone who has passion. They can trust you more, benefit from the higher quality of output you provide, and enjoy the smile on your face and the happiness you exude as you do your work. Your employer will also take note of your passion, especially since he will sense that you are doing his work for yourself. Since you satisfy yourself by doing the employer's work, he feels less of a desperation and burden placed upon him. This means he will feel freer, and also feel freer to give back to you.

You might perceive your passion as something insignificant to the world, but you have no idea of the repercussions the work creates in you or other people. Your first project may lead to another which exceeds the potential of the first but which could never have manifested until the work on the first was enacted. Your endeavors, of which you might believe insignificant, may be the necessary ingredient other people need to develop their projects. The important point is that you are as close as possible to the thing you love. Therein lies the importance of the endeavor. Your gift from your heart's desire is exactly the most important gift you give to humanity.

Start doing what you were meant to be doing. Follow your dreams until they become real; then dream more and follow those dreams. Continue this process; that is what life is all about. The secret to life is in your dreams, your heart's deep desires. Anyone who tells you differently is not following his dreams or not paying close enough attention to know what it is all about.

People who are not following their dreams are drifting into other people's dreams. They are clogging up places where true dreamers would like to be, making it harder for the true dreamers to give their gifts to the world. People who don't follow their dreams, the dreamless, fill up their positions with emptiness, whereas people with passion could fill the positions with fullness coming straight from their heart. True dreamers pump energy into their work, which dreamless people couldn't possibly do because their heart is not in "their" work. Dreamless people are just trying to get by and are afraid to risk for their dreams. Don't let this happen to you. If it does, you will fear getting older because you will not be living the life you should be living. Your fear of death will grow because you are losing your time, your self, your dreams, and your heart.

You are not meant to lose your heart; you are meant to keep it. If you choose differently, you deserve all the sadness, emptiness, and desperation which comes with that choice. These negative feelings are your hearts communications to you that you are betraying it. You deserve to hear it out. It is yours and only you are going to hear it. Only you are making the choices to betray it. Only you can do something to love, listen to, and express it rather than ignore and repress it. Only you feel your feelings. Only you are yourself. Don't just try to get through your life, you will not like what's at the end. Your

life is in the process of your life. Make it happen the way your heart tells you it wants to happen.

-What wake are you riding that is not yours?

-Give your reasons for riding it.

-What wake is yours?

-Give your reasons for riding it.

-Do the above wakes help push in the direction of your dreams?

-What dream are you not following that you should be?

-Why are you holding back?

-List the positives of not following your dream.

-Do you get to live in more safety with less risks?

-What risks do you get to avoid?

-What safety do you get?

-Are they worth not living your life?

-List the negatives of not following your dream.

-List the positives of following your dream.

-Is there anything about the positives you are afraid of?

-If not, explain why you are not following your dream?

-If you listed any excuses, ask yourself if they are they really true? How do you know? have you tested them out?

-When will you give yourself permission to follow your dream?

-Some people think their dream will not happen unless they have more money. Money is only other people's services and work from their own dreams. Dreams sometimes have difficult paths, and lack of money can sometimes be a part of a difficult path. To give up your dream is your choice. Name another excuse besides money for the reason you are not on the road to following your dream.

-Now, if it is truly your dream, stop giving excuses. You are standing in the way of yourself.

## **FLOW OF SELF**

Your self, due to the factor of time, is in a continual flowing manifestation of itself. You reach it through accepting it in each present moment, and yet you will never be done or have finally become yourself once and for all. The flowing process of being yourself ceases when you do not allow yourself to exist in the moment. This break occurs even if you have been yourself completely in each moment up until the moment you stop being yourself.

When you haven't been being yourself for a long period of time, then begin accepting some of yourself, you experience more growth than you've had in years. This dramatic development may foster someone to reconsider using denial again, "Wow, that

is it. I've finally grown! Now I can sit back, relax, and do what is most familiar to me, *just like I used to do.*" This is not true. Now that you have grown a little, you need to continue in being that honest, open, vulnerable self. Otherwise, you just repeat your old, non-growth, self-denying patterns, getting yourself into trouble again.

You must continually risk being yourself to keep the flow of yourself going. That makes sense—right? It requires that you risk rejection. This may sound scary, but it is a risk much lower than choosing not to be yourself. Whenever you choose not to be yourself, not only are you rejecting yourself, but also you are taking away the chance for other people to accept you. You are not being you. By rejecting yourself, other people do not have yourself around to accept. Nobody accepts you when you reject yourself, so it is at this time that you feel you need everyone's acceptance the most. If you accept yourself enough to let it manifest, at least one person, the most important person, will be on your side: *you*.

The risk of being yourself also requires that you risk making mistakes. Being too hard on yourself or expecting perfection is letting yourself down. Your self needs to make mistakes to continue its process of evolving. You are making exactly the mistakes you are supposed to be making in order to be fully evolving. Stop trying to be perfect; it stops the flow of yourself. The only time you are perfect is when you are making the mistakes you should be making. It is at this time that you are living your life perfectly. Accept that! If you don't, you are the cause of your imperfections. The reason you expect and seek perfection so desperately is because you are not perfectly being. You simply need to acknowledge your mistakes and be there with your feelings to help yourself grow. If you are self-punitive or hard on yourself, you get in the way of yourself making

other mistakes and risks *it needs* to make. This slows down the evolution of yourself. The mistakes are blessings; welcome them; they make you human.

You need to accept the pain of a mistake, then integrate a growth or lesson into yourself as you release the pain. If you deny or hold on to the pain, you will have made the mistake without learning what you needed to have learned. This will increase the likelihood of continuing making the same mistake again and again. Whereas if you integrate and release the pain, you will be less likely to repeat the mistake because you will have learned. And even if you do make the mistake again, as you integrate the pain with each subsequent repetition of the mistake, you gain growth to reduce the likelihood of another repetition.

When you use *ought's* or *should's* on yourself, you reject yourself, stopping its flow. These words do not belong in your life. Your self is rejected by judging it using a standard of which you are not. You should not be acting or making mistakes any other way than the way you already are doing it. You are exactly in the right place. The lessons and growth you need are right there. When you tell yourself that you should have done this or ought to have done that, you do not accept the person you were in that moment. You do not accept the weakness you displayed, and try to *should* it away rather than grow from it through acceptance. You need to accept the actions you made in order to grow into the person you need most in that moment. The actions you had taken were necessary for you to be the person you are now, seeing things with more clarity. Accept only one should in your life, "I should be myself."

Perhaps you are concerned that if you allow yourself to be, you may present yourself in such a way which you wouldn't be able to accept (maybe through being

overly angry). Using this rational, you place yourself in a catch-22 situation. You already do not accept yourself when you need to stop yourself from flowing on its natural course. Therefore, you might as well let yourself flow, so at least you wind up with the chance to accept it as it comes out. If you find yourself rejecting yourself anyway, *accept that flow* of how you feel about your self as it comes up. "Wow, I'm really feeling bad about how I spoke up for myself with my friend. I'm feeling angry at myself for feeling so angry when I spoke up. Boy, I'm glad I'm accepting these feelings now." You acknowledge this not to fuel anger towards yourself but to be with the self that currently manifests itself. Otherwise, you create a double rejection: first, you reject yourself for acting angry, then you reject your feelings of anger from acting so angry. You cannot win in this way.

Begin the process of self-acceptance now. That's right—it is a process. This means you cannot just accept yourself once, but need to accept yourself on a moment to moment basis. Be with the process of yourself. It is ever-changing and ever-growing. Allow this process to flow, and it will flow around blocks and dams appearing to be in the way of your flowing self. The blocks and dams are simply part of your suppression. Embrace all of yourself.

The truth of your feelings is necessary for growth. You are your feelings, so if you deny your feelings, you are not allowing growth to occur, for you are not being around to grow. The growth you most need to have is from the feeling you most want to deny. This part of you calls out for growth and comes into your life over and over again for that very reason. If you try to push it away, you will always fail. You will fail because you *need* to grow in the way that you are pushing away. It belongs where it is! As you deny the importance of this growth, its importance can make itself known in a variety of

other ways (headaches, stomach aches, high blood pressure, bleeding nose, asthma, disease, anger, arrhythmia, sleeplessness, lowered immune system, addictions, weight loss or gain, etcetera).

You need to allow positive feelings to flow just as you do negative ones. “Take time to smell the roses.” Enjoy the good times because they will not last. Pain and hurt will come again, but do not let that spoil your good times. Allow it to motivate you to fully embrace the good times. When hurt and bad feelings do come, read the message which comes with them as quickly as you can, learning and growing from them; thus you can be most swift in releasing them. Living in pure suffering is not growth. Just as your muscles need time to be stretched, massaged, rested, and nurtured to grow, so do you. Nature has a balance in it—trust in that balance, so you can live in balance. Living on either extreme is not living. Though if you have been denying your pain, you may wind up more on the pain side of the balance to make up for the time spent avoiding pain.

Some people appear to need to spend time stopping the flow of themselves. If you need to suppress yourself in order to see that folly, so be it. Because you are unsure of the necessity of being yourself, you need to build a case for the value of being yourself. For this reason you may establish flagrant evidence of the immorality of not being yourself before feeling justified being yourself. Trust me and yourself now, and just know that to be yourself is always right. You have lost this perspective because you have lost yourself.

When you deny the painful feelings that come from not being yourself, you put yourself into a difficult position. Not only are you denying some part of yourself, but also you are denying the hurt from denying that part of yourself. This adds hurt to your hurt. Your feelings do not exist to motivate you to be yourself, and the denial of them can only

be seen through physical symptoms and imposing problems occurring in your life. If your self-denial is so strong that even the symptoms and problems from it don't break it, you may live out only a partial life, never reaching your potential. Is that your fate? If it is your fate, why are you destined to be so hard on yourself? Maybe your feelings of anger from all the denial are being directed back at yourself, punishing yourself through continuing not to be yourself. Oh well, if that is how you want to live out your life, it is your choice. But if there is any part of you which does not want this, you are better than being powerless, resigning yourself to the fate of living your life not to live your life. Listen to how silly that last statement just sounded: living your life not to live your life. There is a reason for the silliness of it.

Although it is important to be yourself, it is impossible to be yourself in every present moment. If it were possible, we might never gain an understanding of the value of being ourselves because we may never experience enough pain from losing ourselves. When you inevitably find yourself not being yourself, you need to accept that you're not being yourself. This process allows you to be yourself in the moment you find yourself not being yourself. If you embrace your flaws, you have a stepping stone from which you can grow from. Knowing you have not been being yourself is the necessary truth and momentum you need to step from to reach free self-expression. This awareness may momentarily feel bad, which is appropriate because you are feeling the loss of your self.

Even though you may not have been your entire self in the past, you still can, at any moment, choose to allow your present self to begin existing. This means you will have to feel feelings you have been hiding from. You will have to finally understand and integrate them, creating a new understanding of yourself. If you do choose to continue

suppressing some pain, you are still suppressing a part of yourself. You are not being yourself in the moment because yourself is still being pushed down and is living in the past.

It is when a part of you is living in the past and is trying to express itself in the present that you are perceived by other people as "crazy" or "off." People don't understand your past, and when they see the present filled up with your past, they see you as acting inappropriate to the present. Since they are not you and were not in your past as you were, they don't understand the expression of the old feelings in the present. It appears as if the expression comes from nowhere, hence "crazy." They don't understand that it is a real feeling which is finally being allowed expression. People expect you to continually express your self as it evolves, not keep parts inside until the parts are out of context and then express those parts.

If you kept your feelings suppressed in hopes that they will just fade away, you have resigned to slowly fading yourself away. I knew someone like this who had recurring nightmares of himself sinking down into his bed, as if falling into a hole. The dream symbolized feelings he was having with what was happening to his self in his life. You may acquire a sense of fading self from the accumulative effect of not

TABLE 1.  
Lost Growth.

Moments passed----->

M <sub>1</sub>	M <sub>2</sub>	M <sub>3</sub>	M <sub>4</sub>	M <sub>5</sub>	M <sub>6</sub>	M <sub>7</sub>	M <sub>8</sub>	M <sub>9</sub>	M <sub>10</sub>	M <sub>11</sub>
G <sub>1</sub>	G <sub>2</sub>	G <sub>3</sub>	G <sub>4</sub>	G <sub>5</sub>	G <sub>6</sub>	G <sub>7</sub>	G <sub>8</sub>	G <sub>9</sub>	G <sub>10</sub>	G <sub>11</sub>
S <sub>1</sub>	G <sub>1</sub>	G <sub>2</sub>	G <sub>3</sub>	G <sub>4</sub>	G <sub>5</sub>	G <sub>6</sub>	G <sub>7</sub>	G <sub>8</sub>	G <sub>9</sub>	G <sub>10</sub>
S <sub>1</sub>	S <sub>2</sub>	G <sub>1</sub>	G <sub>2</sub>	G <sub>3</sub>	G <sub>4</sub>	G <sub>5</sub>	G <sub>6</sub>	G <sub>7</sub>	G <sub>8</sub>	G <sub>9</sub>
S <sub>1</sub>	S <sub>2</sub>	S <sub>3</sub>	G <sub>1</sub>	G <sub>2</sub>	G <sub>3</sub>	G <sub>4</sub>	G <sub>5</sub>	G <sub>6</sub>	G <sub>7</sub>	G <sub>8</sub>
S <sub>1</sub>	S <sub>2</sub>	S <sub>3</sub>	S <sub>4</sub>	G <sub>1</sub>	G <sub>2</sub>	G <sub>3</sub>	G <sub>4</sub>	G <sub>5</sub>	G <sub>6</sub>	G <sub>7</sub>
S <sub>1</sub>	S <sub>2</sub>	S <sub>3</sub>	S <sub>4</sub>	S <sub>5</sub>	G <sub>1</sub>	G <sub>2</sub>	G <sub>3</sub>	G <sub>4</sub>	G <sub>5</sub>	G <sub>6</sub>
S <sub>1</sub>	S <sub>2</sub>	S <sub>3</sub>	S <sub>4</sub>	S <sub>5</sub>	S <sub>6</sub>	G <sub>1</sub>	G <sub>2</sub>	G <sub>3</sub>	G <sub>4</sub>	G <sub>5</sub>

“G” stands for growth, with each increasing number dependent on the last. “S” stands for suppression, with each increasing number representing the moments spent in suppression. Notice if you spend most of your moments suppressing your feelings you will have ended up at a lower level of growth than if you do not.

