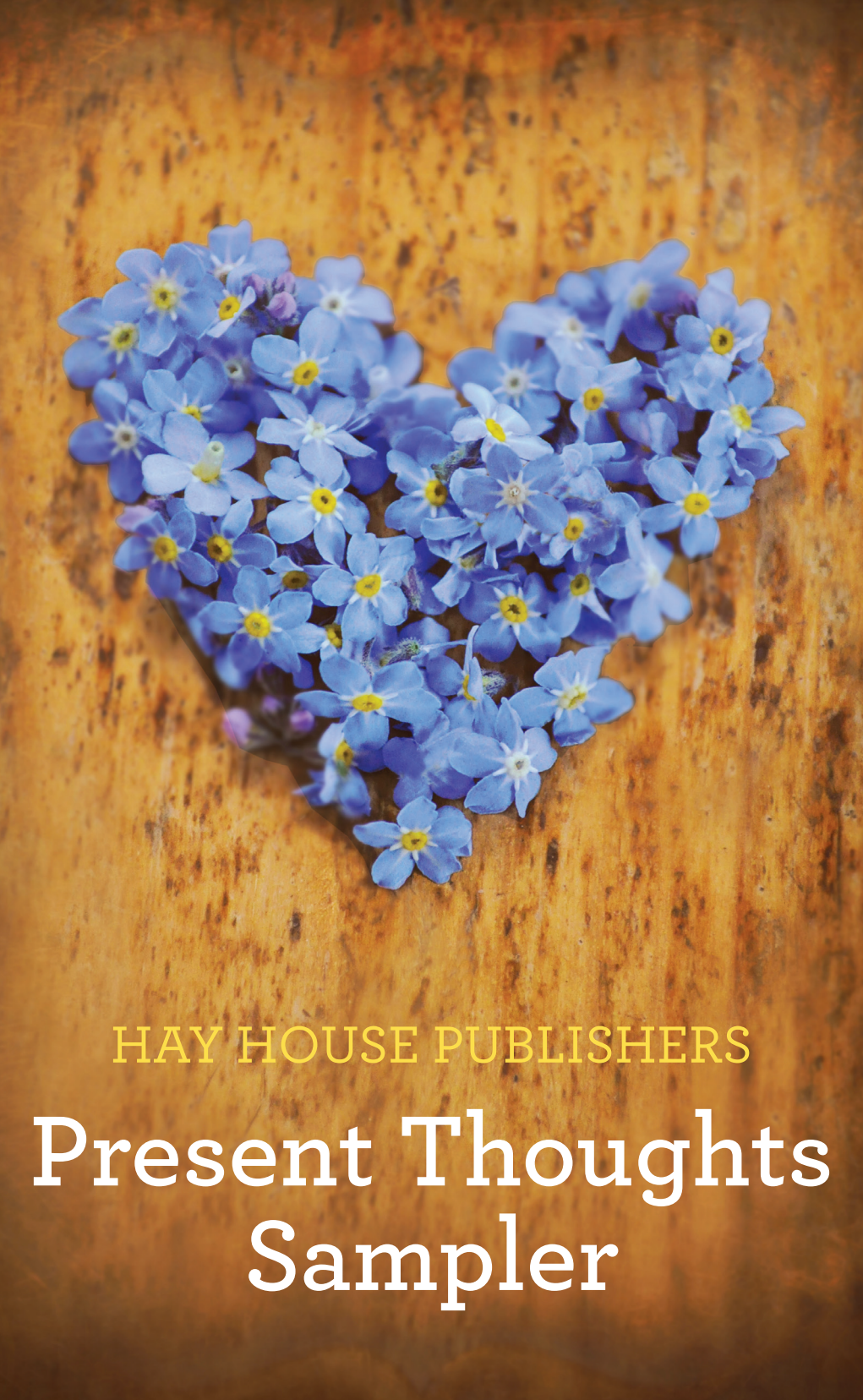

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Present Thoughts Sampler

Welcome to Hay House's Present Thoughts Sampler. We wanted to give you a superb selection of our recent titles so you can see how books by Hay House authors can transform your life in so many ways. We're highlighting books that you might not know now, but we've been getting great feedback on and want to share with our fans.

***Mind Calm: The Modern-Day Meditation Technique that Gives You 'Peace with Mind'* by Sandy Newbigging**

Sandy Newbigging's tips for dealing with a busy mind have made meditation an accessible practice for thousands of people. Here Sandy offers some quick cures from his MIND CALM technique that you can use to quiet and focus the mind.

***I Can See Clearly Now* by Dr Wayne W. Dyer**

Dr Wayne W. Dyer, known as the 'father of motivation' by his many fans, is known for offering practical and clear lessons on self-knowledge that bust through our excuses for not living the life of our dreams. *I Can See Clearly Now* focuses on key moments in Wayne's own life, with reflections on how these moments shaped his outlook and teachings. In this extract, we see Wayne understand his abandonment by his father and how this actually shaped his strengths.

***The Toltec Secret: Dreaming Practices of the Ancient Mexicans* by Sergio Magaña**

Sergio Magaña is one of the very few keepers of the ancient Nahuatal traditions, which allow you to access the power of your dream life in your waking state. In this extract, Sergio shares these teachings (which were the inspiration for the writings of Carlos Castenada) so everyone can benefit from this wisdom tradition.

***Who Says I'm an Addict?: A Book for Anyone Who is Partial to Food, Sex, Booze or Drugs* by David Smallwood**

You might not think you're addicted, but ask yourself this question: how many times did you check Facebook today? David Smallwood shows you the risks of addictive behaviour and how we can understand the underlying roots of this modern day craving.

The Big Book of Angel Tarot: The Essential Guide to Symbols, Spreads and Accurate Readings
by Doreen Virtue and Radleigh Valentine

Doreen Virtue and Radleigh Valentine's Angel Tarot decks have been hugely popular with fans of the angelic realm and those who want to help their clients and themselves look deep within and answer the questions that really matter. Here, Doreen and Radleigh offer their signature clear and simple advice on the minor arcana, which many people often neglect (at their peril!).

Walking Home: A Pilgrimage from Humbled to Healed
by Sonia Choquette

Sonia Choquette is a world-renowned intuitive and spiritual teacher. But following the death of her brother and father, she found herself confused and lost. *Walking Home* follows Sonia's journey of spiritual renewal along the Camino de Santiago, the 820km pilgrimage through Spain, and here we learn about what inspired her to travel this grueling pilgrimage.

***Venus: The Diary of a Puppy and Her Angel* by Diana Cooper**

Diana Cooper has incredible insight into the angelic realms, but few people know that her very own puppy Venus also shares her gifts! Told from Venus's perspective, this magical tale finds Venus overcome her fear of the woods and meet some powerful elementals that congregate there.

***The Untrue Story of You: How to Let Go of the Past that Creates You, and Become Fully Alive in the Present* by Bryan Hubbard**

Bryan Hubbard has been the editor behind the scenes of the international magazine *What Doctors Don't Tell You* for decades. Now he offers his own guide for fulfilment, explaining how we let our 'stories' about ourselves dominate our true self and how we can rewrite this story.

***F**k It: The Ultimate Spiritual Way* by John C. Parkin**

F**k It is the profane way to profound happiness. John Parkin realised that saying these two words to what frustrates us and holds us back had all the wisdom of the Eastern philosophy he'd been studying for decades. Here he breaks down what we're accessing when we say 'F**k It'.

***Miracles Now: 108 Life-Changing Tools for Less Stress, More Flow and Finding Your True Purpose* by Gabrielle Bernstein**

Gabrielle Bernstein is the new sage for the next generation of spiritual seekers. The distilled wisdom she offers here can be understood in moments and used in the busiest moments in your life, including a simple hand position for serenity and a practice for forgiveness you can use every day.

***The Animal Communicator's Guide to Life, Loss and Love* by Pea Horsely**

Pea Horsley is an animal communicator with a very special skill for sensing the feelings and desires of animals living and deceased and showing how guardians can help their pets. In this story, Pea talks about her connection to a sophisticated cat called Willow, the Sophia Loren of the cat world!

***Transform Your Beliefs, Transform Your Life: EFT Tapping Using Matrix Reimprinting* by Karl Dawson and Kate Marillat**

Matrix Reimprinting is a highly effective tool for personal transformation using EFT Tapping. In this extract, Karl Dawson and Kate Marillat show you how this tool can be used to move past limiting beliefs, as long as we first understand their source.

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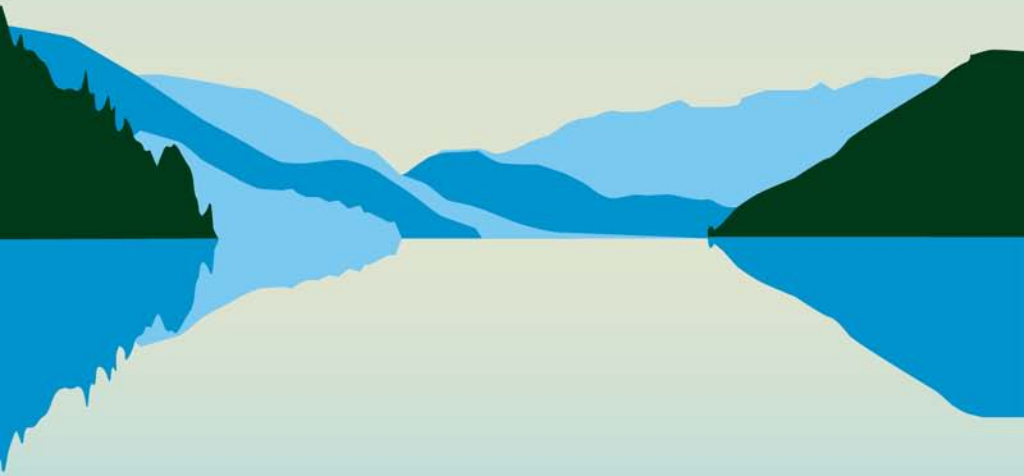
SUZY GREAVES, *PSYCHOLOGIES*

MIND CALM

The Modern-Day Meditation Technique that Gives You 'Peace With Mind'



SANDY C. NEWBIGGING

FOREWORD BY ROBERT HOLDEN PhD

Chapter 1

HIDDEN CAUSES OF A BUSY MIND

Why is my mind sooooooooo busy?!!! I know your frustration. I have felt driven mad by my mind too. Mulling over things at a million miles per hour. I've tossed and turned through sleepless nights, found it near impossible to focus during work or play and, to be totally honest, even had moments when my mind has felt too intense to live with, and secretly questioned whether it wouldn't be easier to check out of this life.

One time I was so caught up in my thoughts I didn't see the wet leaves sprawled across the corner I was heading around and nearly fell off my motorbike. Nearly hitting the hard tarmac that day was certainly a wake-up call, and one of the many motivations that have led to such in-depth exploration into how to move from mental chaos to mind calm.

From this study, together with what I've observed in the many people that I've taught meditation to, I have discovered a number of the subtler hidden causes as to

why so many people suffer from such busy minds. I am curious if you can relate to any of them.

THE FOUR HIDDEN CAUSES OF A BUSY MIND + QUICK-START CURES

Hidden cause 1: The Judgement Game

Making sense of life is one of the mind's jobs. Behind the scenes, every moment of every day, your mind is doing its best to attach meaning to everything that happens. With your best interests at heart, it works tirelessly to help you stay safe, keep you on track and have a good life.

Fully committed to this meaning-full role, the mind plays what I call the 'Judgement Game'. With this, your mind judges what has happened in the past, is happening now or might happen in the future. Always with the intention of determining whether it is good or bad, positive or negative, right or wrong, better or worse. Then, if it deems something to be bad, negative, wrong or worse, you end up with what is commonly called a 'problem'.

Judgement and the compulsion to overthink

There is a direct relationship between judging things as being problems and the compulsion to overthink. The mind loves to problem-solve. Having judged something as potentially problematic, it immediately springs into a hive of activity to either produce thoughts about the problem or attempt to find the best possible solutions.

Whether it is a minor irritation or a major catastrophe, the mind tends to react in the same manner: *Why has this happened to me? How might this impact my life? Am I*

going to be OK? Is my family going to be OK? How is it making me feel? Why am I feeling this way? How can I change, fix or improve things so everything will be better and I can feel good again?

Usually a deluge of thoughts floods in, as your mind does whatever it can to answer the problem-solving questions that it is truly sublime at creating. Such a stream, or in some cases tsunami, of mental movement stemming from the Judgement Game can be, quite literally, endless! When unintentionally engaged in the Judgement Game, your thoughts can end up going round and round in your mind like a hamster in a turbo-boosted wheel, as you consider the many possible ways to escape your predicament. Quite ironically, all this mental activity happens to be due to the mind's best intentions of bringing resolution, and with it, mind calm.

Improve whatever you want

Let me be clear, there is nothing 'wrong' with making improvements to your life, especially if things are happening that require your attention. You may need to make sure you have enough money to pay the bills this month, do what you can to heal a physical problem or sort a relationship disagreement. However, if you want a calmer mind, to be happier, more loving and tap into your intuition to find creative ways forward then a new relationship with the Judgement Game is required.

Quick cure 1: Suspend judgement

Whether you like it or not, as long as the mind is in play, the Judgement Game will happen. Remember it is how your mind makes sense of reality, which can be very useful at

times, especially if potentially life-threatening things are happening. However, if we're completely honest, most things the mind judges and overthinks are not life-threatening at all, far from it. So for the rest of the time – I'd suggest, 99 per cent of the time – it is more useful to suspend judgement.

Suspending judgement requires you to see the judgement instead of being the judger.

The first antidote to this hidden cause for having a chaotic mind is simply to **see it, don't be it**. Shining a light on the judgmental thoughts by seeing them happening in your mind can be incredibly powerful. When you observe the mind, the likelihood of unconsciously reacting to the judgemental opinions is reduced. By seeing the judgement, you can begin to step back from any previous engagement in the destructive game. Instead, you begin to see it for what it is – a judgemental opinion happening in your mind. It can be a remarkable revelation to discover that most of your problems are mind-made and due to an inner judgement of something being bad, negative, wrong or worse.

Albeit a simple strategy, 'seeing the judgement not being the judger' stops you being a victim of circumstance. External people, events or things stop being the cause of your inner stress or lack of serenity. Instead, you see that engaging in the judgements happening in your mind is a major cause of your dissatisfaction with the people, events or things. So whenever you notice that you've been overthinking a problem, take a moment to see the thoughts instead of being the thoughts. Ask this question: *What in my life is my mind currently judging negatively?* Example observations might be:

- I can see that my mind has been judging how much money I have.
- I can see that my mind has been judging what my partner just said to me.
- I can see that my mind has been judging my body.

This is an easy awareness-raising intervention that can create a moment of conscious calm in which you suspend judgement and start to see it for what it is – a thought happening in your mind about life. This insight is made all the more powerful when combined with the next quick cure.

Quick cure 2: It just is!

One of the quickest ways to slow the mind down is to override the Judgement Game with a totally neutral non-opinionated thought. One that is non-judgemental and within it holds the possibility that whatever is happening may not be a problem at all.

With no problem needing to be solved, the mind very quickly and naturally becomes still.

Remember the mind becomes active when it finds a problem that needs to be fixed. But if you are willing to let go of perceiving things as being problems, then you may find your mind has little to do and becomes quiet. Consider: *If something isn't good or bad, right or wrong, better or worse, then 'it just is', right?* Playing with the more neutral opinion that 'it just is', there is very little fuel for the thinking fire. Try it now. Choose a problem from your past, present or future and reflect: *Although this appears to be*

bad, negative, wrong or worse, I cannot deny the fact that it also just is.

Having considered this, take a moment to rest without the immediate need to do anything to fix the perceived problem. Take a deep breath in and out, and be attentive to what your mind does next. You may notice that there is a moment of absolute calm as your mind decides its next move. Which, just so you can be prepared, might be another judgement! Your mind might immediately defend its previous position by justifying why the problem is, in fact, bad, negative, wrong or worse.

Whenever you start playing with 'it just is' – be ready for your mind to bring out its big guns, evidence and reasoning! It may want to start defending its previous position by justifying why the problem *is*, in fact, bad, negative, wrong or worse. It might say, *it's a problem because...* and give some reasons why what you're suggesting 'just is' is actually a problem. This is all part of the Judgement Game, so see it, don't be it. The less you engage in the Judgement Game the calmer your mind will be naturally. Waking up to the mind's judgmental tendencies is so vital, as otherwise you'll find it difficult to heal the next hidden cause of having a chaotic mind.

Hidden cause 2: The Resist Persist

Joined at the hip with the Judgement Game is resistance. The mind often starts resisting whatever it has just judged as bad, negative, wrong or worse. Although it may seem natural to push away 'bad' things, moving on, unaware of this hidden cause, leads to a very active mind – due to what happens when you resist things.

Let's have another behind-the-scenes look at the inner workings of the mind. Whenever something happens, your mind immediately jumps into gear – judging whether it is good or bad, positive or negative, right or wrong, or better or worse. We know this by now, but the next unseen habit of the mind is another major cause of overthinking that you must see if you want to be more calm and contented moving forward.

When the mind decides something is good, positive, right and better then it will allow it. This makes sense: it is good, positive, right and better after all! But the game changer that you may not have previously considered is...

It is your optimistic judgements and subsequent inner allowing of 'what is' that is the cause of your good feelings. No person, place or event makes you feel good, but your inner allowing does.

Take a moment to process this idea. Before, I thought my relationship, money, or new car were the determining factors in making me feel good. In reality, however, it was actually when things happened that my mind judged as good, positive, right or better, that I would allow them to be. I would have a moment of being at peace with 'what is', in which I didn't need my moment to be any different. Or, in other words, I accepted things as they were and had harmony with life in these moments. It turns out, however, that it has always been my allowance of 'what is' that has been the real source of my happiness and contentment. Wow!

The product of pushing life away

However, and it is a big HOWEVER! If your mind judges something as bad, negative, wrong or worse then it is very common for it to start resisting it automatically. Although pushing away negativity may seem both reasonable and logical, it is a major hidden cause of much stress, anguish, heartache and mental chaos.

Prior to exploring the true impact of pushing life events away, I thought it was the people, places, events and things happening that 'made me feel bad'. In reality, however, it was actually my inner mind-made judgements and subsequent resistance that were the cause of all those 'negative' emotions. Quite remarkable really! I spent so many hours working hard to fix, change and improve my body and life so that I could feel good, when all the time my feelings had very little to do with any external factors.

Anger, sadness, fear, guilt, grief, hurt and any other unfavourable feeling you care to mention require negative judgements and resistance in order to exist. Seeing this not only gives you great insight into how to feel fantastic more often – i.e. suspend judgements and remove reactive resistances – but it also shines another illuminating light on how to enjoy more mind calm.

Resistance and the compulsion to overthink

There is a direct relationship between feeling bad due to resisting things and the compulsion to overthink. The mind wants to feel good. In fact, it is the natural tendency of your mind to do whatever it can to help you to be happy. Much of your mind's activity stems from the positive intention to be happy. As a direct consequence, whenever your

mind notices what it's learned to be a 'negative' emotional energy, it feels compelled to figure out all possible ways to make the bad feelings go away so you can once again be happy.

Having noticed a negative emotion, two questions usually come to mind:

1. What am I feeling?
2. Why am I feeling this way?

Finding the answers to these questions frequently involves lots of mental activity. Once you have given the energy a label – anger, sadness, or anxiety, for example – you will find your mind has a brilliant ability to think up logical and legitimate reasons for why you are feeling the way you do. For example, just a few of the common reasons might be,

- I'm feeling this way because of what they just said.
- I'm feeling this way because of the state of my bank account.
- I'm feeling this way because I'm stuck in this job.

And maybe the other person did say something that was unpleasant to hear, perhaps you are genuinely struggling for cash this month, or you could possibly benefit from moving jobs. But this isn't the point if you want mind calm. More important is to see the mind's hidden causes of overthinking, which happen behind the scenes and are often the source of undesirable feelings. Resisting life won't resolve the relationship disagreement, doesn't help you make more money or make you more effective in getting

a new job. Resistance only causes you unnecessary stress and suffering. When you get this, it becomes the obvious choice to let go of resistance and take whatever action is required with mind calm.

Resistance causes stress and suffering. Acceptance creates calm and is the more conscious way to live.

Quick cure 1: Remove Reactive Resistance

Lack of money, for example, isn't the cause of bad feelings. Instead, the source of those bad feelings is the mind's judgements and inner resistance to what appears to be happening. If you are willing to play with this possibility then you can be free to feel good now. Worry doesn't help either. In fact, worry involves focusing on the very things you don't want. In short, resistance makes you narrow-minded and magnetizes you to the things you don't want.

By seeing the resistance instead of reactively resisting, the compulsion to overthink about your perceived predicament reduces and is replaced with clear-minded clarity and creativity on ways to improve things. The same is true for any other challenge that you face. Whenever you notice any negative emotions or overthinking about a problem, I recommend you take time out to see the resistance instead of unconsciously resisting. Ask: *What in my life is my mind currently resisting?*

Possible responses might include:

- I can see that my mind is resisting what happened in my past.

- I can see that my mind is resisting my physical condition.
- I can see that my mind is resisting where I'm currently living.

Having identified what you are pushing away, return to having harmony with life by resting instead of resisting. This easy exercise creates a moment of conscious calm. Provided, of course, that you are open to seeing that it is your allowing or resistance that is causing your negative emotions rather than your circumstances. Why intentionally go on resisting life if you know it is your resistance that's making you feel bad? That's not going to help anything because what you resist persists.

Resistance only keeps you stuck to what it is you don't want. Instead, let your mind become calm by rising above resistance.

Quick cure 2: Bring it on!

One very direct way to rise above resistance is simply to say *bring it on* to whatever you happen to be resisting. Simple yes, but powerful, absolutely! Remember: resisting *what is*, is a core, hidden cause of having a hectic mind. Resistance makes your mind mull over the whys, whats, hows and what ifs of the situation – making it very easy to get lost in all of the stories. Whereas saying 'bring it on' to what you're resisting means you can witness something quite remarkable happen: those external forces of circumstance lose their power over your inner experience of life. Amazingly, you can see how they actually needed you NOT to want them,

in order to have any authority over your wellbeing. Stop resisting and you immediately feel better.

Turn to what it is you think you don't want and welcome it with a wide-open mind.

Bring it on is a powerful antidote to judgement and resistance. However, again, let me reiterate. I'm not saying you cannot improve things. But instead, the three words 'bring it on' are a determining factor in whether you experience stress, negative emotions and copious amounts of thoughts as you go about changing things, or whether you remain calm.

Hidden cause 3: The Attach Catch

Attachment happens whenever you believe that being, doing or having x, y or z will make you happier, peaceful, loved, successful or some other desirable state. Being attached makes you move away from wanting certain things to believing that you need them to be OK. Attachment is based upon the illusion that you can't feel good now without fixing, changing or improving particular aspects of your body or life first. However, as you've already discovered, feeling calm, content and connected comes from no longer buying into the judgements happening in your mind or resisting life.

Growing up you probably learned what a good life looks like. How much money you should have, the kind of house you should live in, the type of person you should end up with, the shape of body you should have, even the make and model of car you should drive... the list goes on and on.

The criteria for a good life are perpetuated in the movies and media, and can often be unintentionally instilled by our parents and peers. Predictably you can pick up a checklist of requirements in order to enjoy a happy and successful life.

Highly motivated to achieve this good life – as, let's face it, your experience of happiness, peace, love and success depends on it – we take our rulebook of requirements and set about doing everything we possibly can to make it all happen.

I spent countless hours setting goals and working hard to achieve them. Totally lost in a 'I'll be happy when' mentality, I was waiting to feel calm and contented in the future; when I'd ticked off my list everything I thought needed to happen. It was not only tiring but also torturous, especially as I couldn't help noticing how, even when I reached my goals, I only felt good for a short while.

Temporary highs at best

Inadvertently being attached to future outcomes meant that my happiness and peace were only ever fleeting. Whenever I got what I thought I needed, my goalposts would always move to the next big milestone and then the next.

I remember getting into a convertible I'd just bought. Before leaving the showroom, I sat for a few moments looking around at my new purchase. I felt great! Then I looked to my right and noticed a little scratch on the side panel and thought: *Oh well, I'll be happy when I get that fixed!*

Sitting in my expensive convertible, which I'd spent years working to get, my mind gave me about five seconds of pure joy before it found something to judge negatively and resist. Can you relate to this? Without realizing it at the time, I had immediately become attached to the scratch being removed before I could fully enjoy the car again. This is just one example of the many times when I inadvertently fell into what I refer to as the 'Attach Catch'. Caught up in the belief that I couldn't be happy (or some other positive emotion) until certain things in my life were fixed, changed or improved first: *I'll be happy when I get my new home*; *I'll be happy when I've redecorated my new home*; *I'll be happy when I've paid off the mortgage* and so on. Left unseen, the mind can postpone your peace and happiness and be busy forever.

As an aside I still highly recommend goal setting, as having a clear purpose and doing what you enjoy can all help you to make the most of your gift of life. I still have many goals that light me up and drive me forward. I'm not sure if I would spend so many hours writing my books, for example, if I didn't set challenging goals to work towards. However, what is downright destructive to your inner calm is being attached to any of your goals ever happening. Attachment puts your positive feelings on hold until some future date in time and also limits your effectiveness in engaging in life fully.

The Attach Catch gets you totally caught up in the mind, making you miss the present moment, and unnecessarily postpone your peace and prosperity.

Attachment and the compulsion to overthink

There is a direct relationship between being attached to things being a certain way and the compulsion to overthink. Whenever your mind believes that it needs something to be OK, it becomes very active in trying to figure out how to get away from where you are now and into a more appealing time in the future. Attachment dulls your experience of now – the present. It stops the moment you are in ever being good enough, leading to discontentment. Attachment also makes you live in fear. Afraid of people disliking or leaving you, as they are your source of love. Or scared of losing the success you've worked so hard to get. Attachment leads to a very limited life in which you need to control and manipulate things to fit your rulebook of requirements. As a result, the mind is given good cause to start producing copious amounts of thoughts about how to improve your current set of circumstances.

Quick cure: Let go of things needing to be different

Ever catch yourself thinking this classic attachment thought? *I'll be happy when...* Take a moment to consider all the things that you think you need to change, fix or improve before you can be truly happy and enjoy Mind Calm. Whether it is your job, relationship, finances, the healing of a physical condition or something else. Take note of any reasons you can think of for not chilling out and being calm now.

If you feel discontented with any aspect of your life, then there's a high chance that you're attached.

Once you have your list, see what happens if you ask this curious question: *What happens within me if I let go of needing this to be any different to how it is now?* Consider it in relation to one or more of the items on your list. Then notice how you feel when you let go of it needing to be fixed, changed or improved? Remember I'm not saying you can't at some point take steps to make things better, but I care most about how you feel right now. **What happens when you let go?**

When I invite my coaching clients and course or retreat participants to do this exercise, I see the same transformations happen time and time again. Common responses are 'I feel relief', 'I feel calm', 'I feel free', along with a range of other really lovely experiences. What happens for you when you are courageously contented? I say courageous because I appreciate it is common not to want to let things be. Your mind may temporarily kick up a fuss that you really must improve things first. It might even tell you that I don't know how bad things are for you, or some other judgement. But if you are willing to be brave, by letting this moment be good enough, exactly as it is, I'm really curious as to what happens inside you.

