

# Living in Peace

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## Introduction

How long must this problem continue?

Have you ever asked yourself something like this when you were sick and tired of feeling unhappy and worn-out with fighting circumstances? When you asked it, did you feel as if the weight of the whole world was crushing down upon you? Did the idea of leaving it all behind and physically running away cross your mind? Were you depressed? Would you recognize if you were clinically depressed?

Don't think for a moment that you are alone in feeling like this. Nearly everyone, at some point or another, has feelings of being unable to cope, of being worthless, of being frazzled and worn-out and not at peace, of depression. Some people learn how to cope with these feelings through their life experiences, through study, and/or through faith in their religious beliefs. Some people need professional help with these types of feelings. Some people just keep on putting one foot in front of the other and plod along until things seem to get better.

The problem is that until you find out what is making you feel this way and deal with it, you'll continue to have episodes of the same types of feelings. My goal in this lecture and associated meditation is to provide you with some mental tools, which I believe can help you find a better way to cope.

Please understand that these tools are not a substitute for professional help. If you are clinically depressed and you've been seeing a professional for assistance, don't stop going to them just because you've heard this lecture.

Even so, you may find that the topics we'll address to be useful in your quest to find peace in your life. You will also find that they may be used to assist you in dealing with negative feelings.

## Combating depression

Many years ago, I often suffered from depression. I still do sometimes. One of the biggest mental steps I discovered is to simply remember that being depressed is a choice that I've made. Now, before you get upset and start arguing about chemical imbalances and so on, just take a deep breath and follow along. This information may challenge you and at times may make you uneasy or angry. If it does, that's good. It's a sign that your ego is attempting to defend the patterns it's imposed on your life. These patterns need to be understood before you can learn to break their hold and feel better.

I've stated that depression is a choice. In order to more fully understand this, we have to learn to take responsibility for our behavior. This is a developmental step that many adults have not mastered. Some people live their whole lives without developing this ability. It doesn't make them any less valuable intrinsically, although it may very well make their lives more difficult over the long run. Once you learn that you are in control of your mental state, you'll see yourself from a healthier perspective. You will also find that this new understanding is the basis for beginning to feel more positive about yourself.

Taking responsibility for your mental state means not allowing self-pity to influence your thinking. Self-pity allows you to excuse yourself from the results of your behavior and thinking patterns. If you allow yourself the luxury of feeling as if your behavior and thoughts are the result of some external force such as other people's opinion of you or adverse events that you've encountered, then you will not make any progress changing them.

Generally, the basic fallacy in our thinking is that we believe that we are at the mercy of the world. But listen carefully for this is very important, the world does provide stimuli to us, but it is actually our thoughts that make the stimuli seem good or bad. It's been said that, "Nothing is ever bad or good, but a man's thinking makes it so." If we think that we've been imposed upon by circumstances, then our ego has a tendency to think, "Poor me!" and this is often used as an excuse for compensatory behavior. Behaviors such as over-eating, going on a spending binge, taking revenge on someone, or feeling sorry for ourselves can have the momentary effect of making us feel better, but often have long-term effects that are harmful in nature.

A child-like scenario can be played out as follows: He hit me! Now I'm seriously offended. He doesn't like me. Poor me! I've got the right to take revenge. I hit him! I feel better. Uh-oh! Now my parent is punishing me for fighting!

Think you've grown up? You're not if you're still playing some version of the above game in your relationships.

Let's analyze a contemporary geo-political situation so that we can see how the same pattern plays out on a national stage.

"The other guys took our land! We have been affronted! We have long memories and we will never forget! We have the right to revenge so we'll shoot these rockets at them. We hurt them and now we can celebrate! Uh-oh! Here comes their army!" And so it goes.

Not a pretty picture is it? The only difference between children playing on a playground and the global scene is that people tend to get killed in horrible ways in the latter. In neither case does the compensatory behavior actually solve the root problem.

The root problem of this kind of behavior is that we allow our belief in cause and effect to conspire with our ego in order to keep us upset. This upset feeling provides energy for our ego.