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growing in each of many moments; this time lost equates to a large loss of self-existence and growth.

When you take away growth of yourself from one moment, you use up that moment to suppress rather than express yourself. This means that the moment you could have been growing in is gone. If you decide to face yourself in the next moment, that moment is expended with growth which was supposed to have happened in the last. This expended moment had the potential of growth that could have built upon the growth which was supposed to have occurred in the last moment (see table 1). When a moment you are not being yourself is lost, that moment for yourself will never come again.

To regain yourself, take courage. Start to risk feeling a little more, and you will gain motivation and courage. Granted, it may be especially hard to begin sticking up for being yourself from feeling unworthy or bad, but if you allow these shameful feelings to be stronger than your feelings to do better for yourself, the destructive cycle of not being yourself continues. The cycle must be broken, and as you are able to express yourself and gain support from yourself through the expression, you begin to gain yourself back.

You need to believe in your heart by understanding feelings are always appropriate to have, even though they may be old. Your shameful feelings are good, but you need to see them for what they truly are, not what they appear to be. They are old guilt, and guilt is anger turned inwards towards yourself.<sup>11</sup> It may help to have your feelings validated through seeing a therapist to help you understand and support your feelings as justifiable, realistic, and good. This is only to help you believe in your feelings, so you are free again to express your self without blockage in its flow.

-Are there times when you feel as though you've reached being yourself in the moment?

-What is common amongst these times?

-What allowed you to be in these states?

-When do you find yourself rejecting yourself?

-Why? What good are you trying to accomplish?

-Is it working?

-For how long has it or has it not been working?

-How is it or how is it not working?

-Is your last answer really true?

-Explain how it is true.

-Is it working for yourself?

-How is this or how is this not working for you?

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<sup>11</sup> David Viscott, *The Language of Feelings*, (New York: Pocket Books, 1976).

-If this is not working for you, then  
for whom?

-List 5 ways you think you are perfect.

-List 5 ways you think you are not perfect. (If you cannot think of any, add that as  
the first one on your list.)

-How do you reject yourself?

-What lie do you embrace to be able to reject your feelings?

-What truth do you push away?

-Are you afraid of your anger? Are you afraid of others' anger?

-Do you need to spend time not being you?

-How do know?

-What part of you is living in the past?

-What do you need to do to integrate that part into your present  
self?

-Did you have any feelings that were unacceptable to own while growing up?

-Have you ever accepted them?

-Can you accept present feelings that are similar to the ones that were  
unacceptable?

-List the consequences you have personally experienced from suppressing  
your feelings.

-In what ways do you find yourself most needing to grow?

-Why have you not been growing in these ways?

-List the ways you believe in your heart.

-How can you begin believing in it more?

-What little things have you done in the past that have helped your belief?

-Is there some expression of yourself in these things?

-What things have you done that have not helped?

-Is there some old hurt and anger which you are reminded of in these situations?

-If yes, commit yourself to express and release these feelings.

### *Following the Flow of Yourself*

Feelings act like a flowing river. When a river is dammed, its flow stops. If continually dammed, the water gets deeper, putting more pressure on the dam, rising to eventually overflow the dam. When you get hurt, the hurt intensifies if not allowed expression. You feel more stressed, and eventually anger from the hurt leaks out onto yourself and the world. Other people, including the people you love most, suffer from the anger. To express hurt as it occurs limits its damage, duration, and impact in your life.

What should you do if when you express your hurt, the other person hurts you for expressing it? Your feelings are a flowing process of yourself. You cannot stop your existence just because someone else does not like it. You may get hurt again, but that is simply a new manifestation of yourself growing and flowing. Each hurt tells you

something about the other person, yourself, and the relationship you share with him. Allow these truths to come forth to guide the process of your life.

When you find that the person who hurt you does not care, you can speak this truth and move on with the process of your self-existence. Now that you know he does not care, you have important information, and you need to ask yourself if you want to continue being around someone who doesn't care for you. If the person is family, why haven't you limited your relationship with him? If he is not family, why did you form a relationship with someone who does not care for you? Did you have some clue he was an uncaring person? Why or why not? How can you get a clue so that you can avoid this situation in the future?

Living in the present simply means allowing your feelings to come forth one after the other. This establishes a true relationship between you and the present. Life is ever-changing and ever-flowing, as is the world and universe around you. For this reason, you remaining static does not make sense; you are part of the ever-growing universe. In order to harmonize with an ever-changing environment, a growing person needs to exist so that he can adapt. Time does not stop, so why should you?

When you express yourself, you become part of the changing universe, and other people around you will need to adapt, or they will be left behind. Because you have already grown and are ready for the next moment of growth, if they cannot see their potential for self-growth in the truth you provide, they are left behind.

This transient way of living may be scary at first, especially if you have covered up some truths or feelings to make your life seem better. Being yourself means you are being real, causing false parts of your life to continually fall to the wayside—where they

belong. This does not offer the comfort of inertness to cover you, but what can remain comforting is growth and belief in your ability to handle being open from gaining practice at it.

Growth can also be scary because you may grow away from people with whom you used to feel close. If you are anxious over this, you have already grown away from them, and you are just stopping yourself from acknowledging it. Perhaps you are scared of being alone. You are already alone.

- Are there some people in your life you have difficulty expressing hurt to?
  - Why? What does that tell you about them, yourself, and the relationship?
  - How is the flow of yourself affected?
- How are you expressing hurt to limit the damage it has in your life?
  - Is this way of expressing working for you?
  - What needs to be different? (Something almost always can be done differently so that you can be more free of hurt. Make sure you answer this as something you can do, not what others can.)
- How are you adapting or not adapting to your ever-changing environment?
  - What can you do to make more of a symbiosis between the two?
- Is there anything scary about yourself growing?
  - If so:
    - What is scary?
    - What can you do to make it less scary?

-If your fear could speak to you telling you a valuable message, what would it be?

-Why?

-Does your fear truly want you to stop growing or to face itself?

-If not:

-Why so confident?

-Have you gotten into trouble in the past because you have not had any anxiety to guide your self-growth?

-What does being alone mean to you? Why does it mean this to you?

### *Being with the Flow of Yourself*

You cannot force yourself to be. To try would be like trying to capture a waterfall in the palm of your hand. You simply have to allow it to flow onto your hand, as it passes from your hand to the ground in an ever-changing stream. As it touches your hand you can feel its pressure, temperature, and texture. You must allow yourself and the water simply to exist. Sometimes your water will feel hot; sometimes it will feel cold. If you feel you need to try to be yourself, what is making it so hard simply to just be? Acknowledge your self and be. Do you try to be someone you want to be at a certain moment instead of being yourself? Your self is just the self which calls for existence in that moment.

Stop trying to control yourself. You will fail. Your self is not supposed to be controlled. The feeling that you need to control it is a lie. A lie which has grown because you started to try controlling your feelings at one time and now have created a large dam which holds many feelings. This dam appears as though you must control it, or it will cause a flood. You may be able to gain momentary control over your feelings, but they will eventually win over you because they are you. Haven't you guessed yet that your feelings are uncontrollable? They exist, period. You are only in control of their expression. Allow your *self* to succeed by being yourself: feeling your feelings, integrating them through accepting and expressing them, then allowing them to leave your "hand." There is no other way; you cannot go around your feelings; you must go through them.

If your self wants to feel unhappy and you are trying not to feel that, why are you fighting yourself? When you push your unhappiness away, you push yourself away. Let yourself be unhappy. Then when you are tired of it, and your self naturally calls for happiness, allow yourself to be happy! Let yourself go through the unhappiness. Just feeling that unhappiness is motivation to be happy in the next moment, and you will be being yourself, not fighting yourself. If you fight the unhappiness, in the next moment when you were supposed to have been happy, you will feel as if you need to be unhappy because you have cheated yourself out of that feeling during the previous moment. You will, as a result, have two moments in which you are truly unhappy rather than just one. Your free expression of whatever your self calls for is your growth. What more could you ask for? All your moments will not be glorious, peak experiences. In fact few will be that

way. You need the average and less than average moments to define and make good the beautiful ones.

If you find yourself out of energy for something you usually have tremendous love and energy for, allow yourself to give its true expression. If it wants a break, give it one, or do something else which you feel like doing in that moment. Artists know that you cannot force creativity and expect it to be your best work or a true expression from your heart. If it is not of what you are feeling, it is cheapened, for it is not your work. You are the artist of being yourself.

Sometimes you might place yourself in situations where you need to direct the flow of yourself for a brief time. An example would be when your heart is not in your work, yet you need to work to meet a deadline. If this work is important to you (by satisfying other feelings), you should complete it to meet the deadline. For whatever reason, you have placed yourself in a situation where you have no control of the deadline, so stop feeling sorry for yourself and finish the work. This perspective allows you to be yourself and work while satisfying more important feelings besides the one nagging you to do something else. You can still allow yourself to acknowledge that nagging feeling, and you can make a promise to yourself to fulfill it as soon as you get a chance.

-When do you find yourself forcing yourself?

-What is going on inside you to bring out this need?

-What can you do to quench this need?

-When do you find yourself being able to freely be yourself?

-What is going on for this to happen so easily at these times?

-What can you do to bring this out during times that are more difficult to freely be yourself?

-Do you have a deadline for something?

-Is it really a deadline?

-What would happen if you did not meet it?

-If you have other feelings desiring expression, why did you allow yourself to be in this kind of a situation?

## **GROWING OLD**

Aging doesn't make us find ourselves, but as we get older it becomes harder for us to hide from ourselves. We have spent so much time with ourselves, even with parts we have been trying to hide, that it becomes more difficult denying ourselves. The parts which have grown gain distance from the parts which have not, tugging on the ungrown ones. Because reality has been constantly thrown at us, our walls of denial erode, causing our hiding places to become more difficult to sustain. Over the years, the people and situations multiply that have challenged our defenses with the truth. Becoming harder to fray away are the hurts and losses that have gathered upon us from our steadfast denial. From holding on to our denial for years, having refused the growth we needed, the repetition of pain from related, unchanging problems weighs heavily. The hurt from having denied our feelings winds up to be much greater than had we been open and vulnerable to each hurt in the moment each occurred. Nature slaps us in the face for hiding.

Time brings out the weak parts of ourselves which we hide from. Early in our lives these weaknesses may not be so obvious or debilitating, for we have less responsibility. Because we don't need to accomplish much, we can get by without addressing our weaknesses. As we become more responsible for our lives, while we hold others less responsible, our weaknesses show themselves to greater degrees. Because we attempt to exert more from ourselves, our weaknesses become more evident. We find we need more of ourselves, including the weak parts. This discovery is the opportunity for growth to be able to carry more responsibility.

When we get older and desire giving something back to humanity, if we have remained closed to our weaknesses, we find we are not able to give as much as we would like.

If we face our weak parts, we find we can use them and not just be used by them. We are able to meet greater challenges because more of ourselves exists, giving us the opportunity to grow into even stronger selves. Truth, the nourishment which makes souls grow, shines on our weak parts. Our failure to grow stronger occurs when we push weaknesses away, not accepting them and not dealing with them. If we don't want to deal with ourselves, why should life want to deal with us? Becoming more intimate with ourselves helps us grow and subsequently succeed in our lives.

Wisdom comes from facing pain, being ourselves in the most moments possible over our lifetime. The eighty-year-old man who has hidden from his feelings during most of his life experiences will not be as wise as the twenty-year-old woman who has been there with her feelings through all her twenty years. The eighty-year-old is really a scared

child from his choices that substantially limited his growth, while the twenty-year-old has grown to an extremely rich extent from the few years she truly experienced.

Wise people embrace their pain so grow from it. Ignorant people push their pain away, continuing not to learn from it, pushing their growth away, pushing their wisdom away, pushing themselves away. The saying, “No pain, no gain,” holds truth. This does not mean that wise people go out and find pain; they are simply open to the pain and joy which comes into their life. There is already enough pain in our lives not to need to seek out more; just be open to it all.

Even when a person in denial begins honestly dealing with his feelings, he does not grow as wise as if he had been honest when his feelings were occurring. From the time he has spent in denial, he has held in so many feelings and opportunities to grow that he cannot catch up. This permanent loss of potential growth is mostly due to the loss of time (see table 1). He can still grow, and grow wiser than perhaps most people, but his potential is reduced. His potential is further reduced from memory loss and distortions from having suppressed the feelings for so long, making it difficult to integrate the old feelings to the greatest extent possible.

