

HEALING POWER

The Methods

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The Methods

One Continuous Sacred Ritual

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May you find the peace, love, and joy we all crave.



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PART 1

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE





CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

- I am a physician with a forty-five-year career as a clinician, teacher, and administrator in community psychiatry. The people I serve struggle with major mental illness, substance abuse, medical problems, homelessness, poverty, unemployment, broken families, lack of social support, and legal problems. I find their stories heartfelt, heroic, colorful, and creative.
- I also have an interest in Mind-Body-Spirit Medicine and have created a self-help, self-healing model I use myself and teach to patients, students, and staff members if they are interested. The model is called *Healing Power*, which is described in four previous works:
 1. *Healing Power: Ten Steps to Pain Management and Spiritual Evolution Revised* (2010). This is the original text. It introduces the ten steps and the universal healing wheel or PMQ: pain-method-quality. You will find a description of fifteen spiritually oriented practice methods designed to help us cultivate any one or a combination of one hundred healing qualities.
 2. *Healing Power, The Workbook* (2015): This is a companion workbook to *Healing Power: Ten Steps to Pain Management and Spiritual Evolution Revised* (2010). The workbook elaborates the dynamics of the universal healing wheel, adds some new information about the practice methods, and a host of other important principles, tools, and wisdom pearls.
 3. *Healing Power: Physician Heal Thyself* (2018): This book elaborates my personal story and focuses on self-healing for physicians and healthcare professionals to avoid burn out.
 4. *Healing Power: One Hundred Days of Love* (2019). This workbook draws material from the prior works and organizes it around the qualities, assigning one quality for each of one hundred days.
- This workbook, *Healing Power: The Methods* focuses on the practice methods already described in *Healing Power: Ten Steps to Pain Management and Spiritual Evolution Revised* (2010) and *Healing Power, The Workbook* (2015). There is nothing new here but the material related to practice methods in these prior works is scattered so one has to search for corresponding sections like a treasure hunt. In this workbook, I have put it all together in one place for the convenience of the student. In addition, the material is reorganized to make it more understandable and accessible. It will be easier to see how the pieces fit together and build upon each other.

- Here you will find a description of fifteen healing methods extracted from the great wisdom traditions and organized into steps and tools designed to help you turn the table on your pain so it becomes your ally rather than your enemy. You will learn how to make your pain work for rather than against you. You will learn how to be a more skillful pain manager. You will learn how to *make medicine out of your pain*.
- This is a pain management workbook. Life is painful. Pain is complex, tricky, and difficult to master. We need all the help we can get. In this workbook, we will study the complexities of pain, see how it works, and offer a variety of methods to help us respond skillfully.
- Our pain can be physical, mental, emotional, interpersonal, or spiritual, in any combination and sometimes all at once. It can be overwhelming. Everyone gets a turn. No one is immune. We all suffer.
- Painful problems of body, mind, and soul take over and steal the peace. We find ourselves caught in a web of pain. We don't know how we got there and we don't know how to get out.
- Most of us at some point in our lives turn to short-term remedies that provide temporary relief but ultimately add to our pain—street drugs, alcohol, food, sex, materialism, power, gambling, and the like. Because we manage our pain unskillfully, we find ourselves in more trouble; poorly handled problems are a source of untold difficulty.
- If only there was a way to reduce our suffering rather than compound it. There is. We can learn how to become more skillful pain managers. Here's how: pain is comprised of two layers:
 1. The inevitable suffering of life
 2. Our reaction to it
- We cannot control the inevitable suffering of life, but we can control how we respond to it. We are afraid of suffering, disease, disability, change, the unknown, and death. This mental distress slows down the healing process and makes the pain worse. When disease persists, we can learn how to slow down and relax so we stay in charge and get our lives back.
- Every painful problem has a mental component because it must pass through the mind. The mind can make the problem worse by responding with one of its negative habit patterns, or it can help contain, reduce, and sometimes completely eliminate the problem. The methods taught here help us restructure the mind's habitual negative responses into positive healing qualities. We learn how to control pain so pain does not control us.
- This workbook recommends active practice of a variety of spiritually oriented methods we turn to when our doctors and other healthcare professionals are unable to solve our problems and relieve our pain entirely. They are intended not to replace, but to supplement, existing components of our treatment regimen such as medication, acupuncture, massage, diet, exercise, herbs, vitamins, counseling, psychotherapy, and so forth.
- The methods do not require professional attention. They are self-help, self-healing methods. We practice them on our own or with like-minded peers. This workbook will show you how to use these methods to nurture healing qualities that activate the mind-body connection and produce palpable changes in your response to your pain.
- *How you manage your pain will determine whether you move forward, backward, or stay stuck in this life.* By reading this workbook and putting its exercises into practice, you will learn what to do and what not to do to more skillfully manage your reaction to pain.

- But this is more than just a pain management workbook. Throughout this work, you will learn about the intimate relationship between pain and love. Skillful pain management inevitably leads to expansion of healing power and spiritual evolution. That is to say, if you learn to be a more skillful pain manager, you are going to love more. You will feel better. You will become a better person. And you may even experience higher states of consciousness.
- If you have finally had enough suffering, if you have a passionate desire to change, if you are ready to do some work, this model answers the call.
- Read on and you will find:
 - A host of profoundly important universal spiritual principles, methods, and qualities you can use for full recovery and deep healing.
 - Fifteen proven methods—from ancient wisdom and modern science—designed to help you crack open the shell of religion to release its pearls of wisdom, hidden secrets, and soothing healing powers.
 - An army of one hundred healing qualities that add up to love. You can use these qualities for protection, guidance, and wisdom. The qualities will help you manage any pain or problem. With the cultivation of these qualities, you will be ready for anything that life throws, even the most brutal realities.

SUMMARY

- This workbook will address the inevitable suffering of life that cannot be eliminated by the medical model.
- We will look at every domain of pain: physical, mental, emotional, interpersonal and spiritual and offer a host of techniques to manage that pain skillfully.
- The supreme goal is to become an ever-increasingly skillful pain manager and expand our love until it is unconditional, one day at a time for the rest of our lives.
- Here you will find a boatload of tools you can use when the going gets rough. The rest is up to you. You can take it as far as you wish. The payoff is as big as you want it to be.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- After we receive our medication, surgery, or natural remedy and are still in pain, there are a variety of psychosocial and spiritual methods that can help us manage that pain skillfully.
- This model has fifteen methods. The methods are the best of the best, a highlight reel of sorts, extracted from great spiritual books, teachers, and masters and translated into spiritually oriented cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), mindfulness, and meditative practices.
- When we practice these methods, we become more skillful pain managers, expand healing power, and evolve.
- The model is for healthcare professionals to heal themselves first and then support their patients in the same process.
- Patients can use this workbook directly without a healthcare professional.

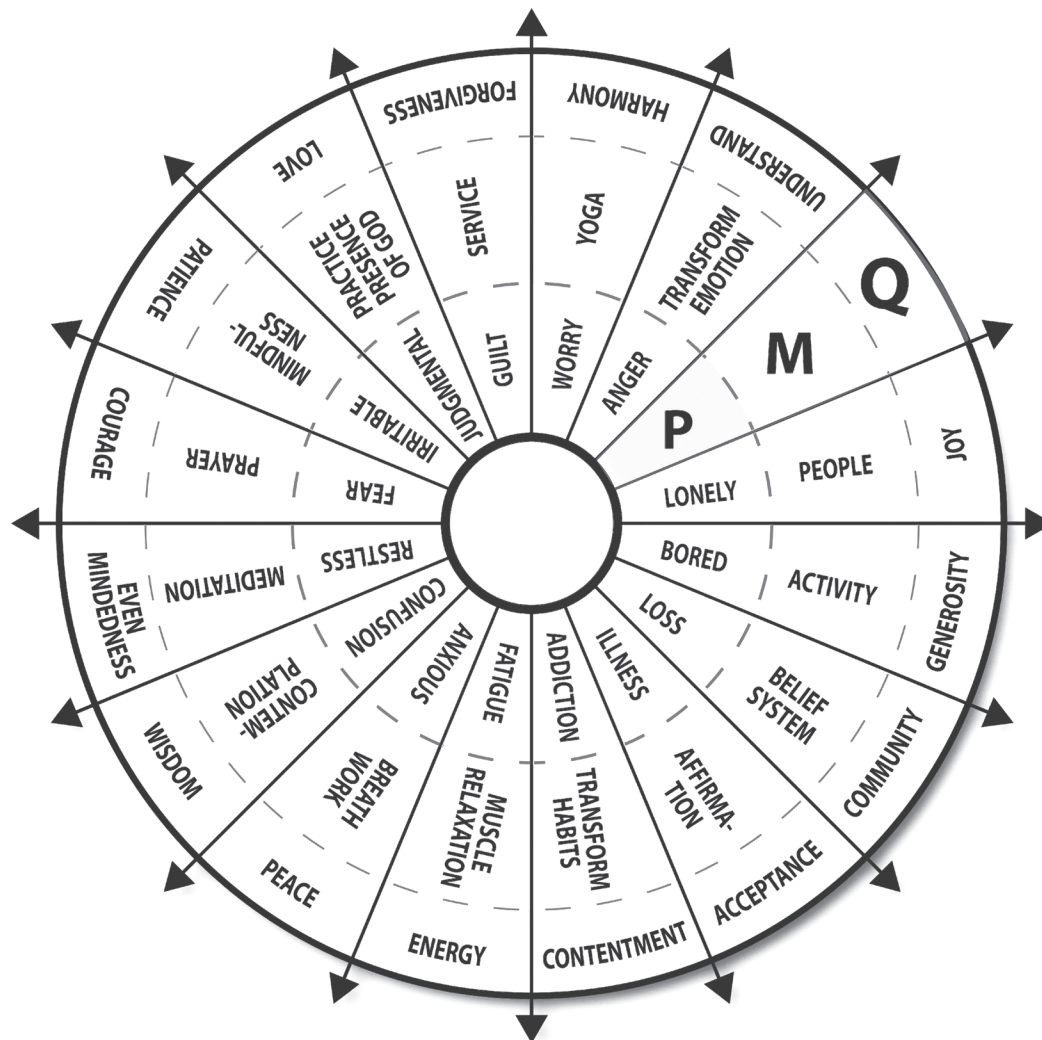
Healing Power: The Methods

- Ideally, both professional and patient will practice the recommended methods. The goal is the same: skillful pain management, expansion of healing power, and spiritual evolution.
- This workbook is divided into three parts.
 - **Part 1: Spiritual Practice**
 - Chapter 1: Introduction
 - Chapter 2: The Universal Healing Wheel: introduces the essential principles of *Healing Power*
 - Chapter 3: Getting Started: outlines the conditions needed to start and maintain a successful spiritual practice
 - Chapter 4: The Serenity Prayer: Will, surrender, and the wisdom to know the difference
 - **Part 2: The Methods**
 - Chapters 5–19: A detailed look at the fifteen methods: principles, techniques, exercises
 - **Part 3: Putting It All Together**
 - Chapter 20: A Balanced Healing Program: suggestions for balancing horizontal and vertical axis methods and exercises designed to help you work on your most challenging problems
 - Chapter 21: Skillful Pain Management: a deeper look at PMQ dynamics
 - Chapters 22–25: The House, The Movie, School, and The Car: metaphors that deepen our understanding of self-healing principles
 - Chapter 26: A Universal Healing Method: spiritualize any painful problem
 - Chapter 27: Omniscient Love and Terror at the Abyss: the essential spiritual battle
 - Chapter 28: Conclusion



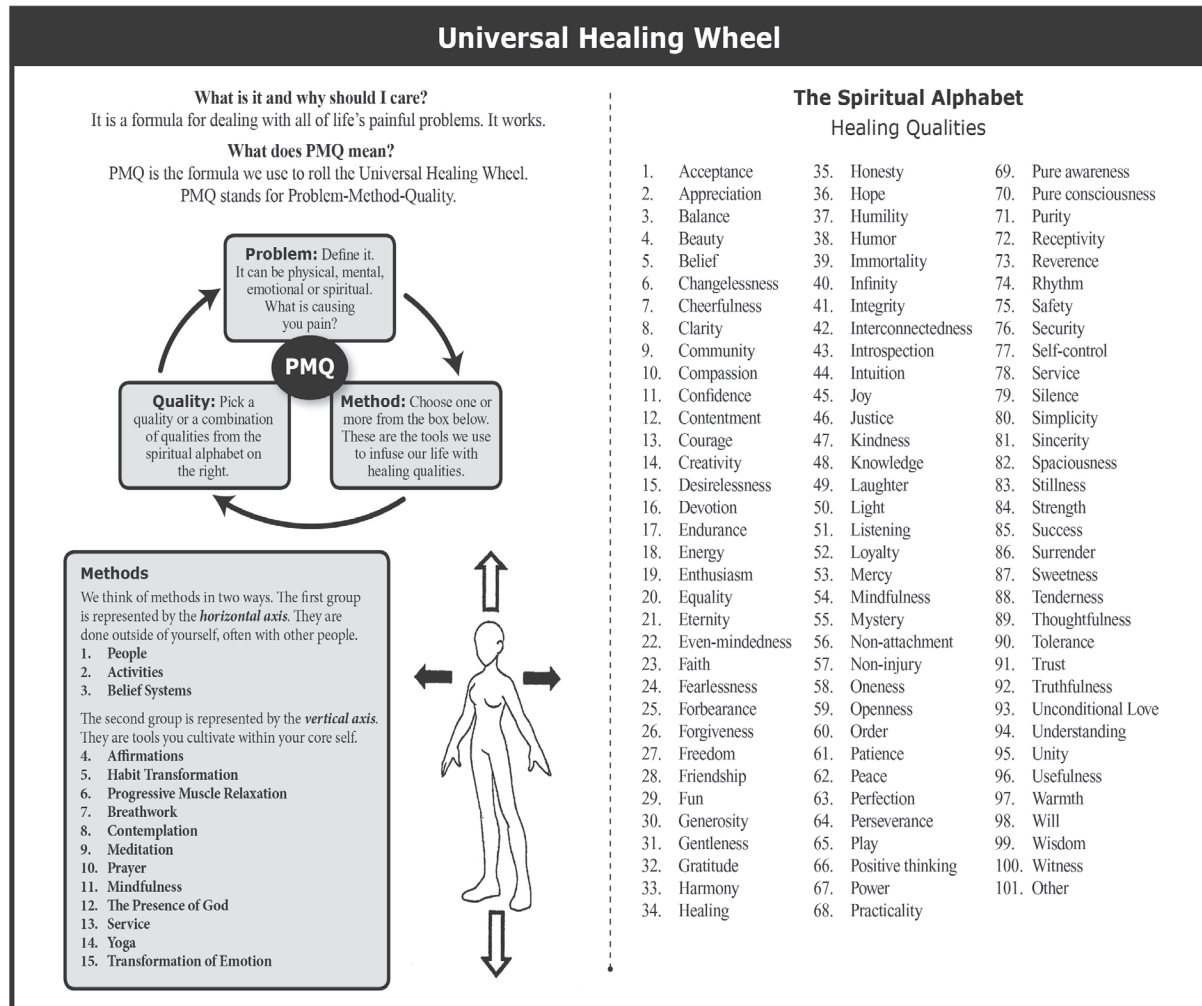
CHAPTER 2

THE UNIVERSAL HEALING WHEEL



HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL AND CONSUMER: HEAL THYSELF

- This chapter introduces a self-help, self-healing model I use myself and teach students, staff, and clients if they are interested.
- It doesn't matter where we are on the map. We all need more healing power. There is always a next step to take.
- The way forward is the universal healing wheel or pain-method-quality, PMQ.



- P is any pain or problem: this can be physical, mental, emotional, interpersonal, or spiritual.
- M is methods: there are fifteen methods.
- Q is qualities: there are one hundred healing qualities.
- Those who practice the recommended methods in response to their pain will cultivate healing qualities such as love, compassion, patience, kindness, humor, forgiveness, courage, perseverance, strength, and more. When these healing qualities grow, we feel better and become better people.
- Next is a discussion of PMQ in some detail.

THE UNIVERSAL HEALING WHEEL: THE MECHANICS

- Mind-body-spirit medicine: There is ample scientific evidence that people with an active faith system have better outcomes in medicine, surgery, mental health, and addiction. This allows us to bring spirituality and religion into the practice of medicine.
- The next step is to *find and transfer the essential healing principle* from religion to medicine safely and without controversy. This is a difficult task. Religious belief systems present a broad array of complex, confusing, and contradictory principles. This model reduces complicated, controversial religion into a simplified practical spirituality.
- Here is the key principle: the entire story of religion is *the triumph of love over pain*. Love is the supreme healer. It is greater than any painful problem.
- Our job is to respond to our pain with love a little bit more every day. To do this we need:
 - A definition of pain
 - A definition of love
 - A way to implement the principle that love is more powerful than any painful problem
 - The universal healing wheel answers that call.

THE E = MC² OF SPIRITUAL HEALING

PMQ is the essential healing principle of all religion. It is the $e = mc^2$ of spiritual healing. You will find PMQ in every healing model.

- P = Pain
 - M = Method
 - Q = Quality
-
- **Pain:** Let's start with pain. Every health care visit has something to do with pain. We can take some of it away with the medical model, but we are stuck with a great deal of residual suffering. We get hooked to our pain story and can't shake it. We need a way to manage this pain skillfully, but nobody talks about this. We say, "Your pain is your medicine if you know what to do with it. You can turn the tables on your pain and make it work for you. You can become a more skillful pain manager." The saints tell us how to do this.
 - **The Qualities:** The saints recommend adding healing qualities such as love, compassion, understanding, and forgiveness to the pain story to calm it down. After all they would say, "Isn't the whole of religion a story of the triumph of love over pain? Isn't love more powerful than any painful problem?" Love, compassion, kindness, and understanding: these are the pain managers and the healers. But these qualities do not grow on trees. They are in the genetic code, and we need to cultivate them by practicing the recommended methods.
 - **The Methods:** There are fifteen methods extracted from religion, psychiatry, and psychology. These include meditation, mindfulness, breathwork, affirmations, contemplation, the transformation of emotion, and more.

- **Rolling the Universal Healing Wheel:** In response to your pain, we suggest you pick a method to cultivate a quality. This is called rolling the universal healing wheel. This is universal and works for people of all persuasions.
- **Traction Devices:** Traction devices are the stuff of religion. We add back the stuff of religion as we think this adds even more power to the healing equation. To stay out of controversy, traction devices are offered as a cafeteria of options with the proviso that one person's traction device is the next person's gag reflex.
- **How This Works:** An atheist or agnostic person with an anxiety disorder might choose meditation to cultivate peace of mind. The PMQ here is anxiety (P), meditation (M), peace (Q). There would be no welcome theological traction devices. A Buddhist with the same problem might want to meditate with the Buddha and focus on compassion. A Christian might add Jesus and the God of love. A Hindu might add Krishna and even-mindedness under all conditions. With the addition of these traction devices, these individuals may find more comfort and solace.
- In summary:
 - a. P is any painful problem: physical, mental, emotional, interpersonal, or spiritual.
 - b. M is the fifteen methods.
 - c. Q is the love = One hundred qualities and higher states of consciousness.
 - d. Traction devices are anything from the stuff of religion that gives you traction.
- Study the healing principles outlined in this work long enough to understand how they work. Then roll the wheel and experience the result:
 - o Love contains, reduces, or eliminates pain and guides us through what is left.
 - o Love grows until love is all there is.
- To see how this works, you have to unpack the wisdom through direct personal experience. You have to sit with your pain and ride the pain waves to get to your upgraded, refined love. This workbook shows you how to do this, but you must be the one to do it. Think, reflect, and practice. Use every opportunity and experience—good and bad—to roll the wheel.
- Love is the great healer and great pain manager. It is more powerful than any painful problem. This message is needed now—sorely needed now—as there is so much darkness and pain in the world.
- In the next section, we will focus on important points about pain, methods, and qualities.

PAIN

- Life is painful.
- How we manage our pain determines whether we move forward, backward, or stay stuck in this life.
- When we manage pain unskillfully, we make it worse. We get stuck and go backwards.
- When we manage pain skillfully, we hold our ground and move forward.
- Unskillful pain management is the number one problem on the planet. It can paralyze and eventually destroy our lives and the lives of those around us.

- We need help. We need to learn more about the origin of our suffering so we can manage it more skillfully. Then, instead of dragging us down, our problems become a source of strength and peace.
- This work is designed to help you become an ever-increasingly skillful pain manager.
- Skillful pain management will help you safely navigate your way through the many pitfalls that have already come your way and will continue to come your way. Is there anyone who does not need this?
- All of us need to improve our pain management skills, but few pay attention. Our society focuses on the opposite: pleasure seeking, immediate gratification, and pain avoidance. This can work for a time but inevitably leads to more pain.
- There is nothing more important than learning how to be a skillful pain manager. Skillful pain management is in the hall of fame of great ideas. It is the missing piece in our lives. It is a big deal.
- Pain is a complex and tricky subject. If we are to become more skillful pain managers, we need to study its ways.
- Facing our pain and learning how to work with it can be frightening. However, when we learn how to do this, we find our power in the story. This means we are going to participate in self-healing.
- Following is a review of some principles to help us do this work.

TWO LEVELS OF PAIN

Pain has two dimensions. It is a good idea to keep these in mind as it helps us see where we do the work. The two levels are:

1. The inevitable suffering of life: we cannot control this.
2. Reactivity: our reaction to the inevitable suffering of life. This is reversible.

The Inevitable Suffering of Life

- All of us have to face the minor irritations of routine daily living and major life problems such as disease, disability, loss, change, the unknown, and death. This is the inevitable suffering of life. Life is difficult and painful for everyone. There is no way around it.
- The pain can be physical, mental, emotional, interpersonal, or spiritual. It can be any disease, disability, stress, or symptom. While we may be able to reduce some of this pain, there remains a great deal of suffering, no matter what we do.

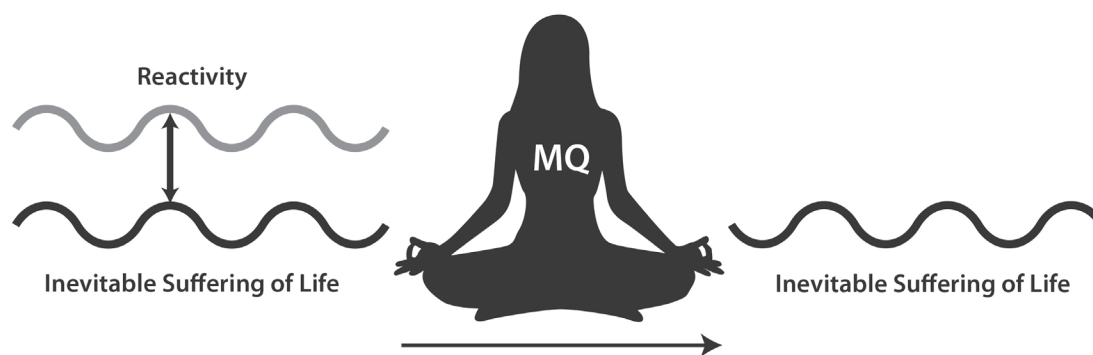
Reactivity

- Reactivity is what we add to the inevitable suffering of life. Most of us add a lot of reactivity to the pain equation.
- Here is a classic, near universal response pattern that occurs when we are confronted with a stressful problem:

REACTIVITY

- **Mind:** The mind heats up, spins out of control, ruminates, and repeats the pain story. It attaches to the pain story and won't let go.
 - **Emotion:** Anxiety, depression, anger, fear, guilt, shame, embarrassment, and other painful emotions add up, overlap, pile on, and overwhelm.
 - **Desire:** Desire, attachments, and bad habits kick in—food, alcohol, drugs, power, sex, shopping, gambling, and more.
 - **Body:** We experience a medley of uncomfortable physical sensations: tremors, butterflies in our stomachs, tight muscles, sweaty palms, rapid heartbeat, and more.
 - **Activity:** We become hyperactivity junkies running on the track of life seeking pain relief through people, activities, and things. We distract ourselves from the time we get up in the morning until sleep. This can be good and works to a point, but we don't get to the root cause of our suffering when we use activity to avoid looking at our problems.
 - **Ego:** The trickster ego adds a layer of confusing maneuvers that get in the way: defensive, paranoid, proud, rigid, judgmental, greedy, selfishness, fixed distorted ideas, power trips, and more.
- Unnecessary high reactivity is a source of untold suffering. But here is the good news. Reactivity is reversible. We can control these reactions. We have considerable leverage here. We can reduce reactivity when we practice the methods and qualities described in this workbook.

SKILLFUL PAIN MANAGEMENT



- When we do this work, we have less pain, and we are better at managing the pain we cannot eliminate. Life still hurts but we get the easiest possible ride by riding the pain waves just as they are. This is how we become ever-increasingly skillful pain managers.

QUALITIES

- In this section, you will find a list of one hundred healing qualities followed by some important points about how these qualities help us manage our pain and heal.

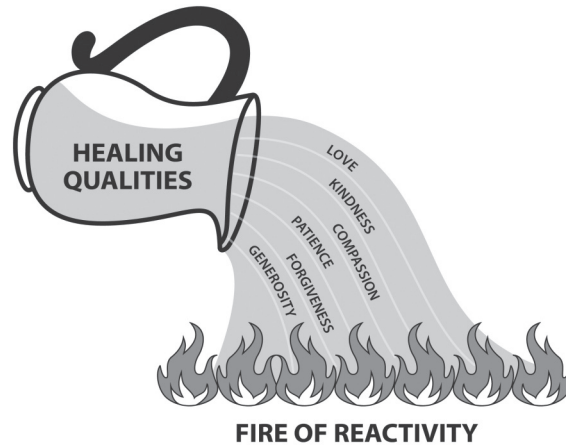
ONE HUNDRED HEALING QUALITIES

- | | | |
|---------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Acceptance | 35. Honesty | 69. Pure awareness |
| 2. Appreciation | 36. Hope | 70. Pure consciousness |
| 3. Balance | 37. Humility | 71. Purity |
| 4. Beauty | 38. Humor | 72. Receptivity |
| 5. Belief | 39. Immortality | 73. Reverence |
| 6. Changelessness | 40. Infinity | 74. Rhythm |
| 7. Cheerfulness | 41. Integrity | 75. Safety |
| 8. Clarity | 42. Interconnectedness | 76. Security |
| 9. Community | 43. Introspection | 77. Self-control |
| 10. Compassion | 44. Intuition | 78. Service |
| 11. Confidence | 45. Joy | 79. Silence |
| 12. Contentment | 46. Justice | 80. Simplicity |
| 13. Courage | 47. Kindness | 81. Sincerity |
| 14. Creativity | 48. Knowledge | 82. Spaciousness |
| 15. Desirelessness | 49. Laughter | 83. Stillness |
| 16. Devotion | 50. Light | 84. Strength |
| 17. Endurance | 51. Listening | 85. Success |
| 18. Energy | 52. Loyalty | 86. Surrender |
| 19. Enthusiasm | 53. Mercy | 87. Sweetness |
| 20. Equality | 54. Mindfulness | 88. Tenderness |
| 21. Eternity | 55. Mystery | 89. Thoughtfulness |
| 22. Even-mindedness | 56. Non-attachment | 90. Tolerance |
| 23. Faith | 57. Non-injury | 91. Trust |
| 24. Fearlessness | 58. Oneness | 92. Truthfulness |
| 25. Forbearance | 59. Openness | 93. Unconditional Love |
| 26. Forgiveness | 60. Order | 94. Understanding |
| 27. Freedom | 61. Patience | 95. Unity |
| 28. Friendship | 62. Peace | 96. Usefulness |
| 29. Fun | 63. Perfection | 97. Warmth |
| 30. Generosity | 64. Perseverance | 98. Will |
| 31. Gentleness | 65. Play | 99. Wisdom |
| 32. Gratitude | 66. Positive thinking | 100. Witness |
| 33. Harmony | 67. Power | 101. Other |
| 34. Healing | 68. Practicality | |

IMPORTANT POINTS ABOUT THE QUALITIES

- You have an army of one hundred healing qualities.
 - They are in the genetic code, the inherited wisdom of the body.
 - They are not just words but actual healing powers.
 - We can deploy them in response to any painful problem.
 - They are more powerful than the painful problem.
 - We know how to make them grow.
 - Grow one, and the others grow with it. They are interconnected.
 - The goal is to make them unconditional, spontaneous, automatic habits.
 - As they become unconditional, spontaneous, automatic habits, the locus of control shifts from outside to inside.
 - Expansion of healing qualities leads to higher states of consciousness.
 - Life presents unlimited opportunities to evolve the qualities.
 - Every moment of every scene is an opportunity to grow a quality.
 - We can bring the qualities to every aspect of life: thought, feeling, choices, actions, listening, talking, working, eating, relaxing, relationships, conflicts—everything; you name it.
 - There is no limit on the growth of a quality. There is always a next step.
 - We always need more of all of the qualities, but from moment to moment some stand out as more important than the others. Work there.
 - Reactivity is that part of our pain that is reversible. Healing qualities contain, reduce, or eliminate reactivity and guide us through what is left. This is skillful pain management.
 - Armed with healing qualities, we are ultimately bigger than our pain.
 - Good mental health is when the qualities are in charge.
 - Good spiritual health is when the qualities are in charge.
 - The most important question: are the qualities growing?
-
- Healing qualities are water on the fire of reactivity.

THE TRIUMPH OF LOVE OVER PAIN



- But the qualities do not grow on trees. They are in the genetic code and we need to cultivate them by practicing the recommended methods.

METHODS

Important Points About the Methods

- This work presents fifteen methods we can turn to when doctors and other health care professionals can't solve our problem.
- The methods are a compilation of ancient wisdom and modern science. They are evidence-based and have proven to be effective over the ages.
- These methods help us manage the inevitable suffering of life and our reaction to it.
- The methods are organized under the horizontal and vertical axes.
- Horizontal axis methods include the outer world of people, activities, and belief systems.
- The vertical axis includes methods we use inside ourselves. These distinctions are made for teaching purposes only. The boundaries between the outer and inner world are arbitrary, and there is overlap.
- You already practice some of these methods. This review will help you become more conscious of what you are doing and help you expand your repertoire.

THE METHODS

Horizontal axis: external work

1. People
2. Activities
3. Belief systems

Vertical axis: internal work

4. Affirmations
5. Habit transformation
6. Progressive muscle relaxation
7. Breathwork
8. Contemplation
9. Meditation
10. Prayer
11. Mindfulness
12. Practicing the presence of God
13. Service
14. Yoga
15. Transformation of emotion

- These self-help methods integrate with traditional, complementary, and alternative medicine.
- The methods can be used by any person: atheist, agnostic, religious, or spiritual.
- The methods can be used for any problem: physical, mental, emotional, interpersonal, or spiritual.
- The methods help us manage our pain, problem, symptom, disease, or disability.
- The methods help us contain, reduce, or eliminate our pain and guide us through what's left.
- The methods help us cultivate healing qualities that contain, reduce, or eliminate reactivity.
- We can practice the methods anywhere and anytime—at home, at work, or at play.
- We can start anywhere. Pick the method that most appeals to you at this moment.
- Explore them all as time allows.
- No method is better than another.
- No method works for everyone. Pick the ones you want.
- Incorporate and balance the methods according to your current motivation and lifestyle.
- It doesn't matter if your pain is mild, moderate, severe, or extreme. These methods work no matter the size, shape, or complexity of your problem.
- When we learn how to deal with small problems, we will know how to deal with the big ones. The principles are the same.
- For chronic, severe problems, we will need to practice these methods in a variety of combinations for years.
- With practice, we can learn how to manage our deepest suffering with corresponding healing interventions to match.
- The methods guide us through the roughest patches, including the most brutal reality, dark night of the soul, and cave of darkness.
- The list is not inclusive. You are encouraged to heal by any method that works for you.
- Following is a brief introduction to the fifteen recommended methods. There will be a more elaborate discussion of the methods in Chapters 5–19.

WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOU ARE IN PAIN?

Horizontal Axis: External Work

1. **People**

- When we are in pain, we instinctively turn to trustworthy loved ones, friends, family, or counselors. We tell our story, seeking understanding, validation, comfort, and relief.
- We have a deep inherent need to give and receive love, compassion, understanding, patience, kindness, and humor. These qualities are the healers and pain managers.
- The idea is to have the best possible network of like-minded, warm, wise, and compassionate people: the right people, at the right time, at the right dose.
- Find a support network of like-minded people.

- Tell your pain story to a counselor, mentor, sponsor, trusted family member, or friend.
- Be understood, validated, supported.
- Spiritualize your relationships = give and receive love.
- Do you have enough support?
- Who is in your life you can really talk to?
- Do you spend too much time with people?
- Are you codependent?
- Is your “people dose” too high or too low?

2. Activities

- Constructive meaningful activities contribute mightily to pain management and healing.
- We need a variety of such activities: school, training, volunteer, work, hobbies, culture, exercise, martial arts, sports, Internet, TV, radio, music, culture, reading, the arts, and more.
- We can spend too much or not enough time in activities.
- What is your day like?
- Do you have enough to do?
- Is your “activity dose” too high or too low?

3. Belief System

- It doesn't matter whether your belief system is secular, spiritual, fixed, or opened as long as it gives meaning, purpose, and positive thought.
- We need a strong, healthy belief system rooted in love qualities expressed as service to humanity. This is monumentally important for pain management and healing.
- How do you understand the meaning and purpose of life?
- Do you have a way to understand the things that happen?
- Do you have a spiritual program or philosophy of life?
- Do you get support and wisdom from church, synagogue, mosque, twelve steps, Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), or other healing ceremonies?
- Do you have a service project that helps other people and benefits your community?
- Many people make the mistake of trying to solve all of their problems on the horizontal axis of people, activities, and belief systems but some problems can only be resolved by doing some inner work.
- When you have done everything you can in the world of people, activities, and belief systems, and you are still in pain, there are twelve additional methods you can use to help you with your painful problem. Methods 4–15 describe the work we can do internally. These are the methods of the vertical axis.
- When we learn how to balance external and internal practices, we become more skillful pain managers. Healing qualities expand. We evolve at maximum speed.

Vertical Axis: Internal Work

4. Affirmations

- The mind has great power to do harm or good.
- The science of healing affirmations teaches us how to apply the inherent power of thought for healing and pain management.
- Thoughts impact disease and healing.
- Practice affirmations for healing body, mind, and soul.
- Fill your brain with powerful positive thoughts and wisdom pearls.
- Keep your mind locked in affirmations rooted in the healing qualities.
- Let healing qualities be your guide during good and difficult times.

5. Habit Transformation

- All of us have a mix of good and bad habits.
- For full recovery and deep healing, we must release the energy captured by bad habits and transfer this power to new good habits.
- Cultivate the habits of a seeker: fifteen methods.
- Cultivate the habits of a sage: one hundred healing qualities.

6. Breathwork

- Breath is always available.
- We can use it to get centered and calm.
- Breathwork helps dissolve painful emotions, curb addiction and craving, and convert mental restlessness to peace of mind.
- Practice any one or a combination of breathing techniques.

7. Progressive Muscle Relaxation

- Progressive muscle relaxation calms the body and mind through tensing and relaxing the muscles.
- In addition, when the body and mind are relaxed, it is easier to practice other methods such as contemplation, meditation, and mindfulness.
- Progressive muscle relaxation helps reduce stress, anxiety, fear, panic, depression, insomnia, and fatigue.
- You might also do a body scan.

8. Contemplation

- We do not need a Higher Power or religion to practice contemplation. All we need is some quiet time and our favorite wisdom.
- The wisdom can come from any source, secular or spiritual.
- Learn how to crack open the shell of a wisdom pearl to release its hidden secrets and soothing healing powers.

- Learn how to *fill your brain with wisdom* and how to *sit with a saint*.
- Convert such great qualities as compassion or any other healing quality or idea from the surface superficiality of mere words to feeling, experience, and action.

9. Meditation

- Right now, there is a place inside of us that is absolutely still and serene but our mental restlessness bars us from entering. Meditation is the solution to this problem.
- When we learn how to meditate, we learn how to slow down the mind, replace negative with positive thought, and eventually get into the room of stillness.
- The experience of peace in the room of stillness surpasses understanding. Here you will find unfathomable beauty, joy, compassion, light, energy, power, elation, and ecstasy.
- In meditation: Negative → Positive → Stillness → Higher Consciousness → Infinity
- Learn how to meditate. Experience deep healing in the room of stillness. This doctor charges no fee.

10. Prayer

- Ask for help from your Higher Power.
- Ask for courage, strength, humility, acceptance, forgiveness, perseverance, self-control, transcendence, wisdom, and more.

11. Mindfulness

- Mindfulness is paying attention in the here and now to one moment at a time.
- Here you will learn how to stay in the present and ride the pain waves just as they are without adding unnecessary reactivity.
- This technique has four steps:
 - a. Stop
 - b. Breathe
 - c. Present moment
 - d. Reframe to the witness, warrior, service, school, entertainment, ritual, other
- When we rotate these frames, life becomes one continuous sacred ritual, offering up its knowledge and lessons, entertainment and joy, and opportunities to love and serve.

12. Presence of God

- This is similar to mindfulness for those who have a personal relationship with God.
- Practice the presence of God as peace, courage, strength, perseverance, compassion, love, understanding, or any one of the healing qualities you need at the moment.
- The sacred meaning of story.
- A conversation with God.
- Hide and seek, find and keep.

