



Getting Unstuck: Heal your Life

Day Three – Emotional Challenges

Listen to your Heart—but how?

Our emotions are mirrors of what we're thinking and attracting in each moment. As such, these emotions are useful indicators, a feedback loop showing just where we're stuck and why.

Once we get that we are not our thoughts, we can understand our emotions as the feedback mechanism reflecting our thoughts, but even once we wrap our heads around that concept (ironically trying to understand a larger world than our heads with must our heads), we still are likely to have trouble separating ourselves from our emotions. E-motions—emissions that move us to action (or at least responses)—seem to be much more than that.

We can understand our physical pain, as in placing a hand on a hot stove, is not us, but something we experience as important feedback. That's a harder distinction, however, when that feedback is continual. People in chronic pain, for example, often struggle to remember that they have pain, and not that the pain has them. Continual pain clouds this distinction, and we begin to identify with the pain.

The same is true of emotional feelings—they are feedback. But it’s damn hard to take an objective view of a difficult emotional time while living through it at the time. Still, to the degree we can recognize that challenging emotions are reflections of poorer quality thoughts, we begin to have the tools to address these tough emotions with better thoughts creating better quality emotions. When we feed our bodies poor quality food, we don’t feel as well. When we feed our psyches with poor quality thoughts, we aren’t going to experience good feelings.

We understand from meditation that we can find peace amid our thoughts; we sit quietly, let the mind come to rest, and slowly calm the mental turmoil--yet we have tremendous difficulty doing this emotionally. Try this—do a heart “meditation.” Forget about the mind; sit quietly with your heart energy, and let it grow calm. Don’t think about it or “listen” for messages—that’s going back to thinking about it. Just let it be still, and just be. It’s a powerful refocusing. When you do, your whole body energy will shift noticeably, and you’ll find distance from what had seemed sticky emotional trials.

Let the heart come to rest, and feed yourself better thoughts; at first, the negative emotions will continue to taint the results. . .but keep at it—gardens don’t grown abruptly. Keep pursuing better feeling thoughts, and gradually you’ll find yourself in a better emotional state.

The Rule of Three

Still, we understand that physical pain is feedback, not literally ourselves, but we have trouble understanding that about emotional pain. Here’s something I learned over time that might help.

While generally only chronic physical pain begins to become a pain-identity for people, emotional pain gets us there much faster—we tend to react as if this pain is forever. We recoil from the hurt, but as this hurt is inside, there seems no escape from it, and we fear it will be around forever, our new reality. It won’t be unless we let it—and some people do.

Enter the “Rule of Three,” something I learned slowly over much time and thoughtful observation. As such, it’s a tool I can use when things seem to be falling apart, a reminder that things have seemed that way before—and didn’t. Here’s how it works.

No matter how anxious, sad, or upset, I won’t feel this way (or at least not this bad) in three hours (usually two, actually). No matter how worked up over it I am today, and want to rush in to do something, anything, I won’t be this worked up in three days. The situation will look very different in just three weeks. And in three months, everything can change. Look back three months, three weeks, three days, three hours. What were the things you were upset about? Where are these now? Trouble is a gypsy—it comes to pass, not to stay.

I’m not advocating a head-in-the-clouds or head-in-the-sand blindness. There are times to be stuck, whether working through an emotional hurt, or taking time off to just be for a

while. But be sure these are conscious decisions, not reactions feeding your fears. I'm talking about being aware, not drowning in a perceived sea of emotion.

I **am** advocating paying attention to what we do to ourselves. I remember once long ago thinking "I feel like someone has thrust a sword right through me." It wasn't true—a sword thrust through me would have felt MUCH worse. But I clung to that metaphor, and the pain it brought me, for quite a while, before I was finally ready to let go and move on. Be gentle with yourself.

Consider the importance of your existence. You are a divine soul, and you weren't brought here to feel miserable. However things may seem in a dark moment, or even a dark period, it's still a moment (or a period), not eternity, and not the whole of your time here. You are meant to be happy.

When you came into being, the thought of You, nothing but you, was held in fully attention, love, and awareness. "You are an original work of beauty, light, love, joy and bliss," Michael Beckwith reminds us in his *40 Day Mind Fast Soul Feast*, and "the truth is that you are here to learn how to handle love, joy, creativity, and success." "The greatest thing you'll ever learn is just to love and be loved in return," goes Nat King Cole's song "Nature Boy." Note that loving isn't the clincher—but learning to allow yourself to be loved in return. Love yourself. Let others love you. Let the world around you love you. And learn to act like the Loved One you are. Let go of fear and excuses—they are not real. Follow your bliss. It's what you came here to do. Bless us with your path and passion.

This is who you really are. Don't get caught up in passing storms, and don't decide the storm is you. Certainly, situations come along that need to be addressed. But continually reacting to each event will create never-ending storms and hence never-ending reactions to storms that would have simply passed. And, cleaning up is easier after a storm than during one. Be the centered, calm, balanced—by being patient.

Let painful emotions pass through, not camp out and become your identity. Much of the drama doesn't belong to you anyway—so don't claim it. Just let it go. If you need to deal with it, you can do so later, from a calmer, less reactive position. But every action does not mandate a reaction from you. Let it go. You'll be happier for it.

Are you the mirror?

"If your reality is other than what you'd choose then you can be sure that you're living a life of reaction." —from the *Positive Thoughts* blog, <http://positive-thoughts.typepad.com/>

If you have trouble accepting for now that the world mirrors your state, consider instead now much you mirror the world; that's really what complaining, excuses, negative projections and so forth are, you reflecting what comes your way—and that's why you're stuck. You aren't moving—just stirring things in circles.