Hidden cause 4: The Time Trap

Time is a major hidden cause of getting trapped in the mind. When thinking, you are in an imaginary story about something relating to the past and future. You are either thinking about something that's happened in the past, appears to be happening now, or might happen in the future. With an unlimited number of scenarios available to you to get caught up in, you can unwittingly waste years entangled in the time trap.

Going into the past offers, quite literally, a million memories to choose from for as far back as you can remember. Obviously, this can play havoc with your mind calm now if you regularly take jaunts down memory lane (or for some, memory highway!). Not only that, but if you believe in past lives then you can also end up sorting through memories from an infinite supply of other lifetimes, too. Adding to the time trap, you also have the future to contend with, which also brings with it an endless stream of potential scenarios for the mind to become embroiled in. All the time, missing the present moment. The Time Trap, left unseen, makes mind calm near impossible.

Stop thinking and get real

Even thinking about what's happening now is a subtle Time Trap. Incredibly, all of our thoughts are about the past and future. Yes, that's the reality of the situation, every single one! There is no such thing as a present-moment thought. All your thoughts are about the past and future, meaning that if you're thinking, then you will inevitably end up missing the moment you're in.

Although now is the only time anything can happen and so your thoughts are happening now too, the *content* of your thoughts is always about the past and future. Even attempting to think about what's happening now, the moment has always moved on before your mind can process what is happening. To enjoy mind calm and truly experience reality in all its glory, you need to be willing to see when you've left now and gone into an imagined story in your mind. Otherwise you risk spending all your time in your mind.

Time and the compulsion to overthink

There is a direct relationship between believing that the past and future are relevant to your current levels of peace, happiness, love and success and the compulsion to overthink. If you believe that you need to resolve all the 'bad' things that have happened in your life to date, then you will feel compelled to think at length about past memories. Similarly, if you believe that you need to have a better future so you can feel good then, again, you can find yourself needing to engage your mind anytime it presents thoughts about the future, and thinking, for example,

- *What if I run out of money?*
- *What if my body never heals?*
- *What if I never meet anyone?*
- *What if I'm stuck with this person forever?*

Remember, we have a problem anytime we judge and resist 'what is'. Entering the past and future presents your mind with infinite opportunities to judge and resist what's happened in the past or might happen in the future. You can find yourself trapped in judging and resisting made-up future possibilities that haven't even happened. It's such a waste of time! To enjoy mind calm it is vital to accept that whatever's happened in your past or might happen in your future need not have any impact on your current levels of peace.

The only time that you can experience mind calm is now.

When you learn how to be here now, tapping into the inner reservoir of goodness that resides within your current conscious awareness, the lure of leaving your calm consciousness to go into some imagined story in your mind diminishes naturally. You see clearly that now is the only moment you can ever experience clarity, contentment and connection. When you leave now, it feels flat compared to the aliveness of the magnificent moment you are always in.

Quick cure: Reality Check

Escaping the Time Trap involves turning your attention towards now. I'm going to share many ways to do this with you, but one of the simplest is what I like to call having a Reality Check.

Right now, as you read these words, take a moment to notice what you can see – colours, shapes, objects, etc. Now notice what you can hear. Better still, listen for a sound that's been happening but you haven't noticed previously. What sounds can you find in your immediate locality? In order to hear them you need to be really attentive, and thus present. Now, notice what you are physically touching, including the book (or reading device) in your hands, the pressure between your backside and the seat or your feet pressing against the ground. What can you smell or even taste, right now? Totally tune in and have a Reality Check into the immediate here and now.

For a few moments aim to do nothing except be attentive to whatever is being presented to you right now. When doing this, you may notice that your mind becomes stiller. Especially when you give all your attention to what you

can see, hear, feel, smell and taste. It can also be fun to see how, in order to re-engage any thoughts, you have to take your attention away from this moment. You will discover later just how important it is to see that shift of attention but, for now, I want to finish this section on the Time Trap by sharing a few words on how to live with time, without being trapped in your mind by it.

It's about time

Obviously, making plans about the future is inevitable and if you never again speak about your past then you might not be the most interesting dinner-party guest! So I want to be clear, I'm not saying you must ignore the past or future. If, however, you continue to ignore the Time Trap then you will find yourself getting lost in your mind, time after time, potentially forever! You will feel compelled to engage with your mind every time it produces thoughts about the past and future. Meaning that Mind Calm will continue to elude you.

With time, you will learn how to talk about the past and future, with your attention firmly rooted in the here and now. You will no longer go into time as you might now. Even if bad things have happened in your past, they won't feel so personal or emotionally intense. You will deeply know that the past is only ever a memory in your mind. That the past or future is not happening at this moment and it is safe and more serene to leave it where it belongs, and make the most of this brand new moment bursting with peace-filled potential.

SUMMARY OF THE FOUR HIDDEN CAUSES

Judgement Game
Judging things as being bad, negative, wrong or worse leads to problems, and the mind becomes very active when attempting to find solutions to problems.

Resist Persist
Resistance to perceived problems leads to stress and suffering. Whenever you feel bad then your mind becomes very active, trying to understand why you feel the way you do and all the ways you can fix, change and improve things so that you can feel good again.

Attach Catch
Believing that x, y or z needs to happen in order to feel good and be successful leads to a busy mind full of thoughts about how to get what you think you need.

Time Trap
Thinking that your past and future determine your current levels of peace, happiness, love and success motivates the mind to produce lots of thoughts about what's happened or might happen.

BE OPEN TO LETTING GO

Can you relate to any of these hidden causes? It is my hope that this chapter has been illuminating for you. So the next time your mind starts playing one of its games, you'll see it and won't feel compelled to take part in its

antics. You will find that the less you engage the mind, the less active it will be.

Most importantly, once you see these hidden causes of a busy mind, you'll find it easier to see the mind and not become lost in its inner workings. By being open to letting go of the mind when you see one of these hidden causes, then the big benefits of Mind Calm, which I'll share in the next chapter, will be your reward.

New York Times bestselling author

Dr WAYNE W. DYER

I CAN SEE CLEARLY NOW

9

"I hate you so much. How could you simply walk away from your children and never make a phone call to see if we are okay? I want to smash your face in I am so angry at you!"

At nighttime my anger and pain erupt in dreams of me screaming at my father. I awaken almost every morning in a cold sweat after these nightly encounters. I dream that I'm in a state of rage when I see him, and I demand answers. This man I've never seen in waking life remains distant and disinterested, unbothered by anything I might be saying to him in my dream state.

Even though I have no memory of this man, and I know the stories about his mistreatment of my mother and my grandparents, I'm perplexed by his continued indifference toward the three children that he left some 15 years ago. I've heard stories of his stealing jewelry from my grandmother, spending time in prison for theft, and refusing to work to support his family—along with his constant womanizing, drinking, and sexual violence. Most egregiously, he simply walked out of our lives, never making a phone call to see how his three children might be doing or making good on the paltry sum of money he was supposed to provide for child support. No, Melvin Lyle Dyer simply disappeared and never once looked back.

I'm now living with my brothers and our mother, as Bill Drury has finally departed the roost. Jim and Dave are not interested in finding and confronting our father, but I am. My nightly dreams reveal a young man deeply conflicted by his father's abandonment. I try to get my mother to describe him, but she refuses—except to say that he was an absolute asshole, a fast-talking con man, stealing money wherever he went, and refusing to take on the responsibilities of fatherhood. She recalls one job he had: selling brooms and brushes door-to-door for an agency for the blind. When he neglected to turn in the money he collected, he was fired.

Although my mother has nothing positive to say about this man who's my father, I want to know him. My indignation and rage insist that I confront him and ask to hear his side of the story. I think about him every day, imagining that I'll accidentally run into him and have a long conversation about what motivated him to leave a beautiful woman and three little boys under the age of five. I want to know if he even knew me or had any feelings of love for this little boy who is fast growing into manhood.

I attempt to locate him so that we can talk. I make phone calls to relatives of his and pick up a few clues as to his whereabouts (someplace in the Deep South), but I never make contact. I have this fantasy that I am going to finally meet this man who so mysteriously walked out of my life, and that we are going to resolve these internal issues I have concerning being abandoned.

I ask questions incessantly, and I can see that my mother is very threatened by my inquisitiveness about my father. My brothers don't ask and simply don't want to know anymore. Maybe my oldest brother, Jim, remembers some of our father's abusive actions toward our mother and us and that explains his disinterest. Perhaps he simply wants to put it all behind him.

My mother has so much obvious hatred toward him that my questions are usually met with, "He was no good, and you are better off not knowing him." I stop pursuing my curiosity about him with her, but my soul longs to know more: to talk to him, to hear his viewpoints and explanations, to maybe even find out that he really did love me even though he chose to stay away. I often think that maybe

he made a noble choice to stay away, knowing in his heart that his presence in my life would not be in my own best interest, and that his departure was a selfless rather than a selfish choice.

At any rate, the absence of a father in my life is huge for me as a teenager. I am curious; I want desperately to find him. And the bitterness I feel grows into a furor that manifests in the frenzied dreams of violence I express toward him in my slumber. I make a vow to myself that, even though everyone in my immediate family feels that I should just drop the matter and be grateful that this loser of a man is out of my life, I am going to chase him down and one day talk to him man-to-man to get the answers I desire. I am not satisfied to just "let it go," as those around me are urging. I want to meet him. I want to hear it from him directly. I want him to know that I exist and, yes, I so very much want him to love me.

On Valentine's Day 1956, our telephone rings on our party line at TUxedo 1-5942. An aunt I've never met or even heard of is calling. Her name is Audrey, and I learn that she is my father's half-sister. She tells me that my grandmother Norah Mabel Wilhelm died that morning, and that my two brothers and I have been asked to be pallbearers at this woman's funeral. I didn't know my father's mother had been alive, I've never even heard her name mentioned, but I instantly say yes.

My decision is not based on my desire to pay tribute to a grandmother I never knew—my heart is racing at the prospect of finally being able to meet my father. Surely he'll be there at the funeral of his own mother, and won't be able to hide from me any longer.

I am a few weeks shy of turning 16 and have my learner's permit, which allows me to drive if accompanied by an older licensed driver. Jim, also a pallbearer designee, agrees to let me drive his car over to the west side of Detroit to a home filled with strangers. I am here for one reason and one reason only: I want to see this man who is my father. But he isn't there. There is a funeral service at a church, but no Melvin Lyle Dyer. Then we make a short trip to a cemetery, where I help carry the coffin of a woman who is my grandmother, the mother of my father, though a stranger to me. No Melvin Lyle Dyer at the cemetery.

We all return to the west-side home, the residence of my deceased grandmother. I'm bursting with excitement, certain that my long-absent father will surface. As we reenter this home for a buffet dinner, a truck pulls up to the house and delivers a few paltry flowers with a note. We are all informed that Lyle is down south in Alabama or Mississippi and unable to be at this final commemoration of his mother's life.

I am crestfallen. Once again my father comes up missing. An assortment of cousins and aunts that I didn't know I was related to make excuses for Lyle. He's afraid to show up, I'm told—probably because he's afraid that my mother will have him thrown back in jail for over a decade of unpaid court-ordered child-support payments.

I wonder what I'm doing here at this memorial service, and I urge my brothers to leave. Yet before we can get away, a cousin named Dorothy says that my father had several wives after he left my mother, including a young girl he picked up hitchhiking in a place called Bloomingrose, West Virginia; and before that a woman named Juanita, a nurse who now lives in Sandusky, Ohio. I take note, say good-bye to these unknown relatives, and realize for the umpteenth time that this man has no interest in getting to know me or my brothers. Even his own mother's funeral is not enough of a lure to have him make an appearance in my life.

I am now more determined than ever that I am going to have that face-to-face meeting with my father, and I have a fairly good idea about where he might be living. I remain uncertain why I'm so obsessed with finding this man who obviously wants nothing to do with me or my brothers—but I am full of resolve.

After I turn 16, I purchase a 1950 Plymouth with $200 I've saved. I make plans to drive down to Boone County, West Virginia, and pay a surprise visit to my father and the young hitchhiker I'd heard he'd married. As summer-vacation time arrives, my boss at Stahl's market, where I have been working for three years, asks me to work full-time all summer as assistant manager, which includes closing up the store and handling the day's receipts. This opportunity, coupled with the expense of owning and insuring a car, and my desire to be with my

new girlfriend, lead me to postpone my trip. I decide instead to look for the ex-wife named Juanita in Sandusky, Ohio.

I drive three hours to Sandusky and meet my father's ex-wife, who works in a local hospital and speaks firmly and without any hesitation. "Your father was a bad man," she says bluntly. "Everything your mom told you about him is true, and even more. He refused to work and support our marriage; he was always in trouble with the law; he had no sense of right and wrong; he drank excessively and was mean and vicious when he was drunk, which was frequent. I recommend that you abandon your desire to meet him. He's a phony, and you are way better off without him in your life."

Juanita Dyer spends the entire day with me, and the most disappointing part of it is her direct response to my question, "Did he ever say anything to you about his three boys that he had deserted, and did he ever mention his youngest son, Wayne?" She looks at me with the caring eyes of a woman who works as a nurse in a hospital, seeing tragedies day in and day out. "No," she responds. "I didn't even know that he had any children, even though we were married for several years."

Such heartbreak . . . I have a father who doesn't even mention his own children to his wife? What kind of a man is this? Doesn't he love anybody? How could I be so dramatically different in every way from the man who is my biological father? *My* heart is full of love for so many people in my life: my mother, brothers, friends, and especially the downtrodden—and even my father. I leave Sandusky determined to squelch my interest in finding or understanding Melvin Lyle Dyer.

I return to Detroit and pour myself into my life as a local grocery-store assistant manager, earning a good living and helping my mother out financially. I have run into a myriad of obstacles attempting to locate this man who's on the run, who leaves heartbreak wherever he temporarily settles—but the yearning to know him never subsides. The bad dreams continue for years.

Twenty years will pass before I'm able to recognize him as my greatest teacher.

I Can See Clearly Now

As much as I wanted my father to show up and love me when I was a young boy, I now value his absence as one of the greatest gifts I've been granted. His waywardness and abandonment of me was truly part of my coming here to teach self-reliance, which is the one great theme of my life. I have been doing precisely this since I was a child, and it has dominated my entire life's work.

It's so clear that there are no mistakes in this universe. The stars are all in alignment. The sun is the exact distance from Earth, to the millimeter, to create and sustain life. There is a precision to this universe, whether looking through a telescope or a microscope, that defies intellectual comprehension. It is all perfect down to the tiniest subatomic particle and outward to the most distant celestial body. Included within this precision is all that comes our way as well, even though an understanding of the *why* is frequently not apparent.

I needed to be in a position of relying upon myself if I was to fulfill my own purpose and live out my dharma to be a spiritual teacher of self-reliance. My years spent in foster homes provided me with the opportunity to learn this firsthand. I had to rely upon myself—there was no one there to do it for me.

My relationship to my father was to be the single most significant relationship of my life. My wanting him to show up for me on my timetable, when I thought I needed him so desperately, was my own ego at work. Everything shows up in Divine time. We get what we need on the schedule of a force much larger than ourselves. This invisible force moves the pieces around in its own way, in its own time, to harmonize with the perfect precision that defines every cubic inch of space and time.

It might seem far-fetched to some, but I believe that my life without the benefit of a father was perfect in every way. From this vantage point I see that my books, lectures, films, and recordings came about because my father was absent from my life. My ego wanted him, but my spirit knew that I had a far greater purpose to fulfill.

Those years that I spent in agony over why and how a man could be so insensitive, so cruel, so distant, always ended up leaving me no

other option other than to go within and resolve the issues for myself, or to turn to a new kind of Divine love practiced only by great spiritual masters and God himself—a love awash in forgiveness. Everything I needed to remain on course in my life was being provided—though the child I was couldn't know it at the time.

Today, from the perspective of looking back over my life, I can see that everything was absolutely perfect. Without my knowing it I was in some kind of training right from the get-go. Perhaps my father agreed to come into this world from the world of Spirit and live his own life in such a way that it would require his youngest son to learn how to live a life of self-reliance as a toddler, a teenager, and then a young adult.

Being given the opportunity to send love and forgiveness to my father for all of his perverse, mercurial behavior perhaps was a training stage for helping millions of people transform their own lives with a vision aligned with a God-realized perspective. I feel my father's presence frequently, and whenever I sense him near, it is like a soft mist of infinite love rather than the storms of fierce rage and angst that previously typified my thoughts of this man.

Yes, he was my greatest teacher. I know with certainty God works in mysterious ways—but not in accidental ways. Indeed, it is, and always has been, perfect in every way. I am so grateful.

11

Boot camp behind me, I'm in Bainbridge, Maryland, attending school for six months to become a radioman and cryptographer. School is arduous, with daily classes from early morning until late in the evening, and requires nightly study. Mornings are spent learning Morse code, converting the dash-dot sounds into letters, and we have exams every other day. My classes also include study in the areas of communications, electronics, physics, learning to operate the latest equipment, encoding and decoding, and mastering typing. My subconscious mind is learning how to respond automatically when I hear the sounds in my headphones.

I am totally committed to pursuing this six-month academic adventure with excellence, and I'm reminded that when I choose to apply myself I can literally master any discipline. Back in high school, when I loved a subject I invariably received a grade of *A.* When I was uninterested, I'd simply withdraw, unattached to whether I got a passing or failing grade. Here in radioman school I am one determined young sailor; I strive to not only pass the course, but to do so with distinction. At graduation, I am at the top of my class.

My best friend at Bainbridge is a 19-year-old young man named Ray Dudley from Chicago. We study together, we bond like brothers, and basically we become inseparable. When we leave the base to go

to Baltimore or Washington, D.C., for a weekend, we frequently do so together.

Ray and I are returning to the base after a weekend in D.C. It's 10 P.M. on a Sunday night and we are due back on base at Bainbridge before midnight. We decide to stop in the little town of Havre de Grace, Maryland, and have a dish of fried rice, as we haven't eaten all day. It is an inexpensive meal for two hungry sailors in the uniform of the United States Navy before the ten-mile cab ride to the base.

I'm startled when I hear, "Sorry, boys, we can't serve you in this restaurant." I ask the waitress why that is—the restaurant is open until midnight, and there are lots of returning servicemen eating. She looks sheepishly at me and simply shrugs her shoulders and points at my best friend, a U.S. Navy serviceman serving his country as a member of the armed forces . . . and then it hits me squarely in the face, as if someone just punched me with a vicious blow. Ray is an African American, and in this little town in Maryland they don't serve people who do not have white skin.

I ask to speak to a manager, but no one of higher authority appears. The waitress doesn't want to have an unpleasant scene, but I am outraged and embarrassed for my friend. Ray has lived with this kind of prejudice all of his life and motions to me to leave quietly to avoid any possibility of a serious conflict.

I have never experienced the horror of racial prejudice like this. I am perplexed, deeply saddened, and so hurt for my friend. But more than this, I am outraged at the insanity of refusing to serve another human being who is wearing the uniform of the armed forces of his country, and willing to go to war and die so that the opportunity to live and breathe freely is preserved for everyone—even the owners of restaurants, and the waitresses who work there.

I apologize to Ray as we head back to our barracks at the Bainbridge Naval Base. I vow to myself to never, ever prejudge anyone on the basis of their appearance. I am shaken to my core. I am changed forever. I will dedicate my life to ridding the world of such moronic thinking. Every day for the remainder of my time at Bainbridge, I am obsessed with what I, as one man, can do to eradicate this kind

of simpleminded behavior. It is my life's mission. I am committed to being a man who judges no one.

I Can See Clearly Now

That Sunday night in Havre de Grace still stands out as one of the most influential evenings of my life, even though it was more than 50 years ago. That moment of looking into my friend Ray's eyes and seeing the pain that prejudice can cause inspired me to make a commitment to abolish prejudgment from my own way of being, and to incorporate this love for all of humanity as a cornerstone of my life's work.

From that night on, I became fully aware of my own propensity for labeling people on the basis of any external factors, and I began to traverse a path wherein I was able to see the unfolding of Spirit in every person I encountered. In many respects, that experience as a 19-year-old sailor was Divinely orchestrated. I had to be there as a witness and an unwilling participant in order to have the horror of this kind of behavior brought home to me.

That hapless waitress was only reacting due to inbred conditioning that had been imposed upon her by cultural circumstances when she was a child. She saw mistreatment of people with dark skin and accepted it as the thing to do. She was also an employee who was just "doing what I'm told to do—it's my job." This mentality has been the driving force behind endless heinous acts over the centuries. In order to replace these habits with behavior that is compassionate rather than prejudiced, people must examine how their subconscious minds have been programmed and then begin to change these habitual ways of being.

Back in 1959 I began to do precisely that. I had heard plenty of nigger/spic/kike/dago/Polack talk as I was growing up in the 1940s and '50s, and though I have no memory of ever using such language in my lifetime, I know that I witnessed it regularly and it didn't arouse any sense of outrage within me. My experience with Ray Dudley turned me around. I began a slow transformation of expressing my

disdain for such language without making a scene. I began to read books that dealt with the subject of prejudice and hatred, and I railed against policies of the Navy wherein segregation was an established norm. As I look back on two of the most consequential themes of my writing and of my adult development, they both harken back to that painful night in Maryland.

The first of these themes is teaching people how to have a mind of their own, independent of what they have been taught to believe. If I know it is wrong and not in harmony with the Divine love espoused by our most revered spiritual masters, then regardless of what I have been taught, I must think for myself and come always from a place of love. If we are told that God is love, then we shouldn't just say it in our place of worship during a ceremonial weekly religious service. We must live it.

The second theme involves the subconscious mind wherein adult habits are ingrained. I wrote of my time in radio school learning Morse code. I practiced and practiced until it went from a conscious-mind activity to a permanent place in my subconscious habitual mind. I haven't used Morse code in over half a century—and every bit of the programming continues to be present in my being. I can still spell out any word or sentence instantaneously in my mind using the dots and dashes that were placed there several decades ago.

Similarly, we all have other ideas that we call *memes,* which drive our behavior today. Even though they may not serve us, they are still there operating, just like my unconscious tapping out of the Morse code today. That waitress in the restaurant in Havre de Grace in 1959 was acting out both of the themes. She was doing what she was told to do, even though her body language was saying, *I don't really feel this way—I'm just doing my job;* and she was also acting out of a host of memes that she had never taken the opportunity to correct and then eradicate completely from her subconscious mind.

I can still see that waitress and my young African-American friend Ray Dudley in my mind as I write these words. I believe they were both sent into my life that Sunday night to help me to not only see the light but to teach from a more illumined perspective.

12

It's the middle of winter in 1959; I have been temporarily assigned to a brief tour of duty at Naval Air Station Patuxent River by Lexington Park, Maryland. I decide to put on my uniform and hitchhike home to Detroit to visit my mother, and especially my girlfriend, Linda, who is matriculating at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. It is a distance of approximately 590 miles, and it usually takes 12 to 14 hours. Being in uniform generally means that someone will stop and give me a ride regardless of where I might be stranded.

I've made this trip several times, and I'm confident that I can get home by Saturday morning, have a full day and a half at home, and then hitch back to the base in order to make curfew at midnight on Sunday. It is a long haul and a lot of time hitchhiking on the road, but well worth it to a homesick, lovelorn sailor who is just beginning to become accustomed to being away from home for long periods of time.

I set out on my weekend jaunt and catch a ride all the way to Washington, D.C. Several connections later I arrive at the Breezewood entrance to the Pennsylvania Turnpike. By now it's close to midnight and the temperature has dropped dramatically. In the bitter cold I manage to catch a ride heading westbound, but the driver informs

me that he's only going as far as Butler, Pennsylvania. He doesn't want to drop me off at the exit in the middle of the night because I'd be in grave danger of freezing to death—it's well below zero, and the winds are blowing fiercely. I'm wearing a dark blue Navy peacoat, and standing in the dark unable to be seen by the drivers heading west on the turnpike could be disastrous. This friendly driver insists on dropping me off at one of the service-plaza restaurant stops on the turnpike just before his exit a few miles ahead. I agree.

I head into the restaurant at around 3 A.M., get a cup of hot chocolate, and then head out to try my luck at catching a westbound vehicle—in the middle of the night, in the middle of what feels like nowhere, in the midst of the coldest weather I have ever experienced. On my way out to the ramp in the freezing darkness, I pass another sailor walking back to the restaurant. He has had no luck in securing a ride and tells me, "It's bitter cold out there, buddy. I wouldn't stand there too long; you could easily get frostbite if you're not careful."

I acknowledge him, wish him well, and head out to the turnpike. I stand there for 15 or 20 minutes—no luck. Almost frozen stiff, I decide to head back to warm up. When I enter the restaurant there's only one person in the place: the sailor who spoke to me a few moments earlier, warning me not to stay out there too long. Imagine my surprise when I realize this sailor is my brother!

Jim is stationed in Norfolk, Virginia. He too had decided to hitchhike home to see our mother and his fiancée, Marilyn, for the weekend; he too had been dropped off at the same exact spot. I had no idea that Jim's submarine was even in port. I hadn't had any contact with my brother in months, since his whereabouts on the sub were considered classified information. My own brother had spoken to me and warned me to be careful without even knowing that it was me. Together we stand in shocked disbelief at the mysterious forces that were at play in order to have this scene be a reality.

We meet the driver of an 18-wheeler who's gassing up and tell him of the incredible "coincidence" that's just transpired. This synchronistic event that brought Jim and me together in the middle of nowhere under these impossible conditions so impacts the truck driver that he

drives us, out of his way, right to our front door at 20217 Moross Road in Detroit early on Saturday morning.

I Can See Clearly Now

I cannot begin to tell you how many times Jim and I have shared the above story in the past 50-plus years, and the conclusion is the always same: it's just one of those bizarre coincidences that show up and defy a rational explanation. This event was deeply meaningful to the 19-year-old sailor I was. It introduced me to the world of synchronicity, quantum physics, and the idea that there are no accidents in a world governed by a Divine intelligence.

Today I look back at all of the events that had to come together perfectly for my brother and me to have that encounter in the middle of the night so many years ago, and I am no longer surprised. My life has been crammed full with these kinds of happenings—but this was the first big one that really caught my attention and changed the way I looked at things forever.

I can see clearly that I had to rid myself of all doubts about the possibility of all things coming together in Divine order and in Divine time. My writing and speaking have been dominated by this grand idea of *synchronicity,* which is a term coined by Carl Jung to explain what he called "meaningful coincidences." The synchronistic incident that brought this to Jung's attention occurred during a session with a client who was relating a dream. As his client pondered the significance of a beetle in the dream, they both heard a noise—which turned out to be a beetle on the window attracting their attention. I now see that this synchronistic event with my brother, which goes way beyond logical thought and defies the incredible odds against such a thing transpiring by chance, was needed so that I could open myself to the possibility that all things are connected and on purpose. I personally needed to be liberated from my own excessive rationalism at that time in my life.