13. Service

- In service to humanity, we discover who we really are and what really helps.

Healing Power: The Methods

- We come to know love as the power that heals the self first and then others. As we change ourselves, we change the world.
- The healing power of love is a magnet that draws to itself all good things.
- It is not what you do but how you do it. Add love to every action.
- The way is small acts of gentle humble service without attachment to outcomes.
- When we help others, we help ourselves. Healing power grows. We evolve.

14. Yoga

- Yoga is union of the soul with Spirit through:
 1. Love: Bhakti Yoga
 2. Service: Karma Yoga
 3. Wisdom: Jnana Yoga
 4. Stillness: Raj Yoga
- We can know God or Brahma through love, service, meditation, and wisdom but not until we reduce the restlessness and excesses of the body, mind, emotions, desires, and ego by practicing one of a combination of these four yogas.
- The science of yoga teaches us to still the waves of mental restlessness, excessive material desire, and emotional reactivity in both meditation and activity.
- Practice love, service, wisdom, and stillness.

15. Transformation of Emotion

- Emotions are a rich source of information. If we are able to experience sadness or anger without excessive use of alcohol, drugs, food, gambling, sex, or violence, we may discover why we are experiencing these feelings in the first place.
- Painful emotions are a part of the normal, natural, intelligent healing process. When we learn how to process emotion into self-knowledge, we gain strength and peace.
- Emotions tell a story with lessons having to do with the cultivation of healing qualities. When we finish the story, it will stop coming up.
- Learn how to:
 - a. Let the pain story unfold
 - b. Spiritualize the story: infuse the pain story with healing qualities.

Locus of Control

- If you spend most of your time in methods 1–3, your locus of control is primarily outside. Most of us start here.
- When life presents overwhelming problems, it is often necessary to do some inner work. As you begin to practice methods 4–15, healing qualities such as courage, peace, and strength slowly grow.

- As the qualities grow, your locus of control gradually shifts to your inner self. You become less dependent on the outer world of people, activities, events, and material things when you find inner peace, security, and contentment.
- At mastery, when your locus of control is deeply rooted inside, you will be even-minded under all conditions.
- For most of us, even-mindedness under all conditions is an affirmation, not a reality. On the way there, we can have fun with the challenge.
- In the next section, you will learn how to practice PMQ or roll the universal healing wheel.

ROLL THE UNIVERSAL HEALING WHEEL

- Now that you have completed your review of pain, methods, and qualities, you are ready to practice PMQ. This is called rolling the universal healing wheel.
- To evolve, all you have to do is find a problem, practice a method, and cultivate a quality.
- Problem P
 - Find a problem you would like to work on.
 - This can be any problem: physical, mental, emotional, interpersonal, or spiritual.
 - It can be any size: tiny, small, medium, large, or huge.
- Quality Q
 - Go to the list of one hundred healing qualities. (See page 11)
 - Pick one or a combination of qualities you need right now to help you with your problem.
- Method M
 - Pick one or a combination of methods that will help you grow that quality.

A SAMPLE OF PMQs		
PROBLEM	METHOD	QUALITY
<i>Any problem of body, mind, or spirit</i>	<i>15 methods</i>	<i>100 qualities</i>
Lonely	People: meet a friend	Joy
Bored	Activity: volunteer	Generosity
Loss	Belief system: go to church or AA meeting	Community
Physical illness	Affirmation	Acceptance
Addiction	Habit transformation	Contentment
Fatigue	Progressive muscle relaxation	Energy
Anxious	Breathwork	Peace
Confusion	Contemplation	Wisdom
Restless	Meditation	Even-mindedness
Fear	Prayer	Courage
Irritable	Mindfulness	Patience
Judgmental	Practicing the Presence of God	Unconditional Love
Guilt	Service	Forgiveness
Worry	Yoga	Harmony
Anger	Transformation of emotion	Understanding

- Here is a generic technique you can use to put your PMQ into play. You can use this technique whether you are an atheistic, agnostic, spiritual, or religious person.
- When you realize you have gone for a ride on the train of thought and you want to get off the train:
 1. Stop
 2. Breathe
 3. Present moment
 4. Problem
 5. Method
 6. Quality
 7. Traction device (optional)

Examples

ROLL THE WHEEL WITHOUT A TRACTION DEVICE

- An ethical humanist with an anxiety disorder might want to use meditation to cultivate peace. The PMQ would be anxiety-meditation-peace. There would be no welcome theological traction devices.
- When you realize you have gone for a ride on the anxiety train and want to get off the train:
 1. Stop
 2. Breathe

3. Present moment
4. Anxiety (P)
5. Meditation (M)
6. Peace (Q)

ROLL THE WHEEL WITH A TRACTION DEVICE

- A Buddhist with an anxiety disorder might want to meditate with the Buddha and focus on compassion.
- The PMQ would be the same: anxiety-meditation-peace.
- With the addition of the compassionate Buddha as the traction device, the meditation would have more power.
- A Christian might visualize Jesus and the God of love during his or her meditation.
- A Hindu might add Krishna and even-mindedness under all conditions.
- With the addition of these traction devices, individuals may find more comfort and solace.
- When you realize you have gone for a ride on the anxiety train and you want to get off the train:
 1. Stop
 2. Breathe
 3. Present moment
 4. Anxiety (P)
 5. Meditation (M)
 6. Peace (Q)
 7. Traction Device: add the Compassionate Buddha, even-minded Krishna, or Jesus and the God of love to your meditation.
- Choose your PMQ.
- Now, gently bring the quality and method to the pain. Everything is done gently.
- Focus on the method and quality, not the pain.
- Practice your method and quality for a day, a week, or longer.
- Read about that quality.
- Think about it.
- Discuss it.
- Contemplate it.
- Affirm it.
- Breathe it.
- Feel it.
- Visualize it.

Healing Power: The Methods

- Concentrate on it.
- Permeate your being with it.
- Invoke powerful memories about it.
- Create from it.
- Make it your faithful guide and companion.
- Write your experience.
- Share in a group or with a friend.

One Continuous Sacred Ritual

- The universal healing wheel works for any problem: tiny, small, medium, large, or huge. The dynamics are the same.
- Choose any problem and match it to a method and quality. Practice the method and cultivate the quality in response to the pain. The quality is more powerful than the painful problem. As it slowly grows, it will contain, reduce, or eliminate your pain, and guide you through what is left.
- We must still deal with the inevitable suffering of life. But now there is less reactivity and more strength and peace. This is skillful pain management by rolling the universal healing wheel.
- With any pain or problem, fifteen methods, and one hundred qualities to choose from, the universal healing wheel offers unlimited creative potential. It is like a palette of colors. You paint your own picture.
- By changing the method and quality from moment to moment, pending circumstance, there can be one continuous sacred ritual. For example, we can practice meditation in the morning and evening and mindfulness, breathwork, or affirmations during the day.
- When you practice PMQ, change occurs in four stages.

FOUR STAGES OF CHANGE

When we roll the wheel, change occurs in four stages:

- Stage 1: *No change is noticeable*: We do the work and nothing happens. The qualities are growing, but the increase is subtle and imperceptible. Many people quit here, as they are looking for immediate gratification and are not prepared for work, struggle, and discipline. Don't put a schedule on this stage. If we do—and our expectations are not met—we may become discouraged and give up our quest.
- Stage 2: *We feel better and become better people*: There is a tangible experience of ever-increasing peace, love, strength, courage, compassion, and the other love-qualities.
- Stage 3: *Superconscious experience*: Love qualities inflate by nature. At some point, they cannot contain themselves. They break into superconscious states that defy description. Words are only signposts. We have to go there. When we reach an expanded superconscious state, we know it, experience it, and feel it. Having said this, these experiences are often referred to as the peace that surpasses understanding, pure Love, ecstatic joy, unfathomable stillness, intuitive wisdom, a feeling of oneness with everything, and other wonderful expressions of Spirit. These experiences may last from a few minutes or hours to several days, but there is inevitably a return to ordinary consciousness. Back to school. Back to work.
- Stage 4: *Mastery*: There is a sustained state of superconsciousness. This is a very advanced stage and requires decades if not lifetimes of work and discipline. With continued practice, our spiritual qualities become strong enough that no external drama or condition of our bodies can shake them. We remain peaceful, positive, and poised no matter what life throws at us. We experience the soul and Higher Power as a durable love born of ever-expanding compassion, understanding, wisdom, and joy. We know we are the immutable peace of the soul, connected to Spirit, eternally safe and protected. We know our love is greater than any pain or problem. We can get through any barrier, no matter how insurmountable it appears. Nothing can stop us. Nothing can touch us. We are awake, aware, and ready for anything. Serene and compassionate service to humanity is the natural outcome of this state of consciousness. For a more detailed description of this stage, you can study the lives of Jesus, Buddha, Krishna, Rumi, or any God-realized master.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- The wheel with traction devices allows us to capture the power of religion and bring it to healthcare safely, efficiently, and effectively.
- PMQ is the final common denominator and cannot be reduced any further. It is necessary and sufficient. We have to have problem, method, and quality to heal.
- PMQ is universal. Anyone can do PMQ. You can be atheist, agnostic, religious, or spiritual and practice PMQ.
- PMQ is cognitive behavioral therapy in which one shifts from a negative painful problem to a positive healing quality. For some people, this is enough. Others need traction devices.

- Traction devices for the wheel allow those who are interested to add anything from the stuff of religion that gives inspiration or traction: the God of love, grace, Jesus, Krishna, karma and reincarnation, and so forth.
- The stuff of religion that can create such consternation and enmity is offered as a cafeteria of options with the following provisos: one person's traction device is the next person's gag reflex; nuke offensive language and substitute your own; stay in your own lane; reform yourself and not others; and take what you need and leave the rest.
- The wheel with traction devices solves the problem of toxic language and traumatic religious history, as PMQ has no theology and you control the traction devices.
- The wheel with traction devices is not invasive, threatening, or noxious. We can choose from any pain or problem, fifteen methods, one hundred healing qualities, and any traction device. With this many options, we can find a way to avoid those problems, methods, qualities, and traction devices that are offensive, invasive, and act as triggers, and work with those that are easier to take at the time.
- The number or type of traction devices we use doesn't matter. We can have none, a few, or full-on religion. What does matter is love. If a traction device leads to more love, it is good. If not, why use it?
- The universal healing wheel with traction devices is a major find. It reduces complicated, controversial religion to a simplified practical spirituality. It is the essence of and link to all religions. It is the $e = mc^2$ of psychosocial and spiritual healing. It is the unifying theory, what actually works, the Holy Grail. It seems too simple to be true, but this simplicity is its elegance; it has the essential building blocks for healing and the add-ons from the stuff of religion. The wheel with traction devices is the total package.
- Here are the steps followed in constructing this model:
 - Deconstruct religion into discrete pieces.
 - Eliminate dogma, ritual, and other nonessentials.
 - Extract the essential healing principle = love = healing qualities.
- All you need is love and a way to make it grow. The wheel with or without traction devices answers that call.
- Roll the wheel with or without traction devices. Love grows until it is unconditional.
- Love is the centerpiece of religion. Everything else is a traction device.
- Spirituality = love = healing qualities and higher states of consciousness.
- We must have PMQ for full recovery and deep healing. When we roll the wheel, we evolve. We become love itself.
- Practice PMQ. Chisel away what does not belong. Deconstruct to reconstruct. Bring out the love you already are.

WHAT WE LIKE MOST ABOUT ADDING SPIRITUALITY TO OUR WORK

- It lights a fire of hope and possibility under traditional medical practice.
- It allows us to function under the umbrella of a great idea: bringing the wisdom of the ages to healthcare.

- It offers a boatload of additional healing tools for staff, patients, and clients who can take it as far as they wish.
- It improves healthcare outcomes.
- It gives the practice of medicine a story and a soul.

STAGING DISEASE AND RECOVERY

For Low-Income Persons with Chronic Severe Illness

Spin → Float → Integrate → Liberate

- We understand recovery and healing is not for everyone. Some are unable or not interested. We respect people's decisions to engage or not. With this in mind, we present a way to stage disease and recovery.

SPIN → FLOAT → INTEGRATE → LIBERATE

- **Spin.** This is high acuity requiring multiple visits to the emergency room, hospital, and clinics. Those in the spin zone have one or more of the following: active physical illness, mental illness, and addiction; low or no income, unemployment, and homelessness. These individuals often spin between the hospital, jail, and street. There may be danger to self or others.
 - **Float.** With medication, housing, and financial support, mental illness, physical illness, and substance use improve. Symptoms if present are more manageable. People isolate in their rooms, watch TV, smoke, hang out, and wander aimlessly. There may be some social contact but little or no connection to meaningful social, recreational, vocational, or spiritual activity. There is often no meaning and purpose.
 - **Integrate.** This is community integration involving people, activities, and belief systems. People get their social, recreational, vocational, and spiritual lives back.
 - **Liberate.** Integrate higher states of consciousness with good mental health.
- **Spin → Float → Integrate → Liberate:** To move from spin to float to integrate, we need positive action on the horizontal axis of people, activities, and belief system. For deepest healing and liberation, we may need to move from fixed to opened belief systems, and add vertical axis healing options including meditation and self-knowledge. This requires managing that gap between fixed and opened belief systems where even a little anxiety is perceived as the uninvited guest in the living room.
 - **Staging Recovery Using the Fifteen Methods:** There are fifteen methods: three on the external horizontal axis and twelve on the internal vertical axis. Some will choose none of these. Others will apply all fifteen. An example of a way to stage recovery using the fifteen methods follows.

Staging Recovery Using the Fifteen Methods

THE METHODS

Horizontal axis: external work

1. People
2. Activities
3. Belief systems

Vertical axis: internal work

4. Affirmations
5. Habit transformation
6. Progressive muscle relaxation
7. Breathwork
8. Contemplation
9. Meditation
10. Prayer
11. Mindfulness
12. Practicing the presence of God
13. Service
14. Yoga
15. Transformation of emotion

STAGING RECOVERY AND HEALING

- **Level 1:** No options. This individual chooses none of the fifteen methods. There is an inability or lack of motivation for community integration. Some people are overwhelmed by stimulation and need to stay alone to remain stable. Others may lack initiative or energy. The illness may be too acute. There may be too much pain. This individual will remain in spin and float.
- **Level 2:** People and/or activities. This individual chooses people and/or activities. There is social and recreational recovery but an inability to engage in cognitive-behavioral work (belief systems) or vocational recovery. This person profits from day programs and drop-in centers.
- **Level 3:** People, activities, and belief system. This individual engages with people and activities and has a belief system: traditional religion, twelve-step program, or other healing models. This includes social, vocational, recreational, and spiritual recovery. This individual remains primarily on the horizontal axis and has an external locus of control.
- **Level 4:** People, activities, and belief system with any one or combination of vertical axis options. There may be a need to move from a fixed to an opened belief system. The locus of control begins to shift from outside to inside.
- **Level 5:** As with Level 4 but add transformation of emotion and meditation, the two most difficult and advanced vertical axis techniques. With the addition of these two powerful digging tools, one can remove all traces of negativity, leading to the recovery of the higher self and Higher Power as the *unlimited* peace, joy, love, and safety we crave. The locus of control is primarily inside. There is an expansion to higher states of consciousness, sometimes referred to as liberation or enlightenment.

TRACTION DEVICES AND HIGHER POWER OPTIONS

- The universal healing wheel is the essential healing principle of any psychosocial or spiritual model. The wheel is universal. It works for persons of any persuasion: atheist, agnostic, religious, or spiritual. For many, PMQ is enough. Others need traction devices for the wheel.
- A traction device is any concept, image, or aspect of a great wisdom tradition that gives inspiration. A few examples are ritual, story, metaphor, parables, Higher Power, mystery, the unknown, God of love, Father, Mother, Friend, Beloved, Omniscience, Omnipotence, Omnipresence, Christ, Krishna, Buddha, Image of God, karma, reincarnation, grace, nature, the collective unconscious, archetypes, the subconscious, reason, traditional worship, sermons, music, art, committee work, and many more.
- Traction devices help us get traction so we do not get stuck when the going gets rough. Healing is work, and traction devices help us do the work. They help us stay in the game when we feel like quitting. Traction devices add more power to the healing equation. They help us manage our pain and heal.
- Traction devices include the stuff of religion and the nature of God. There is great controversy here. Arguments rage within and between religions, and between atheists, agnostics, religious, and spiritual people. The trails of history and current events are populated with tragic stories about confrontations concerning “the one true way.”

- We can do better. We can learn how to talk about these profoundly important principles without getting into trouble. If we do this, we profit greatly. Healing power expands. We become more skillful pain managers. We feel better, become better people, and experience higher states of consciousness.
- Now might be a good time to review *Healing Power Revised* (2010), pp. 78–81, and *Healing Power: The Workbook* (2015), pp.116–127. Here you will find a review of Higher Power options for atheists, agnostics, and spiritual and religious persons. In this work, there are four broad categories:
 1. Higher self
 2. Higher meaning and purpose
 3. Higher states of consciousness
 4. Higher Power or the God of your understanding: you are encouraged to find those aspects and images of your Higher Power that are comfortable, approachable, and accessible, to install that image in your consciousness, and to use it as a source of continuous guidance and inspiration.

Some key points to remember about traction devices and Higher Power options:

- To climb the mountain of healing qualities and higher states of consciousness, we may need some traction devices.
- *Healing Power* offers traction devices as a cafeteria of options but does not promote specific traction devices. It does promote the universal healing wheel, and you pick the traction devices.
- While other people's traction devices may be of interest and can satisfy our curiosity, they can become a distraction or a source of dissension, conflict, and fighting.
- When we focus on other people's traction devices, we can inadvertently kindle traumatic religious history and toxic language.
- We don't need to know each other's traction devices. What we do need is the qualities. The qualities will take us to higher states of consciousness. The most important question: Are the qualities growing or not?
- Love is the universal truth that links the great teachers and their teachings. It is there when we boil everything else off.
- The answer to the cosmic puzzle is love. Are we in love or something else?
- It doesn't matter how you worship or if you worship. What matters is love.
- Ethical humanists may have more love in their hearts than intensely religious persons and vice versa. Judge by love, not the vehicle. Love is the report card.
- Focus on the wheel. That is what we all have in common.
- You have finished your review of the essential principles of the universal healing wheel. In the next section, you will find some suggestions on how to start and maintain a spiritual practice.



CHAPTER 3

GETTING STARTED

SUGGESTIONS FOR STARTING AND MAINTAINING A SUCCESSFUL SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

- In spiritual books and sacred texts, we read stories about the heroism, courage, power, and selfless service of the saints and masters. There are anecdotes about miraculous healings, descriptions of eternal life, and discourse on the nature of truth. Prayers, poems, affirmations, and pearls of wisdom allude to unlimited peace, unconditional love, ecstatic joy, and wisdom. The world's religions claim that the body is the temple that secretly harbors the actual God of the universe, or, similarly, that the body carries higher states of consciousness.
- We can test the truth of these and other wonderful spiritual ideas through direct experience, but only if we develop a spiritual practice. While there may be no absolute scientific proof, we can use our intellect, feeling, intuition, and personal experience as tools for interpretation. The experiment is life itself. The test tube is the body. The material worked with is consciousness, energy, thought, feeling, desire, and behavior. This is the scientific method in metaphysics.
- Spiritual practice leads to concrete, tangible results reproduced across cultures and historical periods. The methods described in this work have withstood the test of history. Millions have found their value as tools for the cultivation of spiritual qualities and experiences. These methods are:

THE METHODS

Horizontal axis: external work

1. People
2. Activities
3. Belief systems

Vertical axis: internal work

4. Affirmations
5. Habit transformation
6. Progressive muscle relaxation
7. Breathwork
8. Contemplation
9. Meditation
10. Prayer
11. Mindfulness
12. Practicing the presence of God
13. Service
14. Yoga
15. Transformation of emotion

- The purpose of practicing these methods is to cultivate healing qualities in response to the inevitable suffering of life. We can transform our suffering into peace, love, joy, and wisdom when we practice yoga, meditation, mindfulness, and the other methods listed above.
- Before we begin the detailed study of these spiritual techniques, we will review some key principles, practice tips, and exercises designed to help you start and maintain a successful spiritual practice.

Practice Principles

1. Goal: Love and wisdom
2. Support: get a support network of like-minded people.
3. Solitude: learn how to be alone.
4. Stages of learning
5. What to expect: The Work-Pain-Joy Cycle
6. Discipline: suffering is a stimulant for the cultivation of spiritual power.
7. Self-reform: change the world by changing yourself.
8. Ego reduction: reduce your ego to expand your soul qualities.
9. Spiritual healing: recognize the difference between physical and spiritual healing.

10. Self-acceptance: accept where you are while striving to improve.
11. The role of medication
12. Risk/Benefit

Practice Tips

1. Design your own program
2. Add methods
3. The best practice position: calm continuous concentration and the yoyo effect
4. Stay in the present: minutes and moments.
5. Start slow: one step at a time.
6. Pace yourself: it's a long climb.
7. Do your best: leave the rest.

Exercises

1. The scientific method in metaphysics: direct personal experience
2. Right attitude
3. Quick start
4. The simplest technique
5. Roll the wheel
6. Roll the wheel with a traction device
7. A balanced healing program: fifteen pain management options
8. Morning program
9. Day program
10. Evening program
11. One continuous sacred ritual
12. Prepare for a rainy day
13. The inner gym
14. The refrigerator of life
15. A simple flick of the switch or heavy lifting
16. Lifelong practice
17. Chip, Chip, Chip: effort is progress
18. Simplicity and complexity
19. Deepest suffering and deepest healing
20. A deep metaphysical purpose

PRACTICE PRINCIPLES

The Goal: Love and Wisdom

TWO WOLVES

An old Cherokee Indian was teaching his grandson about life...

A fight is going on inside me, he said to the boy. It is a terrible fight between two wolves.

One is evil – he is anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego.

The other is good – he is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith.

This same fight is going on inside you – and inside every other person, too.

The grandson thought about it for a long minute and then asked his grandfather, “Which wolf will win?”

The old Cherokee simply replied, “The one you feed.”

- We can have a variety of goals related to the outer world of people, activities, work, training, recreation, volunteer, sports, culture, and so forth. While we work on these outer goals, the inner goal is always feeding that good wolf. Once that inner goal is established, we must continuously visualize and constantly affirm the healing qualities and wisdom pearls we seek to cultivate. Repetition is the key to success. *Healing Power* offers a variety of practices that will help you grow love and wisdom and keep this illumined goal before your eyes. This will keep you from getting confused and lost when the world gets rough.
- Throughout this work, you will find a host of wisdom pearls. A wisdom pearl is not just a positive thought but a super-positive deep thought with the potential power to help us heal not just in the moment but over the course of a lifetime. Wisdom pearls have the potential to help us in every domain of life, but it takes time to understand them. A deep wisdom pearl can grow throughout our life and, even then, not be fully understood.
- An example of a wisdom pearl central to this work is *love is the great healer*. This sounds simple and it is. But at the same time, this simple truth is profound, deep, complex, subtle, and nuanced. There is no limit to the power and variety of its manifestations, how it can work its way into our lives to help us untie knots and dissolve problems, how it can help us manage our pain skillfully, and how it can help us evolve.
- Each of the one hundred qualities recommended in this work is a wisdom pearl. As we apply these qualities to our problems, even our most serious problems, we can see over the years how much power they have to help us heal.
- You will find a variety of wisdom pearls throughout this work: let the story unfold; spiritualize the story; deep healing in the room of stillness; Higher Power options such as Omniscience, Omnipotence, Omnipresence; and much more.

HEALING WITH WISDOM PEARLS

In this work, you will learn how to:

1. Drop wisdom pearls into the center of your consciousness.
2. Let the pearl sink in, absorb, digest, and expand.
3. Apply wisdom pearls to the circumstance of your daily life.
4. Practice in the moments, days, weeks, months, years, and lifetimes.

- Wisdom pearls take time to grasp. Lots of time. A lifetime! Chew on a bite-sized piece. Digest it. Integrate it. Then another piece.
- When we do this work, we become that wisdom a little bit more every day for the rest of our lives. The healing we get is profound.
- The supreme goal is responding to painful problems with unconditional patience, peace, poise, compassion, love, understanding, and associated healing qualities. To do this, we need to practice the methods until they become our new mental habits locked in brain grooves so powerful that ultimately this is all we can do. Regular practice of the recommended methods will heal and transform your consciousness. Don't put a cap on your growth. You are unlimited.
- If you do this work, the virtues of the great saints and sages will slowly add on to you: peace and strength, compassion and courage, wisdom and love expressed in acts of gentle, humble service to all of humanity.

Support:

Get a Support Network of Like-Minded People

- We need support from others to achieve any material or spiritual goal. In the spiritual life, it is important to find people who have similar ideas, aspirations, and practices. The spiritual path is difficult. There are barriers, tests, trials, and temptations that lead us off the path.
- For support and encouragement, we need a network of people who love, care, understand, and forgive. When we see spiritual qualities such as strength, courage, and humor manifested in others, we gain the necessary guidance and inspiration to keep going, no matter what form resistance may take. When we tell our story to others who understand and validate our experience, we get comfort, solace, and relief.
- While a supportive network of like-minded people is essential for spiritual growth, it is no less important that we build in ample time for solitude.

Solitude:

Learn How to Be Alone

- Popular culture would have us believe that success, money, power, and status bring security and happiness. Experience suggests otherwise. In the course of living, we find the joys and pleasures of the outer world are limited and ephemeral.

- The wisdom traditions point to our inner being as the source of lasting happiness, peace, and safety. Discovering the path of wisdom is difficult, however, as the external world is powerful and attractive, continuously seducing us into the illusion that we can find in it the joy and security we crave.
- The secret to discovering what is sacred and making it a part of our life is to develop a habit of solitude for study, contemplation, and meditation. But our addiction to the outer life makes it difficult to retreat for purposes of quiet reflection and stillness. Cultivating the new ground of solitude is akin to withdrawing from a substance of abuse like alcohol, drugs, or tobacco. When we retreat, we may feel anxious and crave our habitual pattern of activity. If we answer the call of this craving too quickly and fail to go through the rigors of the withdrawal, we do not bring the critical ingredient of solitude into our program.
- When we suffer, we turn to other people, work, recreation, and entertainment for support and relief. While it is obviously helpful to have the support of loving people and constructive meaningful activities, an important part of spiritual growth is shifting the locus of control from outside to inside. At times of crisis, the ultimate defense is inner strength and courage. Spiritual qualities are best cultivated in solitude, slowly, and over time through such practices as meditation and the contemplation of sacred texts. Without stillness and solitude, the growth of spiritual qualities is stunted.

Stages of Learning

- Some go to a lecture or read a book about healing and think that is enough. This is a good start but no change can occur without work and practice.
- Without practice, we cannot change a current long-term brain groove carrying a negative pattern to a new groove carrying positive methods and qualities.
- This is a practice model. The following steps summarize the learning process we need to start and maintain a self-healing practice.

STAGES OF LEARNING

1. Read
2. Contemplate
3. Discuss
4. Practice
5. Experience
6. Repeat steps 1–5

1. **Read**
 - Read this or a similar book on self-healing. Go through the material to see what is there. This is like looking at a map to get the lay of the land.
2. **Contemplate**
 - If you are not familiar with this practice, you might review contemplation in Chapter 12, page 140 in this workbook.

- With contemplation, we stop reading and sit quietly with a paragraph, sentence, or even a single word and let the material go deep.
 - We crack open the shell of a pearl of wisdom to reveal its hidden secrets and release its soothing healing powers.
 - We convert the great ideas embedded in wisdom texts from shallow words in our heads to real healing vibrations that permeate consciousness and action.
 - With this study method, our understanding of the healing process gets a little bit deeper every day.
3. **Discuss**
- You will inevitably run into barriers and have questions. Bring these issues to your group. Discuss the material with fellow students and teachers. Get feedback and clarification.
4. **Practice**
- At some point, we have to stop talking and thinking and get to work. We need to begin practicing the methods: mindfulness, meditation, breathwork, affirmations, and more.
 - In this stage, we are working directly with our body, consciousness, energy, mind, will, emotions, desires, decisions, and actions.
5. **Experience**
- You will notice a slow but sure growth of peace, compassion, understanding, strength, courage, wisdom, forgiveness, humor, and other wonderful healing qualities. You feel better, become a more skillful pain manager, and may experience higher states of consciousness.
6. **Repeat**
- a. Repeat steps 1–5.
 - b. Where are you in the process?
 - c. Are you ready to do the work?

What to Expect:

The Work-Pain-Joy Cycle

- Spiritual belief systems make many grandiose, idealistic promises: eternal peace, unconditional love, and abundant joy. In the beginning, it is the hope for such experiences that gets many people involved in the rigorous discipline of the spiritual path. After doing the work, individuals have the natural human tendency to expect the promised rewards. However, there will be times when there seems to be nothing but work, effort, and pain without compensation. Progress towards healing, pain relief, and higher states of consciousness can be very slow or seem non-existent.
- It is best to have no expectations; if our demands are not met, we might stop doing the work. If we are patient and try not to imagine how fast our growth should be, we can persevere and stay on our chosen path. Though results are often slower than we like, progress occurs if we make the effort. Everything gets better slowly with practice, a lot of practice, but not on our schedule.

- If we give our best effort without the expectation of reward on a particular schedule, we will eventually enjoy the fruits of our spiritual work. Peace, love, joy, power, and wisdom lie on the other side of every painful problem, but they arrive on their own timetable.
- Effort is progress. When we roll the wheel or practice PMQ, we are moving forward even if we can't tell. The change is too subtle to pick up. New brain grooves that hold the qualities are forming but they are not strong enough to manifest.
- The new brain grooves remain even when you backslide. Just get back to your practice as soon as possible. It is very important to remember this, as one can become demoralized when there is only work and pain, no apparent forward movement, and sometimes backsliding.
- When you are deeply immersed in spiritual work and experience no change, always remember, you are making progress even if it is invisible. The qualities are growing even when you can't feel it. The reward comes on its own schedule.
- It is worth working and waiting for ever-increasing peace, love, joy, power, wisdom, and a host of other healing qualities. You will feel better, become a better person, and may even experience higher states of consciousness. Tell yourself the qualities are growing even when you can't feel it. This helps keep you in the game.
- Following is the work → pain → joy cycle in five steps:

THE WORK-PAIN-JOY CYCLE

1. Work and pain without apparent change
2. Feel better and become a better person
3. Superconsciousness
4. Repeat
5. Mastery

1. Work and Pain Without Apparent Change

- We are in pain. We do the work. We roll the wheel. We practice PMQ. The qualities are growing but not enough to feel. In this stage, there is work, struggle, and discipline without immediate reward.
- The length of this stage is determined by the extent of the problem. Some problems require just a few minutes of work. Others take longer. Deeply embedded severe problems may take years of work. The schedule is not up to us. Our job is to do the work. Relief comes on its own terms.
- Many quit here as they are looking for immediate gratification. If you are not ready for work and pain without immediate results, you will likely give up. If you persevere, you will feel better.

2. Feel Better and Become a Better Person

- The qualities are growing. You feel the change. There is a tangible experience of ever-increasing peace, love, strength, courage, joy, and other healing qualities. You feel better and become a better person.
- Keep going. You may experience a transformation of consciousness described in the next step.

3. **Superconsciousness**

- There is an unmistakable shift in consciousness: the peace that surpasses understanding, pure love, ecstatic joy, intuitive wisdom, a feeling of oneness with everything, and more. These experiences last for a few minutes or hours to several days but there is inevitably a return to ordinary consciousness. There is more work to do.

4. **Repeat**

- Repeat steps 1–3.

5. **Mastery**

- There is a sustained state of superconsciousness. This is very advanced and requires decades if not lifetimes of work and discipline.
- With unceasing daily practice, the qualities become so strong that no external drama or condition of the body can dislodge them. We remain peaceful, positive, and poised no matter what life brings. We experience the soul connected to Spirit as a durable love born of ever-expanding compassion, understanding, wisdom, and joy. We know we are the immutable peace of the soul connected to Spirit, eternally safe and protected. We know our love is greater than any pain or problem. We can get through any barrier, no matter how insurmountable it appears. Nothing can stop us. Nothing can touch us. We are awake, aware, and ready for anything. Serene and compassionate service to humanity is the natural outcome of this state of consciousness.

Discipline:

Suffering Is a Stimulant for the Cultivation of Spiritual Power

- You may not have found a spiritual path that suits you. You may have only recently found your way and are just beginning. Or perhaps you are well along on a path with a teacher, teachings, and techniques that fit your needs. In any case, a good understanding of the nature of the struggle is important.
- The spiritual path is slippery. It is easy to slide off and fall. We might be tempted to throw in the towel early on, not foreseeing how difficult it would be, nor how uncomfortable. It is a mistake to underestimate the work, effort, and discipline required. The transformation of ordinary to spiritual consciousness is no easy task. Life is painful. Change is difficult and slow.
- Hard times are especially risky if we do not understand the connection between suffering and the development of spiritual power. If suffering appears meaningless, we may become frightened and turn to unhealthy pain-killing habits such as substance or sex abuse, excessive dependency on others, addiction to the Internet, television, and so on. On the other hand, if we understand that pain is a teacher and stimulant for the cultivation of spiritual qualities, we are much less likely to become frightened and abandon the path.
- A comprehensive spiritual program helps us expect, rise to, and work through any challenge. When difficulties arise, we respond with spiritual practices that help us cultivate love, strength, courage, and endurance. The expansion of these and other spiritual qualities will help us transcend any challenge.
- When we have finished a set of problems or have passed some of life's tests, we experience the reward of happiness and tranquility. We love that part of the show when we celebrate life as pure entertainment

and joy. It is only a question of time, however, before a new set of difficulties arises. As we move forward on our path, the bar is raised. More advanced problems and challenges arrive. How else would we develop our spiritual muscles? It is a marathon, not a sprint!

- Finding and following a spiritual path requires self-control, stamina, and balance. We need to follow the path with devotion and loyalty. This involves making choices that build strength, courage, and endurance. The struggle is daily, in the moments of our lives, and continues until our last breath is taken.
- We need discipline to maintain our direction when in crisis. We need patience and perseverance for the long course of life. We must face the pain of reality in order to achieve higher states of consciousness. Running away from troubles and difficulties does not work. There can be no denial or avoidance on the path. We may rest, take time out, pace ourselves, and even backtrack when necessary, but ultimately, we must do all of the work.
- Reality can be harsh and brutal. However, with spiritual practice, we can face whatever comes our way, understand it, learn from it, and move on to higher spiritual realms where the rewards are great: the expansion of spiritual qualities and higher states of consciousness.

Self-Reform:

Change the World by Changing Yourself

- If we want to change the world, we need to start by changing ourselves. We will soon see how difficult a job that is! Gandhi once said he had three major opponents: the British people, the Indian people, and himself, and that by far, the most formidable was himself. Changing ourselves is more than a full-time job. When we focus on self-reform, we won't have the time or energy to dwell on the problems or flaws of others.
- Most of us have made the mistake of thinking we can change other people. This is generally not possible. When we try to remodel the character of others, we can expect stiff resistance. The way to influence others is to develop a spiritual practice that enriches the spiritual qualities in the soil of our own consciousness. When we are more compassionate, understanding, forgiving, peaceful, and wise, those around us who can will profit from our development. They will be inspired to bring out these qualities in themselves. We gain more ground in this way than by pushing them.

Ego Reduction:

Reduce Your Ego to Expand Your Soul Qualities

- The goal of spiritual practice is the cultivation of the soul qualities of the spiritual alphabet. But these qualities cannot grow unless the ego is reduced and ultimately replaced as it occupies the space rightfully owned and operated by the soul. However, the ego does not give up its space so easily. It sets up camp in spiritual territory and will not budge, believing that any surrender of turf may lead to its own demise. On the spiritual path, then, a battle ensues between the fiercely territorial ego and the soul qualities, yearning to blossom with full expression.
- Our daily routines abound with opportunities to reduce the ego. By practicing the spiritual methods described in this book, we can replace the ego with spiritual qualities in a process of

purification—sometimes purification by fire. Introspection is necessary, and pain is often involved. Those who are not willing or able to go through such rigors get stuck.

- The ego fights a bitter, resourceful war to the end. It resists every attempt of the soul to take over, and it does this in subtle and devious ways. Often, we don't even know that it is present and in control. When we discover and work to dissolve a layer of ego, another layer quietly takes over, silently waiting for an opportunity to cause trouble. Ego reduction is slow and difficult. However, victory is inevitable to those who persist.
- When we submit our ego for reduction in a spiritual process, the rewards are great; as the ego is dissolved, humiliation is replaced by humility, insecurity by peace, resentment by compassion, anger by love, ignorance by wisdom, and sadness by joy. The ego cannot survive the expansion of soul qualities that result from spiritual practice. The soul is more powerful than the trickster ego. For a more comprehensive review of the ego, you might want to study Chapter 50 in *Healing Power: The Workbook*, pp 340–353.