Stephen Covey's famous The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People starts exactly here with Habit One: Be Proactive. Move from being acted upon—no, move from allowing yourself to be acted upon—to acting on your own behalf. Don't allow fear (which is reactive) to stop you—change is going to happen...the question is only whether you have a say in it or have to take what comes through refusing to place your order.

Know what you want. Covey's second step is "begin with the end in mind," followed by "first things first," that is, prioritizing to reflect the importance, not the apparent urgency, of your primary activities. Apparent urgency is again you reflecting whatever comes along. Act according to what you want. As E. James Rohn says, "If you really want to do something, you will find a way. If you don't, you will find an excuse."

Don't assume it's out of reach; people commonly say "can't" when they mean "won't," and "couldn't" when they mean "wouldn't." No one asks "Could you marry me?" Of course they could. The real question is "Would you marry me?" And when they say, "Oh, I can't do that," they mean, "I'm not going to do that. I could, but I won't." Why? Again, fear—and reaction to that fear. Follow your Love instead. As James Joyce says, "Better pass boldly into that other world, in the full glory of some passion." If nothing else, try—not trying is guaranteed to fail.

Look at what you can do, not what you can't do. Be proactive, not reactive. Don't let yourself be the mirror. Let the world mirror your passion.

One important point—you are not alone in this...and you shouldn't be.

There's an excellent reason three of Covey's steps involve others: Habit Four is *Think win/win*, Habit Five is *Seek first to understand, then to be understood*, and Habit Six is *Synergize*. The interaction with others gives more energy and better results than working separately. Let people who can help you come into your life and into your day—and let them help you. Get over the loner thing. Management is the art of getting results from other people. To better manage your life, include other people—and be grateful for them. The process helps them as well. For that reason, be sure to help others. Look for opportunities to do so and take them. Do it only for the service; you will be the richer for it. Results are gained through other people—anything else is just ego.

And as you work on yourself, the changes you see in the mirror will start to be changes in your entire world, more and more each day. As Wayne Dyer says, "Change the way you look at things, and the things you look at change."

Good Feelings Become Manifest

The world mirrors our good feelings too—and most of what we see is indeed what we wanted . . . with the blemishes we cling to as well.

We are programmed to notice the negative aspects of our surroundings. By noticing it first, we can better avoid danger. By noticing hungry and thirst, we address those important needs up front. But those survival instincts can become distorted, and some learn to see the world in continual criticism. Ironically, the world then mirrors their critical mindset, seeming to affirm their negative mindset in what is really just mere reflection. When we focus primarily on the negative, we allow it to become our identity, victims in a harsh world.

This negative perspective is not reality, other than subjective reality. Much is going quite well in that survival scenario. There's oxygen. Our hearts beat. But we don't notice, as the negative aspects draw attention. Similarly, even when we face very real problems, much of our world is going well—we just aren't looking at those aspects, as they aren't priority observations. We can consciously shift perceptual habits, however, to begin to notice what's going well moment to moment. When we do this, the world mirrors that positive mindset, confirming our observation that all is well. Even when life is truly hard, there is much that is good mixed in to that pain, and shifting our focus to gratitude for that good shifts our experience of reality as well.

If we look around ourselves, fully and honestly, we will realize that, despite the longing and frustration we might often feel, we actually are largely living our dream. We might live more or less where we want, how we want, and work at work we more or less want, and spend our time with the people we want. If it doesn't seem so, remember that we live the *entire* dream, including all its fears and hesitations and cautions. If we wanted to be left alone, and to avoid high stress and huge responsibility, for example, we may need to recognize that, when we're lonely, or when we're feeling unfulfilled on the job, that we are, nonetheless, living what we have chosen.

This, then, is reason to celebrate. We did it! And that positive emotional vibration will help you continue to manifest what you wish. The parts you find less emotionally exciting, now that you recognize how you are attracting them, can now be changed. It's you bringing them about, and your negative emotions are letting you know the pain of those choices, just as a hand in the fire warns you of that painful choice. Appreciate these feelings! And listen to them, just as you listen to the pain in your hand when it's too near the flame. Don't lament and dwell on them—pull yourself back from the flame and make a better feeling choice. This is how we create.

Truly, we have created the world that feels good to us at this time.

The Role of Desire

Desire is the root of pain, as the Buddha noted, but it's also the road to successful fulfillment of those desires.

Desire gets a bad rap in some interpretations of Buddha's teachings, but the real issue is

attachment. The idea is that desire leads to suffering, so the way to freedom from suffering—and the wheel of karma and rebirth—is to free oneself from desire.

Unfortunately, that would mean a detachment from actually living an enjoyable, meaningful life. So the point is not to have no desires, but rather to stop attaching judgments of “good” and “bad” to what happens, because it’s these judgments to which we become attached, not the desires *per se*. Detachment means detachment from outcomes, not desires.

What’s the difference? Outcomes are mileposts, while desires are continuous. We all have several things in our lives that we once desired—and yet, most of us are not enjoying blissful lives. Why? Those are now outcomes, while our desires have expanded to other wishes. Accumulating past fulfilled desires doesn’t seem to fulfill us, unless we remember to appreciate what we have in each moment with gratitude. This is living in the Now. We will still have desires, because we are always growing and expanding. But we can be so busy enjoying all we have in the moment that we are unconcerned about future outcomes, while still enjoying the anticipation of seeing those desires come to fruition. Desire is an evolving state of being, while outcomes are attachment to specific happenings.