In order to eventually write and speak about the world of Spirit I needed to know at the young age of 19 that there are no accidents or

coincidences in a universe that is truly created and guided by invisible forces that elude rational explanation. I now see that we have no idea how anything gets created in this physical universe and that everything originates in something called Spirit, which no one can define or come close to explaining—including our greatest scientific minds.

There is every reason to believe there is intelligence behind life. As Max Planck, a great scientific mind who received a Nobel Prize in Physics, noted: "All matter originates and exists only by virtue of a force which brings the particle of an atom to vibration and holds this most minute solar system of the atom together. We must assume behind this force the existence of a conscious and intelligent mind. This mind is the matrix of all matter." This being so, then all of that intelligence is innate in each creation of that intelligence, which means it is in everything and everyone and it is directing the entire play.

This intelligence is so stupendously mysterious that it is able to create worlds and galaxies so vast as to stupefy even the most open-minded imaginations. An intelligence that can keep the entire universe in perfect balance and create a rose from scratch, an intelligence that is in all things—"The spirit that gives life," as Jesus said. This invisible intelligence can and does create miracles every second of every day. Bringing two brothers together in the middle of the Pennsylvania Turnpike is a minor achievement compared to creating life from nothing and assembling an infinite number of heavenly bodies to comprise an entire universe. I cannot conceive of a watch without a watchmaker, so it is impossible for me to believe this universe exists without an intelligence that is the *matrix of all matter*—a creator.

When I look back at this experience of synchronicity that occurred in 1959, it appears clearly to me to have opened my eyes to the possibility of a Divine design that contributes clues to our destiny. I felt then that both Jim and I were involved in a collaboration with fate, and I began considering my contribution consciously. I wanted to align my life with this miraculous invisible energy. I began choosing a mind-set that was aware that I was much more than a mere human form—that I was Spirit itself—that the life inside me was truly Divine. As I stepped back and observed from this place of total belief in my

own magnificence and my connection to this grand invisible Spirit, I began to be a co-creator of more and more synchronistic events.

This experience was the first that I can remember that startled me into seeing that life wasn't exclusively factual and physical. I was and still am convinced that an event of this nature is not an accidental happenstance. From that day forward I began to think in new ways. I did not share this newly awakened awareness with anyone at the time. But I knew that I was involved in something much bigger than just going through the motions of life as it was being handed to me.

I began to hear the silence that seemed to gently murmur about my inner life and of seemingly miraculous happenings. There was, it seemed clear to me, a synchronistic tie-in to everyone and everything—all of life was interconnected. I thought of the drivers who dropped Jim and me off at that turnpike rest stop and I began to see them as a part of the drama of my life, and me as a part of theirs. This was my opening to an awareness of the Divine force moving through our lives.

From my perspective of looking back at this event so many years later, I see clearly that I was beginning to liberate myself from the chronological cause-and-effect way I had been trained to think. I was beginning to cultivate a mind that's truly open to everything and attached to nothing. It seems that the 19-year-old me welcomed discovering this theme that eventually would permeate his life's work—surrender and know that it is all just the way it's supposed to be.

Albert Einstein was right: "There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle." Or as Buddha said, "If we could see the miracle of a single flower clearly, our whole life would change." This miraculous event allowed me to see clearly and begin co-creating my own life, and teach others how to co-create their lives as well. As I look back now I give thanks for all of the participants who collaborated to bring about this wondrous awakening in me.

THE TOLTEC SECRET

Dreaming Practices *of the* Ancient Mexicans

Sergio Magaña Ocelocoyotl

Chapter 2 (*Ome*)

Nahualism: The Ancient Knowledge of Dreams

To understand what nahualism is we must first understand what the word *nahual* means. It comes from the Náhuatl language and refers to an ancient body of knowledge that according to oral tradition originated with the Olmecs, the Chichimecas and the Teotihuacans. It was then continued by the Xochicalcas and passed to the Toltecs, before finally reaching the Aztecs and their main indigenous group, the Mexihcas.[1]

The Mexihca culture originally developed in the United States of America, in what is now known as Utah. Its mother tongue was the Yutuazteca language. It then spread down the southeast of Mexico to the state of Veracruz. It was here that the first settlements gave rise to the Olmec tradition, and from here it spread to the centre of Mexico, a process that took thousands of years and resulted in what is currently known as Mexihcayotl or Toltecayotl, that is, the Mexihca or Toltec essence or energy, which is present in all of us who follow the ancient tradition of Mexico today.

The etymological composition of Náhuatl hides a great part of the cosmology and mysteries of ancient Mexico. The words describe the creation process, the mathematical order of creation and the relationship between humanity and the cosmos, not only on a physical level but on an energetic level, too. Consequently, thanks to oral tradition and to the words *mah toteotahtzin mitzmopieli*, the story of our venerable Earth, we have been able to bring to life what was believed to be lost, destroyed by the conquest and by the passage of time: the real treasure of Mexico – its knowledge.

The *Tonal* and the *Nahual*

Before we consider *nahualism* and how it has come down to us, we first need to understand what the two key words in the whole tradition mean: *tonal* and *nahual*.

Tonal comes from Tonatiuh, sun, the one who produces heat. According to our Mexican ancestors, the cosmos manifests in all human beings. Cosmic order is our own order. So, as the sun produces heat, it emits information to our *teotl*, our energy.

At the human level, then, the *tonal* is a body of energy that produces heat, exactly as the sun does. It can be seen as an amber radiance around our head when we're awake and/or in a conscious state and it governs our perception then. Since it is the sun that supplies this power, a group of people who are gathering together in a room, for example, will see the same 'reality' – what the sun makes them see. On the other hand, a

person who is sleeping in that room will see a totally different reality – their dreams – since their *tonal* is not over their head and not governing their perception. (This is also true of someone who is on the path of the *nahual* and is capable of altering their perception at will.)

To sum up, the *tonal* is the perception attached to physical matter and to our five senses. It is governed by sunlight and responsible for creating our identity and location in time and space when we are awake.

Nahual comes from two words: *nehua*, which means 'I', and *nahualli*, which means 'what can be extended'. In the ancient cosmology, it refers to everything that extends beyond the *tonal* – that is, who we really are.

The *tonal* is solely ruled by solar energy, but the *nahual* is ruled by the energy of the whole universe, and mainly by the energy of the moon, Venus and the Pleiades. At a human level, we can detect this energy as a bluish-grey radiance, similar to the cold moon's light, that is located around the navel when we are awake but moves up around the head when we are asleep or when we enter an altered state of consciousness.

The *nahual* is the energy body that travels to the world of slumber, the one in which we dream. That's why we perceive things differently when sleeping and dreaming. The *nahual* also allows us to go to the Mictlan, the land of the dead, and to other worlds. In other words, when we're asleep, we're very close to being what is known nowadays as a spirit.

The *nahual* is dual in character: we can dream about creating or destroying. We can also dream in the land of the dead about our old patterns, the old winds, what is known in the oriental tradition as *karma* and *dharma*.

According to tradition, the worst disgrace for a human being is the separation of the *tonal* and the *nahual*. At present they are always separate in our sphere – our egg or aura. When we're awake, the *tonal*'s energy moves around our head and the *nahual*'s energy moves around our navel, spinning the opposite way from each other and never coming together. When we're asleep, the *tonal* forces the *nahual* out through the liver and then the *nahual* moves upwards to the head. From here it expands into the world of dreams, widening our perception to include the land of the dead, the Mictlan, while we're asleep.

In the morning, before we wake up, the *nahual* forces the *tonal* out through the liver, the *tonal* moves upwards to the head and once again we come back to the person we believe we are, the identity we've created for ourselves in the *tonal*.

If, like most people, we've dreamed without remembering our dreams, and if we don't change this with the appropriate training, our dreams will become our future over and over again until we die. According to tradition, this process is known as 'the moon's invisible prison'. This refers to the *nahual* and to our own dreams rather than to the real moon. Our ancestors believed that the mission of every person on Earth was to tear down the moon's prison and take charge of their own dreams – and their own life.

Our Lady of Guadalupe

All this knowledge was captured masterfully in the most important symbol of Mexico, our Lady of Guadalupe, an image flawlessly designed by the eagle warrior Cipactli, who was later known in our history as Juan Diego, a humble indigenous peasant.

Our Lady of Guadalupe

According to traditional accounts, the Virgin appeared to him on a hill, Cerro del Tepeyac,[2] where the ancient Mexihca temple of Tonantzin Coatlicue,[3] the Divine Mother and ruler of life and death, was once located. The drawing Cipactli presented to the Spanish archbishop Fray Juan de Zumárraga at the time contained everything I mentioned above. The Virgin was standing over the moon, vanquishing it, while rising towards the sun, that is, tearing down the moon's invisible prison in

order to reach the full potential represented by the sun. The blend of Catholic and traditional symbols made her the perfect example of Mexihca–Spanish syncretism.

Nowadays the pilgrimage to El Tepeyac, which takes place on 12 December, is the most popular in the world, attracting approximately 7 million people each year. I try to make this pilgrimage every year and I can say that it is the epitome of devotion. Millions of people come together to visit the Virgin, thousands come to visit the Tonantzin Coatlicue temple and thousands, like me, come to visit them both.

Sun and Moon

These teachings were also illustrated in the ancient Templo Mayor in Tenochtitlan, in the temple dedicated to Huitzilopochtli, the main energy cultivated by the Mexihcas, which in the *tonal* is the warrior's discipline and the rising sun, and in the *nahual* is the hummingbird flying to the left, guiding us to overcome our weaknesses and achieve our potential during our dreams. It is said that the sculpture of a moon cut into pieces, called the Coyolxauqui and representing the moon's phases, was originally placed under the temple's staircase. On top of it was the rising sun, vanquishing the moon day by day and fulfilling its grand destiny, just as we too overcome the moon and the darkness to reach our sun, changing our *tonal* via our *nahual*.

I'd like to clarify that the vanquishing of the feminine moon by the masculine sun doesn't refer to masculine and feminine

duality. The Náhuatl tradition goes far beyond gender. There are masculine and feminine names for the moon as well as for the sun, and for everything that exists for that matter. For example, the entity that governs the moon is the Black Tezcatlipoca, or smoking mirror, the most important energy ruling dreams, and this gives the moon a masculine name. But the ancient tradition of dreaming doesn't talk about masculine or feminine but about being awake or asleep, alive or dead.

The Place of the Moon's Navel

I firmly believe that a tradition's development is strongly rooted in its ecosystem. Mexico isn't very far from the equator, so there isn't a big difference between the length of the day and the night throughout the year. In ancient Mexico, the day was divided into 20 fractions. Each consisted of approximately 72 minutes, thus resulting in 11 fractions of the day and 9 fractions of the night, which were stable during most of the year. Darkness prevailed during almost half of the day, giving way to the world of dreams and the *nahual*. That is why the *nahual* became as important as the *tonal* and gave rise to one of the most sophisticated dream cultures of the ancient world.

It is unbelievable that almost no one, including Mexicans themselves, actually knows what 'Mexico' means. It comes from the Náhuatl words *metztli*, *xictli* and *co*, meaning 'moon', 'navel' and 'place' respectively. When combined, they mean 'the place of the moon's navel'. That is the land of dreamers and those who are awake while dreaming.

One of the most commonly found positions in the Mayan as well as the Toltec pyramids is that of the *tezcatzoncatl*, or *chac mool* (*see page 166*). This is another of the names of the moon and also a figure lying back and holding a mirror or a water container on its navel, representing the smoking mirror. These figures were usually placed on top of temples, and even now we can see one at Chichen Itzá, symbolizing the grand destiny of becoming a dreamer, a *nahual*, or at very least a practitioner of nahualism.

The Aztec Calendar

It is known that when we change a personal name or the name of a place, we change the destiny of that person or place. For over 300 years the Aztec Empire was known as New Spain and it was throughout this period that the ancient knowledge about dreaming and use of the obsidian mirror[4] was brutally eradicated. Practitioners of the old tradition were slaughtered until their wisdom was almost lost. However, New Spain took back its ancient name, Mexico. This was a determining factor in allowing small groups to preserve the knowledge secretly and hand it down to us today.

Mexico didn't only regain its ancient vibration when it took back its name, but also its time: the ancient Aztec calendar. This is still valid today, due to its relationship with the universe.

What does the calendar count? It is the famous long count, the relationship between our solar system and the universe. On the calendar, the last ring, the outer ring, shows two serpents with

human heads. These represent the long count in the Náhuatl culture. Some say this consists of 26,000 years and others 26,500. The feathers on top of the serpents with human heads refer to Quetzalcóatl – an entity that represented knowledge, among other things, in ancient Mexico – and there you can also see seven small circles and a larger one. The large one represents our sun and the small ones represent the Pleiades, which reveal the relationship between the sun and the Pleiades, as well as the movement between the two, cycles which take thousands of years to complete. Science has called this phenomenon the precession of the equinoxes.

The Aztec calendar

The calendar is also called *nahui ollin*, four movements, as it was believed the number four summarized the order in the universe, since it took both nature and the cosmos four movements to complete their cycles: four elements, four seasons, two solstices, two equinoxes, four moon phases, etc. Hence, the long count was also divided into four periods of 6,500 or 6,625 years (depending on how you count), and they were called suns.

The most important point about these suns is that cosmic cycles repeat themselves on different scales, and suns will alternate just as day and night do. Therefore it is believed that one sun is made of light, like the day, and the next sun is made of darkness, like the night.

Daylight or *tonal* suns create a kind of outer perception. During these suns, God is put outside. Healing, satisfaction, conquest – everything happens outside. The Fifth Sun was a *tonal* sun, i.e. fertile soil for the creation of religions, medical systems, wars, etc.

But this time is about to finish. To be more exact, the transition started with the solar eclipse of July 1991 in Mexico City and will end with another eclipse in the year 2021. So we're now moving into a dark sun, a sun of the *nahual*, where our perception turns inwards, where we need light to see in the darkness and where when we close our eyes we can see our dreams, our internal world. It is a time when our first conquest is not of others, but ourselves.

It must also be mentioned that in ancient Mexico there were no prejudices about light and darkness being good or evil. These are modern concepts. Light and darkness were simply seen as entities or forces, such as day and night, and you could use either to do the right thing or the wrong thing. A war could break out if you did the wrong thing in the light, or during the day, and to sow a healing dream, that is, to do the right thing, you would need the forces of darkness or night. Therefore, the criteria used – and still being used by those of us who follow the ancient tradition – were different from what we might expect today.

There were other concepts, too, which are not widely known today, such as enlightenment through the path of darkness. This consists of transforming yourself into a master of dreams as well as a master of the obsidian mirror. I will discuss this further in later chapters.

As I mentioned earlier, the sun governs the *tonal*. It was assigned the number 13 because a single rotation of the solar equator takes approximately 26 Earth days. So the sun, Tonatiuh, shows one of his two faces to the Earth every 13 days, and this became known as a solar wave or *trecena* (a period of 13 days). Thirteen was such an important number in ancient cultures that one of God's names in the Kabbalah is the number 13 in Hebrew.

According to tradition, the *nahual* is governed by the Pleiades, together with the moon and Venus. The Pleiades reach the same position in the sky on a particular day in November

every 52 years and on that day the ceremony of the new fire is celebrated in Mexico City, at El Cerro de la Estrella.[5] Fire is the governing element of sleep, hence new fire equals new dream. That's why the *nahual* was assigned the number 52.

So it was known that the *nahual* was four times more powerful than the *tonal.* Based on these calculations, working on your dreams had much more power than working in the waking state; four times more power, to be exact.

Training in dreams was not, however, for everybody. As ancient Mexican cultures such as the Teotihuacan, Xochicalcan, Toltec and Mexihca originated from a *tonal*'s sun, only those groups chosen by the calendar could receive the teachings. The governors and the warriors were the ones who learned to control their dreams and therefore control others and gain power. However, under a *nahual* sun, like the one starting at present, the information becomes accessible to all those willing to set out on the path of the warrior of dreams.

Nahualism

So, what does a practitioner of nahualism have to do? They have to start by training their perception and their dreams.

It's very important to mention that no one can call themselves a *nahual* unless they have been practising the techniques for over 52 years. Only after this time are you a *mexicatzin*, a venerable Mexihca, a wise man or woman. So we can be sure that anyone who calls themselves a *nahual* before that time, or

before even practising the techniques, hasn't been trained and hasn't received the teachings and wisdom of Mexico.

Energetically, the explanation of nahualism is very simple. When we go to sleep, the *tonal* and the *nahual* come together, forming a unique energy body. I will describe some techniques to make this happen later in the book. When this energy body is formed, we reach the state that in Náhuatl is known as *temixoch*, that is, a blossom dream, a lucid dream, controlled at will. We can also attain this state while awake, by altering our state of consciousness, bringing the *tonal* and the *nahual* together in what we call daydreaming or dreaming while awake. This allows us to see a different reality – energy, ancestors, guides, the underworld and the future – either in the obsidian mirror or on the face of other people or somewhere else.

Long after we have achieved this and become our own master, the master of our dreams, we will be able to take the next step: entering the collective dream and the dreams of others and influencing what we call reality. At this stage, we'll also be developing other skills: prophetic dreaming, repeating the same dream at will, sowing dreams that create our waking state, restoring the sleep body and the greatest paradoxical accomplishment of the dreamer: sleeping without dreaming and so becoming a master of almost total power.

A *nahual* used to say to me, 'You don't need a teacher, you need a dream; and when you're able to have the same dream every night, you'll be able to change your reality at will.'

I don't totally agree with this, because to repeat a dream you need very sophisticated training – training that you can only get right now from teachers who have mastered the skill themselves. But with this new sun, there is another way opening up: you can learn from books that will allow you to start practising.

Oral tradition differs a lot from academic knowledge, and I would like to make that point here, since in the pages of this book there is nothing that is based on the anthropological knowledge of Mexico. You will only find what I was taught, the oral lore that was passed from my teachers to me, and most of the time it will differ from the official history.

For example, the official history claims that Templo Mayor in Tenochtitlan was built between the 1300s and 1400s by the Mexihcas, but according to oral tradition this temple was previously occupied by 19 other groups. The Mexihcas completed the sacred count of 20 when Tenochtitlan was destroyed by Spaniards. So the temple is much older than the official history states.

I don't want to arouse controversy with my views, but *nahualism* is barely mentioned in the official history, so all the information about it comes from oral lore. The best way to find out whether it is true is to experience it in the flesh, as I did.

According to oral tradition, the first dreamers appeared in Teotihuacan about 50,000 years ago (a figure which is not accepted by any anthropologist) and they were called the

people of the moon's halo. As the years passed, a lot of lineages of dream knowledge emerged, but they were primarily divided into two different groups trying to find the same thing in different ways.

The direct heirs to the first group of the moon's halo are all the lineages of the moon's or Mexihcas' knowledge. It should be mentioned that in Náhuatl the moon is called *metztli* and also *maguey metl*, which comes from the root word *metztli*. *Mescal*, 'the one coming from the moon', is a very strong liquor extracted from the *maguey* plant and was the first 'ally' to alter perception. Sacred plants such as peyote were also named *mescal* and were considered the supreme allies for changing consciousness. This is achieved by accelerating the natural daily shift in our energy and making it possible for the *tonal* and *nahual* to come together, which will allow us to perceive other realities, as mentioned before.

Almost everybody throughout the world has experienced these changes in consciousness, either with alcohol or plants. So a lot of proverbs have been created, and there is one in Mexico which says, 'There are no ugly people; there's just not enough *mescal*,' meaning that after a few drinks you can think completely differently.

As mentioned before, the agreement between energy beings and human beings was that humans could have alcoholic drinks from plants, but no more than two portions, otherwise the moon would lead them from happiness to destruction.

Due to this fact, all the moon lineages started their training with allies that could be taken in the form of alcohol, plants, etc., and afterwards continued with rigorous training of the breath and the body and other disciplines that allowed them to repeat at will what they'd experienced through the use of their allies.

An ancient culture that appeared soon after the moon lineages was the Toltec in the years around AD 1000. Toltec comes from the word *tolli*. On one level, this refers to the Tule tree, a tree that grew in the Olmec zone prior to the rise of the Toltec culture. A malleable gum was extracted from the tree, so *tolli* meant flexibility of movement – the only reality for ancient Mexicans. As a result, the Tule became the archetype of movement, and all movement was based on the cosmos, so, in a second and deeper definition, Toltec means 'those who are aware of the movement of the cosmos'.

It was from the Toltec civilization that the second group of dreamers emerged, creating dances, breathing exercises and bodily positions based on cosmic mathematics which altered consciousness in a similar way to the allies, although, unlike working with the allies, this didn't happen immediately. It had the advantage, however, of being able to be exercised at will. It is from one of those lineages that most of the information contained in this book comes, the Tol lineage. I am really fortunate to have been instructed in this lineage.

The closest groups to the Toltec zone stated that a Tol was the measure of 365 days, one year. However, since cosmic

mathematics is based on four movements, as previously described, four movements of a Tol will give you 1,460 days. It is known that in the lineages of knowledge you can take the name Tol only after completing four cycles in the long count, that is to say, 1,460 years. Thus, the techniques that will be described in this book date back at least 1,460 years – that's why the lineage can take the name Tol. We're not certain how old it is, but we do know that it is older than 1,460 years, one Tol.

Who can practise these techniques? As Hugo García says, being Mexihca does not necessarily mean that you were born in the land of Mexico. It does mean that you have accepted the influence of the moon and dreams and that you are very disciplined in controlling them. Nowadays there are a lot of Mexihcas who were not born in this land but are modifying their *nahual* to change their *tonal* and can be called Mexihcas or Toltecs. In the days to come, the Sixth Sun, the sun of the darkness, there will be practitioners in every corner of the world.

Regular practitioners of the discipline who had the courage to go on until they successfully completed the 52 years of training became what are known as *nahuales* or *nahualli*. They didn't really care what they were called: by that point, the external games that give pleasure to most people have become internal games and a title or name doesn't mean anything.

There are few references to the ancient *nahuales* or *nahualli*, but there are some, from a variety of sources, for example:

- 'Wise men who were able to put together the sleep state and the waking state.'
- 'The *nahual* uses wise speech. He is the owner of the liver [this refers to being able to control rage or anger]. He is balanced; does not bend easily, does not over-exceed.'
- 'The *nahual* doesn't weaken because of his emotions. Nor does he weaken due to the venerable serpent of Coatzin [sexuality].'
- 'The *nahual* is very measured in his emotions because he has worked on them.'
- 'The *nahual* is *tlamatini*, wise, *mictlanmatini*, a wise man of the underworld, *ilhuicatlamatini*, a wise man of heavens.'
- 'The good *nahual* is trustable, a guardian. He observes, preserves, helps and does not harm anyone.'
- 'The evil *nahualli* has spells and casts them on people. He creates his own spells in order to seduce people. He does witchcraft. He acts as an evil wizard; he mocks people, troubles them.'

Clearly, one of the fundamental dilemmas that arise for those who possess this knowledge is how to use it. Should it be used for personal benefit, offered to others, taught to others or used in order to die in an enlightened way? For me, this is a huge dilemma I am still sorting out.

Ometeotl.[6]

David Smallwood

Who Says I'm an Addict?

A book for anyone who is partial to food, sex, booze or drugs

'Contains a wealth of insight, wisdom and help.'
Pia Mellody, author of *Facing Codependency*

Chapter 8

How Many Times Did You Check Facebook Today?

Are you one of those people who can't resist checking your Facebook page, no matter where you are and what else you're doing? How often do you log on? Once a day, twice a day, or every 20 minutes? Perhaps you constantly peek at Facebook while you're at work, even if you know your employer doesn't like it? Well, you certainly aren't alone.

The founder of Facebook, Mark Zuckerberg, has revealed that his social networking platform now has more than a billion registered users around the globe.[6] Yet a decade ago, in December 2004, Facebook had just 1 million users. So how has it managed to grow so rapidly that it's increased its size a thousand times over?

Clearly, whatever Facebook offers, a lot of people want it. Many of us are unable to resist our fix of gossip from friends and family, and where's the harm in that? Well, the answer depends on the effect it has on you.

Has being on Facebook ever caused you to have a row with your partner, or led to embarrassment at work? Have you ever forgotten to do something important because you were too busy updating

your status; or have you ever woken up exhausted because you've been up half the night on the internet? Do you worry or obsess about things that you or other people have said on Facebook?

In 2008, I caused a bit of a media storm when I argued that people were becoming hooked on the urge to acquire more and more friends on Facebook in order to appear popular and successful. I warned that women were particularly vulnerable, as they often get their self-esteem from relationships. My comments raised a lot of eyebrows at the time, but today most rehab clinics are coming round to the idea that social networking sites can have an adverse effect on people with an addictive nature. Of course they do have a role to play in modern life as a communication tool, and I currently use Facebook myself in this way.

So, what is it about social networking that we find so seductive? Well, there are potentially several complex emotional processes at play.

When we log on to Facebook, and we see that we have lots of friends, it gives us affirmation that we're valued. We feel popular and liked, and this boosts our self-esteem. It gives us a little buzz and we feel better about ourselves, and this can be very addictive.

In my opinion, nobody is completely immune to this effect, which might explain why Facebook is so universally popular. If you're a well-balanced individual and you're confident of your own self-worth, then it's not going to cause you too many problems.

But what if you suffer from low self-esteem? You find yourself constantly bombarded with messages from all these friends who seem to have wonderful lives, and who are always having such a great time. Pretty soon, you're going to start feeling 'Less Than'. Why aren't *you* having the same brilliant fun as them? There's a danger you'll become insecure, which in turn will make you crave affirmation all the more.

Of course, there's nothing evil about the idea of Facebook in itself. Keeping in touch with others is a natural thing to do. The problem for addicts is that it can create an altered reality in which everybody *seems* to be having a wonderful time, even when their life is a pile of shit! It creates an expectation that everything ought to be hunky-dory *all* the time – and when it's not it creates a huge dent in our confidence.

Facebook is a very superficial way of interacting with others. It's like a TV picture of our lives, and in my opinion, it shows how we've become obsessed with 'the Culture of Celebrity'. When Andy Warhol said that in the future everybody would be famous for 15 minutes, he underestimated it, because he couldn't have foreseen Facebook.

Today, everybody wants to be famous – all the time – all over Facebook, forever. The way people portray themselves on their page is exactly as if they're a mini celebrity. Their every waking moment becomes part of a living soap opera, no matter how mundane the detail might be. Facebook is the ultimate reality show (the irony being that the reality it portrays is built on foundations that are false).

On Facebook, people live in a world that's sugar-coated and packed with fun. Of course, we all know that the real world is very different. Genuine celebrities (who, after all, are just normal human beings themselves) are often the first to admit that their glittering public persona is a myth. They suffer the same stresses and strains as the rest of us. It's called being human...

The Man with 5,000 'Friends'

So let's look in a bit more detail at what happens when a person with an addictive nature repeatedly checks their Facebook page. Why do they do it? Well, at a subconscious level, they could be searching for reassurance about their self-worth. They look at all those friends, and think that they must be popular.

This might sound harmless, but their hopes are rarely validated, and the more they find themselves searching, the more likely it is that they have issues about their self-confidence, hence the need for constant affirmation. I've encountered young women who panic if they can't check Facebook, yet they go into meltdown when they do because everyone seems to be doing so much better than them.