Spiritual Healing:

Recognize the Difference Between Physical and Spiritual Healing

- Spiritual practice results in the healing of the body, mind, and soul. However, healing of the body may not always be possible since some conditions are chronic, progressive, and irreversible. In such cases, spiritual healing can still occur.
- Spiritual healing is independent of the healing of the body. Spiritual healing is a process of purification, which involves reducing and ultimately replacing the ego with spiritual qualities. Our physical illness may improve, stay the same, or worsen, but we can always work on ego reduction and expansion of spiritual qualities. No matter the outcome of our physical pain and problems, with the practice of spiritual methods, we reduce the ego and grow spiritual qualities. We may get a chronic, progressive, or fatal illness, but our spiritual healing process continues as we cultivate unconditional love, patience, courage, endurance, surrender, and self-control.
- Some people give up their work if they don't see their physical problems improve. This is a mistake; the point of spiritual work is the purification of consciousness, whether or not the body heals. In this sense, effort is progress, since spiritual work will always bring the expansion of spiritual qualities even while physical pain persists.

Self-Acceptance:

Accept Where You Are While Striving to Improve

- The list of qualities in the spiritual alphabet is long and may seem daunting. Just thinking about unconditional love is enough to stop some people from trying. If we think love or any spiritual quality is unobtainable, we may not be able to look within, discover our current limitations, and begin the necessary work to improve.
- We can avoid this dilemma if we accept our current state while at the same time make an effort to improve. We can remain relaxed, compassionate, and gentle with ourselves even as we see the distance between where we are and the top of the high spiritual mountain we are climbing.

- Most of the time, there should be little or no guilt. When we are wrong, guilt may occur, but only to show us where to work; its purpose is not to create lingering feelings of low self-esteem. We should look at our past mistakes with compassion and forgiveness. We can use the past as a reference point and not dwell there. We should extract what lessons we can from the past and then let the experience go.
- Everyone makes mistakes. It is a part of the learning process. The key is to get the lesson and move on. Do not make the mistake the center of your life. Once you get the lesson and make the necessary correction, forget about it.
- To avoid neurotic perfectionism, we give our best each day, knowing this is all that is expected. We can accept mistakes, failure, and awkwardness as part of the natural process of growth. We can see setbacks as opportunities to discover what we need for future successes. While engaged in the struggle to improve, we can cultivate humor, fun, laughter, and joy. This helps us not take ourselves too seriously.
- Affirm: God loves me exactly as I am and too much to leave me there.
- Affirm: I love myself exactly as I am and too much to leave me there.

The Role of Medication

- How does medication fit into the picture? Following are some general rules. There are always exceptions.
 - On a scale of 1–10, symptoms can be mild 1–3, moderate 4–6, severe 7–9, or extreme 10.
 - We can practice the methods when symptoms are mild to moderate. It is very difficult or impossible to practice the methods when symptoms are severe or extreme.
 - Mild 1–3: We can practice the methods. Medication is not required.
 - Moderate 4–6: We can practice the methods. Medication is an option.
 - Severe 7–9: There is possible danger to self or others. It is very difficult or impossible to practice the methods. Most need medication.
 - Extreme 10: There is danger to self or others. Medication is indicated. Cannot practice the methods.

Risk and Benefit

- Before we get started, a word about reactivity. Recall that pain has two levels: 1. The inevitable suffering of life and 2. Our reaction to it. When we practice the recommended methods, we reduce unnecessary reactivity. This is to be distinguished from the heightened emotions and sensitivities resulting from major mental illness: schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome), anxiety and depressive disorders, traumatic brain injury, and more. In these instances, there is a biological and or genetic contribution to heightened reactivity that may or may not respond to the techniques recommended here.
- In addition, some techniques like meditation, transformation of emotion, and forgiveness may cause our pain to get worse before it gets better. Opening a dialogue with emotional pain can be frightening, requiring a dive into uncharted territory and facing the unknown. When we stand alone and ride the pain waves, there is likely to be considerable resistance. We should never underestimate how frightful this may be. We should never push anybody into such a process.

- Some cannot and should not engage in exploring their pain in such a manner without seeking professional help; it might flood their defenses and cause alarm or panic. If you feel your pain is too intense when you practice any method, please avoid it at this point and consult with a professional counselor.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- This workbook describes fifteen pain management options, three on the horizontal axis and twelve on the vertical axis. A balanced healing program includes work on both axes. Over time, there is a shift from dependence on the external world of people, activities, places, and things to the internal world of peace, security, and contentment no matter the condition of the outer world.
- The techniques described in this workbook will show you how to place your needle of attention on healing qualities referred to as love or a substitute word of your choice. You will learn how to think, feel, visualize, and ultimately become these qualities. The qualities will then help you broker and buffer any painful problem.
- Healing qualities adding up to love are more powerful than any painful problem. Clearly establish the cultivation of healing qualities as your goal, and keep this goal ever shining before you. You may get overwhelmed, but you won't get lost.
- Spiritual healing is the reduction of the ego and the expansion of soul qualities, independent of whether or not the body heals.
- Spiritual work is difficult. It requires discipline, hard work, takes a long time, and often hurts. However, if you persist, it gets easier and the reward is great: expanded spiritual qualities and superconscious experience. If you persevere with courage and heart, you will learn, grow, and transform. Never, never, never give up.
- Why is it important to have a spiritual support network?
- What is the purpose of solitude on the spiritual path?
- How does a reduced ego assist in spiritual growth?
- What is the relationship between ego reduction and spiritual healing?

AFFIRMATIONS

- Love is the most powerful healing force.
- I balance support from my people and solitude for maximum spiritual growth.
- To change the world, I reform myself.
- I embrace ego reduction through expansion of soul qualities.
- My body may not heal, but I can always expand love, peace, courage, and strength.
- I accept my present state as I make the spiritual climb.
- Peace, joy, love, power, and wisdom are on the other side of every painful problem.
- Spiritual power comes on its own schedule. I wait patiently.
- I love myself exactly as I am at the moment but too much to leave me there.

- I accept myself exactly as I am right now but too much to leave me there.
- Mind makes me sick. Mind makes me well.
- I put every ounce of my energy into my spiritual practice.
- There is no such thing as a quick fix.
- I can learn. I can grow. I persevere with heart and courage.
- Where I place my attention is where I am going. I focus on healing qualities.
- I expect difficult days. I am awake, alert, and ready.
- I practice in the minutes of my life.
- All I have is the moments of my life. I practice there.
- Love is the way and the goal. I start my climb from where I am right now.

PRACTICE TIPS

Design Your Own Program

- In this model, there is no universal prescription for length or type of practice. The healing ball is in your court. You design your own program.
- With any pain, fifteen methods, and one hundred qualities, you can individualize your program to suit your needs.

DESIGN YOUR OWN PROGRAM

- You determine which problem you want to work on.
 - You determine which method you want to practice.
 - You determine which quality you want to cultivate.
 - You determine which traction device you want to use.
 - You determine which wisdom pearl you want to affirm.
 - You determine where, when, how often, and how long you will practice.
- This is different from other models, where for example, you might be advised to practice a method such as mindfulness or meditation thirty minutes twice a day.
 - With this model, you can practice for a few minutes and expand as time and circumstance allow.
 - You can also change problems, methods, and qualities to suit your needs at the time.
 - This flexibility has its advantages. It appeals to the differences between individuals and allows for the natural changes that occur in our schedules and life circumstance.
 - Everyone has PMQ but you decide which problem, method, and quality you want to work with and add traction devices as needed.

- You may practice one or two exercises for a few minutes and build from there to a continuous practice of one or more methods and qualities throughout the day.
- Medical students and young couples with children may be too busy to meditate but one can always practice breathwork, affirmations, and mindfulness.
- How much or what type of structure do you want?
- What works best for you?

Adding Methods

- Review the methods in Chapters 5–19 in this workbook.
- Scan the material to see the lay of the land.
- You may already practice some of these methods but want to expand and refine your options.
- Pick a method you would like to add to your toolbox. Start anywhere. It doesn't matter what method you choose. You determine the method based on your life circumstance, motivation, time, energy, and comfort.
- This is like trying on a new pair of hiking boots. If we know we are going on a long and sometimes difficult hike, we would shop for comfortable boots. Similarly, as you review a method, try it on for size and be sure you are comfortable with it. Then you can use the method to help you manage your painful problems.
- Read and study the chapter on your chosen method.
- Match your method with a problem and a quality.
- With any pain, fifteen methods, and one hundred qualities, you can individualize your program to suit your needs.
- Your practice may be simple or complex. Some will keep it simple and practice one or two methods such as breathwork and affirmations. Others might profit from mindfulness and service. Those who want to go deep can practice meditation and transformation of emotion. Those who enjoy complexity may practice all fifteen methods.
- Take your time. You might practice a new method for a few days, weeks, or longer before you decide to add another method. Build it up slowly. We are in this for a lifetime.
- Study and practice the methods to see which ones work best. Be creative. Choose problems, methods, and qualities that fit the moment and mood. Begin your patient daily practice.

The Best Practice Position:

Calm Continuous Concentration and the Yoyo Effect

- All of the methods described in this work require a calm, concentrated mind; but the mind loves to wander. It remains independent despite our best efforts to control it. In frustration, we fight back, but fighting mind with mind creates tension, taking us even further away from calm concentration. What will help? Here are a few key points to remember.

- The best practice position combines one-pointed, calm, continuous concentration with intensity, but only an advanced student can hold such a position. The rest of us must deal with the wandering mind. When we begin our practice by focusing on an affirmation, the breath, or a mantra, inevitably the mind will lapse into one of its familiar habit patterns. As soon as you notice that your mind has drifted off, bring it gently back to your point of focus. When the mind wanders again, and it will, bring it back to its practice position of calm concentration. This yoyo, back and forth movement, between calm concentration and the wandering mind will go on for years. It is a part of the natural process of meditation, mindfulness, and the other methods described in this work.
- Most people are disturbed by the yoyo and consider it an indicator that they are not succeeding or cannot do this work. On the contrary, the yoyo is the route to full power and deep healing. Nevertheless, the yoyo effect is frustrating. We want to control the mind but can't. It has a life of its own. We can bypass this frustration and stay calm by accepting the mind exactly where it is at the moment because it could not be anywhere else. This will help you stay relaxed while you return the mind to its practice position of calm concentration.
- Concentration is key. We are learning how to focus the mind, control attention, ignore distraction, and keep the mind where we want it to be. The more we bring the mind back from wandering to a single point of focus, the more we build up our brain groove for concentration. Do not identify with a particular stream of thought. Gently bring your mind back to its state of calm concentration.
- Practicing concentration can be fun or frustrating, depending upon our frame of reference. If we remain gentle, compassionate, relaxed, non-judgmental, and accepting of ourselves, we can play the game of concentration as a sport.
- Bring all of your heart, mind, might, and soul to your practice. Apply your unwavering focus to your chosen method and quality. Bring all of your attention, intention, and concentration to each moment. Leave nothing behind. Eliminate all distractions.
- Mind, will power, emotions, energy, everything is channeled in a constructive way towards the cultivation of spiritual qualities. Channel all of your energy and inner faculties in a supreme conscious effort towards expansion of the healing qualities. Bring some zeal, hunger, intensity, and thirst to your practice. This inner workout is like doing mental push-ups. You might call it mental yoga.
- Make every moment count and go deeper. Most of the time, we don't go deep enough. Going deeper has to do with motivation, intensity, and passion. Don't leave anything on the field.
- However, don't go too far and create tension or strain. All methods are practiced in a relaxed state. You cannot get to higher states if you are tense. There should be intensity without tension. Learn to relax and concentrate at the same time.
- You progress by taking one step at a time. Little by little, you get there. No matter what comes, press on. Eventually you will perfect the techniques.
- Perseverance is the key. It gets easier, but you must persevere even on difficult days. Give your best effort. Your concentration will expand.
- When the yoyo slows and finally stops, you can place your needle of attention where you want it to be and keep it there.

- If you follow this advice and practice the recommended methods, you will notice your mind becomes ever-increasingly positive, calm, focused, strong, and resilient, which will help you in every domain of your life.

Stay in the Present:

Minutes and Moments

- *The next step in our spiritual development is here and now.* Spiritual methods help us keep our attention and concentration focused on the present so we do not miss the opportunity to take that next step.
- We spend too much time dwelling on the past and future. We can learn from the past and plan for the future; however, the bulk of spiritual practice is in the seconds and minutes of our lives. When your mind drifts into the past or future during your practice, gently bring it back to the present. Concentrate on each moment by being here and now. When your mind wanders, bring it back to the here and now.
- Spiritual work is in the moments of our lives. Moments and minutes are more important than hours or years. Be aware of your attention and attitude in each moment. Attention breeds habits whether negative or positive. What you focus on is what you are becoming. Focus on the cultivation of healing qualities in the moments of your life.
- You may experience nothing but work or pain as you cultivate spiritual qualities. Do not be discouraged. Effort is progress. The expansion of healing qualities is the result of every little effort in each moment. Results are subtle, but they accumulate. Eventually you will experience the wonderful expansion of peace, love, joy, power, and wisdom. Healing qualities are the route to higher states of consciousness. Keep going and you will experience the peace that surpasses understanding.

Start Slow:

One Step at a Time

- We climb a mountain one step at a time. Similarly, we build our practice each day by applying a healing method one step at a time.
- Healing qualities grow slowly. Patience is necessary. By taking small steps and building our program gradually, we will have a strong spiritual foundation upon which to build higher floors.
- Start slow. For example, your PMQ might be anxiety-meditation-peace. You can practice meditation five to ten minutes twice a day and gradually build up your time. If this seems intimidating, try starting at thirty to sixty seconds twice a day. Anyone can do that.
- Practice any method for just a few moments and minutes and build your practice from there. Perseverance is the key. It gets easier, but you must persevere even on difficult days.
- You progress by taking one step at a time. Little by little, you get there. No matter what comes, press on. Eventually you will perfect the techniques.
- Do as much as you can. It's like going to the gym. The first step may be hard but once you get going, it gets easier and more enjoyable.

- There is no universal prescription for length of practice. Just get started. Start where you are right now and begin your patient daily practice. Push the envelope gently. Go back and do it again. More is better. The more you practice, the better you get. Work your way up to 45–60 minutes once or twice a day if time and circumstance permit.
- Some people build the equivalent of a sabbath into their program, a one-day-a-week retreat for contemplation, prayer, meditation, and fasting. Some retreat for up to nine days or more. In the beginning, this may seem intimidating and unobtainable. However, these individuals started their practice with small steps and built from there, as described in this section. Give your best effort. Your concentration will expand. Eventually you will learn to stay with a method at will throughout the day.

Pace Yourself:

It's a Long Climb

- Some individuals try to move forward on the spiritual path faster than is possible, but real spiritual growth occurs one day at a time. We need to relax and enjoy the day without adding undue pressure or stress by attempting to accomplish too much. We cannot do it all now. We can't live up in the penthouse when we haven't built the foundation or the floors in between. There are no shortcuts. We cannot skip any of the assigned classes. We need to do the homework daily. Then we can pass the tests and advance to the next grade.
- It is a long climb up the mountain. When we try to climb too fast, we slip, fall, hurt ourselves, or get exhausted unnecessarily. When we climb too slowly or not at all, we become bored or indifferent.
- To find the right speed, focus on one or two problems at a time. Bring all of your heart, mind, might, and soul to your work of cultivating healing qualities but remain calm without strain or tension. When you find the right speed, you will experience harmony, balance, rhythm, and flow.

Do Your Best:

Leave the Rest

- Your ability to focus on your method and quality will vary from day to day. On days when you are tired and need rest, you might just watch TV and eat popcorn. At other times, when you feel ready, you can do the deep inner work of transformation of emotion and meditation, the two most difficult techniques on the vertical axis. Pick a method or combination of methods that suit your needs at the moment, and do not worry about perfection. Just do your best and leave the rest.

EXERCISES

The Scientific Method in Metaphysics:

Direct Personal Experience

- In your search for new and better ways of managing your suffering, you might find it useful to follow the scientific method in metaphysics. This method supports your ability to decipher spiritual fiction

from fact. You can put profoundly important questions to the test of direct personal experience in the laboratory of life.

- We can test the reality of any spiritual idea through direct personal experience when we develop a spiritual practice.
- The method:
 - a. The body is the test tube.
 - b. The experiment is on the life force itself, consciousness, energy, thought, will, feeling, desire, choice, and behavior.
 - c. Test a theory.
 - 1. Can I actually make the healing qualities grow?
 - 2. Is love more powerful than any painful problem?
 - 3. Does compassionate service to humanity give peace of mind and strength?
 - 4. Do the methods described in *Healing Power* work?
 - 5. Do higher states of consciousness actually exist?
 - 6. Does the body-temple harbor the God of the Universe?
 - d. Assume the agnostic position.
 - 1. Do not accept or reject the theory
 - 2. Stay open and receptive.
 - e. Practice a healing method.
 - f. Prove or disprove the theory through direct personal experience.
 - g. If a method or concept works, keep it, and, if you are a healthcare professional, teach it to your patients. If not, discard it.
 - h. Trust your ability to tell the difference.

Right Attitude

- A positive attitude is essential for recovery and healing every step of the way. We need this to get started, stay in the game, reduce unnecessary reactivity, and stay calm no matter the circumstance.
 - Following are some exercises to help you cultivate right attitude. You may find these helpful or create your own.
1. Pain has a purpose
 - Pain and tests have a purpose: the cultivation of healing qualities and higher states of consciousness.
 - Turn the table on the pain and make it work for rather than against you.
 - When pain comes, the student affirms:
 - a. Life is school.
 - b. Pain is the teacher if I open to its lessons.

- c. The lessons always have to do with the cultivation of healing qualities.
 - o The student asks the pain:
 - a. Why are you here?
 - b. What are the lessons I need to learn?
 - c. What do I need to do?
 - d. What healing qualities do I need to be working on now?
 - o Respond to tests with healing qualities. Align your thoughts, feelings, desires, decisions, and actions with the qualities.
2. Little steps, little victories
- o We want perfect unconditional love and her associated qualities but we cannot achieve this because of our imperfections. Make peace with your imperfections and keep that shining goal before you.
 - o Growth is slow, painful, and difficult but inevitable if we make the necessary effort.
 - o The way is paved with little steps and little victories.
 - o When we fall down, we get up. We persevere.
 - o With work, effort, little steps, and little victories, we move past our current level, no matter that level, to a place beyond our imagination.
 - o Effort is progress. 1, 2, 3, 4, little steps, little victories.
3. Affirmations for right attitude
- o I am positive, calm, focused, awake, alert.
 - o I am willing, cheerful, and enthusiastic.
 - o I am always willing to change.
 - o I am ready to do the work.
 - o My intent is strong.
 - o My will is strong.
 - o I can overcome any barrier.
 - o I will overcome any barrier.
 - o I am ready for anything.
 - o Nothing can stop me.
 - o Nothing can ruffle me.
 - o Courage, perseverance, and faith pave the way.
 - o Positive thought paves the way.
 - o No defeat. Only will power.
 - o No discouragement. Only enthusiasm.
 - o No failure. Only positive action steps.
 - o Little steps, little victories.

- Slow, steady, this step, this action.
 - I respond to tests with healing qualities.
 - Knots untied. Problems melt. Balance and harmony result.
 - It's not about the role I play but how I play it. I permeate every action with love.
 - I do not try to escape a trial but endure with right attitude.
 - I rise above by cultivating the qualities.
 - Strength, courage, and perseverance get me through.
 - Positive thought and healing qualities get me through.
 - When all else fails, I endure and rise above.
 - Effort is progress.
 - I do my best and leave the rest.
4. Watch the state of your spirit. How would you describe it?
 5. Are you down and out, about to throw in the towel, or are you up and ready for the fight?
 6. What are the ingredients for your right attitude?
 7. What is going to keep you going no matter what happens?

Quick Start

- Some people want simple techniques. Others enjoy more complexity. In this work, you will find both. Choose the methods that suit your needs.
- Most of the techniques in this work are built on the template of the following three examples. Note the progression from simple to complex.
 1. The simplest technique
 2. Roll the Wheel
 3. Roll the Wheel with traction devices

THE SIMPLEST TECHNIQUE

When you are uncomfortable and want to shift gears:

1. Stop
2. Breathe
3. Present moment
4. Reframe

- The reframe can be a quality. For example:
 1. Stop

2. Breathe
 3. Present moment
 4. Choose any one or combination of one hundred qualities: compassion, patience, courage, forgiveness.
- The reframe can be a method of your choice. For example:
 1. Stop
 2. Breathe
 3. Present moment
 4. Reframe: Choose any one of combination of fifteen methods: affirmations, breathwork, etc.
 - To expand, try the following format.

ROLL THE WHEEL

When you find yourself immersed in unnecessary reactivity, you can roll the wheel or practice PMQ: find a problem, choose a method, and cultivate a quality.

1. Stop
2. Breathe
3. Present moment
4. (P) Pain or problem: Realize mindfully you are in a reaction. Notice what is there. Are you anxious, bored, tired, or angry?
5. (M) Method: Choose any one or combination of fifteen methods: breathwork, affirmations, meditation, and more.
6. (Q) Quality: Cultivate any one or combination of one hundred qualities: peace, compassion, understanding, forgiveness.

Example

1. Stop
 2. Breathe
 3. Present moment
 4. (P) Anxiety
 5. (M) Meditation
 6. (Q) Peace
- In the next example, we add traction devices to the wheel.

ROLL THE WHEEL WITH A TRACTION DEVICE

When you become aware that you have gone for a ride on the train of thought and you want to get off the train:

1. Stop
2. Breathe: Take a slow deep breath.
3. Present moment: Get into the present moment.
4. (P) Pain: Realize mindfully you are in a reaction. Notice what is there: anxious, bored, tired, angry
5. (M) Method: Choose a method.
6. (Q) Quality: Choose a quality.
7. Traction device: This is the stuff of religion or any concept, image, or aspect from any belief system that gives you inspiration. This may be a master such as Jesus, Buddha, Krishna, the God of love, a pearl of wisdom, and so forth.

Example

1. Stop
2. Breathe
3. Present moment
4. (P) Anxiety
5. (M) Meditation
6. (Q) Peace
7. Traction device: Meditate with the Compassionate Buddha

A Balanced Healing Program:

Fifteen Pain Management Options

- This work describes fifteen psychosocial-spiritual methods that help us manage the inevitable suffering of life and our reaction to it. These are the methods we can turn to when doctors and other healthcare professionals cannot solve the problem.
- **External Work: Horizontal Axis.** Methods 1–3 describe our work in the external world of people, activities, and belief systems.
 1. People: When you are in pain, you can spend time with family and friends for solace and comfort.
 2. Activities: You can engage in constructive meaningful activities: work, school, training, volunteering, recreation, sports, culture, hobbies, and so forth.
 3. Belief System: You can go to church, synagogue, or temple for traditional worship or to a group like Alcoholics Anonymous for support and wisdom. All of this helps and may be enough for some people. Others need to do some additional work in the vertical axis.

- **Internal Work: Vertical Axis.** Methods 4–15: If you have done everything you can in the world of people, activities, and belief systems and you are still in pain, there are twelve additional methods you can use to help you with your problem. These are the methods of the vertical axis.
- **Locus of Control.** If you spend most of your time in Methods 1–3, your locus of control is primarily outside. Most of us start here. When life presents overwhelming problems, it is often necessary to do some inner work. As you begin to practice Methods 4–15, your locus of control gradually shifts to your inner self. You become less dependent on the outer world of people, activities, events, and material things when you find inner peace, security, and contentment. At mastery, when your locus of control is deeply rooted inside, you will be even-minded under all conditions. For most of us, even-mindedness under all conditions is an affirmation, not a reality. On the way there, we can have fun with the challenge.
- A balanced healing program includes work on both axes. Over time, there is a shift from dependence on the external world of people, activities, places, and things to the internal world of peace, security, and contentment no matter the condition of your body or the outer world.
- It is up to you to balance the outer and inner methods of the horizontal and vertical axis.
- Which method you choose and how much time you spend on each axis varies according to your stage of life, responsibilities, inclinations, awareness of issues, and degree of suffering.
- For example, if the horizontal axis is working, most people don't take time to retreat for contemplation and meditation. Overwhelming pain is usually the driver that forces people to vertical axis methods.
 - a. Review the fifteen recommended methods for skillful pain management.
 - b. Which ones do you already practice?
 - c. Which ones would you like to add?

THE METHODS

Horizontal axis: external work

1. People
2. Activities
3. Belief systems

Vertical axis: internal work

4. Affirmations
5. Habit transformation
6. Progressive muscle relaxation
7. Breathwork
8. Contemplation
9. Meditation
10. Prayer
11. Mindfulness
12. Practicing the presence of God
13. Service
14. Yoga
15. Transformation of emotion

Morning Program

- You may choose to develop a morning ritual consisting of breathwork, progressive muscle relaxation, contemplation, meditation, and prayer.

- If you can't do the full program, do a brief ritual including one or a combination of these methods. Even a few minutes helps set the intent and tone for the day.
- When you finish the morning program, your consciousness is aligned with love and her consort qualities. You can then share these qualities with all whom you meet.

Day Program

- You can maintain the momentum gained in the morning program by practicing mindfulness, the presence of God, and service.

Evening Program

- Every evening, practice the same methods as the morning program: breathwork, progressive muscle relaxation, contemplation, meditation, and prayer.

One Continuous Sacred Ritual

- Morning, day, and evening practice are very beneficial even if only for a few minutes.
- When you get tired, bored, or overwhelmed with a method, try a different one. Mix and match. Over time you will be able to pair methods to moments with increasing effectiveness.
- Every moment is an opportunity to practice one of the methods. Keep increasing your practice at various points throughout the day. The more we practice, the better we get. Practice the methods as much as you can.
- Advanced students always try to practice one of the methods. This is possible since some methods, such as meditation and contemplation require solitude while mindfulness, practicing the presence of God, and service occur during activity.
- Slowly expand your practice until it is continuous and seamless. When you are always practicing a method, you have reached the pinnacle: one continuous sacred ritual.

Prepare for a Rainy Day

- Your current life circumstance determines which methods you choose. For example, bike riding or jogging might be a prominent activity you use for skillful pain management on the horizontal axis. But what methods will you turn to if you break an arm and can't do your favorite sport?
- Most people don't think about this until change is forced upon them by life experience. Why wait for a crisis? Practice some of the vertical axis methods now to prepare for a rainy day.
- Practice when you feel well so you will be more prepared for the difficult painful days that can come at any time.

The Inner Gym

- When you realize your mind has gone for a ride on the train of thought and you don't want to be on the train, shift gears by remembering to practice a vertical axis method such as breathwork, affirmations, or mindfulness.
- This is like going to the gym but in this case, you don't have to go anywhere. The gym is inside. Go there and work out as early and often as you remember.
- The benefits are great: a strong, positive, calm, focused, and resilient mind, ready to help you accomplish goals, solve problems, shape meaning, manage pain skillfully, heal, and enjoy the show. This is the definition of good mental health.

The Refrigerator of Life:

Craving

- The “refrigerator of life” is the world calling you to familiar habits that keep you from doing vertical axis work. For example, you are sitting in meditation, focusing on your mantra, and experience a good result; the mind becomes more positive and peaceful. You resolve to stay in meditation and go deeper.
- However, an idea or impulse arrives consistent with one of your well-traveled brain grooves usually in the form of a person or activity in the horizontal axis: find a friend, watch television, check your e-mail, go for a walk, go shopping, eat something, and so forth.
- Watch these impulses and don't respond. If we answer this craving call too quickly, we miss the opportunity to cultivate the new habit of meditation in its new brain groove. It takes time to make a new habit. Resist the craving, and continue your practice for as long as you can.

A Simple Flick of the Switch or Heavy Lifting

- Sometimes, practicing a method or a quality is easy. It is like the simple flick of a switch. For example, you might practice the one-word affirmation, compassion, and bring yourself into alignment with that quality without much effort.
- There are times however, when more effort is required. We may be struggling with difficult and painful problems on days when we don't have much energy and we don't feel like practicing anything. Concentration can be difficult and more difficult when we don't feel well. Practice on days like this feels like heavy lifting. But we need to do the work when we feel like it and when we don't.
- A simple flick of the switch or heavy lifting. Be ready for both.

Lifelong Practice

- As with any healthy lifestyle choice like stopping cigarettes, eating a healthy diet, and physical workouts, practice of the recommended methods is lifelong.
- There is always work to do, whether life is smooth and stable or rocky and chaotic. If we practice the techniques when life is smooth, we can use them more effectively when it gets rough.

- Learning how to do the methods is simple but it is not always easy. Although practice is enjoyable much of the time, sometimes you will not feel like doing any work. Other days there is considerable discomfort.
- Be ready for anything. Then if life gets rough, you will be less likely to drop the ball and escape to an old unhealthy pain-killing habit.
- Channel all of your energy and inner faculties in a supreme conscious effort towards expansion of the qualities. This inner workout is like doing mental push-ups. You might call it mental yoga.
- Do as much as you can for the rest of your life. Light the fire and keep it lit. Bring it.
- How deep is your practice?
- What ignites your passion?

Chip, Chip, Chip:

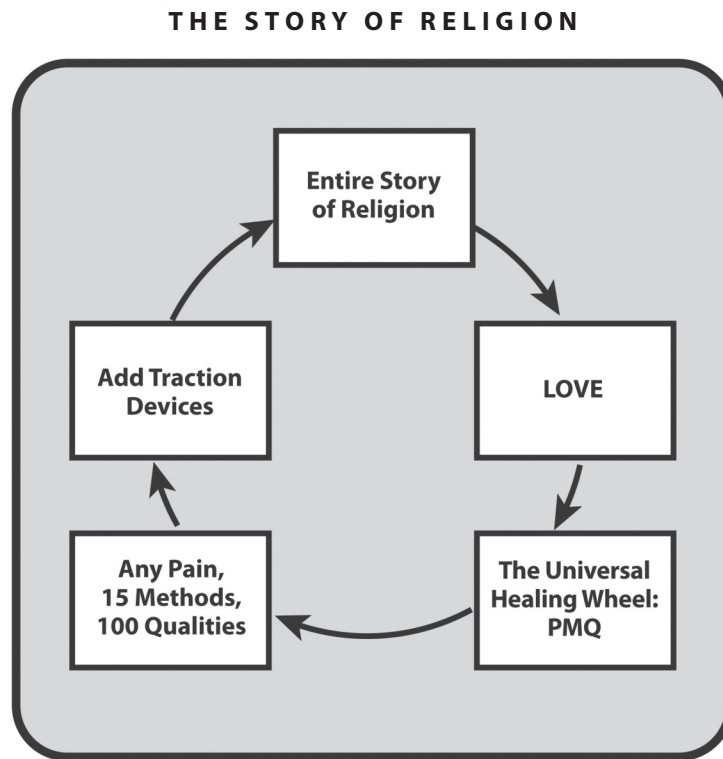
Effort Is Progress

- Problems can be tiny, small, medium, large, or huge. Some problems are long term and severe.
- In general, the bigger the problem, the longer it takes to reduce its influence and power. This can be overwhelming. Hope may take a hit. Demoralization results. Some people never begin the healing process because it seems too big. Others get started but quit early as their pain seems insurmountable.
- To combat this sequence, think of yourself as a sculptor with a chisel, a big block of marble, and a vision of the final product. Go to work. Do a little bit every day. Chip, chip, chip. Effort is progress. (See illustration: A block of marble and the chisel of wisdom, page 264.)
- Everything gets better slowly with practice, a lot of practice. But the schedule for progress is not up to us. With some problems, we may see improvement right away. Other problems take longer.
- If you have an expectation of how long it takes to feel better and your expectation is not met, you are likely to quit. Then progress is impossible.
- As stated by a student in a class on healing, “If your problem is locked in a big fat obsessive compulsive brain groove and your new method and quality are a tiny little filament, this seems an unfair match. Practice anyway. You have to start somewhere. David beat Goliath.” Chip, chip, chip. A sculptor does not produce a masterpiece overnight.
- When you do a lot of heavy lifting and see no apparent result, remember this: effort is progress. Keep on keeping on. Results are slow and cumulative. You think nothing is going on but it is. The qualities are growing but the growth is too subtle to feel. At some point you will experience peace, love, joy, power, and wisdom. You feel better, become a better person, and experience higher states of consciousness.

Simplicity and Complexity

- This is a complex model with a lot of working pieces. It can be overwhelming. However, if you continue your study, you will see the model is as simple or complex as you want it to be. Here is how this works.
- The entire story of religion contracts to a single word, Love. Love expands to PMQ, which branches out into fifteen methods and one hundred qualities with traction devices.

1. Start with the entire story of religion. This is obviously complex.
2. We can reduce this down to a single word, Love. Love is the elegant essence of religion. This is as simple as it gets.
3. Love is expressed through the universal healing wheel or PMQ.
4. PMQ expands to any problem, fifteen methods, and one hundred qualities.
5. Add back the traction devices from the stuff of religion and we are back where we started: the entire story of religion.



- The universal wheel with traction devices captures the entire story of religion while offering a cafeteria of options. You choose the degree of complexity and structure that works for you.
 - a. You can be atheist, agnostic, religious, or spiritual.
 - b. Your belief system can be simple or complex, fixed or opened.
 - c. Your practice can be as simple as breathwork and a few loving-kindness affirmations to full-on religion.
- The amount or type of structure you require is personal but the universal goal is love. Love is the report card. The vehicle is not important. Ethical humanists can be more advanced than religious persons and vice versa.
- Some will want just a few nuggets to chew on for months before they add more on later. Some will want the whole package. Others will choose something in between. The advantage of this is obvious:

individuality, flexibility, and choice. One size does not fit all. There are lots of options. You create as you go according to your needs at the time.

- Your job is to choose how little or how much of this you want or need. Your practice can be one minute twice a day all the way to one continuous sacred ritual.
- The path laid out is from beginning to mastery. Mastery is beyond us but included as the ultimate vision achieved by others and available with sustained long-term practice. How deep do you want to go?
- If you are overwhelmed with the complexity of the model at this point, hang in there. Study, think, contemplate, discuss, and practice. Put the pieces together one at a time. You will see how it works. Complexity won't be a problem at some point. The elegant simplicity of it all emerges as PMQ with or without traction devices. The only problem left is whether or not you will practice. If you do, then and only then can you unpack this wisdom through direct personal experience. And you will keep it as simple or complex as you wish.

Deepest Suffering and Deepest Healing

- This model takes more time and study than most but if you put in the time, the benefits are great. The biggest advantage is that you are given the tools to manage any type or degree of suffering.
- The pain addressed in this model can be physical, mental, emotional, social, or spiritual. The problem can be tiny, small, medium, large, or huge, all the way to the most brutal reality, the cave of darkness, the dark night of the soul, or a personal ground zero where there is nothing but death, pain and suffering, and the unknown. I don't have answers to that but the great wisdom traditions do.
- *Healing Power* presents that wisdom of the ages, the teachings of saints, sages, teachers, gurus, and masters. I extract and transfer their wisdom and float it as options: healing principles, methods, and qualities that are more powerful than any pain or problem, even the most brutal of realities.
- These teachings can help us meet, match, and transcend any barrier we face. Here you will find key universal healing principles, fifteen powerful methods, and one hundred healing qualities. You choose as you go.
- It is very difficult to go deep. We want to squash our anxiety with a quick answer or quick fix. *Healing Power* supports you to enter where you want and control the speed and depth of the work. You discover which methods and qualities you need for problems of different sizes and shapes. You can take it as far as you wish.
- The deepest suffering requires the deepest healing. Which methods and qualities will work best for you when your pain gets big?

A Deep Metaphysical Purpose

- Some of our problems are long term, chronic, deeply embedded, seemingly impossible to shake. Like a difficult relative, the problem keeps showing up.
- These disconcerting, anxiety-provoking problems have a deep metaphysical purpose: the cultivation of healing qualities until they become unconditional, spontaneous, automatic habits.

- Long-term severe problems may require more methods and more time than mild superficial problems. Run your problem through any one or combination of the fifteen methods again and again until it is contained, reduced, or eliminated. It is this repetition that brings forth unconditional understanding, compassion, forgiveness, love, strength, courage, peace, and more.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Pain has two levels: the inevitable suffering of life and our reaction to it. We cannot control the inevitable suffering of life but we can control how we respond. This is where we have leverage. This is where we do the work. The work is reducing reactivity.
- Healing qualities are water for the fire of reactivity. Love, compassion, understanding, forgiveness, patience, kindness, humor, courage, and strength are the antidote to impatience, frustration, anger, jealousy, judgment, selfishness, restlessness, and the like.
- In this work, you will find a versatile tool box of fifteen methods. The list of methods is not intended to be all-inclusive. You are encouraged to heal by any method that works for you.
- The methods help us heal and manage our pain skillfully. With practice, you can wire the methods in the neurocircuits of your brain and make them your new good habits. Once these habits are in place, you can call upon them to help you manage your pain and problems.
- When practicing the methods, we learn how to turn it down a notch so we can enter a difficult situation with Wise Mind = Even-mindedness. In ordinary consciousness, we ride the inevitable pain waves of life and add unnecessary reactivity. In higher states of consciousness, we still feel the pain but we do not add unnecessary reactivity. It still hurts but we get the best possible ride when we respond with love and her associated qualities. At mastery, we can ride the inevitable pain waves of life perfectly without reactivity. We remain even-minded under all conditions. No provocation can disrupt a master's love: a tall order, a wonderful goal.
- You can practice any one or combination of methods for any length of time. Study and practice the methods to see which ones work best. Start with one or two and build from there at your own speed. Take your time. Build it up slowly. We are in this for a lifetime.
- Start wherever you wish. You are encouraged to choose the methods that work best for you in any combination. Some people may only practice affirmations and breathwork. Others focus on meditation and mindfulness.
- You progress by taking one step at a time. Little by little, you get there. No matter what comes, press on. Eventually you will perfect the techniques. Perseverance is the key. It gets easier, but you must persevere even on difficult days. Give your best effort. Your concentration will expand. Eventually you will learn to stay with a method at will throughout the day.
- Focus on the cultivation of healing qualities in the moments of your life. The expansion of healing qualities is the result of every little effort in each moment. Results are subtle, but they accumulate minute by minute, thought by thought, breath by breath.
- Use every circumstance and every moment as an opportunity to practice. Eventually you will experience the wonderful expansion of peace, love, joy, power, and wisdom.