Our ego has an idealized picture of itself as the center of the world. When we encounter events that demonstrate that the rest of the world doesn't see us as being central to everything, we often become depressed. The more upset we feel about this conflict between our ego's view and the world's view, the more depressed we become. The more depressed we become, the more energized our ego becomes. This seems counter-intuitive, but our ego actually thrives on negative energy. It loves conflict and bad feelings. Think about it for a moment. When your pride is hurt, what is your normal response? Do you want to lash out at the person who you believe hurt you? That's a normal ego-driven response and the more hurt you feel, the more violent your response will tend to be. That's because your ego is more energized.

The basic means of combating depression is to remember that feeling bad is your own personal choice. The remembering is the key. It's hard to step outside of the bad feelings and remember that you *actually* have a choice. Once you remember that you can forgive and forget everything that your ego-driven thinking believes conspired to make you feel bad, you can snap out of depression quickly. You may still have some chemical imbalances residing in your body that will tend to bring you back to a depressed state, so you have to watch your thinking carefully.

In order to cue yourself to remember that you can ignore circumstances, please commit this sentence to memory. The more often you say it mentally, the more often you're likely to be able to remember it when you need it, so say it often. Here it is: "I feel miserable because I forgot that

I don't have to."

Perhaps this won't be enough to completely cure your feelings. In fact, I'm sure it won't be, but it's a start. The next statement should also be memorized and used immediately after the previous one: "Why would I ever expect people and circumstances to be other than what they are?"

The meaning here is that people will behave as their internal programming leads them to and not as your internal programming expects them to. Getting upset over and depressed about their behavior is silly. They have to be what they are. The same statement applies to adverse circumstances. Circumstances don't care about you. They are totally impersonal and just exist. It's as silly and yet as easy as getting depressed about the weather. The only control you have about the weather is what you think of it; so don't let it master your thoughts. You, after all, are nominally in control of your thoughts. Or, are you? The next section will explore where your thoughts come from.

## EGO

Our common thought patterns are largely ego-driven and as such they are likely to create bad feelings for us when events and people's actions do not coincide with our expectations.

Ego's six primary beliefs as listed by Wayne Dyer are:

1. I am what I have. Possessions define me.
2. I am what I do. Achievements define me.
3. I am what others think of me. Reputation defines me.
4. I am separate from everyone. My body defines me as alone.
5. I am separate from all that is missing in my life. My life space is disconnected from my desires.
6. I am separate from God. My life depends on God's assessment of my worthiness.

Not one of these six beliefs is true. We're taught that they're true by society, our peers, our parents, and possibly by our religious beliefs, but they are all false. If you find yourself thinking thoughts based on any of these beliefs, stop it right away. Your whole thought structure is false and will only lead you to unhappiness. Be strong and throw the thoughts out. Hum a tune, go for a walk and think of nothing, pet a dog or a cat. Do something to break the chain of thinking and you'll start to get control of the problem. I used to play music in my mind repetitively in order to drown out thought patterns that were bothering me. Don't laugh. It works.

Please note that I'm using the word ego in a different fashion than the popular daily usage, which is confused with self-esteem. In my schema, our ego is the manifestation of the older, reptilian part of our brain, the part of our brain that is solely concerned with survival and power over objects. The ego of a reptile wants all the food, all the females, all the territory, and all the power. Our unrestrained ego is the same. Please don't think that I'm setting the ego up as an enemy. It's not. It's necessary for our survival. Without it, we wouldn't have survived or rather our ancestors wouldn't have survived.

Dr. David Hawkins rates the integrity of a Komodo dragon somewhere in the 70's based on his logarithmic scale of spiritual development. For most of man's history, humans averaged less than 100. For the past several hundred years man has averaged less than 200 and only in the last 20 years has man exceeded the 200-point on the scale. Without going into much detail, the scale goes from 0 to 1000. Christ, Buddha, Krishna and other archetypes calibrate at approximately 1000, which is the maximum energy level the human body can contain. The level of truth, meaning living with integrity as a guiding principle, is 200. Science is in the 400's. The level of dealing with the world through the principle of love is in the 500's. Spiritual enlightenment begins at 600.