In fact, if you want to feel bad, just go online and see how many more friends everyone else has. Yet the very idea of counting our friends in order to evaluate our self-worth is slightly preposterous. I saw one person on Facebook with almost 5,000 friends (the level at which I'm told many accounts are capped). I don't think I even *know* 5,000 people, let alone have that many friends!

Modern technology allows everybody to be connected 24 hours a day, with no respite. We're bombarded with emails, texts, phone calls, tweets and Facebook messages. This might seem a great idea, but like most things that we enjoy to begin with, diminishing returns soon begin to set in, and the consequences can be increasingly negative.

The limitless connectivity that technology facilitates can become an addictive process in itself.

I know that when I'm in a restaurant I sit there constantly checking my phone for messages. It almost becomes a reflex action that's beyond my control. If I don't do it, I start to worry. What if somebody is trying to get hold of me? Am I missing something important? Is everything else okay in the rest of the world? It's not a nice feeling.

Here's a little test you might like to take. Try switching your phone off for a whole day and see what sort of effect it has on you. Ask yourself:

- ⇨ Are you able to enjoy the peace and quiet?
- ⇨ Or do you feel anxiety starting to creep in?
- ⇨ Do you start to feel uneasy about being out of touch?
- ⇨ Do you get a vague sick feeling in your stomach that simply won't go away until you reconnect with the rest of the world?

In other words, do you feel anxious and uneasy when you stop using your phone as an emotional crutch? These are the classic symptoms of withdrawal.

Mobile Devices and Anxiety

I have a friend who is a recovering alcoholic and he simply *has* to take his BlackBerry with him everywhere, including on holiday. Even when he's by the pool in a hot country, he forces himself to check it at periodic times during the day, regardless of whether or not he's actually expecting any messages.

So, instead of relaxing and enjoying his holiday, his mind is always wandering back to concerns about work and other minor issues at home. He can actually *feel* a small amount of tension building up in his stomach before he checks his phone, and then he experiences a little wave of relief if everything is clear and there are no troublesome emails. On the rare occasions that he actually gets a message, he's straight back into work mode and projecting about what's going to happen when he returns to the UK.

The procedure my friend goes through by constantly checking his BlackBerry is part of an addictive process, and it's caused by the background anxiety about life that most addicts suffer from. When he picks up the phone he's seeking to alleviate that anxiety by reassuring himself that there's nothing bad going on back home. When he gets affirmation of this, it temporarily relieves the anxiety, and reassures him that he's okay.

Unfortunately, the respite is temporary and diminishing returns set in, causing him to spend the whole holiday worrying about work. This makes him all the more stressed, which makes him even more of a slave to his BlackBerry! The process he goes through is beyond his control because it's triggered by his limbic system and is a symptom of codependency. He's always on the lookout for a threat: and his BlackBerry is his warning system.

If you're a slave to Facebook or your mobile device, it could be a sign of deep insecurity, which can be a major cause of addiction.

It might not seem like an addiction *per se,* but the process is the same as if you take drugs or drink booze. You do it again and again, looking for an instant lift. The way to tell if you have a problem is by examining the effect that it has on your life. If it's causing negative consequences, you need to ask yourself *why* you're doing it.

One of the reasons that modern technology causes so many issues for people with an addictive nature is that it's omnipresent: there's no respite in our daily lives from the 24/7 chatter of the rest of the world.

Another problem is that it can dehumanize the interaction between people. I've given talks and lectures in schools, and one of the things pupils constantly tell me about is the number of problems and fights that are caused by things that have been posted on social networking sites. It's easy when you're sat in front of a computer screen, or tapping on a phone, to write something nasty and offensive about someone that you wouldn't dream of saying to their face.

We now regularly see items in the news about people who've been arrested for this kind of thing; it's known as 'trolling', but it's just bullying under a different name.

There are at least two major ways that mobile technology can affect those with an addictive nature. On the one hand it becomes a conduit for channelling their fears and anxiety: they need to keep checking their emails or messages to reassure themselves that nothing bad is going on that they need to know about.

The second effect is that it allows their codependency to run riot. If we're codependent we're reliant on other people to validate our sense of self-worth. We don't feel okay unless we're certain that others feel okay about *us*. This means we're always worried about what other people think of us – and it can feel like torture if, as a result, we find ourselves worrying about the finer semantics of every email or text message we receive.

This is something that people with an addictive nature find themselves doing all the time. An email can be read in many different ways, depending on its context. If you find yourself worrying about every little word and phrase that your boss uses in an email, this could be a sign of insecurity on your part.

Perhaps you've sent an email and then found yourself worried about how it will be interpreted? Was the tone too curt, or will the recipient mistake what you meant for something else? Were you too familiar, or too gushing? These are all classic signs of the sort of 'people-pleasing' behaviour that can be a symptom of codependency.

When patients are admitted to treatment centres like the Priory, one of the first things the nurses do is take away their phones. This is because patients need peace and quiet, and it's beneficial for them to be cut off from the temptations of the outside world.

When I counsel alcoholics and addicts who are in early recovery, I usually advise them to avoid using Facebook because I've seen first-hand the negative effect it can have on people when they're in a delicate state.

If recovering addicts whose lives are in tatters log on and see a picture of a friend on holiday in the Caribbean, or driving a brand new car, the effect on their emotions can be devastating as it reinforces feelings of 'Less Than'.

The emotional impact on women, in particular, can be very powerful, especially if they suffer from low self-esteem. If, for example, a woman is recovering from a food addiction and she goes online and sees lots of super-skinny women having a great time, there's a danger she'll compare herself in a negative light. If this happens it can trigger a food binge and the whole addictive process starts once again.

Addicts can become very obsessive in their behaviour – and there's no doubt that for some people, the need to check Facebook or reach for their mobile phone to check messages becomes a compulsion. In the case of my friend and his BlackBerry on holiday, I'd say it borders on becoming an Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD).

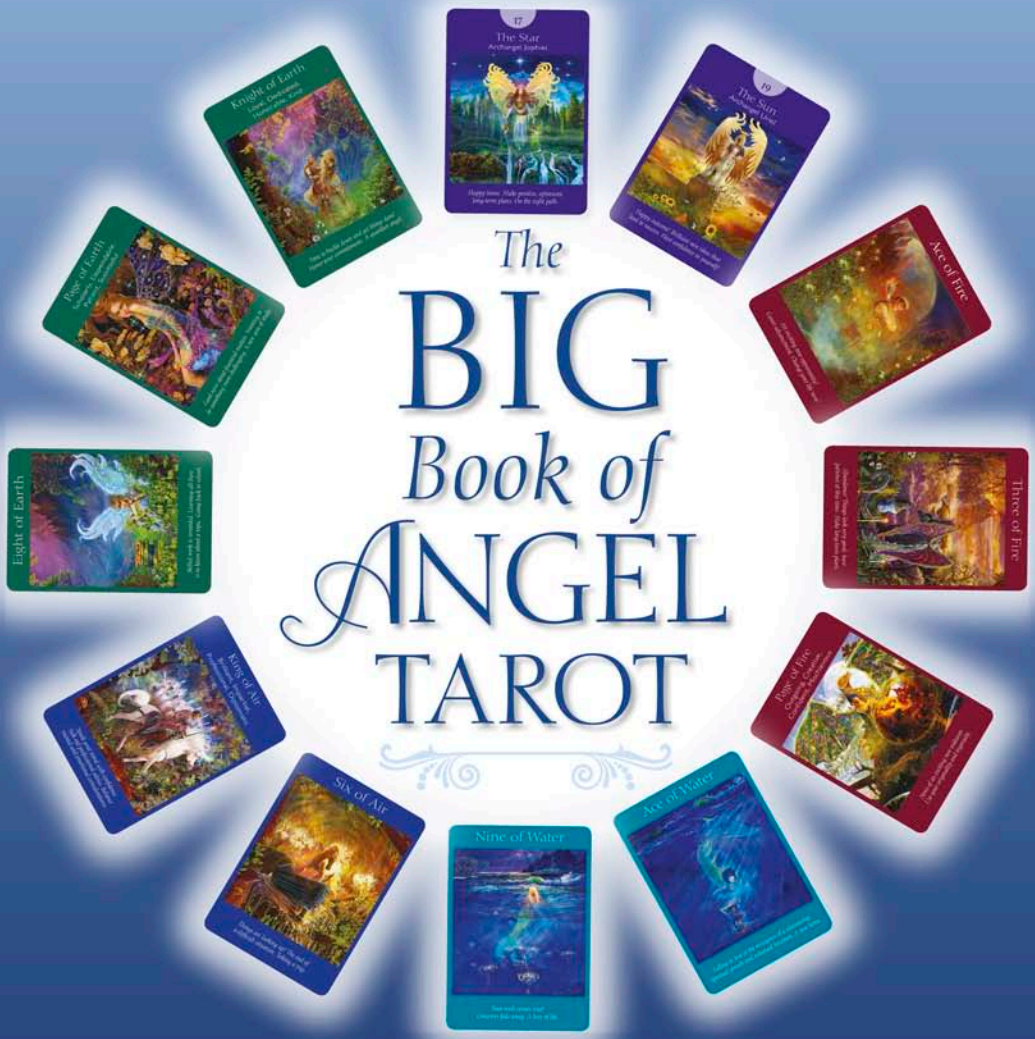
There are lots of words that are used to describe addiction, and one of them is 'compulsivity'. So if you find yourself 'compelled' to check Facebook all the time, you might need to ask yourself why.

Another area in which modern technology impacts on addiction is through computer gaming. Rehab centres are starting to see more and more cases of young men, and in particular teenage boys, who become addicted to playing immersive computer games.

In real life, these people are often shy and lacking in confidence, but in the digital world they become masters of their own universe. They end up playing obsessively for hours on end, neglecting to eat or sleep, and sustaining themselves through the use of drugs to keep them going. It's a destructive downward spiral.

The bestselling authors of *Angel Tarot Cards*

DOREEN VIRTUE &
RADLEIGH VALENTINE



The BIG Book of ANGEL TAROT

The Essential Guide to Symbols, Spreads and Accurate Readings

CHAPTER FIVE

The MINOR ARCANA

The Minor Arcana cards reflect aspects of our daily lives such as our jobs, families, and financial situations. Although big life events are usually in the Major Arcana cards, significant experiences can also appear in the Minor Arcana. For example, there are cards in the Minor Arcana that reflect getting married, having a child, switching careers, and inheriting a significant sum of money. It's just that the majority of the Minor Arcana is about our desire to seek out a happy daily life.

There are four suits in the Minor Arcana that include ten pip cards and four court cards. As mentioned, the word *pip* means "a countable item." It's an old reference to the Ace through Ten cards, coming from a time when there were no images on those cards. Tarot cards were like ordinary playing cards with only symbols such as diamonds or clubs on them.

The four suits of the *Angel Tarot Cards* are *Fire, Water, Air,* and *Earth*—otherwise known as "the four elements." To attribute an element to each suit isn't a concept new to tarot. The suits in traditional tarot are Wands, Cups, Swords, and Coins, which have long been associated with each of those same elements, respectively.

The Suits

Fire: The suit of Fire represents the aspects of our lives where we feel great passion and excitement. In traditional tarot, this was the Wands suit. The Fire suit focuses on our creativity and passions. It's typical to see Fire cards in readings that relate to our careers; our desire to chase after beloved dreams; and artistic endeavors such as painting, acting, or writing. The ideas in the Fire suit can be full of adventure, or they may indicate a temporary pause in the action. But we're never really idle in the Fire suit. Even when we're not physically working on something, the Fire suit asks us to plan for the future. Fire can also represent any of our passions. For example, if clients have a passion for dogs, then a question in a reading regarding their pets may appear in cards of the Fire suit.

Water: For the emotional aspects of our world, we have the suit of Water. In traditional tarot, this was the Cups suit. The Water suit represents the deeper parts of our lives—for example, falling in love, having children, or making new friends with whom we feel deep intimacy. Our families, homes, and childhood memories are also within these cards. They can indicate the times when we celebrate getting engaged and married, and doing the hard work necessary to have a happy family life. The suit of Water also represents our spirituality and intuitive gifts.

Air: The suit of Air represents our intellect. In traditional tarot, this is the Swords suit. The Air cards focus on dazzling new ideas, inspired choices, and an ability to communicate that can bring a crowd to its feet. Yet the Air suit also describes the moments when we're unable to make a choice, find ourselves in conflict

with others, or feel trapped by our own negativity. This is the suit of the mind, so we may experience fear or worry in the suit of Air. When such cards are displayed, it's our strong belief that tarot is trying to help us or our clients see that these moments are illusions from which we can awaken. At the very least, problems are creations of our own hands and therefore can be addressed. The suit of Air also represents legal concerns such as truth and justice.

Earth: Finally, we have the suit of Earth. In traditional tarot, this is the suit of Coins. The Earth cards focus on making money, paying our bills, and meeting our family's material needs. In this suit, we find our daily activities, jobs, and the search for financial security. While the other three suits often speak to matters that come from within (passion, emotion, and ideas), the suit of Earth is all about what's outside of us. Society, community, and our physical health are represented by these cards. The suit of Earth is also very concerned about the environment and how we care for our beautiful planet.

Each suit can be associated with a season of the year. However, there's debate in the card-reading community about which suit matches up to which season. The consensus seems to be that Fire = spring, Water = summer, Air = winter, and Earth = autumn. We feel that these associations also match the *Angel Tarot Cards*.

During a reading, it can be very telling to see if there's a lot of one particular suit in a spread, or if there's a suit missing. For example, if someone asks a question regarding a romantic relationship, we would hope to see cards from the suit of Water (love and emotion) and/or from the suit of Fire (passion and excitement). If these cards are missing from the reading, it prompts the question: "Where is the *feeling* in this relationship?"

A large number of Air cards (intellect and analysis) might indicate that one or both of the parties in the relationship aren't emotionally available, or see relationships intellectually rather than emotionally. A high number of Earth cards (finances and career) might indicate that someone is considering the relationship for financial security rather than the more nurturing aspects it could provide.

The Pip Cards

The pip cards are those numbered Ace through Ten in the four suits of the Minor Arcana. And numerically, these cards can have a common thread. For example, if a spread shows many cards that are numbered Five, we know from the angel numbers described in my (Doreen's) book *Angel Numbers 101* that 5 means "change." This is also true in traditional tarot and numerology. So, in our sample reading, which contains several "Five" cards, we can be assured that great change is coming for the recipient of the reading. However, let's talk about each of the numbers individually.

Ace Cards

Aces indicate new beginnings or opportunities for a fresh start. They generally bring with them some type of energy for a new endeavor. This may include material gifts such as money, emotion, ideas, assistance from others, or a heightened excitement on the part of the client as to what's in store. Aces are often tied to the Page in the court cards, as both can indicate new information. Multiple Aces in a reading indicate someone who's opening up to a whole new phase touching on many different facets of life.

Two Cards

Twos often indicate friendships, romantic relationships, or any type of partnership between two or more people. The type of relationship indicated is generally portrayed by the suit. The Two of Fire is often a career-based relationship, while the Two of Water has more of a personal nature. Twos can also indicate the need to make the choice between two different options, as is reflected in the Two of Air and the Two of Earth. The energy of this number asks us to seek balance, harmony, and cooperation. It can also indicate duality in a situation, which implies multiple meanings at once. Multiple Twos in a reading can reveal the need to make

choices on various fronts of one's life, as well as the need to work with others on various goals.

Three Cards

Threes represent creativity, growth, and self-expression. Three means two parents or a male and female energy giving birth to a new person or project. Three cards indicate a need to see clearly where we're headed and to make decisions based upon those goals. The concept of creativity in the Three cards extends to the birth of children in the Three of Water. The Three of Air tends to reflect the challenges that growth can bring into our lives when we feel unable to embrace change. A lot of Threes in a reading gives us insight that our clients are seeking expansion in many aspects of their lives. There's a strong need to create, and to grow into a stronger person.

Four Cards

Fours represent a solid foundation. Consider a table with four legs. It feels solid, stable, and secure. Fours also represent structure, order, balance, and discipline. Fours are the results of our efforts (or lack thereof). A large number of Fours in a reading indicates a moment of reflection. This may take the form of celebration, like the Four of Fire; or a need to reflect inwardly, like the Four of Air. It's often that reflection that leads to the change that comes about with the Fives.

Five Cards

Fives are often challenges that bring about opportunities. As mentioned earlier, this is the number of great change. With Fives, we learn to adapt—we spread our wings and break free of circumstances that no longer feel right to us. Oftentimes, Fives can show us a resistance to change. Human beings usually don't enjoy the

uncertainty of change, so clients may be openly rebelling against the forward momentum that Heaven has in mind for them. However, Fives can also lead to freedom. Hindsight is 20/20, and once we're past the uncomfortable feelings of change, we often find that we're glad we went through it. Several Fives in a reading should be a heads-up that clients are experiencing changes in many areas of their lives. Reassure them that all will work out, while also having compassion for any fear they may be experiencing.

Six Cards

Sixes bring about harmony. After the uncertainty of the Fives, we're ready for a rest, which can range from elation due to a job well done, like the Six of Fire; to just plain relief over being finished with a challenge, like the Six of Air. Sixes indicate the resolution of past challenges that may bring about contentment or even joy. Sixes often generate a desire to reflect upon the past. Objectivity is important when looking backward so that we neither romanticize how things used to be, nor see them as worse than they were. A lot of Sixes in a reading should bring a smile to a client's face!

Seven Cards

Sevens often bring with them a lot of soul-searching. There can be a longing for more out of life when Sevens are present. In assessing our progress, we may find ourselves lacking, and it can be easy to be unkind to ourselves, generating a need for self-forgiveness. Sevens indicate review, patience, and introspection. We wish to fully understand the truth of our situation and to gain clarity regarding the purpose of our lives. Spiritual development becomes a significant concern. Multiple Sevens in a reading indicate a pause in the action while we make choices regarding what we want to do next. Cards like the Seven of Fire or the Seven of Earth usually reflect a renewed determination to stay the course, while the Seven of Air and the Seven of Water can

indicate uncertainty or difficulty in choosing our next steps. The specific Sevens in a reading give us an understanding of whether the client is moving along a path toward happiness, or standing still in procrastination.

Eight Cards

Eights are an indicator of great progress and activity in our lives. They tell us that accomplishment through concerted effort is possible as long as we retain a positive mind-set. Eight is a number of great power, and therefore represents self-fulfilling prophecies. Optimistic hopes for ourselves are rewarded with the success we seek, while giving in to fear is likely to manifest that which we're most afraid of. Oftentimes when we have a lot going on in our lives, it can feel stressful. However, stress can sometimes stem from a great number of positive things, as the Eight of Fire tends to indicate. The Eight of Water and the Eight of Earth show our determination to make life better for ourselves. Several Eights in a reading will reflect those with a lot going on in their lives.

Nine Cards

Nines often reflect extremes in optimism and pessimism. The positive is accentuated, but so is the negative. We may find ourselves attaining our goals in a spectacular fashion, or allow our fears to bring us to a grinding halt. Nines indicate that we've come a long way on our path. We may have paid what feels like a high price and feel the need to protect what we've created, as in the Nine of Fire. Or we may know great contentment and safety, as in the Nine of Earth. Nines can feel like a completion, but really they're the moment just before we've finished our journey. Many Nines in a reading indicate someone who feels a desire to move forward—but not quite yet.

Ten Cards

Tens are true endings that lead to new beginnings. Often they bring about a sense of completion with the issues of a particular suit before moving on to another suit. However, sometimes they lead right back to the Ace of the same suit if the client doesn't feel finished with those issues. Tens can bring with them a sense of contentment and happiness, as in the Ten of Water or the Ten of Earth. The Ten of Air and the Ten of Fire may bring "contentment," but it's more often in the form of relief that a situation has finally come to an end. Either way, the opportunities for new beginnings are immense. Multiple Tens are signs that a client is ready to move on.

~

Keep in mind that each of the pip cards follows the energy of its suit. For example, Aces are about beginnings, so the Ace of Air might represent a new idea or the beginning of an intellectual pursuit. The Ace of Water, however, is more likely to signify the start of a new relationship or something we feel very emotional about. Fours relate to stability and structure. The Four of Fire indicates joy and celebration with respect to our accomplishments, while the Four of Earth shows pride in our financial security.

Another interesting thing to note is when we see the same series of numbers in multiple readings. If we were to receive, for example, the Two of Fire followed by the Four of Water and then the Seven of Earth, that's a series of 2-4-7. If, in a later reading, we get that same series of numbers but with different cards, then it may be time to look up 247 in the book *Angel Numbers 101* as a part of that reading.

New York Times Bestselling Author

SONIA CHOQUETTE

'A heartbreaking story that manages also to be an uplifting, at times hilarious, read.'
ANITA CHAUDHURI, *Psychologies*

Walking Home

A Pilgrimage from Humbled to Healed

Without The Way,
she would never have
found her path…

4

A Pilgrimage?

Shortly after my father and brother died, a woman showed up to one of my workshops using a cane and wearing a cast over what apparently was a seriously injured foot.

She sat near the front of the room, and as the class was assembling, I asked her what had happened. She said she had injured her ankle while walking the Camino de Santiago and had to quit before she completed it. She then asked me if I knew about the Camino, which I admitted I didn't.

"Oh Sonia, if anyone should walk the Camino it's you," she gushed.

"Really?" I answered, intrigued. "You think so?"

"Absolutely," she reassured me, without going into why she thought that.

"I'll look into it," I responded. But then after the class began, I didn't think about it again. At least not for a while.

About six months later, I was teaching a workshop in Australia and another student came up to me and asked if she could show me some photos she took while walking the Camino.

"I don't know why," she said, "but I feel that I must show you these."

While the photos themselves weren't terribly remarkable, seeing them nevertheless had a strange impact on me. As she gave them to me, one at a time, I had the strangest feeling I had been there before. In fact, it was such a strong feeling of déjà vu that I had a difficult time concentrating on my class for the first few minutes.

I meant to talk to the woman more about the Camino after class, but as soon as it ended, she disappeared. That night I had intended to look up information on the Camino on the Internet, but as is so often the case after teaching a class, once I had dinner, I went to my room and immediately fell asleep.

I thought more about the Camino on the flight home the next day. Still feeling the impact of those photos, I decided that it was something I would put on my bucket list to do someday.

When I got home, I looked into it a little more, but still not too seriously. I was so busy with other things that it kept getting pushed to the back of my mind.

That's why I was taken by surprise when I woke up and received this intuitive directive. I literally said out loud, as if to my Higher Self, or my spirit guides, or the Universe at large, or whatever spiritual influence was sending me this message, "Okay. I hear you. I'll go."

Only I didn't know what I was agreeing to.

So I got online and started to learn what I could about the Camino.

The Camino was one of the three major pilgrimages in the Catholic religion. There was the pilgrimage to Rome, the pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and the Camino to Santiago, Spain, where it is believed that the bones of James the Apostle are buried.

In the Middle Ages, this path, also known as the Way of St. James, or simply The Way, was traveled by over a million Catholic "peregrines," or pilgrims, who walked it as a plenary indulgence to be forgiven their sins and made new in the eyes of the Lord. Or at least the Church. Due to this it had also become known as The Way of Forgiveness, which is clearly the way I was seeking.

As I read about the Camino, chills ran through my entire body. I knew in some deep part of my being that I had already walked this path once before. The sensations were vague, but unwavering. I simply knew it was true but could not access more than this overwhelming feeling.

Legend has it that the apostles, after the death of Christ, were sent off all over the known world—India, Egypt, Africa, Armenia, Persia—to spread the word of Christ. Catholic documents say James the Apostle was sent to Spain to convert the nonbelievers. He wasn't that successful, however. He only managed to convert seven people in twelve years.

In A.D. 42 he returned to Jerusalem, where his luck changed and he began to convert people by the scores, including a known sorcerer named Hermogenes. This impressed the crowds and drew all the more converts to him but angered a Judaic monarch, Herod Agrippa, who had St. James arrested and executed, then had his body thrown over the city walls where wild animals could devour it.

But his loyal followers recovered his body and sent it back to Spain in a rudderless stone boat, where it eventually landed on the Galician coast in northwestern Spain, surrounded by scallop shells.

All seven of his original converts received his body and took it inland for a proper burial. That was the last anyone heard of St. James for another 800 years.

Then one day, a hermit named Pelayo, who led a quiet, isolated life, was awakened out of his daily routine when he noticed a brilliant star overhead.

He then heard celestial music, which caused him to rush to the local bishop and report what had occurred. He was followed back to where he'd had his vision by a group of local peasants who, armed with picks and shovels, discovered a tomb deep inside a dark cave near the site. In the tomb lay a body and a letter that said, "Here lies James, son of Zebedee and Salome, brother of St. John, beheaded in Jerusalem. He came by sea, born of the disciples." This location where the tomb was discovered became known as the Santiago de Compostela (St. James Field of the Star). A church was soon constructed on this site.

Spanish bishops and kings were very excited, even ecstatic, over this discovery, and began encouraging pilgrims to walk to Santiago. Soon they came by the millions from all over Europe.

The Catholic Church, a vast power at the time, sent a group of highly religious and fearless Crusaders, known as the Knights

Templar (or Knights of the Temple), to protect the pilgrims from thieves as they made their way to the shrine.

Their service as protectors of pilgrims expanded across Europe, from Jerusalem to Spain and Portugal. In support of the protection of pilgrims, the Knights Templar created what was to become the first banking system, allowing pilgrims to deposit their money with them in one city and collect it in another, so they could travel without worry, no longer making the pilgrims easy prey for robbers while on the road.

Because of their impeccable credit and upright means of protecting money, the Knights Templar became both extremely wealthy and powerful, often rivaling the power of kings.

They built several cathedrals and castles, which served both as monasteries and military posts, their powers increasing with time as the reigning popes exempted them from taxation and other oppressive jurisdictions enforced upon ordinary citizens.

Their rise in power eventually led to jealousy and accusations of being lovers of power and money by their enemies, in part due to their increasingly secret requirements for those who sought to join their ranks, coupled with their financial sovereignty.

As they became more powerful, they began to ask knights applying to join their ranks to take secret tests to establish their sincerity. These ceremonies and tests were never publically revealed, which ultimately led the Templars' downfall. Because of their secrecy, the Knights Templar came under extreme suspicion and were subjected by their enemies to the most outrageous accusations, from heresy to idol worship to sodomy and more, some of which the accused confessed to after being arrested and made to endure horrific forms of torture.

On October 13, 1307, Philip the Fair, king of France, a manipulative man who was greatly indebted to the Knights Templar and both unable and unwilling to pay back what he owed, put out secret orders to round up all the Knights Templar across Europe and try them for crimes against both God and the Church in order to take away their power, thus leading to the infamy of the date, Friday the 13th.

Due to extreme torture used against the wrongly accused Knights, many of them made false confessions, including the grand master of the Knights himself, a man named Saladin. Some of these innocent men were sentenced and burned at the stake in Paris; others were killed elsewhere. Those in Spain and Portugal escaped this fate and were not accused of any wrongdoing, although all were eventually retired.