We all are on a time-clock called life. You have no time to lose, so get busy feeling. You are growing older by the day.

-Do friends whom you see only once in a great while seem to have grown wiser than you?

-Why do you think that is true?

-Where do you think their old weaknesses went?

-Do you feel less wise than you should be?

-Why do you think this is so?

-Are you where you want to be in your life right now?

-Why or why not?

-What feelings have you been denying, and from what experiences?

-What growth could you get from facing such feelings?

-Why have you not faced such growth?

-What did you get out of remaining immature and childlike? (You got something out of it, otherwise you would not have done it. Write your thoughts down.)

-If you will not find something, why are you choosing not to take responsibility and grow now?

-What weaknesses of yourself do you find difficult to acknowledge?

-Without looking at your answers to the last question, do you remember all the weaknesses you listed? If you do remember them all, go back and give yourself just one more chance to reach deeper for weaknesses. (The failure to remember is from them truly being difficult weaknesses to acknowledge.)

-How can you be more truthful to yourself in acknowledging your weaknesses on a day to day basis?

-How can you put the last answer into practice?

-List how nature has “slapped you in the face” through your denial of your weaknesses and feelings. (If you cannot think of any, put that as first on the list.)

- Acknowledge to yourself outloud three weaknesses.
  - How does it feel to acknowledge them?
  - Notice how you feel later in the day.
  - Acknowledge them every time you see them come up during the day.
- In what ways have you become more yourself and responsible since ten years ago?
  - What has helped this process?
  - What can you do in the next ten years to help further this process?

## **BEING DIFFERENTLY ABLED**

Whatever physical handicap you might have, if it is mostly what you focus on and think about, you are making it bigger than it needs to be. Sure, there are times when you need to make certain accommodations for yourself and give explanations to people, but that does not mean you have to have the disability in your soul all day long. It is good to set boundaries with your disability, just like people set boundaries with work. Generally, people do not bring their work into their personal life, thinking about work all day long. It is most healthy and functional to separate the two so that you can have a maximum amount of energy for each. This is also true with your disability. You need to attend to it to get by (like work), but not bring it into your whole life.

If you find yourself always thinking and talking about your disability, ask yourself if you are still feeling hurt over the loss. Mourn the loss and move on! Come to a

greater acceptance of your present condition, getting on with the rest of your life and becoming more of the self you truly are. Your handicap is not your self. Your self still exists in that body with whatever limitations the body has acquired. Find the next step in your life, and take courage to make it.

When you focus on your handicap just because you see other people focusing on it, you stop yourself. You are too much of them and not enough of you. Other people need to check out your predicament because they are curious. That is human nature; accept it. If you allow other people's laughter and misunderstanding to hurt you, then you allow their ignorance to define who you are. Get over it! Expect them to laugh and misunderstand. Other people do not have your growth to understand your position in life, so stop expecting that from them. You are alone in that growth, just as everyone is alone in his own growth and self.

In seeing your handicap, people are reminded of their aloneness, weaknesses, and peculiarities, which may not be as overt as yours. They need to laugh because they feel anxious from being reminded of such things. They hate their hidden peculiarities and weaknesses, and they are relieved when their defenses quickly cover up what your handicap reminded them of. It is their weak selves that make them laugh; you have nothing to do with it! Stop seeing yourself as so important and at the center of attention. They are the ones they are laughing at, and they are the center of attention. A person who is strong enough to admit his weaknesses will not laugh at yours. The weak people do not want to be reminded of their weaknesses. Aren't you blessed to have your disability disable some of your denial. Be strong in your self, and if nothing else, give others an opportunity to see that it is possible for them to be strong in their selves too.

Your handicap is the biggest part of your life when you make it the biggest part. At first it is healthy to have the handicap as a big part because you are inundated from learning new ways to cope. But learn them and move on. You don't need legs to progress spiritually, nor to be more of yourself and give your gift to the world. If your handicap has prevented you from giving your old gift, you are already in process of growing into giving back your new gift. You are just as important as anyone else, and you have come a long ways and been through too much just to become a vegetable, decomposing. Find your gift, and you will also find yourself shining bright as ever. Do what you need to do to get to this healthy perspective, because if you do not, you are responsible for killing yourself, not your handicap.

Your pain and unique experience has given you perspective and growth which many people will never acquire. This growth can be incorporated into your gift in such a way which others aren't able to attain. Other people are handicapped in this way! They may be able to do similar things as yourself, but other people will never be able to deliver the gift in the way you deliver it. You are irreplaceable. Even though you may find other people with similar handicaps, you still have your growth that no one else has.

If you permit other people's definition of you to define and limit yourself, you are destroying yourself. Other people do not know you and your limits. They know their limits or the limits they have chosen. And if they were in your position, most of them would be more limited than you can imagine. You are strong and you are you; thank God you are in your place and not them. Allow yourself to find your limits through knowing yourself, not only your handicap.

Just because you have some kind of disability does not mean you are completely out of control. You probably feel a loss of control, but that does not mean you are a powerless person. Do not give up, releasing all power you might be able to wield because you feel so disabled in the moment. Start feeling the healthy parts of yourself, and let these feelings grow. If you are alive, you are more healthy than not. Your body works more than it does not. Cherish the things that still work for you. No matter how disabled you are, you can find people more disabled. No matter how much you have lost, you could have lost more. Stop playing a victim in which you are completely powerless and need to be taken care of for everything. If you don't use it, you'll lose it; so take what power and ability you have and use it. You might be used to dealing with your pain by feeling sorry for yourself, attracting people to do things for you. This lazy habit is your current disability.

You sacrifice yourself by taking away whatever power you may have. Through losing not just a physical part but also deciding to lose yourself, you encourage pity from other people. You help no one by making your pain worse than it is. Feel your pain, accept your condition. Move on to become more of yourself than you were before you lost whatever it was you lost. If you believe it cannot be done, it cannot be done. You can commit yourself to being a loser before you check every possible path to being a winner. If you believe in yourself, your self can grow, period. You never lose when you believe in yourself. How could you lose? You are just on the path of manifesting your ever-growing self. You are guaranteed to lose when you don't believe in yourself. Don't hide away from the next step of growth life has for you.

Remember, your self is manifested through your feelings, and this self can grow despite disabilities. You only feel like you cannot grow because you are wallowing in feelings of loss. You need to mourn these painful feelings. You have much more to give the world than just your handicap. Find it; grow in it; and return it to the world which brings you the gift of life.

-Whom do you know who is more handicapped than yourself?

-Do you feel sad for them?

-Why?

-If you have some physical disabilities, what are they? For each one:

-When have you felt better about it?

-How can you increase this?

-When have you felt worse about it?

-How can you decrease this?

-Do you find too much of a focus to be on a disability of yours?

-What payoff do you get from this focus?

-Are you drawing attention to pain you have not yet mourned?

-What truth do you need to accept to allow this focus to decrease within yourself?

-Do you find yourself having a negative perspective on a disability you have?

-If yes, what hurt are you holding on to, tainting your world so. Are there any other hurts from your past which are similar?

-What needs to happen for you to release the hurt?

## SELF IMPRISONMENT

You choose to imprison yourself. You are the jailer in which your conviction of belief that you are imprisoned is the cell which binds you. The only one who can and must help yourself is you. If you have given up that helping process, you absolutely cannot move or grow. You, the mover, has stopped trying. So regardless of whether it is possible to move or not, you will not be able to move because the essential ingredient necessary for movement is gone: your belief and persistence to find a way.

Is it hard to hear this? Why do you think so? Do you feel out of control? Who else is in control of your spirit? Why do you think other people have control over it? Why have you given other people control over it? Even if you think you have no control, you do have *some* control. This is demonstrated by your belief you have no control, for only a person who has some control could believe they have no control. If you truly had no control, you would not even be arguing the point; you would not understand there exists a point to argue about.

If you are going to give up finding a way out of a “jail cell,” you better be sure you have checked *all* possible exits. You need to try things and exits you have never tried and have not yet dreamed up, and you also need to include all exits existent to humanity throughout time. This process may take a lifetime, if not more, to complete. When you are dead, you can give up. If you think you have already tried all possible ways to get out of your dilemma, you have only tried all possible ways that you have used in the past and that you are currently aware of—which is not saying much. You better check with every

human being and book on the planet before you give up, then wait for other humans to grow who also have potential to help. You cannot possibly have tried everything, even up until the last second of your natural life.

Although you are the only person who has had your string of feelings leading you to where you are today, other people have had their unique strings of feelings which have led them to similar places as yourself. Finding out how other people have moved from similar confinements as yourself can help you.

If you never find out how to escape your prison for yourself, at least leave marks of your attempts in the world so that future generations can use your failures. This way you offer them a stepping stone to find out what you never could, and your life will not have been lived for nothing. That is all you truly owe. Nature's gift of life and all the time and energy invested in you can be paid back by not giving up. To believe otherwise is letting the forces you hate have more power in your life than the forces you love, and you deserve any consequence, pain, or situation which befalls you from those forces. Do you feel troubled by this last comment? There is truth in it, and you will feel troubled if you are still not willing to change. Only you can take yourself out of your prison. If you wish to doubt this, you are choosing to stop your growth, yourself, and your giving potential to humanity.

There is the possibility of a way if you believe, but there is no way if you do not. Think about that, and picture all the people you know in your life who stopped believing in something about themselves that you believed in. Didn't they look silly? Didn't they not see a way out that was clear to you? Wasn't their denial of a way out just as much a part of what was blocking them as their ignorance of a way out? When an infant can no

longer see a toy, he believes it is gone and gives up on it coming back. You know better though, and can take the steps to bring it back, surprising the infant. Stop being an infant, and be the adult you already are. It is faith I am speaking of, and I cannot give it to you; you must take it yourself.

To give up, you have to be somewhat self-centered and narcissistic. Do you think you are so powerful, important, and intelligent that you have tried everything. Give me a break! You are supposed to not be able to see a way out because you are covered up in your difficult situation; you are in the middle of it. If you could see a way out, you would not be in the position you are in. This is the place where you are in and the place where you presently need to grow the most. This is your test. Why do you think humans have these challenges? What would life be if we did not? What growth could come? How could we evolve into something greater?

-If you have not given up on getting out of your personal prison, explain why.

-If you have given up on getting out of your personal prison, explain why.

-Answer the last question so that it is not an excuse and you have responsibility for the choice.

-List all positive consequences you get by having no control.

-Have your parents or other influential people done anything which makes it easier for you to give up than face growth?

-What is that?

-What part do you play in that? Think hard, this is a tough one.

-Have you tried all possible solutions, including ones that you did not want to think of? (I'm not speaking of suicide or homicide. They are not solutions.)

-When else have you given up, and under what circumstances?

-Is there any similarity between when you have given up in the past and now?

-If there is a pattern, what is it? What needs to be changed in you to prevent this from happening again?

## GOALS FOR YOURSELF

What have you been learning which is important to being yourself? Establish some goals to help you be more yourself. These goals can be big, such as increasing your love of yourself, or they can be smaller, such as being aware of at least five of your feelings a day. For each big goal, break it down into derivative goals. For instance, loving yourself might be broken down into exercising four times a week, being aware and accepting of at least five feelings a day, and expressing at least one feeling a day with someone. Make sure each breakdown is small enough that it can be doable within the day it is suppose to done. This way you will not be setting yourself up for failure by having unachievable daily goals, and you will be able to gain a daily sense of progress.

Have your goals stated positively so that you know exactly what you need to do. In other words, make the goals say what you should do, not what you should not do. For

example, “Don’t hold back feelings,” can be changed to, “Allow feelings to surface.” This step is important because it makes the goals clearer. Clearer goals have less of an impediment for achieving them than unclear goals.

Keep track of all your big goals and breakdowns. Write all the small goals on a card, and carry it with you the entire day; also carry a completely blank card with you. In your spare time throughout the day, review your goal-card and monitor your progress. How well are you accomplishing the goals? and what is in the way of uncompleted goals? Cross out goals that have been completed, and think about what needs to be added and removed. On the blank card, set up goals for the following day. This increased presence of goals throughout the day increases your consciousness of exactly what you want completed, helping you to accomplish what you want.

Keep only goals which relate to being yourself on the goal-cards. This helps make the cards special, more so than your grocery list. If your goals are revered by you, they are more likely to be completed.

Every few days, at night or in the morning, review the big goals which are not on your daily goal-cards. Does anything else need to be added to that list or to the following daily goal-card? Do some of the big goals need to be changed? Each week rate yourself on a scale of one to ten on how well you have been completing your goals for that week. If you find you want to improve the number of goals you complete, one of your new daily goals may be to complete three more of your daily goals than you had been completing.

-What goals have you had in the past which you completed?

-What helped you to be able to complete them?

-What goals have you had in the past which you did not complete?

-What was in the way of completing them?

## PART II

# YOURSELF AND SIGNIFICANT OTHERS

(WHEN ASKED, “WHAT IS A FRIEND?”) ANOTHER I  
—Zeno (335-263 B.C.)<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> from Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, bk. VII, sec. 23.

## SELF-BOUNDARIES

The boundary of a person's self is defined by his hurt. When you are being violated by someone, your boundaries are being violated: you feel hurt.

