

How To Be Happy



Bob Brown

<http://www.Life-howtobehappy.com>

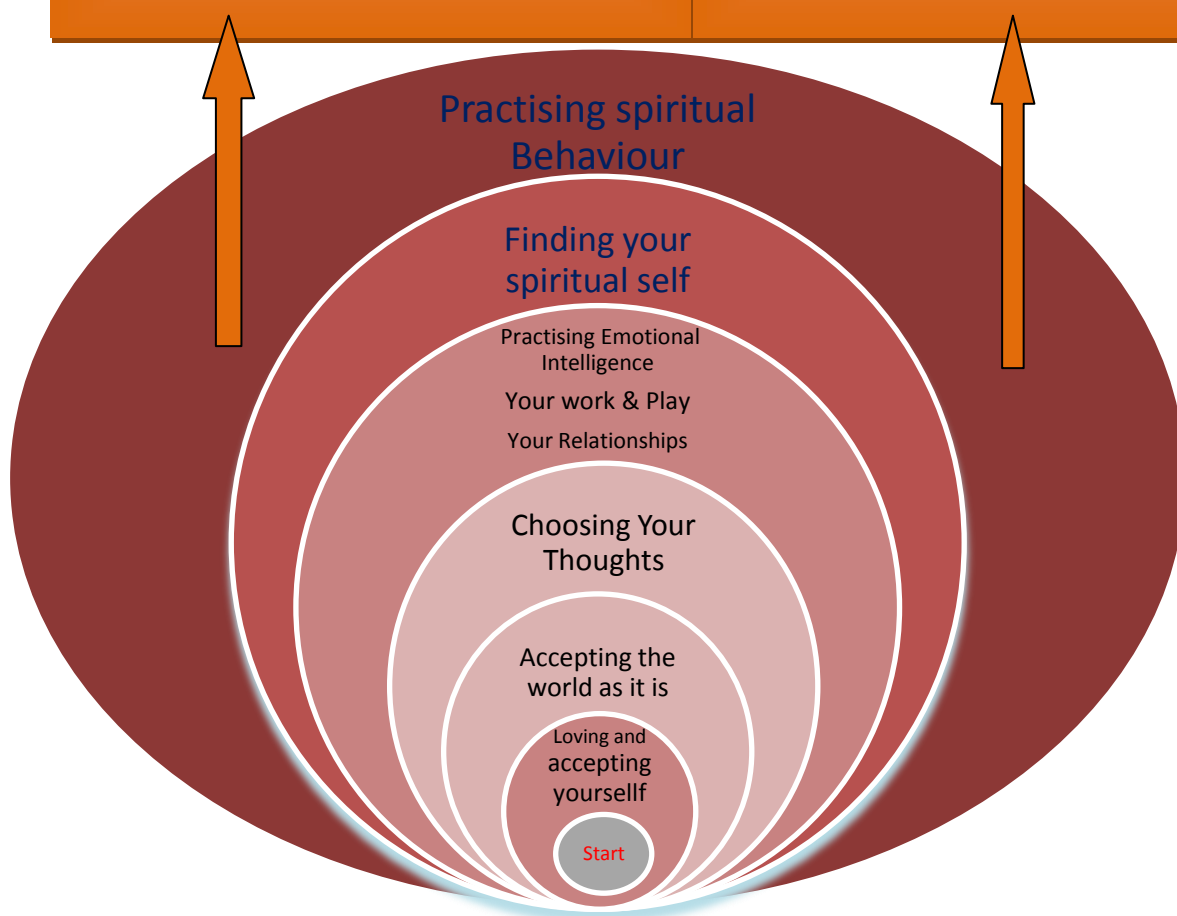
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Your personal journey for self development

Happiness- What will it be like ?

Inner Peace Serenity Calmness Tranquility Contentment Joy Humility Compassion Feeling love for yourself and those around you Being happy with your own company	Living in the moment Awakeness Awareness Paying attention to the wonder of life Feeling connection and part of the universe Seeing the beauty that is all around us Savouring each moment of your magical existence. Finding your own truth with religion and the big questions.
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How to be Happy - *This book really can change your life and show you how to find happiness*

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1. My Offer to You

Your Journey to Happiness

Sometimes life can seem tough and happiness very elusive.

In this guide, I will share with you an understanding of just what happiness is and how YOU can achieve it and be happy with a moment by moment, deep and sustainable love of life that is truly wonderful.

I've been thinking, reading and seeking happiness myself for many years and what follows has worked for me and is working for a large number of followers around the world and I sincerely hope will be of help to you in your quest for lifelong happiness, joy and contentment.

My starting point is to think about our lives on two levels – the Emotional and the Spiritual.

Emotional Intelligence (EI)

Spiritual Intelligence (SI)

Improving the skill and wisdom – or 'Intelligence' - with which we live our lives at these two levels is the key to happiness. The essence of my philosophy is that EI and SI are about you controlling your mind rather than being controlled by it. Further, the causes of unhappiness arise in the mind and the solutions are also to be found in the mind.

Each of us needs to start work on our EI first, and in the guide I explain how to do this. EI is about how we handle basic, raw and instinctive emotions with skill, maturity and perspective to enable us to avoid some or most of the unhappiness that arises where we are at the mercy of uncontrolled emotion. We can never be happy while we are still under the control of our ego, and at the mercy of negative emotions and negative energy.

How much effort you need to put into working on your EI will depend on where you are starting from.

Only when we have learned how to behave with EI can we tackle the understanding and application of Spiritual Intelligence. The prize and rewards for reaching some level of SI are huge. That is where true lasting and deep happiness can be found.

- *'I feel inner peace, serenity, contentment and love for myself and those around me and fun and bubbling joy most of the time'*
- *'At last, I feel my life is fun and I enjoy the ride and each day feel positive and buoyant even when times are tough'*
- *'I can really connect with other people and the important relationships in my life have improved and are more fulfilling'*
- *'I've swapped anger, conflict and upset for inner peace, calmness and serenity'*

You can and should choose your thoughts with care because what you think controls how you feel, and how you feel controls how you see the world, both overall and moment by moment.

I will show you how you really do create your life with your thoughts. Happiness does not come from events and what happens but from within. Later when I get deep into SI I will cover the Law of Attraction and show you how and why you attract your life, and how you can attract the life you wish for.

I will show you how to begin to develop SI by practising critical behaviours such as listening to your intuition, meditation, living in the moment, and feeling love and compassion for yourself and others. For me, SI is the awakening of the missing piece of most people, which addresses the ache that we feel that there must be 'more to life than this'. It has nothing to do with any religion, guru or deity. Some describe SI as 'Insight', or 'Awareness', and Buddhists describe the SI goal as "Enlightenment". What's for sure is that, whatever you call it, Enlightenment is very rarely a sudden and total transformation-a finishing line that we cross and suddenly we are perfectly spiritual people. It's not a place that you arrive at but a new way of looking at things, and a new way of seeing things .

My thinking has been influenced by reading a large number of 'Self Help' books and I've found that actually there is a surprising amount of common ground and although the language and terms may differ they are essentially saying similar things.

You will also find that I have been influenced a lot by Buddhist thinking. I would however emphasise that Buddhism is not considered to be a traditional 'religion', but rather as a philosophy and it is absolutely NOT necessary to be a Buddhist to adopt the principles I set out - or to be religious or believe in any deity .

I invite you to seriously consider embarking on a journey of practising Emotional and Spiritual Intelligence, knowing that doing so WILL lead you to personal Happiness. To be successful you will need to focus on where you are going and not dwell on where you have come from. I understand that you may currently be feeling unhappy, discontented and disappointed – but believe me you are not alone. Modern western culture is leading vast numbers into the unhappiness trap.

The rewards for following this journey will be well worth the effort. **Make no mistake, life can be so rewarding and joyful all the time.** Life is sweet. Life is a privilege. If you can free yourself from your ego and the delusions of your mind then you can skip and dance through life with the excitement and curiosity of a child, savouring every moment, full of love and compassion for yourself and those around you, really seeing the beauty that is all around us.



Thank you for letting me share this with you

Bob

2. Emotional Intelligence

2.1 Introduction

Emotional intelligence (EI) is the handling of raw, instinctive and basic emotions with skill, maturity and perspective and will enable you to avoid some or most of the unhappiness that arises where you are at the mercy of your raw emotion. One way of seeing EI is that it is about living life with skill and wisdom at the level where people appear to be separate islands and to be focussed on and looking after themselves. In this way you can learn to avoid the common traps and hazards that cause people unhappiness in the forms of eg anger, jealousy, and craving on potentially an almost continual basis. If a person does not ever understand and exercise EI then life to them will often seem very hard and painful.

Sadly many people do indeed not understand or exercise EI and are instead living in a brain washed trance. They are blindly obeying what society says they should do, how to speak, how to behave, and what to think. They are following a pied piper dancing to the repetitive beat of society's unrelenting conditioning through parental example, television, magazines, education, peer pressure, and cultural norms. They desperately want to be the same, be 'normal', and be 'cool'. The result is that they see a false 'reality' and believe it to be authentic. For example they actually start to believe that it really matters that their bodies conform to a society 'norm', or worse conform to a media promoted mythical standard of beauty and thinness that is anything but 'normal' or widely attainable. They actually start to believe that they must dress in a certain way, talk in a certain way, have enough friends on their social networking sites etc

Even more damaging society teaches them that they should be driven by the 'Self, Me, I' agenda, and be a slave to their ego, and thereby be unhappy most of the time believing what their Ego' perspective tells them. This is all a false reality, and there is no easy way to say this, but when we do not behave with EI, then we are deluded by our minds, and barred from being spiritual.

Of course we are not born with this false reality. Arguably children are born 'spiritual' e.g. they are born feeling unconditional love, have no ego, and live in the moment. As children grow we observe them being contaminated and brainwashed. Our challenge is to undo this conditioning in ourselves.

At its simplest level, we are beings that think and exist in (and only exist in) the moment. Like a PC if at any given moment we are running a virus i.e. suffering from a delusion, allowing in negative emotion, then we keep out spirituality. In order to develop and maintain a spiritual perspective, we have to begin by behaving with EI.

Your personal Journey of self development

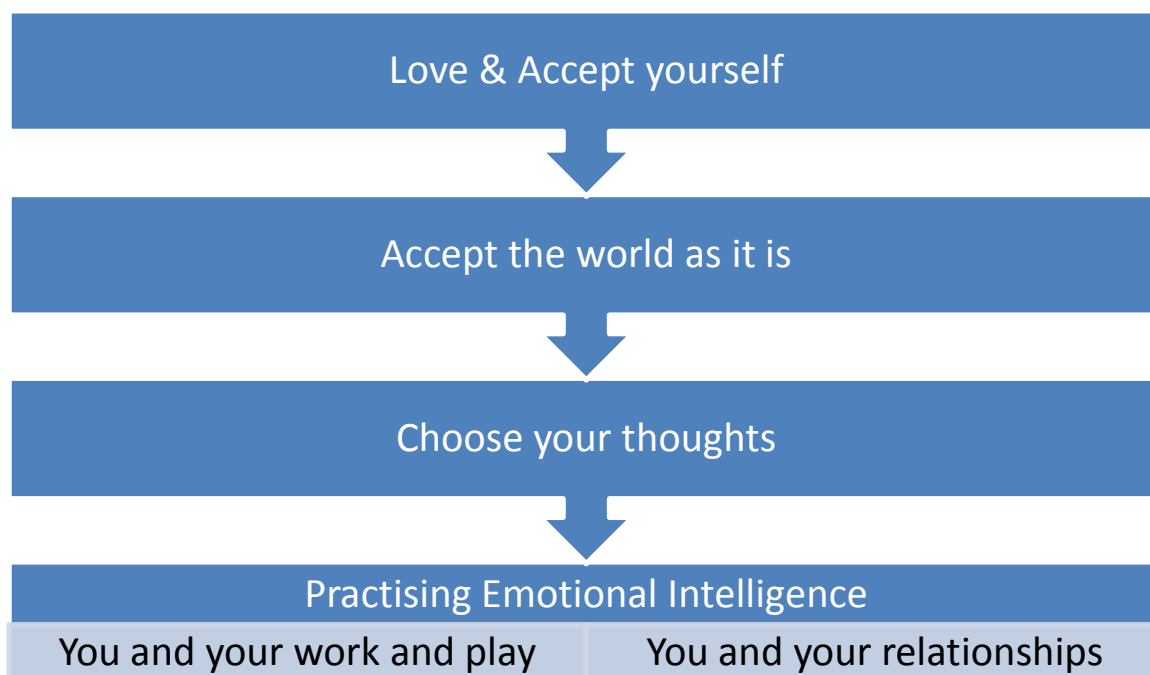
I invite you to seriously consider embarking on the journey of practising EI and SI that will lead you to happiness. As with any journey of self development to be successful you will need to concentrate on where you are going and not dwell on where you have come from. I really do understand how you may currently be feeling unhappy, discontented and disappointed and believe me you are not alone. Modern western culture is leading vast numbers of people into the unhappiness trap.

But you can be different and you can escape. To commence your escape I want you to put your past and how you are currently feeling to one side and get a blank sheet of paper and spend a few moments writing down how you would like to feel and what success would look like. If it helps refer to my description of happiness on Page 4. Then I want you to keep this visualisation of success to refer to at any time after you commence your journey, whenever your resolve or confidence is reduced by life's events.

I need to be honest with you and warn you that depending on where you are starting from this path may be very long and hard. There is no short cut or fast track. But the good news is that rather than jumping

ahead and trying to read and understand all about EI and SI all at once I do not want you to do that. In fact there is absolutely no point in that because it will not work because you will just feel overwhelmed. Also this is because there are some fundamental things you need to work on and really understand at the beginning of the path which are the essential foundation for moving forward in your transformation. For the time being I only want you to take the first three steps identified in 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 below one at a time without jumping ahead. Even when you have achieved just one or two of these first steps you will be amazed at the impact it will have on how you feel about your life and yourself. So the good news is that initially I only want you to read section 2.2 which is short in length but massive in its importance and I would rather you just read that three times than going any further at this stage.

Emotional Intelligence



2.2 Loving & Accepting Yourself

This first step may unsettle you in a big way but if it does you have taken the first step in your personal transformation towards happiness. I assert that there is no other path or route towards happiness than this first step

The foundation to developing EI is **to love and accept yourself**. You cannot make progress with EI if you have issues about your own self worth and lack self approval and self confidence.

Rather than skipping ahead I advise you to concentrate for now just on the advice in this first section 2.2. People look at others who they mistakenly believe are more fortunate and say, "Well I would be happy if I was them!" People say, "I could be happy if I was you. Try being me for a day and see how that feels!" Well that stops here and now.

I want you to make a new best friend **now** and that is YOU. You cannot make progress with EI until you understand and really believe that YOU are the best friend that you have. I know at first that is going to sound weird but trust me for now and try it. Take your new best friend out with you for the next day or so and feel immediately how much nicer life is.

Love Yourself

I do not mean loving ourselves in a narcissistic and vain way but in the sense of treating ourselves and having a relationship with ourselves that is just like the one we would have with another person who was 'the love of our life'.

Self care and self love are fundamental; not in an arrogant and egotistical sense but in the sense of self approval and acceptance. You ARE good enough.

Listen to how you talk to yourself-is it kind?-and ask yourself would you talk to a friend that way?

Value yourself rather than trying to find validation through others.

Get to know yourself. Enjoy your own company. Many people's lives are lived in such a whirlwind of social interaction and social networking, always searching for approval and endorsement from others, that they never spend any time alone or just being themselves. People become almost afraid of being on their own as if it indicates they are a social failure or reject. Time spent on your own just 'being' is more than just desirable, it is vital to maintaining who you are, and maintaining your confidence and knowing yourself. It also gives you the time and opportunity away from the constant bombardment of life to review your choices and friends and relationships to make sure they are all still good for you.

You should feel that it is fun being you, and that you are lucky to be you, and that there is no one else you would rather be. You are doing an important job being you that no one else can do.

We must love ourselves before we can unconditionally love everyone else. We have to love ourselves for others to love us. Others will treat you the way you treat yourself. You must enjoy your own company for other people to enjoy your company. You must enjoy spending time with yourself for other people to enjoy spending time with you.

Do not find identity in love from someone else. If we measure ourselves by how much someone else loves us we give away self worth.

Accept and be yourself

Accept and be yourself. Like yourself. You are good enough. Cut yourself some slack.

A strong sense of self worth and self esteem is the key to an anxiety free life. Self liking is the foundation for happiness. When you build up your self esteem you become less 'needy' of others.

Remain positive with your choices, and have faith in your ability to know what is right for you. One of the good things about growing older is that (hopefully) you build self esteem through experience, and the knowledge that you have successfully handled and will again successfully handle life's situations and problems.

Do not obsess about what other people think.

Humility

Embrace your inner disaster area and laugh at it. Don't take yourself too seriously. If you are the sort of person who is very hard on yourself, then be prepared to let yourself make mistakes and to encourage yourself when you do – extend the same care and love to yourself as you do to others. That does not mean excusing yourself, but remember we are all 'works in progress' and you can be open to yourself and others that this is the case.

Humility does not mean humbling ourselves but the ability to face ourselves honestly and examine our own behaviour and when we are wrong, to admit it to ourselves and others. In contrast, blaming the ones that we love in order to protect ourselves and our own ego is reprehensible. Similarly in our more arm's length relationships, being open and honest about our own failings where this is appropriate is not demeaning, it marks us out as someone who is confident, honest and free of their ego.