Desire is creative, while attachment is not. We conceive the thought of this new thing or experience, and of all the other thoughts we have, we attach positive emotion to this one, and it becomes desire. And this process is continuous, because we will continue to think of new things and experiences that promise significant positive emotion. If we can learn to enjoy this process, rather than lament the absence of what we’ve only just conceived, we’ll live happily in each moment. If we’re continually concerned about what has not yet come to pass, we will be continually unhappy and remain blind to the many blessings we already enjoy. Our focus then is on creating negative experience, and living continually not in the present moment. Attachment keeps us stuck, while desire keeps us continually growing.

Similarly, karma is not justice, neither reward nor punishment, but fulfillment. Every desire comes to fruition—that’s the Law of Karma. Or in other terms, once something is desired, it *must* come to fruition, even if that takes many lives. And—that desire comes as complete packages, all the things that go with it, anticipated and wanted or not. That’s why benefits and retribution seem to chase the actions taken to realize those desires. And that’s why the Wheel of Karma holds us life after life. As long as we continue to desire, we continue to expand, and our experience incarnate continues. Once we transcend the state of continual desire, we have nothing more to manifest, and nothing more to learn from it.

This is the importance of living in the Now. When we learn to appreciate where we are and to just be, we become fulfilled in the moment. With this comes detachment from outcomes—and then emotional calm. Desire is fine; attachment to outcomes creates suffering. Continually expand and grow, but in emotional balance.

When we have the ability to remain in the Now, emotionally detached from the outcomes of our desires and with gratitude for them, we are better on the road to realizing those desires and the positive emotions we have when we think about them.

The Importance of a spiritual path/daily program

To better focus on a purer form of desires, starting and ending each day with spiritual practice will keep the head clear, and the spiritual connection and certainty will grow stronger and build over time. The daily part of this is the important part.

You don't have to be religious necessarily, but decide what you do believe, however secular and/or minimal, and daily focus around your understanding of spirituality—whatever it is. Whatever these beliefs are literally doesn't matter. Just get to the heart of whatever you believe, whatever “spirituality” means for you.

Start and end your day with it, for two reasons—first, it will renew you day to day, helping you keep your head clear. Covey's final step, “Sharpen the Saw,” stresses the importance of renewal for effectiveness. Each day begins with this touchstone, and then whatever happens during the day, each day ends with that touchstone. It will bring you balance.

But second, anything you practice day to day, everyday, will build, no matter how small the start. To let go of fears and complaining and negative projections and excuses and so on, you'll need strength. There will be days this is tougher; sometimes for good reason, sometimes for no particular reason. A firm and strong connection to your spirituality will see you through. As you get clearer about this spirituality and your connection to it, it will grow beyond what you might imagine. Don't miss days—this is key.

“When excitement and fear meet ... you're on the precipice of a life transformation” (<http://positive-thoughts.typepad.com/>). Normally, we let our fears, our negative perceptions, and our apprehensions build day to day. Release them daily instead. Allowing the positive center—in both senses, both certain and uplifting—to grow daily will indeed move life to new heights, bit by bit.

Keep the excitement; banish the fear. Use your spirituality.

So What's Stopping Us?

On the path to clarity, though, human reactions will get in the way; we can begin to recognize these for what they are, though, as well as employ better strategies for handling feelings such as feeling overwhelmed, resentful, or angry.

Note that these all stem from a victim mentality. The world is doing these things to us—and it's so unfair! Or so it seems to us at the time. As long as we remain victims, we remain stuck. However, only our emotional reaction binds us. It's not real.

That's not to say injustice doesn't exist. It does. But. Imagine someone sneaks into your place while you're sleeping, dresses you up in clown makeup and goofy clothes. Not your fault, right? Now imagine you decide to walk around in it all day, lamenting your poor

condition. Whose fault is that? Clean yourself up instead of parading around. The morning makeup wasn't fair; the all day makeup was your conscious choice. The distinction between our choices and true injustice is key.

But much of perceived negativity stems only or predominantly from our minds and egos. Even when we do have cause, over-reaction clouds our assessment of the situation, introducing personal fictions to formerly objective reality. We are, perhaps, predisposed to look for trouble—after all, avoiding danger is crucial to our survival. This instinct, however, becomes a liability when we apply it socially, outside of our natural origins. The resulting “dangers” are our own projections, not reality.

When we have better understanding of what is actually happening, we can then address the situation more appropriately—and with better results. A spiritual practice helps here. Nonetheless, life happens, and we're still human—and think and act like it often. An awareness of this is itself a first step toward better responses.

Feeling Overwhelmed

When we feel overwhelmed, we need to understand that overwhelmed is a feeling, and feelings can be changed by changing our paradigms.

“I'm just overwhelmed!”

“All I do is work!”

“Something's gotta give!”

Any of that sound familiar? You're not alone.

I. The first and most important point is that “overwhelmed” is not a situation. It is not just how things are. No. It's a feeling. You are *feeling* overwhelmed. Perhaps for good reason--but it's still a feeling, not an objective reality. And feelings can be changed--if you want to change them. Why “if”? Because often people *like* to feel overwhelmed. No, overwhelmed is not a nice feeling, but *being* overwhelmed often gives people a sense of importance, a work ethic, an identify. And that they like. I know people, and you do too, who would find a way to be frazzled if living in luxury on a Pacific island. Overwhelmed is a feeling, and if you want, feelings can be changed.

II. Next come three areas commonly ignored, three areas to stop and examine.

1) Stop trying to do everything yourself.

Ego, pride, embarrassment, and probably a few other emotions commonly stand in the way of this simple and frankly obvious point. You are not, whatever you try to tell yourself, the only one who can do what you're trying to do. Stop going it alone. Whether lending a hand, or offering advice, or even just encouragement or camaraderie, an ear to listen...let other

people help you. In fact, ask them to help you. And if you just don't want to, face up to the reality that you've not overwhelmed, but stubborn. Forget the lone wolf argument--people are social creatures, and interaction with each other is how we are wired. Even people like me and you, who like our quiet alone time. Let others help you--they will be delighted.