Violation of your self is only acceptable when it is already being violated by yourself. Think about that. Who else would accept violations of his feelings except someone who is not caring for them. When you are not caring for your feelings, another person not caring for them will go unnoticed by you. A lack of self-care blinds you as to whether others care for you or not. Whatever hurt that you already are pushing down induces the hurt caused by the violating person also to be pushed down. The violating person, because of his self-blindness, may not even know his actions are hurtful to you. You make matters worse from violating yourself by not being aware of your feelings and sticking up for them. If you tell other people that they can violate your feelings by your example, your feelings will be violated. What do you expect? If you accept violation of yourself, others will come to expect violation of your boundaries to be acceptable and normal.

Other people frequently test and sense your boundaries. This is especially true when they are just getting to know you. As much as you allow your personal space to be violated, you can expect them to violate it a little bit more because they are in a testing and learning phase of who you are. Since you and they are continually growing, this testing and learning phase may recur at different times. This is neither good nor bad, just natural. Expect this, so you can be prepared to clearly set your boundaries. If you make

your boundaries unclear, violation of them can be expected more often. If you make your boundaries clear, the average person is more likely to respect them, even though he may not understand your reasons for them.

People who respect their boundaries will be less likely to respect you if you lack respect for your boundaries. They are hurt by your self-disrespect because it takes yourself away from them. In addition, they don't feel good about treating you with less respect than they treat themselves. Because nobody is taking the vast responsibility of your boundary maintenance, they cannot treat you with the same respect they treat themselves. You are trying to give them work that you are unwilling to do. Because you are trying to make them responsible for your boundary maintenance, they feel unfairly treated. They already have enough responsibility themselves! If they take responsibility for you, they will feel a need to control you. The controlling feeling comes from the responsibility you have given them for yourself. Remember, freedom comes with responsibility, so that if other people are responsible for you, they also need freedom to control you. Your responsibility is not theirs, and it is much too great a responsibility to bear while also maintaining their self-respect. When they consistently see you without self-respect and boundaries, they have a more difficult time maintaining their self-respect and boundaries, unless they see less of you.

As someone who lacks self-respect, you are not able to accept others as themselves because you do not respect that within yourself. This leads people who respect themselves not to want to be around you because you reject their self which you deny in yourself. But you wouldn't want to be around them anyway, just as you don't want to be around the part of yourself you reject. Every time they stick up for and make

known their selves, you are reminded of how you do not do this. You might even falsely perceive their self-caring as self-centered and stuck-up because you feel like they should be caring more about you. However, you are the one who is not caring enough about yourself, and because you do not, you need the world around you to care more about yourself and your feelings. You are the one who is self-centered, selfish, and unable to care for your and others' feelings.

Protecting your boundaries is good not only for you but also for others. When you stick up for yourself, you make it easier for others around you to do the same. You make known that it is okay with you for feelings to be respected. Other people who also respect themselves will be attracted to this norm, and people who do not will not. By disrespecting your boundaries, you make it easier for people lacking self-respect to slip into their weakness of stepping into your boundaries and taking control of yourself.

A person to whom you give responsibility of yourself will inevitably make a mistake in respecting yourself, for we all make mistakes, even in respecting ourselves. When this person makes the mistake, you will not have the pain of yourself making it; you will have the pain of him making it with you. Since the pain is not your responsibility, you are unable to grow from the mistake. Since the pain is not really his responsibility, he will not grow from the mistake. No one gets a positive reward from the mistake. Instead, you resent the other person for not being sensitive enough, and expect *him* to grow or change so that the mistake does not happen again. You wind up relinquishing more self-responsibility, giving up more control.

People with self-respect don't want to disrespect you by controlling you; instead, they will choose to be around other people. You may take this personally, feeling rejected

and unworthy of good people, but only because first you have been unworthy to yourself. The people with whom you feel worthy enough to be around will be the ones who don't mind controlling you. Come on! Let loose of your defenses enough to allow this logic to settle into yourself, allowing you to grow and gain more personal power. Or you can remain helpless, dependent, and out of control, and you will deserve every bit of it.

People will manipulate you through your dependent need of having others maintain your boundaries. You will feel abused and helpless, being even more needy for someone to save you while dealing with these uncaring people. The person you need is yourself. Perhaps you believe you never had learned to care for yourself, and are still looking for someone to care for you. Stop looking and do it yourself. Stop feeling sorry for your unloved self, because now you are the one who is not loving you. Take responsibility for loving yourself, so you will not *need others* to do this but can simply enjoy whatever love others have for yourself. If you do this, you will still experience hurt in your life, but you will be empowered. This hurt, no matter how it feels, is not as painful as if you choose not to take responsibility for yourself. For whenever another person hurts you while you are not taking self-responsibility, you have additional hurt from you abandoning yourself.

-How are you commonly violated?

-What part do you play in that violation? (There is some part; think about it until you find it, or ask a friend.)

-Are you holding in any old hurt, causing you to have difficulty perceiving and preventing current hurts?

-What boundaries do you want to strengthen of yourself?

-Why have you not begun this?

-What needs to happen for you to begin this?

-Imagine if you could live forever. When would you begin to increase the strength of your boundaries? Why?

-Now imagine if you could live only for 70 years. When would you begin to increase the strength of your boundaries? Why?

-Now imagine that you have only one year to live (by the way, this is a possibility). When would you begin to increase the strength of your boundaries?

-Explain any differences in your last three answers.

## **WRONG BATTLES**

You get only a limited amount of time here on Earth, so it is important to spend time fighting the right battles. This requires you to know what is most important for yourself, and to let that be the deciding factor for the battles you choose. You also have a limited amount of energy within each day. If you fight for principles and not for helping yourself, you are wasting your time. If you need to argue with someone just because he cut you off in traffic, what does that say about the importance of the battles you choose? Are you not facing the hurt from a girlfriend but instead facing the safer minor hurt of another driver's poor judgment? Are your battles focusing on what you want

accomplished in your lifetime and what you can give to the world? Why would you allow something to take you away from what you are doing and from things that are important to you? Is your life full of important things? If not, why not? Why haven't you filled it up? You are supposed to fill it up with what you love to give. This way you don't get caught up in trivial matters. You have much more important battles to fight.

If a stranger treats you with disrespect, what do you do? Do you get up and fight with him, taking away the limited time you have in life? If so, you not only take your time away but also spend it with someone you don't like! When you give him part of your precious life, you make him special. Why would you do this? Isn't it punishment enough for that person to be himself, having to live with himself every day of his life? Do you need to punish him in a more overt manner? Why? If you do, you bring his badness into your life. You risk injury to yourself and trouble with the law. The lesson you try to teach him will not be heard. Think of the lesson you can teach yourself. Be thankful you have to live with him only for a moment. If you choose to live in someone's miserable existence for longer than a moment, you also must feel miserable. Time to start feeling good about yourself. Next time you get into such a situation, remind yourself of this truth.

You are powerless over other people. The only power you have is with yourself. Empower yourself. If you feel treated unfairly and want to express your feelings, so be it. Express them and move on. But if you need to prove something, get people to understand, or need anything from them, why? Why do you give other people that much power over you. If you need another person to react a certain way, he has power over you. Expect people to react the way they are, not the way you feel you need them to react. You are not that special, powerful, or important for other people to change. Perhaps

you might be able to intimidate people for a brief period, but that is not changing them. They are not going to change for you, no matter what they may say. They can change only for themselves, just like you. They are themselves, and you are powerless over what they choose in their life. Focus your attention where it should be: on yourself and your life. Express self for yourself, and move on to your life, filling it with more beautiful things that you create.

Some people are dangerous, and engaging with them would place yourself in danger. You need to allow these people to leave your life. They are trouble, and you don't need them in your life. Get away from them as quickly and safely as you can while maintaining self-respect. Do not fill your life with their anger, which they have for anyone who crosses their path. Let evil take care of itself; it does not do a good job. Allow them to roll out of your life, so they can meet someone just like themselves: rigidly closed with old hurt of which will never be acknowledged. This way they can both deal with each other, fighting battles that truly mean nothing, draining each other's life-energy.

If you were one of those completely closed people with old hurt, you would not have gotten this far in the book. However, it is likely that you are a person with old hurt of which you aren't entirely open to, as most people are. Unacknowledged old hurt causes you to fight wrong battles. You create battles in the present to fight a conglomeration of unintegrated battles of the past, bringing about the feeling that you are fighting the right battles, even though they are not entirely real. You share something similar to those people who want to start a battle with you. You share old, unacknowledged hurt, yet you are more open to it than they.

Acknowledge the truth by being aware of the sources of your feelings. Be open with that knowledge when your battles are with people you love. This way they will know there are two battles going on (past and present) and can be more respectful to your situation.

-Do you find that people you don't like seem to take you away from your work and love in life?

-What do you need to do to focus less on their miserable life and more on your life?

-When do you find it easiest to focus on your life?

-Why?

-How can you increase this?

-Do you have an old hurt that you haven't integrated which they are using to control you to enter into their miserable life?

-What lesson do you need to learn to allow these people to leave your life right after they enter it?

-What are the true battles in your lifetime?

-How much time do you spend in battles that do not relate to these?

-Why?

-What does the last answer have to do with not being open to your old hurt?

## NEEDING OTHERS TO BE DIFFERENT

When you need people to be different than who they are, what you really need is to ask yourself what needs growth or change within yourself. Why do you have a need for them to change? Why does your life stop because they are not changing? That makes your life dependent on them, powerless. Is that what you want? Other people are simply the way they are, and they will not change. Well, they may change, but that is none of your business. To make it your business hurts others and yourself. When you need people to change, you are rejecting them as they are and setting yourself up to be let down. Accept that other people do not change the way you want them to change. This means that if you want to be happy, the only one left to change is yourself.

Perhaps you feel as if an empty hole has been dug into yourself. No matter how wonderful you believe your parents to have been, your mom and dad, in their love for you, were not perfect; you were hurt by their flaws. This hurt may have remained unexpressed, digging a hole out of your heart. Over the years you may have covered the hole by believing and expecting your parents to be who they never were: parents capable of loving you the way you needed to have been loved. This cover did not remove the emptiness underneath it. Fill up the hole yourself because they will never change to fill it up for you. You must be that loving mom and dad that you never had for yourself by yourself. Take responsibility for that now. What are you waiting for, someone to save you? It will not happen!

Lose your expectation of people being the certain way you want them to be. Mourn the fantasy you have created them to be in your mind: a loving mom, dad, sibling,

child, family, lover, friend, or whoever. People are just the way they are. If you have a lover and expect him to be someone he is not being, what need or emptiness are you asking to be filled within yourself? Is it that same empty hole from your parents, which never got filled? Why haven't you looked to yourself to fulfill that need? Expect people to be exactly who they are, not whom you need them to be to feel complete about yourself. If you accept them for whatever horrible or beautiful way they are, you give yourself power not to be let down when they turn out to be themselves, again and again. Care for yourself enough to give it this power. Life is short; try living it as yourself, not as a self that has people around to hide holes.

If someone's personality is troubling you, how can you grow to feel better about being yourself with this person? Do you need to grow out of the relationship? If the person troubling you feels entitled enough to be his rude or difficult self around you, why are you not allowing yourself to be your beautiful, truthful self around him. What are you getting from him that you fear you may lose?

Feeling content is knowing you are being most of yourself in each situation. You cannot lose when you are completely being yourself with another person. If he rejects you for being yourself, he had already rejected you. If he is not going to change, why hold yourself back for his deadness and lack of growth? Why commit yourself to be dead just because he is dead? Stop rejecting yourself! It no longer does you or anybody else any good.

If you accept yourself, at least you gain information about people's reactions to you, enabling you to see how you want the relationships to continue. The information you gain in being yourself may tell you to stop a relationship or to accept both the other

person and yourself. The latter means accepting the other person as he is and being the self you are. This means you express feelings or truth in response to your feelings when with this accepted person. The truth you speak is to be simply an expression of yourself to define yourself in the situation with him, not as an attempt to change him. You turn the relationship with him into a chance to simply be.

The people you expect to be different may have potential to grow, but they can do so only at their own choice and rate, and in their own way. Don't fill up your life hanging around waiting for them to be something they are not. If you do, you lose time, waiting for something that is not real. The sands of time of your life blow away, lived painfully in your false expectations. Your fantasy of other people being the way you want will never come true. And as they do change in their own way, who can say if they will still want to be around you. After all, it was their selves you didn't like that wanted to stick around you before. If they change, maybe their new selves will not like you.

Use your time to invest in something of yourself. This way you will always have something which you may build upon and grow from. It is empowering because yourself is there with you already, so you don't need to wait for someone else. Your self exists. Give up hope that others will change, so you can empower yourself by yourself. Face any pain you need to face to be yourself. Be brave and take this courage.

-What is it about yourself that needs to change to eliminate your need for other people to change.

-Why do you expect other people to change the way you want them to change?

-Was there something about them which led you to believe they have the potential for that change?

-What clues do you get which can lead you to believe they will not change that way?

-Why haven't you accepted these clues?

-What exists within you to help discount them?

-Do you have any expectations of your mom or dad being different than they already are?

-What do you expect from them that they are not being?

-What gave you the idea they are capable of meeting your expectations?

-Is this realistic?

-If not, give up your expectation.

-If so, why hasn't it happened yet?

-If you believe it has not happened because you have not done something, you need to have some sense of control over them. What are you trying to control through controlling them? Why?