Be careful how strongly you hold your opinions and how sure you are that your view of the world and how things should be is the 'right' one especially as you get older. Develop the wisdom to know that issues are rarely 'black and white' and that 'things change' and that there are different ways of seeing things none of which are necessarily 'right' or 'wrong'. Have the wisdom to know that there are always two sides to everything. And really try to understand the other point of view and how that point of view might arise regardless of whether you agree with it.

2.3 Accepting the world as it is

The world is as it is – not how you think it should be or how you would like it to be. It is as it is. Accept it and be grateful you are here to see it at all. Do not look for or expect any natural justice in the universe. There isn't any - and neither is there a referee.

There that was short and sweet wasn't it? But this is also so fundamental that until you accept, understand and believe this basic truth you cannot make any further progress with EI. If you do not accept this basic truth rather than learning 'How life works', you will instead spend your life struggling with and fighting life's events and be at odds with the people in your life and will be constantly irritated and disappointed that your life is not as your mind wishes it to be, or thinks it should be. I want to help you understand how the world works so that you can work with it, *as it is*, rather than fighting it and being constantly disappointed and frustrated.

I appeal to you to realise and understand that this is what you are doing-fighting life and the world. Your emotional and intellectual energy and resources are being consumed and wasted by this fighting moment by moment. You cannot be happy and have inner peace if you are always fighting this battle. This second fundamental truth is perhaps just as unsettling as step 1.

If you spend your time and energy hoping for things to be other than they are, or wondering why or how something has happened then you are lost. I ask you to really understand that it is absolutely futile and irrational to fight something that *already is*. It means that you are opposing life itself. Start living and embracing your real life, not the fictional version that it is in your head and see how things start working for you rather than against you.

Do not struggle with life-accept life is as it is and not as you would wish it to be-Enjoy the ride and Go with the flow. Our relatively long lives in modern times living in rich nations surrounded by comforts, safety, technology, and abundance are extremely fortunate on a scale that few appreciate and absolutely not typical or representative of the lives experienced by our predecessors, nor probably by those who will succeed us.

Actually you *can* change the world-or at least the version of it that you see and experience and I will show you how in section 3.3 on Practising Spiritual behaviour. We will get onto practising spiritual behaviour after we have built the foundation of a smooth running and stable life applying EI. But for now I just ask that you accept the above statement - **The world is as it is**-and think about it and really understand it.

2.4 Choosing Your Thoughts

The third step on the path to happiness is to understand and really believe that it is possible and necessary to manage your thoughts rather than letting them control you.

You are now ready to start trying to do this and this section will show you how.

Choose Your thoughts with care

You can and should choose your thoughts with care because what you think controls how you feel, and how you feel controls how you see the world, both overall and moment by moment.

People look for and want peace and harmony in their world. But you have to understand that you need to look inside yourself to find it. If you are at peace and relaxed on the inside then you will find that the outside world that you see will be more at peace.

You may not fully understand this yet but you really do create your life with your thoughts. Further what you are thinking now is creating your future life. Happiness does not come from events and what happens but from within. You really can decide in advance whether you are going to have a good or bad day and through your own thoughts and actions attract the commensurate result. Later when I get deep into SI I will cover the Law of attraction and show you how and why you attract your life, and how you can attract the life you wish for.

Your thoughts and how you see the world.

Understand that thoughts emerge from pure consciousness and are then reabsorbed in it, just as waves emerge from the ocean and dissolve back into it. Once we have understood this we have taken a leap towards inner peace as the thoughts have lost their power to disturb us

Much of what we think and how we initially see a situation comes from negative motivations especially craving, aversion and ego. Try to understand that these are just thoughts and are transitional and have no substance in reality. For example, anger is born in the mind, lingers for a moment or two, and then can be allowed to dissolve there. In reality there is nothing substantial that can explain its tyrannical influence over our lives. Unless we see this we end up fixated on the object of anger overtaken by destructive emotion. If on the other hand we see that anger has no substance of its own it rapidly loses all power. Filter it out and replace it with a positive thought about the situation.

I would like you to think about the following everyday example which illustrates how what we initially and instinctively think about a situation is not necessarily the truth or the reality.

The phone rings at home. Immediately your mind will tell you who it wants it to be for its own selfish reasons and its belief that it can control reality. But when you answer it you find instead that it is an elderly person, perhaps even a close relative, who wants some information or help. Your mind goes into overdrive. It immediately casts a black cloud over your consciousness. You are too busy. You do not have the time. Why me? Why now of all times? The harder you try to dig deep and do the nice thing and give this person some quality time, the more your mind will be frantically tipping sack loads of negative thoughts over you about how you need to bring this to a rapid conclusion as it is a complete waste of your time.

But what is the Reality? In truth you probably can afford a few minutes-what were you doing before that was so precious? See that your mind does not really know how valuable this conversation will be or not be to you or the elderly person. Just because you have such a strong response from your mind it does not mean that it is true or Reality. You are in control - not your mind. Don't tolerate that old selfish and predictable reaction.

Here is the alternative way of thinking about this situation in an Emotionally Intelligent way.

"I am going to give this person some time and really LISTEN to them because I have learned that if I give people time and truly, actively listen, I will nearly always find out something that is interesting, stimulating and possibly pleasurable and of benefit." Say to yourself, "I now live in the moment. I know that I am lucky to be here at all to have this conversation and by the end of it even if it was not that valuable to me I can almost guarantee that it will have been useful to the caller and in all probability the highlight of their day. And the positive energy that was created during the call will enhance my own well being and self esteem for the remainder of my day."

So just because you have a thought – which is often a conditioned reaction anyway- IT DOES NOT MAKE IT TRUE.

I really urge you to start to NOT BELIEVE EVERYTHING THAT YOU THINK.

Banishing negative emotion, and developing EI can more or less be summarised by that single sentence.

Mental state and mood:

Feel the excitement of living and life and its richness of opportunity. In the brief time that we are here you cannot scratch the surface of what there is to do. Wake up to each new day with the excitement of a child in your heart and make a plan to fill it with worthwhile and affirming work and play. Live your life with total enthusiasm as if you were rushing along beside a beautiful river or canal where you cannot wait to see what is around the next bend.

You have the choice to be in a good mood or a bad mood. You CAN control how you feel and behave. Focus on all the good things in your life rather than dwelling disproportionately on the things you wish you could change.

Live in the moment and handle each new moment with skill and freshness. I have introduced the expression 'live in the moment' for the first time but it is a very well used term that most readers will have heard many times before. Living in the moment is fundamental to happiness and as such you will find a great emphasis and a lot more detail on what this really means when you get onto this section in behaving with SI. But for now I want you to recognise that increasingly people are unable to give the here and now their attention preferring to always be thinking about the past or the future or e.g. distracted by their smart phones and other electronic gadgets. It is becoming increasingly rare nowadays to see someone who is not staring at their phone regardless of whether e.g. they are walking along the road, or sitting on a train or even worse sitting with a friend or partner. Nowadays many people are never really 'present' and just take a momentary glance every so often at their actual surroundings and situation preferring to immediately re-immense themselves back into diversionary distractions.

If it works for you use your favourite music to lift spirits. Never underestimate the power of music to induce mood change. How does it work? How can some music e.g. Enya, if that is your taste, instantly lift your spirits into the Heavens such that you are full of love for life and everybody? It's actually very simple. Uplifting music suppresses negative thought and emotion and frees you to live in the moment and see Reality i.e. just how wonderful it is to be alive.

However always remember to make listening to music or the news or watching TV etc a conscious and positive choice with a beginning and an end. You will not be able to have a successful relationship with yourself and be aware of your thoughts if you fall into the trap that so many do nowadays of never turning the TV or radio off and so it is always in the background bombarding and distracting your senses. More and more people are unable to just 'be' and feel restless and uneasy when they are unoccupied or not being bombarded by media. This is a symptom of the underlying problem that when they are free to think they are swept away by negative emotions.

If you like reading newspapers and listening to or watching the news a particular issue to watch out for is media induced downward spirals of depressing perceptions of how 'bad everything has become', what a 'mess everything is' etc when such attacks on your peace of mind are designed to push your buttons for their own ends i.e. circulation or numbers of listeners / viewers. Little good comes from such sessions of depressed thoughts about political and social matters when you usually cannot do anything about it, and the story is being simplistically misrepresented to you anyway for maximum impact.

Strive to be:

- mentally and physically active.
- someone who feels –Joy, Excitement, Thrills, Sadness
- someone who feels that it is fun to be you.
- relaxed and calm
- upbeat, positive, witty and funny in your social contacts. Be fun. Spread positive energy. People like others who make them feel better. Do not always be a taker from other people.
- irrepressible.
- impervious.
- indomitable.

Be able to manage your emotional life and not be hijacked by it e.g. paralysed by depression or swept away by anger. The easiest way to distinguish between our emotions is to examine their motivation (mental attitude and objective) and their results. If an emotion strengthens our inner peace and seeks the good of others, it is positive, or constructive; if it shatters our serenity, disturbs our mind, and is intended to harm others, it is negative. As for the outcome the only criterion is the good or suffering that we create by our actions and/ or words for ourselves as well as others.

Learn to identify and not to trust conditioned responses that tell you that you should respond to events by feeling sadness that people or life are not as they should be. The inability to manage our thoughts is the principal cause of suffering. Learn to tone down the ceaseless racket of disturbing thoughts through the wisdom of knowing that although you can make efforts to manage and affect your future you cannot ultimately control the future.

Do not be seduced by short term highs of petty conversations and gossip. Rise above this behaviour.

Avoid being driven by uncontrolled negative emotions such as anger, irritation, worry, excessive pride, hatred and jealousy. We are the cumulative product of what we have thought and thus every incident of aggression, jealousy or loss of control (temper) is a setback in the quest for serenity and happiness. Envy and jealousy derive from the inability to rejoice in someone else's happiness or success. The truth is that envy and jealousy are absurd since someone else's happiness cannot deprive us of anything. Only the ego can be wounded-this is another ego issue. Blaming others and holding them responsible for things we do not like about our own life is a sure way to an unhappy life.

Do not be affected by minor irritations. Do not believe that when these occur you have been personally singled out! Have the wisdom to know that e.g. when you are in a traffic jam, you are not really *in* a jam, you *are* the jam just as much as everybody else who is in it. Most of the time, 99% of our situation and circumstances are wonderful. We are deluding ourselves when we concentrate only on what we perceive to be bad. When your mind is trying to tell you that something is a 'problem' and that we should be unhappy about it, e.g. unwelcome noise, boisterous children, rain, heat, etc, say to yourself, "What if

everything was OK? What if this were alright? What if nothing around you holds any power to make you unhappy?"

Develop enhanced awareness of the formation of thoughts, which allows for the immediate identification of an angry thought as it arises, and for its deconstruction the next instant. Work on your thoughts one by one analysing the way they emerge and evolve and gradually learning to free them as they arise thus defusing the chain reaction that allows thoughts to invade the mind. Watch closely for aversion thoughts which become more prevalent as you get older. A prime example is inbuilt prejudice towards those who are different especially from different races and cultures.

I invite you now to start to realise that the basis of inner peace and happiness is the absence of negative emotion, or if you like, the absence of irritation, annoyance and agitation. This will be a recurring theme and principle in this guide.

How you hold your opinions and views

When making a case or expressing a view do not become personally aligned with the view. A view or opinion is just that – a view. You are not that view or defined by it. There are two sides to everything and very little is black and white. Some say there is no right or wrong – just different ways of looking at things. Obviously you can conjure up an extreme example where the moral position appears cut and dried but in general it is true that most debates are complicated and not trivial.

So do not make winning a debate or argument a matter of pride and ego. Just calmly state your view without emotion and mentally shrug your shoulders and think that you hold your view, they are entitled to theirs, and there is no reason why someone else's view should cause anger to you. Under different circumstances you could just as easily be putting the case for the opposite view!

Do not be deflated by the mood or behaviour of others

Have no expectations of other people. Do not allow your inner happiness / mood to be hijacked by a knee jerk reaction to the negative moods of people close to you around you. Just because they are morose or picky or stressed that does not mean you have to rise to it or react to it.

In particular do not allow the knee jerk reaction of disappointment or deflation when you experience what you interpret as selfish and inconsiderate behaviour by others for example when driving. Try to cultivate being impervious to the selfish and aggressive actions of other drivers.

When family members or close friends around you are stressed rise above it and take it in your stride. Do not feel irritated or frustrated by it. People are who they are. If they cannot cope they cannot cope. Do not believe that you can change the people around you. The more stressed, depressed, tense and uptight someone else is the more they will believe that you are the problem and not them. Do not ever expect to rationalise with a tense and stressed person and absolutely do not attempt to convince them that they are the one who is stressed. You cannot expect others to not be stressed just because you are not. They may be stressed for any number of reasons but for females this is especially likely to be hormonal, and for everyone overload, pressure and tiredness. You may be frustrated and disappointed that they are stressed and thereby spoiling the day but what will be received and perceived is that 'you are getting at them', and that 'nothing is ever good enough'. This is a perception gap that cannot be bridged and no good ever comes of trying. Just refrain from judging, definitely refrain from passing comment, and divert your own thoughts and attention onto something independent. Just offer unconditional love.

Anger

No good can ever come from allowing anger to take over your mind. Remember that this unbalanced/distorted view of a situation has only arisen in the mind, and has no substance in reality. Anger and rage seriously affect your ability to deal with a situation. Anger is bad for your health.

When I see an angry person I know that is not a happy person. They may be angry because they are unhappy, or unhappy because they allow themselves to get angry!

When someone or a group of people are making you angry ask yourself why does it bother you so much? What is it that is really annoying you?

Try to see issues in perspective. Often when you have got angry you will remember that you got angry, or perhaps that you had an argument, but will not remember what it was that you were angry about. The negative energy and damage caused by anger lives on long after the issue ceases to matter. So ask yourself will the issue that is making you angry matter in a year's time or possibly even next week?

Think about Others' Needs.

It is not enough to just concentrate on maintaining your own mood when close ones around you are uptight, tired, and stressed. In fact to maintain your own mood you need to positively apply yourself to meeting their needs. This is a time to give them unconditional love, consideration, and support. In a relationship try to predict when these situations will arise. It is a golden rule that you do not look for any emotional energy and support from them during these times.

Above all just listen and ask open questions and do not be in a hurry to offer off the shelf solutions. Just because you may believe you have a better perspective, and more EI, this is not the time to thrust your beliefs on another.

Feel emotion. It's OK!

Emotion is not weakness or, as some males assume, limited to females. It is crucial to give emotions free expression and allow the energy to dissipate rather than to suppress emotion. Do not be ashamed to cry. It is a bodily function with a purpose.

In modern culture we have a tendency to bury grief, or turn our backs on emotion, and refuse to allow ourselves compassion. We confuse self pity with self care. We refuse to show sympathy for our own pain. This is repression. The trouble with this is that strong emotion demands to be acknowledged and processed and ignoring it does not make it go away. When we swallow our feelings they emerge in other ways e.g. depression, lack of confidence, or anger. Showing compassion to ourselves is emphatically not self indulgent. Positive thinking is good but do not turn positive thinking into a stick to beat yourself with like I must get over this and not feel or process the sadness or pain.

Feeling melancholy and contemplative or reflective / sad / nostalgic are natural emotions. Do not beat yourself up over them. But remember they are only thoughts and cannot harm you. The main thing is to feel at all –so embrace a range of emotions and enjoy the ride. Feeling melancholy is **not** depression. Emotional reminiscing and nostalgia is a natural consequence of having had good experiences in the past and is not depression. You cannot always be high. If you were it would not be a high!

Do not worry

Constantly worrying about what might go wrong has become a very common affliction. Many people feel anxious even when there is nothing specific or tangible to feel anxious about.

Worry really is a pointless emotion. Do your best to plan for your future, manage risk, but let go of the outcome. You must know and understand that usually in life the adverse things that happen are not the things that we worry about but instead tend to be unexpected and unforeseen events that occur at random. Worrying about what may happen is entirely pointless and arguably may cause illness and self fulfilling prophecies due to our own behaviour attracting the very things that we dread. Living is like climbing a ladder –don't look down as this can cause fear and freezing.

A healthy and confident acceptance of yourself and the outside world, really knowing that things are as they are, is the way to achieve a positive optimistic outlook.

After socialising with a friend or relative do not give any time to worrying whether you have said the wrong thing. If you have tried your best to be pleasant, loving, and friendly then leave it at that. Nobody is able to express themselves perfectly all the time and it is inevitable that after any bout of socialising there will be one or two things that you may wish you had put differently or perhaps not mentioned at all. It's life. The most likely situation is that the other person will not have noticed or remember.

Why does the mind left unchecked have such a strong predisposition to worry? Human beings have evolved to be worriers, and to look for the worst case scenarios and interpretations as this has conveyed survival advantage. The people who survived were the ones who attended the most to potential dangers of hostile invaders, predators or adverse weather and made the best provisions to protect against these risks.

Beware the EGO:

An exacerbated sense of self importance i.e. pride is guaranteed to cause you pain several times a day when your pride is hurt. The delusion of self or ego is one of the most powerful of human instincts and at the same time one of the most potent sources of wrong action. Selfishness or rather the feeling that we are the centre of the universe i.e. self centredness is the source of most of our undesirable and destructive thoughts. Guard against and be on the alert for knee jerk emotional responses fired out by your ego. An exacerbated sense of self importance causes and enables us to be hurt by past and current events, or words. Your ego leads you to feeling resentment to those who try to belittle you or are jealous of you due to their own lack of confidence. It is common for people to feel that they are being humiliated but without ego humiliation would not exist.