2) Stop trying to control everything.

Or put another way, instead of asking yourself "What should I do about this?" ask yourself "Why do I have to do anything?" The Universe will continue without your aid. People will still breathe in and out. The sun will still rise and set. You are not the Boss of Everything. Let it go. Life will become so much easier, and run so much more smoothly, when you simply allow it to do so. Life existed before your arrival, and will continue when you're gone.

I love the beginning of Ken Blanchard and Spenser Johnson's "The One Minute Manager": Typically, a manager is seen as someone torn in multiple directions, finger on every pulse, but a good manager is standing around the office with little to do--because everything is running smoothly without the manager's immediate input. We tend to think of "making" things happen, by force. Instead, *allow* things to happen.

3) Stop taking on too much.

This ain't rocket science. If you're feeling overwhelmed because you have too much to do, you're taking on too many things. Duh. Stop it.

Sure, I get that there's a lot to do, and that a lot of it is important. But it makes no sense to daily plan what can't possibly happen and then beat yourself up for not accomplishing what had no chance of getting done from the start.

If you're doing too many things, do fewer things. Prioritize. If that means less than you want to do, fine. But decide which to do and do it, and feel glad of a good day's work.

Remember--overwhelmed is a feeling; you at least will stop feeling overwhelmed.

III. And finally, there's a difference between time management and getting unstuck from what we're managing.

First, time management. Lots of help available here. Probably at the top of the list is Stephen Covey's approach, laid out in his book *First Things First*. This, however, is far more than allocating the 168 hours of each week into the various pieces that make up your time life.

Covey suggests turning first not to the clock, but to the compass, that is, instead of juggling minutes, considering principles. Where do you want to go? What are your objectives?

What is important to you in this life? Those are your organizing principles. Thus, your “big rocks” get placed first, then medium rocks, then smaller rocks, then pebbles, then sand. But don’t let a sandstorm keep you from getting to the big rocks. The important things--like relationships, or your children, or someone who needs help--take precedence.

OK, that’s an important start--but you’re still left with only so many hours in the day.

You need a paradigm shift.

Here’s an example of what I mean--my first week of graduate school.

I had followed a scholarship to the New England Conservatory of Music, but I was also working, partly delivering the *Wall Street Journal* to Cambridge businesses, and partly selling mutual funds (I was licensed in both New York and Massachusetts). Additionally, as a performance major, I was expected to participate in a number of ensembles. So I knew time would be at a premium.

I was ready, I thought. I collected all my course syllabi, and bought myself a spiral notebook, laying out a week for each page, and entering all the assignments for all my classes in each week. Then, I started working through it to make adjustments necessary for various clusters of assignments. For example, if four papers were due in Week 7, three of those papers will need to be written sooner, in previous weeks. I figured I’d lay it all out, making my work load smooth and manageable--good idea, right?

Well, I hit a snag; very quickly, the reality became apparent that there was no way all this work this was going to happen—it couldn’t. Literally, there was no way I could do all this work, no matter how I scheduled it. Simply not possible. Time management was NOT going to help. If I was going to continue in grad school, I needed a very different solution.

So I headed over to Barnes & Noble, and bought eight books--six of them on speed reading, two on writing quickly (as, for example, journalists must do, or freelance writers who want to make a good living). That’s how I spent my first week of grad school, ignoring my school work, reading these books instead. Either they worked, or I was screwed.

They worked. I got quite the education.

I also employed other strategies. I never read anything without asking my professors where we were going with those reading selections. Then, if we were writing a paper eventually, I read for the paper elements I would need, marking them as I read, recording the page number and topic inside the book covers. I could then write and document at the same time. For a class with a large research project, I teamed with other students in an eight person study group. We met in the rare book section of the Boston Public Library, divided the necessary research areas into eight pieces, and presented our findings to the group (then we wrote individual papers from that source material). All these approaches had in common

not managing available time, but rather cutting necessary work to fit the available time.

Tim Ferriss, in *The Four Hour Work Week*, takes ideas like this much, much further. He challenges multiple assumptions about how we construct our work and our time, noting that much of our structured time (*i.e.*, structured *for* us) is wasted, and often working from home can be far more productive (while acknowledging that this isn't necessarily true for everyone). He gives the examples of sales calls to business owners--an hour of calling from 8-9 and another from 5-6 accomplished more than calling all day. Why? He didn't have to go through the secretaries on duty 9-5; the decision makers themselves answered the phone. Ferriss focuses heavily on doing work that needs to be done—and none of the work that isn't productive.

Take the Pareto Principle seriously: 80% of our results come from 20% of our activities. Invest time in isolating that 20%, and cut or minimize the 80%. Ferriss points out that this need not mean expanding your 20% (though you may well want to do so)--lateral moves can also be satisfying. What if you could make the same income you do now, even doing the same thing, but in half the time? The remainder could be spent doing things you love, rather than reinvesting in work pursuits. This in turn would give you considerably more energy during the time you *do* spend working--for even greater results. Being "time rich" should be as important—or more important—than traditional productivity goals.

Ferriss has a number of other interesting ideas, from maximizing Internet resources to setting up your business to essentially run itself to employing "Virtual Assistants" to take up the slack--including offshoring this to low cost countries. Yup--you too can offshore operations to Bangalore, and for less than \$10 an hour, for often excellent quality work. Ferriss even hands off personal responsibilities. This book is definitely worth a read--there are *multiple* options to how you are doing things now.