-Is this helpful to you? Explain how?

-If this could be unhelpful, explain how?

-Would giving up your expectations mean you would have to feel some pain?

-Is this why you have been holding onto your expectations?

## LETTING GO

Sometimes there is power in letting go. It can allow you to lose negative energy that you bring into your life from difficult people. If you are dealing with a person trying to control you, your power is in letting go. If you lose hope of him acting differently, power is taken from him which he imagined he had. It is your expectation and need for him to be a certain way that he uses to control you. Your expectation of him being different is the string he uses to drag you. Allow him to exist as the controller he is with no control over you or your feelings.

Perhaps you have some negative feelings towards him even though you have relinquished expectations of him being different. You can accept these feelings, state the truth of what he has done, state the truth of how it makes you feel, and state that he must have been feeling powerless to have done such a thing. State this with the knowledge that you are taking care of yourself and being yourself. This will help you speak your truth from a stronger position. Then move on to something more important than his struggle for control. That struggle will always be there for him; it is his punishment for being so rigid. You don't need that punishment; release. Know that he is punishing himself, and



















































































































the superficial things he gives. If you are closed to your superficiality, you will not be able to see this symbiotic interaction.

Ask yourself why you place such a high value on objects, styles, or looks. Do you desire something simply based on the value others have placed on it? What does it give you? Why is the desire for those gifts in your life? Does the desire exist in order to fulfill or make up for some lack in your life? Do you feel devalued and worthless, needing someone or something admired by many people to compensate for those feelings? If this is true, you are using the superficial thing as a crutch to lean on, instead of addressing the lack in yourself or beginning to love the part of yourself which you don't like. Rather than taking the path of painful growing, you are leaning on something superficial as a safer route. This has potential initially to make you feel better; however, this path eventually winds up in emptiness—that is what superficiality is.

Consider the example of a woman who needs to be admired by her peers. Let's assume this woman goes out with a socially perceived good-looking guy because she doesn't feel worthy and valuable herself (feelings) to be admired by her peers as herself. She has already set herself up for failure. The guy used as the object to gain peer-admiration will give her the superficial compliments and status among her peers; however, it will not be something intrinsically a part of her which fosters the status and compliments.

The “friends” of this woman are not really her friends. To praise her just for going out with a good-looking guy, to not see through the woman's superficiality, they must also be superficial. They do not see her; they see the status she holds from her good-looking guy. These friends are giving her *status* praise not her self. They will see

her as worthless once that status disappears and she is alone, just as herself. She understands this at some level so fears losing the status, growing even more needy to maintain it to feel self-worth. Her “friends” are friends of this need, as they also have it. When life gives us its twists and turns, it will bring out feelings, and these “friends” will not be there for her. Feelings are too deep for superficial people. When her husband dies, loses his status, or is divorced from her, the thing the superficial friends need most from her—status—will be gone, and so will they. They were never really there in the first place.

The superficial man this woman has chosen is also unable to care for her to make her feel worthy and valuable. If he could care, he would not be superficial. If he was not superficial, she would not respect him and he would not respect her. Even if he could respect her, she would think him a fool for respecting her feelings because she really believes she is not worth it. She does not want that type of man in her life because he will bring out what she does not want to face: herself. She needs to believe in herself first before she gets into a relationship that can work for her. She needs to accept and work on her weaknesses.

This woman’s superficiality is used like a crutch. It is a lie, a vanity to cover for growth that she does not want to face. It is an umbrella in the rain of life, shielding her from her potential. It covers up the part of herself that most needs to grow. This shield covers her from motivating-pain, so she does not even feel the need to grow in the way she otherwise would.

Spoiled people use this superficial shield to hide from themselves. They expect certain superficial compensations for pain they have been avoiding to make it easy to

continue avoiding growth. Because they have been deprived of growth, they appear childlike or immature in particular situations. They have been supported not to face that growth during their life and do not want to face it. This is the folly of being financially rich and not being open to all of yourself: you may use objects to make up for what you don't like in yourself, spoiling yourself.

Only you are going through your life. You may be around certain people or objects, but they will be there only for a short time during your life. Even if they could be around you constantly, they would not be able to be there for all your feelings, only you can. Therefore, to value what is around you the most, yourself, makes more sense rather than superficial things, which are not part of you. The people or objects you choose to have in your life had better be able to be with your feelings when you express them, or you are undervaluing yourself.

Some people desire people in their lives with outer beauty as well as inner beauty. That's fine. But as long as observers' perceptions are not tainted from denial of their superficiality and pain, the outside just reflects what is inside. If the observers are in denial, another person's outside can lie to them. People who are open to their superficiality and pain are simply attracted to beauty, inside and out.

Why do people allow their perception to be distorted? The answer is that they do not want to feel some pain. The denial of this pain causes the distortion. It also leads to a lack of self-worth, which they may try to find compensation for from outside themselves, through superficial means. This quest to fulfill themselves outside of themselves will not be enough to make up for the lack of self they feel; only embracing their lost selves can make up for that. When they embrace their selves, they will find the value of the

superficial person, whom they used to value so much, decrease, and their self-value increase.

As a superficial relationship ages, genuine parts of yourself grow, These parts yearn for the superficial parts that are not growing. You might try getting more superficiality to cover for your denied self; however, this is a losing battle. When you die, you die as yourself. You will not have the superficial things you acquired to make up for the self you failed to face. You die with your whole self, even the parts you have been avoiding. It is then that you must face your vanity through having to have to take all of yourself with you. You will have lived a life superficially, through only parts of yourself, less full and complete than if you had embraced yourself. What you had really been seeking had always been inside you, and your quest to find it outside drained your life and value away from you and others.

-Picture any friends who had become increasingly superficial. Describe how close you felt to them as they became more superficial?

-Explain why.

-Did it appear as though they became more powerful?

-Did they really become more powerful?

-In what way?

-In what way were they not powerful?

-How could they have had more power?

-Did you envy them?

-If yes, were you embracing all of yourself? Were you also superficial but just didn't have the means to acquire the superficial objects or people they had?

-In what ways have you been told you were superficial by others?

-How much of this may have been true?

-What did you want but did not have?

-Did you feel incomplete in some way without this?

-Why?

-What would have been different if you had it?

-Was this difference outside of yourself?

-If so, what inside yourself would be different from having the difference outside? Why?

-If the difference was inside of yourself, what difference was it?

-Why didn't you think you could have that difference without the outside thing?

-In what ways are you currently superficial? Think hard. Look for even the slightest superficialities.

-How does this help yourself?

-How does this not help yourself?

-What do you want but do not have?

-Do you feel incomplete in some way without this?

-Why? What will be different when you get it?

-Is this difference outside of yourself?

-What will be different inside yourself as a result?

-How can this difference occur without the outside difference?

-If the difference is inside of yourself, what difference is that?

-Why can't you have that difference right now?

### *Being Yourself and Dating*

Many people expect you to be someone other than yourself when you begin dating them. They want you to be the wonderful person of whom they have been dreaming. They don't want to go through all the uncomfortable feelings, time spent not being themselves, and risks of being vulnerable with someone if that person is not the right person. What initially motivates them to take these risks is that you might be their dream person. The fact is that even when they find their dream person, he will not be all they had dreamed him to be; so for them to see you first as yourself and not as their dream, really puts a damper on their motivation to continue the relationship.

Some people, while dating you, may expect you to make up for their weaknesses. If they find your weaknesses too soon, they may get turned off, perceiving you as not good enough to make up for theirs. In order for them to continue denying their weaknesses, they need you to act in just the right way to keep their self hidden. If you

display the dream person they are looking for (which will most likely be a person in a similar state of denial as themselves), you will not be being loved. You will be being used to fill their life with their dream to make up for their inadequacies.

When people give up themselves for another person, they expect much more from the other person than he can fulfill. They expect him to be even more of their dream person to make up for their loss of self. The man may expect the woman to have wonderful sex with him for hours (his dream woman). The woman may expect the man to be always strong, powerful, yet consistently kind (this is an impossible expectation because to be a consistently kind, a person must be able to show his weaknesses, his hurt). These expectations create a never-winning battle because nothing can ever make up for a lost self but a found self.

I'm going to go out on a limb here and suggest, against common practice, to be yourself on first dates. If you hold yourself back (your opinions, thoughts, concerns, and feelings), you will expect the other person to do the same. When the other person starts being himself, you will be reminded of the loss of yourself. This will cause you to be angry with him and/or yourself, or relieved for his genuineness, giving yourself permission also to be yourself. The latter does not mean you will disclose your deepest, most intimate self, just that you will gradually become intimate. This is being yourself with the other person because you are being real with him yet also testing his trustworthiness. Sharing a little of the self you are with him, like opening a crack in a doorway to yourself, will help attract the right person to yourself, not fake dream people.

Be open to being vulnerable with your dates, but not so much. Don't shock yourself or their selves by having your lives quickly intertwined. Provided you are right

for someone, he needs to slowly assimilate you into his life. If he is happy with himself, he doesn't want another person in his life too suddenly. He doesn't have the motivation for such an abrupt change, although he may have motivation to risk sharing some of his happy times with another person. This sharing of happiness happens by slow, bit by bit coming together. You then can become part of the happiness he had before he knew you, as well as the reciprocal. It cannot be achieved all at once; it is a process. As he learns to enjoy time spent with you, he will not want that to change, just as he didn't have motivation to change his happy times alone. (Happy times means that problems and hurt are dealt with so that happiness can flow.) If he is happy, he doesn't need your problems and what your being brings into his life; but if you slowly become part of his life, you bring yourself into part of the happiness he already has. However, this process cannot occur unless each individual is already happy with themselves.

If you ever get a chance to date your dream person, he will not be enough because your self will not be all there. You may desire him very passionately (be in love), but this longing is not for him. It is for the self you have not allowed to fully exist with him. As this "dream person" wears off, you will find he is not what you first perceived him to be. As you allow yourself to be more of yourself in the relationship, your genuineness further breaks down the unreal perception of the "dream person." Your found self teaches you the truth. You may discover you have wasted time with the wrong person. This truth can help you learn being yourself in spite of the presence of a "dream person," helping you perceive people for whom they really are.

If you continue not to risk being all of yourself with a person you have been dating awhile, doubt exists within you of whether he can really accept you or not. This

anxious *not-knowing* is part of the feeling of being in love. It may feel nice that he wants to spend time with part of yourself and your facade, but does he really want to spend that time with *you*? You are driven with a passion to be closer to him because you don't feel as close to him as you want; you have not yet revealed all of yourself to him. You repeatedly call him and cannot wait to see him because you want that "dream person" and perfection closer to yourself. Yet you fear revealing yourself to him because you know you are not so perfect and such a dream as he. Your false perception of his greatness is a cover for your feelings of worthlessness. It is these feelings of worthlessness you are afraid of showing for fear he will reject you. The truth is if he accepts your facade, he is already, to some degree, rejecting you and putting a facade on himself. What you are anxious about is already happening.

There are not many people who are the right lovers for you. Stop wasting time seeing someone as what you want them to be and being what you are not. You both do yourselves a disservice by not being yourselves. If you are real from the beginning of a relationship, it makes it harder for the other person to maintain his facade. This way he either rejects you because he is too scared to have himself seen, or stays with you so that you can see who he truly is. Either way you win. The way you lose is to remain hidden and wonder if he would ever want to spend the rest of his life with the real you. As your feelings remain hidden, they can motivate you to do rash things, such as getting married quickly or forcing commitment with a baby. These actions are taken to create an opportunity to feel free to finally test being yourself with him without the fear of his rejection being so intense. As you test being yourself, you might acquire enough of

yourself to find out he is not your dream person and neither of you are good for each other. Just be yourself at the beginning, and avoid all this mess; it is much less costly.

If you allow yourself to be, you will be less critical and will not need such a perfect “dream person.” From being open to your imperfect self, your expectations of the other person will be lower. You will be more in reality and less in that dreamy in-love state. If you need to be in-love, what you really are needing is an escape from the relationship with yourself. If you find that in being yourself someone needs you to be a certain way, he is telling you he is not happy with himself. Do you need to escape from yourself, like him, because you are not happy? When he easily passes judgment on and is critical of you, he is not being his self. He is afraid of parts of himself which he is not open to that you represent. Everyone is afraid at first; be open to this so you can be real. If you are real, you will have yourself and can look at him with pity for his neediness, neediness which is self-destructive, despite an air of arrogance, superiority, or worthlessness he may be wearing.

Would you do drugs with someone you hardly knew? If not, why would you stop being yourself throughout the beginning of a relationship with someone. They both are similar actions (see section on drugs), for in each you are not being yourself, clouding your perception. You need to be yourself to give yourself direction. You might discover you do not like the person. Perhaps he may even be dangerous. When you find out he is not the person for you, the loss of him will not be as great. And when he rejects you for not being able to maintain the facade of his perfect dream, his rejection will not be such a great loss to you. He is the one at a loss! Truly, he hasn’t a real person around him



we can worship what is in him, we feel less need to become that ourselves. We can just go to that idol-temple to see what we love, and worship it rather than doing the hard work necessary to get what we are passionate about into ourselves. We need to start taking steps to get it in us, so we can love it in our selves and see that beauty anytime we desire.