- Healing qualities are the route to higher states of consciousness. Keep going and you will experience the peace that surpasses understanding, pure unconditional love, and ecstatic joy.
- The only criterion for progress is doing your best. Practice PMQ and you will move forward. At some point, you will feel it.
- Do not worry about perfection. Just do your best and leave the rest. There is only one report card. If you do your best, you get an A.
- Spiritual work is difficult. It requires discipline, hard work, takes a long time, and often hurts. However, if you persist, it gets easier and the reward is great: expanded healing qualities and superconscious experience. If you persevere with courage and heart, you will learn, grow, and transform. Never, never, never give up.
- None of this works without practice, and practice occurs without immediate results. Many quit for lack of an immediate response but if we persist when the going gets rough and we don't feel better, at some point we will. Then we see how the healing process works. We feel better and become better people. Then we trust the process.
- You may have a little or a lot of time to do this work. A little is good. More is better. You expand your practice or not as you wish.
- You may start your practice on your own and later find the need for a teacher.

SUMMARY

- This work describes fifteen powerful healing methods. Practice these methods in the daily grind of ordinary activities, in the minutes and moments of your life, when things are good, when things are bad, when you are in crisis. You will see that they work. Results are subtle, but they accumulate minute-by-minute, thought-by-thought, and breath-by-breath. Use every circumstance and every moment as an opportunity to practice.
- Practicing these disciplines will heal and transform your consciousness. You will experience an ever-expanding feeling of peace, compassion, and joy expressed in acts of gentle, humble service to all of humanity.
- In the next chapter, you will find a review of the serenity prayer.



CHAPTER 4

THE SERENITY PRAYER

WILL AND ACCEPTANCE

- This work describes fifteen methods designed to help you become a more skillful pain manager. These methods will help you change, heal, grow, cultivate healing qualities, eliminate bad habits, get through barriers, accomplish your goals, and never give up.
- Before we begin our study of these methods, we will review the Serenity Prayer. This is a good place to start because it is intimately involved in the practice of each of these methods.

The Serenity Prayer

*God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
courage to change the things I can,
and the wisdom to know the difference.*

- The Serenity Prayer is in the Hall of Fame for all-time great prayers. It is a part of every twelve-step meeting. There is a reason for its popularity. The Serenity Prayer helps us sustain peace of mind during all phases of recovery work—including those times when we feel we are not making any progress—by addressing two great powers: will and surrender. (Some people prefer the word acceptance. Others enjoy the word surrender. In this chapter, I will use these words interchangeably.)
- **Will and Acceptance.** Will and surrender are monumentally important every step of the way on the recovery and healing path. We need both to reach our full potential. In the pursuit of any goal, we need:
 1. **Will.** We need will to change what is changeable.
 2. **Acceptance.** We need to accept what we cannot change.
 3. **Will and Surrender.** Many problems require both will and surrender. We can work on a problem with will, and accept it as long as it remains.
 4. **Wisdom.** With wisdom we can figure out which problems require will, acceptance, or both. This lesson describes how will and acceptance work separately and together for maximum recovery and healing.

Will

HOW TO DEVELOP WILL POWER

- Will has two components:
 1. Free will: our ability to choose. This determines our direction.
 2. Will power: the degree of intensity and passion given to our choices.
- Will is enormously important on every step of the recovery path.
- Will is involved in determining if we choose the path of healing and how much time and energy we invest on that path.
- Will shapes every moment of our lives, as we are always making choices in our thoughts, values, attitudes, desires, emotions, and actions.
- Each of the practice methods described in this work requires the use of our will power.
- We will review the importance of will in developing one-pointed, calm concentration in the performance of every practice method.
- Will is intimately involved in our choice of thoughts, which in turn have a profound effect on how we see, feel, and act in the world. We will study this in the lessons on positive thought and the science of healing affirmations.
- Will determines how much healing work we do. The more work we do, the better our results.
- Following is a discussion on how to expand will power.

CULTIVATING WILL POWER FROM SPARK TO BONFIRE

TWO FROGS IN TROUBLE

From the writings of the renowned yogi, Paramahansa Yogananda

Once a big fat frog and a lively little frog were hopping along together when they had the misfortune to jump straight into a pail of fresh milk. They swam for hours and hours, hoping to get out somehow; but the sides of the pail were steep and slippery, and death seemed certain.

When the big frog was exhausted, he lost courage. There seemed no hope of rescue. "Why keep struggling against the inevitable? I can't swim any longer," he moaned.

"Keep on! Keep on!" urged the little frog, who was still circling the pail. So they went on for a while. But the big frog decided it was no use. "Little friend, we may as well give up," he gasped. "I'm going to quit struggling."

Now only the little frog was left. He thought to himself, "Well, to give up is to be dead, so I will keep on swimming." Two more hours passed and the tiny legs of the determined little frog were almost paralyzed with exhaustion. It seemed as if he could not keep moving for another minute. But then he thought of his dead friend and repeated, "To give up is to be meat for someone's table, so I'll keep paddling until I die—if death is to come—but I will not cease trying. While there is life, there's hope!"

Intoxicated with determination, the little frog kept on, around and around and around the pail, chopping the milk into white waves. After a while, just as he felt completely numb and thought he was about to drown, he suddenly felt something solid under him. To his astonishment, he saw that he was resting on a lump of butter, which he had churned by his incessant paddling! And so the successful little frog leaped out of the milk pail to freedom.

- **Tests.** The unavoidable suffering of life shows up as tests, trials, and temptations that inevitably interrupt our peace and stability. Obviously what happens to us in this life is important but it is even more important how we respond. In response to life's difficulties, we have the choice to react in a positive or negative fashion. However, no matter how hard we try to choose rightly, at times we get lost in negativity. Sometimes our problems take over. We get stuck in old, negative thought patterns and habits that automatically choose our path for us. We cannot seem to get out.
- **Fifteen Pain Management Options.** To get out of a negative rut, you can do some work on the horizontal axis by getting help from your support network, constructive meaningful activities, or going to church, synagogue, mosque, twelve steps, or other healing groups. And you can do some inner work by practicing PMQ on the vertical axis.
- **Will Power.** The next step is to apply all of your will power to the chosen method. But a spark of will power will not do. We need a bonfire! If our will is weak and we run into a large barrier, we will not have the power to get through. However, when our will is strong, we can burst through the barrier that stands in our way. The stronger our will, the easier barriers are to breach. With continued practice, we can get through anything. But what if your will power is weak? How can you make it stronger?
- **Push-Ups.** To understand the expansion of will power, imagine increasing physical strength. Let's say you're able to do twelve push-ups. You set a goal of twenty-five. To achieve twenty-five push-ups, you need to reach the current boundary of twelve and push past it with several repetitions of thirteen and then fourteen. With the sustained effort of pushing past your current limit, you will get to your goal of twenty-five push-ups. As you push through and expand your boundaries, your will power gets stronger.
- **The Invisible Muscle.** Will is the invisible muscle of our life, the power that gets us through an obstacle to our desired goal. As with physical muscles, our will power expands or atrophies depending on how much exercise it gets. We can use this principle to understand how will power grows.
- **The Inner Workout.** When life springs a challenge, we can add to the problem with frustration, anger, or negative actions, or we can do an inner workout. The inner workout utilizes our will with a practice method to cultivate a healing quality. For example, when you are trying to change a bad habit such as substance use, you will experience craving. If instead of using your drug, you do some inner push-ups such as deep breathing and affirmations of loving-kindness for yourself, you dissolve the craving and replace it with strength and peace, which you can then give to others who come your way. With repetition and practice, you expand your ability to find comfort and solace inside instead of from your drug.
- **Maximum Effort.** For maximum spiritual growth, we should identify realistic, attainable goals and pursue them no matter what obstacles arise. We set our desire and effort at 100 percent. We do not let up.
- **Calm and Continuous.** We do the work in a calm and continuous manner, chipping away at each barrier with all of our determination until it dissolves.

- **Effort Is Progress.** Mistakes are part of the process. However, if we maintain our effort despite setbacks, eventually we progress.
- **Ever-Expanding Will Power.** As we work our way through obstacles and resistance, we exercise our will and thereby increase its power. The more we exercise our will, the more will power we build. This cycle repeats itself with new barriers, forcing our will to higher levels. This is how we can increase our will power from a spark to a bonfire, a necessity on the healing path. We will need ever-increasing will power to help us through the trials and tests of life.

Goal Setting

Following is an exercise in goal setting. This exercise will demonstrate how to use will, thought, and action to accomplish any goal:

1. Goal
2. Thought
3. Will
4. Action
5. Tests
6. Persistence
7. Success
8. Confidence
9. Goal

1. **Goal.** Pick a realistic, attainable goal. Choose a goal that is good for you, others, and the world.
2. **Thought.** Thoughts are very powerful, whether negative or positive. Keep your thoughts positive in the direction of your goal. Negative thoughts will only delay your progress. Remove all traces of negative thinking. You might try some of the affirmations related to will at the end of this chapter.
3. **Will.** Use the full force of your will to accomplish your goal. Gather all of your strength, might, and determination until your intent is unbending. Set your mind to absolute victory. However, if your will is too intense, you create tension and reduce your effectiveness. Remain calm even as your will is at full power. Calm continuous use of the will is best. Your effort should remain smooth and steady. The formula for success is calm, single-minded concentration.
4. **Action.** With a positive mind aimed at your target and your will at full throttle, perform all of your actions in the direction of your goal.
5. **Tests.** Expect many tests. Tests come in the form of difficulties, barriers, and obstacles. Exercise your will power and thought power against this resistance.
6. **Persistence.** Do not allow any negative influence to weaken the developing power of your will. Refuse to lose. Never give up. The only way to stop your growth is when you give up: then you lose. On the other hand, if you choose wisely and keep battling, you will move forward and ultimately succeed.

7. **Success.** When you follow the steps outlined above, your thought power and will power increase and you accomplish your goals.
8. **Confidence.** Confidence grows when you succeed.
9. **Goal.** Set a new goal. Over time, you can pursue goals that are more complex and difficult to achieve. However, with too many goals, you can scatter your energy. Do not leave something half done to start a new goal. To avoid this problem, devote all your will power to mastering one goal at a time.

An Example of Goal Setting

1. **Goal.** Joe wants to quit smoking.
2. **Thought.** Joe makes up his mind and begins using the following affirmations:
 - I can change.
 - With will and thought, I cultivate strength and peace.
 - With great determination, I create new good habits and healing qualities.
 - I make up my mind strongly now.
 - I am busy doing my part because God helps those who help themselves.
3. **Will.** Joe knows his cigarette habit is very powerful so he will need the full force of his will. He starts working with these affirmations:
 - I have the will to change.
 - I will change.
 - I use the full power of my will to transform negative to positive thoughts.
 - Nothing can stop me.
 - I am strong.
 - I give 100 percent of my effort.
4. **Action.** With his mind set at success, Joe conducts all of his activities in accord with his goal.
 - My mind is set at success.
 - My intent is unbending.
 - I refuse to smoke.
5. **Tests.** There are many tests. Cigarettes are everywhere. When Joe sees other people smoking, he wants to retreat to his bad habit but resists the craving by using the following affirmations:
 - I use any obstacle to stimulate my effort towards greater achievement.
 - The craving for cigarettes tries to throw me off balance, but my inner strength keeps me steady.
 - The more work I do, the more results I get.
 - When I resist the craving, it disappears like a wave in the ocean, only to be replaced by strength and peace.
6. **Persistence.** Joe knows his battle against cigarettes is long-term. A friend offered him a cigarette at a party. He relapsed and gave in, but quickly picked himself up, using the following affirmations:
 - No matter how many times I fall down, I pick myself up and struggle again towards my goal.
 - When a host of difficulties and obstacles arise, I refuse to give up.

- I possess the power of will and the power of thought. I make the effort now to draw these powers out through practice in the daily routines and challenges of my life.
 - 7. **Success.** Joe experienced difficulties and setbacks on his way to success, but because of his persistence, he gave up smoking and no longer craves it. By exercising his will and affirmations, he replaced his smoking habit with peace of mind and strength. He affirms:
 - I am victorious.
 - I am successful.
 - I am calm and strong.
 - 8. **Confidence.** Because of his success, Joe is more confident in himself. He is especially buoyant, as he has discovered the scientific method of healing through affirmations and will. He is amazed at how the wonderful gift of will power works. By simply learning how to think correctly, he expands his healing power, positive energy, and will. He beat the habit because he was thinking scientifically. He affirms:
 - I meet everybody and every circumstance with courage.
 - 9. **Goal.** Joe sets new goals as he realizes that he can use his newfound positive energy to benefit himself, others, and the world. He affirms:
 - I am a strong-willed person who can accomplish much good in this world.
 - I exercise will and thought to help others and myself.
 - I try to make this Earth a better place to live by using my tools of will and thought.
 - No matter what challenge comes my way, I remain positive and live constructively.
- Clearly, will is important on the recovery and healing path as it helps us change, heal, grow, eliminate bad habits, move through barriers, accomplish goals, cultivate healing qualities, and serve the world.
 - However, some conditions do not respond to will power. When we have applied all of our will, thought, and action to a painful problem and the problem remains, we can invoke will's partner, acceptance.

ACCEPTANCE OR SURRENDER

Learning to Live with What We Cannot Change

- We need to learn how to accept the painful conditions of our current reality that cannot be changed.
- Acceptance is the opposite of resisting, running, or hiding. It means going through whatever comes our way in order to find our personal brand of knowledge, power, courage, humility, endurance, and wisdom.
- We must face our pain thoroughly and completely, for our most triumphant assets reside in the depths of our suffering. Pain is the teacher. It carries our personal story, meaning, and lessons.
- Athletes train their bodies for the exertion of their sport. People in recovery must also train. They work out their inner body of thoughts, feelings, desires, and energy. The inner workout includes introspection and transformation. Introspection is looking within to uncover issues, problems, bad habits, and flaws. Transformation is making the necessary changes.

- For introspection and transformation to occur, we must accept pain as our teacher. Suffering is packed with personal meaning. When we inspect our pain, it reveals the lessons we need to learn, which always have to do with the expansion of healing qualities.
- The power of acceptance is great. When fully developed, it can get us through anything. Through acceptance, we gain the peace and strength on the other side of every painful problem.
- When we understand the healing principle of acceptance, we become inspired to drop our defenses and resistance, which do nothing but add tension and delay learning. Instead, we will enter the pain, eliminate negativity, and cultivate courage, strength, peace, love, and joy.
- Moving into the center of our pain requires courage, as we may have some dark days when nothing seems to make sense. However, if we trust pain as our teacher, we will see the evolution of our story take the high road of wisdom.
- Pain is intelligent. It takes us where we need to go. It reveals its hidden meaning as it leads us through the maze of our troubles into the light and wisdom.
- When we apply our will to a problem and it remains, we can accept the problem as a guest-teacher who has come to reveal a hidden secret. Life is school. Pain is the teacher if we open to its lessons. The lessons always have to do with the expansion of healing qualities. Following is a technique for unpacking the secret knowledge carried in our pain.

A Technique for Surrender/Acceptance

1. Higher Power
2. Introspection
3. Healing Qualities

1. **Higher Power**

Ask for help from your Higher Power.

2. **Introspection**

- o Take several slow deep breaths.
- o If you know a meditation technique, use it now to invite as much stillness as you can.
- o Assume an attitude of gentle, compassionate understanding toward yourself.
- o Surrender to the pain. Feel it fully. Listen to it. Learn from it.
- o Ask the pain:
 - a. Why are you here?
 - b. What do you want?
 - c. What do you have to teach me?
 - d. What lessons do I need to learn?
 - e. What problems remain hidden from my view?
 - f. What healing qualities must I develop in response to you?

- The pain will point you in the direction of your inner work, which always has to do with expanding the healing qualities.

3. **Healing Qualities**

- When we align ourselves with the healing qualities, we purify, heal, and transform.
 - Choose a method and begin the work of cultivating any one or a combination of healing qualities in response to your pain.
 - These qualities are not merely words but actual healing powers.
 - They help us manage our pain and suffering.
 - Such healing powers as love, compassion, understanding, forgiveness, and humility will contain, reduce, or eliminate any barrier we encounter.
 - Focus on these qualities as your true identity.
- With acceptance, we drop our resistance and enter the pain that will not otherwise go away. Through introspection, we find our problems. Through transformation, we respond to our problems with peace, compassion, understanding, or any combination of healing qualities.
 - Surrender, introspection, and transformation activate the healing power that resides and operates within every cell of the body. We can deploy this process of purification with any type of problem.
 - The transformation of pain and problems into healing qualities through surrender is one of the inherent miracles of the body. Do not miss the opportunity to demonstrate this marvelous power when presented with a problem or condition that does not respond to your will. With practice, you will see how this miraculous, intelligent healing power works. It is incomparably brilliant!
 - The purpose of suffering that does not respond to will is to help us decorate the rooms in our inner home with the great healing qualities. In this sense, all pain is a blessing.
 - It is for you to decide if your suffering is God's will, but no matter what your beliefs, you can always be in school, learning the lessons and cultivating the qualities. To set yourself up for healing, surrender to the pain and let your story unfold in the direction of love. This is the secret of pain management through acceptance. Make contact with and befriend the great power of acceptance. It will get you through anything.

MANAGING PROBLEMS WITH WILL, ACCEPTANCE, OR A COMBINATION OF BOTH

The Prayer of Relinquishment

*I am faced with this problem at the moment.
I won't run away from it.
I'll do my best to overcome it.
But the outcome is in the hands of my loving Father.
Whatever He wills, I accept.*

- **Balance Will and Surrender.** The Prayer of Relinquishment describes the balanced use of will and surrender. The prayer reminds us to do our part of the work and accept life just as it is. While we use all of our initiative to work on a problem, we simultaneously surrender the results to our Higher Power. This is difficult. All of us miss the balance point between will and surrender countless number of times. Mistakes are inevitable. We are either too active or too passive. When too passive, we feel poorly about ourselves and do not live up to our potential. When too active, we create new problems.
- **Listen in Stillness.** What is the right combination? How do we know whether a condition requires more or less will or surrender? Often, we do not; but we can improve. Stillness is the key. When we are alert, aware, and calm, we can hear the still, small loving voice within, guiding us to a balanced combination of will and surrender.
- **When We Don't Do the Work.** Pain may come subtly at first, trying to gently coax and persuade us to discover and work on our problems. If we are mentally restless, however, we may not recognize its purpose. When we do not sense and listen to it, we cannot extract the necessary lessons. The underlying problem remains, pain grows, and tension and pressure increase. If we do not do the work at this stage, our pain may expand into symptoms, impair our functioning, and lead to crisis and danger. At this point, there is neither a balance of will and surrender, nor wisdom to know the difference.
- **When We Do the Work.** With sustained practice, our foundation of inner peace broadens and deepens. We can maintain inner harmony and balance even when challenged by painful difficulties. The mind remains calm, and we hear the messages from that voice within. When we learn how to listen in stillness, we can find our problems through introspection, and transform ourselves through the cultivation of spiritual qualities.
- **The Great Teacher.** When we take responsibility for our problems by using pain as our guide, we make fewer mistakes in our attempts to balance will and surrender. As long as we remain calm and unruffled, pain, the great teacher in life, helps us know when to act and when to remain silent.
- **Expand Love and Usefulness:** For deep recovery and healing, we must learn when to surrender and when to act with will. We need one-pointed, calm, continuous use of our will to change what we can, and we need to surrender and expand our healing qualities in response to what we cannot change. With time and practice, we can use will, surrender, or combinations of both in increasingly sophisticated ways, thus expanding our love and our usefulness.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- A sleeping giant lies within. You can wake up that giant when you learn how to exercise and expand your will power. You can take back lost territory by realizing your power and potential.
- You can exercise will consciously and continuously by simply remembering to use it throughout the day.
- Will power is the invisible muscle of life. When you exercise your will, it gets stronger.
- With continuous will, thought, and activity, you can accomplish any realistic goal.
- While you practice your method with intensity, your effort should remain smooth and steady. Anxiety and tension reduce effectiveness. The formula for success is calm, single-minded concentration.
- Anxiety reduces will power, as it uses up the energy that we could otherwise use to accomplish our goals. Overcome obstacles by practicing deep breathing with affirmations of peace, courage, and faith.

- When we cannot change an outer condition, we retain the freedom to choose our inner response. We use our will to choose positive thoughts, values, attitude, feelings, desires, and actions no matter what other people do.
- We are control artists. Pride keeps us from letting go. We fear humiliation. We worry about appearing weak. We think acceptance implies passivity. We think if we give up control, we are going to get hurt. While it is true that when we surrender, we stop trying to solve external problems by changing others and controlling events, paradoxically, we gain control: surrender breeds an imperturbable state of inner strength and peace.
- Surrender is a powerful tool because it allows us to be at peace even though conditions and circumstances may be rough.
- We control very little. Let the game come to you. Stop dribbling so much. Stop trying to control other people. Be in it to love, serve, and grow spiritual qualities in a relaxed way. Ultimately all we have is our qualities.
- We can invoke the Serenity Prayer for any circumstance at any time. It works for all of the moments of our lives. All we have to do is remember to use it.
- As we improve our ability to use will and surrender with wisdom, there is a corresponding expansion of peace, balance, and harmony in every domain of life.
- Practice the Serenity Prayer. Exercise will, surrender, and the wisdom to know the difference for years, and you will slowly enter the unified field of love. At mastery, no condition of the world or body can throw you out.

AFFIRMATIONS OF WILL

- I can change
- I will change.
- I am successful.
- I make up my mind strongly now.
- My mind is set.
- My will is strong.
- I am ready to take on the challenge.
- I meet every circumstance with courage.
- No matter the challenge, I stay positive.
- I am filled with purpose, heart, and determination.
- God helps those who help themselves. I am busy doing my part.
- I possess the power of will and the power of thought.
- I use my will and thoughts to accomplish my goals, every step of the way.
- With will and thought, I work through any barrier.
- I act until my goal is accomplished.

- My will is calm, continuous, and concentrated.
- With great determination, I cultivate love, peace, and strength.
- The more work I do, the more results I get.
- No matter how many times I fall down, I pick myself up and struggle again towards my goal.
- I use my will and thoughts to love and serve.
- With will and thought, I make the Earth a better place to live.
- When difficulties arise, I refuse to give up.
- Love is my reason for being. I use my will to carry it out.

AFFIRMATIONS OF ACCEPTANCE

- I accept the things I cannot change.
- I don't try to change anything.
- I accept everything just as it is.
- I just let everything be.
- Everything is included in the path to enlightenment.
- Every problem, disease, and disability is an opportunity to advance on the spiritual path.
- I remain unruffled no matter what comes.
- I have done all that I can. Now I surrender to the will of the Universe—Life—God.
- The outside is just right, and the perfect Teacher is within.
- I have done all I can. Now I expand my healing qualities.
- Love is the greatest healer.
- Love transforms my suffering into peace, compassion, and understanding.
- No matter what circumstances arise, I trust in a higher, invisible order.
- I used to try to control everything. Now I have trust and remain calm in any circumstance.
- I know when to resist my problems and when to resign myself to them.
- In response to any painful condition, I cultivate strength, courage, and endurance.
- I remain loving, compassionate, and gentle with myself while I try to change for the better.
- Love burns up my problems until love is all there is.

EXERCISES

1. What is the Serenity Prayer?
2. What are the two components of will?
3. What is acceptance/surrender?

4. What is the way to increase will power?
 5. Describe the nine-step method for setting goals. Choose a goal, and apply this method.
 6. Describe the technique for acceptance. Practice this method for any painful problem.
 7. Can you think of a time when you were willful when you should have practiced acceptance?
 8. Can you think of a problem you accepted when you should have been more willful?
 9. Can you think of a time when you have used will and acceptance on the same problem?
 10. Think of the saints, sages, or masters, and how they embody the qualities in the Serenity Prayer. They have a great capacity to immerse themselves in brutal reality, the courage and will to change what they can, the acceptance of that which they cannot change, and the wisdom to know the difference. They have extraordinarily powerful will, surrender, courage, wisdom, compassion, love, and a host of other wonderful spiritual qualities. Their use of these qualities to skillfully manage their pain results in a high degree of spiritual evolution.
- In the next section, you will find a detailed review of fifteen methods you can use to help you manage the pain doctors cannot fix.

PART 2

THE METHODS

- In this section, you will find a detailed review of fifteen proven healing methods from ancient wisdom and modern science. Regular, consistent practice of these disciplines will change your life. If you do the work, the virtues of the great saints and sages will slowly add on to you: peace and strength, compassion and courage, service and wisdom.
- We will start with a review of how people, activities, and belief systems help us manage our pain and heal on the horizontal axis.





CHAPTER 5

PEOPLE

HUMAN AND DIVINE LOVE

- Unconditional love is the pearl of great price, the greatest gift, and the ultimate healer. We are here on this earth-school to perfect our love, to make it unconditional, to learn how to love when we do not. Our power in the story is always love. When we find love, we find our power.
- Love is a composite of one hundred healing qualities. We know how to make these qualities grow in two dimensions:
 1. Horizontal axis: human love
 2. Vertical axis: Divine Love
- Human and Divine Love work together in a continuum for the cultivation of Unconditional Love. Below are a few key points to illustrate how this works.

Horizontal Axis

HUMAN LOVE

- We have a deep inherent need to give and receive love. We cultivate love on the horizontal axis through meaningful relationships in a variety of roles. There are unlimited opportunities to practice love as a father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, husband, wife, romantic partner, aunt, uncle, cousin, grandchild, grandparent, friend, colleague, coworker, neighbor, stranger, even enemies.
- When we are in pain, we instinctively turn to trustworthy loved ones, friends, family, or counselors. We tell our pain story seeking understanding, validation, comfort, and relief. This works. Social support helps us heal and manage our pain.
- The idea is to have the best possible network of like-minded, warm, wise, and compassionate people. However, many people make the mistake of trying to solve all of their problems in the human domain. Some problems can only be resolved by doing some inner work through the cultivation of Divine Love.

Vertical Axis

DIVINE LOVE

- The vertical axis corresponds to Divine Love, sometimes referred to as Cosmic Love, Big Love, Christ Consciousness, Krishna Consciousness, the Love of God, and more.
- Divine Love is pure and unconditional. It is Omniscient, Omnipotent, and Omnipresent. It embraces all people, creatures, and creation. It is always inside, waiting to be tapped, free of cost. We can use it as a universal balm for any pain or problem.

Human and Divine Love Work Together

- We can use our current relationships as a starting place. We give and receive love in the variety of roles described above: father, mother, friend, lover, and so forth. In the daily grind of these relationships, problems inevitably emerge. We can use these problems as opportunities to expand and purify our love. To do this, we can do some interpersonal work to improve communication and solve problems. (See Exercise 5 below.)
- However, the transformation of human to Divine Love is ultimately about self-reform and self-mastery. It is not about others' behavior. It is about our response.
- Instead of looking to others, we bring love from within ourselves. We give love, no matter what others do. This higher love gives complete satisfaction while setting up the condition for others to change when they can.
- When we look for love on the outside, we are vulnerable. We may or may not get it. But we already have the love we need inside. When we learn how to love within ourselves, we are in a position of strength.
- We can cultivate Divine Love by practicing mindfulness, meditation, affirmations, prayer, the presence of God, and other vertical axis methods. When we practice these methods, we learn how to love unconditionally from the inside out. With this expanded and purified love, we will be able to manage our interpersonal relationships with more skill.
- For a more in-depth discussion of human and Divine Love, read Chapter 25 on Love in *Healing Power Revised* (2010), pp. 363–382. Here you will find a description of how to purify and expand your love on the horizontal and vertical axis.
- Following are some exercises designed to help us grow love in two dimensions: human and divine.

EXERCISES

1. The Right People

- Healing requires good people. We can't recover alone. We can do some of this alone but we need like-minded people doing the work at a higher level. We can draw from their presence. They are in a higher place. They help us get to a higher place.
- Are you with the right people?
- Do you have enough support?
- Do you need to meet some new people?

2. The Right Dose

- People are like medication.
- If we get the right medication, at the right dose, at the right time, we heal.
- If we don't get enough medication, there is no healing.
- If we get too much medicine, there are side effects. There may even be danger to health or life.
- And of course, the wrong medication will be useless or negative.
- Are you at the *correct people dose*?
- Do you need to spend more time with people?
- Do you need to spend less time with people?
- Are you codependent?
- Notice how the correct people dose changes. Sometimes we need more and sometimes less.

3. The Pain Story

- When we are in pain, we instinctively turn to the right people: those loved ones, friends, family, counselors, or mentors who have earned our trust.
- We tell our pain story seeking understanding, validation, comfort, and relief. This works. This is a big part of healing.
- Who gets you?
- Who is in your life you can really talk to?
- Do you need a counselor, therapist, mentor, or teacher?

4. Hot Potatoes

- How you manage your pain will determine whether you move forward, backward, or stay stuck in this life.
- Unskillful pain management is a source of untold difficulty. We give a huge amount of pain to each other unnecessarily.
- To illustrate, let's say each of us is born with one hundred hot potatoes.
- A hot potato is an unresolved painful problem that surfaces when we are stressed.
- Our job is to cool off the hot potato so we don't give it to others, but it is too hot to handle. We don't know what to do with it so we flip it to the next person's lap, adding to their burden. They don't like it so they flip it back and give you a few of theirs. Alternatively, they absorb it and get sick.
- If we keep giving each other hot potatoes, everyone's burden increases. Examples include irritability, rudeness, yelling, passive aggressive behaviors, addiction, control and power trips, greed, physical and sexual abuse, and more. Most of us do this at some level. It happens even if we are totally dedicated to not doing it.
 - a. Give some examples of others giving you their hot potatoes.
 - b. Give some examples of how you give your hot potatoes to others.

- The alternative is to manage our pain skillfully, to protect others by cooling off our own hot potatoes and not passing them along.
- Do you need some help in cooling off your hot potatoes? Try rolling the universal healing wheel. The wheel has fifteen methods and one hundred qualities designed to help you become a more skillful pain manager, to help you cool off your hot potatoes before you pass them on to others.

5. **Interpersonal Problem-Solving Discussions**

- All relationships have conflict at some point. To get back in harmony, we need to have interpersonal problem-solving discussions. The goal is to give and receive constructive feedback and minimize reactivity. However, receiving critical feedback can be very painful. We react. We argue and fight. We get too big. We manage the pain unskillfully. Instead of helping the relationship, things get worse. Following are some suggestions to help reduce reactivity.

INTERPERSONAL PROBLEM-SOLVING DISCUSSION

- a. The Golden Rule
- b. Right Speech
- c. Focus
- d. Listen
- e. Give feedback
- f. Receive feedback
- g. Time out
- h. Go to your room
- i. Persist
- j. Mastery

a. **The Golden Rule**

- ◇ When people feel supported and encouraged, they are much more likely to respond.
- ◇ Be aware and sensitive to other person's needs.
- ◇ Treat others as you wish to be treated.

b. **Right Speech**

- ◇ Harsh or brutal criticism is like hitting someone over the head with a club. It does not work.
- ◇ When giving critical feedback, give a warning to reduce surprise and shock.
- ◇ Your words should be true, necessary, kind, firm, and gentle.

c. **Focus**

- ◇ Do not bring up multiple problems at the same time. This causes people to be overwhelmed and shut down.

- ◇ Discuss one problem at a time.

d. **Listen**

- ◇ Listen carefully.
- ◇ Do not interrupt unless one person is dominating.
- ◇ Cultivate an attitude of opened reception and reflection.
- ◇ Try to get the other person's experience.
- ◇ Look for solutions acceptable to both people.

e. **Give Feedback**

- ◇ Giving and receiving constructive critical feedback on each other's problem behaviors are the most important and sensitive steps in the process.
- ◇ Define each other's triggers and avoid as possible.
- ◇ When you discuss the other person's problem behavior, own it. There should be no third-party comments. Describe the effect the problem behavior has on you.
- ◇ Make suggestions about the changes you would like to see.
- ◇ Do not interpret what you think are the causes of the behavior. This is usually felt as invasive.

f. **Receive Feedback**

- ◇ When you receive painful feedback, you may feel hurt.
- ◇ If you are hurt and your emotions are rising, use your breath to create space and buy time. Practice this:
 1. Stop
 2. Breathe
 3. Present moment
 4. Affirm a healing quality or one of the following affirmations:
 - a. Sometimes there is more pain to have less pain.
 - b. I can hear the truth without attacking the messenger.
 - c. I can hear the truth without defensive comments.
 - d. I have this problem but it does not define me. I am the qualities.
 - e. I am patient.
 - f. I am kind.
 - g. I am loving.
 - h. I am understanding.
 - i. I am thoughtful.
 - j. I am calm.
 - k. I am wise.

- l. I am responsible for myself.
- m. I have to do this.
- n. I can do this.
- o. I got this.
- p. In the gap-abyss, a pearl of wisdom forms.

g. **Time Out**

- ◇ If your hurt or anger leads to debate, fighting, or retaliation, take a time-out.
- ◇ This is very important. If we learn how to do this, we can avoid destructive fighting.
- ◇ Leave the room immediately so you do not do any damage with abusive language, which leads to more anger and possible physical violence.

h. **Go to Your Room**

- ◇ It is easier to find fault with others than it is with yourself. However, a searching and fearless inventory of your issues goes a long way in the healing process.
- ◇ Take the painful feedback you have received from your partner, family, friend, teacher, supervisor, or mentor.
- ◇ Go to your room. Introspect. Take responsibility for your problems.
- ◇ As you discover your own problems, be sure to remain kind and gentle with yourself.
- ◇ Practice vertical axis methods: meditation, breathwork, affirmations, contemplation, and prayer. These methods help us find the love we are looking for inside. This will take some of the pressure off the horizontal axis.

i. **Persist**

- ◇ Return to your problem-solving discussion when both parties are calm and receptive.
- ◇ Do not wait too long as this might lead to smoldering resentment.
- ◇ Communicate until there is a strategy agreeable to both people.

j. **Mastery**

- ◇ Practice the new strategy or plan.
- ◇ Meet again on old and new problems as needed.
- ◇ Observe the growth of healing qualities: mutual respect, empathy, compassion, humility, love, understanding, strength, peace, forgiveness, and wisdom.

6. **Spiritualize Your Relationships**

- Don't divide your life into a spiritual life and the rest of your life. Everything is spiritual.
- Spiritualize everything including your relationships.
- You can spiritualize your relationships by infusing them with healing qualities: love, compassion, understanding, forgiveness, patience, kindness, and so forth.

- Love everyone, all of the time, no matter what. When you fall short, and you will, be gentle and compassionate with yourself and continue your practice of PMQ. This will expand your little love until Big Love is all there is.

7. Human and Divine Love

- We have an absolute need for unconditional love. When we look to people for pure love, we fail; human love is imperfect. We all have egos, flaws, attachments, and bad habits. These barriers impede our ability to manifest perfect love. When our need for unconditional love remains unmet, we get anxious, angry, and depressed. In frustration we desperately seek love in all the wrong places. We end up with codependency, multiple partners, addiction, and other such bad habits. Many become hyperactivity junkies, immersing themselves in activities from morning to night, trying to avoid the work that must be done inside.
- To further illustrate this principle, recall step one of the ten steps described in *Healing Power: Ten Steps to Pain Management, Revised* (2010), p. 51, the Core Drive: we have an absolute need for unlimited peace, love, joy, safety, more time, and no pain. Let's assign an arbitrary number to the achievement of unconditional love as one hundred. Almost everyone will go about trying to achieve that perfect score of one hundred on the horizontal axis of people, activities, events, and things. And let's assume that one has achieved a good life with family, health, prosperity, and success. However, even when everything is just right, the horizontal axis does not deliver that pure unconditional love that can only be found inside. We don't know this so we subconsciously and blindly pursue that perfect love on the physical plane and end up looking for it in all the wrong places: food, sex, things, power, control, money, gambling—i.e., attachments, habits, and addiction. It's as though there are only thirty units of love available on the physical plane and any attempt to get more will only lead to an overheated motor. On the other hand, if that same individual knew that the remaining seventy units of love could only be found through vertical axis practices, there would be a more balanced approach and a greater likelihood of success.
- When we learn how to cultivate love on both axes in a balanced way, our love purifies and expands at maximum speed. Learn how to maximize the healing power from relationships on the horizontal axis by finding the right people at the right dose, and balance that with the healing power of Divine Love on the vertical axis.

8. Love Is A Field of Infinite Possibilities

- We have a deep inherent need to give and receive love. We express that love in a variety of ways: compassion, understanding, validation, forgiveness, courage, humor, strength, grounding, comfort, inspiration, laughter, connection, reality testing, mirroring the qualities, and more.
- Review the thirty ways to practice love in *Healing Power: Ten Steps to Pain Management and Spiritual Evolution, Revised* (2010), pp. 374–377.
- Think of the variety of ways you already help others.
- Can you think of some other ways to give and receive love? Be creative. Love is a field of infinite possibilities.
- Start an epidemic. Send your little love wave out into the Big Love Field. It keeps going. As in homeopathy, a tiny cause can have a big effect.