What lifestyle do you want? Do you want to travel the world? How about continuing to do your current job while living in China, or Italy, or London, or anywhere else that strikes your fancy? From remote control of your home or office computer, to services that cater to exactly this clientele, Ferriss has a wealth of ideas. Live the life you want to live--now.

And that's key--live the life you want to live, rather than get caught up in merely managing the details of what life presents. Alex Baisley, of the Big Dream Program (<http://bigdreamprogram.com>), is a genius at challenging people to construct their lives around five principles ("Juicy Realizations," he calls them), considering them as an ecosystem, where all five are required:

*What if your Big Dreams were essential to what you do, and not some distant possibility?

*What kind of lifestyle would you like to live? Do you want to travel? Or live somewhere specific? What if this is not a "someday I could do this" but an important

element of what you do right now?

*Who do you want in your life? What if you enjoy your work, but the people you're serving just aren't the kind of people who jazz you up? Who are your tribe? Who would you love to have with you?

*What fires up your energy? Usually, as we get busy, we tend to cut back the very things that renew us--exercise, meditation, days off, vacations, fun with friends and family--exactly when we need that extra energy. What if incorporating this rejuvenation was part of our pursuits?

*Rethink income as a series of projects. I love this one. Love, love, love it. Two reasons--it breaks things down into manageable parts/projects, and it moves the typical assumptions about jobs/employment to considering a "living" as a combination of income streams.

IV. Have you ever noticed that a LOT of successful business people run not one, but a few businesses? They get the project principle, and the same is true on a smaller scale. Let's say you love to write, but your pieces are only netting you \$1,000 a month. Hmm. Not a living, for sure. Maybe even not a full day's work per week. But that's one project. What if another project--music, theater, organic apples--nets another \$12,000 a year? See where this is going? Five small projects could bring in ample income just doing things you love to do anyway--or even one such project, on top of your current work, once you rethink your current work to reduce your time commitment there.

Go project by project, and don't get overwhelmed about getting unstuck from being overwhelmed. The point is simply that you have a wealth of options. Do the ones you want, pass on the ones you don't want, and come up with a wealth of your own. Change your thoughts. Recognize that you are *not* stuck, that you are experiencing a feeling only, and that change--even radical change--is not only possible, but also accessible.

Learn to say *no*, and learn to say *yes*.

Saying no to things and people as you choose need not be a conflict. As a first step, simply stop saying yes to these things. When asked to attend an event, for example, instead of feeling pressured to respond yes or no (notice that *feeling* again?), say, "Thank you; I'll keep that in mind," or "I'll have to think about that when we get closer to it," or "OK, maybe I'll see you there." NONE of these things commit you. In fact, even if you WANT to go, leave the commitment open, so you're still free to decide in the moment. [And by the way, just because you said you would doesn't force you to go either...though I too keep my word.] You get to choose for yourself.

In time, you can nicely say, "Thank you for inviting me. I'm glad you thought of me, but I just don't want to go." There it is. You're entitled. Keep in mind that people-pleasing

comes from egos with inferiority complexes. We want people to like us, and fear they won't if we don't acquiesce. Or (and), we feel the world would fall apart without our help, so we simply have to go help. Neither of these things are true. Stop acting out of fear, as it simply creates things in our heads that are not real. Do what you want, and gently state your firm truth.

Say YES to the things you want to do, to the person you want to be, to the life you want to live, to the people you want with you, to the time to pursue and enjoy all these things, and to the time to allow yourself to grow into the person you have always been meant to be.

And you can do it very, very quickly, a few months, if you decide to embrace it.

Let *that* overwhelm you!

Imagine your ideal feeling—and choose it *now*. How do you want to feel? What have you done that made you feel that way? What could you do now that would make you feel that way?

One day at a time. Step by step. Closer and closer.

Enjoy the journey. You can feel better *right this instant!* Alex Baisley compares this to planning a road trip across country. You pack, prepare, plan, and you're excited just getting into the car--and you haven't left your driveway yet! Let your life be like this, and the exciting, fulfilling, joyous feeling starts--today. Right now!

How awesome is that!

Letting Go of Resentments

Resentments are about ego, and as such are negative thought projections that only hurt ourselves and only exist in our minds—another paradigm shift.

We can't afford resentments--first, they're costly, and second, we get nothing for them. They're a very bad investment.

Yes, yes, yes, I know, but this person really, really deserves it. Guess what? You're not doing a damn thing to that person. Resentments are like swallowing poison and expecting the other person to die. Really bad idea. Resentments are you hurting yourself. That's it. Cold hard truth. Nothing to see here. It's just you, and you alone. If you don't deserve it, stop.

But I'd understand if I knew what this person did, right? You aren't getting it. I've heard some pretty horrendous stories. Changes nothing. A resentment hurts you, and you alone. Stop hurting yourself. Let go. Not for the other person. For you. How long do you want

to keep letting this hurt you? Do YOU deserve this?

A resentment does nothing to the other person. The person you resent doesn't even know what you're thinking right now. It's just You making You miserable. Stop.

Stop. Really. Stop.

Really—now. Because here's the tricky part--once you decide you want to stop torturing yourself with resentments, you'll find that's difficult to do. It's become a habit, and you're good at it. So here's what you do.

So first--get over yourself. You aren't that important. People really don't go around planning what they're going to do today to make you miserable. Give it up. I get it--these may not be the nicest people in the world. But they are interested....wait for it....in THEIR lives, not yours. You are an incidental detail. They aren't doing it TO you, and never have. You were just there. They were concerned about themselves, not you. Your reaction is pure ego--how dare they do this to ME? The Great and Powerful Me! They didn't. They were thinking about themselves and their concerns, not you. Just accept that. You aren't that important.