Living trapped in an isolated bubble of the ego also causes loneliness and depression even when surrounded by company.

Avoid negative mindreading-that perceives neutral comments as criticism or an attack. Check what is meant before becoming defensive.

Other nonsense promoted by the ego is feelings of:

Inferiority e.g. I am not good enough

Insecurity- e.g. I am not popular, lack of friends, social ineptness, lack of social skills,

Inadequacy- e.g. I am no good at a hobby. Ego also leads to obsessive and unhealthy ambition.

Feeling Low

Occasionally you may feel low without any apparent reason. I preface the following comments with the qualification that some unfortunate people suffer from regular acute depression which has a physiological cause e.g. chemical or hormonal imbalance and clearly the following does not apply to such people who need medical treatment. I am absolutely not making light of their plight. In the following I am referring to people in general who do not have a medical condition but who suffer occasional bouts of feeling low but with no rational or identifiable cause.

Do not believe your mind when you are feeling low. Usually it occurs for no apparent reason. It does have causes and can be overcome. It can be because you are tired and not slept enough. If not it is almost certainly a sign that you are not being sufficiently mentally and intellectually active. It is always the case that it is because you are concentrating on 'Self, Me, I' instead of looking outwards at your family and friends and everybody else. This is going to sound extremely harsh but the fact is that feeling low is essentially the result of selfishness and laziness. The way out of it is to give out unconditional loving kindness and thereby feel this reflected back. If you allow yourself to wallow in feeling sorry for yourself it will only get worse, and you will become a burden to those around you and no good will come of that. In

this situation you will give out no positive energy, and thereby not receive any back. It is ok to feel the pain but then put it to one side, say 'not you again', manage your mind and move on. Get involved in something mentally stimulating and interesting and fast. As soon as you are on the up again count your blessings and if necessary write them down. See the good in your life which is enormous.

We often focus on a few circumstances that are not going well instead of all those that are. For example, we leave our comfortable homes and family in the morning to enjoy a full and blessed day in our life, be it work or play. We set off full of optimism and good spirits and then our peace of mind can be spoiled by being caught in a rain shower or discovering a scratch on our car. Look at the broad picture and see we have so many positive things in our life, and many if not most other people on the planet especially in the third world have far worse problems. We are as happy about our lot in life as we choose to be. It is morally wrong to take all the good things in our life for granted.

Do not keep telling others about what is 'wrong' with your life. You are the sum total of what you have thought so you are the one who will keep hearing all this negative energy about your life!

At the EI level we should not expect our lives to be perfect. But try to understand that what we see as imperfections are usually small and insignificant and meaningless in the context of the totality of our lives, and in any case these imperfections e.g. the broken off car wing mirror, your wallet or purse being stolen, the snappy negative comment from our friend, the inconvenient rain shower- these were always how it was going to be, and your mind cannot control that- as much as it would like to. When you see your life in perspective you will start to see that overall it is in fact 'pretty much perfect'. And when you start to develop SI you will definitely start to feel that 'life is perfect.'

Intolerance of others

It is widely believed that the faults that we are most intolerant of in others-the faults and behaviours that cause us the most irritation are the same faults that we ourselves possess and are repressed in ourselves. Thus observing our reactions to faults in others is an opportunity to learn about ourselves and grow.

Whenever we feel particularly resentful and self-righteous about someone else's behaviour we should reflect on exactly what it is triggering this reaction in us. Acting as a mirror others can sometimes make us angry. These 'mirror' emotions can be positive, but more often are negative.

If someone rouses your anger, check whether what is angering you is actually a quality that you share (or alternatively do not share) with that person. For example, if we are irritated by how much socialising somebody does, or how popular they are, it is highly likely that we are dissatisfied with our own abilities and performance in these areas. If we resent that a male friend is popular with women then it is possible that deep down we wish we ourselves were more popular with women. Thus the things that we do not like in others are probably the same things that we do not want to acknowledge and confront in ourselves and we subconsciously resent that the other person is 'better' than us and more able than us in that particular characteristic.

Similarly if we have to fight hard to suppress or repress a weakness in ourselves for example a tendency to feel sorry for ourselves, then we may find that we particularly dislike or despise that same weakness in someone else when they display it. It is as though we are thinking, "Well we could all be feeling that way but some of us overcome it or rise above it". So if you find yourself disliking someone, my advice is to think more deeply and check whether the quality you are reacting negatively to is one you fear to find, or would dislike in yourself.

It is even possible consciously to hold a strong opinion which is opposite to our real sub conscious attitude; this is repression. For example, we may have an aversion to homosexuality but sub consciously would like to experience being the opposite sex or act out transsexual fantasies. If we despise people who are overweight it is almost certainly because we are frightened of being overweight ourselves and know that could happen and /or has happened in the past.

When someone or a group of people are annoying you ask yourself why does it bother you so much? Are you being totally honest with yourself about what is really upsetting you? Take the everyday example of when you hear a group of friends or children noisily enjoying themselves laughing and giggling having fun but perhaps a little too loudly and it is annoying you. Ask yourself honestly is it really the noise that is such a serious problem to you or are you in truth resenting the fun they are having, and the good friendships they are enjoying? How you feel about someone else usually reveals more about how you are than it does about the other person.

2.5 You and Your Work & Play

Practising Emotional Intelligence

The next 14 pages or so- i.e. the rest of Section 2 –are guidance on how to behave with EI in most everyday situations at work and play and how to manage your relationships with friends, family and your partner. As you start to apply EI in more and more situations and areas of your life you will avoid the traps and hazards which cause suffering and unhappiness. You will gradually get your life on a more stable footing where you are not constantly fighting the fires of upset and unhappiness, and will progressively feel more in harmony with yourself, your friends, work colleagues and family. As you progressively start to feel that your life is generally 'OK' and running reasonably 'smoothly' this will free up the emotional and intellectual resources and energy to start to develop some SI where real deep and lasting happiness and inner peace is to be found.

You get out what you put in.

Now I know you have heard this said a zillion times before but I would like to elaborate on why it is true. I want to show you a different way to think about effort. When we get into practising spiritual behaviour a fundamental ingredient to being a happy and contented person is that with every human activity you must LET GO OF THE OUTCOME. It is always the positive energy, the good mental attitude, the effort, the good karma if you like, that went into a job that is also the result of the job, and NOT the outcome. It is what you personally put into a job that will be the lasting effect of the job in terms of contributing to how you feel afterwards-not the physical outcome. By all means derive satisfaction from a completed quality job but always know that it is the effort that counts, i.e. do your best and let go of the outcome.

You will know how sometimes when you finish a substantial job eg it might have been decorating a room or for the more ambitious installing a new bathroom, that finishing can often seem like an anticlimax. It can often be that you realise that you actually enjoyed doing the project more than the pleasure you get from the end result. And this is why I assert that it is what you put into a job that will contribute to how you feel afterwards. In my life I have done a lot of DIY and moved around a lot and I no longer even own or have access to the vast majority of the DIY projects that I have completed. You will probably find the same that things move on all the time and for many reasons you will not derive long term satisfaction and well being from the physical outcome of your work, only from the positive energy that you put into those projects.

I am freeing you here and now from all results that you would previously have viewed as failures or unsuccessful. These are delusions of the mind. If you have done your best and put positive energy into a job then with regard to your happiness and well being it is a success regardless of the physical outcome.

Let me give you an example: Your car needs repairing. You have never done this particular job before but you read about how to do it on the internet and assess that you have the requisite experience and competence to tackle the job. You maybe also talk to a more experienced friend. You gather up what you think will be the necessary tools. You put on appropriate old clothes. You agree with those around you that you are going to concentrate on this job for the period of time that you estimate that it will take. You then settle down and attempt the work in a relaxed and positive frame of mind in a methodical and organised manner. When you get the affected area stripped down you find that the problem is not quite as you expected. You know that this sort of situation is common in life and it has no power to annoy you or disturb your inner peace. You maybe are going to need another specialist tool that you are going to need to borrow or rent. You maybe need some additional replacement components. It becomes clear that you are not going to be able to finish the job today. Or maybe you realise that for various reasons you will never be able to finish the job and must put it all back together and take the car to a garage. All the time you were enjoying the challenge, interested in the engineering, enjoying the privilege of living and breathing and accumulating more experience and learning.

Now was that a failure or a success?. It is absolutely a success because at the end of it the positive attitude that you invested for the duration has made you a happier person. You smile and shrug your shoulders with the wisdom that sometimes you win and sometimes you lose and that is all part of the endless fascination of life. The physical result is not the result of the job because although you did your best YOU CANNOT CONTROL OUTCOMES. Physical outcomes are life and you know by now that you must accept life as it is –not as you wish it to be. Of course you would have wanted to get that job finished but you accept that does not always happen.

All you have to do in life is get up each day and do your best. Try to operate with skill and to the best of your ability applying your knowledge and experience but you must LET GO OF THE OUTCOMES. You cannot control them and that is about accepting the world as it is. Understand that if at the time you always try to do your best, and try to always want the best for those around you, then there is no such thing as failure. All there is is LIFE and experiences.

You need to be mentally and physically active to be happy and content. Activity causes the production of endorphins which prevent depression. You get out of life what you put in more or less on a daily basis. There is very little inertia. You must keep interested in, and stimulated by, a variety of projects and activities whatever they are. You also must maintain the vitality of each of your activities by continuing to be consciously aware of where you are going next in the development of each.

You should pit your wits and talents against the job or game, to the best of your abilities and to your full potential, and enjoy the Intellectual challenge. Ultimately there is little difference between playing an intellectual game or sport to the best of your ability to doing a job to the best of your ability. Be passionate about what you get involved in and do.

As with any living thing, plant or animal, there is no option of stagnation. You must keep exploring and learning, and growing; the alternative is atrophy, decay and withering.

You have heard the saying 'Seize the Day' and this is a good adage. Do not fritter the day away-set some objectives and form a plan of what you plan to do. It does not matter if unexpected things occur which divert you from your plan. The important thing is to approach the day with healthy effort and intent and positive energy.

Sensual desire and Craving

The servicing of sensual desire gives temporary pleasure but not inner happiness. Pleasure has its' place but do not confuse it with happiness-they are not the same. There is nothing wrong in taking pleasure from enjoyable experiences big or small - the danger lies in the wanting. We must understand that the mind constantly craves pleasure and is insatiable. The way to view it is to group all sensual desires together as a bundle-ie sex, food, drinks, music, beauty, art, warmth, scents , pleasant touch sensations and entertainment, etc and also include the craving for feeling good from the company of your loved one or friends. A large part of the mind is an insatiable fire which craves to be fed with continual sensual pleasure. As soon as one sensual desire is satisfied, the mind immediately moves onto the next. The truth is that all searches for happiness which are lead by the senses are doomed to failure. This is because all sensual pleasure is temporary and worse still, we habituate to it over time, which means that any sensual experience which is continued for too long, or to excess, will lose its attraction and become an irritation or boring. It is frustrating that even after the best possible meal, or sex, or whatever, the mind very quickly starts to seek a new stimulation to amuse it or even worse, seeks a repeat experience of the sex or meal that it has just enjoyed. Sensual desire arises again and again but the more pleasure you get the more you want and need .The mind is insatiable and our senses can get more and more dulled.

So don't confuse the pleasure of sensual satisfaction with true happiness. And if you look around you at people who are truly happy, I can guarantee that they will not be people drinking greedily from the cup of sensual desire; they will embrace it, but with an awareness and sparingness that retains its value.

A development of craving is the urge to try to hold onto sensual pleasure (rather than just repeat them). When we see beautiful sights, or experience a wonderful taste, we ache to be able to preserve it, or permanently capture it but, of course, we cannot as everything is momentary and impermanent. What is more the way our senses work is to respond to change and if any sensual input remains unchanged we quickly become numb or habituated to it.

All the time that we are preoccupied with pursuing temporary sensual pleasure we are by definition not investing in more worthy thoughts and behaviours that would enhance our enduring happiness. Whilst we are beset with desire and the possibility of its gratification we can no longer see that there could be something else much more important to develop and address in our lives and that is SI. If we allow ourselves to be like leaves in the wind, blown about hither and thither by our desires then we are missing out on much deeper fulfilment. That means we have to 'manage' our desires – and practicing moderation is a good way to start. For example how about trying for starters moderation in eating. The thinking is that if we are able to put a fence around one of our desires, it gives us a chance of addressing some of our others because it frees up our mind and energy

Craving will always end in disappointment and dissatisfaction. Remember you cannot be in the moment with ideas of gaining at the same time. Always believing that you want and need whatever material thing is fastest, biggest, best or newest leads to being dissatisfied and never having enough. When we are obsessed by a person or thing we take on an illusion that they are 100% desirable and ignore the reality of their faults and disadvantages. The possession of what we desire is precarious, momentary and constantly threatened. It is illusory as ultimately we have very little control over what we think we possess. This is not to say that you should not enjoy material things-that is absolutely fine-just keep them in perspective and do not become dependent on them. Being sexually demanding and having frequent sexual expectation and desire is craving. Being demanding of time with the one you love because it makes you feel good is another form of craving.

Money and Material Possessions

This is probably a good place to bring up the thorny subject of wealth. You will have heard many times that money does not make you happy, but do you truly understand why not, and believe it? There are plenty of unhappy wealthy people around so why is that? Money is a commodity but has no value in and of itself to bring you happiness. The reason is that in the Western world, we already have more than enough wealth and possessions that our level of wealth is not an issue in determining whether we are happy or not. People can construct a full life of loving, friends, and e.g. listening to music, reading, walking, cycling, playing a sport etc within the limits of very modest wealth. For example, if you are of modest means you can still have some of the best and most memorable holidays of your life in the most beautiful locations merely by going camping or hostelling. The old adage that 'the best things in life are free' is so true! It is also absolutely true that the most precious and valuable gift you can give your children or your elderly relations is your time.

Whilst money cannot bring you happiness, **money can certainly make you very unhappy** if you allow yourself to feel envy and jealousy when others have more than you, or if you spend your time worrying about what others have.

It is fine to enjoy and derive pleasure from material possessions without guilt but beware real attachment. In other words make sure you are not dependent on them. Try to learn how to be satisfied thus avoiding craving and the cycle of chronic discontent. It is all about whether your motives and emotions are positive or negative.

Let me give you an example of this. Suppose that you want to own a classic car. It really does not matter how much or how little the car is worth. What matters is how you think about it. There is nothing

intrinsically 'wrong' about enjoying a material possession but being materialistic can make you very unhappy indeed. Here are some positive and negative ways of thinking about your possession:

Negative Emotion, Negative Energy, Route to Unhappiness

- My car will be the envy of my friends and neighbours.
- Everyone will be jealous of my car.
- Everyone will think I am prosperous and important when they see me in my car.
- I would hate it if for some reason I no longer could afford to keep my car.
- I like my car but deep down wish I had got a newer model, or one with a higher specification and then I would have **really** loved it.
- I would not like it if one of my friends or neighbours now buys the same car, or a better one than mine.
- I resent the fact that my friends and neighbours seem to ignore my car and will not acknowledge how smart and great it is.
- I don't care that someone else will be made envious or uncomfortable by me having this car –in fact I will relish the fact.

Positive Emotion, Positive Energy, Route to Happiness

- I like having my car, but am not dependent on it, and if and when I no longer have it, I could walk away from it with no regrets or attachment.
- My car does not define or change me in any way.
- I love my car because I see in it the positive energy, ingenuity and skill that engineers over the years have contributed to its design and development.
- I love my car because I see it as a beautiful thing and am glad that I am able to derive pleasure through my appreciation of it.
- I know that we never truly 'own' any material possession and are merely temporary custodians whilst we are passing through this life.
- I feel warmth and connection with those people who have 'owned' this car before me and who will 'own' it after me.

Hobbies

You cannot scratch the surface in a lifetime of what there is out there to explore. It's an Aladdin's cave of treasures. And the internet has changed our lives and potentially enriched them to a spectacular degree. It has sent the boundless availability of information, and entertainment into the stratosphere. There is a bewildering and mind boggling choice and availability of a kaleidoscope of information, fiction, non-fiction, entertainment, games and social networking to amuse and interest us .

You should be able to relax and enjoy what you enjoy without feeling guilty. If you derive enjoyment from e.g. reading or watching a film this is a good thing. If you are enjoying doing something you are never wasting time-quite the opposite in fact. Do what you really enjoy doing- e.g. reading, watching films, walking, cycling (my list!) or whatever energises and interests you.

There is a balance to be struck and you need to be selective, and not just driven by habit, because there are dangers in being involved in too much and being too busy. Do not pursue any hobby out of habit if it has lost its freshness and become routine. Have a break from that hobby and invest time in others that for you still generate excitement.

You do not need a lot of money to enjoy most hobbies. Be clear what your hobbies are and make a list of what they are and their main elements. If necessary rationalise your list, and be prepared to be ruthless, to end up with a manageable number of discrete hobbies. Maintain a diary or log of what the next steps

are, or the next ideas to explore, or knowledge to acquire for each hobby. If the total of potential projects/ initiatives to expand / progress your hobbies is greater than you can realistically address in the next few weeks then that is no bad thing. The important thing is to maintain an appetite and enthusiastic anticipation for your hobbies.

Try to avoid having just one hobby to the exclusion of all others which is a common human behaviour. I have met so many people who only ever seem to do one thing. Apart from the lost opportunities, being excellent at one thing can give rise to the delusion that you are excellent and something special all round. You do not have to be the best at everything you do. Make an effort to try new things and be ready to laugh at yourself. Make yourself go outside your comfort zone, and pit yourself at a range of challenges in order to retain your humility.