My contention is that the higher man evolves along this scale, the less man needs ego-based patterns of thought. The average person on the face of the globe is less than 200 and displays a range of actions, which are completely ego-controlled. America as a nation is somewhere in the 400's. The best part and the worst part is that one enlightened individual can outweigh thousands of people who are at lower levels. Thus, 80% of people are hovering slightly below 200. They still use their ego as a basis for interpreting every event they experience. Until one moves in to the 500's, one can only deal either rationally or irrationally with other people. Either way, at this level people engage in conflict because they are trapped in the pattern that enforces belief in causality and duality.

What I mean by this is that when trapped in this pattern we believe that the other guy or group is bad while we are good and that the other guy caused our problems so we have the need to retaliate. Once we move into the level of dealing through love, we find that it is no longer necessary to think in those lower energy patterns and life gets easier for us in any number of ways.

I'd guess that the good news as far as you, my reader, are concerned, is that since you're studying this material, you are undoubtedly at a higher level of development. If you were at or below the 200's, the material would be both boring and nonsensical to you and you probably wouldn't have even started reading or listening. You see, once you've heard that there is such a thing as enlightenment, you automatically want it. At lower energy levels, your ego wants it and provides a considerable drive towards study and development. Of course, your ego wants it for the wrong reason, i.e. "I want to be enlightened so people will be in awe of me and love me and give me stuff." It thinks that it will be itself, only better. Surprisingly this is a good result because any impulse towards spiritual development is good. The ego doesn't realize that when you become enlightened, you're not "you" anymore. You no longer need your ego and it fades away.

I'm assuming that you're interested in continuing with this line of thought, that you are still trapped in the lower energy patterns of the ego, and that your ego isn't feeling so threatened that it's putting up a huge defensive battle.

So, the basic principle you should glean from this is that we need to work at breaking the ego-derived patterns of thoughts that 99% of us have inherited from childhood and our surroundings. The statement that you can't teach an old dog new tricks sort of applies here. It's not going to be easy for you (or for me either) to change your mode of thought. It requires constant diligence and attention to how your mental patterns are influencing your attitude toward what is happening around you.

Since neural networks in our brains start out with many connections and some of these connections get pruned away during childhood and adolescent learning, we as adults are left with brains with distinct response patterns burned into them. The basis of psychotherapy is that altering these childhood patterns requires a large cash investment in order to achieve a transformation in thinking. However, looking at neural network research shows that you can learn new tricks, but it is somewhat more difficult than when you were a child. You have to be able to start all over again and again even when you'd feel more comfortable with the same old thought processes. The solution is repetition, constant repetition and careful monitoring of your thoughts.

Remember we're speaking here of changing the way you respond to external events. Your thoughts are totally in control of your responses. This means that you must change the way you think. If the new pattern is used carefully again and again and if the old pattern is carefully avoided, the old pattern will gradually fade away.

## **New thinking**

How do we change? With what do we replace the old ego-driven patterns?

The first step is to become conscious of our thoughts. We might think that our thoughts are driving us crazy. We differentiate ourselves from our thoughts with such an idea. If they're driving us crazy, we should just stop thinking. Of course, we can't. We are not our thoughts. Some of our thoughts aren't even our own creations. Our brains are quantum level devices that are stimulated to activate patterns of energy that can solve problems or that can loop around again and again to the same old painful feelings.

On a mental level, we are different from animals in a key fashion. We have the ability to monitor our thoughts. It's been said that, "...a dog will know it's in a room, but it won't know that it knows it's in the room." We do know. We can decide to change and then work towards that goal. A dog would never think of deciding to change.

When we know we can change and we know that there is a better existence that we can change to and when we become tired and sick of mistreating ourselves, we will search out methods to initiate that change. It's important for you to read as much material about these topics as you can. You'll find it helpful to listen to this lecture repeatedly. Not that I'm such a good speaker, but unless you are very atypical, you'll find new thoughts arising about what I'm saying each time you listen.

It's essential that we learn to monitor our thinking. When you're sitting quietly, you may become aware that you're playing a situation or dialogue out in your mind and the result is that you're imagining conflict and it's making you feel upset. This is exactly what we must learn to turn off.

It's possible to sit back and watch our thoughts pass through our minds and simply comment on them as they go by. This is like being a bird watcher. You might comment, "There goes a pretty one." Or, "There goes a big, ugly buzzard." You don't have to be the buzzard. You just let it fly into your mind and out the other side.