9. Gratitude and Humility

- In ordinary consciousness, we take things for granted and miss the blessings that are already there. Don't miss the blessings and the help you are getting.
- Love comes in a variety of forms. Be mindful of the many ways you get help from others.
- Cultivate gratitude and humility. This power couple will help you attune to the countless blessings already there.

10. Karma

- Love is more powerful than any painful problem; or if you prefer, love burns karma: mine, yours, and ours.
- What others do to you is important. How you respond is even more important. No matter what others do, respond with love and associated qualities.
- When you respond to others with love, you will contain, reduce, and eventually dissolve your karma while setting up the condition for others to successfully manage theirs.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- We can find the right people at the right dose.
- We can share our pain story and be understood, validated, and supported.
- We can learn how to cool off our hot potatoes (painful problems) without flipping them into our neighbors' laps.
- We can improve our ability to have interpersonal problem-solving discussions involving critical feedback without destructive reactivity.
- We can spiritualize our relationships.
- We can improve our ability to love on the horizontal axis.
- We can learn how to cultivate Divine Love on the vertical axis.
- We can learn how human and Divine Love work together for maximum purification and speed of evolution.
- At mastery, there is no distinction between human and Divine Love. Love is one and love is all there is.
- In the next chapter you will find a brief summary of how we can use the right activities at the right dose for maximal healing and pain management.



CHAPTER 6

ACTIVITIES

CONSTRUCTIVE MEANINGFUL ACTIVITIES

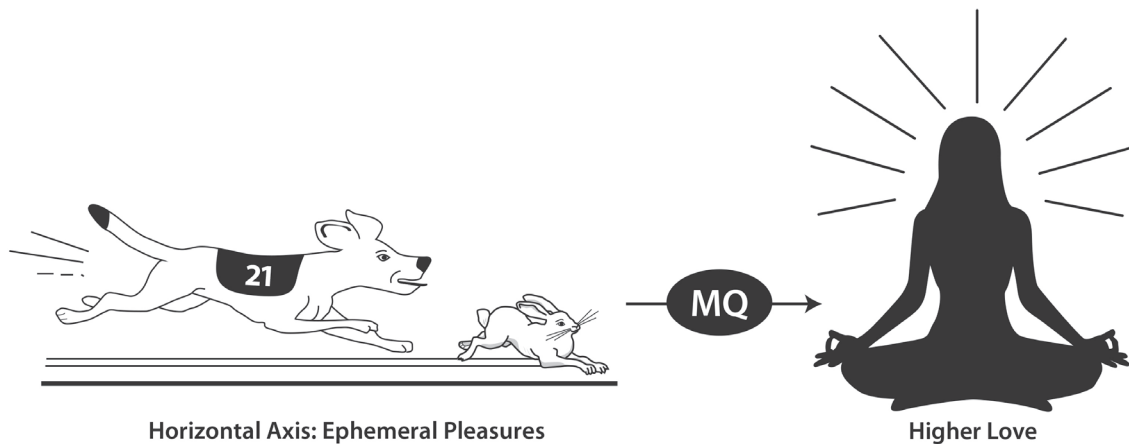
- **Right Action:** Constructive meaningful activities contribute mightily to pain management and healing. We need a variety of options in the activity domain, both solo and with other people: school, training, volunteer, work, hobbies, culture, exercise, sports, Internet, TV, radio, music, culture, reading, the arts, nature, and more. All of these activities help us manage our pain and heal.
- **Right Dose:** When we find the right activities at the right dose, we have more healing power and our ability to manage suffering improves. But even if we have a perfect activity program filled with right action at the right dose, we are going to have residual pain. Most of us get into trouble with bad habits because we try to eliminate this inevitable suffering of life with unhealthy pain killers: substance, sex, and food abuse; gambling; materialism; power trips; and hyperactivity.
- **Perpetual Motion:** In our culture, we are encouraged to surround ourselves continuously with stimulating activities. Between work, relationships, recreation, sports, culture, television, and the Internet, we have plenty to keep us busy. In fact, most of us have become activity junkies, staying in motion the entire day. We walk, talk, work, shop, cook, clean, care for children and parents, exercise, study, read, play, go to church, mosque, or synagogue, play sports....Most of us are in a state of perpetual motion from the time we get up in the morning until we go to bed at night.
- **Outer Life:** In the course of living, we find the joys and pleasure of the outer world are limited and ephemeral. The world of events, objects, and people is always changing. Everything has a beginning, middle, and end. Joy alternates with sadness, peace with anger, health with sickness, success with failure, and pleasure with pain; we cannot avoid the ups and downs of life. Worldly pleasures do not last and suffering is inevitable.
- **Inner Life:** Although we cannot be completely satisfied with our lives on the physical plane, the wisdom traditions point to our inner being as a source of lasting peace. Discovering the inner path to contentment is difficult, however, as the external world is powerful and attractive, continuously seducing us into the illusion that happiness is within our grasp and the price is right.

- **Stillness:** Activity becomes a barrier to spiritual growth when it is compulsive, addictive, or used as a substitute for searching within for the superconscious peace, love, and joy bred of stillness. We can bring stillness into our lives when we practice vertical axis methods: contemplation, introspection, and meditation.

EXERCISES

1. **Right Action:** When we are in pain, we can turn to school, training, volunteer, work, hobbies, culture, exercise, sports, Internet, TV, radio, music, culture, reading, the arts, nature, and more. Constructive meaningful activities contribute mightily to pain management and healing.
 - a. What is your day like?
 - b. Do you have enough activities that involve other people?
 - c. Do you have enough activities that you can do alone?
 - d. What activities would you like to add?
 - e. Are there any barriers that keep you from expanding your activity program? If so, what steps do you need to take to move through these barriers.
2. **Activity Dose:** You can spend too much or not enough time in activities.
 - a. Are you at the *correct activity dose*?
 - b. Are you a hyperactivity junkie?
3. **Balance Activity with Stillness**
 - o We chase ephemeral worldly pleasures like a dog chases the bunny at the racetrack. No matter how fast the excited dog runs, (s)he never catches the bunny. When you discover the fountain of peace-joy in the stillness of deep meditation, you have no desire to go elsewhere. Go inside. Meditate. Find the room of stillness. Here you experience the ever-new satisfaction and undying contentment that can only be achieved within.

BALANCE ACTIVITY WITH STILLNESS



- Are you spending too much time on the horizontal axis with people and activities and not enough time on the vertical axis in retreat for contemplation and meditation?
- Have you learned how to balance activity with stillness?
- In the next chapter, we will review how belief systems help us manage our pain and heal.



CHAPTER 7

BELIEF SYSTEMS

POSITIVE THOUGHT, MEANING, AND PURPOSE

- Across cultures and time, people have gone to temple, church, synagogue, mosque, or engaged in related healing ceremonies for solace and comfort. Now there is evidence that religion stimulates healing power. The connection between spirituality and healing has been made.
- In this chapter, we will explore the mind-body-spirit connection. Mind-body-spirit medicine is now an established part of modern medical practice. It is scientifically grounded and evidence based: people with an active faith system have better outcomes in medicine, surgery, mental health, and addiction.
- Belief systems are monumentally important in the healing process. How does this work? What is the mind-body-spirit connection?

Key Principles of Mind-Body-Spirit Medicine

- There is no separation between mind and body.
- The mind is connected to every cell in the body through electromagnetic and chemical waves.
- What goes on in the mind affects the cells in the body and how they do their work.
- In some yet to be determined way, thoughts impact disease and healing.
- Negative thoughts and feelings contribute to the disease process.
- Positive thoughts and feelings promote healing.
- Healing power expands when people exercise their spiritual beliefs.
- Healing power expands when we find our connection to something greater than ourselves, something that pulls us, secular or spiritual, be it a higher power, service to humanity, family, work, children, or volunteer work.
- There is an essential healing principle secreted in the religions. If we can define it, extract it, and transfer it to medical practice, it will help us manage disease, stress, and pain. This model defines that principle as love operationalized: as the universal healing wheel with or without traction devices.

- In the following exercises, we will take a deeper look at belief systems, and how they help us manage our pain and heal.

EXERCISES

1. **What Is a Belief System?**

- Belief systems are a composite of thoughts, values, rituals, and actions.
- Belief systems are religious, spiritual, political, national, cultural, racial, familial, psychological, and personal.
- Belief systems are fixed or opened, secular or spiritual.
- The essential function of a belief system is to create a story.
- The story may be literal, allegorical, or both.
- The story is usually comprehensive and compelling. It tries to make sense out of life by explaining everything that happens to us and around us.

2. **Why Are Belief Systems Important in Healthcare?**

- Belief systems help us manage our pain and heal. This is the business of healthcare.

3. **Belief System Functions**

- Belief systems have many functions. Some of these activate at the time of illness and suffering.
- Meaning and purpose
- Story and metaphor
- Knowledge and wisdom
- Positive thought, positive feeling, positive vibrations
- Comfort and solace
- Pain relief and healing
- Guidance and protection
- Inspiration and strength
- Identity
- Self-control
- Self-esteem
- Truth
- Expansion of healing qualities: love, compassion, understanding, forgiveness, and more
- Community and service
- Grounding
- Connection to everyday life
- Connection to all events: tiny, small, medium, large, huge

- Connection to the moment, any moment, every moment.
- Connection to all levels of detail from microscopic to macrocosmic: infinitesimal, tiny, small, medium, large, infinite
- Pulls us out of ourselves and brings us to higher ground
- Deals with the big questions of life
- Manage brutal reality, the cave of darkness, or the dark night of the soul.

4. Brutal Reality and the Cave of Darkness

- Review Step 2: Duality and Brutal Reality, pp. 52–53 and The Cave of Darkness, pp. 398–400 in *Healing Power: Ten Steps to Pain Management and Spiritual Evolution, Revised* (2010).
- Brutal reality is death, pain and suffering, and the unknown. No one escapes. It asserts itself in the life of anyone, at any time, in a seemingly endless variety of ways: illness, disability, trauma, loss of loved ones, crime, domestic violence, sex abuse, war, earthquakes, economic depression, tyranny, racism, ethnic cleansing, hunger, unemployment, poverty, homelessness, and more.
- In the cave of darkness, we face severe pain without immediate answers to our questions. The cave is dark. All evidence of spiritual life is gone. The world seems to be against us. There is no solace from our usual sources of family, friends, work, the arts, or recreation. Sometimes even going to church, synagogue, or temple brings no relief. We feel alone: separate, powerless, and frightened.
- Belief systems are geared to protect us, even when brutal reality strikes, even when terrified at the abyss, even in the cave of darkness. If our sacred knowledge holds here, it will hold anywhere. However, when pain is overwhelming, our belief system comes under its most rigorous challenge. Some lose all but a thread of their system and hold onto that. Some people lose their entire system. Others have enough spiritual infrastructure and deep healing wisdom to match whatever shows up so they can move through and out of crisis with new wisdom and strength.
- It is a good idea to get your belief system in shape for life in general and for pain management and healing in particular. We need something to help us get through our trials, to help us face the abyss, to help us get through any condition, however long or severe—something more powerful than the worst-case scenario life can bring. The next exercise may help you do this work.

5. The Interface of Medicine with the Big Questions of Life

- The big questions about the meaning of life and suffering come up anytime, especially when suffering or ill. They are always there but they get bigger when we are sick. The medical model, with all of its power, does not address these questions. Doctors and healthcare professionals ignore the big questions. The big questions are the elephant in the room. They are left on the table without any conversation or direction from the biological healer.
- If we don't journey these questions, our pain can be overwhelming and cause disintegration. Review the following and contemplate where you stand. Take your time. These questions do not yield answers so easily.

THE BIG QUESTIONS

- a. Who am I?
- b. Why am I here?
- c. What is the meaning of life?
- d. Why is there so much suffering?
- e. How do I understand suffering?
- f. Is there a way to heal my deepest suffering?
- g. How can I find peace, love, and joy in the face of suffering?
- h. What is death?
- i. Is there life after death?
- j. How do I get through all of this?
- k. Is our search for permanent love and safety futile on this earth where limitation and insecurity seem to have the upper hand?
- l. If the physical plane cannot satisfy our deepest yearning, is there another dimension to life, perhaps higher or subtler, that can help?
- m. Is there anything to hold on to?
- n. Is there something in this life and after death which we can trust?
- o. Is there a God, and, if so, what is its nature?
- p. If God is love, why is there so much evil and suffering?
- q. Is there anything that doesn't change, which gives stillness and peace?
- r. What can be done about my character defects?

- We ignore these questions at our peril. If we don't journey the questions, if we don't deal with the inevitable suffering of life, with the mystery of suffering and evil, with the unknown and death, and with our reaction to all of this, we inevitably run the risk of making things worse.
- We repress the pain in the subconscious and body, douse it with unhealthy pain-killing devices like substance use, or share it in unhealthy ways with others: cynicism, irritability, hostility, anger, and verbal and physical abuse. In the worst-case scenario, a failure to journey the big questions successfully can lead to disintegration and grave danger to self and others.
- What to do? This is potentially dangerous territory. Whether atheist, agnostic, religious, or spiritual, we protect our belief systems with fierce tenacity. How do we address the big questions in healthcare without getting into trouble?
- In the following exercises, you will find some suggestions on:
 - How to talk about these important issues in group meetings
 - How the universal healing wheel or PMQ applies to atheists, agnostics, religious, and spiritual persons

- How traction devices for the wheel support the tremendous individual variation within and between religions

6. How Do We Talk About Belief Systems in *Healing Power* groups?

- One of the reasons we don't deal with belief systems and the big questions in medical practice is that we don't work with Spirit, we are not comfortable talking about religion, and we don't have a language or map.
- Please review the following guidelines. If we follow these suggestions, we can extract the essential healing principle from religion and apply it to healthcare safely, efficiently, and effectively.
- We use these guidelines for groups and classes. They work. We have enjoyable, educational discussions without getting into destructive debate.
- The model is a composite of universal healing principles from the great wisdom traditions.
- It does not push religion. It does try to equip persons of all persuasions with the essential healing principle embedded within religion.
- We do not promote a particular religion. We do promote your individual approach to spirituality. We have respect and tolerance for the great variety of ways to understand and practice spirituality.
- The model is for any person: atheist, agnostic, spiritual, or religious.
- The model is for any problem: physical, mental, emotional, interpersonal, or spiritual.
- The methods can be practiced anywhere and anytime—at home, at work, or at play.
- There is a cafeteria of options. You can add these options to your current belief system or build your own program.
- Take what you need and leave the rest.
- The term Higher Power is used to describe the God of your understanding, our higher self, higher states of consciousness, or your higher meaning and purpose.
- One person's traction device is the next person's gag reflex. Don't let language stop you. For some people, even the word spirituality is a problem. Nuke offensive language and substitute your own. For example, you might substitute Higher Power for God, higher self for soul, healing qualities for spiritual qualities, or cognitive behavioral practice for spiritual practice.
- Some chapters in this book speak to those who believe in a God of love. Other chapters are more universal. If you don't believe in God, let alone God as love, substitute with words like spiritual qualities, healing qualities, qualities, The Tao, The Way, The Great Spirit, Creator, compassion, or any other term that gives you traction. The universal goal is to become a more skillful pain manager, expand healing power, and evolve. As you proceed, use whatever term is most acceptable to you.
- Stay in your own lane.
- Reform yourself and not others. We are not here to change others. We are here to change ourselves.
- We do not proselytize (convert others to our point of view).
- We engage in discussion without debate.
- We are here to listen and share, learn and grow, study and practice.

- Although active participation is encouraged, it is perfectly okay to remain silent throughout the meeting.
- During the class, we take turns reading. If you don't wish to read, you are welcome to pass.
- The group lasts sixty minutes. Each person reads a paragraph followed by a discussion and contemplation of the material.
- We avoid giving advice or trying to fix other people's problems. We focus on our personal experience using the spiritual methods for cultivating healing qualities in response to life's problems.
- When we finish the book, we return to the beginning and read it again.

7. **Healing Power and the Big Questions**

- The saints, sages, masters, teachers, and gurus from the great wisdom traditions offer answers to the big questions. *Healing Power* transfers their ideas and floats them as a cafeteria of options. *This work does not push a particular point of view. You make the choices. The choices are embedded within the universal healing wheel or PMQ with or without traction devices.*
- PMQ is the essential healing principle within the religions. P is any painful problem. M is fifteen methods. Q is one hundred qualities. With these options, you design your own healing program. You choose the level of work you want to do at this time. You pick the pain, method, quality, (and traction device if you desire) and go as deep as you wish.
- You may choose to work on a minor problem with breathwork and affirmations for a few minutes twice a day. Others may want to go deep, leave no stone unturned, and confront brutal reality: death, pain and suffering, and the unknown. If you can manage that, you can manage anything.
- In short, this model puts the pain ball back in your court and gives you a racket to hit it, that is to say, a boatload of practical tools to help you manage your pain and heal. The rest is up to you.

8. **The Universal Healing Wheel With or Without Traction Devices**

- The universal healing wheel is the essential healing principle of any psychosocial or spiritual model. The wheel is universal. It works for persons of any persuasion: atheist, agnostic, religious, or spiritual. It doesn't matter what your beliefs are. PMQ will help you manage any painful problem: tiny, small, medium, large, or huge. Healing qualities are water for the fire of reactivity whether you believe in God or not. The inevitable suffering of life, our reaction to it, and the qualities as antidote to the reactivity cut across all categories. These are universal principles.
- For many, PMQ is enough. Others need traction devices for the wheel.
- A traction device is any concept, image, or aspect of a great wisdom tradition that gives inspiration. Here are a few examples: rituals; story; metaphor; parables; wisdom pearls; affirmations; prayers; Higher Power; mystery; the unknown; God of love; Father; Mother; Friend; Beloved; Omniscience; Omnipotence; Omnipresence; Christ; Krishna; Buddha; Image of God; karma; reincarnation; grace; nature; the collective unconscious; archetypes; the subconscious; reason; traditional worship; sermons; music; art; committee work; and much more.
- You don't have to change your belief system to practice PMQ. All you need is a problem, method, and quality. Traction devices are optional.

- We pose the big questions but do not provide answers. We float traction devices as a cafeteria of options. You pick.
- There are fifteen methods, one hundred qualities, and unlimited traction devices. Most of us are doing some of these already.
- How might you expand your practice?
- What works for you?

9. Higher Power

- We need something beyond the self to pull us up and out of the mud when we get stuck. Here are some Higher Power options:

HIGHER POWER OPTIONS

- a. Higher meaning and purpose
- b. Higher self
- c. The God of your understanding
- d. Higher states of consciousness

- Do you have a Higher Power?
- What is the nature of your Higher Power? (For more details on this topic, see *Healing Power: The Workbook*, Chapter 14, Exercise #1, pp. 117–120)

10. Love Is the Report Card

- Your belief system may be religious, spiritual, atheist, or agnostic. It doesn't matter as long as love is the product.
- Nor does it matter how much structure you need. Some need a fixed belief system with a lot of structure as in the orthodox wing of a religion. Others need an opened belief system with choices and flexibility. Love is the report card, not the vehicle. Ethical humanists may have more love in their heart than an orthodox religious person and vice versa.
- Mindfully ask yourself the most important question: Am I in love or something negative?
- When you find yourself in any kind of negativity, practice PMQ. Define the negativity as your pain and respond with a method and quality of your choice.
- When you roll the wheel, your expanded love transforms your consciousness to the next highest level possible at that moment.

11. What Is Your Story?

- How do you understand the meaning and purpose of life?
- Do you have a way to understand the things that happen?
- Do you have a spiritual program or a philosophy of life?
- Are you atheist, agnostic, spiritual, or religious?

- Do you go to church, synagogue, mosque, a twelve-step program, DBT (dialectical behavior therapy), or other healing ceremonies?
- Do you have a Higher Power, service to humanity, family, work, children, volunteer, nature, other?
- Some need a fixed belief system with a lot of structure and clarity. Others want an opened system with more ambiguity, mystery, and personal choice.
- What will this be for you?
- Where do you fit in the spectrum?
- How much structure do you need?
- Do you need your system to be signed, sealed, and delivered or do you prefer freelance?
- Choose your own adventure book.

12. Religion and Spirituality

- There are a great variety of ways to define religion and spirituality. *Healing Power* offers the following distinctions.
 - Religion includes story, metaphor, parable, concepts, images, aspects, sacred texts, wisdom pearls, rituals, traditional worship, attending services, listening to sermons, prayer, social gatherings, committee work, music, architecture, and more.
 - Spirituality is the *love = one hundred healing qualities and higher states of consciousness* that permeate the religious elements listed above.
- What is your definition of religion and spirituality?

NOTABLE QUOTES FROM GROUPS AND CLASSES ABOUT BELIEF SYSTEMS

- Some go to church, synagogue, mosque for formal worship. Others have God in their heart. Others want to have nothing to do with this.
- With positive thought and prayer, it always gets better.
- We seek not to know all the answers but to understand the questions.
- Breakfast feeds you. Medication adjusts you. Meditation lifts you.
- Believe in yourself.
- Job gets it all back and more in the end.
- I am a humanist. I do not have a concept of God. I do believe there is a Spirit that can help me get stronger by going through the pain. We all have pain. We are all frail. I need to be alone with the healing power within me. I can get through this.
- I am in the arms of God, protected.
- Things are not okay. We need to address it. We need to look after one another. We are all one. We need loving guidance.
- I suffered a great loss. It was too much. I shattered into a thousand pieces. There was relief and elevation, eventually with prayer.

- Desperation is a gift. It forces me to ask for help. Help comes. I understand more about Spirit.
- It's all about finding out how the elevator works.
- Recovery means changing our story by replacing fixed negative core beliefs with positive thought and wisdom.
- What goes on in the mind counts a lot in healthcare outcomes. I choose positive thoughts grounded in healing qualities such as patience, kindness, love, and understanding. This helps me get through troubled times.
- Here is how we work with belief systems. We spiritualize the old story and in so doing create a new story, new beliefs, new identity. The link: change looking for love in all the wrong places to looking for love in the right way.
- Start your day with pearls of healing wisdom and use this to combat fear, insecurity, worry, and doubt throughout the day.
- Bring the wisdom of the ages to the street and healthcare and translate that through the universal healing wheel as love.

NOTABLE QUOTES FROM GROUPS AND CLASSES ABOUT THE ULTIMATE MEANING OF THE UNIVERSE

- This is personal. It's up to you to decide.
- Shift negative to positive.
- Christianity.
- It all happens for a reason.
- It's about mindfulness. Today is why. What can I do today? It's not about past and future. Be of use here and now. Seize the moment.
- The goal is self-knowledge. Who am I? This is the key. When you figure this out, you can deal with the daily grind.
- There is no reason. Religion is created to reduce fear.
- Do we create religion to help manage fear of the unknown and death or is there an absolute truth and reality that awaits our discovery?
- The goal is knowledge. Seek your personal brand of knowledge about how to make it through and then share that wisdom with others to help them get through.
- Jesus spoke about the God of love. Buddha taught compassion and joy. Billions are attracted to these and similar messages in other religions. We don't push a particular brand here. We support individual choice. The healing qualities however are universal and good for healing and recovery.
- It does not matter what religion we practice. Nor does it matter if we practice a religion at all. What does matter is the level of our development of healing qualities, or love. If the fruit of a religion or other healing model is love, it is good; if not, there is a problem. Just practice PMQ. You will evolve.
- In Chapters 8–19, you will find a detailed review of vertical axis methods.



CHAPTER 8

AFFIRMATIONS

THE POWER OF THOUGHT

- In this chapter you will learn how to create powerful and effective affirmations and a technique for practicing affirmations during activity and meditation.
- What goes on in the mind is monumentally important. It has great power to do harm or good. It can be our greatest friend or our greatest enemy. It contributes to our health, and it can make diseases worse. It creates mental storms or gives us the peace we so desperately crave. Yet most of us remain unaware of how it works. We don't think about thinking.
- We allow our thoughts to wander freely like a pack of wild horses in the wilderness with no goal or direction. Junk thoughts, false beliefs, distortions, and delusions play in the attic of our body-house without restriction. We get stuck in negativity. Fear, insecurity, worry, and doubt rule the day. The restless mind has a life of its own. It won't quit. There's a manic in the attic. We ask him to leave, but he won't go.
- There is a way out. We can change the way we think. We can replace restless, destructive thoughts with the wisdom of the ages. Powerful, beautiful, deep, peaceful thoughts can be our invited guests and ultimately take up permanent residence in our body-home.
- This chapter introduces the science of healing affirmations. Here you will learn how to exercise the inherited but dormant powers of your mind. This work will help you in every dimension of your life. You will learn how to shift mental gears from negative to positive. Your relationships will improve. You will be more productive. Your healing power will grow. You will become a more skillful pain manager. You will evolve spiritually. You will feel better, become a better person, and experience higher states of consciousness.
- Thoughts, both negative and positive, have great power; they are magnetic, but unlike ordinary magnets, they attract their equals—not their opposites—according to their vibrations. Negative thoughts attract negativity; positive thoughts attract positivity. Remembering this simple principle can change the course of your life. You can change your destiny by changing your thoughts.
- The science of healing affirmations teaches us how to send powerful positive thoughts as chemical, electrical, and magnetic waves to our conscious and subconscious minds and to the cells in our bodies.

- Through a simple maneuver involving free will and choice, you can learn how to deploy your own thoughts to break through limitations, transform bad habits, turn failure into success, and activate your healing powers.
- Thoughts have leverage in the inner workings of our cells having to do with transforming disease into health. By using affirmations to cultivate spiritual qualities, you can stimulate healing power. When you align your thinking with such qualities as peace, compassion, and loving-kindness, you set up harmonious conditions for the healing power to do its work. The right condition for healing is a mere thought away.
- The discovery that we are both the problem and the solution in the intimate proximity of our own minds is of enormous importance. A new level of responsibility and work is assumed when you learn how to apply the power of thought to affect any need or condition.
- In the next section, we will study affirmations and the subconscious mind. This will be followed by the principles for creating powerful and effective healing affirmations and then the techniques for affirmations in meditation and activity.

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE THOUGHT IN THE CONSCIOUS AND SUBCONSCIOUS MIND

- Life is a battle between negative and positive forces. In the subconscious and conscious mind, this battle takes place between positive and negative thoughts. Negative thoughts contribute to the disease process. Positive thoughts promote healing.
- The subconscious mind is a vast storehouse of memories, thoughts, and experiences. Most of us have experienced rejection, humiliation, abandonment, and the loss of loved ones. Many have had terrible trauma, abuse, accidents, or illness. These harsh experiences can lead to negative thought patterns or habits that cause unnecessary, ongoing pain. These patterns are stored in our subconscious mind and brain cells in negative thought circuits that lock us into destructive ways of responding to the world. Some examples of this type of negative thinking are:
 - I am ugly, bad, guilty, and worthless.
 - I do not deserve to be healed.
 - I am a helpless, weak, inadequate loser.
 - I cannot change.
 - I am doomed to suffer.
 - I deserve punishment.
 - I will never be able to get out of this problem.
 - I can't beat this habit.
 - No matter what progress I make, something will come along to take it away.
- In response to life events, such negative attitudes emerge from the subconscious rapidly, automatically, and habitually. They often manifest in relentless repetitions referred to as ruminations or obsessions. The mind can get stuck in ruminations for minutes, hours, days, weeks, and longer. Some deeply embedded patterns can extend their influence over a lifetime. We have a tendency to underestimate the mind's negative power, much of which is submerged beneath our awareness.

- The science of healing affirmations teaches us how to access the conscious and subconscious mind so that these negative patterns can be brought to awareness, rooted out, and replaced by new brain circuits carrying positive thought patterns.
- The result is a positive, calm, focused, strong, and resilient mind, sharpened and ready for problem solving, managing life's harsh realities, and creating health, success, harmony, and joy. This is *Healing Power's* definition of good mental health.
- Positive thoughts act like medicine released from the brain's own pharmacy. This thought-medicine cannot do its work, however, if negative ideas, beliefs, or attitudes neutralize its healing power. When a positive affirmation is stated, there is often an attack of negative thoughts or beliefs, which emerge from their storage place in the subconscious.
- For example, you may be fighting low self-esteem because of prior abandonment. To change your self-image, you affirm, "I am good, beautiful, worthy, and strong." However, your subconscious mind sabotages your efforts to create a new positive identity by releasing the negative counter-thought, "You are an insecure, awkward, homely loser." This negative thought has had control of your self-image for years. It is a well-established thought circuit that does not give up its power so easily.
- The effect of the countering negative thought is the same as if you wrote something with chalk on a board and erased what you wrote. The negative thought maintains its power unless neutralized by a stronger, positive thought force.
- The science of healing affirmations teaches us to use our concentration, will, feeling, and faith to infuse the positive thought with the necessary power to take hold in the subconscious mind.
- With practice, the positive thought slowly grows in strength and associates with other positive thoughts such as, "I am a good person. There have been many victories. People actually do like me. I have a lot to offer."
- At some point, we can deploy an army of positive thoughts to rapidly and effectively neutralize the negative ones. Then, when the same provocative situation arises to test us, our mind stays positive, poised, and peaceful.

CREATING POWERFUL AND EFFECTIVE AFFIRMATIONS

- Affirmations work, but they may not work for you if they lack the necessary potency to take hold and grow. Following are some suggestions for creating effective healing affirmations.
 1. Problem
 2. Goal
 3. Present Tense
 4. Positive Terms
 5. Individualize
 6. Visualize
 7. Practice
 8. Intensity
 9. Faith

1. Define Your Problem

- This can be any problem or condition of the body, mind, or soul.

2. Define Your Goal

- Focus on the solution rather than the problem. Think more about where you want to be than where you have been. For example, if you are working with disease, focus on health. For fear, invoke courage or bravery. For anger, try peace, patience, forgiveness, or gentleness. For weakness, try strength. For failure, try success. You become and attract what you intend. Your goal will become your new habit.
- Keep your goal in the forefront of your consciousness, ever shining before you, making the way clear when you might otherwise be overwhelmed or confused.

3. Present Tense

- State the affirmation in the present tense, as though the goal is already accomplished. You would not want to affirm, “I am going to be calm.” You would affirm, “I am calm.”

4. Positive Terms

- State the affirmation in positive terms such as “I am calm,” not the negative, “I am no longer anxious.”

5. Individualize

- Keep reworking the affirmation until it feels just right. For example, you may prefer “I remain even-minded under all conditions” or “Even-minded no matter the condition” or simply the one-word affirmation, “Even-minded.” When it feels right, it will fit the rhythm of your being perfectly.

6. Visualization

- You can reinforce the power of your affirmation by associating it with a mental picture or visualization. In this way you can *think, see, and feel the reality of the affirmation*.
- For example, we can all imagine circumstances that make us nervous, angry, or agitated. We can rehearse these scenes in our minds by creating thoughts and pictures of ourselves remaining calm despite provocation. The more we rehearse, the more likely the subconscious and conscious minds will help us stay relaxed when the actual stressful condition arrives.

7. Practice

- Practice and repetition are most important. Without repetition, there can be no progress. Deeply embedded negative thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes have been around for a long time in the subconscious mind. When the brain cells are loaded up with thought habits that have to do with disease and limitation, it takes time to form thought circuits that have to do with health and possibility.
- The first round is just the beginning. It takes time to root out the subconscious brain grooves that carry negative thought patterns and replace these with positive thought and deep wisdom pearls. This is a life-long project that goes to the deepest and most hidden corners of our being.
- While some habits, patterns, or conditions may change with ease, others may take a long time to heal or replace. We need to repeat affirmations continuously for chronic, deeply embedded conditions, and we need to ignore an unchanged or contrary condition as we repeat the affirmation. Many people give up early, not understanding the effort required or unwilling to do the work. We

need patience; it may take months, even years, to transform deeply ingrained habit patterns of thought, feeling, desire, or behavior.

- Perseverance is the magic of healing work. The more we use positive affirmation, the quicker change occurs for the better. With continued practice, the affirmation takes on a life of its own. It repeats itself by itself. The thought gains momentum and strength, eventually becoming powerful enough to become reality. Repetitious positive thoughts gradually replace and finally dominate the negative patterns of the conscious and subconscious minds.

8. **Intensity**

- To be effective, you will need to bring all of your attention and energy to your practice. Each method described in this book requires all of your heart, mind, might, and soul for maximum benefit. There must be sufficient intensity and concentration of feeling, thought, will, and faith to give the exercise—in this case, the affirmation—sufficient energy and power to make the necessary changes. If the affirmation is spoken without passion or planted in a restless, unfocused mind, it will have less power.
- Muscles atrophy from lack of exercise. Similarly, those who have not been doing an inner workout weaken their powers of concentration and will, the tools necessary to break through the barriers of limitation into conscious possibility. With practice and repetition, however, will power and concentration slowly grow.
- As you strengthen your affirmation, be sure not to create tension by going too far. Calm concentration without tension increases the force of the thought. The goal is to repeat the affirmation as many times as you wish with calm concentration, deep feeling, and will.
- When you realize your attention has wandered, bring it back to the affirmation with as much focus as possible. Repeating the affirmation with increasingly intense concentration and feeling mobilizes healing power.
- At first, our healing affirmations may be like sparks blowing in the wind with no apparent effect. With patient, persistent practice, these thoughts get stronger. They light healing power ablaze. Although it kindles slowly, if we keep adding affirmative fuel to the healing power, there will be a bonfire. Then the affirmation permeates our conscious and subconscious minds, every cell, fiber, molecule, and atom of our being, as well as surrounding space, eventually bringing into existence the very thing being affirmed.

9. **Faith**

- The life energy operating the bodily cells, tissues, organs, and systems has within it the power of healing. This brilliant power heals our cuts, bruises, colds, and other ailments without our action. We can trust it, and there is evidence that the more we trust it, the better it works.
- Affirmations are more effective when practiced with faith and belief. Doubt and insecurity undermine the authority of the new positive thought and work against the life energy and healing power. For maximum benefit, perform your affirmation with faith, trust, and belief in its power to heal.

When to Do Affirmations

- We can do affirmations anytime: at rest, in meditation, or during activity.

- Affirmations are more effective when the mind is relaxed, opened, and less defensive, such as just before going to sleep or just after awaking. Their maximum benefit occurs when the mind is still during or after meditation.
- We can practice affirmations before, during, or after a particular problem surfaces. For example, if we are struggling with anxiety, we can practice affirmations of peace while we are anxious. But we can also practice when we are feeling serene, which is a good time to fortify the subconscious for the tests of life that are sure to come.

THE TECHNIQUE FOR AFFIRMATIONS DURING PERIODS OF REST OR MEDITATION

- The mind in ordinary consciousness hops like a bunny by free association. Some call it busy brain or monkey mind. The mind is not only hyperactive but is all too often filled with a host of junk thoughts: negative, violent, wrong, frightened, insecure, worry, doubt, hysterical, reactive, ruminative, and more. In a recovery and healing meeting, one member said, “There is a bad neighborhood up there. The six inches between my ears is the scariest place I know. Don’t go in there alone!” Busy, hyperactive, monkey mind, junk thoughts! What to do?
- Since we are always affirming something, why don’t we fill our brains with wisdom rather than let junk thoughts play?
- We can notice our train of thought and shift gears to an affirmation or wisdom pearl when the mind goes negative.
- An affirmation is a beautiful idea or a positive thought that we would like to be true and can be true but is currently out of reach.
- A wisdom pearl is not just a positive thought but a super-positive deep thought with the potential power to help us heal not just in the moment but over the course of a lifetime. Wisdom pearls have the potential to help us in every domain of life but it takes time to understand them. A deep wisdom pearl can grow throughout our life and even then, not be fully understood.
- The idea behind practicing affirmations is very simple. We fill our brains with positive thought and wisdom pearls. We make our self-talk say better things. We take a positive thought and make it our own. We make it real. We become it. This takes practice, lots of practice. In the beginning, we set intention and direction. Slowly, we realize the affirmation. We become that wisdom.
- *Healing Power* is a compendium of positive thoughts and wisdom pearls. It is way ahead of most of us. Take a little piece at a time and work on it. Practice the following technique. It will help you do this work.
- You are always affirming something in your conscious and subconscious mind. You can find out what is in there and get rid of what you don’t like by practicing the following technique. You can perform this technique during periods of rest and before, during, and after meditation. It will help you transform your mind into a powerful, positive healing force for yourself and others.
 1. Sit
 2. Breathe
 3. Relax

4. Open
 5. Affirm
 6. Feel
 7. Visualize
 8. Repeat
1. **Sit**
 - Sit with the spine straight.
 2. **Breathe**
 - Take several slow deep breaths.
 3. **Relax**
 - Relax the body and calm the mind.
 - Throw out all problems, restless thoughts, fears, insecurities, and doubts.
 - Gather as much concentration and stillness as you can.
 4. **Open**
 - Open yourself to the idea that affirmations work and that all conditions of the body, emotions, mind, and spirit are changeable.
 5. **Affirm**
 - Choose an affirmation, and repeat it with increasing intensity.
 - With your will and concentration, eliminate all other thoughts.
 - Hold the affirmation in the center of your being for several minutes.
 - At some point, notice the affirmation repeating itself even when you do not try to remember it.
 6. **Feel**
 - Feel the affirmation.
 - Allow it to permeate your conscious and subconscious minds, every cell, fiber, molecule, and atom of your entire being and surrounding space.
 7. **Visualize**
 - Visualize yourself as you imagine yourself to be when the affirmation has become completely real.
 8. **Repeat**
 - When the mind wanders, bring it back to the affirmation.