Since you have the clarity of being able to see the beauty of the thing you love in your idols, you also have the seed for this growth. Turn your seed into a tree; you are the one who sees it. Others who do not see it do not know enough to grow it in themselves. You are the one with the motivation to capture it within yourself. This does not mean you will grow into exactly what your idols are. You will grow into what you are with what you admired as special about them. Start growing seed, and do not stop. Let your branches reach ever skyward to unknown places.

Do not allow your seed die underneath the shade of great redwood trees. You deny the part of yourself that is like your idols when you idolize them. What you both have in common, you reject in yourself. You can respect and like people, but when you idolize them, you see them as too great. Your perception of them as being so great distances them from yourself and makes it harder to believe you can achieve such greatness. Because you choose to perceive them as greater than they are, your seed of that same greatness is seen less significantly so is not as accepted and nurtured by yourself.

Our idols are not much greater than us. In fact they approach being insignificantly greater as we change our perspective to a larger one. Some people may have more power or influence in this world than others, but on a scale of the infinite Universe, this difference becomes insignificant, giving us all equally important parts to play. In calculus there is a theorem in which if we divide 4 or 1,000,000 by infinity, we get the same

number back, zero. In fact any constant numbers, no matter how big the difference between them, divided by infinity equals zero.<sup>4</sup> Thus, if one person has influence over 4 people and another has influence over 1,000,000 people, the person with the greater influence may appear to have greater power when we compare the two on a scale the size of just Earth (if we represent Earth as the number 10,000,000,000, so  $4/10,000,000,000 < 1,000,000/10,000,000,000$ ). However, if we use a scale the size of infinite Universe, both people approach an equal amount of power ( $4/\text{infinity} = 1,000,000/\text{infinity} = 0$ ). We are not living just on a planet; we are living in the Universe.

You are caught in a place where your idols were at once before. Acknowledge this. Remember, the tall redwood trees also were once mere seeds. They did not always display the beauty you see within them. If you become what you love in them, you will share that beauty with them. That beauty will then become normal to you, facilitating your growth to the next level of beauty that you could not see while you were busy idolizing. You may even have the potential to become more than your idols. Perhaps you may be able to help your idols in the next steps they need to take, or be able to inspire other individuals to reach their own heights.

-Who are your idols?

-Why?

-What in them do you want in yourself?

-What parts of these do you already have in yourself?

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<sup>4</sup> Theorem 4.21 from Earl W. Swokowski, *Calculus with analytic geometry*, (Boston, Massachusetts: Prindle, Weber & Schmidt, 1983) pg. 172.

-How can you make these grow in you? (Whether you think you have them in you or not, answer the question. If you say you cannot, you are already right. Is being right more important to you than becoming what you dream to be?)

-Since you and your idols are both equally insignificant on a scale the size of the universe, can you see the significance of yourself?

-If not, look hard at the stars in the night for an hour and think about this question again. As you look at them with your naked eyes, realize each one is similar to our bright sun, just further away from us. Imagine how many stars are out there which you cannot see because they are too distant. Then look at the stars through a pair of binoculars. See how many more of them you can see. Imagine if you could travel to those far away stars, how many more stars you could see, which are even further away . . . and so on . . . and so on . . . and so on. Now quickly focus back on just Earth. Look at the chunk of Earth which supports you. Picture the size of this planet compared to where you have just been traveling to. Answer the question, "Is one person greater than another?" When you can see we are all equal, remember how great you had previously thought your idol to be. With the new knowledge that he/she is not greater than you but equal to you, transfer some of that significance and greatness you had held for him or her back to yourself. Now, since you are significant, you had better get busy working and making the difference you want.

## GREETINGS

Greetings are social rituals developed to give us time to read people and their intentions. They are devoted to habitual, automatic questions and answers which do not require much thought: “Hello, how are you?” “I’m fine. How ‘bout yourself?” “Good. Good.” These mindless interactions free up our minds, enabling us to focus on nonverbal signals. Often what someone says about himself, “Oh, I’m doing just fine,” is not what really is going on.

The greeting ritual allows you to gain an understanding of the other person’s intentions and predicament. This allows you to move in a direction best for yourself yet also have sensitivity towards the other person, knowing more truth. It can help prevent you from being hurt and hurting others. These abilities probably had been essential in primitive times, when formal laws didn’t exist to help govern people. Greetings gave people a chance to look deeply for signs of ill intent and deceit.

Even dogs greet, as they read each other for dominance or submission. After they both agree on a read, their relationship can proceed with order and harmony around the established structure.

Sometimes when I meet a person for the first time, my mind does not register his name. In the few moments of greeting, I am not listening to the words he says, but I am completely tuned in to reading what he says nonverbally, including the tone of his voice, the syntax of his speech, the posture of his body, the expression of his face. That is a lot to be aware of at once! I allow it all to make an impression on me as a feeling, which I

can then easily read to gain information about him. My mind is so intent on listening to who this person really is that I could care less about registering his name. I know he is not going to verbally tell me who he is, so I find out for myself. I don't like being ignorant with whom I am dealing. I like to know people.

Similar to most people, I don't verbally tell people who I am right away. Why should I? It would be a waste of time if they are not able to hear because of the state they are in. Besides that, it is not safe. Because I would get hurt and begin not to trust myself or my judgment of people, I don't trust blindly. First, I like to gain information about people. That's what greetings are for.

-What do you do when you greet people for the first time?

-What do you feel?

-Is there a pattern to this?

-If this pattern could speak, what would it tell you?

-Do you disclose a lot of information?

-Why?

-What are you gaining by doing so?

-What are you losing by doing so?

-What would happen if you changed this?

-Do you hardly disclose at all?

-What are you doing in the quiet time?

-Do you want to disclose but are not doing so?

-If yes, why are you not doing it?

-Do you get any reads on people or how you feel during the greeting rituals?

-Why?

-If yes, what do you do with that information?

-How accurate are your reads?

-How can you be more true to yourself in a greeting ritual?

-Why is that?

## GOODBYES

Having people leave you who have been instrumental in your growth can be difficult, more difficult than it may initially seem. Losses from a variety of sources could come up. When someone leaves with whom you have unexpressed hurt, the hurt may push harder at and break through defenses to get a chance of finally being expressed. Memories of hurt from growing pains you have experienced together may surface. A loss may be felt of not having that person around and of not being able to grow with him any longer. Maybe feelings which you have not dealt with from other relationships will come out, calling for acceptance and expression. Perhaps you are already going through many other losses in your life, so as you say your goodbye and feel that loss, other losses are felt along with it.

When someone close to you dies or leaves, it can feel as though you lose a part of yourself. The part you lose is the unique expression of yourself which existed in the

relationship with him. Only he shared that expression of yourself in that period of your life. You lose the special growth with him you could have had if he had stayed and continued his unique self-expression. If you are unable to say goodbye to each other, you lose the expression with him from your loss of his leaving. This does not mean you cannot express the feeling of loss, just that you cannot express it in the relationship.

Perhaps you think the feeling of loss is not worth expressing to the other person since he is no longer going to be in your life. What's the point of expressing yourself to him if you are never going to deal with him again? This is you not wanting to feel your pain. The main point of expressing your feelings is mostly for yourself, not so much for other people. Even though other people have golden opportunities to grow from the shower of your self-expression, you do not allow yourself to take responsibility for their growth.

Do you think I am making a big deal out of nothing? Do you think goodbyes are not important? If so, you are displaying how little you are in touch with your feelings at the time of goodbyes. Do you have unmourned losses in your past, possibly of people dying or abandoning you (quickly write them down right now before your defenses push them away), which make present goodbyes more difficult unless you pretend they don't mean much? If you look and feel closely, people do either feel loss at goodbyes or manifest other behaviors from trying to hide the loss.

When people are not in touch with their feelings, goodbyes are complicated. Their suppressed hurt may show itself by excessive hurt at other irritations or losses that are smaller and safer. During the expression of these lesser losses, some of the hurt and anger come out from the larger loss of the goodbye. These misplaced emotions will naturally

feel unjust to people unless they understand what is happening. The donors also haven't dealt with other losses during their lives. They feel vulnerable as their old feelings of loss mix with present ones, not knowing how to control the feelings or where they all come from. The complexity of the mixture can result in them being their weakest selves (defenses operating in full rigid force).

Even when someone leaves whom you never liked but at least got to know, you have feelings. You may have grown in spite of him so feel a little hurt from loss of the continuation in that growth. Maybe your feelings come from the time which was spent so horribly with him. Perhaps you feel a loss of just the consistency that is ending from change coming.

People differ in their expression of hurt from separations. Some may not show their feelings until you no longer can see them. Others may start mourning months before the separation so that when it happens, their loss is not emotionally so great. Depending on when they start mourning, on their unique selves, and on the value the relationship meant to them, they vary in the level of hurt expressed.

Some people may try leaving on a bad note because they are afraid of rejection. They express anger at you in an attempt to get you to reject them. This way they do not have to face the pain of rejection they would feel in *losing a good relationship* with you. If they can make the relationship bad in the last few weeks, days, or hours, they haven't lost so much from the breakup of that relationship. This way their unexpressed hurt from past rejection doesn't echo so deeply with the present hurt of separating from you. However, because they alter reality to alter their true feelings about you, they undermine their self, destroying growth they could have had from a true separation.

As you see truth people are not facing, comment on it in a dispassionate way to them. You achieve dispassion by accepting the way they are expressing themselves or not, yet also accepting and expressing your feelings.

Allow enough time for saying goodbye to someone so that your feelings can surface and be expressed with him. It is easy to get caught up in haste, having everything move too fast for emotions to come up.

Other people you miss, including yourself, might make the pain of a goodbye heavier, seeming harder and more emotional. You may feel like you don't want to be so vulnerable to reveal so much of the hurt you are experiencing. This goodbye may be your last chance to be yourself with this person; let it be true, and any excesses of emotion can also be addressed.

Your feelings are who you are in the moment. To deny them is to take away your growth, the other person's growth, and to make everything less real. Would you feel better crying all alone, with no one to see your tears, no one to validate your feelings, and no one even to have the chance of being able to comfort and share yourself? Crying alone is not unhealthy, but to cry only alone can be lonely. Those tears are also meant for the person who is leaving. It is courageous and takes strength to show vulnerable feelings. It is easy in the moments of a goodbye to be just like any other person—not having *your* feelings or *yourself*. But then who is the person you care for saying goodbye to?

The feelings you wanted to express to them, but did not; the expectations you had with them which were never met; the things you wanted to do with them and share, but never did—all of these add to the loss. All of the you that you want with them, but cannot.







































## HUMANITY AND YOURSELF

The heart of humanity, essence, or what some may call God is the hearts or feelings of all of us combined in the moment. Like ourselves, it is ever-growing and can only be defined in the moment it exists.

Denying ones own heart is not only destructive to oneself but also destructive to the heart of humanity. We were given feelings not just for ourselves but also for humanity to continue growing and evolving. We need to be ourselves for humanity to evolve to its potential.

You take from the world your self when you do not allow yourself to fully exist. We were inherently given feelings for a reason, not to push them down, be afraid of them, limit our growth, and stop being ourselves. When you push yourself down, you cheapen it, giving it emptiness. The degree you push yourself down is proportional to the degree you give the world an emptiness and cheapen humanity. Imagine if all people went around not being themselves. What would the world be like? It would be full of people not being. Actors would not put their soul and heart into their work. Musicians would not reach deep inside to create works of art which others could relate to, grow from, and enjoy. In fact, other people's selves would not be around to enjoy people's expressionless work. What reason would people have to work, love, or give anything back to the world? We would die as a species. That is how important feelings are to us.

The heart of humanity, like our hearts, is in the process of continual evolution. This is exemplified by the continuation of good and bad in the world. If there exists both good and bad, we must still be in transition. We still have pain and growth occurring through the pull between good and bad. We apply the *good* and *bad* labels to what is simply the process of growth. Both ends are needed for growth to occur. The struggle between the two means the heart of humanity is not a finished product, but an evolving entity with good and bad helping structure its evolution. If humanity were already all good, we wouldn't need to grow any further. We wouldn't have anything to grow away from.

Although it is important for us to be ourselves for humanity to exist and grow to its potential, humanity can survive without some of us. If you die, the heart of humanity will not stop. It is like if one cell dies in a human heart, the heart can still live. Since you are not that powerful, you might as well be as powerful as you possibly can for humanity. Be yourself. You will then at least contribute the most to the evolution of humanity. You will be one of those living cells in the heart. If you choose not to allow the full potential of yourself to manifest, you can be easily replaced by most anyone else. However, if you allow your unique self to exist, you cannot be replaced, for your self and its gifts to the world are gems which cannot be duplicated by anyone. You become part of humanity, not just an observer along for the ride.

In being part of humanity, you can sense its manifestation. You can learn of its true power—power lying in the collection of individuals being themselves over generations throughout time.

We need this true power of humanity. In about six billion years our sun will run out of the hydrogen energy it uses. When this happens the sun will become a red giant, expanding and heating up the Earth. All Earth's water will vaporize and our atmosphere will no longer exist. In another billion years, all the sun's helium will be burned up, and the sun will become a red supergiant, expanding itself so that it gobbles up Earth and Mars.<sup>2</sup> We as a species which values its survival need to increase our technology in order to get off this planet and find another life sustaining home. This is a difficult task considering there are not many planets which can sustain life as does Earth. Although the death of our sun may seem like a long time from now, it would be a shame to procrastinate and discover near the end that we don't have enough time to make the necessary extreme technological leaps.