Ultimately, you may find that you're not even the observer of your thoughts. There is actually a you that is standing behind and above the observer. This is the real you, but that part of your being is hard to get in touch with, since it is largely non-verbal. People who live from that position are completely impervious to external events. They maintain their equanimity and happiness no matter what happens.

As you continue in your efforts to watch your thoughts and split yourself away from ownership of these thoughts you will have many setbacks. There will be many times when you slip back to the old ego-driven patterns. Just keep trying and eventually, the ego will start to fade and you will find that you can use the thinking part of your brain without fear of it's taking over. It should be a useful servant, but not the master. It's incapable of happiness by itself. It needs the guidance of your higher self in order to work as it should. It should be a great tool for solving problems and birthing creative ideas. It should not be something that creates misery for you.

If you're unhappy with yourself and what's going on around you, you will henceforth know that your thought patterns are responsible. It makes it pretty hard to blame someone else for your unhappiness when you remember this. In fact, all you ever need to remember is the key phrase: "Why would I ever expect it to be other than what it is?" Whenever you're faced with some circumstance that doesn't correspond to what you imagine your optimum would be, just ask that question.

## **Forgiving others**

In the New Testament, Jesus makes a real point for us forgiving those who offended us. It's correct. That's something we must do. But, don't just do it for salvation. Do it for peace of mind. Do it because you'll feel miserable if you don't. When you realize what you're doing to yourself

with lack of forgiveness, you'll start caring more about your thoughts.

Buddha said that, "Revenge is like a man carrying a red-hot coal in his hand to throw at his enemy." You'd better drop those coals now and allow yourself some time to heal. If you forgive slights, because, "...they know not what they do," you'll ultimately be happier. Once again, just ask yourself, "Why would I ever expect them to be other than what they are?"

*You have control so use it!*

I know. It's easy to say, but hard to do. The secret is to set up your mind so that you remember to use some of these mental tools. Tie a string around your finger if you have to in order to remember.

When you give up taking a position on things that occur, you'll find that it becomes easier to understand what's actually happening. Human consciousness is innocent at its core. The human mind is incapable of telling truth from falsehood so it is easy for it to be manipulated. It's easy to program people to hate each other as long as they cling to positionality. When you see suicide bombers blowing innocent people to pieces, you must realize that the bomber really thinks the act is virtuous. They've been mentally abused and know not what they do. Just as you'd feel sympathy and concern for a child who was physically abused, you should feel the same for the innocents who are wrongly programmed mentally.

I'm not saying that we can solve the problem by physically putting our arms around them and saying, "Oh, you poor thing." They're quite likely to blow us up also. This suicidal behavior is an ego driven pattern. It doesn't want to change, because it can't conceive of anything else. But, coming towards a solution from a position of love and understanding is useful. If we know that their religious leaders have a low spiritual energy and are not coming at life from a position of integrity, then we will know that they can't be trusted to behave in ways that we think are rational. So, we must take care to deal with them in ways they can actually understand.

If you are dealing with a sociopath and you are tempted to trust them to always do the right thing for other people they encounter, you're going to be very disappointed. You must understand them and set up circumstances where they can't damage others.

So if you understand people, you'll know that they cannot be other than what they are and are therefore worthy of forgiveness. Please note that this includes you. You must make a habit of forgiving yourself (forgiving, not excusing yourself).

Forgiveness is easy if you give up the idea of causality. We think that what happened in the past is determining our path today. Look at a motorboat. It's driven by the action of the propeller on the water immediately under it. The boat creates a wake. The wake doesn't push the boat. It's just the track of where it has been. It doesn't determine where the boat goes next. The rudder determines that and the rudder is set by acts of will. We're being pulled towards our destiny. We use acts of will to determine our destiny and it pulls us forward. Everything that happens is necessary in order for us to reach our destination. So it's kind of silly to carry grudges or guilt about past actions. They were supposed to happen and they helped you to get where you are today.

Let's cover this once more in a different fashion. When someone says something that's not true and is hurtful about you, you can decide that they meant to hurt you and knew what they were doing and intended you to get angry and hurt and then you behave exactly in the fashion you believe they intended. How about that for a silly behavior pattern?