Avoid becoming obsessed with achieving a goal when your time would be more productively invested elsewhere and the task has gone beyond that which is necessary. It is helpful to give a hobby momentum and direction to set goals but avoid over emphasis on them. Always remember the hobby is the doing –not the end product or outcome. I will say more about this in the section Visualisation & Goals when we get into practising spiritual behaviour.

Approach your hobbies with zest, organisation, and structure. Give them the same energy, and quality of application that you give your working life.

Looking After Your Body

Most people need to feel that they are 'fit for life' and be comfortable with their general weight and fitness to have the energy and motivation to strive to follow a journey of personal development and managing change at the emotional and spiritual levels.

You need to strive for a level of health and wellness that provide the platform to build on and develop Emotional and Spiritual Intelligence.

There is so much written on keeping fit, and eating and drinking sensibly and healthily that I would just encourage readers to choose and define their own practices, diet and exercise programme. You would need to consider what are the key ingredients for you and construct something that is relevant and challenging, but at the same time achievable for you. It does not need to be long. In fact I would suggest keeping it simple and to one page. However you need to accept the general deterioration of advancing years and be realistic about striving for levels of fitness that are commensurate with your age.

Overcomplicated and crowded life

Our lives can be frittered away by detail. Simplify and simplify again. Rid yourself of the superfluous. Simplifying your activities does not mean sinking into laziness-on the contrary it means acquiring a growing freedom. Do not over clutter your life such that you are permanently busy and cannot savour anything or do anything properly without the need to rush it. Similarly declutter your life and home of material possessions that you do not particularly need or have time to do justice to. You have nothing to prove and no appearances to keep up.

Do not believe that you always have to be working, busy, or physically active. There is nothing wrong with sitting and reading or just thinking. Curtail the endless stream of pointless talk that continuously flows from our mouths-the illusion that we need to be talking all the time.

A practical technique that is very effective in managing your life is what I call 'setting out your stall'. What this means is being up front and clear with those around you about what you want to do and what you do not want to do. Other people are not mind readers and you need to communicate your own wishes and particularly the exact nature and limits of the contribution you wish to make to any shared project, work, or other human activity. If you do not then you can end up involved in activities (both work and play) that you are not committed to. Generally people around you in your life will want to live in harmony with you

and will fit in with your wishes and choices. If your wishes do not work for them, and they still want you to undertake different tasks, or make a greater or smaller contribution, or have different priorities they will tell you and this will be an invitation for you to consider their views. If you use this technique you will find it prevents resentment building in your relationships.

2.6 You & Your Relationships

People ARE who they ARE

Not only the world IS as it IS, people ARE who they ARE. What do I mean by that?

Friends will not speak or act in accordance with preconceived notions of how you think they should. It probably isn't personal. They are just different from you. People are the people that, for whatever reason - that they want to be, or think is right to be, or do not know of another way to be.

People blow hot and cold - that is what they do. They have their own lives to lead. They may be in a hurry, stressed, tired, depressed, or unable to cope or perhaps jealous and resentful. Accept that that is how people are. Accept that people are the way they are, and they behave in that way not to offend us, but simply because that is the way they feel and think. We cannot make other people behave in ways that we would like. The only person we have the power to change is ourselves. If we do not accept them as they are then we are saying that they should behave in a certain way according to criteria that we believe to be correct. In other words I am right and they are wrong.

Understand that people who are stressed will often believe that it is you and not they, who are stressed. However frustrating that may be, it is a fact.

We can sometimes be surprised by how similar we all are and how others, on occasions, think and act the same way as ourselves. But that should not be your expectation. Just because we are making an effort to behave with EI it is illogical to suddenly expect that those with whom we interact will also be behaving with EI. It is strange how our minds seem to make that jump when there is no basis for it.

Our starting position should be that at the EI level we are all islands and we should expect other people to think and act differently to us. When people behave differently that should not disappoint us - it should be our expectation. When they do behave the same as us or as we would wish them to then that is a bonus.

Be careful with Criticism

You can do a huge amount of damage through criticism and usually much more harm than good. And remember the damage is cumulative in a relationship. If you tell someone they are wrong you are very unlikely to make them want to agree with you because you have struck a direct blow against their intelligence, judgement, pride and self respect. Hurting their feelings will make them want to retaliate but never make them change their mind.

How then to deliver criticism? For a start always make it clear that you yourself may be wrong, show respect for someone else's opinions and never tell them they are wrong. Remember encouragement of what is right is the safest and most powerful motivator. Never get emotionally aroused and it is a good aim to try to never argue with your partner. Criticism is a destroyer of a primary relationship.

Do not give your opinion without first thinking about how the other person will feel about what you are saying. Be clear in your own head what you are hoping to achieve and where you want to end up as the result of the conversation.

Professional Relationships

Within any organisation (business or club etc) people will often behave in a manner that optimizes their self interest. They may work hard to conceal their underlying motivation but it is there nevertheless. Organisational behaviour and politics are deep seated and complicated. There will always be base rivalry between contemporaries, between departments etc. Most people are to varying degrees ambitious to acquire perceived status, power and / or money and as a result motivated to optimise their career

progression but again are very skilful at concealing that. Many people are engaged in a struggle between on the one hand being a team player working for the common good, and on the other hand trying to optimise their own position and look good and standing out themselves. In any organisation although it may appear that groups of individuals are 'in the same boat' and have a common interest greater than themselves, in fact if you analyse it you will see that almost everybody has a slightly different orientation or frame of reference that can lead to people who should be 'alike' behaving in different ways. In any organisation of people there will always be background networks, alliances, friendships, and enemies which can be based on a huge number of parameters some of which will be apparent and some will not. For example people may unite with and support colleagues of the same gender, education (or lack of), marital status, ethnic group, nationality etc. There will always be those who support you and want you to succeed and those who do not for reasons that could be almost anything and often you will never know why. At its simplest level people may just have a fear of and resist any form of change. There will always be prejudice towards other groups who are perceived to be eg unfairly advantaged or more capable or less capable etc usually without any real foundation and thus the potential for demonstrating poor EI is almost without limit!

The important thing is to be yourself, and be true to yourself. In an organisation where the culture and values leave something to be desired then not following the culture may sometimes put you at a disadvantage in respect of your own 'advancement'. But it is necessary and fundamental that to be happy you must not follow or copy styles of behaviour that you know to be wrong. This is about understanding that we are the sum of what we have thought and we need to aspire to keep our thoughts ethical and good for as much of the time as possible. In organisations behavioural styles are very contagious and often roll down from the top through all the layers of the organisation. Although it takes courage when you stand out against a negative culture and do 'the right thing' you become a beacon of an alternative style and behaviour which is also there to be copied and followed. The knowledge that you are spreading positive energy where it would be all too easy to 'keep your head down' and just conform will without doubt enhance your feelings of happiness and inner peace.

In business, some people want to provide good and fair service, but sadly many people are simply driven by greed, want your money and basically are not to be trusted. That is how they are. Take heart; continue to try to be honest and remember that it is irrational to be depressed by people who do not behave in the same way.

Friendships

Your success or otherwise with friendships and perceived popularity has nothing to do with your worth or adequacy as a person. Do not give house room to feelings of social ineptness, and poor interpersonal skills. You are who you are.

Exercise diversity in your appreciation of other people especially those from different races, cultures and age groups. Genuinely know and believe that people are fascinating and everybody has a story to tell, or has a talent, and may surprise you if you do not approach chance meetings with bias, prejudice, and fixed preconceptions.

Day to day relationships are vital so maintain a sufficiently wide group of friendships and do not overly rely on any one of them. Absolutely do not put all your eggs in one basket since over reliance on a single friendship has a high risk of ending in tears. Watch out for this and avoid. This is a very important element of a happy life. You will never be happy if you spend your life obsessing about what a particular friend has said or not said or has done or not done. Maintaining a wide set of friends protects you from this source of anxiety. You should also always remember that when a friend does not say or do what you want, it probably has nothing to do with you, and there can be a thousand reasons most of which you could never know or guess.

Do not look for or expect perfect friendships. You get back from them what you get back from them. Life is as it is-not how you want it to be.

Put regular effort into relationships. They need a lot of maintenance.

People are who they are. Do not allow yourself to be hurt, or wounded when friends do not say or do in accordance with preconceived notions of what you think they should do. It probably isn't personal. They are just different to you. Absolutely have no expectations from anyone. All pleasant, enjoyable and positive experiences with friends and family are a bonus and NOT an expectation or right. From time to time friends or family members will unexpectedly turn against you and find fault with you. Look for the message that may be contained as a learning opportunity. Is there something you are not giving? But always remember that the events and happenings side of life is not where your inner happiness comes from and therefore you should not be emotionally vulnerable to such outcomes.

Do not carry on with friendships which have run their course, and are worn out, and no longer mutually good or rewarding for you. Time is limited and you should periodically choose and review your friends. It is a waste to keep investing time and energy in the same friendship out of habit where you no longer get anything positive out of it.

When dealing with people remember we are not dealing with creatures of logic. We are dealing with creatures of emotion, bristling with prejudices and motivated by pride and vanity.

Regrettably, many people are threatened by or jealous of people who are more financially 'successful' than themselves however superficial, or deluded you understand this to be. Thus it will always be more difficult to attract and maintain friendships with many people as you become wealthier even though you know this to be absolutely irrelevant. However people who show themselves to be shallow in this way would be unlikely to be able to provide any valuable connection of depth.

There are some well documented and widely accepted techniques for encouraging people to like you eg:

Encouraging people to like you

- Be genuinely interested in other people
- You have to like yourself for others to like you.
- Smile . People with a warm genuine smile are attractive.
- Make frequent eye contact.
- Remember and use people's names
- Be a good listener-encourage people to talk about themselves. Most people love to talk about themselves .Listen to what people say and seek opinions. People love being listened to. Ask open questions seeking to understand them better – and avoid pushing your own solutions
- Do not talk over people. Never be in a hurry to deliver your own off the shelf solutions as if it is all obvious.
- Know that you must have a good time meeting people if you want them to have a good time meeting you.
- Talk mainly about the other persons interests-not your own
- Make the other person feel important and do it with sincerity

Family relationships

Much of what is written under friends applies but particular points to your family relationships are: You will often hear it said that blood is thicker than water meaning that the bonds of family are stronger than those with unrelated people e.g. friendships.

Families are never easy and everyone has their story to tell about the difficulties and frustrations and disappointments of their family relationships. But generally they are always worth investing in and persevering with because we are genetically programmed and have evolved to stick together and support each other within families. Family ties run very deep and it can take a life time to realise just how deep. As the years pass the relationships that are most likely to endure are those with close family members and when push comes to shove and the going gets rough the people who will be there for you and offer you unconditional love and support will be close family members. Within families it is often sadly the case that people do not like each other that much but they will nearly always love each other.

Primary Relationship / partner

Much of what is written under friends and family applies but particular additional points to your primary relationships are:

At the EI level we are all islands however close you want and believe your emotional relationships to be. Everyone, even within couples, has their own agenda and their own individual frame of reference. Investing in your EI will have an impact on your most important partner relationship. Think of it as creating a bridge to your most important other and therefore enhancing the potential for a deeper relationship.

We should not take each other for granted and presume that our relationship is for life. A good marriage needs regular negotiation as our needs and circumstances change if it is to last.

The 'and they lived happy ever after' love story is a fantasy. In every primary relationship, however good, there is conflict. EI enables you to negotiate these conflicts. There are two individuals with two individual sets of feelings and behaviours. These parameters need constant adjustment and negotiation. But they also need honesty in that you must tell your partner what your needs are. People are not mind readers and if your partner does not always know your needs without you telling them it does not mean they love you any less. Above all successful primary relationships need regular maintenance. In our society today commonly people have unrealistic expectations of love and sex. As a result divorce rates have risen and half of all marriages end in divorce within seven years, and many of these are triggered merely by disappointment rather than irretrievable breakdown.

You must always continue to invest in your relationship and make quality time for each other. If your lives are very busy there is nothing wrong with planning this into your schedule. It is particularly important when children come along that a couple make regular time just for each other and even indulge in what is popularly referred to as 'Date Nights'. It is remarkable how revitalising such time is to a stressed relationship.

How we feel comes from within. Feelings of love and joy that we feel when we are 'in love' exist in us already and the object of our love is the catalyst that awakens these feelings in ourselves. However we must not be reliant or completely dependent on others for our happiness. To be happy you must firstly love yourself, and secondly you must have some sort of interior life i.e. your own interests and hobbies and indeed other friends. I have seen this expressed as 'we must have a relationship with ourselves before we can be in a true relationship with another.' It is a heavy burden to make another human being feel responsible not simply for our happiness but for our very existence. Furthermore in the long run partners need to feel proud of and respect their mate, and for this to happen you must have more in your profile than simply loving them.

Sometimes I hear about people already in relationships, possibly even married, who cannot understand how it can be that they fall madly 'in love' and obsess about someone they hardly know. It could be for

example someone they have met in a chat room on the internet. This is all the more confusing for people when they already have a partner or spouse and they wonder what to do. The explanation to this is further proof that the feeling of 'being in love' is already in you and is awakened or reawakened by the idea of the other person rather than the reality of the person. The other person, who you admit you hardly know, is a construct of your mind. This is what people sometimes refer to as 'being in love with being in love!'

It is a fact that it is likes that attract. A successful primary relationship is one based on similar values, attitudes, attractiveness, appetite for life, energy levels, sense of humour, morals, and often wealth or wealth potential and also the same weaknesses and hang ups, and insecurities. When a couple are together this may not always be apparent as couples tend to polarise as a check and balance on the others behaviour. As a common example both partners may enjoy and prefer a tidy clean home but if one partner becomes too obsessive about this in the opinion of the other, the other is likely to back off and leave it to his partner as what they do will be more than enough. Were the first partner to back off, or discuss an agreed and shared approach and schedule then both partners would be seen to have an equal interest in the cleanliness of the home. True love is interpreted by many as meaning finding a soul mate – someone who matches our values, interests, and ambitions and will be a good parent but the reality is that it is also about learning how to accept some inevitable incompatibilities that form the bedrock of a lasting relationship.

You largely control the partner that you have by the way that you treat them. It is often true that you get the partner that you deserve-it is in your hands- as your partner will often take their lead from you. Think about being a good partner yourself rather than questioning whether your partner is one all the time. It is largely true that if you are loving, loyal, kind and considerate to them then you will receive this in return. Your primary relationship will largely be a mirror of your true self. Unconditional love for someone else is not however about what love you get back. When we feel love it is reflecting the love that is in ourselves and our spirit soars. The love that we feel does not come from the other person but is awakened in us. Being with the right partner is about how you are when you are with them and what they awaken in you, and secondly and equally importantly whether you feel unconditional and unselfish love for them and their well being.

You must be trusting and not jealous and possessive as this negative emotion is a relationship destroyer. Possessive attachment is not true altruistic love because we are primarily focussed on self love through the love we claim to have for another. Altruistic love is the sharing of life with our partner and contributing to their happiness. We are concerned for their happiness and instead of wanting to possess them we feel responsible for their wellbeing. Instead of anxiously awaiting some gratification from them we can receive reciprocal love joyfully. Similarly being needy and emotionally vulnerable is not altruistic unconditional love.

It is fundamental that you have to relish your partner and encourage them to be themselves. It is by allowing them to be free and to follow their ambitions and explore their talents that you possess them. You must recognise your partner's individuality and give them space. Your partner should feel that you are totally on their side and similarly you should feel that more than any other person your partner is totally on your side. This can be termed 'supportiveness' and it is one of the most crucial factors to a successful primary relationship. The most successful couples retain a profound sense of their own autonomy. Good relationships cannot flourish on the romantic myth that merged souls are essential. There have to be spaces between the togetherness so you can come together. You have to learn how to give each other space and stop making them account for everything. Furthermore eroticism requires a respectful distance. The more fused we feel with our partner, the more likely we are to find sex dull or repetitive

It is possible to fall in love 'at first sight' when you meet someone and others more qualified than me have attempted to explain how this can occur but it seems likely that intuition would play a big part. In the early stages of a relationship people may be attracted by the novelty and freshness of the new partner, perhaps their personality and of course by passion and physical attraction. But often you do not really know the object of your love. Real love is different and comes when you know and can see the other person clearly in their individuality and from this distance does true closeness come. Real love is an open

eyed recognition of separateness, but of separateness connected. It is about two people who make a positive commitment, and free choice to make that connection.

The person that you believe your partner to be is a projection of your mind. It is likely that you glorify and idealise your partner but in practice they have faults and have traits that are not always nice just like you. Similarly they will have secrets and thoughts that they will not wish to share with you just like you. So be realistic with regards to your expectations of your partner. When you argue and your partner is not as you wish them to be take the wider view and continue to assess overall whether you are suited. It is likely that you are far more alike than different.

Try not to be vulnerable. For example when your partner prefers to follow their own agenda e.g. see their own friends, rather than spend time with you then rise above it, accept it and do your own thing in a positive frame of mind. When you want to do something with your partner, perhaps even just to talk to them, they may prefer to just read or sleep and if they do accept it. The space created will usually open up some other option or possibility. If the one you love wants more time apart and personal space then respect that, and accept it. It does not mean that they do not love you as much—they are just different to you.