Technology depends on people building on contributions of knowledge from previous generations. If enough generations slack off from their selves and work, we will not have the potential to make it off this planet. We might not be able to make it even now! Who knows how far advanced we should presently be to ultimately save ourselves. Our lives as a species is running on a timer. We need to get certain things done, or all our lives will have been lived only to have died.

Technology must not be constrained. We don't know in what fields or directions it will need eventually to have developed to leave this planet and save ourselves—save God—save the ability of humanity to continue growing and being itself. We don't know what kinds of technology we will eventually need after we shove off this planet and create a new home elsewhere. We have no idea. It is likely we will encounter many other natural challenges even greater than a dying sun in order to continue our existence. For

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<sup>2</sup> Cesare Emiliani, *The Scientific Companion*, (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1988), pg. 53-57.

these reasons we need everything we can create now and all the knowledge we can develop. Perhaps the development of a cure for AIDS will somehow lead us to an understanding that we need to generate a planet with life on it to sustain ourselves. Maybe our developments in nuclear technology are what we will eventually build upon to help us dispose of our sun and create another. We need to allow creativity to exist in technology so that it can be most expansive. We need to stop blocks that get in the way of technological creativity, which include not being responsible enough for the technology we create. We need to quickly grow as a species in responsibility to match growths in technology so we don't make stupid mistakes and destroy ourselves or create additional hurdles for our survival.

Long before the sun destroys Earth, we will have many other challenges which technology (freedom to control environment) will help us deal with. Disappearing ozone layers, lack of disposal space for hiding our waste products, destruction of rain forests, deadly diseases, and other calamities will test how far we have technologically grown. Many of these challenges may become a result of technology used irresponsibly.

With growth in technology, we grow into a freer species as a whole. We need this freedom to survive. Since freedom and responsibility are intertwined (see section on responsibility), we also need to increase our responsibility as a whole. The link between freedom and responsibility can be technologically illustrated with the development of atomic bombs. This power has given us the present responsibility for the survival of the world's life systems. We choose life or death for ourselves now as an entire species. Because we have the power of that choice, we also are responsible for the choice we

make. We must increase the responsibility of our species so that part of our species does not use technological power to destroy the whole.

The way to increase our responsibility as a whole is to increase our responsibility as subsets of the whole: nations, groups, individuals. But in order for groups or nations to be more responsible, it comes down to individuals becoming more responsible within these groups or nations. A chain is only as strong as its weakest link. Why do you think our government has been so distrustful of Iraq to gain power of nuclear weapons? Why were we distrustful of Nazi Germany gaining that power? These countries have not been trusted with that responsibility. Why? It is because the countries were not responsible enough, meaning the individuals in these countries were not responsible enough. The countries were governed through having most power (responsibility) in the hands of only a few people. When only a few have power for the whole, it means the majority have less power (responsibility). For this reason these countries were less responsible (Iraq is still in this predicament). A handful of men do not equal a country, even if the country gives them that responsibility.

A country could only allow its responsibility to be held by a few when its people have a low sense of self. There exists a strong denial of self in the Iraqi culture, as had also existed in Germany culture. The German culture had placed a high value on being strong and proud. This is indicative of not wanting to be weak and hurt. So hurt feelings were denied. In Iraq, women are treated as less than men and have much less power. This necessarily means they are also less self-responsible. Half of the culture is already less self-responsible just on one issue I have addressed! Women's decreased self-responsibility obliquely diffuses self-responsibility in men as well. The men have to

take on the self-responsibility that “their” women are not taking. For this reason the men have less responsibility for their own selves. The men need to deny their hurt from their women’s hurt of being treated as inferior; otherwise, they could not maintain the lack of motivation they have for giving women equality. The entire culture is less self-responsible because of the inequity it supports between men and women.

Individuals of the human race need to grow. As generations pass, this will help evolve more responsible individuals to keep up with the responsibility that increased technology demands. The disappearing ozone layer is an example of technology used irresponsibly. France continued to test nuclear bombs even though they knew it was harmful to the ozone layer. Freon was still being used in mass quantities even though we knew about its harmful effects. Rainforests are currently disappearing. These irresponsible acts tell us that we as a whole are a little behind in being responsible for the freedom of technology. Nature will take away freedom which we abuse. This consequence, however, may sometimes take generations for nature to enact.

Selfish people, who abuse freedom thinking only of themselves, need to be countered by responsible individuals who are themselves. Selfish people feel justified in taking more than their fair share as compensation for the pain from loss of their selves. In contrast, people who embrace themselves have greater ability to empathize with the selves of others who may, someday, suffer consequences from irresponsible actions of the present.

Being more responsible as individuals means being more responsible for being ourselves. Being more responsible for ourselves is indicative of being more of a leader for ourselves. Being a leader for ourselves involves qualities of being a leader in general.

We are coming to a point in our evolution where we need to not be followers. Because followers don't have the entirety of their selves with them, they don't utilize their full power. We don't need one more Martin Luther King, Jr.; we need thousands more. Would you rather entrust your life with a room full of one leader and five followers or a room full of six leaders? What if the one leader was wrong about the approach of saving your life? The five followers would not be able to take a leadership role to correct the group's direction. In the room of six leaders, they would all take the leadership role at different times necessary to accomplish the goals of the group. Leaders know enough not to need to be leader all the time. A good leader takes on many roles, not just commanding, controlling, or directing people. The six leaders all know themselves and one another well and have excellent ability to work within a group. The five followers simply trust the one leader, following his directions, needful of his leadership.

Good leaders are sensitive to others' feelings, helping best express the group's feelings. In this way the group's goals are accomplished with the least hindrance. Good leaders cannot deny their own feelings, for those denied feelings would then also be denied by the leaders in each of the group members. If they denied themselves, they would be insensitive to others' feelings and would not be existing as whole leaders for the group.

An insensitive leader provokes group members to leave the group for a leader who is sensitive, to lead themselves, or to become a leader, (the last two are almost identical). Our planet's group members (countries and cultures within countries) reek of insensitivity to one another, exemplified by prejudice, discrimination, hate groups, and wars. Since we are all stuck on this planet with its insensitivities, we need to do more of

either leading ourselves or becoming leaders. This means we need to take on the leadership quality of sensitivity. This is done by being more sensitive to ourselves. We need to become more responsible for leading ourselves.

For humanity to reach closer to its potential it needs your self, and you need to value your feelings to be able to give that self to humanity. Humanity needs to hear your feelings to grow. It needs you to express yourself. Humanity gave you a gift, and it needs you to value your feelings to have the motivation to give your gift. It needs you to feel pain when you are not giving your gift back to humanity. This pain allows you to grow to develop your gift and deliver it. Your gift, through others receiving it, will help them benefit and grow. The growth they gain will help them focus on developing their own gifts. Your gift speeds up their work, thus speeding up technology. If computer experts never gave their gift of fast computers, scientists would have less time, energy, and potential to submerge themselves in their intellectual gifts of creating more technology. Businesses which profit from expanding technology would suffer as would employment dependent on expanding technology. People whose talents depend on particular technical products from the businesses would become more limited in their abilities. From lack of employment, many people would not be able to give their gifts, and people would have less money to spend supporting you with your gift.

If you allow yourself to give up responsibility for itself by giving it to other people or institutions, you and they take away the responsibility which could have been used in other areas. We need everyone here on this planet as much as he can possibly be, so we can be a most powerful force in nature.

- How important do you think your feelings are to being yourself?
- How important are your feelings to the rest of the world?
  - Why?
- How important are any one person's feelings to the rest of the world?
  - Why?
- How are you increasing your self-responsibility?
  - What do you need to do to increase it more?
- What is your gift?
  - If you do not know what it is, how can you find it?
  - How would it help others for you to develop your gift?
  - How are you not giving yourself to humanity?
    - What do you want to give that you are not?
      - What has stopped you from giving this?
        - How can this be minimized or eliminated?
      - What might help you to give this?
        - How can this be increased?

## CONNECTION AND HUMANITY

Common experiences do not bind us and allow us to feel connected with one another; it is the common feelings that bind us which we have from experiences. Some examples of cohesion can be seen in your occupation, school, family, or when you go to a movie. People in these similar external experiences may feel closer to one another in comparison with the rest of the world, but they do not necessarily feel connected with everybody else in the situation. The factors which differentiate people in similar

situations are the different feelings, intensities of feeling, and level of denial. These factors interact to make people's personal experiences different from others' personal experiences, despite similar external experiences. The fact that people have the same external experience does not mean they have the same internal experience. Something that facilitates connection between people is an external experience which necessarily yields similar internal experiences or feelings.

An example of such an external experience would be when everyone in a group is threatened by someone or something outside the group. The threat makes it difficult for members to hide and push down their feelings because their lives depend on acknowledging their fears. The group feels a heightened connection with one another from the explicit common feelings. Once a friend and I were walking through a park in the dark of night when from behind us, we heard a dog begin to bark and run rapidly our way. We looked at each other, both showing fear on our faces, and began running together over and through bushes, holding each other's hands as if we were one person. We shared a common feeling motivating us to do a similar thing and afterwards felt closer.

The binding force of feelings evolved because it has helped us survive. Through increasing cohesion, groups' energies could be directed outward rather than inward at internal conflicts. For example, when a tribe was attacked by a bear, everyone put aside his group differences to come together to kill or fight off the bear. If all members continued to fight amongst themselves, the bear could pick off each person, one by one, eventually killing the whole tribe.

Group cohesion is difficult to develop in situations where feelings can be easily denied. However, by breaking through denial, tapping into feelings, people can bring about cohesion. This process occurs in therapy groups where feelings are drawn out. Thus, people are given the opportunity to relate to the feelings and to feel connected with one another. As a result, they can be focused as a group to deal with the emotional predicaments of each member.

Other people are too much like ourselves not to feel connected with them. However, if we are not connected with ourselves, we will not feel connected with others. Being connected with ourselves means being connected with our feelings. Feelings are simply how we relate to one another. We do not feel so alone when we share our feelings and someone else feels them with us. When someone feels with us, our feelings become his, so we share a part of each other.

-Name a situation where you were in a group and people were all focused on getting some goal accomplished (a team effort).

-What feeling was most common amongst members before this process begun?

-What feeling was most common during this process?

-If too many people had very different feelings, would the same level of cohesion existed?

-Explain why.

-When have you felt most connected to humanity?

-What was going on to produce this?

- What feelings were you having?
- Who else do you think felt that way?
- Did it feel good?
- Why?
- When have you felt most connected to just one other person?
- What was going on to produce this?
- Were you sharing similar feelings?

## **WE NEED ONE ANOTHER**

We all are the same in some way. We all are from the same spirit of humanity and have experienced the same feelings, except possibly in different ways, intensities, and experiences. We all hold in pain and get ourselves into trouble for doing so, albeit the types of trouble we get into might differ. We all are of the same species, from the same planet, of the same general genetic structure. We all breathe air, get energy from the same biological processes, were born from a mother and will die, feel cold when it is cold, feel fear when exposed to terrible situations. We have more similarities about us than differences. We are more of one another than not.

You need to remain open to yourself and others to be yourself. You need to be open to your feelings, thoughts, and beliefs while also being open to those of others. We are so similar to one another that if you are closed to yourself, you will be closed to others, and if you are closed to others, you will be closed to yourself.

Think about when you visit other cultures, countries, or exotic places. When you come back home, you may feel more worldly, and your hometown may seem smaller in some way. This is because you have grown! Your openness to another culture brings out more of yourself. Because you have gained more of yourself, you have more humanity in you. Parts of that culture amplified parts of yourself which had been hiding, making yourself become greater.

When you visit another culture, because you are not part of it, you can view it with more objectivity. This objectivity helps you see things about the culture which the indigenous people may not notice; things which seem too ordinary for them to take notice of. What you see in the indigenous people is merely an extension of what is inside yourself. This explains why you learn about yourself by learning about them. You have experienced your “brother” in that other culture, and he has shown you yourself. This does not mean you have to travel the world to find yourself, just that you are a part of humanity and humanity is part of you.

You are not all intelligent, for you are only part of the whole of humanity which holds true intelligence. You need to own your intelligence to add to the intelligence of humanity, but also be open to other people’s intelligence because you don’t know it all. You don’t even know it all of what is best for yourself; although you are your best self. You make mistakes, and you are perfectly imperfect, exactly the way you should be. Your truth may be true for your life experience, but since everyone’s life experience is different, so may be his truths. Truth exists regardless of what we perceive of it. Simply by being ourselves, we all experience a part of it in some way. You hold your special perception, knowledge, and gifts, but they are just a part of reality, truth, humanity, and

beauty. We all are part of a greater evolving entity which has its perfection, beauty, and truth in every moment we exist.

No individual or group can feel everyone's pain in the world to grow into a higher entity than humanity. Only humanity can do that. Only humanity can feel everyone's pain and grow into something greater than it was before, bigger than simply every single individual's, group's, or country's growth. We all are vessels of the spirit of humanity. This entity can be felt to a small degree when you are involved with one or more people in a self-respectful relationship. You can feel the greatness of something existing that is more than just the sum of individuals existing. This greater essence can be exemplified in a musical group, where each person's instrumental part may sound beautiful by itself; but when put together with the rest of the musicians, a musical entity is created that is much more capable than just all the musicians playing solo.