First, you may have misheard or misinterpreted what they said. Second, you're attributing thoughts and motives to them that they may not have had. Third, you're believing that they acted with malice aforethought and not carelessly or innocently. Fourth, you're responding in a way

that will exacerbate the situation and perhaps lead to conflict.

Buddha was traveling with an unenlightened person who decided to test him. For days, the person would heap all sorts of abuse and vituperation upon Buddha. Buddha's response was only to smile and continue placidly doing whatever he was doing. Finally, the person grew so exasperated that he asked Buddha how he could ignore the continued bad treatment. Buddha responded, "If someone gives you a gift and you refuse the gift, to whom then does it belong."

In the same fashion, Jesus directed us simply to turn the other cheek.

## **Prosperity**

You can solve this problem easily. Our normal tendency is to believe that it's very difficult and our belief is self-fulfilling. I once spent thousands of dollars to be taught about prosperity. This might seem like a lot to you or not, I don't know. In point of fact it was hardly anything compared to the good I received by letting go of much of my positionality about finances and money.

The enlightened person doesn't worry about where things are coming from or how they'll take care of themselves. They just know it will happen. That's how I know I'm not fully enlightened. I know that prosperity comes to me as I need it, but I still have an unfortunate tendency to worry. Oh, well. It just goes to show you that we can all use some work on our thoughts.

Jesus speaks of the flowers of the field not worrying about what they'll wear. We should take heart from this story and understand that as we relax and quit thinking about what is coming to us and instead think about how we can be of value to others and what we can do to make the world easier to inhabit, compensation will magically arrive at our doorstep.

If you work at your job or career with only the idea that you are performing for money, you will not do very well and will ultimately set yourself up for a shortage of funds. Simply work in order to do the best you can for the people you are helping. If you go out of your way to help them, even beyond the requirements of the job, you will ultimately be compensated. Sometimes this compensation comes in strange ways; ways you can't now imagine. But, it will come to you, because this is a universal law. This is the law of giving and receiving. Neither stands alone. You can't receive without giving and you can't give without receiving.

People who try to give things to others and have a great reluctance to receiving value in return are just as guilty of attempting to violate the law as those who try to take without giving.

I'm urging you to make a concerted effort to concentrate on the good of the people you encounter, without counting the cost in terms of time and effort. This does not mean that you have to go out of your way to locate people to help, though that would be nice. It simply means that you need to do the best job for people that you can and not to worry about getting paid.

Once you are able to reach this level, then you are ready to begin working on intentionally attracting prosperity. The mentor who taught me about making money is an interesting person. He is the only man I know who read Napoleon Hill's *Think and Grow Rich* and had it work perfectly for him. He was making about six thousand a year as a fireman and was in debt nine thousand. He was always sick and constantly complained about things. One day a wealthy man he knew gave him the book *Think and Grow Rich*. He read it carefully.

In his own words, he didn't really understand it, but he did glean that he was supposed to write out a goal card and read it repeatedly. He wrote out that he would have twenty-five thousand dollars by the end of the year. The other firemen made fun of him and were generally unbelieving and unsupportive, but he persisted in reading the card at every spare moment.

Before seven months had gone by, he got the idea that he should start a business cleaning offices. He quit the fire department; an act which was unheard of, since most firemen stayed to retire with the parsimonious pension they qualified for at the end of their career. Everyone told him he was crazy to quit.

He started an office cleaning business. By the end of the year he had made, if I remember correctly, seven hundred thousand dollars. By the end of the next, he was making over a million per year. He did this by hiring work crews to clean offices and then selling them the cleaning contract, so the workmen had their own business. He retained a 10% royalty on the contract. In this fashion, he provided good service to the office owners and helped many other people build their own business and fortune. The universe couldn't ignore this degree of service and so he was rewarded commensurately.

He was so astounded at his success that he sold out completely and became a salesperson working for one of the largest success and personal development marketing companies. He did this in order to have the opportunity to study the science of human success. He became well known in both the insurance and real estate industries as a great personal development trainer. He was a good speaker and provided clear-cut diagrams that lead the willing towards success. I owe him a lot, because he helped my wife and me develop our ability to attract prosperity. In case you're wondering, his name is Bob Proctor.