The main destroyers of a primary relationship are defensiveness (inability to accept feedback and criticism due to ego), criticising your partner, and stonewalling (giving your partner nowhere to go with dissatisfactions and concerns about your relationship). You absolutely must not allow a 'soup of discontent' to build up. Good communication and honesty are vital. Honesty about our ambitions, desires, and how we would like to be loved is crucial. Too often we expect our partner to have the same attitude to life or to know by osmosis why we are upset. Intimacy is about reaching out and showing our vulnerability. Argument can be healthy and not necessarily the sign of a relationship in trouble if you carefully say what you really feel and really listen to your partner.

It is a fact that most men will not be happy to go without sex for excessive periods and women would be misguided to believe otherwise. Men are capable of huge love, loyalty and devotion but usually only within the context of a sexual relationship. Women on the other hand are capable of huge love, loyalty and devotion but usually only within the context of a relationship where the man is absolutely faithful.

And what if you are unattached and looking for love? In our culture today many people see 'love' as the solution to unhappiness. With breath taking naivety you frequently see people advertising for a 'soul mate' in dating columns like they were ordering a pizza. But until you have understood EI 'love' (and by 'love' in this context I mean a new primary relationship) will never be the solution to unhappiness. The best advice to people in this situation is to try to see what life is about and how it works from the EI perspective and secondly stop trying to force their imagined agenda and concentrate on broadening their social circle by taking up new activities rather than chasing romantic liaisons. You need to be open and flexible and allow life to unfold in its mysterious way.

You also need to ask yourself honestly if you are ready to be 'in love'. To be in love you must be 'in love' material; this is just the same as to have a best friend you must be 'best friend' material. Maybe you are not ready yet and maybe that is why it has not happened yet. You must be capable of giving unconditional selfless love to another human being, and to genuinely want the best for another person. For it to be possible for another person to awaken these qualities of generosity of spirit in you, they must be present in you already. Maybe, if you are honest, you like your freedom too much to really want the day to day negotiation that being in a relationship demands. Remember that your emotional life is largely a reflection of you. It is far from being just dependent on meeting the 'right' person or finding your 'soul mate'. In truth most people who have successful relationships would admit that there may be other potential partners out there with whom you could be happy and make a life. It is much more about you being the right person than you not finding the right person. The potential to be 'in love' must be inside you but the good news is that everybody can, if they really want to, become a worthy candidate when they develop the necessary EI.

The Basics of Good Parenting

There are countless good books on parenting and this section does not attempt to replace them. These are just some of the basics.

The most important foundation is to be loving to your children, to tell them you love them regularly, and cuddle them frequently. Similarly you should encourage them to express their love for you in return. The feelings of security that you give them through your love, the value you give them as a person, gives them the courage and strength to explore the world both inside and later outside the home. For healthy development in later life lots of physical contact in the form of hugs and kisses is vital. If a child lives with acceptance, friendship and love he learns to find friendship and love in the world. If a child lives with approval he learns to like himself.

Modern society has evolved to become highly democratic and where the freedom and rights of the individual are prominent features of our culture. Children pick this up from a very young age from a multitude of sources and as a result what absolutely does not work is an autocratic style and an attempt to impose a dominant-submissive relationship.

I once heard someone say that good parenting can be summarised as 'Firm and Loving'. Actually if I wanted to reduce good parenting to just 3 words then firm and loving is pretty good. Firmness is our refusal to give in to the undue demands of the child, or to indulge his every whim. Once we have made a decision in line with order and consistency then we must maintain it. The child soon catches on-just as he does if he learns that through persistent pressure and nagging you can be broken down. Firmness means stating calmly, and assertively, but without being dictatorial what the position is and the needs of the situation are. The point is it is not about forcing the child to do what you want. Instead inform the child in the vein of, "Well that's just how it is". Never make the battle personal, be consistent, and never give in!

It is not what you say to children that ultimately shapes their characters-**it is what you do**. Children do as you do –not as you say. Children follow the examples you give them of what you actually do in thousands of actual day to day situations. So for example the way the parents treat each other and behave towards each other sets the pattern for all the relationships in the family. If the parents are warm, friendly, caring, and loving towards each other then usually the same relationship will develop between the parents and the children and between the children themselves. If the parents are selfish towards and / or competitive with each other then the children will follow this example.

For example you can tell children a million times that they must be honest but eventually one day a situation will arise where a parent is faced by temptation and has an opportunity to profit through dishonesty. Your child will be watching closely to see what you do and it is that example that he will remember and follow in the future.

All children need constant encouragement. When children are learning new things do not just seize on what is wrong with what they have done, and how it could have been better. Instead encourage them. If a child lives with encouragement he learns confidence and a child that lives with praise learns how to appreciate things himself. Conversely if he lives with criticism he just learns to condemn. Every child needs continuous encouragement like a plant needs water. Children really do want your approval even if at times it does always seem like it. The lack of encouragement and appreciation is the major cause of misbehaviour. Stimulating competition between siblings is not encouragement-it only reinforces the status quo; it emphasises the hopelessness of the situation to the discouraged child, and fear in the successful child that it is important they maintain their position of superiority.

Try to avoid the fallacy of the punishment and reward cycle. Punishing a child by shouting, slapping or denying arbitrary privileges will not teach your child what you are really trying to teach. All that happens is the child becomes more and more confused by your illogical behaviour. Similarly a system of rewarding children for good behaviour is as detrimental as a system of punishment. Treats for good behaviour will only teach your child an attitude of 'what's in it for me'. You are not training a dog or a dolphin! The point

is that you must be natural and straightforward in ways that a child can understand and make sense of. All punishment or reward must be the logical consequence of their action. For example if a child behaves well in a situation where he is amongst a group of adults partaking in a special activity then his reward should not be something unrelated like sweets. It should be that you teach them that because they have learnt to handle themselves well in an adult environment then they will be able to enjoy and partake in other similar events in the future. Similarly punishments must be the logical consequence of the misdemeanour. If punishments are not the logical consequence of the crime e.g. being shut in their bedroom you will not teach them whatever is the real thing you are trying to teach. Instead you will teach them that the world is an illogical place where adults are unpredictable and can at random withdraw their love and support for reasons they do not understand. For example if your child refuses to put a coat on to go outside on a cold day your punishment should not be anger or physical force but instead to let the child go out and experience the cold for himself. You can always secretly take the coat in the car so it is there when he realises his folly.

Similarly if a child will not eat his meals at mealtime then do not fight him or try to force him. Let him experience hunger between meals and say calmly that since they did not eat their lunch they are probably feeling hungry. In other words your lessons and training should be delivered not as a battle of wills, and without emotion or ego. You are there as a parent to teach how the world is and how things work in an 'it is as it is' style. Never make your conflicts with your children personal. Children are very quick to see the justice of logical consequences and will usually accept them without resentment. Obviously there are limits-you cannot e.g. expose your child to the logical consequences of playing in the road but in your act of prevention you must still explain calmly and without making it a personal battle that until a child can be trusted not to go in the road then he must play only indoors or possibly in the garden.

I see parents all the time who boss their children around and bark at them without making any attempt whatsoever to explain the reasoning for their ruling. In supermarkets for example when children are mithering for goodies parents often just bark that they are not having this or not having that. A child cannot know that he cannot have the things he sees and desires. Why not just take a second to explain with some respect the reason which may be that something is unhealthy, fattening and not good for you, or maybe is too expensive. Then the child will understand.

Always show your child respect and never humiliate them. Only correct your child when it is absolutely necessary. Most of the time they will be able to see how to improve on a job or task for themselves. If we only ever pay attention to mistakes or imperfections we discourage our child. When a child is constantly corrected then the child becomes fearful of making a mistake.

When raising children it is very important to not only be consistent but also to maintain routine.

Avoid giving a child undue excessive attention. A child who seeks constant attention believes that they only have significance when they are the centre of attention. He feels that unless he gets attention he is worthless. This is a slippery slope to creating a monster. There are great dangers in being over responsive to repetitive demands for attention. You must be prepared to kindly and respectfully put limits on the amount of attention you are willing to give to your child as there are no limits to the amount that they will seek. Be selfless as a parent but that doesn't mean letting your children do whatever they want but it does mean putting their needs before your own.

When your child is growing older try not to be vulnerable. For example when your child prefers to follow their own agenda rather than spend time with you then rise above it, accept it and do your own thing in a positive frame of mind. The space created will usually open up some other option or possibility

And most importantly play together and have fun together with your children.

3. Spiritual Intelligence

3.1 Introduction

So have you now fully mastered EI? Well do not worry because neither has anyone else but practice changing your beliefs and behaviour in manageable bites and treat each day as an opportunity to practice more skilful EI. You are now ready to move up to understanding and practicing Spiritual Intelligence (SI). Congratulations! You do not have to be totally emotionally intelligent to be able to experience and practice SI in some aspects of your life. In any area of your life where you truly understand and practice EI you are ready to move up into SI in that area. Few people are so saintly that in some situations they do not sometimes regress and act in a childlike or emotionally unintelligent way. But if the general direction is up and one of inexorable general progress towards practicing EI in more and more of our life then that is the best we can hope for.

SI is the combination of applying EI with the practising of a number of spiritual behaviours, which I will elaborate for you, such as listening to your intuition, living in the moment, and feeling love and compassion for yourself and others. SI is expressed as the awakening of the missing piece of most people that addresses the ache that we all feel that there must be more than this to life. SI comes entirely from within and is the route to happiness. It has nothing to do with any religion, guru or deity. One way of seeing SI is that it is about living life at the level where we appear to be connected with each other, and to be at one with, and an integral part of the universe. Some describe SI as 'Insight', or 'Awareness', and Buddhists describe the SI goal as 'Enlightenment'. Whatever we call it, it is very rarely a sudden and total transformation—a finishing line that we cross and suddenly we are perfectly spiritual people. It is much more likely that you will be 'better' in some areas than others and behave with more skill in some areas than others. Enlightenment may be achieved for periods of time, sometimes only for an instant, and in some situations.

What does it feel like to be spiritual and really see Reality? Some of its main characteristics are to feel love for yourself, your loved ones, and for the beauty and magic of the universe and life.

Rather than thinking about this in respect of 'areas of your life', see it instead in the context of 'moments of your life'. We are creatures that only exist and think in the moment. People pursuing spirituality often puzzle over why they cannot feel spiritual all the time, i.e. practise SI all the time. Why do they regress? Why does the effect of meditation wear off? Why do they have relapses and lose their cool, allow things 'to get under their skin' etc? Well the answer is to turn the question around and see it the opposite way. In any given moment of your life unless you are behaving with EI then the spiritual view of the world i.e. Reality is barred from you at that moment. In order to enjoy being spiritual at every moment you must not be at the mercy of your ego and negative emotions. It really is that simple. So to recap, these are the negative emotions that you must not allow moment by moment, as they are a false reality suggested to you by your mind. If you can progressively not allow these negative emotions you will progressively achieve more moments of SI in which you truly live in the moment and see Reality in all its splendour. Progressively this will become not 'second nature' but your real nature.

Do Not

- Engage in day dreaming about negative interpretations of life and its events.
- Worry.
- Allow conditioned aversion especially with respect to people.
- Allow envy / jealousy.
- Allow craving of any sort.
- Allow hate.
- Allow downward depressing spirals from the deliberate negative misrepresentation of the news by the media

All of these negative emotions prevent you from being spiritual at the same time. The basis of inner peace and happiness is the absence of negative emotion or if you like , the absence of irritations, annoyances and agitation .



3.2 Finding Your Spiritual Self

The starting point in your journey to behaving with SI is to try to see and understand the real nature of your existence. All that exists including all human beings , all life and all matter are part of one integrated system. To believe that you are looking out on the world is a delusion-you are part of a flowing river of existence. Life on this planet is an ever changing soup that is in an endless cycle. You must see yourself as part of that. An aid to a more real visualisation of your position in the universe is to see yourself as one of a massive flock of birds all flying in convoy in the sky . You will have seen that they will twist and turn in a giant formation as if they are controlled and have a leader-but they do not. Each bird flies and moves following rules which have evolved over millions of years which enable it to be part of the flock as if the flock as a whole was a single entity.

This is a really important concept because to attain insight and awareness you have to be free from the notion of self and the 'Self, Me, I' perspective. Who and what you are is the product of countless generations of Mothers and Fathers who have contributed to and helped develop and evolve YOU. What a privilege! Yes you are an individual and 'alone' in one sense but also you are absolutely an integrated part of the soup of life on this planet in more ways than you could ever know. You do not think those birds are

alone do you? You can be **connected** to people all around who love, support and cherish you and who you can in return love, support and cherish.

Look inside yourself

Happiness is a state of inner fulfilment, a deep state of well being, not the gratification of inexhaustible desires for outward things. In fact happiness can only ever come from within-and ultimately from purely being i.e. existing.

It is fundamental to this journey that you now start to practise meditation. This will enable you to start to turn off the continuous clatter of life and take time to quietly listen to your thoughts and look inside yourself to find peace and calmness. In the next section I will give you some guidance on how to begin practising meditation.

You should not look for happiness from life's events since sooner or later life's events will disappoint or involve suffering. Understand that our desires are boundless. It is one thing to get pleasure from material possessions but do not be dependent on them and know that we can never be content from having all the good things in life. Material wealth, comfort and security will not satisfy us. Happiness does NOT depend on outward conditions. **It depends only on inner conditions.** Shakespeare-Nothing is good or bad but thinking makes it so. Abraham Lincoln-Most folks are about as happy as they make up their minds to be.

Take time out to meditate

Meditation is a fundamental ingredient of practising spiritual behaviour. Meditate regularly as this is essential for developing and maintaining inner peace, tranquillity, calmness and serenity. Without a calm mind, insight cannot occur.

Meditation is simply a deeper state of thought and relaxation than we normally achieve .But this is not to be regarded as another job or chore to be fitted into your busy schedule! On the contrary-meditation when you get the hang of it is pleasurable. It can be like having your head stroked by a loving parent as a child , or the emotional equivalent of having a massage or relaxing in a hot tub! You will definitely find it actually makes you feel better and has an effect that endures afterwards.

You must take time out on a regular basis to listen to your thoughts , not to pursue them but rather the opposite-to observe them-and not pursue them . Instead the skill is to be able to just let them go , without following them or worrying about them and thereby learning how to not be a slave to the endless clatter of thoughts that invade the mind. You understand that thoughts form and can dissolve away like wavelets on the sea and you do not have to seize each one and process it . Meditation is essential training for developing your ability to live in the moment , and to be able to accept or reject your thoughts.

As you gain experience with meditation you will begin to be able to cease the endless desire, and anxiety that can pervade normal life. The thought process that endlessly generates the ego comes to a stop. There is then a window within meditation that there is no thought creating self , and no self concern. Insight arises through meditation when we have abandoned desire and anxiety.

Meditation is not a religious practise, is not prayer , and is not hypnosis. It is however widely promoted and recommended by most personal transformation methods and for the very good reason that it works. People often meditate in groups because the discipline of attending a group can help in making the time to do it, and that is fine. But essentially meditation is a personal and individual experience and can be done anywhere anytime.

Here is a brief guide on how to meditate:

Start by relaxing your physical body. Try to get comfortable sitting in an upright position perhaps with your hands on your lap. Concentrate on relaxing your neck, legs, arms, in turn but then try to let them go. Be

aware of background noise in the room or wherever you are but try to let that go too and not be distracted by it. It is important that you do not drift off to sleep when you are meditating so the perceived wisdom is that you should keep your eyes half open but personally I prefer to close mine. If you find ritual such as having a Buddha figure in the room or burning incense conducive to creating conditions that assist your meditation then there is nothing wrong with using such aids.

Now as your meditation begins quietly and calmly observe your thoughts but then let them go. Instead try to just concentrate on your breathing, and specifically the in breath and then the out breath and so on. Each time a thought comes in to your mind, try to let it go calmly but practise returning your concentration to just the in breath and the out breath. A widely used breathing technique is to breathe in deeply but normally but to extend the out breath for longer than usual. You are trying to just concentrate on being aware of your very existence and just being- just being alive –and breathing. You are trying through meditation to get to know and make friends with your inner self! After a while the predictability of your mundane thoughts may even start to amuse you! Learn through meditation that you can accept or reject your thoughts and that they are only thoughts and have no power over you. It is believed that just concentrating on your breathing is a good discipline because if you can train your mind to do this, then you are on the way to being able to control your mind and thoughts during normal life when you are not meditating.

Being able to meditate takes a bit of practice and is a skill but you will quickly acquire it so please do not be put off if on the first couple of occasions that mundane thoughts and worries keep invading your mind; this is the very reason you need to keep going because you absolutely will get better at it. And I can assure you that the inner peace, and serenity that meditation bestows will equip and empower you to start to change how you see the world.

We are all the same

Understand we are all more alike and in the same boat than you might think. Everybody is seeking happiness. Our basic needs are to be loved and to find our own purpose and meaningful connections in life. Everybody wants to love and be loved. Everybody wants to feel important and appreciated. Know that when you strip away the armour of their outward togetherness everyone is really a little bit of a fiasco.

We are all connected and co-dependent

Everybody is dependent on a vast number of other people for so many things e.g.

- Farmers to grow their food.
- Retailers to operate the shops where they buy food and other goods.
- Oil production and refining, and distribution for transport, goods distribution and a myriad of other products.
- Generation and distribution of electricity. Anyone who has ever endured a power cut that has lasted more than 24 hours will know how quickly everything else degenerates without electricity.
- Medicine, doctors, nurses, hospitals and paramedics.
- Storage, purification and distribution of water which is essential for life.
- Police who maintain law and order to keep you safe and free. There are many examples of how when natural disasters disrupt policing, then civil disorder, mass looting and worse set in within a few hours.
- Artists who work in the movie industry, television or sport to entertain us.