And second--OK, you're over yourself, but there's still what the other person did, right? What to do about that?

Imagine God/Universe/Buddha/White Buffalo Woman/Anyone Else Meaningful to you sitting on your shoulder, watching and totally taking your side on this—hardly seems likely. So let's play a game. If you aren't a believer, play anyway--the game still works. Imagine God looking at the situation from your perspective, and saying, "Damn! You're right! Look at the obnoxious bozos you have to deal with! Man that sucks!" Now....if you're having trouble seeing God taking sides like that...then you're getting the point. If God wouldn't be enthusiastically supporting your personal rants, then you aren't being objective, and the problem is.....You.

Third--alright, you've accepted that the other person isn't the problem...but you're still steamed. Just can't shake it. You're still letting this person rent space in your head.

So evict them from your head. Seriously. Stand up, announce, "I'm sorry, but the Hotel Head is now closed to visitors. Pack and go, right now. Bye!" No, I'm not kidding. The sillier the better--after all, how silly is it to be renting head space to your resentments in the first place! Throw the bums out. Let them live in somebody else's head.

Fourth--pray for them. No, not, "God, let them be hit by a bus."

"But wait!" you say. "Look, I went along with all your other silly ideas, but come on, why should I pray for that SOB?" Because, my silly friend, the point of the prayer is not for

them--it's for you. Even if you don't believe in God or prayer, pray anyway. For real. The point of the prayer is to change You, not the other person. Wish them well--your energy and attitude will shift. You will feel better. You will heal. You will free the resentment. You will find peace.

Again, remember--resentments do nothing to the other person; they bind You. And when you are bound by the actions of others, you're truly a prisoner, as you have no control over what others do. You CAN, though, control what you do. Let go and be freed.

Fifth--this is a maintenance step: learn to let things go. That driver this morning didn't get up early just to rush over and cut you off. Probably doesn't even remember, if indeed noticed in the first place. As yourself, "How important is this, really?" Then let it go. Life is too short, and resentments are too costly.

Remember--the cost of resentments is high, and with no benefit beyond the delusion of the ego.

Ditch 'em. Sell at a loss. You'll feel so much lighter when you're not carrying those around.

Anger

Anger is useless except as a red flag—when we're angry, we're wrong...yet another paradigm shift. Years ago, I had a lot of trouble with anger. I was young, life was unfair, people were idiots, etc. Here are a few things I learned, slowly.

The first 30 seconds of anger *can* be an important emergency response, to alert us to a serious problem, to stop something abruptly, things like that--but usually not, and anything after that is what anger is really about—fear and ego. We aren't justified, no matter how long we carry on. And perhaps more to the point—it's counterproductive.

All that yelling and screaming, or worse yet, throwing things in an attempt to force the world to conform to our vision—just doesn't work. Oh, it can *seem* to work, if you're in a position of authority, literally or one granted in the particular relationship dynamic. But all you really do is train people to avoid you. That ranting manager who gets everyone scurrying? The moment he's gone, people are complaining to each other instead of working. Anger actually works against us.

Anger does damage. Maybe you only blow up occasionally, say, once a year. Not bad, huh? Sorry—everyone is just waiting for the next time. Your credibility and your ability to communicate with these people honestly and openly is gone. That loss of trust is hard to undo, and takes time.

Anger does not show that we are in control—it demonstrates that we have lost control, of ourselves and of the situation. And no matter how that might look on the surface, anger

does not help you regain control—only the illusion of temporary compliance. Not cooperation, not communication, and in fact, you only gain what you can get while you stand there and rant. Unless you have time for that continually, this is not an effective practice.

Nor does righteous anger work. When we're angry—we're wrong. Sounds simplistic, yes, but it's stunning how accurate that simple tool proves itself. If you've got an excellent, important point, you should be able to make it calmly and rationally. To the degree you can't is the degree to which it's not as good a point as you imagine. Nor is there a need to shout back at an irrational, angry speaker. How does that contribute to any understanding or communication or persuasion? You are only talking to yourself—and to your ego—convincing only you that you're accomplishing anything.

And that's the problem. You're stuck—but don't know it, or aren't admitting it.

In the absence of a true and immediate danger, then, take anger for the sign it is—a sign we are covering another emotion. As it's not love...that leaves fear. "Nothing real can be threatened; nothing unreal exists." When we find the need for anger, we are feeling threatened, hence the defense. It's why dogs bark when they're tied...all they can do is ward off. So they do. Like the bumper sticker says, "Wag more. Bark less." Let the more positive emotions become dominant. And find and address the real emotional concern.

After recognizing the sign that something is wrong (even if you're still convinced it's nothing), slow down and pay attention to how you're really feeling, what's really going on. If you find yourself suddenly snapping at someone or something, you aren't fine.

Don't neglect obvious things—if you're tired or hungry, for example, recognize Grandma was right—somebody needs a nap, or have a little snack. If you're feeling alone, call somebody and chat. Don't tell yourself you're above these things—these are basics we all need.

If you're angry and no one is there, or if you're the silent angry type—you have a resentment—also unproductive. Accept it as something you can't change, or recognize you need to talk. Those are the options. Arguing with an empty room is certainly not a positive sign.

Some good news—you don't have to be a saint. If you need some time, take it. Go for a walk. Breathe. Or share that "I can't talk about this right now, but we'll talk later," and without attitude or tone.

Nor do you need to react to everything immediately. Before you send off that fiery email—take time first. Take a few days even, or weeks. Things change—or at least look different. And (something that took me a while to learn), just when you are fuming and deciding what to do, first ask yourself, "Why do I have to do anything?" Learn to act proactively, not react

in anger. Reacting always means you are not the one in control. Nor will reacting help you regain control. Let things settle down—including you.