As a brief aside, I was at a function where Bob was speaking and what he was saying was riveting to me. During the break I chanced to speak glowingly about what I'd heard to an acquaintance. My friend said in sort of a bored tone, "Oh. He's ok, I guess, but nothing he's saying is useful." I took this as a great lesson that you have to be *ready* to hear a fact before it will make any sense to you. If some of what I'm saying seems not to the point, please don't give up. I'm giving you the best information and techniques I know and I've studied this area for most of my life.

The point of the story about Bob is that he never had to worry much about money after he made his first break-through. This is a great example of how our thinking is all that holds us back. Once he changed his thinking, possibilities that he would have not been able to see or would have ignored came out of the fog and he chose one and followed it to success. You see we are our own worst enemy and critic when it comes to attracting prosperity.

To begin with, we believe that we don't deserve money. We believe it's bad. Of course, this isn't true. God wants us to be as prosperous as we desire and universal law will allow us to attract as much prosperity into our life as we need or care to work at. We categorize ourselves as people who can't earn more than a specific amount annually. I've seen this repeatedly in sales organizations where salesmen achieve a certain reward level every year and just can't seem to break through to the next level. If they finally break through, they just barely make the next level and then that's where they're stuck until and if they make another break-through.

It's not my purpose to teach you how to make money in this article, I'm only trying to give you some ideas which will lead you to the conclusion that worrying about funds is just about the worst thing you can do. When you worry in this way, you are activating another universal law. This is the law that you always, always attract what you are thinking about. If you are thinking that you will be short at the end of the month, then you probably will be. So you must learn to think differently. For now, I'd like you to visualize what it would be like for you to have all the money you really need. Visualize the relaxation and release from worry. Keep this pretty picture in mind and refuse to go back to the old way of thought where you worry. Concentrate on what you want to have and not on what you believe you're missing. Do this consistently enough and you will find the picture becoming a reality. It will happen, but as with sincere prayer, the results may come in a totally unexpected fashion. So, keep your eyes open for possibilities.

## Physical Health

I'd like to briefly mention that the same techniques work for your personal health. You can utilize the power of positive visualization and intend your health to be good or intend for it to improve and it will oblige you as long as your subconscious programming doesn't get in the way. There are literally thousands of stories about people who have cured serious physical illness by changing their thinking.

How can your mind possibly change your body? This is a question more easily demonstrated with a negative example with which we're all familiar. Simply imagine having a serious and nasty argument with someone you've had problems with in the past. If you imagine it vividly enough, you will notice that your heart rate increases, your breathing speeds up and you begin to exhibit physical signs of a conflict situation. But where is the conflict? It's only in your imagination. The obvious conclusion is that your mind can influence your body for the worse. It can influence your body for the better also. It's all in how you think. Once again, concentrate on what you want and keep your mind off of what you don't want.

It has long been thought that genes were self-actualizing and could turn themselves on and off. The theory stated that genes could turn themselves on and off and this ability was necessary in order for genes to control our biology. Today, a new understanding is emerging. We now know that our perception of the environment directly controls the activity of our genes. If you think about it for a moment, you'll see that this order actually makes more sense. For our genes to be effective, they must respond to environmental changes. To respond to a change implies the existence of perception of the change. The process of genes being controlled by the environment is known as epigenetic control.

Rather than viewing our bodies as mere mechanical devices, epigenetic control requires the intercession of mind. The role of mind in biology means that our beliefs directly control the programming of our cells. This explains how people can have spontaneous remissions of diseases when they change their thinking.

We have about 50 trillion cells in our bodies. Each of these cells can be removed from the body and can survive on its own, if placed in a favorable environment. In the community of the body, each cell concentrates on a particular role. In a safe environment, our perceptions as mediated by our brain, release signals to our cells that allow them to concentrate on growth and maintenance. In a stressful situation, our cells adopt a defensive posture. The bodily resources normally used for growth then are used for dealing with stress. Prolonged stress is harmful to us because the energy demands of the defensive posture prohibit use of the bodies resources for growth and maintenance.

While we may not want to admit it, the principle source of stress is our mind. Depending upon how we've been taught, our past experience may lead us to view a certain situation as either stressful or not. If we have good life management skills, we are more able to deal with stress and move on from a defensive posture to a more healthful one. Inappropriate emotional management can stress our cells even more and can cause a breakdown in our bodies systems.