Understand that if you are successful and a high achiever it is because you are merely standing on the shoulders of those that gone before you in your field or business. You personally have invented very little of the knowledge and skills that you have and apply. The river of human knowledge and human ingenuity is merely flowing through you during your brief life. If you are for example a great musician you owe so much to the people before you who have created the music, to the people who have educated and

encouraged you, and to the people who have made your instruments, and to your audience or customers who finance your lifestyle and enable you to follow your chosen field. You owe everything to the people who have worked in your field before, and to your parents who have given you the example and role models, love and encouragement to learn and facilitated and provided your education. I cannot put this into any better words than the totally insightful and unforgettable words of Michelle Obama who when addressing a group of school girls said *"I am an example of what is possible when girls from the very beginning of their lives are loved and nurtured by the people around them"*. And finally a spiritual high achieving person does not feel the need to bully or belittle others below them; they do not feel smug and elite, rather they use their position of power or privilege to inspire and encourage others and to give something back.

The Miracle of the Beauty within us

The world that we see is merely a construct of the mind. We are reminded of this when we have a lucid dream in which people and places all appear just as they do when we are awake.

Everything that exists is essentially only energy. In fact everything in the universe is connected. It is just one energy field. Our minds have evolved an extremely advanced set of ways of representing the energy that is presented to us very analogous to holograms. But make no mistake sound, colour, heat, cold, taste are only really models in our brains and are merely interpretive ways of representing energy and are ways that have conferred evolutionary and survival advantage to earlier forms of life. Our advanced and very clever brains present a very sophisticated 'show' of colour, sound, and smell to us to enable us to navigate our environment.

But however they work we have evolved the most fantastic senses that enable us to SEE and enjoy the most exquisite beauty. How fantastic for example can be the breathtaking beauty and pleasure of a sunset or a face. All that beauty is in ourselves and the way we perceive the world and the universe.

The illusion of sight is arguably the ultimate magic. All those 'frames' are processed and presented to us in full colour for our entire lives. And it is all only an illusion really based on the different wavelengths of electromagnetic radiation. We take so much for granted when we do not SEE the magic of our existence moment by moment.

And what about hearing and sound for another example? Just different wavelengths of vibrations of air. All another illusion. That sound is not really 'there' if we are not there to interpret it. But what a miracle that we have brains that can process it and distinguish between millions of 'sounds' and thereby enable us to enjoy the exquisite pleasure of music be it pop or a full orchestral symphony. Again all that beauty is within us and some people take it all for granted.

To be philosophical for a moment, we are both the creators of the beauty of the universe (in our minds), and the beholders who appreciate and enjoy the beauty.

I make no apologies for repeating the following statement more than once in this guide. Consciousness is a mystery and a miracle and it is a travesty that people take it so for granted rather than really seeing that just 1 second of consciousness is the greatest most exquisite and precious possession of all in the entire universe.

3.3 Practising Spiritual Behaviour

This section is about embracing your spiritual self. What does it mean exactly to practise spiritual behaviour? What does spiritual behaviour look like? How on a moment by moment basis does it manifest itself?

Take time out to meditate

Meditation is a fundamental ingredient of practising spiritual behaviour. Because of its importance I covered some practical guidance on how to start meditating at the beginning of Para 3.2 as part of finding your spiritual self.

You can change your world.

If you practise spiritual behaviour you really CAN change YOUR world. A very bold claim I hear you say. But the way it is done is by transforming our minds such that **the world that we SEE and experience is reality** and not one that we see distorted by delusion.

What you notice is what you get. We see things and people not as they are but **as we are**. We shape the reality around us by what we choose to notice. Whatever you pay attention to in families will start to grow and increase. Every partner is both beautiful and ugly depending on how you look at them. Notice and attend to what you would like to see more of, and watch it manifest. It has been said that the difference between a happy and an unhappy person is what you SEE and notice. The world that you see and experience is very largely a reflection of yourself.

We change our world by changing the person that we present to the world moment by moment. There are so many ways that you do this and everybody does but usually unconsciously. For example if you give out and radiate love and positive energy you will receive it back faster than you would ever think. Conversely if you are miserable, and negative and feeling self pity then you will instead find that reflected back to you pretty quickly in your daily experiences.

Another classic example is that without realising it you change the people you meet. If you are the type of person who tries to dominate every conversation, never really listening to anyone else, always desperate for the other person to finish so you can expound your opinion, then you will miss out on so much of the richness of other people. Try to understand that people who do this are *changing* the people that they meet. People you meet will be different and will closedown such that they appear passive and quiet and uninspiring. In fact the opposite may be true-given a chance they may have lots of wisdom, and information that would have been pleasurable and helpful to you. Your domineering overbearing interpersonal habits suppress the people you meet so that you miss out on their potential interest. It is always surprising to me that when you start to talk to anybody, whatever their initial impression and appearance, they have an interesting story or angle to tell. But many people dismiss the people they meet and shut them out and never get to enjoy them. And away from you the people you meet will regard you as an overbearing know all so you damage the potential relationship / friendship that you might have had with them. What is your point? Have you become so arrogant that you believe that you already know everything and your job is to prove that to everyone you meet? Are you still being controlled by your EGO? Do you now believe that no one can tell you anything ever again? If you suffer from this try and relax and start to watch the richness of people being revealed in front of your very eyes instead of stifling it. You CAN change the people you meet simply by wearing a smile and listening to them and asking open questions and genuinely being interested in THEM. Go and try it-you will be amazed!

I say again that the world that you see and experience is very largely a mirror of yourself.

Love

The Beatles sang 'all you need is love, love is all you need' and it was all true. It is fundamental to being spiritual to love yourself and those around you.

Love is the ultimate emotion to which man can aspire. In 'normal' life this is unquestionably true but even in the most hopeless and desperate situation e.g. being a prisoner in a concentration camp, or a passenger in an aeroplane than is falling out of the sky, you can still know bliss and contentment through the contemplation of loved ones.

Practicing loving kindness could be defined as having a strong wish for the welfare, well being, and happiness of others. This may take the form of e.g. consideration, compassion, empathy, sympathy, wanting the best, and support for others motivated by warm hearted affection.

On a day to day basis what practical steps can you take to put your love for those around you into practice?

Practical Steps to expressing love

- Practice Interest in others
- Look for ways in which you see that we are all the same and in the same boat.
- Look for the good / best in people.
- Treat everybody respectfully regardless of your perception or assumption about their social / economic status or any other status.
- Be open and accepting so that people can feel comfortable around you.
- Find ways to connect personally with others at an honest human level. Ask sensitive questions and identify common areas of interest,
- Practice tolerance.
- Wear a smile. A smile contains so much information from within.
- Compassion for others
- Practice loving kindness

Live in the moment

We have all heard this expression so many times that we say 'yeah, yeah. I know all about that.' But most people have little idea what it really means.

Before I embarked on my own journey of spiritual learning and searching I thought that living in the moment just meant being alive to and noticing and savouring e.g. a particularly beautiful natural landscape or sunset or hearing and savouring a piece of beautiful music etc. But I have learnt that behaving with SI takes living in the moment to a whole new level that most people never know about.

Living in the moment is often alternatively referred to as awareness, or aliveness, or being awake and in Buddhism it is called mindfulness. Behaving with SI means feeling for the rhythm of the moment. It means connecting with and synchronising with the moment and consciously choosing your actions and responses with care. Living in the moment is the most important manifestation of spiritual behaviour and therefore this is an inevitably lengthy section in which I will give you several examples to illustrate it.

We do not need time travel for people to live their lives in the past or the future; they are very good at doing that for themselves. We need time travel to enable people to visit the present!

Consciousness is a mystery and a miracle that should not be taken for granted and it is a travesty that people squander their thoughts in so many ways instead of using them to be here for the present and

now. What does it take for people to see that 1 second of consciousness is the greatest most exquisite and precious possession of all in the entire universe?

Some examples of what it means to really be in the present are:

(i) Avoiding conditioned thoughts

It is about monitoring and observing your own thoughts and reactions, and blocking conditioned responses of e.g. defensiveness, ego, aversion, attachment, and other negative emotion. Sadly many people live their entire lives 'asleep', completely unable to ever realise that every behaviour, every thought, every response, that they have learnt is from someone else. They never have a single thought that is truly their own. The free choices that they believe they exercise are in reality from a menu that they have been brainwashed with mostly by their parents, the media, and marketing. Unless we are 'awake' we think we are free but there is probably not a gesture, a thought, an attitude, a belief, or an expression that is not coming from someone else. We are in many ways conditioned clones of each other.

You must live in the moment because the consequences of not doing so are that your autopilot will merely respond to situations with conditioned responses i.e. you will always be constrained by your past and childhood-you will never be free from your past to grow and improve. The conditioned responses presented by the mind will often or mostly be from the orientation of your EGO or sensual desire (craving) and as such are raw or basic emotions. The point about living in the moment is that you do not believe and accept everything you think and instead apply fresh intelligence to each moment.

(ii) Avoiding addiction and aversion

Whenever you are wanting, or craving for something bigger, better or different you are by definition not in the moment appreciating life just as it is. You will be familiar that the brain is composed of two parts; the conscious and sub-conscious parts. The majority of the brain is the unconscious part where memories and experiences are filed and stored. The sub-conscious part offers up to the conscious part suggestions that it believes to be 'helpful' based on past repeated experience. This is how addiction and aversion work. The sub-conscious brain offers up suggestions of thoughts about learnt habits that have provided temporary pleasure in the past eg having an alcoholic drink or cigarette. It is the same process when your sub-conscious feeds you aversion thoughts such as 'you don't like people from different cultures, or maybe children or cats!'

If you are applying fresh thinking in the moment you will not just be repeating learnt behaviour and operating out of habit.

(iii) Really listening to people

People who do not live in the moment dismiss and ignore opportunities for connection with other people. They do not really LISTEN to what people are saying to them and are instead eagerly waiting to respond with some prepared and well worn and frequently trotted out package of opinion or advice.

Remember that the moment may not always require you to be transmitting, and a spiritual person recognises when the moment requires you to really listen. Is someone reaching out to you? Are they trying to say something more deep and meaningful to you and looking for empathy and an encouraging signal that you are really there for them in the moment. Most people blunder on desperate to be dominating the conversation and thereby missing and obliterating potential opportunities for real connection. Try not to be always wanting to come in with your own views or anecdotes. Really try to respond to what people are trying to tell you and not be always trying to steer the conversation thread to what you want to be telling them about. You should be concentrating on what they are saying and genuinely trying to build on it rather than trying to switch to a 'bigger and better' subject or story of your own.

I find it frustrating when I listen to or am part of conversations which just leap all over the place where no participant is trying to listen and build on what anyone else is saying. It is as if people are together physically but in reality are all still locked in their private bubbles with their egos.

(iv) Really being present to appreciate sublime beauty

If you do not live in the moment you will miss so much that there is to enjoy; you will not SEE the beauty that is all around you. When I am stuck in traffic I play a game and look for something through the windscreen that I find pleasing or beautiful outside. There is always something to appreciate if you look for it instead of just becoming frustrated by the delay. It does not matter what it is –there is no right and wrong in taste or interests.

Often when you go with people to a beautiful place they remain obsessed with spending the entire time telling you about another beautiful place they have been to in the past. One wonders whether they paid attention to that one either! Equally I meet people who when you go to a restaurant and have a wonderful meal they feel compelled to spend the time telling you about another wonderful meal they have had in a different restaurant. It is as if some people really are unable or frightened of actually living and experiencing the NOW.

So when you are in a beautiful place or having a wonderful meal or having any other exquisite or sublime experience please be there for it and not somewhere else in your head.

I have been in beautiful restaurants with wonderful food and views with people who just transmit the same repertoire of stories and anecdotes regardless of their surroundings and the company. It is as if they are trying to block out the here and now. You must be sensitive to the real needs of enjoying the moment which may be for quiet contemplation and not necessarily be always transmitting regardless.

The modern day curse of the anecdote has become so prolific and thereby so damaging that it deserves special mention. Telling long and rambling anecdotes has become such a widespread and prolific custom because people believe that it marks them out as a witty, funny and entertaining person. They require only a memory and not intelligence because they are learnt and can be trotted out over and over again. The problem is that they are increasingly trotted out when they have little relevance to the here and now and thereby obliterate the real opportunity for an exquisite moment to be enjoyed.

I have been with people in what could be a perfect moment e.g. looking over a mirror calm sea looking at a perfect and spectacular sunset, when all that is needed is some quiet contemplation to savour the moment in the quiet companionship of good friendship. But sadly so often someone will feel the need to block out the experience by filling the space with a long and tiresome anecdote the relevance of which is only in the mind of the expounder. The group are dragged away from the present to another time and place and most will merely shut down or switch off and chuckle politely at the end.

Similarly I see friends and couples out together perhaps having a meal in lovely surroundings where the moment absolutely calls for them to be concentrating on each other and engaging and connecting with each other, but where instead they are just staring at and playing with their own smart phones. They could just as well have stayed at home in a small city flat as they are making no effort whatsoever to enjoy and be there for the real moment and life that is in front of them. Instead they are falling back into a habit of aimless playing with texts, social networking, and apps which is a comfort zone that does not require any effort to face the present with freshness and enthusiasm.

(v) Be there for other people-not somewhere else.

Be present for the people that you meet and interact with during the day. Increasingly people do not even concentrate on conversations with their friends and partner. Often people are just nodding but thinking about something else, or glancing at their mobile phones or the TV. You might think that the other person does not notice, but trust me they do and they feel devalued and disappointed that you treat them in that way.

(vi) Do not always be planning the future

You will have heard the saying 'Life is what happens to you while you are busy making other plans' usually attributed to John Lennon. Another way of expressing this is 'Preparing to live instead of living now'.

Many people spend their working week looking forward to the weekend and their weekend looking forward to their holidays. But until you learn to live in and enjoy the present and the now your weekends and holidays when they finally arrive will be a disappointment. So do not spend your life looking forward to things. The things you look forward to the most often do not live up to expectations whilst those times that you have little expectations about can often turn out to be unexpectedly enjoyable. Learn that you cannot predict how life is going to feel and be. Spending your time looking forward to things does not make them more enjoyable and is just another way of ignoring the present.

(vii) Do not always be thinking that the present is ‘wrong’ or ‘not good enough’.

it is the case that for many people life is what happens to them whilst they are busy believing that for one reason or another they are being prevented from spending their time on what they planned or wanted to be doing. Instead they feel frustrated that they are e.g. spending it on finishing some other job that is taking longer than it ‘should’, dealing with some unexpected problem or accident, or having to talk to a stranger who wants to be sociable and thereby ‘waste’ their time. They are all the time searching for something ‘more’, or believing that everything would be fine ‘if only’. The Reality is that your life *is* the time you spend stuck in traffic, *is* the time you spend mopping up the drink you have just knocked over, *is* the unplanned and unscheduled conversation with a stranger in the supermarket. It *is* the picking up of a book or newspaper and getting engrossed in something interesting, *is* investigating why the heating has suddenly stopped working. You really have to understand that life is as it is and is happening perfectly. Enjoy the ride and stop struggling. There can be magic and fun in every moment if you turn off that part of the mind that chatters on telling you ‘if only’ you were somewhere else and / or doing something different. It is in the very ordinariness of mundane life that the extraordinary reveals itself.

(viii) Be Flexible

Living in the moment requires that you do not stick rigidly to a pre-conceived plan for how your day should be. When someone in your life is suggesting that you do something different to what you had originally planned then listen with an open mind. Living in the moment is about being flexible and light on your feet. Sticking rigidly to your own plan is a form of trying to prevent life unfolding as it is. When someone else wants you do something different, of course, they may be ‘wrong’ but they may also be ‘right’ so be open minded. When someone persuades you to change your plan or schedule it can often turn out that they were right and it was a better decision. It also has the benefit that they feel better because they have succeeded in influencing you. When you do change your plan to accommodate someone else’s suggestions buy into it and give it your full commitment. Living in the moment means not being stubborn, and inflexible and clinging to a preconceived plan that is in your head.

What it means to live in the moment

- Paying attention to the wonder of it all.
- Connection with the beauty of the universe-really SEE!
- Enjoying the moment.
- Knowing and believing that you can be as happy and enjoy your time as much when on your own as when with your friends or loved ones.
- Feeling your life is so much fun you feel guilty about it!
- Feeling love for yourself and those around you.
- Feeling Inner peace, serenity and contentment.
- Tasting each moment in life like you are sampling a fine wine.
- Being aware of all of your senses.
- Really feeling the magic of touch with your loved ones.
- Genuinely wondering -How can it be for some people that NOW is ever not enough?

Purge all negative emotion

The way to happiness is to control your thoughts. It is the purging of all negative emotion, the purging of all mental toxins such as resentment, jealousy and craving which literally poison the mind. If on the other hand you are having good positive thoughts it is impossible for you to feel bad at the same time because your thoughts control how you feel.