As I read this, my feelings of déjà vu intensified. I had had, ever since childhood, recurring dreams of being part of some sort of secret Catholic society, rife with extreme rituals, and devoted to the protection of people. The more I read about the Knights Templar who protected the ancient pilgrims, the more I was overwhelmed with a sense of knowing and, surprisingly, grief and sorrow.

I had written about these dreams in my first book, *The Psychic Pathway,* 13 years earlier and had spoken about them on many occasions to both my family and my students. I had spontaneously mentioned, almost without thinking, many times that I had once upon a time been a Knight Templar myself, and felt an intensely strong connection to Crusaders and the medieval Catholic Church.

Funny how those dreams had faded in the past few years, having been such a big part of my life since I was a child. And yet, as I was researching the Camino, I felt the same eerie, ominous feelings I had in all those dreams.

I had long been considered and called a warrior, and had even been laughingly referred to as Joan of Arc by some of my closer friends for my fearless ability to confront and fight whatever I considered to be an affront to my spirit or the spirit of someone I loved. And yet, it was that very same warrior self that I longed to leave behind.

I was done protecting and defending the inner world—the world of spirit, intuition, and authentic personal power—and standing up to those who denigrated my work, and my world. I was also tired of fighting for the underdog and the oppressed at my own expense, and carrying those who I feared could not carry themselves. I was especially done fighting the "enemy" in my husband, or anyone else for that matter.

All of this flashed across my mind as I discovered more and more about the history of the Camino. I knew in my heart that perhaps this was one of the greatest reasons why I had to make this pilgrimage: to bring closure to an ancient story and identity that I no longer resonated with. Inside my being was a dark, heavy, patriarchal energy suffocating my inner feminine.

The self I yearned to be and express no longer resonated with the warrior essence. While I loved my strength, my fire, and my courage, I was war weary and needed to lay down my defenses and open my heart to a different kind of strength.

That is why I had to walk the Camino. I knew it in my heart.

5

Making the Decision

Once I made up my mind to listen to my inner guidance and go on this pilgrimage, I had to massively rearrange my life. It was no small assignment, as I would have to take at least a month and a half off of work and be out of communication with my world for that entire time. That was a long time to disappear, especially in the face of a divorce and massive professional responsibilities and commitments.

I knew it wouldn't be easy. But obstacles had never stopped me from pursuing anything else in my life. In fact, it almost seemed a prerequisite for me that things be difficult if I were to undertake them. The challenge was what made life interesting.

First I told my daughters. To my surprise, they were all for it and fully supported my plan.

"Go for it, Mom," said my oldest daughter, Sonia. "You've been saying you needed a change for some time. This is obviously a great way to begin making changes in your life."

A born empath, Sonia had suffered along with me for the past several years, which only made me feel all the more guilty and depressed.

My other daughter, Sabrina, was my optimistic cheerleader. "You can do this, Mom. I know it's important, so if that is what your Higher Self told you to do, you have to trust your spirit and go for it."

Relieved that they understood and supported my intention without question, I now had to tell Ryan, who managed all my

business affairs and to whom I would be leaving a mountain of responsibility and work while I was gone. I wasn't sure what he would think.

I called him a few days later to tell him I was going to walk the Camino.

"What's a Camino?" he asked, almost laughing when I told him that I needed to take more than a month off. I wasn't surprised by his reaction. He knew me well and had seen me do other crazy and unexpected things before, but never of this magnitude.

"It's an over 800-kilometer spiritual pilgrimage starting in France at the foot of the Pyrenees, and ending in Santiago, Spain," I answered.

"You mean the Pyrenees *Mountain*s?" he asked, not sure he had heard me correctly.

"Yes, the mountains."

"How are you going to do that, Sonia? You just had knee surgery a few months ago!"

He was right. I did have knee surgery, and I was not yet fully recovered.

"I don't know, Ryan. But I am being guided to do it, so I have to."

"Are you sure you are being guided correctly?" he asked. "I'm not aware that you are much of a hiker."

"I know. It's crazy, isn't it?" I answered, laughing myself. "I'm not a hiker at all. But I guess I'll become one."

"How long does a Camino take? You have so many speaking commitments coming up this year. I'm not sure you have the time."

"I don't know. I've read it can take anywhere from a little over a month to two months, depending on how fast you walk," I replied, now laughing even harder. "If I have to, I'll run."

"Across Spain? You are ridiculous." I could picture him shaking his head on the other end of the phone.

"I know. It does sound ridiculous. But, seriously, Ryan. I have to go. I don't know exactly why, but I trust my vibes."

"Well, that I know. Okay. Let's see what you have ahead for the year."

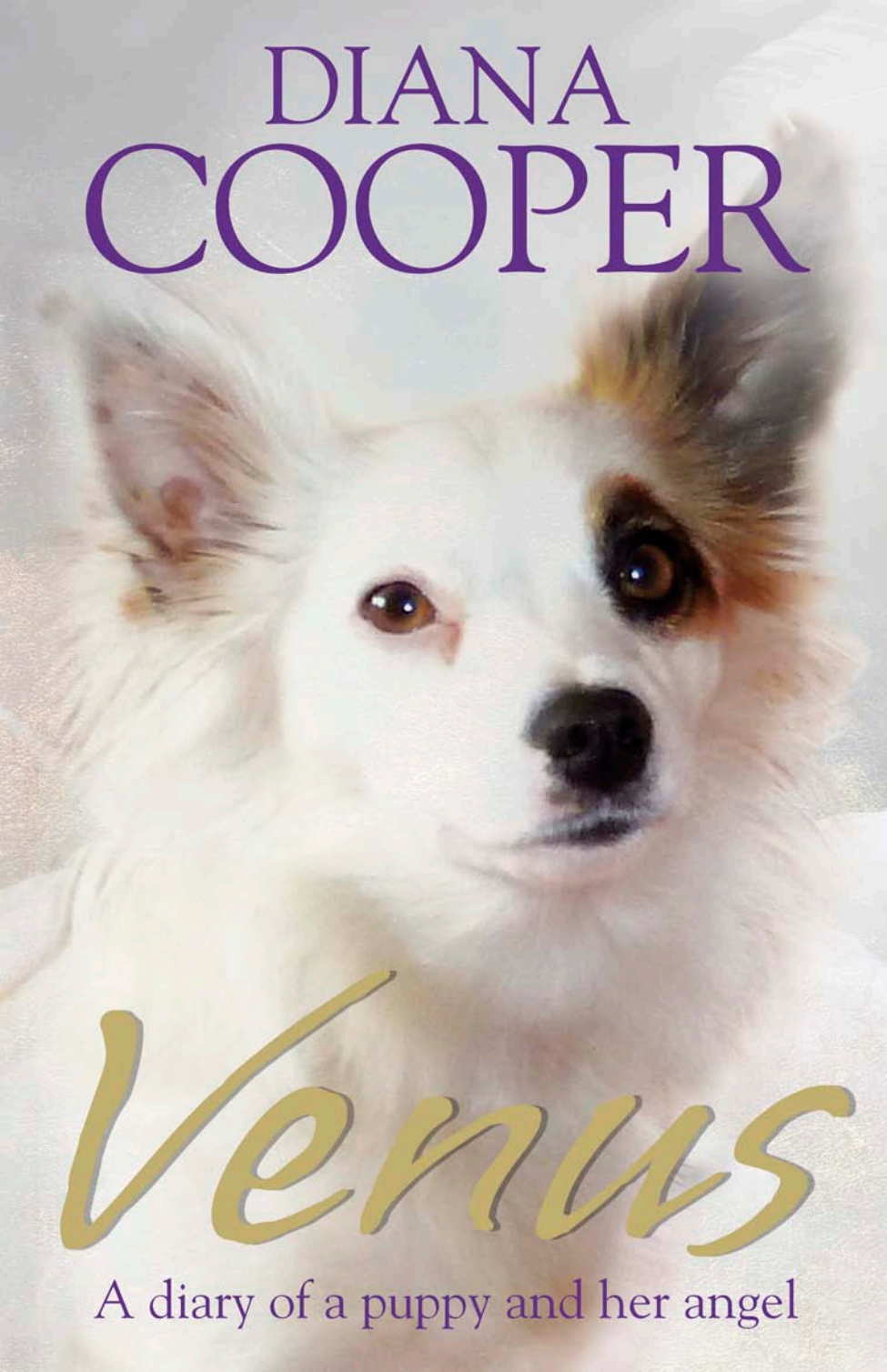
We discussed my teaching schedule and discovered a window of exactly 38 days in May and June when I would be free to do the walk. Then I would have to show up in Vienna to teach a workshop.

"Put it on my calendar, Ryan," I said to him.

"Okay," he replied. "I've inked it in: WALKING ACROSS SPAIN."

Hanging up the phone, I could feel my heart was pounding with excitement. I couldn't believe I had just allowed myself to commit to this. I was going for it, and now there was nothing in my way.

DIANA
COOPER



Venus

A diary of a puppy and her angel

Chapter 5

Meeting the Elementals

17 July

I'm so excited! Today Mum and I are walking for the very first time along the street to those woods I've heard so much about. Wow, she's right – it's fabulous! I keep stopping to sniff the scents on the roadside. It takes so long that she picks me up and carries me until we are among tall trees and bushes. Then she places me on the ground.

Oh no! This is terrifying. Scary creatures are staring at me from the long grass and bushes! I whimper and Mum lifts me up and cuddles me. She says, 'It's okay, Venus. That's enough for today. We'll go home.'

I was so looking forward to going into the big wide world. The angels are most sympathetic and explain that things aren't always quite what you expect. They tell me that I'll soon understand and get used to the woods and then I'll love my walks. I hope they are right.

In the afternoon Mum ties a toy to the lawnmower on a long string and I chase it up and down the lawn. This feels safe and is real fun. The cord keeps getting tangled up so she only gets half the lawn done, but she doesn't mind.

18 July

It's the challenge of the woods again today and I stay very close to Mum with my tail between my legs. She's puzzled, as she expects me to be enjoying the walk. She doesn't understand how overwhelming it is. Why aren't my angels helping me to understand?

In the afternoon I see Mum's angel whispering into her ear. I wonder what he's saying and whether she has really taken it in. But she must have done for suddenly she announces that she's realized why I'm scared in the woods. She tells me that I'm a very sensitive little dog and that I'm feeling the energy of the nature spirits and elementals. She says she knows how to make that better. Oh, I do hope so!

19 July

Today Mum is going to introduce me to the forest elementals. Apparently, all those watching eyes belong to the little creatures who look after nature. Mum tells me that they aren't hostile, just curious.

She carries me into the glade and sits on a bench with me. I see a glorious blue-green angel of nature floating between the trees watching us. Mum strokes me while she invites the elementals to come and say hello. Something extraordinary happens! A whole host of little creatures stream across the clearing: fairies, elves, imps, brownies and others little beings. Mum introduces me to them.

There are dozens of fairies, all about 45cm or 18 inches tall. They are like brightly coloured lights that flutter towards

me on wonderful iridescent wings. Mum says that they are the air elementals who tend the flowers, and some of them are fifth dimensional. They look so pure and playful and they greet me in such sweet tinkling voices that I want to jump right down and gambol in the grass with them. However, I sit bolt upright and say hello back, in a dignified way, with my tail wagging. I like them and they like me. One of them grins and tickles my ear.

Then a whole crowd of sylphs flies towards me, all smiling and wafting air in my direction so that the hairs of my tail stir in the breeze. Sylphs are tiny little air spirits who clear away pollution from around flowers and plants to keep them healthy, but mostly these little creatures enjoy flying with the wind. Mum says that she can feel them blowing away her tension headache.

I love the earth elementals, who approach me next to say hello. There are little elves with their jaunty caps, who serve the trees, as well as taller pixies who look after the soil and co-operate with the bees. The pixies are very shy and I thump my tail to make them feel more relaxed. We exchange smiles.

I meet the elementals

And lastly come the sweet, wee imps, who stand only 2.5cm or 1 inch tall. They are a combination of earth, air and water, and they aerate the soil and help seeds grow.

Right now I don't care what the little spirits' jobs are. I jump down from the bench and race round in the grass playing with them. Wowee! I'm so happy to meet them. The woods are fabulous after all. Thank you angels, you were right!

When we are home again and I have snuggled up on the sofa with my eyes half closed, my angels sit on either side of me for a chat.

'Are you feeling more comfortable now that you have met the elementals?' they ask. I nod sleepily. They explain that elementals have never had much to do with animals in the past but that things are changing now. As the frequency of the planet rises, elementals and animals are starting to help each other. 'How could an elemental help me?' I ask, thinking of myself first.

'If you get lost, for example, an elemental can tune into your wavelength and lead you to a path you know,' they respond.

'Of course, that won't apply to me because I never get lost,' I reply, fully closing my eyes.

I faintly catch the angels saying, 'And you can help them by appreciating them.' I fall asleep and they sing to me in my dreams.

22 July

Today I win a point from Brutus, that huge tabby cat. He's stalking across the lawn as if he's king of the world and he doesn't see me lying in a flowerbed behind a bush. I suddenly jump out behind him! He's so startled, he runs. That does it. I fly

across the lawn behind him and I, Venus the puppy, chase that mammoth cat. I trot back across the lawn, grinning widely, with my tail wagging. Brutus sits on the zip-wire platform and glares at me. See if I care!

I still can't understand why Elisabeth adores Brutus. She's now sitting on the lawn stroking him and calling him her 'best boy'! After a short while he gets up and strides off, most ungrateful, not even giving her a lick or a purr. I run up to her eagerly for my share of attention and she does stroke me for a little while and throw my ball, but she doesn't lavish love onto me. Perhaps it's the fact that Brutus was found in France that makes her like him? Is he an attractive foreigner, an *alien* cat? But I thought we were all One?

It's strange how you think of a question and the answer is sent to you immediately. This afternoon Mum and I are in the woods and we meet a friend of hers called Gobolino, who is a very interesting goblin. Goblins are highly evolved, enlightened earth elementals with huge, well-developed heart centres. Indeed, he opens his arms to us and a huge shaft of pure love pours from him right into my chest. Ooh, that is unexpected!

Mum says, 'Hallo Gobolino. This is Venus, my puppy.' He smiles and bows to me in an old-fashioned way. 'What do you think of all the dogs in the woods?' Mum asks him.

He replies, 'We are all One yet we're different!'

Bingo! I get it at last. The answer to my question about Brutus… he's just different.

I like Gobolino. He's just over 1 metre tall and has a jolly face with laughing eyes, yet he's also very wise. I believe he

strives diligently to clear ley lines and to link spiritual people and places together.

25 July

Elisabeth has received a letter from her husband's solicitor demanding more maintenance money for the children. He lives on state benefits while Elisabeth toils all hours doing any work she can to earn money to send to them. She scarcely eats and looks as if a puff of wind might knock her over.

She still hasn't told us how she came to be in this situation, but maybe she will explain soon. I think Brutus should be more supportive. She gives him so much love and would rather starve herself than see him going short, but he never rubs himself against her or purrs.

I gather the courage to tell Brutus what I think and he looks at me as if I'm a mouse who might become his dinner.

In the afternoon Brutus corners me to tell me that the task of cats is to raise the energy of a house, not to cosset the people who feed them.

I nod and dare to say, 'But I thought cats helped their owners?'

It's the wrong thing to say. 'Cats do not have owners,' he scowls. 'We graciously bestow our presence on people who feed us.' I swallow nervously. I'm half his size.

'But cats are healers, aren't they?'

'Sure, it's in the energy we radiate. But the purrs and cuddles are extra favours we can choose to offer or not, and this cat chooses not to.'

He struts off more like Emperor Brutus than a common tabby. I glance at my yellow angel who murmurs with a smile, 'Cats have egos, too.'

26 July

Mum and Elisabeth light a candle. They ask the angels to help Elisabeth connect with her two teenage children, Annie and Ben. They live only a few miles away, but their father has threatened he will move away immediately to a place she won't be able to find them if she tries to see them. She's incredibly sad. I lick her foot and she raises a smile for me.

Elisabeth tells us she has an older son by a previous marriage and the three children were brought up together and were very close. They always kept in touch by phone and e-mail, supporting each other through the difficult times. but now her husband has forbidden Annie and Ben to have any contact with their half-brother. He won't let them communicate with their grandfather either, so he has cut off family support for all of them.

I want to bite Elisabeth's husband but my angels beam peace down to me and explain that under all his bullying and threats, he's a very unhappy, frightened man. They remind me that at a soul level the family has called in these circumstances and is acting out their drama in order to learn. So the decisions each one makes are the foundation for the next part of their life.

'The greatest support you can give is to love Elisabeth,' they suggest. I know they are right, so I creep to Elisabeth's side and sit on her foot. I wish I could do more.

1 August

I get into trouble today. Some small children are running through the trees and I rush up to them barking loudly and ferociously. They are satisfyingly terrified. Their mother gets very upset and Mum has to catch me, which is not easy, I can tell you. Then she makes me lie down. She sits in the pine needles with me and passes the children treats to give me. I gobble them. Finally, she holds me firmly while they stroke me. They are happy and their mother is pacified. I have to go on a lead for the rest of the walk, which Mum says is my karma for being naughty. Oh, but it was worth it!

3 August

After my success at frightening small children, I'm on the lookout for more possibilities. I spot a mother with two little boys. *Aha*, I think, *they'll be scared of me*. I rush at them unleashing my truly terrifying bark – a lion could not be more frightening! But they aren't in the least bit bothered. One laughs at me and says to his mother, 'It's a bit mouthy, like Scamp next door.' Oh, the ignominy of being described as 'mouthy' and compared to a dog called Scamp. There's nothing like a put-down to take energy from you. I'm quiet for the rest of the walk.

5 August

Mum says she has a special treat for me today! I salivate. Is it chicken, a bone, fish? I imagine them falling from the sky and landing in a pile at my feet.

Instead, I hear her say, 'I'm taking you to the seaside.'

'What's that?'

Later

I now know what the seaside is. I can't believe my eyes when I see it. We walk on yellow gritty stuff that has lots of squawking children playing all over it. And worse, beyond that is this vast expanse called 'the sea'… an eternity of turbulent, grey-blue water with dangerous-looking, white, frilly edges. We stroll along beside it. Mum takes off her shoes and paddles at the edge, saying, 'Come on in, Venus! It's lovely.' She must be mad. Nothing would induce me to join her. I plod along with my tail between my legs as near to her as I can be without actually getting my paws in the water. *I don't like the seaside*.

Then I see a big bird land on the sand. I'm off. I shoot like a bullet towards it and nearly catch it before it flies off. Wow! Brilliant! Panting, I trot back to Mum, my tail wagging proudly. The sand's not too bad after all. I just don't like that cold, wet water. I'm a dog, not a fish! My angel says that you can't take someone out of their natural habitat, and I must say, I agree.

'*The Untrue Story of You* offers one of the most significant advances in our understanding of who we are, why we do what we do, and how we can end the negative patterns that hold us back.'

John Gray, author of *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus*

THE ~~TRUE~~ Untrue STORY OF YOU

How to Let Go of the Past that Creates You, and Become Fully Alive in the Present

BRYAN HUBBARD

Chapter 2
The Untrue Story of You

'We are never living, but only hoping to live;
and looking forward always to being happy,
it's inevitable that we never are so.'

BLAISE PASCAL

We all have our story. We live by it, and it shapes us and the world we live in. If you were abused as a child, abuse may well become the primary colour of your life, and you may seek out more abuse because that's an endorsement of your story.

Your story can also colour the world in less vivid hues, but it's still the lens through which you see the world and interpret it. If you think that money is hard to come by, or that relationships will always end badly, then that's your story, and it's a self-fulfilling one that's on permanent repeat. As a result, patterns start to appear in your life – money becomes your pre-eminent struggle, or one bad relationship is followed by another.

But your story *isn't* true. If it were, nobody would be able to make money and every relationship would end badly, and there are plenty of examples in the world that contradict your story.

Often, though, the ways in which we define ourselves are more subtle, but are just as devastating on our lives. We may think we're not good enough, or that we don't deserve things – these were certainly two ideas about myself I carried around for years.

Your story isn't just a series of thoughts that are the aftertow of experiences. It has a deeper and richer resonance than mere thinking, although thoughts are one expression of your story (emotions are another, and a far more profound one). It goes deeper still, because what then sparks the emotion or the thought?

Footsteps through the generations

The rocket fuel of your story is an energy imprint from experience. This energy drives thoughts and emotions and provides the colour scheme to your world and the subtle hues that determine it.

This imprinting can sometimes move beyond an individual and into a family or a generation, like sedimentary layers. For example, sociologists have noted that a tendency to commit suicide runs through families, and parents whose own parents were alcoholics often are themselves addicts or have children who become addicts.

Similarly, those who were raised in a household afflicted by a parent with gambling problems will also display similar traits – or, again, their children will. The reality of the past will create the circumstances in their lives right now and will continue to do so until they wake up to the unconscious processes that are wrecking their lives and those of their children.

We can all recognize these patterns, whether their origins are from our own experiences or from a leitmotif of a family or close community, even if few of us understand how they happen. Biologists maintain that behavioural patterns are the result of genetics and the imprinting in our DNA, but the science of epigenetics – which studies outside influences on DNA coding – tells us that our environment, including the people in it, are more powerful influences and can overwrite genetic coding.

This energy does something far cleverer than just create your story, though – it creates 'you' in the process. A story without a central character wouldn't be much of a story, although you're the hero, the teller and the listener of yours. So, when we say that an abused person is drawn to more abuse in his life, the energy imprint of the experience of abuse itself seeks out more abuse.

'You' are created as a necessary part of that process. That you assumes the mantle of the thinker, and without you, the essential part of the process – the thought itself – would collapse under the logical absurdity of there being a thought without a thinker. Yet you've become so bewitched by the energy's drives that you're convinced you're a continuous and coherent 'I', sitting in command-central.

It feels that way, too. You think when you want to or need to – or you think you do. You don't, of course.

Thoughts come into your mind all the time – it's like a tap that won't turn off. This constant stream of thoughts and feelings gives the impression of a permanent 'you'. But here's what's actually happening:

The thought thinks the thinker.

I think I'm not good enough, say: I'm not good enough because of the experiences I've had, usually as a small child. Tragically, too many of us are actually told this by our parents, or our teachers, or friends. If parents are kind enough to point this out beforehand, as my father was, almost everything that we do thereafter will be a vindication of this judgement.

The hurt that becomes your world

But what did we actually *feel* in that moment when we were told we weren't good enough, or we weren't as good as our brother or sister? Enormous hurt – a throbbing, raw heart of hurt. And it's this hurt that persists as an energy imprint. If you doubt this, there are hundreds of studies that demonstrate how past hurts affect our health, and even our longevity, when we grow up. I give a few examples of these in chapter 4.

It's the hurt itself that lives on, although the hurt becomes more subtle over time and becomes the lens through which we see ourselves and the world, and our chances of success in it.

This hurt finds expression through our brain and body as thoughts and emotions. And this is the meanest trick of all: these thoughts and emotions create a 'you' as they rise up. You, as a subset of the original hurt, which is translated into a thought or emotion, then become the owner of that thought. So not only do you then think you're not good enough, you aren't good enough because there's no distinction between you and the thought.

This becomes the starting point of almost every therapy because you then go to the therapist to seek his or her help in ridding yourself of your anger, or your inability to cope, your

depression or anxiety, or your feeling of worthlessness. It's what I call the 'therapy triangle': there's you, your problem and the therapist.

It seems that there's a central player – 'you' – who's an active, independent entity that wants to overcome negative feelings. Once clear of these problems, you, the central player, are then free and unburdened, and able to live a fuller and more fulfilling life.

Because we live by the idea that 'I' am a constant and continuous agent, we seek help, or work on ourselves – to make us a better person, or rid us of our phobias and personality issues. Although the therapist may achieve temporary or slight improvements, deep and transformative change will be difficult while there remains a you who owns the problem.

'I'm often angry,' as another example, should more accurately be expressed as 'There's often anger that creates a sense of me in the process.' When it's seen in that way, the impulse to be calmer comes from the anger energy itself, and is a continuation of the same process.

This doesn't mean you do nothing, and just put up with the angry outbursts; the action is in the seeing, with absolute clarity, the process itself. Once seen completely, it dissolves naturally – as my depression and feelings of worthlessness did for me – and what remains is a feeling of joy and delight that's beyond words.

Only when you finally see there was only ever the thought itself – *that there never was a 'you' that wasn't good enough or was angry – can the possibility of true healing begin. Until you completely see the process of the past, you'll continue to believe there's a you that's in control, that thinks when it needs to.*

But if you do believe that, this central commander isn't very consistent – another clue that perhaps the idea of a continuous self is a mirage. If you watch closely, you'll see many thoughts that stake a claim as the real 'you' during your day. One moment you're someone who loses his temper, the next you can be the very model of patience. Sometimes you're very friendly, and other times you don't want to talk.

Because you constantly change, you can see the mess it creates in your life. We fall in love, we fall out of love; we make money and then we struggle with money; we're happy and then we become depressed and so we take antidepressants, drugs or alcohol or all three; we love our job and then we hate the job and want to quit it. For the rest of the time, we have mood swings. Of course, circumstances can change, but often it's us who are changing, and constantly.

Far from there being a 'you' that's the architect of all this, it's as though we've been possessed by an entity over which we've almost no control. We have, of course, and it's the past. As we get older, and have more experiences, the here and now becomes less apparent. We become *time-heavy*.

The past can also have a psychosomatic effect. How many times have you felt your stomach knot up as you think about someone who's upset you? Does an event in the past still have the power to make you angry today? Bad things that happen to us as children can make us chronically ill when we're adults. The event doesn't have to be as severe as sexual molestation; it can be anything from a father who shouts at us, to a mother who's never at home when we come back from school.

Even though the parents may be dead, their power is such that they can reach out through time and give us a fatal heart attack. How could that happen, unless the past lives on in us as some energetic entity?

As the past grows, so we feel increasingly separate from the world. Our sense of a self – made up of past sufferings, sadness, regrets and disappointments – becomes a fortress against a world that's hostile and against us. As the past grows in us, so does a sense of space that separates us from the world.

The time machine

So what are you that you can live in the present and yet be more influenced by the past, which separates you from the world? You're a time machine: you create an imagined future from a past that you didn't completely understand in the first place. This continual time projection – from past to future – bypasses the present, and events in the present moment are invariably seen and interpreted through the filter of the past.

As a result, you never fully experience the moment, when any seeming division between you and the world would evaporate and the fortress walls of the self would melt.

As a self that's made up of the past, you're a complex mass of feelings and emotions that has the potential to blow like a volcano at any time. The trouble is that you don't know what may trigger an outburst. It could be the wrong word at the wrong time, a situation you encounter, even a toothpaste tube squeezed the wrong way.

You don't do it because you're a 'bad' person. Having angry outbursts or occasional emotional eruptions isn't an aspect of

your inherent nature – it happens because the impulse from the past truly wants to understand.

This book will explain why it is we feel hurt and upset in the first place, where these feelings of hurt come from and what the whole process is trying to achieve. As you read it, you'll start to recognize an energetic impulse that seeks understanding through you as a body in time and space.