THE TECHNIQUE FOR AFFIRMATIONS DURING ACTIVITY

- We can perform this technique when we are engaged in activities that do not require our full attention such as walking, raking leaves, washing dishes, cooking, shopping, cleaning, riding the bus, waiting in line, or being stuck in rush-hour traffic.

- We can also do this technique when our mind wanders into negativity, when we are upset, or when we want to change the direction of our thoughts for any reason.
1. **Stop**
 - When you notice your mind is in a negative space, give it a command to stop.
 2. **Follow Steps 2–8 Above**
 - You can repeat your affirmation, mantra, or chant throughout the day.
 - Every thought sets up a corresponding vibration. When you repeat a word, thought, or chant reflecting a healing quality such as peace, love, or compassion, you will eventually experience peace, love, and compassion.
 - Avoid mechanical or dry repetition. Feel the affirmation in your heart. When your repetition becomes mechanical, bring it back into your heart and infuse it with feeling.
 - Repeat the silent chant when you are working, cooking, shopping, cleaning, driving, walking, exercising, playing sports, or helping others. Repeat the affirmation with interest, attention, and feeling.

Writing and Recording Affirmations

- You can write affirmations on note cards and keep them in your pocket at all times. You can pull the card out during the day whenever possible.
- Pick a relevant affirmation, and repeat it until the idea deeply ingrains itself in both the conscious and subconscious minds.
- We can also record affirmations.

How Many Problems Should Be Addressed at One Time?

- We can work on one or many problems at the same time, but it is wise not to put too many affirmations into our program at first. It is better to concentrate on one or a few affirmations with intense concentration than to dilute our power by spreading ourselves too thin.

The Difference Between Prayer and Affirmation

- Affirmations and prayer are similar. In prayer, we seek help from our Higher Power. An affirmation is a statement of the prayer as though the result is already accomplished. For example, one might pray, “Lord, grant me even-mindedness under all conditions.” The corresponding affirmation would be, “I am even-minded under all conditions.”
- Those who understand themselves to be co-creators and co-operators with their Higher Power can combine the use of prayer and affirmation. For example, it has often been said that God helps those who help themselves. When we work with affirmations, we are helping ourselves. Prayer is the request for God’s grace as a means of getting help with the problem.

One-Word Affirmations

- When we need to do some work in a particular area, we can affirm any healing quality with one word. For example, when we feel restless, we can talk to our body. It will take instructions. We can give the body a one-word command such as “relax,” “harmony,” “balance,” or “rhythm.” We can talk to our mind. Eventually it will listen. We can think, “patience,” “peace,” or “poise.” When someone is giving us a hard time, we can affirm, “understanding,” “compassion,” or “forgiveness.”

ACCEPTING THE THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE

- We can apply affirmations to get rid of any unwanted condition or to attain a desired goal. However, there is no promise of a cure or even improvement in simply doing affirmations. Some conditions will not change, no matter how long or perfectly we practice.
- When healing occurs—if it is going to occur—is not up to the individual. Do not set a time limit. Desire for change is good but should not be confused with an expectation of results on our own schedule. Such expectations may create unnecessary tension, an attitude of entitlement, and disappointment.
- Stay realistic and avoid magical thinking. Perform affirmations, prayer, and other techniques with the realization that the outcome is not up to us. If we improve, we are grateful. If we continue to struggle with our current problems, we can cultivate acceptance, courage, strength, and endurance.
- It is natural to want a physical cure or to accomplish our goals in the external world, but this is not always possible. We can, however, always continue working with our inner being, seeking emotional stability, peace of mind, and spiritual wholeness. For most of us, there is more than a lifetime of work to do in these areas.
- For those conditions that improve slowly or not at all, affirmations of surrender or acceptance may be of use:
 - I surrender to the will of God—Universe—Life.
 - I accept the things I cannot change.
 - Pain is the teacher. I work with it. I learn from it. I am not afraid.
 - Or you might try one-word affirmations such as, “accept,” “surrender,” “yield,” “open,” “soft,” “patience,” or “silence.”

Example

Joe has a very difficult time accepting criticism without feeling rejected. When others are critical, he reacts with anger and fear. He loses control of his emotions, yells, and becomes verbally aggressive. Later, embarrassed by his immature behavior, he feels guilt, shame, and remorse.

Joe wants to change. He starts the practice of affirmations. He affirms, “I am at peace under all conditions. I remain calm when challenged. I am a warm, compassionate, loving human being. I am as good as any other person. I remain calm even if the other person is mean and wrong.” With his imagination, he visualizes himself at peace no matter how angry others get. These pictures go into his subconscious mind.

Joe performs his affirmations and visualizations with calm concentration, will, feeling, and faith. His subconscious mind forms a new habit pattern of staying calm, just as Joe pictures himself to be when others get angry.

Later, an angry person confronted Joe in the street. Instead of reacting with anger and fear, he remained calm. He was even able to stay supportive of the other person and give him a kind word. He withdrew from the scene without adding oil to the other person's fire. Joe marveled at the power of affirmations to heal his long-standing problem.

Joe was also wise to the fact that his healing was not complete. From his study of the science of healing affirmations, he knew that his progress might not be in a straight line, that his record might not be perfect. He knew that he might not handle other situations as well and that negative thoughts of discouragement and insecurity would arise.

Despite the inevitable setbacks, Joe continued his practice of affirmation with diligence, patience, and perseverance. Although he knew it would take time, he was confident that he would ultimately master his long-standing problem by calmly concentrating on his affirmations with all of his heart, mind, might, and soul. Eventually, Joe achieved mastery.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Nothing is closer to us than our own thoughts. It is in this realm that we can change our reality and our destiny.
- Life is a battle between negative and positive forces. In the mind, this battle takes place between positive and negative thoughts. Negative thoughts contribute to the disease process. Positive thoughts promote healing.
- We look at the world through our thoughts as though they are glasses. Negative thoughts fashion a dark vision of the world. Change your glasses. Think positive thoughts rooted in love.
- Healing power is a part of the wisdom of the body. We can help it do its work when we think positive thoughts.
- Spiritual qualities are the healers. When we align our thinking with such qualities as peace, compassion, understanding, and forgiveness, we maximize the chemical and electromagnetic forces that control healing.
- We can work on any problem by affirming any one or a combination of one hundred healing qualities. Choosing thoughts in alignment with these qualities lights the fire of healing power. In so doing, we make an immediate contribution towards the transformation and healing of the world by reforming ourselves.
- In each moment of our lives, we have a choice concerning our thoughts and attitude. A negative thought unchallenged becomes the truth. As soon as we perceive a single negative thought, we can eliminate it with an army of positive thoughts. When feeling restless, affirm peace. When judging others, counter with an affirmation of loving-kindness.
- We compound our problems with our excesses. In response to the difficulties of the world, we respond with mental restlessness, high emotion, bad habits, and greed. Our selfishness gives us the illusion of protection while creating more fear and insecurity. Instead, we can respond with compassion, peace, and understanding—powerful healers that neutralize all types of negativity.
- In a state of deep meditation, we can plant our affirmation and visualization in the subconscious mind. With continued practice, this thought-picture grows in strength and power until it has enough force to become a new habit.

- Healing qualities are the gateway to higher consciousness. We can create the qualities we lack through concentration, will, thought, and faith. Pick a healing quality, breathe it, affirm it, and practice it in your actions. Each time we align our thinking with healing qualities, we move one step closer to higher states of consciousness.
- When we see something we dislike, we can affirm our vision of goodness and beauty. We can apply the scientific principles of healing affirmations to eliminate all traces of negativity.
- Even when our thoughts are distorted and wrong, we endorse them as gospel. Remember this: negative thoughts are just thoughts, not facts. We don't need to believe them. We can take away their invasive destructive power and replace them with the wisdom of the ages, healing thoughts centered in love, compassion, kindness, and understanding. The body, mind, and soul love this.
- Fill your mind with wisdom when you first get up in the morning, and give yourself a tune-up any time of the day or night.
- You are the prime beneficiary of loving-kindness affirmations, as the affirmation must pass through your cells on the way to others. So too with anger and other harsh emotions.
- You have the power to magnify or reduce your pain. Here is how it works: Pain is both physical and psychological. All pain is experienced in the mind and can therefore be influenced by the mind. Fearful thoughts magnify the inevitable suffering of life—this is called stress, or reactivity. When you strengthen your mind by practicing affirmations and the other methods described in *Healing Power*, you can remain calm even when the body presents challenges such as disease and disability. Some people refer to this as a positive mental attitude, the power of positive thinking, mind-power, or mental yoga.
- We can do much more to heal ourselves through positive thought. Negative thinking leads to negative emotions and vibrations, which impede the healing process. Positive thoughts, feelings, and vibrations stimulate healing power. Of course, we need to eat right, exercise, and eliminate our addictions to tobacco, alcohol, and drugs, but it is equally important to replace thoughts of fear, insecurity, worry, and doubt with affirmations of peace, strength, and courage. We may not be able to eliminate disease and disability, but we can always soothe ourselves with positive thoughts.
- Affirmations are mental push-ups. When you practice affirmations, you are tapping into your inherited mental power. Pick a goal, and line up all of your thoughts toward accomplishing that goal. Don't let a single negative thought come in. If you dwell on the negative thought or experience, that becomes the goal. Train your mind to eliminate all traces of negative thought.
- Applying the power of positive thought to healing your life is simple, relaxing, and enjoyable. The results are of great benefit over time. Practice affirmations. You will be amazed when you see how the wonderful power of thought can change your life! Never underestimate the healing power of positive thinking.
- Watch the thought and its ways with care, and let it spring from love born out of concern for all beings (Buddha). With affirmative thought, we can give ourselves inspiration and guidance, comfort and solace, transformation and purification.

AFFIRMATIONS

Success in Work

- I am successful in all aspects of my work.
- I focus on completing one task at a time.
- I am calm, efficient, and productive.
- I enjoy making a contribution to the welfare of others.

Success in Relationships

- I am in harmony with all people.
- I contribute to the health and welfare of everyone I meet.
- I am understanding and compassionate, even when others are wrong and provocative.

Cultivation of Spiritual Qualities

- I am at peace no matter what the world does.
- Compassion and kindness permeate my thoughts, feelings, and actions.
- Love is the great healer. I give love and kindness to all I meet.

Healing

- The infinitely intelligent healing power permeates every cell of my body.
- The infinitely intelligent healing power cleans my cells.
- The infinitely intelligent healing power eliminates debris.
- The infinitely intelligent healing power creates antibodies against disease-causing microbes.
- The infinitely intelligent healing power generates new cells where needed.
- The infinitely intelligent healing power energizes my body.
- The infinitely intelligent healing power relaxes my body.
- The infinitely intelligent healing power melts disease.
- The infinitely intelligent healing power coordinates all the activities of my body.

EXERCISES

1. Review and study the nine guidelines for creating powerful, effective healing affirmations.
2. Describe and practice the technique for affirmations during meditation or rest.
3. Describe and practice the technique for affirmations during activity.
4. **A Calm, Positive, Focused, Strong, Resilient Mind**

- We do our best when the mind is calm, positive, focused, strong, and resilient. It is awake, alert, and ready for problem solving, creative intelligence, shaping meaning, goal accomplishment, pain management, and the creation of health, success, harmony, and joy. This is *Healing Power's* definition of good mental health and the goal of recovery and healing work. Affirmations, along with the other methods prescribed in this work, help us accomplish this lofty goal. There is no end to this work. We can always make our mind stronger and more positive. Try the following or similar affirmations:
 - I prepare my mind daily.
 - I train my mind daily.
 - I develop my mind daily.
 - I strengthen my mind daily.
 - I can always make my mind stronger.
 - I make my mind stronger with positive thought
 - I need to fear less, train more, and rely on positive thought and wisdom.
 - I am always investing and forwarding my mind.
5. **Replace Fixed Negative Core Beliefs with Healing Qualities**
- Review the section on positive and negative thought in the conscious and subconscious mind in this chapter on page 96. Here you will find a discussion about automatic negative thoughts which emanate from fixed, deeply embedded, negative core beliefs and how such subconscious negative thoughts sabotage affirmations.
 - Negative false subconscious thought patterns can build up over the years. We need to reprogram our thinking by shifting from a negative brain groove carrying a negative thought pattern to a positive one.
 - Our goal is to root out the negative core belief and replace it with thinking patterns related to the healing qualities: peace, love, joy, power, wisdom, strength, courage, patience, kindness, compassion, and understanding. We are the healing qualities. This is the true self. To realize the true self, we have to get rid of every last trace of conscious and subconscious negativity.
 - Do you struggle with fixed negative core beliefs? I am invisible. I don't matter. I am wrong. I am bad. I am not good enough. I am weak. I can't change.
 - Watch the trend of your thoughts. When you become aware that your mind is negative, bring in a positive affirmation. For example, when your thinking is stuck in fear, insecurity, worry, and doubt, substitute such thoughts as "I am strong. I am courageous. I can do this work. I can win this victory."
 - Find your most negative thought and write a polar opposite affirmation to counter that thought. Replace "I can't" with "I can." Challenge "I am an awkward, homely, loser" with "I am compassionate, loving, kind, and warm."
 - What affirmations will you create to counter your negative fixed core belief?
 - As you repeat your affirmations, try writing down the negative thoughts that surface from your subconscious. This will demonstrate the nature of the negative images and attitudes that could be controlling you at this time. By doing this, you can find out what beliefs prevent realization of your intended positive thought.

- Remember this is a slow process. It does not work overnight. It takes time and effort to build up the new brain groove so it can compete with the old one that has had the power for years if not decades.
 - The mind is like a juke box. Brain grooves are the records. Practice affirmations related to healing qualities. Eventually you will cut the new song habits of your true self, songs of peace, love, strength, courage, perseverance, forgiveness, understanding, and humor.
6. Notice how you feel when your mind is negative and when it is positive. What is the difference?
7. Notice the difference in the direction your life takes as you shift from negative to positive thoughts.
8. **Two Great Powers: Thought and Will**
- Many spend enough time working out physically but not enough on their inner workout. We need to build up our mental endurance. We can do this by exercising our will and thought. Will and thought are two great powers. We don't realize their full potential because we don't exercise them enough.
 - We can use will and thought when the world or body gives us trouble. Find an affirmation that you need. Then apply all of your muscle to that thought. For example, if you are in pain, send loving-kindness thoughts to the body part in pain, to all the cells of your body, to all people, to all creation. This practice expands love. If you maintain your practice, your love becomes unconditional. At mastery, no trouble of the world or body can ruffle you.
 - Apply your thought power and will power to all of the methods and qualities described in this work. There is no limit to their potential. But you must do the work. You must persevere.
 - Thought and will are two great gifts. Don't forget to exercise them. Even when backed in a corner, you can always do something with will and thought.
9. **Quality of the Week**
- P: Choose a problem you would like to work on.
 - Q: Consult the list of healing qualities. Choose one or a combination of qualities that will help you manage that problem skillfully. For example: If you are working on fear, choose courage and peace.
 - M: Choose your method. You might decide to practice affirmations, meditation, mindfulness, or the presence of God.
 - a. Affirmations: Practice affirmations of courage and peace throughout the day.
 - b. Meditation: Bring in as much stillness as you can.
 - c. Mindfulness: Cultivate the witness and affirm: stillness, silence, spaciousness, serenity.
 - d. Practice the presence of God as the peace that permeates all, inside, outside, above, below, left, right.
 - e. Practice your method and quality for a week or longer.
10. **Note Cards**
- Write out some affirmations on note cards and keep them in your pocket at all times.
 - Pull out the cards and practice these affirmations during the day.
 - Drop that affirmation down to the center of your being and let it radiate out to all of your cells, surrounding space, and other people.

- As you do this, you are healing yourself and spreading your good healing vibrations to other people.

11. Thought Glasses

- Thoughts are like glasses. We see the world through them.
- If your thought glasses are smudged and you can't see clearly, try cleaning them with positive thoughts.
- Choose a healing quality such as love, gratitude, or humor. Look at the world through the lens of that quality.
- You will see what a difference a thought makes.

12. Replace Junk Thoughts with Healing Qualities

- Mark Twain said, "My life has been filled with misfortunes, most of which never happened."
- Junk thoughts: we all have them. Some are more common than others. I am a loser. I don't deserve to get well. I can't do this. What is in your hall of fame of junk thoughts?
- Change your thinking. Keep your thoughts consistent with the qualities. Review the list of one hundred healing qualities. These one-word affirmations have unlimited potential healing power. They give off electromagnetic healing waves that hit every cell of your body, surrounding space, and other people.
- When negative or junk thoughts arise, switch to positive thoughts synchronized to the qualities. Stay with the qualities when the going gets rough.
- When you realize you have gone for a ride on the negative train of thought and want to get off the train:
 1. Stop
 2. Breathe
 3. Present moment
 4. Affirm peace, courage, compassion, or any of the listed qualities. Use these one-word affirmations as your word of the day. For example, you can chant "peace, peace, peace" throughout the day. This will help you get through any physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual problem.
 5. If negative thoughts emerge from the subconscious mind such as "I can't do this. Peace is impossible for the likes of me," take notice, and let them go. With consistent long-term practice, these negative thoughts will be replaced by thoughts aligned with healing qualities such as peace, strength, courage, and kindness. Practice these one-word healing quality affirmations like physical pushups: the more you do, the stronger you get.

13. Affirmations and Meditation

- Practice affirmations and meditation. This potent combination leads to the following sequence:
Negative thought → Positive thought → Stillness → Higher Consciousness → Infinity
- With affirmations, you replace negative with positive thoughts. Meditation breeds stillness and expansion to higher consciousness.
- Affirmations have more power when planted in stillness. When you plant your affirmation thought seed in a quiet field, it has a better chance to take.

- a. Stop thinking and talking.
- b. Sit, be quiet, and feel.
- c. Meditate and bring in as much stillness as you can.
- d. Choose a wisdom pearl.
- e. Let everything else go and focus only on the pearl.
- f. Drop it down to the center of your consciousness. Let it simmer and cook there.
- g. Don't let any negative from the outside or inside take it away.
- h. The thought-seed planted in stillness vibrates and eventually spreads to every cell in your body. It becomes a part of you and affects surrounding space.
- i. As you proceed in meditation, you will experience the unlimited peace, love, and joy we all crave.

14. Right Speech

- o Words are bullets that cause great destruction or healing powers for you and others.
- o Review the list of healing qualities. Align your thoughts and speech with the qualities.
- o Avoid gossip, criticism, judgment, debate, and harsh words.
- o Your word has the vibratory power to spread truth, healing, and love. Speak truth guided by sweetness of speech.

15. Loving-Kindness Affirmations

- o Loving-kindness affirmations help us move from our selfish ego to our serving soul.
- o This training in service to others reduces anxiety.
- o This is a long-term practice. It can be done in both meditation and activity. It is a great walking meditation.
- o Start with yourself. Wish others the same. Think of those who are good to you and those who are not good to you. Include family, friends, strangers, even enemies. Keep your mind locked in your affirmation.
 - May I be healthy and content. May you be healthy and content. May we all be healthy and content.
 - May I be relaxed and safe. May you be relaxed and safe. May we all be relaxed and safe.
 - May I be happy and strong. May you be happy and strong. May we all be happy and strong.
 - May I be free from suffering. May you be free from suffering. May we all be free from suffering.
 - May I feel peace, love, joy, power, and wisdom. May you feel peace, love, joy, power, and wisdom. May we all feel peace, love, joy, power, and wisdom.
 - As I heal, may I give this healing to those I love and those I don't.
 - I throw loving-kindness-light affirmations to all of my cells, all people, and all creation.
 - Create your own affirmation.

16. Mind Over Matter

- Remember the inevitable suffering of life and our reaction to it. We cannot control the former but we can always reduce reactivity. Many suffer from chronic physical illness that does not

respond completely to medical interventions. There can be considerable residual disability and pain, made worse by our reaction to it. To put out the fire of reactivity, practice the following mental yoga.

- When the body hurts and you find yourself reacting:
 1. Stop
 2. Breathe
 3. Present moment
 4. Choose a healing quality such as courage, strength, patience, endurance, perseverance, or even-mindedness.
 5. Affirm your quality and breathe gently, slowly, and deeply.
 6. When the mind wanders, bring it back to the breath and quality.
- Don't underestimate the power of affirmations and breathwork. These techniques work. Even when the body hurts, the mind can remain calm, positive, and strong. Even-minded under all conditions. What a good idea!

17. Your New PRN (As Needed Medication)

- Clonazepam and other benzodiazepines are commonly used for anxiety. They are very effective but can be addicting. Try affirmations instead. Make these your new PRN medication.
- Identify your negative problem and assume the polar opposite positive. For example, if you are anxious, practice peace.
- If your affirmation of peace doesn't feel true, affirm it anyway.
- Concentrate on peace. Picture it, feel it, visualize it.
- When your mind wanders, stop, breathe, get in the present moment, affirm peace.
- Don't give up. Apply all of your concentration and attention to the breath and peace. At some point, the work pays off. Peace is restored.

18. Wisdom Pearls

- A wisdom pearl has multiple layers of meaning. We can only realize such wisdom with patient daily practice. We have to sit with it, work with it, contemplate it, practice it, and intend it over weeks, months, years, decades, and lifetimes. Some examples:
 - a. Love is the great healer.
 - b. Even-minded under all conditions.
 - c. Make medicine out of your pain.
 - d. Pain is the teacher and stimulant for the cultivation of healing qualities.
 - e. Healing qualities are more powerful than any painful problem.
 - f. Fearlessness.
 - g. The perfect peace of the soul.
 - h. Acceptance.

- One super pearl is enough. We don't need 100s or 1000s. Take one super-pearl tablet in the morning. This is your potent medication for the day. Swallow the pill. Let it dissolve in the blood stream. It will permeate and purify your entire system, a little bit, each day. Wisdom is a great cleanser. Be patient. Remain calm. Slowly the wisdom pearl becomes real. Following is an example of how this works.
- Most of us have moments throughout the day when we get frustrated or angry about things we cannot change. We consult our Divine Doctor and ask for help. She reminds us of the Serenity Prayer: "God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change." She says this medicine will help us stay even-minded even when things don't go our way. She says the pill will work for hours at a time but there may be a need for an extra dose. She gives us an unlimited supply of pills and says we can take as many as we need. There are no side effects. She reminds us that acceptance is more powerful than the painful problem but we must put this principle into practice. She writes the following script.
 1. Take one super-powerful acceptance pill first thing in the morning.
 2. Let it dissolve in your blood stream and permeate every cell in your body.
 3. Let it determine every thought, feeling, decision, and action you take.
 4. If a problem comes up that you cannot change and you get frustrated or angry,
 - a. Stop
 - b. Breathe
 - c. Present moment
 - d. Affirm, feel, and visualize acceptance until peace is restored

19. Two Schools of Thought: Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and Mindfulness

- With affirmations and CBT, we replace negative thoughts with positive thoughts.
- In mindfulness, we don't engage in a battle of negative vs positive thought. We accept the mind just as it is, noting thoughts are just thoughts, not a reflection of reality. This takes the steam out of the overheated mind's engine.
- While some may debate the merits of these schools, why not combine the two for maximum healing power.
- When we have a negative thought, we can work against it with a positive thought; and we can leave it there and change our relationship to it with the mindfulness practice called the witness. When we practice the witness, we don't try to change our thoughts. We change our relationship to thoughts by cultivating a space for them just as they are. Then we can watch the mind-movie as entertainment rather than get entangled in the drama.
- When we do CBT and mindfulness together, the sequence is:

Negative thought → Positive thought → Stillness
- The positive thought is an affirmation. This is CBT.
- Stillness is a product of the witness. When we cultivate the witness, we don't try to change our thoughts. We create space for them by affirming stillness, silence, spaciousness, serenity.

- When you discover a negative thought pattern:
 - a. Stop
 - b. Breathe
 - c. Present moment
 - d. Choose an affirmation to counter your negative thought.
 - e. Affirm the stillness, silence, spaciousness, and serenity of the witness.

20. Horizontal and Vertical Axis Affirmations

- Review the list of fifteen methods on page 13 of this workbook.
- We can have affirmations for both the horizontal and vertical axis.
- Horizontal axis affirmations focus on our relationship to the world: people, health, success, and prosperity. Vertical axis affirmations relate mostly to getting our inner house in order.
- You can practice affirmations to help achieve your horizontal axis goals and simultaneously practice affirmations of acceptance when the world, or your body, does not conform to your wish. And you can always cultivate spiritual qualities internally, no matter what your body or the world is doing.
- We need affirmations for the outer world and our inner life. Both are necessary. Both require work and discipline.

21. Stay in Reality

- Positive thought is good but avoid magical thinking. Don't use affirmations to go out of reality.
- Be sure to see your doctor when you have a medical problem.

22. What is the difference between a prayer and an affirmation?

23. Reflect on the brilliance of the healing power. Meditate on it. This will increase your trust in its magnificent intelligence. As you increase your faith, trust, and belief in your own healing power, your affirmations will be more effective.

24. Life is school. Pain is the teacher if we open to its lessons. The lessons have to do with the cultivation of healing qualities. There are lots of tests in the school of life. Tests are any painful problem of body, mind, or soul. There are tests of the world and tests of the body. We don't like tests. But every test is an opportunity. We can react with a negative attitude or a healing quality. Can you find the blessing in disguise? Can you accept the painful problem and respond with a healing quality?

25. Many people suffer from thoughts of sin, guilt, fear, and punishment. Such thoughts are harmful to the immune system and may lead to disease. Try shifting gears toward thoughts that stimulate healing power. Bring in some affirmations of kindness, understanding, and forgiveness for yourself.

26. The mind is like a living room. The thoughts you let in become your furniture, decorations, and guests. Who and what is in your living room? Do you need some new furniture? New decorations? How often do you clean the room?

27. To illustrate the power of thought, Dr. Blaslotto at the University of Chicago conducted a study of three groups and tested each group on how many free throws they could make. Then he had the first group practice free throws every day for an hour. The second group visualized themselves making free throws. The third group did nothing. After thirty days, he tested them again. The first group improved by 24

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percent; the second group improved by 23 percent without touching a basketball, except mentally; the third group did not improve, which was expected. Such is the power of the mind.

- In the next chapter, you will study how habits are formed and how to change bad to good habits.



CHAPTER 9

HABIT TRANSFORMATION

HOW TO ELIMINATE BAD HABITS

- A cocaine addict, a working person raising a family, a seeker practicing meditation and service, and a highly conscious sage all have the same motivation—we all want avoidance of suffering and permanent love, peace, and safety. What separates us are our habits. Our life is a sequence of habits that determine our course and evolution. Habits rule destiny.
- We are creatures of habits—thousands of habits. Habits are actions performed on automatic pilot. We don't have to think about the action to perform it.
- Habits reside in neurocircuits. These neurocircuits carry our thoughts, feelings, desires, attitudes, values, and actions.
- Some habits are positive and some are negative. For recovery and healing, we need to learn how to eliminate and replace bad habits with good ones. The good news is that we know how to do this. We know how habits are formed and we know how to change them.
- In this chapter, we will study how habits are formed and transformed through brain grooves, attention, and repetition. We will apply these principles in a ten-step method for eliminating bad habits and replacing them with three categories of new and good habits:
 1. Constructive meaningful activities
 2. The habits of a seeker: fifteen practice methods described in this work
 3. The habits of a sage: one hundred qualities adding up to love

HOW HABITS FORM AND CHANGE

- To understand how we got where we are and how to change direction, we need to look at:
 1. Brain grooves
 2. Attention
 3. Repetition

Brain Grooves

- The brain is composed of approximately one hundred billion cells, called neurons. A brain groove is a series of interconnected neurons that carry the thought patterns of a particular habit. Any pattern of thought or action repeated many times results in a habit with a corresponding neurosignature, or brain groove.

Attention

- Attention feeds the habit. When we give our attention to a habit, we activate the brain groove, releasing the thoughts, desires, and actions related to that habit.
- The brain is like a jukebox. It records everything we have ever done and stores these records in the subconscious. Where we place our needle of attention determines what record plays.
- As the old Cherokee wise man said, the wolf you feed is the wolf that wins. (See *Two Wolves*, page 32).

Repetition

- The brain is malleable. We can change our thoughts and behavior by recruiting new cells to form new brain grooves. Every thought and action is recorded within the interconnected nerve cells, and each repetition adds new depth to the brain groove.
- If we repeat a thought and action enough times, a habit is formed. Continued repetition strengthens the power of the habit. Inattention and lack of repetition weakens the power of the habit.
- These principles apply to the formation of both bad and good habits. Negative thoughts and actions create harmful habits. Positive thoughts and actions create good habits.

HABIT TRANSFORMATION

- We can use these principles to eliminate and replace bad habits with good ones.
- We can gradually starve bad habits to death by not giving them our attention.
- As we pay more attention to forming a good habit, the new brain groove slowly gains power.
- Eventually, the new positive brain groove dominates the negative groove, and good habits drive out the bad. Without this transformation, recovery and healing are impossible.

SKILLFUL PAIN MANAGEMENT IN THE SCHOOL OF LIFE

- When we are assigned painful problems in the school of life, we need to do the homework. All too often, however, we play hooky by escaping into the pleasures of a bad habit. If we repeat this behavior, at some point we get addicted. We end up with the original problem and a host of additional difficulties associated with addiction: wild emotions, mental storms, paranoia, rage, humiliation, chaotic relationships, job loss, disease, and death.
- We can avoid this by doing our homework, by learning how to be good pain managers. Learning how to manage our suffering is critical for deep healing and full recovery. However, most of us slide down the path of bad habits early in our lives in our attempt to avoid pain.

Addiction

- Bad habits include smoking; use of drugs or alcohol; excessive eating; compulsive gambling; compulsive shopping; addiction to the Internet, computer, or television; addiction to sex, money, fame, work, activity, power; or dependency on others at the expense of independence and individuality (a condition known as codependency or relationship addiction).
- Although bad habits are pleasurable in the beginning, their eventual evolution into emptiness and torment is inevitable as they force us to act in ways contrary to our true nature—we want to give and receive love, compassion, kindness, patience, courage, strength, and perseverance.



- Life is painful no matter what route we take.
- How we manage our pain determines whether we move forward, slip backward, or stay stuck in this life.
- We can think of the choices we have in managing our pain as two separate rooms in our house. There is pain no matter which room we choose, but room number one is the room of addiction, and room number two is the room of healing.
- The room of addiction is attractive and seductive. It lures us into thinking there is an easy way out by giving us pain relief in the beginning, but over time, it creates more pain.
- The room of healing may not look so attractive in the beginning, and it may even appear intimidating or frightening. It may involve more pain in the beginning, but that pain takes us to strength, peace of mind, and courage.
- The pain of bad habits is worse than the pain of healing. Cultivating good habits is hard, but it is more difficult to maintain bad habits. The pain of addiction takes us down. The pain of healing takes us up.

Refrain Tonight

- The time to create positive habits is now. Every time we repeat a thought or action of a bad habit, it maintains or gains power. Procrastination weakens our will to the point that we think we cannot

change. Before we know it, the habit has locked us in a prison of our own making. We may not even know if a habit already has enough power to imprison us for decades; we only discover its power when one day we try to stop it and find out we cannot.

*Assume a virtue if you have it not.
Refrain tonight,
and that shall lend a kind of easiness
to the next abstinence, the next more easy;
for use almost can change the stamp of nature,
and either lodge the devil or throw him out
with wondrous potency.*

— Shakespeare, *Hamlet*

- Shakespeare describes the entire problem of habit formation and change with great economy by homing in on two key variables: assume a virtue and abstinence.
- We need to assume a virtue if we have it not. In our case this will be hundreds of physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual habits. These fall into three categories:
 1. Constructive meaningful activities: activities related to health, work, training, volunteering, school, relationships, culture, sports, recreation, or hobbies.
 2. The habits of a seeker: the methods described here: meditation, contemplation, affirmations, and so forth.
 3. The habits of a sage: qualities such as love, compassion, forgiveness, courage, strength, and others listed in the healing alphabet.
- And we need to *refrain tonight as that shall lend a kind of easiness to the next abstinence, the next more easy for use can almost change the stamp of nature, and either lodge the devil or throw him out with wondrous potency*. This sounds good and it is but it is not so easy.
- A member of our community shared the following wisdom in a recovery and healing meeting: “Addiction is like a gorilla in a cage. The gorilla always wins if you let him out. Sometimes if he gets out, we may not be able to get him back in.” Even when we know this truth, we find it difficult to follow. What keeps us from taking on our bad habits and why do we fail so often when we do take them on?
- Picture a battle between two brain grooves: the old and the new. Our old bad habit resides in a big fat obsessive-compulsive brain groove. It has had its way with us for years and has great power.
- In the beginning, the new brain groove carrying a new good habit is a tiny filament. It takes time and practice to build it up so it is strong enough to compete with and eventually dominate the old bad habit brain groove.
- When we first start to do the work, it is an unfair match. The big bad habit brain groove has more power than the tiny filament new habit brain groove. As a result, we may lose some of the battles, return to our bad habit, get demoralized, and quit trying. This can be dangerous and, in some cases, lethal.
- What will help? How do we get motivated to take on our bad habits? How do we stay safe in this early phase of healing? Let’s start with the Buddha. He says,

*The thought manifests as word;
the word manifests as deed;
the deed develops into habit;
and habit hardens into character.
So watch the thought and its ways with care,
and let it spring from Love
born out of concern for all beings.*

- The Buddha suggests we root our thoughts in love and compassion. By practicing the technique below, we will learn how to lock healing qualities such as love and compassion into our brain grooves, thus making them our new mental habits.

Technique

- Neurocircuits or brain grooves carry both good and bad habits. Attention and repetition determine which brain groove is active and gaining power. Place your needle of attention on the neurocircuit of a bad habit, and it gains power. Place your needle of attention on a good habit, and it will gain power. What you pay attention to and repeat will determine the course of your life. Following is a technique for transformation of habits from negative to positive.
 1. Introspection
 2. Avoidance of everything associated with the bad habit
 3. Affirmations and will
 4. Constructive, meaningful activities
 5. Healing methods: the habits of a seeker
 6. Healing qualities: the habits of a sage
 7. Support
 8. Solitude
 9. Perseverance
 10. Victory
- 1. **Introspection**
 - Make a list of the habits you would like to change. Examples of bad habits include smoking, substance abuse, gambling, compulsive eating, addictions to sex, computers, money, power, work, and codependency or addiction to people.
- 2. **Avoidance of Everything Associated with the Bad Habit**
 - People, environment, routines, and our own thoughts are the breath that gives life to the brain groove of a bad habit. With continued stimulation, a bad habit grows, our will weakens, and we slide off the recovery and healing path.
 - However, the neurocircuit for the bad habit remains dormant in the subconscious if we give it no thought or attention. We can gain power over a bad habit by avoiding exposure to everything

associated with it. Stay away from the negative environment, people, and actions that support the habit until the new brain groove is strong.

- Avoid thinking about the bad habit as much as possible. We are subject to craving in an instant if not careful. Even a passing thought or image of the negative habit can awaken desire. The more we let the idea play in our minds, the more at risk we are of recurrent addiction. Starve the bad habit to death by inattention.

3. Affirmations and Will

- Review Affirmations, page 93-112, and will, page 59-70 to see how thought-power and will power can erase even the deepest grooves of long-standing habits.
- The mind has the key that can unlock the door of a bad habit, as a single thought or visual image can stimulate craving. We need to choose our thoughts carefully. Thoughts associated with our bad habits do pass through our consciousness against our will, however. To prevent these thoughts from becoming action, we must work against them. As soon as we become aware of the unwanted thought, we can knock it out with will and affirmations.
- We can invoke our will at full power, deploy our favorite affirmations, and turn to good actions. These include constructive meaningful activities, the habits of a seeker, and the habits of a sage.

4. Constructive, Meaningful Activities

- Make a list of activities related to your work, chores, relationships, leisure, recreation, hobbies, and self-nurturance. These activities are a part of your repertoire of positive habits. You can use these activities to ward off the thoughts and impulses related to your bad habits. Such a list might include playing and watching sports, listening to or playing music, watching television, surfing the Internet, watching movies, reading, writing, studying, exercising, doing arts and crafts, playing board games, completing crossword or jigsaw puzzles, gardening, paying bills, shopping, cooking, cleaning, taking a nap, getting a massage, and so on.

5. Healing Methods: The Habits of a Seeker

- The habits of a seeker include any technique that leads to the growth of healing qualities. For our purposes, these are affirmations, progressive muscle relaxation, breathwork, contemplation, meditation, prayer, mindfulness, practicing the presence of God, service, yoga, and the transformation of emotion.