Free Yourself from your Ego

You must eliminate the pride, ego, self importance and egocentricity that places the self at the centre of the universe. We imagine that by living in a bubble-the ego- we create an illusion of being separate from the world hoping to avoid suffering. In fact what happens is just the opposite, since ego grasping and self importance are magnets for attracting suffering. By reinforcing the separate identity of the self we fall out of synch with reality. The truth is that we are fundamentally interdependent with other people and our environment. We are droplets of water separated from the ocean and merely the continuum of consciousness is no justification for seeing the self as an entirely distinct entity. We get so accustomed to attaching the label of I to the mental flow that we develop an attachment to the self and the notions of mine, my mind, my possessions, my friends. The erroneous sense of duality forms the basis of all mental afflictions be it hatred, jealousy, pride, or selfishness. It is the cause of believing that when anything adverse happens to you however trivial that in some way it is personal and an attack on you-the self. It nearly always is not personal and nobody has even thought about you and certainly the universe has not. Think of a massive shoal of fish or flock of birds-and you will see the true perspective of the individual. If tragic events befall us e.g. war, terrorism or accident we have not personally been selected-we are just caught up at random by chance. However the ego interprets such events as a personal attack and as such are e.g. bad luck, or as being cheated or punished.

It is ironic that most of the time when the ego feels the need to defend a view, or knowledge, the very thing that the ego wants to defend was not your thought in the first place but originally came from someone else.

When we are physically hurt by someone else or even merely insulted the ego's wound lasts much longer than the physical pain. When we see the self as a mere concept and not an autonomous entity that must be satisfied at all costs we react in completely different ways.

The source of disturbing emotions is attachment to the self. If we want to be free of suffering once and for all, it is not enough to rid ourselves of the emotions themselves; we have to eliminate our attachment to the ego. Is that possible? The ego is merely a concept that can be dispelled, but only by the wisdom that perceives that ego is devoid of intrinsic existence.

People that free themselves of the ego think and act with spontaneity and freedom. Stripping the ego of its importance is tantamount to winning incredible inner freedom. It allows us to approach every situation with natural ease, benevolence, fortitude and serenity.

As we progressively drop the 'Self,/ Me, I' perspective then we start to see others more clearly. There is a lot of suffering in this world and through increasing Insight compassion for others arises. Feelings of compassion for others drives away egoism. When the self ceases to be the most important thing in the world we find it easier to focus our attention on others and gives us the resolve to work and act on their behalf. This is in contrast with the constant paranoia provoked by the whims of a triumphant sense of self. In our day to day lives we experience the self through its vulnerability. The self is always there ready to be wounded or gratified.

Intuition

Intuition is the 6th sense and is an essential part of the process of developing SI. Follow your heart and intuition. Recognise the power of your intuition to guide you. There is a voice inside all of us that knows what is best for us more than anybody else. Follow it. We all know deep down whether something is right and good. This may well be because a moral code is our genetic inheritance. An intuitive sense of what is good for the general benefit of the community or group has conveyed survival advantage in our evolution.

Many people have become so used to suppressing their emotions that they have become deaf to their instincts. Following your instincts and intuition is far more likely than using reasoning and logic to lead you to make the right decisions for you and happiness.

Intuition is invaluable especially in dealing with people. Take note of physical and emotional feelings associated with intuition. Your heart will tell you what to do. Try to listen to that rather than your head. It is the heart or intuition that knows when to trust somebody. Our head may try to overcome our deeper feelings but deep down we know the truth. When you have been betrayed or let down you need to understand yourself and know your emotional limits. Can you still trust someone? It is not mean or wrong to protect yourself from further emotional damage. Only your heart knows the answer. Listen to it.

Let Go and Let be !

Do your best and be the best person you can and live by the principles in this guide but you must let go of the outcomes. Things are as they are and life is as it is-not always how you want it to be. Letting go is not getting rid of. Letting go is letting be. Let other people around you be who they are and settle into the relationships. Others around you are not perfect but then neither are you. Making demands on others around you that they must behave in the way you think is right destroys relationships.

How we cope with tragedy, disaster and bereavement depends a great deal on our attitude. Suffering can be intense without destroying our outlook on life. Once we have acquired inner well being it is easier to maintain our fortitude and recover it quicker when confronted externally by difficult circumstances. If we let ourselves be overwhelmed by our personal problems, no matter how tragic, we only increase our difficulties and become a burden on those around us. If our mind becomes accustomed to dwelling solely on the pain that events or people inflict on it, one day even the most trivial incident will cause it overpowering sorrow. Eventually everything that happens will assume a hostile character and we will rebel bitterly against our fate, bemoaning our luck. Ride the punches, and go with the flow.

Feel Lucky, be Lucky

If there is no pre destiny and no referee then logically there is no such thing as luck. But there is more to it than that. We all know that some people seem 'lucky' and also we know that at times we can feel 'lucky'.

Of course the randomness of events means that a statistically unlikely bad thing can happen to you eg an accident or illness and if you define that as 'bad luck' then nobody is immune from that. But how can we raise the odds of feeling and enjoying generally 'good luck' ?

Firstly we can feel lucky by truly appreciating and feeling grateful for all the good in our lives and not dwelling on the elements we would like to change i.e. thinking positive. Conversely if you are feeling ungrateful then this negative emotion and negative energy will attract more of everything you do not like or are dissatisfied with.

Secondly you can definitely make your own luck by unconditionally giving out love and positive energy, and building a network of friends, supporters and allies who will look after you when they get the choice and chance. You make your own luck in this life everyday and this is largely through how you treat and deal with other people. All human interactions can lead to other things for you in the future in ways you

can never predict or imagine. But people need to like you and feel you are someone they could work or play with. For a successful life you should work on the principle that you are never in an anonymous situation and behave accordingly, and secondly that it is a small world and everyone knows everybody else. Clearly they do not but there are far more unknown connections that are invisible to you than you would ever imagine.

Thirdly the saying that 'the more I practice the luckier I get' is absolutely true. Another way this is expressed is that 'Luck is preparation meeting opportunity'. If you decide what you want in life and work and prepare for it, when events occur that can potentially be a step towards that goal you are ready to seize that chance. People who have already thought about what they want and studied their options can recognise a good tactical card when it is dealt to them and act decisively. Sadly some people are not clear about what they want, and are fearful of making decisions and as a result allow good cards to slip through their fingers. Almost everybody can think of an example of an opportunity that they passed up and subsequently regret.

As you get older you will find that you regret what you do not do, and very rarely what you do. You regret the decisions that you did not make, not those that you did.

You must always of course have no expectations and having done the work and preparation you must let go of the outcome. Remember it was always the preparation (the effort) that was the result, and not the outcome. So when the planned for 'break' does not come, you can still feel lucky, and so often in life something else good happens instead if you are open and flexible and not rigid. Life is as it is and is not following a plan that is in your mind.

Keep Your faith in Humanity and the Human spirit.

At this point I want to include a morale and spirit rousing paragraph **on keeping your faith in the human spirit and humanity**. It is a big problem is that all we hear about in the media is greedy and selfish and / or corrupt behaviour and it wears us down. It constantly attacks us and threatens to make us disillusioned and cynical. But these people are a small minority. All around us are ordinary people who are not like that and are not driven by greed and a 'Self, Me, I' agenda and are 'nice' and will help others and put themselves out for others. All around us are people who are generous in spirit and loving and genuinely doing their best to be good partners and / or parents. There are so many people who quietly get on with and contribute to society through voluntary work and charitable giving. But they do not make news.

The Law of Attraction

You are now far enough into understanding how life and the world works to be ready for the Law of Attraction. This is a very popular belief nowadays and is a modern way of expressing that you 'reap as you sow'. The Law of Attraction simply put says that we attract to our lives what we focus on the most. If we focus on what we want and radiate good feelings and positive energy and positive emotion then good things will be reflected back. If on the other hand we e.g. hold grudges and blame others for our situation then we attract more of the same. Our lives are a reflection of ourselves.

People who do good generally experience good things as a result. We do not always fully understand why it is so but it is. It may be simply because it is a small world and there is a very high degree of interconnection between people you meet and know and how people behave in respect of looking after others they know and like or dislike.

Do as you would be done by is also a truism because our positive or negative energy (karma) is reflected back to us and what we experience is a mirror of the karma that we give off. In fact the reflections can be immediate as you find if you go around with a smile on your face radiating goodwill and altruistic love and everyone you come in contact with seems to enjoy their contact with you. It takes courage to be yourself and spiritual in front of others, but when you demonstrate this behaviour it allows others to behave in the same way. This applies with friends, in business, and with strangers.

It is also true that good and bad things that you say and / or do come back to you in ways that you can never predict but they DO come back – and this is demonstrable and we all experience it.

With anything that you want, you need to genuinely start to think and feel as you would if you already had it. So if you want to be more loved and cherished by others, then you start by visualising yourself as someone who is already well loved and so being loved more is simply not an issue. This visualisation, and the consequent living as if you are already enjoying the situation you wish for will lead you to assume the positive thoughts and feelings associated with this state and as a direct result, you will attract more of the very thing you are seeking . Whereas if you are a person who e.g. feels an unloved victim, angry or hard done by , unlovable and jealous and envious of others , then you will merely attract more of the same. Once you think that way you act that way.

Similarly, if you are a complainer, then you will find that you attract more and more situations into your life to complain about. And if you spend your time listening to, and whipping up someone else complaining , and agreeing with them, then you also will attract more situations to yourself to complain about.

Hopefully by now it is self evident that *you* are deciding moment by moment how you view and regard and respond to your life as it unfolds . You decide whether every event is funny, amusing, fun, frustrating, annoying, exciting, disappointing, challenging, interesting, boring, etc. And how you interpret every event ishow you want and choose it to be and what you focus on the most.

The Law of Attraction

- We attract into our lives what we focus on.
- Whatever is going on in your mind you are attracting.
- You become and attract what you think.
- What you focus on grows.
- You create your life with your thoughts and feelings.
- When you dwell on what you do not want or like you attract more of the same.
- What you think controls how you act.

I want to tell you a story about two friends of mine who visited the same recently opened restaurant on consecutive nights.

On the first night my friend, let us call him Mr Cloud ,went and was immediately frustrated and irritated that he had to wait in line to speak to the receptionist and to be allocated a table. He had had a long and difficult day at work and wanted to just go straight in and eat. Mr Cloud felt that the his town was becoming over populated and also that the restaurant was inefficient. When he did eventually get a table it was not by the window as the restaurant was very busy and he had to settle for a table in the middle without a view.

Mr Cloud soon became even more irritated because the group on the adjacent table were enjoying themselves too much and laughing and joking too loudly. He felt this was selfish and inconsiderate behaviour and after a while asked them if they could quieten down a bit which they did. Although Mr Cloud did not know it at the time by coincidence one of the group on the next table did recognise Mr Cloud by sight because he is the boss of the company that Mr Cloud's son works for. From then on the group at the adjacent table were more subdued; they were not able to have so much fun and there was an atmosphere and tension between the two tables.

Anyway when the waiter came to take the order, Mr Cloud was a little annoyed by the young waiter's accent as he was an immigrant and his English was not that clear and Mr Cloud found him difficult to understand. He turned to his partner in the waiter's hearing and said that he would have thought they could have hired someone who spoke English. The waiter who was fairly new and inexperienced became increasingly nervous and flustered by Mr Cloud's attitude and bluntness.

Mr Cloud became even more cross when he was told that the dish of the day that he chose had run out so he had to make a second choice of something that the waiter recommended. The restaurant was very busy and the food was a little slow to arrive. Mr Cloud is a busy man, so while he was waiting (and getting progressively impatient) he took to catching up on his emails and texts on his phone. Because the restaurant was busy, the WIFI performance was also very slow and Mr Cloud became further irritated by how long it was taking for his emails to load. When the waiter finally did arrive with the food he was anxious not to upset Mr Cloud further but in his nervousness he knocked his glass of water over and some went onto Mr Cloud's trousers. His partner reassured him that it was only water and would dry out but Mr Cloud was nearing the end of his patience and snapped angrily at the waiter. Meanwhile, the group on the next table were watching with great interest and smirking.

Mr Cloud did not like the alternative dish that he had been persuaded to choose. He kept telling his partner, quite loudly and impatiently that he had been really looking forward to his original selection and was annoyed and disappointed that that was not available. His partner was not enjoying the evening either because of Mr Cloud's moaning and negativity.

Mr Cloud then started to package all his complaints together in a long litany of issues – the restaurant was too crowded and noisy and the food overpriced, without adequate choice for customers. His partner picked up on his mood, and became increasingly disenchanted with the evening, embarrassed at being looked at by others, and ultimately, tired of Mr Cloud's company. The waiter too picked up on his animosity and attitude and became increasingly curt and tight lipped in his responses. When Mr Cloud came to pay the bill, he demanded a reduction due to the poor service he had received; the waiter was not able to deal with this, and the manager was called. Mr Cloud argued volubly with the manager and took another 20 minutes during which time Mr Cloud became more angry, loud and animated, and his partner more and more embarrassed. When he left of course Mr Cloud did not leave a tip but was further irritated when he got back to the car park because he had spent so long arguing with the manager that he had incurred a hefty parking surcharge as he had exceeded the maximum stay. On the drive home he moaned further to his partner, swearing that he would never go back to the restaurant and that this always seems to happen to him – in his view, the standard of service everywhere is in serious decline as he never gets good service (any more). Over the next few days Mr Cloud took every opportunity to tell friends and acquaintances, which of course included me, all about his experience, how angry it made him and how this is symptomatic of a wider decline in society.

By complete coincidence, another friend, let's call him Mr Bright, went to the very same restaurant the following evening. When he arrived with his partner, Mr Bright was not surprised to be met by a queue because he knew that the reputation of the restaurant was growing, particularly given some recent positive press reviews. This made him even more excited about the prospect of the food to come that evening, and he reinforced this to his partner by saying how lucky he felt to have secured a reservation and what a good addition the restaurant was to the town.

When Mr Bright finally got to the front desk and the hostess apologised for the wait, Mr Bright said, with a smile and enthusiasm, that he was glad business was so good for them and was delighted to be able to come as he had wanted to for some time. He also noticed and complimented the decor of the restaurant and its fresh modern design. The restaurant was just as busy and Mr Bright similarly found himself on a table in the middle. He commented to his partner that this table gave them a good view of the chefs frenetically cooking the food out in the open at

the back of the restaurant which is always interesting and amusing , and also it was warmer away from the entrance and the windows.

Coincidentally they were served by the same waiter and Mr Bright enquired of the young man where he came from as he had such a 'melodic accent'. When the waiter explained he was an overseas student doing a summer job, Mr Bright engaged in a short discussion on the course the young man was following and its location and found out that he had visited that same city in Europe. The two men exchanged some friendly small talk about the historic nature of the city and how well it had been preserved and what a terrific visit Mr Bright had had a couple of years previously.

It was now time for Mr Bright to order; he asked the waiter for his recommendations, saying that he was always up for trying new things, and had had some great recommendations in the past from waiting staff. Mr Bright followed the waiter's tips and thanked him for his suggestion. While they were waiting for their food, Mr Bright and his partner could not help noticing that the table next to them was engaged in a rather noisy celebration. They seemed to be really enjoying themselves and Mr Bright and his partner exchanged smiles, commenting to each other that this was definitely the fun place to be. They both felt uplifted by the laughter and enjoyment around them and excited to be part of such a buzzing venue.

The food was again slow to turn up – but Mr Bright was content as this gave him and his partner the chance to catch up on the day, savour the wine, and indulge in a little light romancing. When the food finally arrived, the inexperienced waiter accidentally knocked over the water and Mr Bright was quick to reassure him not to worry, saying, with a smile that 'we've all done it' and that it was only water.

Mr Bright was glad to have tried a new dish, but felt he probably wouldn't choose it again. He was however delighted his partner really enjoyed their meal and made a joke of stealing a couple of mouthfuls.

Towards the end of the evening, the manager toured all the tables to check with customers how they had found their dining experience. Stopping at their table, Mr Bright and his partner replied enthusiastically that they were so glad to have got in, that the place had a real buzz and that they had had a lot of fun – and would definitely be back. The manager thanked them and offered them a liqueur on the house and a loyalty card which would give them a discount for this and future mid week meals.

Mr Bright's evening ended positively, with both parties feeling that they had had an enjoyable experience – one that they would want to repeat, and that it was always fun trying somewhere new. They told 5 other couples within the week about the new restaurant. Mr Bright reflected on how up and coming the area was and how great it was that the service and quality of all the restaurants in that area was so consistently good and that he felt lucky to live here and be able to experience it.

Visualisation and Goals

The Law of Attraction leads us into the role of visualisation and goals. Visualisation is the practice of creating pictures in your mind seeing yourself in the situations that you want. This can be anything from e.g. being in a successful primary relationship, being slimmer or having a different job or home. And most importantly it can and should be seeing yourself as a happy person. Visualisation is a very powerful practice because it works and is now widely used for instance with professional sportsmen .When you are visualising how you want life to be then you have taken the first step to thinking and behaving in such a way as to attract the life that you want .But you have to be sincere and honest about it because that is how attraction works. If you are underneath still at the mercy of negative energy and negative emotion then that is the type of life you will attract and visualising being happily married in a new home is not going to work. The law of attraction cannot be fooled or tricked!

Let me illustrate visualisation with the example of losing weight but it works exactly the same for everything. You need to visualise yourself having lost the weight that you want to lose. You need to see yourself as that person who has already lost the weight and the reason for this is that you are generating the thoughts and feelings of having it now. This is a very important principle of the Law of attraction. You attract the thing you want by assuming the thoughts and feelings already to allow the thing you want to come to you. Once you think like that you act like that. If on the other hand you still have issues of self confidence and self esteem and you do not love yourself as the result of your current weight then clearly all you will do is attract the same and you will continue to comfort eat.