While you're unaware of this movement, you're living unconsciously. You're often unconscious of the referencing, the projection from the past into a future, yet it colours your world every moment, and the more you're in the thrall of these waves of psychological time, the less happy you are.

Most thoughts and feelings have their origins in the past. These feelings are the accumulation of hurts, disappointments and upsets that have happened. That past may be just a few seconds old, as happens when we think about solving a problem that has just cropped up, but it's more often from years ago.

The past becomes a weight. Yet how does this affliction of time happen? How did the untrue story of you begin?

Your Three Selves

If the past is a 'body', or energy centre, and if you already have a physical body, this suggests you have more than one body. But you don't have two bodies, or selves – you have three. You may live in present time, while being more influenced by the past, but you also have experiences that seem to be outside of space and time.

These strange phenomena – the intuitive leap, the sense you just 'knew' something was going to happen, or the dream that foretells a future event – suggest that there's a third 'you' that's not dependent on time.

I call these three selves, or centres, the Present time-body, the Past time-body and the Potential centre. It might seem an extraordinary thought that you're the amalgam of three entities, each calling itself 'me' or 'I', but this isn't so alien a concept if you're from the Christian tradition. One of the axioms of Christianity is the idea of the three-in-one God: the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

But Jesus's teachings were distorted. His original doctrine, espoused in the Gospels, stated that God is within us. Yet, within years of the establishment of the Christian Church, this radical idea was replaced by one that situated God in a distant Heaven, reached primarily through the intercessory powers of the priests.

The notion that we're made up of Three Selves is also not such a surprise to those of you immersed in ancient philosophy, especially that of Plato, who told us we are a blend of the intellect, passions and spirit.

The three-in-one self is also the basis of Freudian psychology, which proposes that we're made up of an ego, a subconscious and an unconscious, and the ancient wisdom schools often refer to the three bodies of the self – the gross body of the physical world, the subtle body of feelings and images, and the causal body of subtle energy.

So what's so special about my model? It's one of the first to explore who we are in and through time, a dimension that I

believe is the key to our understanding. From this understanding we can achieve fulfilment, creativity and joy. Only when we clearly see ourselves as a creation of time and the past can we begin to live fully in the present moment – and lose our sense of separation, alienation and anguish.

Of the Three Selves in my model, the Past time-body causes most of our worries and, indeed, most of the strife in the world. It's the seat of both depression and addictions – as such, they have the same origins. It's where the past accumulates and the past-to-future movement occurs. As we grow older, the Past time-body has more energy from experiences and so becomes more substantial.

By the time we reach adulthood, we've become time-heavy. We're more past than present, whereas, when we're small children, we're time-light, more in the present moment than in the past. When the past doesn't dominate, there becomes less of a sense of space that separates us from the world and isolates us.

Do you remember when you were a small child – when you were time-light? You probably have some memories of that time, and they're likely to be idyllic (unless you were in an abusive family). Moments seemed to go on forever, and the slightest thing could fascinate you for hours. You felt at one with the world. It was your home, your playground, and any division between you and that world was slight. If you have small children yourself, their wonder at the world should remind you of how it is to be time-light and space-light.

Is that how you live your life every day now? I doubt it. Instead, it's likely that commitments and worries weigh you down, you're always planning for some imagined future, and you're concerned about money, your job, your family and children. It's natural to ensure you're secure – that you've enough food, proper shelter, and that you've good health – but is this supposed to take the joy out of your life?

Life for you today is invariably mundane, occasionally a struggle and, in the main, tolerable. You enjoy moments of happiness and joy, and reward yourself with the odd holiday, a nice meal, a bottle of wine or the latest movie. However, beneath this activity lies an undefined sense that life could and should be better, if only you knew how.

At this point, some of us get the 'spiritual bug' and desire enlightenment, bliss or nirvana, without recognizing that the very desire is merely a movement – from past unhappiness to an imagined joy in the future – that's the exact same as the one that covets the new Mercedes. As such, it becomes merely the latest chapter in your untrue story.

The metaphysical itch

Our tragedy is that, deep down, we do know that money or a big new house aren't quite going to hit the spot, that we've been locked out of an unspoken inheritance, a metaphysical right that came with our birth. Material success is a pale imitation of the glory that somehow should be ours. It's a little like the cosmic joke: 'Most of us go through life not knowing what we want, but feeling damned sure that this isn't it.'

You can get a sense of this by looking at your own life. Many of us live with a general sense of malaise, a greyness or fog that seems to have descended over the sun-filled days of our early childhood. We suffer anything from frequent irritation and regular angry outbursts to occasional stress, anxiety, phobias, or even chronic depression and finally to suicidal thoughts.

Many of us feature somewhere along this spectrum of desperate living. Life overwhelms one in five of us to such an extent that we regularly take a powerful antidepressant just to get through the day, and some one million people around the world commit suicide every year. Even if we eschew the antidepressant, many of us have various addictions – to alcohol, food, drugs, gambling, cigarettes or even sex.

So this becomes the story by which you live.

The New Edition of the International Bestseller

f**k it

the ultimate spiritual way

John C. Parkin

2

ESSENTIAL F**K IT TECHNIQUES

These five techniques will help you to live a F**k It life. In fact, I highly recommend that you tattoo the techniques onto your fingers. That way you won't forget them. Give it a nice flowing typeface – though I wouldn't italicize it or you might end up looking a bit country restaurant.

As you may well soon observe, the techniques flow into one another and depend on one another. Well, that's a bit like making a fist with your tattooed fingers: ready to smash your uptight life into submission.

RELAXING

Most of us don't know how tense we really are. Not you? You're actually really relaxed? OK, let's see.

As you're sitting reading this, begin to focus on your shoulders: you can probably feel them dropping as you relax them. Then move to the neck, feel the tension dissolving away. Then go to your jaw: let

the jaw feel slack as you relax it. Then the forehead and the muscles around your eyes.

Now go back to your shoulders. The chances are they've tightened up again: so try to relax them and let them drop once more.

And this is how it works. We find tension where we didn't think there was any, and as soon as we move our attention away, the tension returns. It can be a little disconcerting when you first get into the habit of going into the body consciously like this: because your impression is that you're actually quite tense (whereas before, your ignorance was a peculiar form of bliss).

If you ignore tension in your body, though, it does what children (and some adults) do when they're ignored: it starts shouting, screaming and generally misbehaving. This misbehaviour takes the form of aching necks, headaches, backaches, etc. So have a go at listening to your body *before* it starts to shout for your attention.

Remember that we're very simple beings, too: we tend to try to avoid pain and increase our own pleasure. So far we've been talking about avoiding pain. Try also, then, to find pleasure in relaxing. Try to find as much pleasure in relaxing as you would in a glass of wine, a kiss with your partner or _____ (please insert your favourite pleasurable activity here, though do be a tad careful in case someone else picks up this book after you; I don't want the expression of a pleasurable activity to become, ironically, painful for you).

I call this 'internal pleasure seeking'. Now some smart-arse once pointed out in a workshop I was teaching that *all* pleasure is internal. Well, yes, of course. But I'm talking about finding the source of pleasure inside you rather than outside yourself. This usually wouldn't cross our minds. We desperately try to stimulate internal

pleasure (otherwise, yes, known as 'pleasure') through an external search. Again, write the things that tickle your fancy in the margin if you fancy (if we fill this book with too many spaces it will become too much like a workbook and I hate those, or we'll get letters from people saying, 'I bought your book expecting some meaningful advice and all I got was lots of spaces. Next time I'll buy some blank paper from the stationer's: it's a lot cheaper').

If you can find the source of pleasure inside yourself you'll never be bored: you'll be self-sufficient and you'll become a very cheap date, too. But the biggest boon is that if you can find pleasure in the very thing that can boost your own health and lead to a long life, happiness and possible enlightenment, then you're a damn sight more likely to do that thing on a regular basis.

Find the source of pleasure inside yourself and you'll never be bored.

So go on, retire to your room, shut the door and do a bit of internal pleasure seeking. And after you've done that, try to find some really deep pleasure in simply relaxing. Start to enjoy what it's like to take a deep breath. Enjoy the feeling of your hands tingling as they relax more. Get turned on by your whole body feeling as mushy and slushy as ice cream melting on a hot summer's day.

LETTING GO

Maybe it's because we innately know that everything is impermanent that we so desperately cling to it. But cling we do. We know that our youth vanishes, that we and our loved ones will die one day, that whatever we have accumulated can easily be taken away from us, that one day our skills might not be wanted, that a day may come when our love might not be reciprocated. But we go on clinging.

Everywhere we turn we are faced with impermanence. I'm writing this in early October, and as I look outside I'm faced with nature's yearly reminder that everything fades away.

Of course, the more we cling, the more pain we feel as things fade, disappear, or die around us. And sometimes the more we cling, the more these things happen. Imagine someone in a relationship who is, yes, clingy. They hold on to what they think they love with an iron grip, are jealous at the slightest thing, spend their time in fear of what terrible things might happen rather than enjoying the relationship as it is. How does that make the other person feel? How long does that relationship last? (Bad. And not long. Just in case you were sitting there scratching your chin, wondering.)

The key to being able to let go of all the stuff you're holding on to is knowing that you'll be OK if you don't have it. And that's the truth. This is a good exercise: go through all the things that you really want to hang on to in your life – the partner, the job, your health, your sense of humour, your family and friends, the soaps on the telly – and tell yourself that you would (actually) be OK without them. You can survive with very little. And though the passing of people and things can be painful, you will survive.

Though the passing of people and things can be painful, you will survive.

If you're up for it, say this to yourself a few times: 'I am OK with things passing and fading away in my life. I will be OK no matter what happens to me and those around me. I let go of my hold on life and allow life simply to flow around me and through me.' Now light a candle and burn off your own eyebrows. Noooo. Don't just do what I say.

But do relax (finger 1), let go (finger 2) and get ready to accept (finger 3) everything as it is.

ACCEPTING

We're in such a terrible state nowadays. Things really are just getting worse. You can't get on a bus without thinking that it might be blown up by some extremist. And that's if the bus comes. What with the government handing over everything to private companies, who just put money first, there's no one who'll bother with you if there's no money in it. So that's just typical, standing in the rain in the middle of July, waiting for a bus that never comes.

Is it just me, or is it raining more in the summer? It's rubbish, this global warming stuff. It's colder, wetter, just another reason to tell us what to do with our lives. And anyway, if it's getting warmer, why are my gas bills going up? Shouldn't they be going down if we're using less? I rang them up and asked them, and some young chap in India answered. He was very polite but of course had no idea. At least he was polite, that's not something you get here any more. No politeness, no respect.

Do you know how much we moan, here in the UK? Well, I say 'we', I should be saying 'you' as I now live in Italy, where they don't moan much at all (OK, you still get game shows hosted by old men who ogle a stage full of girls in bikinis… Hey, maybe there's a link here… Note to the BBC: bring back 70s game shows with Sir Bruce Forsyth and babes in bikinis… that would stop blokes moaning – for a while at least… As long as you then balance it with a game show hosted by Germaine Greer with loads of beautiful boys in trunks, you'll be fine: then the girls will stop moaning, too).

I notice it even more now that I only surface in Blighty occasionally. You're so uptight and moany. There's always bad news on the television, or people in soaps moaning and shouting at one another, or on *Big Brother* bitching and moaning about each other, and newspapers happy to see that the gorgeous so-and-so is looking a little chubby or too thin. There were endless pieces just this summer about Victoria Beckham being too thin: that she eats just the inside of a banana skin and licks the salt off a crisp every meal. They screamed that she is such a terrible example to all young women. Well, I'm sorry, but isn't she a *great* example to all young women? If you eat less than a small bird with a stomach upset you start to look like a small bird with a stomach upset.

Yes, girls, that woman ain't pretty. She doesn't do it for us boys. Please feel free to chub out a bit, eat lots of ice cream, then you'll get even more of us crossing the dance floor to ask you for a dance… or whatever they do nowadays.

Please feel free to chub out a bit.

This is why we moan and bitch and criticize: we don't feel too good inside, and we try to find reasons outside ourselves for this discomfort. As you start to feel better inside (by saying F**k It, by relaxing and letting go), you'll get to like that feeling: and you won't find it as easy to moan about everything. After a while you'll positively dislike it because it will make you feel worse, not better.

You'll find that it's best to try to accept things around you just as they are (and this will be easier as you lose the need to justify your own painful feelings). The truth is (I'm sorry to break this to you) that there's usually diddly-squat we can do about most of the things in our lives that piss us off. We can't do a great deal about late buses, terrorists, incompetent politicians taking us into phoney wars, young people swearing and being disrespectful…

Even stuff closer to home: your boss being a bully, your partner being selfish, your children being lazy. Sure, you can leave your job, and your partner, and kick the kids outside to do a bit of good, healthy exercise. But until you're ready to do these things, stop bloody moaning and accept things as they are.

Accepting everything, just as it is, is a beautiful state to get to. Just feel it now: what would it be like to accept yourself just as you are, not slimmer or taller or better looking, just as you are right now? What would it be like to accept your life just as it is: job, family, friends, sex life, prospects, the whole bloomin' lot, just as it is right now? And what would it be like to accept the world – fucked-up, messy, warming up, war-strewn, greed-littered – just as it is?

Try it today. Accept the things that don't go according to plan, the people that don't treat you quite how you'd like to be treated, the bad news as well as the good. Start to enjoy feeling good inside yourself. And remember that you don't need to moan and criticize any more. And if you do feel crap inside (like we all do sometimes) try to accept that feeling, too, without looking for things outside yourself to blame it on.

WATCHING IMPARTIALLY

The Watcher is not some pervert sitting behind drawn curtains, ogling Mrs Tardywells as she unfastens her corset late at night (before flossing seductively by the light of the moon). No, it's what those of us who eat beans for a living call the ability to watch what goes on in your own mind and body impartially. This is sometimes also referred to as 'consciousness' or 'awareness' (both words are used more narrowly by bean-eaters than by philosophers). But let's stick with The Watcher.

Sitting still for a little while (usually off-puttingly referred to as 'meditation') is a good opportunity to get in touch with your inner Watcher. Do you see how giving him/her that capital 'W' has already given him/her some importance in your life? Sit there and, as the thoughts start to roll in – as they invariably will – develop a sense of watching the thoughts (from above if you fancy), as if they're not yours. Don't get involved with the thoughts. Don't judge them. Just accept them. It may help you simply to observe the thoughts in an impartial, non-judging way – e.g. 'Ah, killing the cheating boyfriend with a neatly sharpened axe: OK'; 'Ah, so hungry I could skin my pet tabby and barbecue it for tea: interesting.'

Here's another image for you. You could imagine The Watcher as a CCTV camera on a busy high street. The camera sees everything. It doesn't intervene or shout out, 'Hey, you, big nose, you look ridiculous in that jacket.' It just watches. In fact, the chances are that there's no human being watching a screen of big nose and his jacket. The camera is just a piece of dumb machinery watching (and most probably recording, just in case). A camera watching, not judging or criticizing.

And do you know the effect of this little bit of inanimate machinery? People behave themselves more. And that's pretty much what happens in your mind/body, too. The more you watch impartially – accepting what is seen just for what it is – the better your mind/body is likely to behave. It doesn't have to behave better, of course: there's no MI5/NSA going to be looking at the footage of your thought crimes. But the truth is that when you accept your thoughts and feelings just as they are (through The Watcher), then everything tends to slowly calm down a bit.

Have a go and see for yourself.

And if you're having trouble with it – with getting some distance between you and your thoughts/feelings – have a listen to this. Years ago, we were living in a small flat in London. Every night I would sit cross-legged in silence for half an hour (at around midnight). The flat was part of a huge block, so you could hear the noises of humanity being human at all hours: toilets flushing, doors slamming, TVs blaring, babies crying.

As I settled myself, and my mind began to slow down, I slowly became aware of voices next door. They were male voices, maybe two people, just chatting away about the usual inane day-to-day stuff. I could just about hear what they were saying if I concentrated hard enough. And I remember feeling a little surprised that they were talking like this – so audibly – at this time of night. I listened a little more. I contemplated that I'd never before heard people talking next door: I knew there was a middle-aged man living there alone, but I'd never heard him with anyone else. And I listened.

Then I realized with a jump that the voices weren't next door at all: they were in my own head. I was listening to my own thoughts (as inane and day-to-day as they usually are) as if I were completely separate from them. I tried to tune in again. But the spell had been broken. I was astonished. I really had been convinced that these voices were coming from next door. I understood (maybe for the first time) that I am *more* than my thoughts. I understood that there is something else – in my head, or elsewhere – separate to the thoughts that I'm having.

Some people would say that I had – at that moment – merged with the source, or with God or the universal being. I have no idea. But it felt good. I've not tried to replicate the experience since – but I have had similar glimpses occasionally, usually when I'm driving.

As you develop The Watcher in you – your own CCTV camera – you get that slight sense that the thoughts are just happening, and that you don't have to get into them. Don't shout, 'Eh, big nose', just watch the colourful passing crowd of your mind with total impartiality.

Just watch the colourful passing crowd of your mind with total impartiality.

CONSCIOUS BREATHING

Conscious breathing is very easy, yet very powerful. So for the increasingly lazy and carefree F**k It practitioner, there's not a lot to do or think about.

Breathing is a marvellous thing to play with. For most of us, breathing is something we don't (and don't have to) think about, ever. After the difficult, painful first few breaths when we're born, we tend to breathe pretty well for the rest of our lives.

Of course, if we have asthma or any other lung condition, we'll be very conscious of our breathing. But for many people, the only time they think about their breathing is if they feel sick and they're told to 'take some deep breaths (and put your head between your knees)' by their mothers.

Breathing is one of the miraculous automatic functions of our body: like the pumping of blood from our hearts, the exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide, the regeneration of cells, the digesting of foodstuffs, the clearing of toxins, the balancing of acidity and alkalinity, and so on.

Our bodies just get on with their own business without us. And that's all very good. It would be a bummer to wake up in the morning and to have to go through a checklist of what to do:

* Breathing? Check.
* Heart pumping? Check.
* Correct hormones releasing? Check.
* Oxygen to carbon dioxide ratio 2:1? Check.
* pH level 8.5? Check.
* 20 per cent cells regenerating? Check.
* Engaging right side of brain? Check.
* Release adrenaline to begin worrying about the day? Check.

Now, here's the point. And it's a big one. Of all these numerous functions that are going on automatically all the time, breathing is the one that we can very easily play with and change.

Sure, if you really put your mind to it, you can slow your heart rate down. But it ain't that easy. Whereas now, sitting where you are, reading this, you can breathe more deeply, or more quickly, or you can hold your breath. And everything that you do consciously with your breath will have an effect on the rest of your body (and mind).

That's why Conscious Breathing is so cool.

If you sit and breathe consciously and deeply now for a few minutes, you will feel calmer, and a whole bunch of things will start to happen in your body:

* Your heart rate will slow down.
* You'll send more blood into your internal organs.
* You'll send more oxygen to your cells.

* You'll be releasing less adrenaline, thus relaxing the pressure on your overworked kidneys.
* You'll send a message to every cell that says, 'Hey, relax a little, it's not so bad after all.'

There are two sides to Conscious Breathing: bringing consciousness to how you are breathing now, and changing your breathing consciously.

Simply bringing consciousness to how you are breathing now allows you to get to know your breath. And it's a good idea to start doing this. Sure, as soon as you start to think about your breathing, it changes a little bit. It's hard to really catch it by surprise and see what it does when you're not looking. There's no dark wardrobe you can hide in and peek out of to see how you're breathing when you're not looking. Your lungs always know when you're in the wardrobe – no matter how small the crack is that you're looking out of.

But have a go. Notice what the breath feels like as it enters your nose (or mouth). Notice what moves when you're breathing. Are you breathing into your chest or belly? Are you breathing quickly or slowly? Are there any pauses in your breathing? Can you feel the effect of your breathing in other parts of your body? Concentrate very hard on your hands: is there anything going on in your hands as you breathe in and breathe out?

Notice how you breathe when you're relaxed. Notice how you breathe when you're in a big meeting at work, or when you're with your lover. Get to know your breathing: how it works, and how it changes. Start to learn your patterns and your ways of breathing. This is the first side of Conscious Breathing. The second side is to start playing with the breath – changing your breathing and breath patterns and seeing what happens with your body.

It's worth knowing a little bit about how our breathing works.

The inbreath is (obviously) when we take things in and expand. We take oxygen in. We take energy in. And our body expands with this. The chest or the belly expands, but so does the rest of the body, too. When you really get to know your breath and body, you'll feel the expansion in every part of your body: that's because every cell is expanding.

The outbreath is when we let things out and we relax. We let out carbon dioxide. We let out tension from our body. The whole body softens and relaxes and drops a little when we breathe out.

A little word on the 'energy' here. You might have lots of experience with energy, but you also might have no idea what I'm talking about. Energy – aka *chi*, or *qi*, or *prana*, or life-force, or life energy – is what they go on about a lot in the East, and what we have pretty much ignored here in the West.

First off, energy exists. It's not some esoteric idea. It exists and it is life. If we had no energy in our bodies, we'd be dead. Energy is a moving, tingling, magnetic-feeling force that moves through our bodies (and the body of anything else that's alive). Chinese medicine is all about the balancing of this energy to create a balanced physical system.

For now, if you know very little about this energy thing, simply be open to the possibility of feeling something new in your body. Or maybe starting to put a name to something you've already felt. The best time to spot this energy thing is when you are really relaxed. First, because – when you're really relaxed – energy flows. Second, because being relaxed will give you the space to feel the energy properly.

A little warning, though: beginning to feel your own energy can be seriously addictive. It feels gorgeous. It is like being bathed in light. It can

feel ecstatic just to be sitting and feeling this life-force buzzing around your body. You can get hooked on this feeling and want to find ways to increase it. (But there are no side effects to this addiction; you will only feel better and get better.)

A little warning: beginning to feel your own energy can be seriously addictive.

And the best way to increase the feeling of *chi*, of course, is to say F**k It to everything, and breathe.

Conscious Breathing is the perfect aid for the F**k It practitioner.

Let's start with the F**k It Outbreath. If saying F**k It is about letting go of the things that matter and creating tension, then breathing out slowly is the best way to help this process. That's what the outbreath is: you release what you don't want; you let out all the waste gases and toxins and tensions that are not welcome in your body.

The quickest way to relax is to really slow down the outbreath. Really drag it out. And start to feel your body relaxing. You can exaggerate the effect of this even more if you add a sigh to the outbreath.

The sigh is an amazing tool in itself. You sigh when you're at the end of doing something difficult and strenuous. When you've finished work and poured yourself a whisky and you sit down on the sofa to watch an episode of your favourite soap, that's when you sigh. Sighing says to your body, 'That's it, you can relax and let go now.' Sighing is your way of saying, 'F**k It. No matter what's been going on today, now's my chance to sit back and relax.'

So if you want to trick your body into thinking that all the work's been done, and it can just sit back and relax, then SIGH.

Have a go at combining some F**k It thoughts with some sighing outbreaths. Choose whatever you want to say F**k It to at the moment; speak it out and then have a long, sighing outbreath. A quick warning here again: if you're reading this somewhere public, it may be best if you wait till later, when you're on your own. Or maybe just tone it down a bit… mumble your F**k It line, and then breathe out slowly. I'm sorry, I just don't want to get you into trouble.

I just don't want letters, you see. I don't want letters saying:

> *Dear Mr. Parkin,*
>
> *I was reading your book during a rather tedious recital of Brahms's Fifth Concerto at the local town hall, and I diligently carried out the F**k It breathing exercise. I said, 'F**k It to my husband's lingering gazes on Hilary Thrimble's ample breasts. F**k It.' I then breathed out with a long sigh, as you suggested. And to cut a long story short, I have been ostracized from Thricket Windon's polite social gatherings, which is a mortal wound for a woman of my standing…*

No, I don't want letters like that.

Just so you know, and in case it comes up, I'd like letters like this:

> *Dear Mr. Parkin,*
>
> *I read your words with a delight barely containable, and find all that you have to offer attracts me to the very core of my being. May I be so bold as to suggest a liaison next Wednesday evening at The Pimple and Shard? You can't miss me: I will be wearing a red rose pinned to one of the lapels covering my ample breasts.*
>
> *Yours,*
>
> *Hilary Thrimble*

Just so you know.

So, ahem, back to breathing. Where were we? Yes, The F**k It Outbreath.

Try it.

'I say F**k It to my bad back.' Then sigh and breathe out.

'I say F**k It to my bullying boss.' Then sigh and breathe out.

And so on.

*Just say F**k It, then sigh and breathe out.*

Whenever things matter too much. Whenever you feel tense or anxious or afraid. Just say F**k It, then sigh and breathe out. It works a treat.

But let's not forget the F**k It Inbreath. While the F**k It Outbreath is about letting go and relaxing, and saying no to things, the F**k It Inbreath is about pulling in energy and strength, and saying yes to things.

The F**k It Inbreath is about sucking in the energy to do what you want to do. And this is at least half the game in leading a F**k It life. If you want to get up from your desk and go and chat up the dishy new account director, take a deep breath, say F**k It and do it. If you want to go travelling, take a deep breath, say F**k It, hand in your notice and go book your flights. If you're tired of your boring relationship, take a deep breath, say F**k It and end it. Today.

In energy terms, the F**k It Outbreath is yin… relaxing, soft, letting go.

Whereas the F**k It Inbreath is yang… energetic, enthusiastic, embracing.

And if you know anything about Taoism, you'll know that you need a good balance of yang and yin to live harmoniously in this world.

The problem for most of us is that we live somewhere in between a good yanging and a good yinning life. So we don't go for things enough, we don't embrace life as vigorously as we could. And we don't relax and let go enough.

This is replicated in our breathing, just as everything in our lives is replicated in our breathing. If you look at anyone's outbreath and inbreath, they can look quite similar. The F**k It Inbreath is full of energy, though – try it, really fill up and pull in the energy. And the F**k It Outbreath is exactly the opposite. There should be no effort in letting the air out, just a letting go and relaxing.