Learn to let go. It's the only true control—control of one's self.

Honesty, Forgiveness, Ego, Teams, and Healing

"In every person who comes near you look for what is good and strong; honor that; try to imitate it, and your faults will drop off like dead leaves when their time comes." – John Ruskin (1819-1900)

To feel better, then, takes one more paradigm shift: forgiveness and self-honesty are the keys to relieving the pain.

I was asked recently about my take on honesty and forgiveness; the occasion was a betrayal one person was trying to work through. The group conversation, however, evolved quickly into more universal themes. I was struck by how heavily the wonderful points shared as people spoke stressed healing on many levels, and I'm passing it on!

First, let's be real—when negative things happen, we need time to work through them. There's nothing wrong with that. It's a process, and that's fine—even good. Take time to heal.

At the same time, though, as long as we hold on to our anger and withhold forgiveness, we are clinging to the pain. What may seem as directed at someone else is actually hurting ourselves. Again...OK for a time, as long as we recognize what's going on. If we don't see that, though, we can set up a chronic condition. What seems outer directed is actually directed inward.

Forgiveness of others is also a prerequisite for something crucial for healing—forgiving ourselves. Whenever we cling to pain, it's always for reasons of ego (no natural instinct would make us do that). What part did we play in the exchange? Or are we beating ourselves up for poor choices or perception? Outer anger covers and disguises this inner festering, even from ourselves. This again can set up a chronic condition.

Here's where honesty enters the picture in a major way. To heal, we really have to take the focus off others and put it on ourselves. That's the only way to watch what is truly happening, and then we can start to heal the things in ourselves that need it—not cure other people from their transgressions. Let go. Stop clinging to needless pain. Grow beyond it. Forgive, and learn what you needed to learn from this interaction, even if the lesson was painful. Recognize that this new knowledge and wisdom is a keeper—it applies to all new situations, so you truly have gained from this experience. Make it a positive application.

People make mistakes. Yes, even stupid ones they had no business making. But we've all done things in retrospect that weren't the best moves. Understand people are dealing with their own issues and growth, however well or poorly, and that this is their process. Focus on

your own growth and process, and bless others in their journey. Love and forgive. You don't have to repeat poor choices, of course—but forgive, and love them for who they are. Do this as best you can at first, even if that's not much. The effort counts.

This acceptance of imperfect people, including oneself, is the key to being “right-sized.” We are each not the center of the universe, but one person among many, part of a group. When we can see our part in interactions, we can start to see our role in daily life. We are part of a group—many groups, actually. Each member has a role to play; each member is responsible for his or her own progress. But if we place ourselves above this, we have lost the reality of our place in the group, and we've taken on a greater role than what we truly serve. We are different, not better. An architect building a home might indeed have the creative inspiration and direction that spawned the project, but the owners' needs shaped that vision, and the tradesmen on the job are the ones who know how to make abstract ideas work in the field. ALL these voices are necessary for a successful project. All are part of this team—none better than the others. And what a relief! You don't have to run the universe today. Pressure's off.

This vision, though, of knowing yourself and your growth and process, of knowing your place as one of the many on the various teams in your life, your important place at that, just as the others are important, is really a lynch pin for healing and for a healthy life. It is truly who you are, in gratitude for all those around you as well. It's a vision of harmony and well-being, one model each day, if we only see it for what it is. Forgive others. Love them. And forgive and love yourself. They, and you, are just that special. When we let go of pain, we begin to live in love—daily, constant, universal love.

Love, let go, and at the end of the day, say thank you. Even on the crappiest day, it was not all bad. Be grateful. If you have trouble with this, make a list--yes, I get the irony of listing what you are having trouble articulating. Start with A--Apples? Alice? Anesthesia? Alaska? Animals? Anagrams? Then B. Then C, D, E, F, etc. But end the day grateful and thankful, even if you need to work a bit to get there. Your mind will start to quiet, your nerves will slowly unwind, your muscles will begin to relax (didn't know you were that tense until you started relaxing), and you will sleep better--and be better prepared for the following day.

In time, day by day, you'll find yourself progressing, growing, and healing. Then do the same for the beginning of your day—wake up grateful and glad to start the day. It will happen.

Let go and heal.

Release Emotional Pain

We are vibration; to let go of any emotional pain or difficulty, simply release it. This is one of those things that really is that simple. Except that we don't want to let it be that simple.

As Einstein or Tesla could have told us 100 years ago, we are energy, frequency, and vibration. That's it. Our experience of a material world is simply the interaction of these vibrations. It's not some solid wall we're powerless to address. All being is vibrating energy at frequencies.

Somehow, though, as straight-forward as that may make any first impulse to see deep mysticism here, that understanding gets immediately clouded when applied to emotion. The less tangible emotional energy might logically seem easier to grasp as frequency and vibration, but this aspect we prefer to mysticize. These are emotions! Subjective, soft, subtle, secret sensations of silent sorcery. "You made me feel that way!" "These emotions just came over me!" "I fell in love" (like tripping into a hole). "Anger washed over me" (as if just innocently standing on the beach). Powerful stuff, these emotions!

We see emotions as inevitable storms, not as conscious choices. We're attached to our emotions. We love to wallow in them, negative ones as much, even more, than positive ones. And the positive ones, we convinced, are only temporary, just waiting to throw us back into turmoil. It's a wonder we're all not emotional wrecks.