This is such an important concept and it applies to everything so let me run through it again still using this example of losing weight. You have to feel good about yourself and love yourself and that includes your body, and physical appearance. If you feel bad about your body, or even more extreme hate your body, then you will continue attracting more feeling bad about your body. This will manifest itself in lack of willpower to gain control of your diet due to negative feelings like it is all hopeless, you are not worth it, you will always be overweight, eating to combat depression, etc. You have to feel that you are already beautiful, you have to already love yourself and your body, and feel good about all your other qualities like your personality and character and then you will attract the good things you want regarding your weight. Funnily enough long before I understood these things many years ago I had a tape aimed at weight reduction by hypnosis. But the hypnotist was saying exactly the same things that you cannot lose weight if you do not love yourself, and he used a lovely expression that 'you've got to *love* the weight off!'

I would like to make a quick point about wealth. Contrary to what some self help books on this subject say, and in particular, *The Secret*, you cannot attract great wealth into your life. This is because firstly there is not enough money in the first place for everyone to be a millionaire, but more importantly because wishing for great wealth and affluence is grasping and therefore negative emotion and so you will merely attract more of feeling that you do not have enough and jealous that others have more. Instead visualise being content with your wealth, visualise feeling that you have everything you need, that you have enough; or even that your cup is overflowing and you have an abundance of what you really need and what matters in life. What happens then is very interesting. Because you are no longer a jealous and envious person who feels ungrateful, you become the opposite and thereby a positive person who other people like and want to help and look after. You then find that more and more people are generous towards you, and help you, and your luck changes with respect to money. It sounds unbelievable but try it and you will find that it is true.

Goals.

You need to understand the role of goals as this is something about which there is widespread misunderstanding. Setting goals to drive direction and timeframe has a place but please see that this has more to do with EI than SI. I read many self help books particularly from the USA where goal setting is seen as the be and end all of self improvement. They even dangerously assert that happiness is the successful achievement of goals. But this is not true and I will explain why.

People often achieve a goal but they find that they do not feel any different and are still not happy and they are surprised by this. They had believed that once they had lost that 2 stone or got that promotion that from then onwards they would be happy. Instead they feel exactly the same as before they started and they cannot believe it.

But SI is about understanding that there is no end of the rainbow where happiness is to be found. SI is about realising that life is a miraculous, wondrous, and magical privilege and that you were always already at the end of the rainbow but you just could not see it. There is only the present moment and the role of goals is the positive attitude and positive energy and emotion that working towards a goal generates moment by moment. The outcome or result of a goal is not about the achievement of the goal but the cumulative effect of the positive thinking along the way moment by moment. The feeling e.g. that your weight is no longer out of control, and that instead you are now in control of it and your feelings about it. In fact it probably does not matter if you achieve most goals; what endures and shapes you is the

cumulative positive emotion and positive energy that is engendered by feeling that you are now in control of your thoughts and behaviours.

Having goals is fine but you need the wisdom to really understand that it is the change in your thoughts; cultivating loving yourself and self esteem, being in control of your thoughts, that is engendered by pursuing a goal- that is the source of happiness. Happiness is not a place that you arrive when you have achieved a goal.

Take time out to meditate and review

I began the Practising spiritual behaviour section with the importance of meditation and I am deliberately ending it with meditation again. I included some practical guidance on how to start meditating at the beginning of Para 3.2 as part of finding your spiritual self. Meditation is a fundamental ingredient of practising spiritual behaviour. Meditate regularly as this is essential for developing and maintaining tranquillity and serenity.

While you are on this journey meditation is a refuge just for you. It is a private place, an oasis, where you can just be you away from the world and refuel with new calmness and resolve to continue your journey.

Meditation is not to be regarded as another job or chore to be fitted into your busy schedule! On the contrary-meditation when you get the hang of it is pleasurable. You will definitely find it actually makes you feel better and has an effect that endures afterwards.

Meditation will help you see life with a real perspective and enable you to properly and honestly review where you are going, and what matters, and what does not. It will help you see what relationships are good for you and which are not helping you on your journey. It will help you assess your priorities in life. These are all bold claims but meditation is not an ancient and worldwide practice for nothing.

And finally What if Life just gets TOO GOOD to handle?

A nice problem to have I hear you say. That will never happen to me I hear you say.

However, spiritual people do reach heights of happiness and serenity that they genuinely find it difficult to cope with how truly delightful life can feel. People can find that things are just too wonderful, too miraculous, that they do not know how to deal with it. They can find, as they really learn to live in the moment and accept life as it is and savour the ride, that their life just becomes too pleasurable and exciting. And this may be coupled with an overwhelming and bursting love for their family and those around them. Add to this really seeing the beauty that surrounds us all and e.g. the awesome majesty of dawn and sunset and natural landscapes. But when these moments arise they are absolutely not something to feel guilty or selfish about. What you are experiencing is REALITY and how life can and should be.

The older I get the more exciting and miraculous and unbounded I realise that life is. Unfortunately you often do not fully appreciate how magical and wonderful life is until you get older and when they say that 'youth is wasted on the young' there is some truth to it. And the irony is that when you truly wake up you SEE that happiness was there all along, and you just could not see it.

Sublime moments of enlightenment when you experience complete peace and serenity can be overwhelming and even intimidating. You can feel that somehow you should be capturing it and bottling it, but that is your mind up to its old tricks. You know now that you cannot capture it and that being OPEN to fully experiencing life in the moment is how and why these sublime moments arise in the first place.

3.4 Searching For Your own Truth

No one can give you the answers to the big questions about the universe and life. But hopefully this section will give you some ways of thinking about things, not all of which you will necessarily agree with, but which will help you develop your own views and find your own Truths.

We are limited by what our brains are capable of and much of the complexity of the universe with its multiple dimensions, and infinite scale and timeless existence will always elude us. Our consciousness asks questions to which there will never be a complete answer. We cannot ever know the ultimate truth of what the universe is. Truth matters in whatever form we find it, and it is a fact that humans cannot live without searching for the truth and that has always been so.

There is no grand purpose in the universe that is apparent to us. It just *is*.

The Buddha considered that there are no answers to the ultimate questions of why and how the universe exists at all and given that man will never be able to answer these questions it is not productive to be concerned by these issues. Buddhism is the only major religion that acknowledges a large area of ignorance about external matters. It does not attempt to answer such questions as 'what is the purpose of life, the universe and everything?' Buddhism regards such questions as at best unanswerable and probably intrinsically meaningless.

But we **can know** at an empirical level a great deal about what works and what does not for making ordinary human lives happy and fulfilling and meaningful on planet earth. Furthermore we may not also ever totally understand why spirituality works the way that it does.

It is not about religion

Being loving and spiritual is NOT dependent on being religious or believing in a god of any sort. It is about a set of empirical findings about human behaviour that enable us to live happier lives. Being loving and spiritual WORKS even if we do not fully understand or ever will understand why.

The yearning to believe in something greater than ourselves

In evolution people who were disposed to want to belong to a group or tribe that is greater than themselves had a survival advantage. This may explain why it is such a ubiquitous attribute (our genetic inheritance) to be disposed to belong to and follow a religion as this is a modern manifestation of this attribute. However we need to acknowledge that the act of placing our trust in a leader or authority or institution that we can feel is 'bigger' than us, or 'above' us gives us huge feelings of comfort and security and is in some ways very liberating. We all want to do this because it absolves us of having to take full responsibility for ourselves and our moral code, actions and opinions.

It is in fact a cop out to simply unquestioningly swallow whole an entire package of views and 'truth' off the shelf from a religion or leader. It is however very tempting to do this.- a boost up a very big ladder in the search for understanding in life to suddenly be able to accept a whole package of beliefs, morals, opinions and even dress code. From then on you can merely say I am e.g. a Catholic or a Muslim. In answer to any question you can answer, 'Whatever they think-I think'. And when any moral dilemma arises and you are asked to act in a way that seems 'wrong' in the cause of that belief you can blindly follow and absolve yourself of all personal moral responsibility. So if you do decide to attach a label to yourself and 'follow' you must not stop questioning and thinking for yourself. If you do then believing is usually an undesirable thing. We must always take responsibility for thinking and questioning for ourselves, and never suspend disbelief.

For many people today especially the young, it is disorienting and unsettling that there are no longer any institutions that they feel they can look up, respect and trust e.g. the State, Church, police or government.

Many seize upon something man made like allegiance to a football team or the State but at least it gives them that sense of belonging and a 'greater cause' that they are seeking. But for everybody who is not a religious fundamentalist it is difficult to find anything to believe in above and beyond yourself. Belief in religion has been responsible for a great deal of bad and evil action and thought.

There is however one benefit of 'believing' and that is that the resulting humility that it engenders helps us develop SI. It does not actually matter whether the authority to which we bow and 'worship' is real or exists! People do benefit from the humility that believing in something greater than themselves bestows. It does also have the important effect of positioning themselves in the universe. So if you want there is nothing wrong in saying prayers to the 'universe', or looking at the stars at night and feeling that enormous sense of smallness and fragility, humbleness, and mortality that washes over you. As I say it is a way of positioning ourselves and seeing the 'greater' picture.

The nature of existence

Phenomena exist in an essentially interdependent mode and have no autonomous and enduring existence. Nothing exists independently immune from the forces of cause and effect. Everything happens as the result of previous causes. Everything is relation. Everyone is connected. We do not really exist in isolation as a discrete entity-it is a delusion of the mind. To believe that you are looking out on the world is a delusion-you are part of a flowing river of existence. Life on this planet is an ever changing soup that is in an endless cycle. You must see yourself as part of that. Even the cells that we are made of are constantly being renewed. We are not a constant unchanging entity. We are not the same from one moment to the next and bear little relation to who or what we were decades ago. When we die we are immediately recycled as is every other form of life. Whilst we are alive we have numerous constant interfaces with the soup upon which we are completely dependent.

Everything in existence in the universe is energy. Everything is connected. It is just one energy field. Our brains have evolved an extremely clever and elaborate collection of senses such that that is not how it seems to us. Our senses only provide access and visibility of a small proportion of the energy that exists estimated by modern theoretical physics as about 4%. The rest of is referred as 'dark' matter. None of this is particularly helpful except to remind you that all is not what it seems.

Self importance, ego, and emphasis on self are erroneous perceptions of the world. Our control over the world is limited, temporary and more often than not illusory.

In nature life is cruel and harsh for most living things. The whole principle of the food chain means that most animals live a life of fear that ends in an early and violent death. Living is characterised by suffering, to varying degrees for all living beings. There are no explanations for all the sufferings, and evil, and torture and destruction and hunger in the world. It is the very harshness of the environment on earth; the dramatic and extreme changes that take place, the changes that make life uncomfortable and dangerous, which have driven evolution. Life on earth dances to the beat of the environment and adjusts to hostile changes e.g. floods, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and long term climate changes. Of course whilst life overall is resilient, the survival of the individual and even whole species is not guaranteed. There is no grand plan for the outcome of evolutionary change.

Understand that there is no absolute truth or good or bad, or right and wrong. There is only different ways of seeing things.

Reality is as it is and it is our thinking reasoning minds that cannot make sense of it. The only way is to wake up and realise that Reality is not the problem; it is you who imagines it is a problem. That is not to say that human beings should not attempt to help and assist others who are suffering where and when they can.

So Who Am I?

The spiritual answer to this is to define yourself by what you are not. You are not for example any convenient label e.g. a Buddhist, or a Catholic, because being always aware and awake demands that you always approach each moment with freshness, and an open mind and not be controlled by conditioning.

Secondly you are not permanently shackled by any notion of weakness, or affliction from which you cannot improve or shake off. Neither are you identified with your failures and mistakes; you are no longer defined by them, and this is empowering and liberating. Be able to laugh at yourself and your goofs as if they happened to a third party, but do not in any way define who you are.

Arguably you are not your body because that is being continuously replaced and you do not have a single cell that you had 7 years ago.

Similarly you are no longer the baby or child that once had your identity. You are not your past because that does not exist anymore, and you are not your future because that does not exist yet. We live and exist only in the moment. The reality is that everything changes all the time including you.

It is my personal opinion that human beings (or any form of life) have no permanent essence of self, or soul, although I recognise this is a highly controversial area and respect all other opinions.

The self is a concept built up by the mind and is a reference point within our thought processes. By solidifying into an apparent entity, the thought that creates the self becomes the pivot around which all other thinking revolves.

So what or who are we really? Arguably merely a continuum of consciousness, and the cumulative product of what we have previously thought.

The meaning of life / the purpose of life

The ultimate question of all. There are many ways of thinking about this some of which may be helpful to you. Ultimately you have to decide the answer to this for yourself.

There is no grand purpose in life that is defined for us, because who or what would define it? The Universe, and life itself, just is; there is no purpose in it. We have to define our own purpose.

It is in fact a naive question which sees life as attaining some aim through the creation of something of value e.g. wealth, fame, or power. What do you do when you have achieved your aim? No the purpose in life must be continuous and a moment by moment aim to respond to life in a selfless way applying SI. Accepting that we exist and live only in the moment then our purpose in life is not something that is defined as the purpose of our entire life but instead is about having purpose moment by moment.

But one of the main aims of SI is to live a meaningful life with purpose. If that is not achieved one could reasonably ask what is the point of SI? So another way of looking at it is not to ask what we expect life to provide for us and instead ask what life expects from us i.e. what is the purpose of our life to the collective river of life and humanity.

You could define SI as living a life that is dedicated to connection to the universe, enjoying the moment, being the best we can, showing compassion for our fellow man, giving out love and positive energy to those that are close to you, and working to help and assist and improve the lot of others, and in these ways making the world a better place. The common theme is that all of these attributes are about thinking about and acting for the benefit of others, rather than thinking about yourself.

This leads you to the conclusion that there is a purpose in life and it is a purpose that you make for yourself moment by moment in being of service to others.

I will now suggest another entirely compatible moment by moment purpose. By following the path of EI and SI in this guide, and practising the behaviours, I believe that a related purpose in life is to develop a permanent state of mind that allows you to enjoy each moment with inner peace and happiness from the sure knowledge and wisdom that these states of mind do not come from worldly attainments.

Everyone has a current set of circumstances –friends, family, job, hobbies, etc –i.e. their so called ‘lot’ in life. Everybody’s lot in life or tasks and commitments and responsibilities are different, but they are real, and they are your ‘destiny’. Some of the ‘cards’ in your life have been dealt to you and some will have been chosen by you. But whatever is your current ‘lot’ in life or destiny, your purpose is to respond to it moment by moment with what Buddhism refers to as right thought, right effort and right action, or in other words with skill and integrity and with the highest quality that we can muster.

We can all see what are the actual set of demands on us at any time, and instead of trying to deny the ones we do not like, or always wishing some were different, we should accept them as they are, and fulfil them to the best of our ability and to the highest standard we can. Our purpose in life is thus simply put to be the best and nicest person we can in the life that we find ourselves.

Clearly at its most obvious this includes being the best husband, or wife, partner, parent, child and friend we can. If you live your life in this way it is guaranteed to feel that it has huge purpose and meaning due to the importance of your life to others.

On the subject of suffering it is the lot of many that their lives contain much suffering. We must see that the suffering in our lives is, as it is, and is also our destiny and the opportunity is to respond to this in the same positive way as to any other commitment or responsibility or task. Many of the happiest people in the world are disabled, and / or poor or abused servants or have endured or are enduring serious illness.

In summary the purpose in life is not some mythical goalposts or finishing line but the route, the journey.

Fate and Destiny

Many self help books use the expression that everything happens exactly as it should or everything happens perfectly. I believe this to be true but I need to try to explain what is meant by this. This can be a difficult concept to understand or interpret especially if you were trying to reconcile it with e.g. a tragedy as extreme as the loss of a loved one.

It may be preferable to express this concept as everything happens exactly as it is going to and your mind constantly deludes you by trying to tell you otherwise.

A bedrock of the spiritual approach is that you do your best to manage risk and manage your life, making preparations where appropriate but you must let go of the outcomes. You can go so far in trying to change the odds that your life will unfold in a particular way but you cannot control the future. For example. you may fear having a serious road accident so you select a car that offers superior crash protection, you drive very cautiously, and you avoid driving on dangerous roads, you do not drive when tired etc but if it unfolds that you still have a serious accident maybe entirely due to the fault of someone else then this is an example of having to accept Life as it is. Due to the particular set of conditions that existed immediately prior to the accident, the accident became inevitable and was always going to happen.

This is NOT the same as saying there are such things as fate or predestination or destiny because in my opinion there are not. But everything unfolds moment by moment, and everything is the result of previous causation so by the time you reach your next moment, it is only ever going to go one way. That is not the same as fate.

The future does not exist yet and there are no plans anywhere for the future except perhaps in your head! But the nature of existence is that it unfolds moment by moment, and clearly you have free choice to manipulate the future to a certain extent. For example you can and do choose whether to go out in your

car on the day you may or may not have an accident. The point is the accident does not exist until it happens .

Our lives really would be pointless if we had to follow a pre-determined path over which we had no control and everything was set out in advance as if we were just acting out a part in a play. So be thankful that fate and destiny do not exist actually, and when I talk about 'destiny' elsewhere in this document what I mean is 'your lot in life' as it has unfolded. That does not mean it was determined in advance.

4. Why not join our supporters?

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4.2 Our Facebook page

If you are a Facebook user we would encourage you visit our Facebook page which has the name **Life-HowToBehappy.com** and LIKE it. You can also access it via www.facebook.com/howtobehappypages

This will help us build visibility and momentum for the How To Be Happy project and attract others to read the guide. Also our intention with this Facebook page is that progressively people will leave uplifting messages of their own about moments of happiness that they experience during their everyday lives which will inspire and encourage other followers. In this way our Facebook page will genuinely become a HAPPY page.