The conscious mind or the part of you which thinks may not recognize that your subconscious mind is acting out programs which can inhibit your dealing with stress successfully. Some subconscious programs are genetic or instinctive, but the majority are acquired by learning. This learning is often unmonitored which means that we can have a huge repertoire of dysfunctional programs in our subconscious.

Using our will power to monitor our subconsciously programmed behavior with the aid of our conscious mind is almost impossible. This is because children operate in a theta brainwave state up until about the age of six. This level of brainwaves is what we call a hypnotizable state. The child acquires beliefs and patterns from its peers, siblings, authority figures, and parents and

incorporates them into the subconscious without examination. The child has no ability to reject anything. This means that early experiences can lead to incorrect methods of dealing with stress.

When an adult tells a child it is stupid or undeserving or has undesirable traits, this information is accepted uncritically. These acquired beliefs then begin to control the fate of the child's cellular community. The conscious mind may believe that the self is valuable and worthy, but the powerful unconscious mind may engage in dysfunctional acts at the same time. This behavior is often unconscious and unmonitored by the conscious mind. If we think about it, we may also discover that we often have a great reluctance to take responsibility for these self-destructive attitudes and thoughts. We recognize that such thoughts are not good, but we try to blame them on external circumstances or other people.

The subconscious mind is much more powerful as an information processor than is the conscious mind. About 5% of our daily cognitive activity is processed by the conscious mind, the rest by our subconscious. This means that simple affirmations and positive thinking routines are only effective if the subconscious supports the conscious mind's intent.

What I'm getting at is that we must learn to become more aware of our behavioral patterns. We must become more adept at assuming responsibility for our actions. We must remember that we actually have a choice in our responses to stressful situations.

## **Courage**

We must not fail to act when we are inspired. If we do not act, we will begin to hold a picture of ourselves as cowardly and not able to achieve or become all that we were meant to become. Such a self-image is very damaging. God wants us to be all that he gave us the ability to be.

There is literally no limitation on what you can achieve, if only you can overcome the negative thinking patterns that prohibit you from seeing the world as it really is. Wait, you ask, how is the world really? I answer, "It really is limitless and it really can provide you with everything you can dream of." I've read books that say this type of thinking is dangerous, because you might decide that you want to fly and jump off the barn roof and get hurt. This is an insidious argument because it appeals to the side of us that believes that the world is limited. With the proper preparation and equipment, you can jump off the top of the barn with impunity all day long. You simply must learn to work in accordance with Universal Law.

The apparently successful people who are perfect and never make mistakes are usually quite unhappy because of two problems. The first is that they are devastated when they actually do make an error. They haven't made enough mistakes to learn how to deal with them easily. The second problem is even more severe. Because they are so sensitive to making mistakes, they are reluctant to risk much and thus don't try new things. This translates into a feeling of unhappiness because they know deep at heart that they could be more and achieve more than they are now doing.

The truly successful people who are not afraid to risk mistakes often have track records that include huge failures. As a result they have learned to be insensitive to error and have learned to keep on trying even in the face of failure. They have also learned to define success as a level of achievement that they personally find satisfying, not what society thinks is satisfying.

Which of the two would you rather emulate?

It is true that on your deathbed you will always regret the things you didn't do when you had a chance to do them. Be brave and the Universe will support your bravery.

## Relationships

Nearly everyone wants a satisfying relationship with a true soul mate. People often find it extremely difficult to find the right person. There are two approaches here compounded with a basic tactical mistake that nearly everyone suffers from.

The tactical error is that nearly everyone bases his or her initial judgment upon physical beauty. Physical beauty is nice, but it can't begin to overcome the problems caused by a couple that don't match up in terms of spiritual development. If one member of the pair is at a low level of spirituality using Dr. Hawkins scale and the other is higher, they aren't even speaking the same language. For example, if he is operating at a level less than the level of integrity and she is coming from the level of love, nothing she says to him will be meaningful in his context. She will constantly misunderstand his utterances and end up being disappointed because she expected him to behave in ways he simply couldn't. He doesn't know what real love is. The best he can do is to speak words of flattery intended to ingratiate with probably the ultimate goal of exploiting the other person.

So, the problem becomes one of finding an acceptable mate who is at approximately the same level of spiritual development. At a certain level of development, this is easy, but for most people it can be a challenge.