We all need one another to be ourselves so that we can play a most capable melody of human spirit. It is not an accident that we need another human being to reproduce. We need one another. We are a social species. This does not mean we always need another human or a specific human being in our lives. We can live alone yet still give our gifts to the world and receive other people's gifts, satisfying our need for one another without ever having been committed to a particular person.

We need to allow ourselves to exist as ourselves. This way we can grow into more of ourselves while humanity grows into more of itself.

Humanity would be nothing without us. Don't let it down.

-Think of a person you believe to be the most different person from yourself whom you have ever met.

-How is this person similar to yourself?

-How did you learn more about yourself in experiencing this person?

-What did he being different have to do with you learning more about yourself?

-If you met this person again, how could you learn more about yourself?

-When have you felt something greater than just yourself?

-Why do you think that was so?

### *Alignment of Yourself with the Truth*

People who speak the truth have the power of the truth behind them. They no longer are simply speaking; they are a part of the force that truth holds. For example, if a woman tells pedestrians walking blindly across the street that a truck is coming towards them and that they had better get out of the street, she has the power of the truth on her side. The truck *will* come, and the pedestrians who do not listen will have it crash into them. Her words become related to the truth if spoken in truth most of the time. People will learn to listen to her more earnestly, because to do otherwise could mean suffering

consequences from nature. While she is aligned with the truth, she flows with its power, harnessing the power of nature. In the movie “Star Wars,” there is a term called *the force*, which is a good metaphor for the power of nature. Aligning yourself with the truth may be likened to aligning with *the force*. Truth is everywhere and in everything. You are more powerful when you align yourself with it, if only to step out of its way when it comes to disperse its consequences.

When you embrace lies, you align yourself with them, decreasing self-empowerment. Lies eventually eat up yourself like *the dark side* from the “Star Wars” movie. Lying is usually done to manipulate reality or people because you are feeling weak. If it works, it does nothing for self-growth but allow you to continue being weak. When the lie no longer works, you are left as you were: weak and ungrown; yet also you are a little bit older. So, like *the dark side*, it truly decays yourself. The grown self you could have been does not exist.

Evil deeds can be done in the darkness of lies but none in the lightness of complete truth. A child abuser abuses because he is aligned on the side of lies. He lies to himself about how he felt when he was abused as a child, lies to the people who abused him, lies to the children who he abuses, lies to himself about what he feels while he does the abusing, lies to himself about who is responsible for the abuse of the children, lies to himself about the children’s feelings from his abuse, lies to himself about the consequences of his behavior on the children, and lies to other people about his abusive behavior. If this person would align himself with the truth on a moment to moment basis, he could not continue abusing.

A person is empowered when he speaks the truth and disempowered when he does not. He may speak the truth to a blind woman that she walks near a cactus, to a wife that he cannot live with her verbal abuse, or to a friend that he felt hurt when the friend made a spiteful comment. The people who don't listen to the truth he speaks suffer consequences: the blind woman may fall on the cactus, the wife may lose her husband, the friend may share less intimacy with him. If he fails to speak the truth, he may suffer consequences: feeling bad for not letting the blind woman know that she was in danger; having to continue living with a verbally abusive wife; having to stuff his feelings of hurt so that his friend is pushed away from him.

When you become truthful with yourself, you are aligned with your truth. It may not be the whole truth all the time, but it is empowering; for if nothing else, it can lead you to higher truths. Allowing lies to surround yourself disempowers yourself and goes against the harmony and forces of nature. When you allow yourself to lie about yourself, you are at a disadvantage. Other people can play off of your lies, using the excuse that you were being dishonest so that they didn't know better. One late night I was working with a controlling woman who would constantly talk and wasn't able or didn't care to read my body-language. I had been giving strong nonverbal signals that I wanted to do my work and not talk; however, I allowed my truth to be verbally unspoken. The truth was not made plain; it was left to be misunderstood. In this way, I gave her the excuse of not knowing that I wanted to do something else, allowing her to continue using me to dump her verbal garbage. If I had spoken the truth that I wanted to get back to work, I would have held a more powerful position because the excuse would have been taken from her. If she still continued to talk, I could take the truth further by letting her know

that I need to leave the room to get what I want done. Or I could speak a higher truth, telling her she is not respecting me, and could ask her what is going on with her to want to do something like that.

If you don't follow your truths, you will get yourself into trouble. Your feelings are the truth of who you are. When you do not listen to your feelings, you experience natural consequences. Nature made us with feelings so that we could live in harmony with it. When you lie to yourself about what you are feeling, besides other harmful consequences, it becomes harder to get back in touch with the truth of your feelings.

Nature does not care if you listen to its truth or not. It will just stomp on the disbelievers and support believers. Sounds a bit like religion now, doesn't it? It is no wonder religion has been so popular as long as it has, because there is truth in it. Religion is an attempt at realizing the truth. True religion, though, is simply the truth.

-When have you recently aligned yourself with the truth?

-How did you feel just before you did this? Why?

-How did you feel at the time you did this? Why?

-How did you feel after you did this? Why?

-In regards to yourself and others, what happened as a consequence?

(Positive and/or negative.)

-What do you think will happen in the future as consequences, if any?

-When have you recently aligned yourself with lies?

-How did you feel just before you did this? Why?

-How did you feel at the time you did this? Why?

-How did you feel after you did this? Why?

-In regards to yourself and others, what happened as a consequence?

(Positive and/or negative).

-What do you think will happen in the future as consequences, if any?

## EPILOGUE

Now that you know what it takes to be yourself, you must begin *doing*, *feeling*, and *being*. All this reading, working, and thinking does no good if you do not begin putting into action what you have learned. You need to begin feeling each day, every day, more and more. Openness to feeling. Openness to being. Openness to yourself.

People can tell you all sorts of positive things and support you in all sorts of ways, but if you do not believe in yourself, you are stuck. You need to take the step of being yourself. You need to believe in yourself. No amount of belief from others will do; it is you, and that is all it must be. I can say this no stronger, for the next step is yours to take.

Love yourself. No one else can do so as completely as yourself. Only you are you.

When the wind blows hard and the leaves surrounding you fly away, you will be left alone to face the wind. Give to yourself the love now that will steady you in times of storm. Give to yourself your feelings so that a whole person will be there standing in the tempests of life.

## **APPENDIX A.**

(Answer the following questions after reading each part of the book: part I, II, and III.

Answer the questions as you tape yourself by asking the question out loud then giving the answer.)

1-What were your expectations of this part of the book.

2-Talk about any insights, understandings, or ideas you gained.

3-What did you find difficult to read, think about, or understand?

-Why?

-Is there something about it that reminds you of a part of yourself which you find difficult to accept?

-What is that?

4-According to the part of the book you just finished, how are you not being yourself?

-What gets in the way of you being yourself?

-If the last answer involved another person as being responsible, answer the question again so that you are responsible. If you cannot think of how you are responsible, think harder; your freedom depends on it.

- If the last answer depended on a circumstance you get placed in, what part do you play in placing yourself in that circumstance?
  - What can you do to be yourself more?
- 5-According to yourself, how are you not being yourself?
- What gets in the way of being yourself?
  - If the last answer involved another person as being responsible, answer the question again so that you are responsible.
  - What can you do to be yourself more?
- 6-What is the difference between your answers from questions 4 and 5.
- Explain the difference.
  - What answers are more empowering to yourself?
    - If your answers from question 5 were less empowering, why do you think you answered that way?
    - Were you afraid of something? What?
- 7-According to the part of the book you just finished, how are you being yourself?
- What helps you or makes it possible to be yourself?
  - How can you get more of that help?
- 8-According to yourself, how are you being yourself?
- What helps you or makes it possible to be yourself?

-How can you get more of that help?

9-What is the difference between the answers from questions 7 and 8?

-Explain the difference?

10-Any similarities between the answers in questions 4 and 7? How about questions 5 and 8?

-How are they similar?

11-Did you take offense of anything you read?

-What hurt or loss made you take offense? (Being offended is just another way of saying you are hurt and angry.)

-Can you relate it to anything similar that has hurt you in the past or is hurting you now?

-What do you think this relation means?

-Did you feel like it was a personal criticism?

-If yes, what investment would I gain by criticizing you—of whom I do not even know?

-Why? What else in your life do you take personally? Why?

-What hurt still lives within you which you have not mourned to make you so sensitive?

12-What did you really like in this part of the book?

-Why?

-How was it special to you in particular?

-What does it have to do with being yourself, if anything?

13-While reading this part of the book, did you think of others whom you felt needed to hear some of the ideas or insights?

-What sections was this happening in?

-Now, place yourself in each of these sections so that you are learning something from it, not someone else. Do this by seeing how it applies specifically to yourself.

14-If this is your first time answering these questions (Appendix A), skip this question. Do you notice anything you did different while answering the questions this time that you did not do before?

-What was it, and why the difference?

Wait a day or two, then answer the following questions in Appendix B on a clean sheet of paper as you listen to your tape.

## APPENDIX B

(Answer questions on a clean sheet of paper a day or two after answering questions from Appendix A. You do not have to make an essay out of your answers, just simple straightforward truth. Try answering the questions in order. Do not tape this section, just listen to the tape you made while you were reading the book and from Appendix A as you answer these questions.)

1-Are you answering the questions on the tape from the bottom of your heart of what you know is true?

-When you find yourself not:

-Answer them now (in writing) so that they are true.

-What was it you were trying to hide from?

-Have you tried to hide from this before?

-Explain what you get by hiding from this?

2-Do you have any body sensations, aches, or pains while listening to the tape?

-What are you talking about on the tape at the time you begin to feel them?

-Explain what you are feeling as if it is trying to come out through being a body sensation?

-Why do you think it happened at this time?

-Did something change in your attitude on the tape?

-Is there something painful you are bringing out on tape?

-See if you can find any pattern with respect to any of the above?

3-When did you feel really tired and lacking energy?

-Was there a pattern as to when this happened?

-What subject was being addressed?

-Explain the reason for the tiredness as if there was a reason.

-Was there something you did not want to face?

4-Note each time you laughed on the tape.

-Did you feel relief? Why?

-Was there something you had seen that may have helped you in some way?

-Did you feel anxious? Why?

-Were you reminded of some anger you have been holding in?

-Why do you think you laughed at that time?

-If you don't think you need to have had a reason for laughing, answer the last question as if there was some reason.

5-When were you most afraid to say something?

-What does this say about yourself?

-If your fear could speak, what would it be telling you?

6-What did you not want to hear while listening to the tape, if anything?

-Why?

7-Do you notice any patterns or similarities in your responses to the above questions in this appendix.

-Explain the reason for the pattern.

8-Do you notice any changes in your voice pattern, cracking, coughing, pausing, changes in pitch or intensity?

-At each of these times, did you feel anxious, uncomfortable, or have difficulty thinking?

-Why?

-What were you feeling at that moment?

-If you were to place some meaning in the feeling, what would it be?

-Look back at the last answer, ask yourself if it feels uncomfortable to you?

-If so, why?

-Read the last answer again; does it feel like the truth? (It is okay if you were not truthful and you would like to change it. Sometimes our defenses make it hard to be ourselves.)

-Add more truth to it.

9-What feelings most commonly come up for you on the tape?

-Why?

-Where are they coming from?

10-Look over your daily journal and think about your daily life. Is this congruent with the feelings you most commonly had in the tape?

-Explain the difference or similarity.

11-Did you have any thoughts that were common or had a similar pattern (perhaps all negative, positive, denying, blaming, making excuses, etcetera)?

-If this pattern could speak, what would it tell you about yourself.

12-What do you notice you are most sensitive to?

13-Describe:

-Who is this person on the tape?

-Is this person really you? Explain.

-If not, why? What needs to happen for it to be you?

-What needs does this person have? (Besides the obvious, food, water, shelter.)

-What are this person's strengths and weaknesses, and when is he most likely to show them?

14-Do you find yourself going into complex intellectual discussions?

-Why?

-What did it feel like as you were answering the questions with such complexity?

-If you cannot identify a feeling, why weren't you feeling anything? Are you hiding from a feeling? What?

15-Do you find yourself thinking that you are better than you are or what was said in the book?

-If so, why do you feel that way?

-Is it hard to admit that you can feel worthless?

16-In regards to any strong or nonexistent opinions you taped while reading:

-What does the intensity of your opinion tell you about yourself?

-Imagine a hurt that has created the strong opinion:

-What is it?

-Where is it coming from if you could pick a place in time and a person?

-If no opinion on the topic, why?

-Do you have opinions on anything?

-Imagine a suppression that has caused the non-existent opinion:

-What hurt are you denying? (Clue: it is probably related in some way to the topic you have no opinion about.)

17-Look at all the above:

-Do you notice any patterns, trends, or consistencies?

-What do you learn from them?

18-Any new insights, understandings, or ideas you have gained?

-What are they?

-Will they help you to be yourself more?

-How?

19-Whom have you suggested read this book or a part of it?

-Why?

-Is there something you want them to learn?

-What is that?

-Is that also something you need to learn?

-Are you diluting your learning of it by giving responsibility of learning it to another person?

-If so, what is making it hard for you to learn it?

-If they are not at the point where they can learn it, what do you need to learn to feel okay about them staying the same.

-What has stopped you from learning this before?

20-Is your perception of yourself different now that you have listened to the tape and answered these question?

-How so?

-What stopped you from seeing this before?

-Is some belief of yours different now?

-Why? What happened to change it?

21-Do you *feel* different?

-How so?

-What do you attribute this to?