6. Healing Qualities: The Habits of a Sage

- The habits of a sage are the qualities listed in the spiritual alphabet: love, compassion, understanding, forgiveness, courage, strength, endurance, peace, and joy. When a bad habit takes over, the habits of a sage are reduced or non-existent. As healing and recovery advance, these spiritual qualities grow and the power of addiction is less. In full recovery, craving ceases as these qualities completely replace the bad habit.
- If constructive meaningful activities, the habits of a seeker, and the habits of a sage keep the door of the bad habit locked, craving is kept at bay. We are safe. On the other hand, if despite our best efforts, the door of bad habits opens, the seductive music of craving may bring us to the brink of relapse. On the way to full recovery, there will be times when craving is dangerously strong and

impossible to resist. If this occurs, we must surround ourselves with people who will protect us from negative actions.

7. Support

- We need to surround ourselves with people who support our goals. Friends and family associated with our bad habits often try to pull us back. When we move forward, they take it personally. Moreover, we are afraid of finding new people. We must get through this fear to create a support network of people with like-minded goals who act as our bodyguards, protecting us from ourselves in moments of vulnerability.

8. Solitude

- To heal completely, we need to practice discipline when we are alone. This is a tall order. Many of us are afraid of the unknown and afraid to be alone. With continued practice, however, we will gain the necessary courage and self-control to resist craving even when we are alone. Then we do not need bodyguards. Eventually, craving ceases.

9. Perseverance

- Change is difficult. Some strong bad habits may take years to break. Tests, trials, and temptations come. Setbacks occur. Back and forth movement between old and new patterns is a natural part of the process. Do not give up.
- If you slip and fall, be sure to create the mental habit of gentleness with yourself while using the remorse, regret, or disgust you may feel as an incentive to push you on to greater efforts. Get the lesson from your mistake, and move on. Don't let guilt, shame, and embarrassment dominate your consciousness. Replace feelings of self-contempt with love, compassion, kindness, understanding, and forgiveness for yourself.

10. Victory

- Focus on your goal, and avoid thinking about the problem. Thinking about the problem only serves to rev up the negative brain groove that carries it. Keep feeding the positive habit to make it stronger and starving the negative habit to make it weaker. Give the best of your effort, concentration, and attention to the new habit until it takes over and becomes a natural, effortless, and automatic part of your repertoire.
- Stay with your support network and constructive meaningful activities. Go to twelve-step meetings, other healing circles, and church, synagogue, or mosque if that is part of your program. Practice your healing methods and cultivate healing qualities. Keep battling, and you will win. Craving ceases. Peace and strength expand. Life becomes easier and more natural.
- As we practice the methods of a seeker, we reinforce the neurocircuits containing spiritual qualities such as love, compassion, understanding, strength, and courage until these become unconditional habits. In the end, we realize our true spiritual identity by reconditioning our brain with soul qualities. We do not have to think about our practice. We express the habits of a sage, the love qualities, automatically, naturally, and easily.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- We all have a mix of good and bad habits. Bad habits cause untold suffering. Good habits help us manage the inevitable suffering of life and expand healing power. For full recovery and deep healing, we must release the energy captured by bad habits and transfer this power to new good habits.
- Neurocircuits or brain grooves carry both good and bad habits. Attention and repetition determine which brain groove is active and gaining power. Place your needle of attention on the neurocircuit of a bad habit, and it gains power. Place your needle of attention on a good habit, and it will gain power. What you pay attention to and repeat will determine the course of your life.
- The next step in our development is in the immediate moments of our lives. However, when we do not like what is going on, we leap out of the moment into an unhealthy habit. We hypnotize and narcotize ourselves in order to avoid unpleasant feelings. Instead, choose constructive meaningful activities and the healing methods of a seeker to develop the healing qualities of a sage.
- In the beginning of our self-healing work, it may be difficult to get traction. We can gain momentum by setting reasonable goals, taking small steps, achieving modest successes, and building from there.
- The ego, in its drive for immediate gratification, gets us into trouble with addiction and attachment. Not only do we lose preexisting strength, but also spiritual qualities cannot grow. Our souls yearn for love and are willing to pay the price of work and patience.
- Reactivity is located in Step 5, Tools Become Barriers [see *Healing Power: Ten Steps to Pain Management and Spiritual Evolution Revised* (2010), Step 5, Tools Become Barriers, pp. 56–66)]. The restless mind, high emotional reactivity, excessive material desire, physical problems, hyperactivity, and the ego get locked into neurocircuit-driven habits that are difficult to change. We can change, however, if we form new neurocircuits carrying the habits of a seeker and the habits of a sage. The habits of a seeker are the methods and the habits of a sage are the qualities described in *Healing Power*. Break bad habits of thought, attitude, emotion, desire, energy, and action so you can emerge from the past and find yourself renewed: fresh, spontaneous, and in the moment.

AFFIRMATIONS

- I can eliminate any bad habit.
- I expand my will power through practice.
- With my expanded will power, I escape from bad habits.
- One by one, I eliminate all bad habits.
- Nothing can stand in my way.
- Nothing can touch my will.
- Nothing can shake my resolve.
- My will power grows stronger each day.
- My mind is set.
- Nothing can stop me.
- I will succeed.

- Old friends who would have me indulge my bad habits are out.
- With will and thought, I conquer every bad habit, one at a time.
- I am not my bad habit. My true self is warm, compassionate, loving, and kind.
- I am stronger than any negative desire or temptation.
- No matter how many times I fail, I will rise and conquer.
- As I strengthen my body through physical exercise, I strengthen my will with mental exercise.
- With will and thought, I cast out this bad habit from the neurocircuits in my brain.
- With will and thought, I cultivate the habits of a sage: love, peace of mind, compassion, and strength.

EXERCISES

1. Make a list of your good and bad physical and mental habits. Which habits would you like to change now?
2. What barriers keep you from changing your bad habits?
3. Make a list of constructive, meaningful activities that you will use to avoid bad habits.
4. What self-healing methods would you like to practice?
5. What healing qualities would you like to develop?
6. What will you do when craving for a destructive habit returns?
7. Practice the ten steps for replacing bad habits with positive habits.
8. It is a good idea to have a spiritual practice even when you are doing well. Practice now, so that when the going gets rough, the brain grooves that carry the methods and qualities will have more power. Then, when painful problems emerge, you will be able to focus on your method and quality and you will be able to maintain strength and peace, even in the face of duress.
9. There are three stages to think about when dealing with a bad habit:
 - a. The Safety Zone: There is no craving. You are safe and protected from the bad habit.
 - b. The Ambivalent Zone: There is craving and a corresponding risk of returning to your bad habit.
 - c. The Roller Coaster: You cannot control the impulse and indulge your bad habit. This is akin to going for a ride on a roller coaster. You give the man your tickets, sit down, pull the bar over your lap, and go for the ride. Once the ride starts, you can't get off until you get to the finish line. Then you have the option of getting off or going for another ride. When you finally get off the roller coaster, you are weak and dizzy. Sound familiar? When craving starts and you enter the ambivalent zone, what will you do to avoid getting on the roller coaster?
10. Keep a log. Each day you can inspect the status of your habits. Give yourself credit for your successes. Recognize your slips, but do not dwell on the bad habit; this only reinforces the associated brain groove. Instead, cultivate the mental habit of being gentle with yourself while you focus on the good habits you are creating. Always be compassionate, loving, kind, and forgiving towards yourself.
11. Following is a review of the fifteen methods described in this workbook. We can use these methods to combat addiction.

As you review the methods, remember this. The brain is malleable. When we practice the methods, we are literally rewiring the brain. With continued practice, we lock the new good habit in a brain groove strong enough to compete with and eventually dominate the old bad habit brain groove. This is called neuroplasticity.

To fight addiction, practice any one or combination of the following methods for the rest of your life.

- a. **People:** Find a support network of individuals in recovery from addiction. Tell your story. Receive their guidance and wisdom. Get a sponsor or mentor, one whom you trust. Get some spiritual bodyguards to protect you during vulnerable times.
 - b. **Activity:** Engage in constructive meaningful activities: school, training, volunteer, work, hobbies, sports, culture, the arts, and so forth.
 - c. **Belief System:** Go to church, synagogue, mosque, twelve-step meetings, or other healing ceremonies.
 - d. **Affirmations:** Replace junk thoughts with positive thoughts and wisdom pearls. Fill your brain with wisdom first thing in the morning and keep it there. Practice affirmations on overcoming limitation, controlling impulses, and increasing will power. Apply all of your will power to positive thought.
 - e. **Habit Transformation:** Follow the ten steps described in this chapter.
 - f. **Progressive Muscle Relaxation:** Calm the body and mind.
 - g. **Breathwork:** Relax and heal the body, mind, and soul. Reduces craving.
 - h. **Contemplation:** Read sacred texts. Find what resonates with you and work with it. Bring this wisdom to realization in your very own consciousness.
 - i. **Meditation:** In the room of stillness, there is no restlessness, striving, seeking, or craving. Thoughts and feelings calm down. Actions follow suit. The deep peace bred of meditation spreads to every domain of your life.
 - j. **Prayer:** Effort and grace go together. Put a knee to the ground and speak to God in the language of your heart. "I will do my part but I can't do this alone. I need Your help." With this surrender, Grace comes on its own schedule.
 - k. **Mindfulness:** Learn how to surf your pain-craving waves without jumping off the board into a destructive habit. As the wave folds back into the ocean, craving ceases.
 - l. **Practicing the Presence of God:** We would not use drugs in the presence of Jesus, Buddha, Krishna, or The God of Love.
 - m. **Service:** How can you use when you are helping others?
 - n. **Yoga:** When you practice the yoga of love, service, wisdom, and stillness, craving dissolves.
 - o. **Transformation of Emotion:** Craving and emotional pain often overlap. When we transform painful emotion into self-knowledge, we gain self-control.
12. Will Power and Perseverance
- o Review the exercise on goal setting on page 63 in this manual. Here you will find a 9-step method designed to help you quit any addiction. The example given is for cigarettes but you can

apply these steps to any bad habit. Embedded in these steps are some affirmations specifically designed for eliminating bad habits.

- Set a goal and start your practice. It doesn't matter how much will power you start out with. Just get started. Having said that, we are going to need all of the will power we can get. See the section on cultivating will power on page 61 in this workbook. You will find some additional affirmations designed to help you increase your will power on page 69.
- Taking on a bad habit often means losing some of the battles. It's okay if you lose a battle. This is par for the course. If you don't have enough will power and you lose a battle, pick yourself up, dust off the dirt, and get back in the game.
- You don't have to be perfect but you do have to keep your effort. Make up your mind that you can do this. Just do your best. If you do the work, will power slowly increases. Perseverance is the magic of addiction recovery. Victory comes to those who persist.

13. Riding Complex Waves: Craving + Emotion + Body Sensations

- Craving may occur by itself but often combines with painful emotions and bodily sensations, thus creating more complex and confusing waves. It can be frightening and overwhelming.

RIDING COMPLEX WAVES

When you feel the craving-emotion-body sensation wave arise, try the following method.

1. Stop
2. Observe: Notice what you are experiencing. Stay with the pain wave as it grows. Ride it to its peak. Don't try to escape. Don't jump off. You may feel like you can't do this or that you are going to break but you won't. If you ride it out, it will go down. This is the nature of craving. Review the verse by Shakespeare, page 118 in this workbook.
3. Breathe: Take a slow deep abdominal breath. Breathe into the craving-emotion-body sensation wave. Use the breath to steady yourself as you ride the wave trusting it will naturally subside without any action. (This might be a good time to review the breathing methods described in Chapter 11, breathwork, page 132.)
4. Let the story unfold: Observe the medley of thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations. There may be a story you need to discover. My girlfriend left me. I am depressed, afraid, humiliated, rejected, alone, ashamed, embarrassed. I don't care. I want a drink. Let it all come out. This is valuable information.
5. Spiritualize the story: Infuse the story with healing qualities. Love, compassion, understanding, forgiveness, patience, and kindness are water on the fire of reactivity. For more information on spiritualizing the story, review Chapter 19, Transformation of Emotion, page 243, and Chapter 15, Mindfulness: School, page 185).

14. Roll the wheel

- We have fifteen methods and one hundred healing qualities we can cultivate in response to any bad habit.

- Healing qualities are actual healing powers. There is no limit to their power but we must do the work. The work is practicing PMQ. Throw the switch to power. Roll the wheel.
- When you experience craving P:
 1. Stop
 2. Breathe
 3. Present moment
 4. Choose any method M
 5. Cultivate any quality Q
 6. Apply all of your will, thought, and concentration to your chosen method and quality
- 15. Yoga and Addiction
 - We can apply the principles of yoga to the problem of addiction. Review Chapter 18, Yoga, page 228, in this workbook.
 - When we have a bad habit, our energy goes down and out through the lower three chakras and attaches to the object of our addiction. This down and out force is powerful, magnetic, and seductive.
 - We can reverse the flow of energy from down and out to in and up by practicing love, service, wisdom, and stillness. In addition, we can focus at the third eye or spiritual eye. When we focus at the third eye, we are connecting the soul to Spirit. Healing qualities expand. Will power, strength, and equanimity grow. Craving ceases.
 - When you experience craving, place all of your attention at the third eye. Make a supreme effort to keep it there. When you notice your attention is no longer focused at the third eye, gently bring it back. If you are in public or working, keep some of your attention there. You don't have to raise your gaze.
 - Notice the battle between craving and peace. When energy goes down and out toward the object of the bad habit, we experience craving. When energy goes in and up to the third eye, we feel calm. This battle, this yoyo between craving and peace, can go on intermittently for weeks, months, and sometimes years.
 - Practice love, service, wisdom, and stillness and keep your focus at the third eye. At some point, craving ceases and is replaced by the permanent peace and strength of the soul.
- In the next chapter, you will study progressive muscle relaxation. This is the first of five techniques that comprise the morning and evening program: progressive muscle relaxation, breathwork, contemplation, meditation, and prayer.



CHAPTER 10

PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION

ENERGIZING AND RELAXING THE BODY

- When stressed or threatened, the sympathetic nervous system activates a complex response for fight or flight. Part of this response is muscle tension, which is good as we may need it to take action for safety. The problem is we carry this tension when we no longer need it. Excessive tension occurs in any part of the body, adds unnecessary suffering, and interferes with optimal functioning.
- In this chapter, we will study two techniques that help counteract this tendency: progressive muscle relaxation and the body scan. Both of these techniques relax the body and mind and restore balance.

PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION

- Progressive muscle relaxation calms our mind and body through tensing and relaxing our muscles.
- An anxious mind results in a tense body. Progressive muscle relaxation calms the body, which in turn calms the mind.
- This technique is effective for reducing anxiety, fear, panic, depression, insomnia, and fatigue.
- In addition, when the body and mind are relaxed, it is easier to practice other methods such as contemplation, mindfulness, and service. Many people use this technique to relax the body in preparation for deeper states of meditation.

Guidelines

1. Practice the entire routine described below in your morning and evening program for ten to fifteen minutes. You can also tense and relax specific muscles when stressed or fatigued.
2. Make this part of your morning and evening routine including breathwork, contemplation, meditation, and prayer.

3. Concentrate exclusively on tensing, relaxing, and energizing each muscle. Use your will and concentration to eliminate all other thoughts. This is not a time to worry, plan, fantasize, or solve problems. It is a time to relax and gain energy. When the mind wanders, bring it back to focus on tensing, relaxing, and energizing your muscles.
4. To reinforce your intention of energizing and relaxing your muscles, you can use an affirmation such as “energize” when you tense the muscle and “relax” when you relax the muscle.
5. Tense each muscle at maximum strength but without strain for three seconds. Then relax for three seconds. The movements are smooth and continuous, not abrupt or jerky.
6. Repeat each exercise three to five times.
7. When tensing a particular muscle, keep the rest of your muscles relaxed.

Technique

1. Position: practice sitting, lying, or standing.
2. Eyes: close your eyes and focus at the point just above and between your eyebrows.
3. Breathe: You may breathe in as you tense and exhale as you relax each muscle, or simply maintain calm, natural, smooth, relaxed breathing in the background. When you inhale, imagine that you are inhaling energy. When you exhale, imagine exhaling tension.
4. Foot: Make several circles with your left foot in each direction. Then tense the left foot muscle by curling the toes downward. Repeat this exercise with the right foot.
5. Calf: Tense and relax the left calf muscle three to five times. Repeat this exercise with the right calf.
6. Thigh: Tense and relax the left thigh muscle three to five times. Repeat this exercise with the right thigh.
7. Buttock: Tense and relax the left buttock three to five times. Repeat this exercise with the right buttock.
8. Lower abdomen: tense and relax the lower abdomen three to five times.
9. Upper abdomen: tense and relax the upper abdomen three to five times.
10. Full abdomen: Pull your abdominal muscles all the way in and hold for two seconds, then relax your abdomen. Repeat this exercise five to twenty times.
11. Fist: Tense and relax the left fist three to five times. Repeat this exercise with the right fist.
12. Forearm: Tense and relax the left forearm three to five times. Repeat this exercise with the right forearm.
13. Upper arm: Tense and relax the left upper arm three to five times. Repeat this exercise with the right upper arm.
14. Chest: Tense and relax the left chest three to five times. Repeat this exercise with the right chest.
15. Lower back: tense and relax the muscles in your lower back three to five times.
16. Middle back: Tense and relax the muscles in your middle back three to five times. You might imagine squeezing an orange between your shoulder blades.
17. Upper back: tense and relax the upper back muscles three to five times.
18. Neck: Tense and relax the left neck muscle, then the right neck muscle, then the front neck muscle, and then the back neck muscle. Repeat this exercise three to five times.

19. Head: gently tense the muscles in your neck while you roll your head three to five times slowly in each direction.
20. Facial muscles: Notice any tension that you have here. Tighten your facial muscles by smiling wide, closing your eyes tightly, and wrinkling your forehead. Tense and relax each area three to five times.
21. Inhale and tense your whole body. Hold for a count of five. Exhale and relax, releasing the tension from your entire body.
22. Now take inventory of your body. Notice any lingering tension. Tense and relax three to five times where necessary.
23. Take several smooth, slow, deep breaths. On inhalation, imagine taking in life energy. On exhalation, imagine releasing any remaining tension in your body. Eliminate all negative thoughts. Concentrate on the peace and energy you have gained from these exercises.
24. Spend a few minutes feeling peace and energy spread to all parts of your body.
25. Open your eyes and feel awake, alert, and refreshed!

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Practice progressive muscle relaxation slowly, with deep concentration. Eliminate all thought of problems, difficulty, and worry.
- Your muscle movement in these exercises should be smooth and continuous, not abrupt or jerky. It is important to tense each muscle to maximum strength without strain. Tense your muscle for three seconds, and relax for three seconds.
- Each time you tense and relax a muscle, you are energizing and relaxing that muscle. When you tense and relax all of your muscles at the same time, you fill your entire body with calm energy.
- Tense and relax your whole body three to five times whenever you feel anxious or fatigued.

EXERCISES

1. Notice the contrast when you tense and relax any muscle. Muscle tension, followed by a conscious effort to relax the muscle, allows you to recognize the difference between tension and relaxation. Once you notice this difference, it is easier to induce relaxation.
2. Include progressive muscle relaxation in your morning and evening routine. It is easier to meditate when your body is relaxed.
3. Practice progressive muscle relaxation any time you feel anxiety or fatigue.
4. You can memorize the instructions for progressive muscle relaxation or make a recording, so you can listen to the instructions as you perform the exercises.

PASSIVE PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION: THE BODY SCAN

- This exercise helps us get connected to what is going on in our body. It is similar to progressive muscle relaxation but performed without tensing and relaxing the muscles.
- In this exercise, we cultivate concentration and flexibility of attention. We focus on a body part, become aware of what's there, and let go. We breathe in to and out from each region a few times and then let go as our attention moves to the next region.
- As you focus on, breathe into, and let go of the sensations, thoughts, and images you find associated in each region, the muscles in that region release accumulated tension and relax.
- Remind yourself of the intention of this practice. Its aim is not to feel any different or relaxed. This may or may not happen. Instead, the intention is to bring awareness to any sensations you detect as you focus your attention on each body part.
 1. You can do this exercise lying, sitting, or standing.
 2. Close your eyes.
 3. Take a few moments to settle in.
 4. Take a few slow deep abdominal breaths.
 5. Feel your body as a whole from the tips of the toes to the top of the head.
 6. Now bring your attention to the toes of the left foot. Narrow your beam of attention like a spotlight to toes. Bring your attention to just this small area of the body. Take note of what is there. Be curious. There is no need to find anything in particular. Soften your awareness and allow whatever is there to arise: cold, warm, clothing, numbness, tingling, tension, relaxed, or no sensations. Hold the toes in awareness just as they are. Don't try to push any sensation away. Just sense the body as it is. If you don't feel anything at the moment, that is okay. Observe any changes in sensations.
 7. When your mind wanders, gently bring your attention back to your toes.
 8. As you focus on your toes, direct your breathing so that it feels like you are breathing into and out of your toes. As recommended by Jon Kabat-Zinn, we can imagine breathing through a hole in the very top of the head, as if we were a whale with a blowhole. We let our breathing move through the entire body from one end to the other, as if it were flowing in the top of the head and out through the toes, and then in through the toes and out through the top of the head. Continue this for a few breaths.
 9. When you are ready to leave the toes and move on, breathe in all the way down to the toes and, on the out breath, disengage from the left toes and move on to the left foot, left calf, left thigh, pelvis, right toes, right foot, right calf, right thigh, abdomen, lower back, upper back, chest, left fingers, left forearm, left upper arm, left shoulder, right fingers, right forearm, right upper arm, right shoulder, neck, throat, all regions of the face, back of the head, top of the head. Feel the sensations as you go and direct the breath in to and out of each body part, then let go and move your beam of attention to the next region.
 10. When the mind wanders, gently bring it back to the body part you are working with.
 11. Move slowly through each region. Maintain your focus on the breath and on the feeling of that particular region. Breathe with and into whatever is there, let it go, and move to the next region.

12. When you become aware of tension or other intense sensations in a particular part of the body, you can breathe healing energy into that part and release the tension on the out breath. As you breathe into that body part, imagine you are sending healing power and light to that part. With exhalation, imagine you are releasing disease and tension.
13. Acknowledge the presence of whatever comes and stay with that in the moment. If intense and difficult emotions arise, try to continue the body scan or if you need to look deeper into that feeling, practice an emotional processing exercise such as Chapter 19, Transformation of Emotion, page 243, or Chapter 15, Mindfulness: School, page 185 in this workbook.
14. After you have scanned the whole body, spend a few minutes being aware of the body as a whole.
15. Invoke the witness. Feel the stillness, silence, spaciousness, and serenity that are always there.

AFFIRMATIONS

- I permeate every cell in my body with energy and peace.
- I fill my body with energy and peace.
- In the next chapter, you will study the second method of the morning and evening program, breathwork. You will learn how to use your breath to relax and heal your body, mind, and soul.



CHAPTER 11

BREATHWORK

USING BREATH TO HEAL MIND, BODY, AND SPIRIT

- This chapter introduces breathwork, the second method of the morning and evening program.
- We will review a variety of breathing techniques. The benefits are profound.
 - For the body: breathwork gives an immediate relaxation response. Everything slows down including heart rate, respiratory rate, and blood pressure. Muscles relax. There is more energy, better sleep and digestion, and improved pain management.
 - For the emotions: breathwork dissolves anxiety, depression, anger, guilt, and other painful feelings.
 - For the mind: conscious breathing helps cultivate a positive, calm, strong, focused, and resilient mind. We replace mental restlessness with peace of mind.
 - For the soul: When we learn how to breathe, we can find our calm center, a necessity for all cognitive-behavioral, mindfulness, and contemplative practices.
- Breathwork increases our awareness of our body, feelings, and the environment.
- Breathwork helps curb addiction and craving. We breathe right into the heart of the craving to make it disappear.
- Breathwork helps manage physical pain. Breathing into the pain helps us control fear and cultivate strength.
- With cognitive-behavioral, mindfulness, and contemplative practices including breathwork, many will be able to reduce and ultimately get off addicting anti-anxiety and pain medications.
- Following are some simple, enjoyable breathing exercises. These exercises can be practiced anywhere, anytime, and in any position including sitting, standing, walking, or lying down.
- As with other methods, the benefits of breathwork develop gradually and cumulatively with patient daily practice.

ABDOMINAL BREATHING

- To breathe correctly, we need to understand the difference between chest and abdominal breathing.
- Notice your breath. If you expand your chest or rib cage more, you are a chest breather. If you expand your abdomen or stomach more, you are an abdominal breather.
- Stress causes rapid, shallow, noisy, and irregular chest breathing, which in turn results in more stress, locking us into a negative cycle. For example, anger and fear are inevitably associated with rapid, uneven, shallow breathing.
- Abdominal breathing, on the other hand, induces relaxation and has an immediate anti-anxiety effect. The heart rate slows, blood pressure decreases, and the mind and muscles relax. We regain our calm center and reduce the likelihood of getting stuck in a negative mental or emotional state.
- In addition to relaxation, abdominal breathing gives the body more oxygen, resulting in more energy.
- We should breathe abdominally when we feel well or when we have stress, restless thoughts, painful emotions, or fatigue.
- You can practice abdominal breathing as part of your morning and evening program or at any time. The goal is to make a habit of abdominal breathing. Following are several wonderful breathing techniques.

Focused Breathing

- Most of us pay no attention to breathing. Unconscious breathing often leads to breathing habits that create tension. We can change this by practicing focused breathing. Focused breathing stills the restless mind, quiets ragged emotions, and restores the peace. This is the quickest way to induce the relaxation response.
- The breath is always with us so paying attention to it requires nothing extra. To get centered and calm:
 1. Sit in comfortable position.
 2. Focus on your breath.
 3. Make the breath longer or just watch it.
 4. Breathe with a relaxed belly.
 5. Make the breath sweet, calm, gentle, and slow.
 6. When the mind wanders, bring it back to the breath.

Focused Abdominal Breathing with Affirmations

1. Focus on your breath. Make a conscious effort to breathe slowly, regularly, quietly, smoothly, and deeply. Chest breathing is common when anxious or in pain. If this occurs, go back to slow, deep abdominal breathing.
2. Inhalation: Inhale slowly. Expand in this order:
 - a. Abdomen
 - b. Lower chest
 - c. Upper chest

3. Exhalation: When you breathe out, exhale slowly, fully and completely. Squeeze all the air out of your lungs in reverse order:
 - a. Upper chest
 - b. Lower chest
 - c. Abdomen
4. Affirm: Try any affirmation that makes you comfortable or simply focus on the breath. You might affirm:
 - Breathing gently, calming down.
 - Breathing gently, problem melts.
5. If the mind wanders, gently bring it back to the breath.
6. Breathe slowly and deeply five to ten minutes in your morning and evening program, or any time of day. You might try ten to fifteen quiet, deep breaths whenever you need to refocus and energize.
7. If you feel light headed, stop for twenty to thirty seconds and then start again.
8. With practice, abdominal breathing replaces chest breathing. The result is a relaxed body, peace of mind, and vitality.

THE CALMING BREATH

- This breathing exercise produces a feeling of peace. Practice the calming breath when you are anxious, restless, or at any time.
 1. Make a conscious effort to make your breath slow, regular, quiet, smooth, and deep.
 2. Inhalation: inhale fully to a count of eight.
 3. Hold: hold the deep breath to a count of eight.
 4. Exhalation: exhale fully to a count of eight.
 5. You can count to two, four, six, twelve, or even up to twenty. Choose whatever number you wish. Use that same number for the inhalation, holding it, and the exhalation. It does not matter how fast you count.
 6. Repeat this six to eight times in your morning and evening program, or any time of day.

4:4:6:2 BREATHING

1. Inhale to a count of four.
2. Hold at the top to a count of four.
3. Exhale to a count of six.
4. Hold for a count of two.

MINDFUL BREATHING

- Mindfulness is about allowing, welcoming, inviting, accepting, and then letting go.
 - We apply this principle to thoughts, feelings, and sensations.
 - Use this technique throughout the day when you feel stressed, out of balance, or overwhelmed. It is very effective in reducing reactivity.
1. Breathe: Focus on the breath just as it is or breathe deeply.
 2. When thoughts, feelings, or sensations arise, notice, accept, let go, and return to the breath.
 3. Thoughts: The goal is not to stop thinking. It is to accept and gently let go. Let thoughts enter and invite them to gently leave. Remember, thoughts are just thoughts. Notice the thoughts that are there and say, “thinking, thinking.” Then let go and return to the breath.
 4. Feelings: Notice any emotions that arise. Just observe the feeling and say, “feeling, feeling.” Then let go and return to the breath.
 5. Physical sensations: Notice any sensations that arise. Observe the sensation as pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral. Then let go and return to the breath.
 6. Sounds: Notice any external stimuli such as sound and say “sound, sound.” Then let go and return to the breath.

UJJAYI BREATH, ALSO REFERRED TO AS VICTORIOUS BREATH AND OCEAN BREATH

- The Sanskrit word *ujjayi* means to conquer or to be victorious. Because of the sound it makes, this technique is also called Ocean Breath or Hissing Breath.
 - This technique energizes and relaxes the body and mind, reduces emotional reactivity, and restores the peace.
 - If you have any medical concerns, particularly a respiratory condition like asthma or emphysema, consult your physician before you begin this practice.
 - Start this practice for five minutes and increase to ten to fifteen minutes if you wish.
 - Always work within the range of your limits and abilities.
 - Stop the exercise if you become faint or dizzy.
1. Begin seated in a comfortable position.
 2. In this exercise, you breathe through your nose, gently constrict your throat, and completely fill your lungs.
 3. Inhale and exhale deeply through your mouth. Let your inhalations fill your lungs to their fullest expansion. Completely release the air during exhalation.
 4. On exhalation, slightly contract the back of your throat, as you do when you whisper. Softly whisper the sound, “ahhh,” as you exhale. You will notice your breath sounds like ocean waves, softly moving in and out. Make sure the sound originates from your throat and not from your nose.
 5. Now maintain the slight constriction of the throat on your inhalations.

6. When you can comfortably control your throat during the inhalations and exhalations, close your mouth and begin breathing only through your nose. Keep the same constriction in your throat as you did when your mouth was open. You will continue to hear the ocean or hissing sound as you breathe through your nose.
7. Concentrate on the sound of your breath. Allow it to soothe your mind. It should be audible to you, but not so loud that someone standing several feet away can hear it.
8. Throughout your practice, keep the sound even and the breath steady and smooth.
9. Be careful not to tighten your throat.

COHERENT BREATHING, ADAPTED FROM STEPHEN ELLIOT

- For adults, the average rate of breathing is fifteen breaths per minute.
- The ideal is five breaths per minute. This is accomplished with an inhalation of six seconds and exhalation of six seconds. The interval for one complete continuous breath would be twelve seconds. When we stretch the breath to twelve seconds, it becomes slow, deep, continuous, and smooth.
- This is mindful breathing as it requires conscious effort. To develop your new habit of conscious breathing, it is best to set aside a short time each day for deliberate practice. If at any time you feel pain or discomfort discontinue this practice. Do only what is comfortable for you.
- Start with just a few breaths and build slowly from there. Stay calm. There should be no strain. Continue for as long as you are comfortable. Then relax and return to your usual breathing rhythm.
 1. Begin inhaling for six seconds and then exhaling for six seconds. One complete breath is twelve seconds. Each breath is gentle, smooth, and even. Breathe across the entire interval, inhaling for six seconds and exhaling for six seconds. Both inhalation and exhalation must be smooth and continuous.
 2. Continue this practice of breathing at a five cycle per minute rate until you can do it comfortably for one minute, two minutes, three minutes, etc.
 3. Your practice might start with one to two minutes twice daily and build to ten to twenty minutes twice a day.
 4. As you breathe, consciously relax, and attempt to let go of any tension you may be carrying.
 5. Note any changes in body or mind before and after a few cycles of breathing at the optimal rhythm. Eventually, you will note a distinct relaxation response.
- You can practice conscious breathing at any time throughout the day. Slowly build conscious breathing into your daily program until it becomes your new normal. Continue your practice until you are proficient at breathing at the twelve-second interval as often as desired.
- With practice, breathing at the target rhythm of five breathing cycles per minute will become commonplace for you. While at rest or activity, make it your objective to breathe at this new rhythm all the time. When you forget, return to the new rhythm.

THE BREATH OF FIRE

- The breath of fire stimulates, energizes, and relaxes the body. Try it when you get up in the morning or any time you are sleepy, fatigued, or anxious.
 1. With mouth closed, breathe through your nose at a rate of two to three breaths a second. One breath includes inhalation and exhalation.
 2. The inhalations and exhalations are continuous, smooth, and of equal length.
 3. Practice this exercise for fifteen to thirty seconds. Increase in small increments up to several minutes at a time.

THE BREATH AND EMOTIONAL PAIN MANAGEMENT

- Abdominal breathing helps us work through emotional pain. This allows us to experience the truth of our feelings. When we process anger, anxiety, depression, and other difficult emotions, we gain self-knowledge and peace of mind.
 1. Notice what you are feeling.
 2. Remind yourself that repressed feelings remain, while processed feelings dissipate.
 3. Breathe right into the center of the feeling. Sometimes just breathing into the feeling clears it.
 4. If the feeling persists, stay with it and let it speak to you. When the feeling reveals its truths it moves on, and you gain self-knowledge. Refer to Chapter 19, Transformation of Emotion, page 243, for additional details on emotional processing.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Abdominal breathing is one of the keys to physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health.
- The way we breathe has a profound effect on how we feel.
- We do not have to practice breathing for months or years to get results. The relaxation response can occur immediately.
- Breath is always available. We can use it at any time to get centered, calm, comfortable, and still.
- Abdominal breathing increases our awareness of our body, feelings, and the environment.
- Breathwork helps dissolve painful emotions.
- Breathwork helps replace mental restlessness with peace of mind.
- Breathwork helps curb addiction and craving. Breathe right into the heart of the craving to make it disappear.
- Breathwork helps manage physical pain. Breathing into the pain helps to control fear and cultivate strength.

AFFIRMATIONS

Practice the following affirmations as you breathe slowly and deeply.

- Breathing gently, calming down.
- Breathing gently, problem melts.
- Aware of breath, relax-peace.
- Follow breath, relax-peace.
- Breathe in and out, relax-peace.
- Breathe deeply. Feel peace.
- Breathe deep. Feel better.
- Breathe deep. Nothing to fear.
- Breathe deep. Ready for anything.
- I use my breath to stay present.
- I relax my body. I calm my mind. Relax. Peace.
- I slow down my breathing to slow down my thoughts.
- I use my breath to heal myself.
- I fill my mind with thoughts of peace.
- Whatever comes, I can do.
- Fears examined melt away.
- Drop of water wears down stone.

EXERCISES

1. Describe the benefits of conscious breathing for the body, mind, emotions, and spirit.
2. What is the difference between chest and abdominal breathing?
3. Describe and practice focused abdominal breathing with affirmations.
4. Describe and practice the “calming breath.”
5. Describe and practice the “breath of fire.”
6. Practice deep abdominal breathing the next time you are upset or angry. Notice the effect.
7. Practice deep abdominal breathing the next time you are craving food, alcohol, drugs, or anything else you are trying to avoid. Notice the effect.
8. Practice deep abdominal breathing the next time you are suffering from physical pain. Notice the effect.

MEMORABLE QUOTES FROM CLASSES AND GROUPS

- The full deep belly breath is like magic. It helps reduce mental and emotional reactivity. My higher self and healing qualities take over. I can face my problems and accomplish my goals.
- Breathing and affirmations stabilize my behavior. I can be with people a little bit easier. I throw an affirmation of love in there at any time. This helps me calm down and get me through. There's a lot of power here. Affirmations become real. I feel like a better person. I am more focused. No matter how tough the scene, I have hope. I am more able to converse with people. This helps every situation that otherwise beats me down. It helps me get back on my feet.
- Don't underestimate the power of affirmations and breathwork. They are like a one-two punch. Sometimes when backed in a corner, this is all we have. They help bring a panic reaction down to size.
- When a negative thing comes in, you can react equally negatively, or you can use affirmations and breathing to neutralize it and remain immune. The quality you are cultivating is powerful; it acts like an invisible shield.
- Breathe right into the middle of your pain: resentment, anger, fear, shame. See what is there and breathe into it. Eventually peace takes over.
- Breathing helps you unearth what is there, what you need to face. Breathing also reduces what is already overwhelming. Works either way.
- Bring awareness to breath. Focus on the breath going in and out. No counting or affirmations, just breathe. Later you can add other intentional techniques.
- Use the breath to center all day long. There is a calm center. Focus on peace.
- Add breathwork to your toolbox. It works.
- In the next chapter, you will study the third method of the morning and evening program: contemplation.



CHAPTER 12

CONTEMPLATION

THE REALIZATION OF WISDOM

Contemplation for an hour is better than formal worship for sixty years.

– Mohammed

- This chapter introduces contemplation, the third method of the morning and evening program.
- The contemplation of wisdom is a special method of study that allows us to realize the powerful knowledge hidden in great wisdom texts. The Bible, Bhagavad Gita, Koran, and the poetry of Rumi, Hafiz, and Whitman are just a few examples of texts packed with pearls of wisdom that we can integrate into our being.
- A wisdom pearl is not just a positive thought but a super-positive deep thought with the potential power to help us heal not just in the moment but over the course of a lifetime. Wisdom pearls have the potential to help us in every domain of life but it takes time to understand them. A deep wisdom pearl can grow throughout our life and, even then, not be fully understood.
- It is one thing to sit, read, think, and talk about pearls of wisdom but these ideas are useless if they stay in our head. They must be realized. There must be a change in consciousness, a change in vibration to the higher state represented by that wisdom. This is difficult for us. We like to stay with words. Words are much easier than practice. Contemplation is a deep spiritual practice that takes us beyond words to experience and transformation.
- Without contemplation, the inherent healing power of wisdom pearls remains locked up, waiting, if not begging, for liberation. We have seen many preach about the enlightened life but come up short because they do not know how to transfer the life of the sacred written word into their daily lives. We can avoid this perilous trap by practicing contemplation.
- With contemplation, we apply the idea to our mind, emotions, desires, and ego. This involves a whole other level of understanding and commitment. Wisdom pearls come up against old thoughts and

feelings that have to go. There may be discomfort on the way to the deeper and higher state represented by the wisdom pearl.