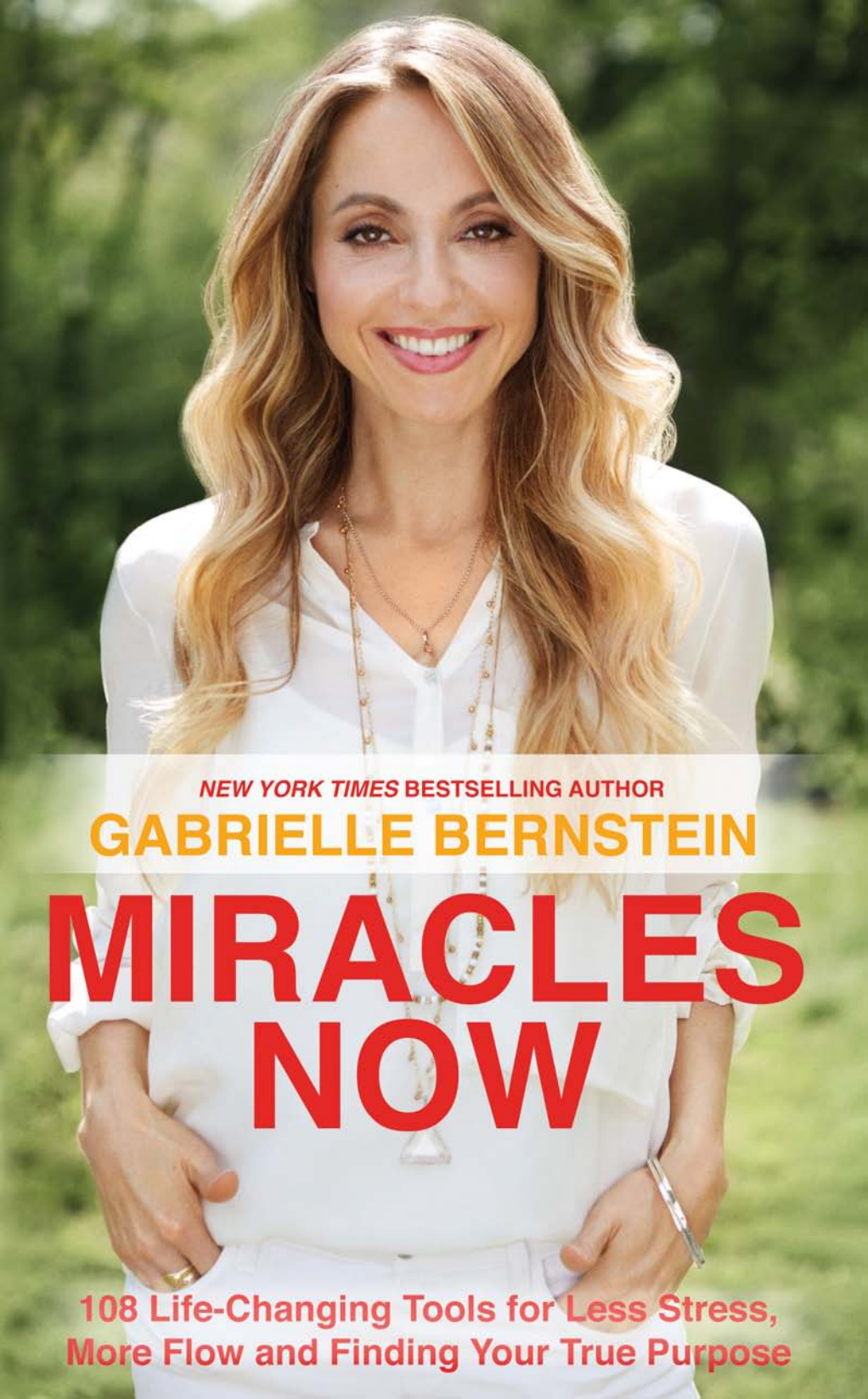
The two breaths could not be more different. And each breath offers you the two sides of living the F**k It life.

Start practising breathing like this. Enjoy the active sucking in of energy that is the F**k It Inbreath. Then enjoy the absolutely passive letting-go that is the F**k It Outbreath. And you'll start to enjoy how this impacts on your life, too.

You'll give yourself the F**k It energy of the F**k It Inbreath to really go for it in life: to do what you really want to do, no matter what other people think.

And you'll give yourself the F**k It ability of the F**k It Outbreath to really not give a fuck about things that used to bother you and get you down.

So now let's look at how we can say F**k It to specific areas of our lives.



NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR

GABRIELLE BERNSTEIN

MIRACLES NOW

108 Life-Changing Tools for Less Stress, More Flow and Finding Your True Purpose

#1: HAPPINESS IS A CHOICE YOU MAKE.

Whenever I'm asked about the greatest lesson I've learned, my response is: *Happiness is a choice I make.* It's very easy to look for happiness outside ourselves: in a relationship, a dream job, or the perfect body weight. When we chase happiness externally, we're simply looking for God in all the wrong places. The outside search is based on false projections we place on the world. These projections build up a wall against true happiness, which lies within us. This first exercise will help you understand how nothing "out there" can save you from the conflict that resides within. You must develop a rich inner life to enjoy life altogether.

Each time we make this shift and choose happiness, we experience a miracle. Our mind shifts from fearful delusions and reconnects to our truth, which is love. Creating these shifts requires a dedicated commitment to choosing love. To begin your commitment to new perceptions, start by paying attention to attack thoughts toward yourself and others. Whenever you notice your thoughts detour into attack mode, say out loud or to yourself: *Happiness is a choice I make.* Make this your mantra.

The more you retrain yourself to choose happiness over fear, the more blissful you will be. Repeating a new behavior is what makes change stick. When you repeat a new pattern often, you literally change the neural

pathways in your brain. This shift helps true change settle in.

Happiness is your choice. You can choose today.

Now it's time to spread the love! Tweet, Facebook, pin, Instagram, e-mail, and repeat the Miracle Message below. Pay it forward by carrying the message.

Miracle Message #1:

Happiness is a choice I make.

#MiraclesNow

#4: PEACE IS IN YOUR PULSE.

Everyday life brings challenges and discomfort, which can knock us out of a peaceful place. Throughout this book, one key principle for releasing stress and achieving peace I'll recommend again and again is meditation.

Many people want to meditate but don't know where to begin. They are aware of the benefits and possibly have enjoyed some mindful moments, but have had trouble making meditation a daily practice. One obstacle can be the fact that many folks find meditation intimidating. They think they have to be masters right away to reap the rewards but in truth, it's called a "practice" for a reason. Would you expect to play tennis like Serena Williams the first time you pick up a racquet? Of course not! But that doesn't mean you can't hit the court with focus and enthusiasm, get a great workout, and improve your skills. The same is true of meditation even rookies can revel in the results immediately!

An easy way to begin meditation and access peace is through your pulse. Just by meditating on your own pulse, you can calm your mind, balance your brain hemispheres, and recalibrate your nervous system. This Kundalini meditation is called Learning to Meditate clearly, it's the perfect place to start. If you're a newbie meditator, follow this practice and you'll be Zenned out in no time.

Through this simple meditation you can develop your ability to concentrate. It will also help you control your

reactions in all situations and bring calm to even the most scattered mind.

Learning to Meditate

Sit in Easy Pose (comfortably cross-legged on the floor) with a slight neck lock, which means your chin is slightly down and your neck is straight.

Lightly close your eyes and focus on the space between your eyebrows (the third-eye point).

The mantra is *Sat Nam* (which means "truth identified").

The hand position (mudra) is simple. Place the four fingers of your right hand on your left wrist and feel your pulse. The fingers are in a straight line, lightly pressed on the wrist so you can feel your pulse in each fingertip. On each beat of your pulse, mentally hear the sound of *Sat Nam*.

This meditation is suggested for 11 minutes, but you can experience great benefits in just one minute. Practice this meditation daily to develop your intuition and calm your mind.

Miracle Message #4:

Peace is in your pulse.

#MiraclesNow

#9: "WHEN YOU'RE FEELING HELPLESS, HELP SOMEONE."

Many people who come to my work feel a disconnection from their life's purpose. The issue isn't that they have no purpose; rather, it's that they forgot their true purpose. This principle will help you reclaim your true purpose: to be love and share love. This is the job of the miracle worker. *A Course in Miracles* teaches: "Miracles occur naturally as expressions of love. They are performed by those who temporarily have more for those who temporarily have less." As you open up to your inner power, it is important to accept that your life's true purpose is to be helpful to all.

Today, I'm introducing a powerful technique: regularly reciting a prayer from *A Course in Miracles*:

I am here only to be truly helpful.

I am here to represent Him who sent me.

I do not have to worry about what to say or what

to do, because He who sent me will direct me.

I am content to be wherever He wishes, knowing

He goes there with me.

I will be healed as I let Him teach me to heal.

The words of this prayer hold the energy and surrender of service. Once again you'll be guided to get out of your own way through serving others. As Nobel Peace Prize winner Auyn San Su Ki said, "When you're feeling helpless, help someone." Let your desire to be of service guide you to find your purpose.

For today's Miracle Message I suggest simply sharing the incredible Auyn San Su Ki quote. This message carries an energy that needs to be shared.

Miracle Message #9:

"When you're feeling helpless,
help someone." — Auyn San Su Ki

#MiraclesNow

#16: MAKE FORGIVENESS A PRACTICE.

In all my books, lectures, and teachings I emphasize the importance of practicing the F-word like a full-time job. The experience of forgiveness is rooted in all spiritual teachings and is the method through which we release the past and reclaim love in the present. Forgiveness is a great way to become unstuck and open up to a more vibrant life.

When you're unforgiving, you feel stuck, weak, angry, and resentful. All those feelings contain low-level energy and therefore block your capacity to heal, grow, and live life to the fullest.

Forgiveness offers you a way out. Through forgiveness you can learn to let go of littleness and crack open to your true inner light. Like many things, forgiveness is a habit. Get into it by learning to forgive yourself first.

Yogi Bhajan once said to a room full of his students, "The only difference between me and you is that I practice forgiving myself all day long." Yogi Bhajan shows us that a key to being the master of your own mind is to learn how to forgive yourself. So for today, just for one minute, practice forgiving yourself. Make it a conscious, purposeful action. It only takes a few moments, but it's radically transformational.

The moment you recognize your self-attack, follow these four steps:

1. Witness the attack thought.
2. Breathe into the feeling of discomfort.
3. Feel the feeling.
4. Say to yourself, "I forgive this thought. I know it is not real."

Practice these four steps and prepare yourself to go deeper into the forgiveness process. In technique #83, you'll be guided to heighten your forgiveness and experience true freedom.

Miracle Message #16:

"Forgiveness is not an occasional act, it is a constant attitude." — Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

#MiraclesNow

#17: MEDITATE TO RELEASE CHILDHOOD ANGER.

So much of what holds us back in life are the long-held resentments stemming from childhood. In our youth we create many of the stories that we play out as adults stories of unworthiness, self-hatred, victimhood, and many more. As young children we learned about separation and specialness. We were taught to see ourselves as less than or better than others. We learned inequality. That separation made us angry, and we carried the anger into our adulthood.

Our childhood anger is a huge part of our neuroses and unhappiness. If we are to move forward in life, we must move through our anger to access our true energy source. This meditation will help you release childhood anger so that you can truly tune in to your own subtle powers.

Meditation for Releasing Childhood Anger

Sit in Easy Pose with your arms stretched out straight to the sides. There is no bend in the elbows. Use your thumbs to lock down the Mercury and Sun fingers (pinkie and ring fingers) and extend the Jupiter and Saturn fingers (index and middle fingers). The palms face forward and the fingers point out to the sides (as seen in the pictures).

The breath is unique in that you inhale by sucking air through your closed teeth and exhale through your nose. It is suggested that you practice this meditation for 11 minutes, though you can start with 1 minute and build up.

To finish the meditation, inhale deeply and hold your breath for ten seconds while you stretch your spine up and your arms out to the sides. Then exhale. Repeat this two more times.

If you feel stuck in or held back by childhood anger, use this meditation regularly or begin a 40-day practice. The meditation will change you inside and out. You can practice it in the morning and the evening. Yogi Bhajan said

that if you practice the meditation in the evening, when you wake up your whole energy will have changed.

Miracle Message #17:

Releasing anger from the past
sets me free in the present.

#MiraclesNow

Pea Horsley

The ANIMAL COMMUNICATOR'S GUIDE

Through Life, Loss and Love

FOREWORD BY
RICHARD ALLPORT
MRCVS, VETMFHOM, BVETMED

Chapter 2

Willow, the Sophia Loren of the Cat World

'Stop trying to please everyone else and put yourself first. They will show you more love and respect if you do.'

Willow

Jane approached me back in May 2007. She was 40 years old, the director of her own marketing company and an experienced guardian to cats, having lived with them all her life. She wanted me to communicate with her 15-year-old cat, Willow, but to understand why she made contact about Willow, we first need to hear about my communication with her rabbit.

Jane had found me the year before through a search for alternative animal healing when her rabbit, Peter, had problems with overgrown teeth and was in danger of being put to sleep.

To connect with Peter I looked at his photograph and went through my process to forge a link. I began by inhaling and exhaling slowly, using my breathing to relax my body and mind. Then I moved my focus into my heart and imagined reaching out from my heart to Peter's heart, sending him the frequency of my loving intention. I spoke to him silently in my mind, explaining who I was and why I was linking in with him. We began to communicate and I received his thought forms in my mind,

hearing them as my own inner voice. He told me there was still a spike on one of his teeth and it had caused another ulcer. He also told me it was not his time to pass over.

Despite her vet having already given Peter a dental inspection and treatment, Jane chose to act on his information and made another appointment. The vet discovered Peter was right and a spike had been missed. The information Peter had communicated saved his life and he went on to live for over two more years. As the communication was life-changing, literally, Jane decided she needed to hear from all her other animals and Willow, her favourite cat, would have to be first.

Being based in Gloucestershire, she opted for another distant communication. I can go to people's homes to visit their animals, but due to geographical location the majority of guardians opt for distant communication.

Jane e-mailed me a photo of Willow and the questions she wanted me to put to her. This time she wasn't looking for a specific answer to a physical illness; what she really wanted to know was what was going on in Willow's mind and whether she was happy.

> *'She has been my cat since she was eight weeks old and she is 16 years old next month. The bond between the two of us seems immense. She talks to me, says "Hello" in a cat meow and I am just captivated by her. This one will certainly break me when it's time for goodbye. Could you just have a general chat, as I am fascinated by the connection I have with her? I love all my animals, but the connection with Willow seems so strong.'*

When I looked at Willow's picture I saw a cat exuding elegance. Her fur was a subtle tabby blend of toffee, coffee and chocolate and she was lying on a fawn-coloured cushion on a sofa, her face

towards the camera. Her right leg was draped beautifully over the left, revealing two pristine white paws. She boasted a white heart-shaped chest and her whiskers, too, were milky white, proud and wide. Her pale pistachio eyes immediately commanded respect. Willow was posing for the camera and waiting.

Many animals seem to expect me when I communicate with them, but it doesn't matter if they are busy doing something or even sleeping, because the connection is energetic. It goes beyond the external behaviour to discover what the animal is feeling on a deeper level. It transcends body language. It also transcends space. I don't need to have the animal in front of me – a good photo is enough for me to build a link with them, whether they are still in physical form or have passed over.

The moment I connected with Willow I heard a loud *roarrrr* inside my head. Was Willow roaring at me? This was the first time a cat had done that during a communication. She certainly had a huge energy, which was very strong and spirited. When I felt her looking back at me it was as if she was looking straight through me. She was confident, in charge and not a cat to be messed with, despite her beguiling air of sophistication.

The next thing I heard inside my mind was: 'The queen.' These were unusual impressions from an animal, but I wrote them down anyway, because although they meant nothing to me, they might mean something to Willow's guardian.

I continued to sense as much as I could about Willow while holding her in awe. Once I'd received a number of details I e-mailed Jane some first impressions, which I asked her to verify so we could both check the connection.

Impressions of Willow

'Jane, I feel that Willow is a lion in a cat's body. The first thing I received was her giving me one of her best roars.'

'This made me laugh,' wrote Jane. 'She has always sat in the position of the Sphinx, but with her front paws elegantly crossed in front of her. Does she really think she's a lion? I do tell her she's a *sphinx*. Do you think I've brainwashed her?'

On the contrary, I thought, *Willow is doing the brainwashing*.

Jane confirmed my feeling that Willow had a big presence and was very strong-minded: 'It's either Willow's way or no way.'

'Willow says she likes to sleep up by your chest and heart area,' I went on, 'but you prefer her to sleep lower down the bed by your feet.'

'Oh yes, Willow is a well-cosseted cat. My husband is pushed to the very edge, I am in the middle and Willow spreads out on the other side. However much I try and move her lower down the bed she won't have any of it and walks all over me to get back up by my pillow and sometimes even on my head!'

My next impression was a little more private: 'Willow tells me that you share special moments in the bathroom with her.'

'Mmmm, I wouldn't say "special moments",' Jane replied, 'but my bathroom is my sanctuary. There I am no longer a director, a wife, a mother, a sister… I am just me, lying in bubbles for a few minutes with nobody asking me anything. But Willow will often time it that as soon as I climb into the bath she cries at the door to be let in. I'll clamber out, dripping wet, and open the door, and she'll have a drink of water from her bowl, which she insists on having in the bathroom, and then lie on the bath mat waiting for me. If I decide to stay in the bath for longer than usual, she will get bored and ask to be let out. The whole clambering-out routine will happen all over again.'

So, those were what Willow considered *special moments*.

I went onto the next impression Willow wished to share with Jane: 'I adore her.'

Later Jane told me, 'Now that is what I wanted to hear… the purrs and cuddles and rubbing were enough to let me

know she loved me, but for her to communicate that was such a special moment.'

These details were just the beginning of a larger tapestry which was about to be unveiled.

The next impression I sent Jane was: 'You have two daughters who are lots of fun, smiley and happy.'

'No,' Jane's heart dropped. 'I don't have any daughters, just one son.'

I felt so sure Willow was talking about two daughters I decided to bring it up again later when we were on the phone.

We continued with further impressions and Jane was happy that I had made a connection with Willow. We arranged a telephone appointment.

The Queen's Speech

I began by explaining the procedure and that Jane could interrupt me at any point to ask questions, take notes or seek clarification. When she was ready, we began.

Rather than simply answering Jane's questions, Willow wanted to say one or two things of her own. One of the first was: 'I am the queen.'

'I've always called her that!' Jane exclaimed. 'I can't believe that now she's telling you in no uncertain terms that she *is* the queen. I also sing her a little song.'

'How does it go?' I asked.

Jane started to sing it:

> *'Willow is the queen of the May and the June,*
> *Willow is the queen of the sun and the moon,*
> *Willow is the queen of the land and the sea,*
> *Willow is the queen who belongs to me!'*

I loved the fact that Jane sang to Willow. Continuing, I said, 'As well as referring to herself as a queen, or rather *the* queen, I feel

she has a very Sophia Loren quality to her. She's got a strong feminine strength and is really quite beautiful. In fact, Willow *is* the Sophia Loren of the cat world.'

Jane looked across at Willow, who was yet again lying Sphinx-like across her cushion with her front legs crossed. She said, 'Willow has just blinked at me very slowly as if to say "I am."'

This made me laugh. It was very Willow. She had good self-esteem and considered herself stunning. If only all females had such a healthy view of themselves.

Jane was happy with the communication so far and it was now time to bring the two daughters up again. I knew I needed to be as delicate as possible because of what I was about to say.

'May I ask, have you ever lost any children, Jane?'

'Yes, I had two miscarriages before having my son.'

'Do you happen to know if they were girls?'

'No, the doctors never told me. One was at 10 weeks and the other at 15 weeks.'

'Would the timing make sense if I said one of the girls would be 11 now and the other 12?'

There was a prolonged silence and then in a quiet voice Jane answered, 'Yes.'

'Willow is giving me the name "Bethany",' I said. 'Does that make sense to you?'

'Oh my God! Nobody, but *nobody*, knew that was the name I had chosen for the second pregnancy: *Bethany*. Bethany Jane. Nobody would know that – you certainly wouldn't – but Willow does!'

Jane felt herself go cold with shock.

'Did she say anything else?'

'Yes. She said, "She has two daughters. They are lots of fun – smiley, happy girls. I like the little one, Bethany, the best."'

Jane went quiet and I felt she was going to cry, but then I heard Willow say, 'Tell her Bethany is the naughty one.'

I repeated it for Jane, who burst out laughing. 'It's typical of Willow to make me laugh if I feel down, and only she could make a judgement about someone being naughty, someone I have never met.'

'She's going on to talk about your son.'

'What does she say?'

'He has a lot to learn.'

Jane laughed. After the call she passed Willow's message on to her 11-year-old son, Jake, who was surprised and asked, 'What does she mean?'

Jane helped me understand. 'I know exactly what Willow means. Willow wraps humans – well, *me* – around her little finger. She will cry and I am there, but not Jake. She will often get a lump in her blanket which simply needs straightening – a queen *cannot* lie on a creased blanket – and she'll walk in a circle moaning. Jake will tell her to shush, but not me – I'll be there straightening it out.'

Willow also had her own views on Jane's husband: 'Willow says, "Derek is nice, but he doesn't appreciate Jane enough. She works very hard and is very generous. He needs to share the jobs more."'

She even expressed her thoughts about the rabbit.

'I feel Willow is a bit jealous of your rabbit,' I told Jane.

'Yes, she licks her lips and starts hissing if Peter comes up,' she confirmed.

'Willow sees you all as equal. She's as much a member of the family as anyone else. I sense that she's a bit stiff in her shoulders and a bit more cantankerous than usual, more demanding, but she says, "There's nothing to worry about. I eat well, sleep well and feel very strong."'

Jane laughed again.

I finished the communication by giving her Willow's final message: '*Love, love, love*.'

'You have summed her up so well,' Jane said. 'I knew she was a character but now I have evidence, which I feel I can trust because of all the details you couldn't possibly have known, including the name "Bethany" – and all this from her photo!'

Later she wrote:

> *'Both my son and husband were surprised by how much Willow communicated and for days afterwards they both seemed to be on their best behaviour whenever she came into the room. It was almost "Better behave or Willow will tell Pea." I must admit that for a few days after the communication Jake was up like a shot if Willow moaned, but that didn't last long.*
>
> *The communication was simply fabulous. It filled me with such happiness to have evidence that Willow did know what was going on in our lives. I wasn't frightened or nervous and it was delivered in such a caring way. It was so appropriate.'*

I was impressed by Willow myself. She had tuned in to Jane's energy and understood that she had lost not one but two of her children. As well as this, she had been aware of their characters in their soul existence. In the most extraordinary way she had been able to heal Jane's aching heart.

Willow's Health Deteriorates

On 9 December 2009 Jane asked me to communicate with Willow again. 'Tests have revealed her kidneys are deteriorating rapidly,' she told me. 'I feel devastated. She's 18, but I'm not ready to let her go. I'd like one more year, please. Can you find out if there's anything I can do?'

I connected with Willow by looking at her photo and once more began to take notes of the impressions she was giving me:

'Nothing is too much of a problem. Willow sometimes needs a hand up onto the sofa, but she doesn't mind.

Her sense of dignity is strong.

She adores biscuits (for humans) – "A lady should be able to eat whatever she likes."

Lower spine/coccyx – arthritic feeling. Hips and back legs are worse – the sensation is grating.

She is very calm and serene.

"I am not struggling so badly, dear one. Don't worry yet. Just keep calm."

She loves it when Jane admires her white paws and white chest.'

When Jane and I started our phone call she asked me not to tell her if I felt Willow would transition soon. She asked her first question: 'I really want to know what else she wants me to do for her.'

'Just keep calm,' Willow replied. 'You are doing everything perfectly. Don't worry any more.'

'That cat knows me far too well – I worry when I've nothing to worry about,' Jane said.

'I like the warmth,' Willow continued, 'a heated pad, a source of warmth. You know this.'

'I was about to buy a heat pad for her,' Jane said, surprised. 'It's been on my mind for a while. Another thing I need to know is, am I doing anything wrong?'

'Not a thing, dear,' Willow replied.

'I just want to understand a bit more what's going on,' Jane told me. 'I still feel Willow has a huge energy about her, but I do wonder sometimes if I'm just *hoping* she has.'

I explained, 'Her energy is waning, but she is still happy with life. She still feels as strong mentally as she's always been and she's positive, upbeat, calm, sophisticated and unflustered.'

'I know she's an old cat and is slower,' Jane said, 'but she's probably the most spoiled and loved cat that ever purred on this planet. This one is my little soul mate. I want to make sure that she is happy and not in too much pain.'

Willow replied, 'My lower back and legs ache quite consistently, but I am peaceful.'

'What does she want me to do?'

'Everything you're doing now,' said Willow. 'Just love me.'

Much later, looking back at the communication, Jane realized that Willow was protecting her from the full extent of her situation and at the same time preparing her for the inevitable. She reflected:

> *'Like a mother protects a child, Willow was protecting me. I am sure she knew that I would have had the most miserable Christmas knowing that this was the last one with my girl, and she chose to spare my feelings. I hoped in my heart that you were going to say, "Oh, Willow is fine, she has such huge energy and she's going nowhere." I hoped, but it was never said. The communication was comforting, but at the same time I knew deep down that it would be the last one with my girl on the Earth plane. I knew it wasn't going to be long, but I couldn't accept it. Her closing words still resonate. When asked if I was doing everything right for her, she replied, "Of course you are, my dear. You're doing everything perfectly." So ladylike, so much dignity, so Willow.'*

'Goodbye, my Queen. I Love You'

Over Christmas and New Year Willow's health continued to slide. She spent most of her time on her special cushion, snuggled up and warm under a pink blanket. Jane would sit for hours stroking her and talking to her and Willow would blink slowly to acknowledge her. Her back legs had gone and she could hardly stand or walk. Then throughout one morning she was sick. Jane wrote:

> *'I held her over her litter tray to spare her dignity, as she hadn't the strength to get there herself. The vet took more bloods to ascertain whether it was her kidneys or whether her potassium was low, as this can happen in cats with renal failure. I knew in my heart that she wouldn't recover.*
>
> *The day before her passing I sat with her and sobbed, because I felt the time was getting nearer. She stretched her paw out and placed it on my hand. Was she telling me, "Hey, don't worry, it'll be fine," or was she saying, "Let me go"?*
>
> *The next morning I sat with her, kissed her and told her how special she was. She looked up from her cushion and our eyes met. I knew then she was telling me to let her go. I told her to stop fighting it and that I felt happy for her to leave me now. I gave her permission, as I knew it wasn't fair to expect her to stay any longer.*
>
> *Our vet, Jason, rang later with the results and told me, "Her kidneys have totally failed." In less than a month they had gone from critical to total failure and he said there was nothing he could do. I asked him to visit us one last time. As I stroked Willow's head I noticed that it was wet from my tears. My final words to her were "Goodbye, my queen. I love you."'*

Willow's body was carried out of the house wrapped in her pink blanket.

> *'The days that followed were horrendous. I cried a river, but deep, deep down I knew I had done the right thing. To see her staggering was probably harder than her passing. That wasn't the Willow I knew and loved, and that wasn't the Willow she wanted to be.'*

It was 5 January 2010 when Willow was assisted over. That day it began to snow, and it snowed and snowed until Gloucestershire was covered in a glorious gleaming blanket of purity, as if the Earth were being bathed in a magical glow ready for new life.

Willow's Advice from Beyond the Grave

When Jane contacted me a few weeks later, she was understandably still grieving. I connected with Willow and without prompting she immediately started to express herself in the same manner as before, except that her energy felt stronger and somehow more complete. She wanted to talk about Jane:

> *'She's a worrier. She can't help it. She worries about everything. My job was to calm her down and remind her how special she was. I did my job well. I can say this now I am on the other side of the physical reality.*
>
> *She is not supported enough by her husband. He doesn't understand how hard it is to juggle so many things – to divide the energy in so many different ways. He will one day fully comprehend.*
>
> *I am well and relaxed – no longer in pain lower down. My kidneys were in dire condition, especially my left – very sore, hopeless really. Jason is a kind man; he came to end*

my days. It was the right time. I was ready to go. I was very weak and could hardly walk. That was no kind of life for me.'