You can usually judge the level a person is at by observing their behavior and how they interact with others. Avoid wasting time with a person who acts in ways you don't find appropriate. If they kick their dog and you respect yours, you won't get along.

If you have found someone exactly at your level, you will have a good chance of making a success of it. If that someone to whom you are attracted is not exactly at your level, you might make it work by being especially understanding and caring. If the relationship works out, the lower level person will have gradually moved upwards toward the level of the other person. However you must avoid thinking that you can fix someone and actively drag them up to your level. This will not work and will probably lead to an unpleasant break-up at the end.

Conflict in relationships is not necessarily a bad thing, but it must be handled correctly. What happens if you get into a fight? First realize that the relationship is more important than winning the fight. If it isn't then you are really wasting your time. If the relationship is more important, then it becomes easy for you to relax and accept that the other person has an issue that is making them unhappy. Concentrate on solving the basic problem that is at the root of their issue. Don't worry about what you want out of the situation at this time. Once you have exhibited an interest in actually hearing what their issue is, they will be more receptive to hearing your issue. Strive for compromise, but know that surrender is often easier and even more productive. You don't have to fight, but if you do, you must learn to avoid personal attacks and phrase things in a more non-confrontational manner.

Words are only vibrations in the air and as such have no inherent meaning. If your mate were arguing in a foreign language that you didn't understand, how could you fight? If you realize that it's all in how you personally choose, and it is your choice, to interpret what he or she says, then you will know that you also have the choice of how you will respond. Do you get hysterically angry and scream and curse? Or, do you reasonably say, "I understand your point. I'll try to be better in the future. Will you listen to my idea of why I tend to behave this way?"

Obviously one way will lead to more unhappiness than the other. Don't cut off your nose to spite your face. It always amazes me how many people do exactly that, so don't you do it. Think first. You can't recall an arrow once it has left the bow and you can't recall your words once they have left your mouth.

If you have repeatedly had relationships blow up in your face, you should spend some time

analyzing the type of person to whom you find yourself attracted. Are they at the same level as you? Do you think that you always like a certain type of personality? Realize that there is nothing wrong with them. It's in you that the mistake exists. You may be trying to relive some prior relationship that was a problem for you. This type of mistake will continue until you either learn to choose the correct person or until you learn to deal with the problem that first locked you into this type of choice.

## **The Final Step**

In the previous sections I have attempted to provide you with some tools that you might be able to use to begin to solve problems impacting your happiness. Ultimately, we are here because we chose to be here and before we came here, we made a compact with God to face certain circumstances that were designed to assist us in our spiritual development.

You should keep in mind that what has happened in your life, no matter how good or how bad, was something that you signed on for so that you could learn how to deal with circumstances of that type. Of course, it's difficult for us to realize this, since we don't normally remember making this contract. However, it really doesn't do any good for you to be regretful about past experiences. It's really only useful for you to learn lessons from your failures. You should be thankful for each and every circumstance no matter how unfortunate, because each one is designed to meet a spiritual need that you have.

It is now time for you to take an active role in your life. Before, you might not have known this and you might have felt that you were simply at the mercy of events. Now you know that you have a choice.

The first step you must take is this: You must begin to search for that which you can be inspired and passionate about.

There is an actual reason you're here. There are lessons you must learn in order to have a successful life. Take some time and sit with a paper and pencil and write out things that have happened in your life. You're looking for themes of related events. Perhaps finances have been a continual problem to you. Perhaps you just can't find the right person to love and have had many unsuccessful relationships. Perhaps you have addictive tendencies. Perhaps you passionately enjoy music or art. List every significant event that you can remember and organize the events according to theme. If you find a general trend of many events that are similar in some fashion, you may have found your reason for being here and at the least you will have found a clue which points towards that reason.

We each have numerous sub-lessons that are subsidiary to the main theme and these should be listed carefully. Eventually you may be able to determine which is most important. Understand that you must master each lesson. If you put it off, avoid it, or fail at it in any fashion, it will keep coming back over and over again until you either master it or until you run out of time in this life. If you don't master it in this life, then you will probably have to work on it in the next, so you might as well buckle down and get with the program. I'll guarantee you that you'll be a lot happier!