But just as we tune into the desired frequencies on the radio dial, we tune into the frequencies and vibration emotionally that we choose. As mentioned before, emotions are reflections of our thought. If we have positive emotions, we're thinking positive thoughts. If we experience negative emotions, we're thinking negative thoughts. If some one is "psychically draining energy," it's only because the "victim" is tuned right into that emotional mindset and energy. Change the dial, and it's fixed.

When we don't see that we're choosing, we mistakenly identify with passing storms, thereby hanging on to them, preventing them from simply passing through quickly. "Oh no! How did I get this way?" we exclaim internally. But emotions are a feedback loop, not themselves tangible things, and they reflect, not create—unless we decide to focus thoughts on creating a static emotional state. And we often do just that. We're miserable, and instead of changing that, we resist attempts to cheer us up! We want to stay in the pain, and cry "Woe is me!" This is as silly as going out into the rain and then crying, "Oh no! I'm raining!"

If someone throws us a ball, we don't cling to the ball and start to identify with it. We toss it back, or even just let it whiz right by. The same is true of emotions. If they aren't emotions we choose to share, we don't have to catch them and cling to them. Release them.

This is even worse when the emotions arise from within. Trying to battle emotions is as ridiculous and as pointless as trying to battle that ball. But we do—or try to do it. And it never works. If anything, it amplifies the vibration, and we can work ourselves into a real tizzy. When we understand what's really going on, and how simple and frankly silly it truly is, we can step back, stop exacerbating the frequency, and either switch or let go. Emotions reflect our thoughts, and to react emotionally to something we're creating is insanity itself.

Imagine you're being dragged by a rope behind a speeding car. What can you do about something so horribly painful? You can let go of the rope. Stop focusing on the emotional pain, and let go instead. Just as you take your hand off a hot stove, stop pressing against whatever is generating the emotional pain. Common sense—but oh we love our drama and our troubles. Recognize, though, that this is a choice, not the conditions of our lives.

Remember the simple monkey trap: the monkey reaches into a jar to get the peanuts, but can't pull back the fist without letting go of the peanuts. Don't be trapped by nothing but your resistance to letting go. It really is just you creating all that pain. Just let go and be free.

In physical healing, sometimes we visualize the pain as dissipating, releasing that energy. Do the same with emotional pain (and with mental confusion too). See the emotional pain as simply dissipating into the atmosphere around you. Keep at it. Let it go. Stop recreating it. Recognize and think better thoughts, ones that feel better, until you've changed your vibration into a better feeling frequency. The emotions will shift with the quality of your thoughts. Notice them, and they've done their job. Release them. This is the wisdom of non-attachment. It keeps things real without creating projected reality. Like physical healing, getting unstuck emotionally means letting go of trapped energy—even if we're the ones trapping it.

In emotional healing, resist the urge to hold painful emotions tightly, and instead, visually them dissipating, releasing that energy and any “stuck” conditions we're unconsciously continually recreating. It really is that easy. Emotions aren't destiny—they are a way to sense the quality of our thoughts and the creation/manifestation process.

Release Attachment to Ego: Only our egos prevent us from seeing and using this important sense, and we need only decide to be happy to manifest our desires.

What if life was happening not “to” us, but *for* us? What if we never took anything personally, no matter what? What if we were so busy noticing and appreciating life that we had no need to bring anything extra created from our reactions and projections? What if we just saw things for what they are, without interpretation? Can you imagine how much easier life would be, how much more powerfully our actions would resonate when we did act, how much lighter our burdens would be, and how much less pain we'd carry around? What if we could see the opportunities given at every instant?

We wonder why we aren't creating the lives we truly desire, but we're so busy creating the lives our egos insist on seeing that it takes all our time and energy and manifestation. We **are** getting what we're sending out. We **are** living in the vibrations we create and attune to. We just are so wrapped up in our egos that we live in the vibration of stuck ego. And when we're so busy separating ourselves as distinct from all that's around us, we can't see that all around us is part of ourselves, part of our energy, part of our vibration—nay, it **is** us, it **is** our energy, it **is** our vibration, our frequency. What's around us is *us*, and if we'd

learn to accept, to recognize, and to live this, we'd be far more happier (and powerful) beings, living in peace and harmony.

We need only be grateful for what life brings. Imagine—that's really how simple this truly is. Just be in the moment, grateful for what life brings, addressing what's in front of us. When we're not, that's when the problems start to multiply—or so we perceive.

Our emotions are the early warning system. Learn to watch them as giveaways for the quality of our thoughts. When we aren't having good emotions, we aren't having good thoughts. When you're loving our emotions, we're having perfect thoughts. Taking the chain one stop further, we are not our thoughts. If our thoughts aren't good, we are thinking at odds with who we are—not to mention all that's around us—and we are disharmonious and feel negative emotions. If we are thinking good, balanced, positive thoughts, our thoughts are in harmony with the *us* that's all around us, and our emotions are happy, passionate, loving, joyful, peaceful.

As such, emotions are a spiritual barometer. Are we separate from the One, from our true selves, or are we in communion with the Universe and our Highest Selves? Our emotions tell us, revealing our thoughts, and the level of balance in our ego. That's why it's so difficult for our minds to grasp what physics assures us—we are energy, vibration, frequency. This threatens the ego-mind, which wants to be separate. But separate will always be unhappy, and separate will always be a lie. We can still choose where to tune in and be whole, but we cannot be separate from that whole—and our emotions will always flag it when we try. If we listen to our emotions, we can bring our thoughts back into alignment, and return to peace.

Release attachment to ego, and life automatically flows better—and our emotions reflect this happiness. Fight life, holding to ego to the last, we can only encounter consistent resistance, as we are unknowingly fighting the Universe—the same Universe that's serving us, if we only let it.

Good Luck!

More tomorrow!