When I saw Willow in my mind's eye she was glowing with vitality, with lustrous fur. She continued with life advice for Jane:

'Tell Jane to slow down. She is working too hard and needs to give herself more time to unwind and play, to really enjoy herself. I want to see her laugh again. To smile and feel a lightness in her heart. To dance around the garden naked! To feel her full divine feminine essence. To harness her female power. I was always trying to remind her of the power she had, but I grew tired. Now I am at full strength again I will be more direct with my message.'

I was writing the message down and would type up every last word.

Willow continued, addressing Jane directly:

'Baby girl, stop trying to please everyone else and put yourself first. They will show you more love and respect if you do. Follow my example – didn't I always put myself first? Didn't I always draw others to me? This is not a selfish act, it is a self-ish act, putting the focus on your self – your soul being, physical being and emotional being. You know I care for you and say this with love in my heart, because our hearts are entwined. You have always done what's right for me; now I am trying to do what's right for you – will you let me? Will you listen?'

I was sure Jane would listen.

Jane had wanted to know whether Willow had passed over OK and who was taking care of her now. I put these questions to Willow.

‘I was gone in an instant,’ she replied, ‘because I was ready to let go. It was what I wanted. And I take care of myself, because I am Willow. And a cat.’

Jane had asked whether she was ready to go.

‘Yes, very ready. I urged you to let me go and you listened to my message. You were brave. And I am grateful.’

Jane had another cat called Blue who was the same age as Willow and had arrived on the same day. Although from a different litter, she had been like a sister to her. She also had health concerns now. Jane had asked whether Willow could tell her if Blue was OK.

Willow answered, ‘Blue is getting tired. She has to rest more, but she is content for now. You don’t need to worry about her. Just let her be, enjoying her life. She knows I am close. I have not left her, or you. You may feel my essence close by. Kisses. Head rubs.’

Jane’s last question was: ‘I felt Willow was my soul mate and wonder if she will ever come back to me?’

‘Yes, we are soul mates,’ Willow replied. ‘Always connected. But I don’t feel I want to come back as another body. I feel one lifetime together was perfect and irreplaceable and I was very happy with that physical body. I will wait until we are both back together and then we can reincarnate together. I hope that is OK with you.’

Later Jane wrote to me: ‘I know those messages were from Willow because I always called her “baby girl” and in her message that’s what she called me. Thank you.’

Blue

Blue stayed by Jane’s side for another 12 months, just as Willow had done.

‘That old ailing cat healed me through every anniversary,’ she said.

The weekend before Blue passed over, Derek, a fulfilment manager of an online optical company, thought he saw Willow jump off Jane's lap. He described her as 'like a bright light, but the essence was Willow'.

Then the day before Blue died, Jane's sister was convinced she had seen Willow walking into Jane and Derek's bedroom.

Jane told me, 'To me, this was her final duty: Willow came back to help Blue across.'

It was reassuring to know that Willow had come to accompany Blue to the other side. It was also humbling to hear Willow giving life advice to Jane. If an animal is able to know so much about other animals, and people, both in their physical body and as souls who passed over many years earlier, it is exciting to think how much they could know about other areas of life, death and beyond.

In the next chapter I'd like to share with you how Morgan suddenly fell ill and how I begged him to stay with me a while longer. We will also look at the importance of palliative care and whether animals can decide whether to stay or go.

'Energy psychology is nothing less than the medicine of the future.'
LYNNE MCTAGGART

TRANSFORM YOUR BELIEFS, TRANSFORM YOUR LIFE

EFT Tapping Using Matrix Reimprinting

KARL DAWSON WITH KATE MARILLAT

Chapter 1
THE POWER OF BELIEF

'The greatest revolution in our generation is the discovery that human beings, by changing the inner attitudes of their minds, can change the outer aspects of their lives.'

William James

Your beliefs are the rivers running through the inner landscape of your mind. They are the life source for the fertile soil and affect all that grows there. So, what do you believe about yourself? Do you think you're a good parent? Effective at your job? Clever, rich and talented? Or do you believe you could achieve more in your life? How healthy do you think you are? Do you see the world as a safe place? Is it a world full of love or are you still endlessly searching for romance?

Perhaps this is the first time you've been asked these questions and you aren't sure how to answer. And beliefs are fluid, like water – they shift and change. They create new pathways through our mind, and the more energy that flows into them, the stronger they become. We may find ourselves dealing with torrential rapids.

We all have hundreds of different beliefs about ourselves and the world around us. Some are supportive, some are not. All of them, however, affect our life.

In allopathic medicine, the absolute power of belief systems is shown through placebos, or 'fake medicine'. Placebos don't have to be pills –

they can be creams, injections or even surgery – but if we believe in them, they will improve our health. Researchers have measured this by using variables such as colour, dosage and branding. Interestingly, the effect is greater if the dosage is increased. Shiny boxes and a capsule will trump a tablet, and an injection will work even better.[1]

Health authorities are well aware of the placebo effect. According to the UK National Health Service, 'The placebo effect is an example of how our expectations and beliefs can cause real change in our physical bodies. It's a phenomenon that we don't completely understand. But we can see it working in all kinds of ways, and all kinds of circumstances.'[2]

Take this pain-relief study, where a group of students was told that they were going to take part in a study of a new painkiller called trivaricaine. This was a brown lotion that was to be painted on the skin. It smelled medicinal, but contained only water, iodine and thyme oil: it was a placebo. Of course the students were not told this.

The administrator of the 'medicine' donned gloves and a white lab coat. Each student had the trivaricaine painted on one index finger and the other left untreated. Then each index finger in turn was squeezed in a vice.

The students reported significantly less pain in the treated finger. They expected the 'medicine' to kill pain, and sure enough, they experienced less pain. Even though the trivaricaine was a fake painkiller, expectation and belief had produced real results.[3]

This is only one example of hundreds of clinical trials that consistently demonstrate the power of the placebo. Essentially, what we *believe* can make us well. The medical authorities know it too. In March 2013, 783 doctors were polled about their use of sugar pills – a treatment they knew had no medical value – to aid patients' recovery. An overwhelming 97 per cent admitted that they had recommended a sugar pill, and one in 100 gave out these placebos at least once a week.[4]

The power of the placebo is becoming better known in part thanks to Dr Irving Kirsh, a professor at Harvard Medical School. Kirsh challenged the effectiveness of antidepressants, which are worth US$11 billion annually. Following an initial study in 1998, he invoked the Freedom of Information Act and obtained unpublished clinical trial data of antidepressants from American pharmaceutical companies. He found that when these data were included with his original findings, antidepressants outperformed placebos in only 20 of the 48 trials (less than half!) and that the overall difference between drugs and placebos was 'clinically insignificant'.[5] It was the belief in the placebo that directly influenced the subjects and had an impact on their physiology.

Placebo is Latin for 'I shall please.' Just as strong is the opposite term, *nocebo*, meaning 'I shall harm.' If we are told something negative, generally by a person in authority such as a doctor or teacher, it can have just as much power as the placebo, because we totally believe what they are saying. Being told that we have a specific period of time to live or are 'at risk of developing a certain disease', for example, may mean we believe it and so it comes true.

Conversely, there are many documented reports of people who have chosen *not* to believe their medical diagnosis and healed themselves using various techniques, including Matrix Reimprinting.

Where Do Our Beliefs Come From?

So, where do these powerful beliefs come from?

When it comes to understanding how we develop our belief systems, the magic number is six. There are six ways in which we create core beliefs and most of our core beliefs were formed before the age of six.

Why pre-six? Scientific research has now clearly demonstrated that before the age of two our dominant brainwave state is delta, and between two and six it is theta. These brainwaves give a lower electrical

energetic reading than those we subsequently use in our waking life. Delta is the slowest frequency, the frequency of deep meditation. Theta is the state that hypnotists drop their clients into in order to make them more suggestible. It is also associated with deep relaxation, creativity, light sleep and dreaming.

Nature cleverly designed us this way because when we are born we don't have any conscious memories – in essence, we are an empty filing cabinet ready to be filled with memories and beliefs – so we enter the world in download mode. It is in our first six years that we form most of our core beliefs and if we encounter any of the following experiences, they are most certainly hard-wired into our subconscious.

Conclusions Based on a Traumatic Experience

When we have a traumatic experience (i.e. when our body goes into fight, flight or freeze mode), we take the conclusions we draw from it into our subconscious so that we can automatically remember them if the situation should present itself again.

After many years of helping people manage their framework of beliefs, we know that beliefs are formed not by trauma itself, but by the conclusions that are drawn from it. For example, if 10 people were to experience the same traumatic event, such as a tsunami, they would all have different beliefs about themselves because of it. Some might believe 'I deserved it', while others might think 'Bad things always happen to me' or 'I'm unlucky.' The same goes for war veterans who were in the same conflict – they will have different beliefs about their time at war. This also explains why some will experience severe PTSD and others will be able to cope well with their time in combat.

Learning Experience

When we have a powerful learning experience, it goes straight to our subconscious so that we don't have to relearn it. Essentially, all our basic

skills like walking and talking are compounded learning experiences. Yet we are also continually formulating additional subconscious programs based on new information which has an impact on us.

Post-hypnotic Suggestion

When we are in an altered state of consciousness and a suggestion is made to us, it automatically goes into our subconscious mind. We can be in a hypnotic state like this in the presence of doctors, teachers or anyone who is in a position of power over us and leaves us feeling helpless – which can take us into a post-hypnotic state. This is why it is so important to consider the nocebo effect: the words spoken by 'powerful' people can either support or damage us.

Teaching

We are also in a suggestible state when we are in the role of student. Many people resonate with this point, as they can easily remember times when they were told by teachers that they weren't 'trying hard enough' or were a 'chatterbox' or 'one of the disruptive students'. Add these suggestions to a few school reports which your parents read out to you and you have a traumatic learning and teaching experience rolled into one.

Unconscious Modelling

We learn so much from modelling our parents in the first few years of life. We copy what we see them doing, not what they tell us to do. This continues throughout life (e.g. modelling celebrities or our peers at work), but it is especially potent in those early years, when we are in the theta 'sponge-like' state, as it goes directly into the subconscious database.

Repetition

This is also related to modelling, because if we repeat an action, it goes into the subconscious. This is also why affirmations work over a period

of time. Simply repeating a positive affirmation once or twice won't do anything (apart from make us feel a little better at the time), but doing it consistently will change the pathways in our brain, otherwise known as neuroplasticity.

The specialist in this field, Dr David Hamilton, a biochemist, has shown through his research and book *How Your Mind Can Heal Your Body* that every thought we have creates microscopic changes in the structure of our brain. Our neural connections (the communication pathways between our brain cells) become denser when we consistently repeat a specific thought. So, with affirmations, repetition and visualization, our thoughts are changing the physical structure of our brain.[6]

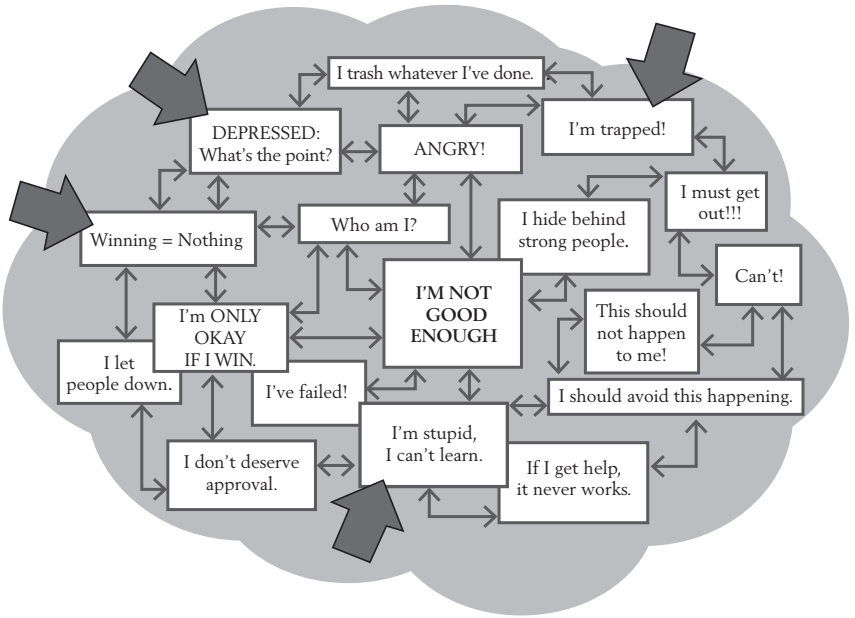
When we understand the importance of the brainwave state in children, together with the six ways in which beliefs go subconscious, it's easy to see why such a strong belief system has grown up around doctors and allopathic medicine. A child gets taken to the doctor when they are feeling unwell (traumatic experience). The doctor is a figure of authority to whom the parent listens attentively (post-hypnotic suggestion and unconscious modelling). The doctor gives the child some medicine and tells them that it will make them better (learning experience). This cycle continues throughout their childhood (repetition). It's no surprise then that the belief system surrounding placebo medicine is one of the strongest and easiest to test.

The Fluidity of Beliefs

Like water, beliefs are fluid – they gather momentum, they shift course, they filter out into new streams. We have core beliefs which branch out and become generalized. They loop backwards and forwards around each other, depending on what is happening in our life at the time.

> *In 2013, the transformational coach and bestselling author Arielle Essex spoke at the Matrix Reimprinting convention about a client with whom she had been working. Let's call him Lucas. Lucas had been suffering*

panic attacks and throughout the course of their work together he and Arielle made a visual of his thought loop process between beliefs:



Belief thought loops

Lucas was the eldest son in his family, and his father was the headmaster of his local school and a keen sportsman. He pushed Lucas to succeed both in academia and on the sports pitch. However, Lucas's talents did not lie in either of these areas and he continually felt he let his father down and 'wasn't good enough'. He also found out that his father would often fix little awards so that he would sometimes win one.

Lucas had the belief that 'I'm only OK if I win', along with many other generalizations such as 'I let people down' and 'I'm stupid – I can't learn.' As he grew into a man, he was plagued by self-doubt. On one hand he was desperate to 'win', but on the other, even when he did achieve a goal, he couldn't quite trust it due to his father's 'fixing' during his childhood, so he often felt 'trapped'. These beliefs also brought up strong emotions such as anger, together with a state of depression.

We all have a myriad of beliefs that we've picked up along our journey through life. Yet we aren't often conscious of them until we start looking for them, or they start looking for us. In Lucas's case, he reached the point of having panic attacks and was desperate for some help. Obviously, it's best not to let things get that far. So, where are our beliefs held and how can we access them?

The Two Minds

We all have two amazing and interconnected minds. The one you are using to decipher these words is the conscious mind. It is conscious of itself. It is a creative mind that holds all our wishes and desires. It is not bound by time constraints. Try thinking about a date next week or an appointment a few days ago – your mind will present the information to you in a busy, creative and often image-based way. And this self-conscious mind also gives us the ability to analyse ourselves.

Our other mind is the subconscious. Literally meaning 'below the conscious', it's a database full of programs and beliefs. The conscious mind is wildly creative, while the subconscious is habitual and enables us to function in daily life. This filing cabinet stores all our daily actions from walking to touch-typing, locking doors, brushing teeth or making a phone call. The number of actions that we perform every day runs into the thousands. We couldn't possibly hold all this information in our conscious mind or we'd never get anything done. Imagine having to think about which muscles need to contract, where the pressure needs to go and in what sequence every time we needed to walk. Fortunately, our subconscious mind learned all of this information years ago and stored it in the filing cabinet so it could unconsciously retrieve and use it while we engaged our conscious mind in thinking creatively. All we need now is the intention to walk and our subconscious mind plays that program for us.

The Über-powerful Subconscious Mind

The subconscious mind often gets a bad reputation, but, as the walking example shows, we need it to function in daily life. Scientific research has now proved that in all our daily thoughts, we only use 5 per cent of our creative conscious mind versus 95 per cent of our subconscious mind. Isn't that astounding? It's actually our subconscious mind that is in charge. It's this filing system that is running our life.

What's even more flabbergasting is that scientists have measured cognitive activity and have ascertained that the conscious mind is capable of handling 40 bits of information a second, but the subconscious mind is capable of handling 40 million bits of information a second! So this amazing filing system can absorb 1 million times more information than the conscious mind in a single moment. For example, if you were in a restaurant and someone dropped a glass, your conscious mind would capture 40 pieces of information about that moment, but your subconscious mind would take in 40 million pieces of information, from the smell of the dinner on your plate to the expression on the manager's face, to the clothes you were wearing… and the list goes on.

Staying with a food theme, imagine you are invited to a posh dinner party and lobster is brought out as the main course. You've never eaten lobster before and are intrigued by the strange implements, a claw cracker and lobster pick, that are presented with your dish. You learn how to eat the lobster by nervously asking for advice or watching other diners cracking the crustacean's joints and scooping out the flesh.

A few months later you're attending another dinner party and again lobster is on the menu. At this point you catch your thoughts in slow motion and it is as if they are entering a search term on Google and pulling up the relevant web page, complete with pictures, on how you used the implements at the previous dinner party. This feels like a bridge between the conscious and the subconscious.

So, how about you go on holiday for a week and the resort's speciality dish is lobster and it's on the menu every night? After two or three days, you're a lobster-eating expert. That program is stored in your subconscious and your conscious mind is free to entertain itself with talking to other guests and enjoying the holiday ambience while you are eating lobster. Compare this to the first time you encountered the lobster and your nervousness at the sight of the strange implements.

Add a belief into the mix such as 'I've got to get it right.' This could mean that eating lobster for the first time makes you stressed and nervous. What if you're worried about a potential allergy to shellfish? That will change your experience as well. How about a belief that eating lobster isn't for people like you? Will that influence how you feel about eating the lobster and what you believe other dinner guests might think of your ineptitude with the instruments? So, as well as having these pre-learned programs, your beliefs will underpin how you experience a situation.

It can be quite a daunting thought to know that our conscious mind, the one that holds all our wishes (earn more, be successful, lose weight, etc.) and that we use to make positive affirmations, only has control of 5 per cent of our thoughts. It's also a million times less powerful than our subconscious mind. No wonder it's so hard to change our behaviour and beliefs with willpower and positive affirmations alone – we're trying to do it with the smaller of our two minds.

Beliefs Shape Our Reactions in the World

The face of science has changed over the last decade, with huge advances being made in neuroscience, epigenetics and understanding the role of the heart. These discoveries have shown that what we think and believe changes our physiology right down to our genetic structure. Science is now proving what self-help pioneers like Louise Hay have been teaching for years: that we can heal ourselves. (For easily digestible information on these findings, see *Matrix Reimprinting Using EFT*.)

Quite simply, our body and mind are connected. They work together in a constant flow of messages/energy from cell to cell, and these messages are controlled by signals in both our inner and outer environment. Our inner landscape includes our emotions, our biochemistry, our mental processes and our beliefs. Our outer environment is everything outside ourselves: the external toxins to which we are exposed, the food we eat and the culture in which we grow up. When we encounter a signal from either the inner or outer environment, our body reacts to it by passing messages through our 37 trillion cells. As cellular biologist Bruce Lipton explains,

> *'Cells respond to a massive variety of signals using protein switches: over 100,000 per cell built into its membrane. These protein switches are fundamental units of perception. They read environmental conditions and adjust the biology to meet the need required. This becomes very profound when we own that perception controls behaviour for it is how we perceive the world that controls our lives.'*[7]

If we add the recent discoveries in neuroplasticity into the equation, it's even easier to see that our perception actually alters our brain structure. These findings have shown that the brain is made of a malleable material. When, as a result of physical experiences and/or thoughts, our brain cells (neurons) reach out and make connections with each other, there is a microscopic change in the brain. The more we repeat a thought, the denser the neural connection becomes and the stronger the neural pathway in the brain.

For example, take meditation. Researchers at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston used MRI scans to document changes in the brain's structure in the areas associated with mindfulness meditation. After eight weeks, the MRI scans revealed an increased density in areas of the brain associated with memory, self-awareness and compassion.[8]

So, the way we react to environmental signals is determined through the filters of our beliefs. Our reactions then change the brain structure:

certain neural pathways become deeper and easier for our thoughts to travel down. Great if you're thinking how much you love yourself; not so great if you're constantly doubting your own ability.

Meet Sarah, who has a spider phobia. One morning she is having breakfast in the kitchen before leaving for work when she sees a large spider crawl across the floor. In this instance, the spider acts as the environmental signal and her subconscious mind whips out the pre-learned 'Spiders are dangerous' belief that was imprinted as a result of conclusions drawn from a traumatic experience in the past. This environmental signal and belief then send the message to her cells to act accordingly.

Next comes a whoosh of physiological reactions! The amygdala in Sarah's brain (part of the limbic system controlling our emotions and long-term memory) sends signals to the hypothalamus that it is in danger. The hypothalamus-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis is activated, and adrenaline, blood sugars and cortisol are released into the bloodstream.

This in turn can affect a whole host of other bodily functions, such as blood pressure, heart rate, body temperature, blood acidity, intelligence, cognitive ability, stress and anxiety levels and digestion.

In Sarah's case, she is suddenly full of irrational fear of the spider, her breathing is erratic and her hands are shaking as she runs out of the kitchen and locks herself in the bathroom.

Flight, Fight, Freeze

This response has been named 'flight, fight, freeze' and it affects our entire being. We needed it when we were living in caves and found ourselves in genuinely life-threatening situations on a regular basis. It means that mind and body are completely focused, we lose all logic and clarity, and simply want to run or fight. And if we can't run or fight, we freeze.

The freeze response is the least known of the three, but it is important in releasing the trauma or energy of the situation and also in understanding the theory behind Matrix Reimprinting.

We see the freeze response very clearly in the animal kingdom. Trauma specialist Dr Robert Scaer undertook research which involved observing animals in the wild and noting their behaviour during trauma. If you watch an animal being pursued by a predator on TV you will see that when it is chased, it will often collapse and become limp, even before being seized by the predator. This is the freeze response. It is usually a last resort for animals when fight or flight has failed.

When the animal freezes, it releases a flood of endorphins, so that if it is attacked, the pain will be minimized. If the animal is not eaten and survives the period of immobility, in virtually all cases it will begin to tremble. This can range from a shudder to a dramatic seizure.

According to Dr Scaer, slow-motion video of this trembling reveals that it resembles the last act of the animal before it froze – usually the act of running. So the animal generally discharges the freeze response by shaking, breathing deeply and perspiring. After discharging the response, it will emerge unscathed by its ordeal. Dr Scaer theorizes that this is its way of releasing all unconscious memory of the attack.[9] Humans, however, don't do this. In fact shaking after a trauma is seen as a negative symptom and we are often told to calm down.

But why do we go into the fight, flight, freeze response for different external signals? Why is Sarah scared of spiders but other people keep tarantulas as pets? It is due to the beliefs that were imprinted on us by emotional events in the past. In Sarah's case, they are from her childhood, when she watched her mother scream and jump on a chair every time she saw even the tiniest spider. In essence, she was watching her mother become engulfed in the fight or flight response. For a small child, seeing your primary caregiver lose control can be a traumatic experience. Add in the modelling and repetition and you can see why Sarah developed the subconscious belief that spiders are dangerous.

This belief means that every time Sarah sees a spider she will experience an energetic shift in her nervous system into the flight, fight, freeze response, meaning she will respond irrationally to a harmless spider and perhaps spend the next hour full of anxiety behind a locked bathroom door, possibly waiting for someone to rescue her, missing the bus to work and creating further problems for herself. On a conscious level, she knows there is no real threat from the spider, but this energetic reaction in her body will still have her running to the bathroom.

Sarah's personal perception of reality is determined by the beliefs she holds. This does not necessarily make the beliefs real. But her beliefs dictate her attitude to spiders, and her attitude dictates how she responds.

Is there a situation that triggers you into this fight or flight response? What about going on a training course and being asked to stand up and introduce yourself to a room full of strangers? Karl finds this instantly sends the majority of his course attendees into the fight or flight response, as the thought of public speaking strikes fear into people's hearts like nothing else. Many attendees report energy shifts in their body such as a faster heartbeat, dizzy feelings and an instant lump or tightness in the throat at the thought of having to speak in front of a room full of people. These reactions will be based on their beliefs about the safety of public speaking. We wouldn't need to search too far before we came across a previous memory that made them feel unsafe in this situation.

Imagine if Sarah could revisit those times when her mother screamed and her little self was frozen, stuck in fight and flight, and change them. What if we could release the trauma and reimprint those memories so that she and her mother believed spiders were harmless? There's no 'what if' or 'imagine' about it – this is the purpose of Matrix Reimprinting. With it you will learn how to reduce the fight and flight response by exploring the emotional memories in your subconscious mind. You will be able to find the beliefs stored there and elegantly transform them.

Some people intrinsically know what their core beliefs are and how they acquired them, but awareness alone won't transform them. Dr Bruce Lipton sums this up beautifully in his analogy that the subconscious mind is like a CD player playing music from the subconscious database. Simply walking over to the CD player and shouting at it to change the music isn't going to do any good. It's only when we press 'stop' on the player and put on another CD that the music changes. With Matrix Reimprinting we can find our core beliefs and discover when they were hard-wired into our subconscious. We can then reimprint a new belief – a new CD for the player. In this way, Matrix Reimprinting elegantly allows us to release any trapped emotions around a traumatic event and subsequently change a negative core belief into a supportive one.

Your Belief Blueprint

We've seen the power of our subconscious beliefs and how they change our physical and emotional reactions and can be the blueprint for our past and the future. Now, with Matrix Reimprinting you will soon see the connections between your own beliefs and the life events that you have created.

Exercise: Brainstorm Your Beliefs

Your task for this chapter is to 'brainstorm' your beliefs. This will begin to give you a conscious understanding of what they are.

1. Grab some pieces of paper.
2. Look at each of the beliefs on the checklist (*see opposite*) in turn and ask yourself, 'How true is that for me out of 100 as a percentage?' This is known as the 'Validity of Cognition' (VoC) scale.
3. Write down each of the beliefs that rate highly for you in the centre of a new piece of paper.
4. Note your reactions to each belief and create a brainstorm of where they emerge in different areas of your life. List them all, radiating out from the belief in a 'mind map'.
5. Feel free to add your own beliefs.

As you work through this book, you can come back to this map and note down any changes in the validity of your beliefs and any connections that you have made between them and the events in your life.

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We all have a myriad of beliefs – positive, negative and neutral – and often one core one that we can spend our life proving to be true. There are also shared beliefs that may be culturally or family dependent.

In the next chapter we're going to examine how these beliefs are stored on a personal and human level and how and why our core beliefs form torrential rivers in some parts of our inner landscape and barely make a puddle in others.

Belief	**Validity of Cognition – the Truth Percentage**
I'm not good enough	
I'm not loveable	
The world is a dangerous place	
I'm worthless	
I'm incapable	
I'm misunderstood	
I'm abandoned	
I'm betrayed	
I'm unattractive	
I'm unproductive	
I'm incompetent	
I'm a failure	
I'm a victim	
I'm a burden	
I'm dumb	
I'm always used	
I'm alone	
I'm bad	
I'm guilty	
I'm sinful	
I'm confused	
I'm trapped	
I'm powerless	
I'm inferior	
I'm separated from God	

The beliefs checklist