- Most are not ready for this. When we are ready, when we see the need and begin our practice, the reward is great. We crack open the shell of a pearl of wisdom to reveal its hidden secrets and release its soothing healing powers. We slowly discover the healing qualities described in the great wisdom traditions are within us. We become peace, joy, kindness, compassion, courage, and strength. We can understand these qualities better in contemplation and embody them through repetitive action. With practice, patience, and perseverance, we expand and express these virtues in our thoughts, feelings, and actions. This is realization of wisdom, a part of deep healing and full recovery.
- Include this powerful technique in your healing program. Start your morning and evening program with a period of contemplative study. You will see that it not only works but also is supremely enjoyable.

TECHNIQUE

- The aim of ordinary reading, such as a newspaper or novel, is the accumulation of knowledge and or entertainment. For these purposes, we generally read straight through without pause.
 - Contemplation requires a different type of reading. We slow down our reading so we can go deep into our consciousness, in order to convert the words into personal realization.
 - The pearls of wisdom found in sacred texts reflect the healing qualities that already exist within us. To realize any healing quality, set aside some time and follow these steps.
 1. Choose a topic
 2. Study
 3. Affirm
 4. Act
 5. Introspect
 6. Mastery
1. **Choose A Topic**
 - Pick an area where you would like to do some work, such as becoming more compassionate.
 2. **Study**
 - Find a quiet place to study. Eliminate all distractions: turn off the TV, radio, and telephone.
 - Find a passage in your wisdom book having to do with compassion. Read this passage to get the overall picture.
 - Go back and read the material again, this time jotting down the important points. When written, the material is impressed much deeper in the mind and consciousness.
 3. **Affirm**
 - Affirm one complete thought. This may be a sentence, a few lines, or a paragraph.

- Here is an example of a thought on compassion from the Dalai Lama: “The feeling of kindness, love, and compassion is the essence of brotherhood and sisterhood. This compassionate feeling is the basis of inner peace.”
 - With your will and concentration, eliminate all other thoughts.
 - Place the affirmation in the center of your being, and keep it there for several minutes. When your mind wanders, bring it back to your affirmation.
 - Let the vibratory power of your affirmation spread throughout your body and surrounding space.
 - Visualize yourself spreading love, compassion, and kindness with each action throughout your day.
 - If you know a technique of meditation, you can include your affirmation and visualization before and after your practice. Affirmations are most effective when the mind is relaxed and opened, as during meditation.
4. **Act**
- Place note cards with affirmations related to compassion in your shirt pocket or other convenient places. Pull these cards out when you have a spare moment.
 - Review these affirmations as a reminder of your theme for the day.
 - You might give your mind a one-word affirmation such as “compassion.”
 - Remember to let compassion be the governor of every thought, attitude, feeling, and action.
 - Notice how an oft-repeated affirmation will come into your conscious mind automatically. This is a sign that compassion is becoming a mental habit.
 - Through repetition and practice, compassion slowly expands.
5. **Introspect**
- In the evening, you can review your performance that day with respect to your chosen theme. When you fall short—and you will—take note of it and keep trying. For most of us, such a great quality as compassion requires a lifetime of practice. There will be many setbacks. This is natural.
 - Do not allow your ego to slow your progress by denying mistakes and blaming others. Instead, humbly accept your limitations as part of the human condition. This will help you be more compassionate with yourself as well as others.
6. **Mastery**
- After many years of daily study and practice, compassion slowly takes hold, eventually becoming a habit. It guides all of your thoughts, feelings, and actions.
 - As compassion slowly expands, it surrounds, feeds, permeates, and saturates every aspect of your being. In the end, you become compassion itself.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Contemplation is spiritual study. We read, affirm, and integrate wisdom pearls from spiritual books and sacred texts. The goal is cultivation of spiritual qualities for healing, pain management, and spiritual evolution.

- Through contemplative practice, we convert the great ideas and healing qualities embedded in wisdom texts from shallow words in our heads to real vibrations that permeate consciousness and action.
- When we do this work, we change the way we think. We reprogram and rewire our brain. We move from the pain story to the healing story.
- We do not need a Higher Power or a religion to practice the contemplation of wisdom. All we need is some quiet time and our favorite wisdom, which can come from any source, secular or spiritual.
- Affirmations of love, compassion, understanding, and kindness are healing vibrations that go to our cells and to the cells of other people.
- The contemplation of wisdom is in the hall of fame of cognitive-behavioral and spiritual practices. It converts such great qualities as compassion or any other healing quality or idea from the surface superficiality of mere words to feeling, experience, and action.
- It is good to have a positive thought in your mind. It is even better to let it drop down to the center of your being, permeate your entire consciousness, and become a part of who you are. Wisdom thoughts are faithful guides and protectors when they become one's constant companions.

EXERCISES

1. What is the difference between ordinary reading and contemplative study?
2. You do not need a Higher Power or a religion to practice the contemplation of wisdom. All you need is some quiet time and your favorite positive thoughts, which can come from any source. Some people get their wisdom from spiritual writings or church. Others find it in secular work and the community. Others get it from their family, relationships, their conscience, or the image of God or Buddha within. Some have street smarts. Where do you get your wisdom?
3. Describe the six steps for contemplating wisdom.
4. What healing quality would you like to develop? Choose a reading that reflects that quality. Follow the six steps for contemplating wisdom.
5. Fill your brain with wisdom.
 - Outer worship in church, synagogue, or mosque points us in the direction of the healing qualities and higher consciousness we want but the actual change must occur inside the body temple. As stated by Mohammed, one hour of contemplation is greater than sixty years of formal worship.
 - Before and after your morning meditation, read from a sacred or spiritual text.
 - Take a thought from that text and use it as your affirmation for the day
 - Choose a concept that inspires you to become more than you are, a direction you would like to take, a quality you want to expand.
 - You might review *Healing Power: One Hundred Days of Love*. Here you will find a host of wisdom pearls related to one hundred healing qualities adding up to love. You might like these pearls just as they are. If not, refine them to make them better or create your own.
 - Drop your wisdom pearl into the center of your consciousness. Feel its healing vibrations throughout your system. Send those healing vibrations to others and the surrounding space.

- During the day, whenever you are not focused on a task, bring in your affirmation. This will help keep your vibration spiritualized. Your mind will be positive, calm, strong, focused, and resilient. You will be ready to help, learn, and enjoy. You will be ready for anything.
 - Affirm and reaffirm your favorite pearls and qualities. Fill your brain with wisdom in the morning. It will set the tone for the rest of the day.
6. Sitting with a saint
- The words of the Great Ones carry their vibrations. Contemplate their words. They will vibrate you to their presence.
 - Focus at the spiritual eye.
 - Visualize your favorite saint, sage, guru, teacher, or master: Buddha, Krishna, Christ, St. Francis, St. Theresa, Rumi, other.
 - Invoke the presence of your saint with a quality or affirmation: Buddha's compassion, Krishna's even-mindedness, or Christ's love.
 - Open your heart to their wisdom and feeling.
 - Realize you are moving in that direction through the power of your love and devotion.
 - You will gradually absorb the qualities of your saint.
 - You might also try visualizing your favorite affirmations, quality, pearl, or any aspect of God that arouses your devotion: light, peace, harmony, Divine Mother's forgiveness, Divine Father's wisdom, The Teacher, Guide, Protector, Confidante, Great Physician, spiritual warrior's courage, and more. Slowly, you will absorb that aspect.
7. When you are alone and suffering, remember this: healing qualities—which are already inside of you—are more powerful than painful problems. We can make them grow by practicing contemplation. Find one of your favorite wisdom books, read a meaningful passage, and sit with it for a few minutes. Then focus on one thought and the healing quality it reflects. Place that thought and healing quality at the center of your consciousness, and let it spread to every atom and fiber of your being and surrounding space. Notice how your slowly increasing love, peace, compassion, courage, and strength gradually contain reduce, or eliminate your pain and guide you through what is left.
8. What is realization of wisdom?
9. Why is introspection necessary for realizing wisdom?
10. It takes time to cultivate the true compassion of a master, or to develop any of the wonderful healing qualities in the spiritual alphabet. Be patient and humble—your growth will slow down if you make the mistake of thinking you have already mastered the qualities. Acknowledge your limitations. With consistent daily practice, the qualities slowly grow until they become the unconditional, spontaneous, and automatic habits of a sage.

MEMORABLE QUOTES FROM STUDENTS IN CLASS

- At first I wanted to set the abuser on fire. Then I realized I was a slave to him inside. I realized he is sick and that I couldn't help him. I began practicing compassion for him, for others who harmed me, and for myself. Compassion is a healing power. It leads to a greater spiritual infusion and sense of freedom.

When I contemplate compassion, I feel safe, secure, and peaceful. Then all I want is good things for him and me. I flipped it through forgiveness.

- I commune with the creator. It takes me into the safety zone.
- I read, sit with, and embed wisdom in my consciousness. I understand a piece of what is way beyond me. I can see what I am putting into place, another stone in my foundation. I contemplate a new life.
- I take in knowledge and wisdom and release the bad.
- Each time I read, I see new things. The same paragraph speaks differently the next time.
- The words on the page go to my head as an idea and then to my consciousness as a vibrational shift. It's like plucking a magical invisible string. It literally vibrates. Peace and safety become me.
- Fill your brain with wisdom first thing in the morning and keep it there the rest of the day.
- Omniscient Love permeates the universe. We have a piece of this Wisdom and Love. We can make it grow. Affirm:
 - a. I am a piece of Big Wisdom.
 - b. I am a piece of Big Love.
 - c. I make my piece grow.
 - d. I express it a little bit more each day.
 - e. This is my job, every day, every moment.
- In the next chapter, you will study meditation, the fourth method of the morning and evening program. You will learn how to bring stillness into your program.



CHAPTER 13

MEDITATION

A TECHNIQUE FOR ALL SEASONS

- This chapter introduces the principles of meditation, describes its risks and benefits, and outlines a practice technique. Here you will learn how to replace negative thought with positive thought and positive thought with stillness. When you add stillness to your program, problems are contained, reduced, and eliminated. You become a more skillful pain manager. Your healing qualities grow. You feel better, become a better person, and experience higher states of consciousness.

THE LAST PLACE THEY WILL LOOK

In a Native American parable, the Creator gathers all the animals and says:

*“I want to hide something from humans
until they are ready for it—the realization that they
create their own reality.”*

“Give it to me. I’ll fly it to the Moon,” says the Eagle.

“No, one day soon they will go there and find it.”

“How about the bottom of the ocean?” asks the Salmon.

“No, they will find it there, too.”

“I will bury it in the great plains,” says the Buffalo.

“They will soon dig and find it there.”

“Put it inside them,” says the wise Grandmother Mole.

*“Done,” says the Creator. “It is the last place they
will look.”*

- In our culture, we are encouraged to surround ourselves continuously with stimulating activities. Between work, relationships, recreation, sports, the arts, radio, television, the Internet, magazines, and

newspapers, we have plenty to keep us busy. Most of us have become activity junkies, staying in motion the entire day.

- In response to the barrage of continuous happenings in the outside world, the mind becomes restless and hyperactive, getting no rest except in sleep. We crave peace of mind, but we have distracted ourselves from that tranquility that can only be found in the room of stillness at the core of our beings. Meditation—an ancient technique currently undergoing a revival in popularity—brings such inner peace.
- Right now, there is a place inside of us that is absolutely still and quiet, but our mental restlessness bars us from entering. The hyperactive mind keeps us from even knowing it is there. Meditation is the solution to this problem.
- When you learn how to meditate, you will be able to slow the mind down, replace negative thought with positive thought, and, eventually, get into the room of stillness. The experience of peace in the room of stillness surpasses understanding; there you will find beauty, joy, compassion, light, energy, power, elation, and ecstasy.
- Before introducing the meditation technique, we will review how the mind works when it is in alignment, what happens when it goes out of alignment, and how meditation fixes this problem.

MENTAL HEALTH: THE MIND IN ALIGNMENT

- The mind does its best work when it is positive, calm, focused, strong, and resilient. In this position, it is our best friend. It helps us create, shape meaning, solve problems, accomplish goals, manage pain, and heal. It remains peaceful and poised no matter what the world and body throw at it. It is ready for anything. This is the definition of good mental health.
- Unfortunately, the mind doesn't always work this well. When presented with stressful problems, the mind goes out of control. Instead of helping us manage our problems, it adds untold suffering. Instead of acting as our best friend, it becomes our worst enemy. What happens?

MENTAL DISTRESS: THE MIND OUT OF ALIGNMENT

- All kinds of events impinge on the screen of the mind—events from our inner being, from our bodies, and from the outer world. Some of these events are painful and frightening, harsh, or even brutal; they can be difficult to manage. In response to this barrage of events, the mind becomes restless and hyperactive and, aside from sleep, gets no rest.
- The mind is highly sensitive and reactive. When stressed, it takes off into a great variety of negative states spontaneously and automatically, against our will. Sometimes these negative patterns are quiet, subtle, and difficult to detect. At other times, they create their own bad weather: tornadoes, hurricanes, cyclones, and a variety of noisy storms—all for nothing.
- The mind creates untold and unnecessary fear, insecurity, worry, and doubt. It knots us up like a pretzel, makes us feel terrible, and keeps us from effective action. Like a robber, it steals our peace and replaces it with profound and unnecessary torment and suffering.
- Meditation offers a solution to the dilemma of mental restlessness. It brings us to the room of stillness, where healing qualities such as love, peace, compassion, courage, and strength slowly grow. The mind returns to its position of peace and poise.

FIVE STAGES OF MEDITATION

- There are five stages of meditation, each with a greater degree of stillness. The progression from one stage to the next is dependent on meditating longer and deeper. Although these stages are progressive, they are not mutually exclusive. There is overlap. They are separated here for descriptive purposes only. The stages are:
 - Stage 1: Meditation for the body. The relaxation response.
 - Stage 2: Meditation for the mind. A positive, calm, focused, strong, and resilient mind.
 - Stage 3: Meditation for the soul. No mind; a shift in identity to the soul; an expansion of healing qualities; stillness.
 - Stage 4: Meditation with your Higher Power. Communion, guidance, protection, intuition, prayer, and further expansion of healing qualities.
 - Stage 5: Infinity. A dramatic transformation of consciousness sometimes referred to as liberation or enlightenment; the full blossom of healing qualities.
- As you move through these five stages, there is a natural progression from negative thought to positive thought to stillness to higher states of consciousness.

STILLNESS: THE DOORWAY TO SUPERCONSCIOUSNESS

Negative → Positive → Stillness → Superconsciousness → Infinity

Stage 1: Meditation for the Body

The Relaxation Response

- The non-meditating mind is restless and hyperactive. This is the active state from which we all start. The first step up from this level is meditation for the body.
- When we focus on a single point such as a word, phrase, or the breath, our thought process slows down. The heart, lungs, muscles, brain, and every other organ, tissue, and cell in the body relax. The heart rate, respiratory rate, and blood pressure decrease, as does the rate at which the body burns energy. This profound effect is called the relaxation response, the easiest level of meditation. It can occur in a few minutes.
- The relaxation response is good for health and healing: the trillions of cells in the body get a chance to regenerate, repair, and resist disease. Meditation helps us manage chronic pain, insomnia, high blood pressure, and any condition caused or worsened by stress.
- For some, these health benefits are reason enough to meditate. For others, there are additional motivations such as strengthening the mind with positive thoughts and deeper peace.

Stage 2: Meditation for the Mind

A Positive, Calm, Focused, Strong and Resilient Mind

- In the first stage of meditation, there is no attempt to restructure thinking. There is simply a slowing down of the mind. In stage two, the goal is to slow the mind down further and replace negative with positive thoughts by practicing affirmations or contemplation.

- Positive thoughts and wisdom pearls are particularly effective during and right after meditation; the mind is more receptive at this time. Meditation helps clear the soil of our consciousness of hyperactivity so that we can plant new ideas and suggestions. When we restructure negative or distorted patterns of thought with affirmations and wisdom, we reframe problems in a realistic, positive way.
- You might review the lessons on affirmations and contemplation and practice these techniques when you meditate. The combination of meditation, positive thought, and wisdom pearls results in a strong, positive, calm mind. When the mind is peaceful and positive, it is better able to create success in relationships and activities, deal with painful problems in the school of life, and foster our enjoyment of life.
- For some, the achievement of a positive, strong, calm mind is sufficient motivation to meditate. Others may be interested in the next phase of meditation, discovery of the soul. With longer and deeper meditation, it is possible to bring the mind to a position of complete stillness. This leads to the discovery of the soul and expansion of spiritual qualities.

Stage 3: Meditation for the Soul

No Mind—Stillness

- The goal in stage one is to slow the mind down and relax the body. The goal in stage two is to further slow the mind and replace negative thoughts with positive thoughts and wisdom pearls. The goal in stage three is to proceed with slowing the mind down to complete stillness. We transition from negative to positive thought and from positive thought to stillness.
- Stopping the internal dialogue is referred to in Buddhism as “no mind” or “empty mind.” To bring the mind to complete stillness requires longer and deeper practice.
- The path of progressively greater degrees of stillness in meditation leads ultimately to the soul. The soul is always completely still, no matter what tempest is happening outside. The soul, also known as the witness, is our true identity and the home of all of the spiritual qualities. We can find the soul, the place of perfect peace, inside, through meditation, whether we are in a personal or impersonal relationship with our Higher Power.
- To find the soul in the stillness of meditation is a valuable skill. It not only brings deep peace no matter the external condition, but also reveals our true identity. It is in this stillness that we see our consciousness not completely identified with our body, mind, ego, and the external drama of life. We can see that we are the soul, that we are warm, compassionate, loving, courageous, and strong. It is difficult to get to this state of higher consciousness. It takes years of daily practice.
- On the way to progressively greater degrees of stillness, the mind continues to churn with all kinds of useless thoughts related to our concerns and insecurities. These thoughts come like waves, one after another. We are unable to stop them. However, we can counter them with our mantra, breath, prayer, affirmations, and visualizations. We can replace negative thoughts with positive thoughts. In addition, we can watch thoughts come and go from the witness, the place of stillness inside.
- To reach the soul, we need to stop identifying with our thoughts as though they are the ultimate judge of reality. We must reduce the power of our thoughts so that we can give control of our consciousness

back to the soul. We can do this in meditation by watching our train of thoughts without getting aboard the train. The mind will go on and on indefinitely, even after we start meditating. However, rather than being swept along with the movement on the train of thought, we can simply watch it go by, noting that thoughts are merely thoughts. They are not the whole of reality. They are not who we are. They are not in control of our lives. In this way, we can reduce their importance, their charge, and their ruling power.

- As meditation proceeds and the mind quiets, we have a chance to step back from the drama of life and view the story as if it were a movie or a play. We are still actors, but now rather than identify with the characters we play, we become the observer or witness. This detachment gives us a chance to relax in the face of our troubles. We gain perspective and objectivity as we begin to see that we are not our thoughts, ego, problems, or role in the drama. As we step out of the movie-mind and approach the soul, we realize that our ego and problems must be dealt with, but they are not who we are. We are the soul, a composite of the most wonderful qualities.
- If we practice with diligence and discipline, if we persist and refuse to quit, if we give it our best over days, weeks, months, and years, slowly but surely the mind calms and is replaced by stillness. There are progressively greater degrees of quiet resulting in a state of absolute stillness.
- When we enter and delve into this domain of stillness, we arrive at a state where we want to be all the time. Here we find the peace that surpasses understanding, a love that is pure, perfect, and unconditional, and a joy so intense, we call it ecstasy. This is a place of no pain and no problems, where nothing can harm us and nothing can touch us. This is the soul.

No weapon can pierce the soul; no fire can burn it; no water can moisten it; nor can any wind wither it. The soul is uncleavable; it cannot be burnt or wetted or dried. The soul is immutable, all-permeating, ever-calm, and immovable—eternally the same.

The Bhagavad Gita: Chapter II: verses 23–24. pp. 221–223, Paramahansa Yogananda

- When we stop the waves of activity from the world, body, senses, and mind and sit in the stillness and spaciousness of deep meditation, we absorb strength, courage, compassion, and wisdom. We become who we really are: compassionate, loving, serviceful human beings, capable of managing any problem or pain in the school of life. We enjoy the show in the theatre of life. We are ready for anything, including meditation at the next level, communion with our Higher Power.

Stage 4: Meditation with Our Higher Power

Receptivity and Attunement

- There is an Omniscient, Omnipotent, Omnipresent Power in us, surrounding us, and extending outward and endlessly in every direction. By making contact with this power in meditation, we can get help for ourselves, others, and the world. We can get guidance, healing, advancement in the development of any spiritual quality, and help with any pain or problem.
- Meditation is an ideal time for communion with our Higher Power; stillness promotes receptivity and attunement. For those who have a personal relationship with their God, this is a good time to pray, talk,

share, listen, and feel. When the mind and body are still, we can send and receive with more clarity than when the mind is restless.

Stage 5: Infinity

Deep, Vast, Still, and Changeless

- This stage is reserved for highly evolved souls: saints, sages, gurus, and masters. After many years of deep and long meditation, prayer, and service to humanity, there can be a dramatic transformation in consciousness, sometimes referred to as liberation or enlightenment. This experience is like entering an infinite ocean of Spirit.
- Think of life as an ocean. On the surface of the ocean are waves. At times, the surface is calm. Other times, the waves are variously choppy, turbulent, stormy, or dangerous. Beneath the surface, the ocean is deep, vast, still, ubiquitous, and immutable. Consider the deep part of the ocean as a vast repository of healing qualities and higher states of consciousness.
- Now think of the waves as change in life and the underlying ocean as that part of life that is changeless. In ordinary consciousness, we bob about on the surface of the ocean, riding the waves of change. Our awareness remains tethered to the changing waves at the surface by our restless mind, volatile emotions, excessive material desires, the body, hyperactivity, and egotism [see *Healing Power: Ten Steps to Pain Management and Spiritual Evolution Revised* (2010), Step 5, Tools Become Barriers, pp. 56-66].
- When we relinquish our mind and ego and reach absolute stillness, our consciousness can slip beneath the changing surface waves of the ocean and merge into the depths of the vast Changeless One below. This results in a magnificent shift in consciousness from limitation, division, and impermanence to unity, infinity, and eternity. In advanced yoga meditation, this is called *samadhi*. Here there is absolute safety and protection from the problems of the body and the problems of the world.
- Entry tickets to this realm of superconsciousness are reserved for those who have achieved a high degree of spiritual evolution and ego reduction. In this stage, the advanced meditator bathes in an infinite ocean of peace, joy, love, power, wisdom, and other spiritual qualities. Some get to travel. The vehicle for travel in this neighborhood is fearlessness. The fuel is love. The destination is other worlds.
- Those who enter the greater world of Spirit return to the surface world of duality to share with us what they have found, not with words so much as through acts of gentle, humble service. They are able to manifest and express their soul qualities under all conditions. With calm and strong minds, powerful love, durable faith, and courage, they are ready for anything.
- The love of such an advanced soul is palpable and tangible. If we are receptive, we can receive and feel their loving power through attunement. Many students try to spend too much time with such masters in order to receive their power, but the true spiritual adept will direct the student to practices that will allow them to gain these spiritual qualities for themselves. Meditation is one such method, a power tool of the ages and of great importance to our work in cultivating peace, love, joy, power, and wisdom.

RISKS

- Now that you have reviewed the benefits of meditation and before you begin your practice, please review the following statement about risks.

- Meditation is not without risks. Some people become frightened rather than relaxed. Old wounds can be stirred up. You might experience a flood of emotional or mental anguish.
- Some find meditation useful in working through such periods of agitation or crisis. Others cannot meditate when in crisis but can meditate later when they feel better. Some should not meditate under any conditions.
- If your meditation causes a frightening increase in inner turmoil or symptoms, stop temporarily and consult with an expert in mental health and meditation.
- Presented below is one of many approaches to meditation. You can explore this or other methods until you find what works best for you. It may be of great value to have a teacher of meditation.

MEDITATION TECHNIQUE

DEEP HEALING IN THE ROOM OF STILLNESS

- You are a house with many rooms. One of the rooms is the room of stillness. It is completely still no matter what is happening outside. It has the greatest concentration of healing power, healing qualities, and higher states of consciousness: the peace that surpasses understanding, pure unconditional love, intuitive wisdom, and ecstatic joy. It is always there inviting us to enter.
- The goal of meditation is to enter the room of stillness to experience the deep healing that occurs only there. But most of us don't know it is there. We are too busy spending our time in the outer world seeking the little peace, love, and joy we can get from our people, activities, things, and events. However, the Big Peace, Love, and Joy we crave can only be found inside, in the room of stillness. To take advantage of the deep healing available only in stillness, we need to learn how to meditate.
- In meditation, we learn how to reduce and finally stop our thoughts, feelings, and desires. This leads to progressively greater degrees of stillness. In stillness, our restlessness, problems, habits, compulsions, attachments, and ego slowly burn up and are replaced by healing power, healing qualities, and super-conscious experience. This is the greatness of meditation.
- In the room of stillness, we reach the deep healing power of the spiritual qualities, which slowly and subtly overpower our ego and our problems. In the stillness of deep meditation, love burns up hate, kindness dissolves cruelty, courage defeats fear, and hope replaces despair. When we come out of meditation, the priceless gems of love, kindness, courage, and hope permeate our thoughts, feelings, and actions. With renewed strength and courage, we are in a better position to manage the harsh realities of life and can help others do the same. Stillness provides the opportunity for deepest healing.
- When we are swarmed with problems, it is hard to believe that a room of stillness loaded with expansive healing power is in us. But it is. Go to the quiet room inside. Here there are no problems, just healing qualities.
- Stillness is the missing element in almost everybody's life. Are you ready to do some work? Following is a twelve-step technique designed to help you enter the room of stillness.

MEDITATION TECHNIQUE

1. Sacred Space
2. Cast aside all problems
3. Posture
4. Spiritual eye
5. 20 20 20 breathing
6. Tense and Relax
7. Prayer, Affirmation, Visualization
8. Breath or mantra
9. Stillness and expansion
10. Prayer
11. Action
12. Repeat

1. Sacred Space

- Go to a quiet place in your home. Try to return to the same place each time. This is your sacred space. You might want to build an altar. Turn off the phone and all other distractions so you can remain undisturbed for the duration of your meditation.

2. Cast Aside All Problems

- For the period of this meditation, use your will power to cast aside all worldly thoughts, problems, cares, and concerns. Meditation is a time for stillness and expansion. You can work on your problems later. They will be there when you finish your meditation. Take the whole drama—your people, issues, and problems—and leave it in a bundle at the door.

3. Posture

- Posture is important. Get comfortable, symmetrical, and balanced. Sit with a straight spine and chin parallel to the floor. This helps move energy or *prana* upwards from the lower to the higher centers in the spine and brain where you can experience higher states of consciousness.

4. Spiritual Eye

- Close your eyes and gently lift your gaze to the point just above and between the eyebrows. This is the third eye or spiritual eye, the gate to higher consciousness and intuitive guidance. With all of your will power and concentration, bring your mind, consciousness, and energy to the spiritual eye. Leave nothing behind. Practice with intensity but without tension. Check your gaze every so often to see if it is still there. If not, gently bring it back. Feel yourself centered here. This third eye training will expand your consciousness to higher states.

5. 20 20 20 Breathing

- Inhale to the count of twenty, hold at the top of inspiration for twenty, and exhale to the count of twenty. Repeat this six to twenty times. You can change the count from twenty to any comfortable

number such as eight, ten, twelve, and so forth. Do the count at a pace comfortable for you. 20 20 breathing is itself a tremendous technique as it slows down the breath, which in turn slows the mind and body.

6. Tense and Relax

- Inhale, hold your breath at the top of inhalation, and while you hold your breath, gently tense the whole body for three seconds. Then exhale and relax. Do this four to six times. Inhale, gently tense, exhale, relax. Inhale, gently tense, exhale, relax. Feel all the tension leave your body. Relax the body completely. Feel the peace.

7. Prayer, Affirmation or Visualization

- Choose a prayer, affirmation, or visualization that fits your belief system and the need you have at this time.

8. Breath or Mantra

- The purpose of this step is to cultivate one pointed calm, continuous concentration, a must for stillness and expansion. You can do this by focusing on your breath or mantra.
- Focus on the breath: Breathe naturally. Watch the breath flow in and out without trying to control it. When the mind wanders, bring it back to the breath. Enjoy the interval of peace between the breaths. Concentrate on the breath and the peace that comes.
- Focus on a mantra: A mantra is a word or phrase consistent with your belief system: Om, shalom, love, peace, harmony, Our Father Who Art in Heaven, and so forth. Repeat the mantra silently. Keep your concentration exclusively on the mantra. As soon as you notice the mind wandering, gently bring it back to the mantra.
- Intensity: The best practice position is one pointed calm concentration. Bring all of your attention and concentration to your point of focus. Be intense but completely relaxed. We can't get to higher states of consciousness when we are tense. The correct position is calm concentration without tension.
- The yoyo effect: When the mind wanders, and it will for years, gently bring it back to your breath or mantra. This going back and forth movement between the wandering mind and the mantra or breath is called the yoyo effect. It is the natural process of meditation. The yoyo effect is prominent and can last a long time. However, if you persist in your practice of meditation, you will notice a progressive slowing down of the yoyo. As the yoyo slows, stillness increases until stillness is all there is.

9. Stillness and Expansion

- Now, forget the breath or mantra and let your body breathe naturally by itself.
- Keep your body still. Don't move a muscle. Absolute physical stillness helps us get to inner stillness. When you think you need to move, remain still for two more minutes. That is the way to build progressively more stillness into your program.
- Learn dispassion for the body. There will be some discomfort. Remain still as long as you can. Rise above temperature. If it's too hot or cold and you can change it, go ahead. If you can't, rise above it.
- Relax, be patient, and don't strain. You can't force your way into the room of stillness. Just show up, be there, and be aware.

- The ever-increasing stillness bred of meditation brings the body and mind to a state of deep peace, rest, and relaxation. When you stop the superficial waves of thought and are immersed in stillness, relax and feel the peace. Don't think. In this state of open, quiet receptivity and stillness,
 1. *Healing qualities grow*
 2. *The ego shrinks*
 3. *Problems burn up*
- Stillness itself is a lofty state but it is a springboard to even higher states of consciousness. In stillness, healing qualities expand and eventually transform into superconscious peace, pure unconditional love, and ecstatic joy. This is the Big Space, the land of Higher Power and Higher Consciousness, sometimes referred to as nirvana, bliss, or God. This pure consciousness expands to infinity.
- It takes time to cultivate stillness. Don't feel bad if you don't achieve this right away. In the beginning, the mind remains restless despite our practice. We keep thinking about our story and our problems. We've got things to do and people to see. It all seems so important.
- No matter how domineering your mind-drama, just practice a little bit each day. You will see the mind progressively slow down. The more you practice, the further you go, the stiller and quieter you get. You can do this. Just keep going. Eventually you enter the room of stillness.
- As you enter the room of stillness, don't think. Just relax, feel, and absorb the profound healing vibrations of peace, love, compassion, forgiveness, understanding, courage, strength, patience, kindness, sweetness, and wisdom.
- As you focus on these healing qualities, they slowly expand and permeate your body, mind, soul, heart, brain, spinal column, spiritual eye, every cell and fiber of your being, and surrounding space.

10. Prayer

- Toward the end of your meditation, you can commune with your Higher Power, seeking guidance, protection, or healing for yourself and others. You can close your meditation with a prayer for all who need help as well as for harmony and peace between all individuals, nations, races, and religions.

11. Action

- Do not stand immediately when you are finished. Continue to sit quietly, enjoying the peace that occurs from slowing down your mind. Then open your eyes and sit for another moment before rising. You are now prepared to give the benefits that you have gained from meditation to all who need your help.
- Allow the expanded peace, love, joy, power, and wisdom cultivated in meditation to permeate every thought, feeling, desire, decision, action, surrounding space, and other people. Give these qualities to your loved ones and all whom you meet.

12. Repeat

- Repeat this process once or twice a day or more. If meditation is intimidating, start one minute twice a day and increase slowly from there. As with any training, the more you practice, the better you will get.

ADDITIONAL TIPS

Regularity

- The key to success in meditation is regularity. Mastery is achieved through practice, as with any discipline or art. Think of playing the piano or any instrument. Without practice, there can be no progress.
- Meditate for ten to twenty minutes in the morning and evening. If this is too long, meditate for even one minute at a time. You can gradually extend this as motivation and time allow.
- The amount of time spent in meditation can vary depending on your level of responsibilities to family and work and on your desire to go inward. Some will meditate on a regular basis. Others will meditate whenever it feels right or fits into their schedule. Best results occur with regular, long, deep meditation. Advanced practice can be one to two hours, twice a day. Longer meditations of three to ten hours are reserved for special occasions or retreats.
- You can increase your time in meditation slowly according to your desires and needs. More is better. Build up to thirty to forty-five minutes twice a day. Make it a regular part of your schedule. However, your schedule may vary. On a busy day, you may only have five minutes. The next day you may have thirty or sixty minutes. Do what you can. Have at least a short meditation daily.

Depth

- In the vast stillness of the ocean beneath the surface waves of activity, there is an unlimited supply of healing power. This is the best place to absorb love and her associated healing qualities. First get your meditation on a regular schedule. Then meditate longer and deeper. There is no limit to how long you can practice. The more sweetener, the sweeter it is. Our problem is we don't go deep enough. Make every moment count. Go deep and then go deeper.

Brief Meditation

- You can meditate for a few minutes any time of day. Once meditation is part of your daily routine, try meditating briefly wherever you may be. Tense the whole body for a few seconds and relax your muscles. This releases physical tension. Breathe slowly and deeply, then focus on your mantra or breath for a few minutes.

What to Expect

- There are three common experiences in meditation:
 1. **Work.** It felt like a lot of work, and nothing special happened.
 2. **Pain.** It was difficult and maybe even painful. The most common difficulties are restlessness, boredom, and frustration with the rebellious mind that will not quit thinking about everything. There may be physical or psychological discomfort. Many are afraid to look inward for fear of what they might discover.
 3. **Higher Consciousness.** We experience stillness, peace, beauty, joy, love, compassion, light, energy, power, elation, or ecstasy. Often, however, these results are subtle. If we look for a big experience, we may miss the more refined changes in our vibration or consciousness. We want elation all of the

time, but this is not possible. In order to get to the higher states, it is best to have no expectations, anticipating some of the meditations to be work, slightly difficult or painful, or nothing special.

Results Are Slow, Cumulative, and Lifelong

- Think of the results of a meditative practice as a lifelong process of ever-increasing relaxation of the body, peace of mind, and opening of the heart. Do not worry about your progress, expertise, or whether or not you had a good meditation. Just practice.
- In the beginning, you may not feel anything special. Although some may feel results immediately, for most, it is likely to be difficult at first. Do not be discouraged. This is usual. Since the benefits emerge slowly, patience is helpful.
- As with all spiritual practices, effort is progress. If you are meditating, you are making progress. You will succeed if you let the process unfold on its own schedule, have no expectations, and make no demands. If you persist, it gets easier. In the beginning, you may not want to sit. Later, you will not want to get up.

Inspiration

- While meditating, give yourself a pep talk. Remind yourself why you are doing this. “This is good for my physical health. This is good for my mental health. This is good for my spiritual health. This is good for my relationships. In meditation, the ego shrinks so the higher self and Higher Power can get in. This is free therapy. Deep healing in the room of stillness, nothing is better.”

Patience

- In meditation, we want to take advantage of the deep healing available only in stillness. But our restless, problem-focused, desire-plagued, matter-addicted mind will not stop and get out of the way. Thoughts keep coming. The mind races. It hops around like a bunny. Like a pinball machine, thoughts bounce off each other. It's chaos up there. For most of us, building the new brain groove for stillness takes years of patient daily practice. Be patient and persevere. Keep going. Every time you meditate, the brain groove for stillness gets a little bigger.

Command the Mind

- To clear the zone, at the start or anytime during your meditation, if your mind won't quit, give it a command: “Stop, wait, be still, feel the peace.” With maximum intensity yet calmly and firmly, will the mind to stop. Keep doing this. It works. Your mind will respond to your command as you get stronger.

Group

- We all need spiritual bodyguards. Meditate in groups. Group meditation enhances your individual meditation. Your individual meditation helps the group meditation.

Service

- Meditation and service—another hall of fame power couple. In meditation, we expand love and her associated healing qualities. In stillness, the qualities permeate all of our thoughts, feelings, and desires. When we come out of meditation, the qualities guide our choices and actions. We share the qualities with all whom we meet. This is love in action or service.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Everything that happens to us passes through the mind. The mind is like a receiving station that gets messages from the outside world, our bodies, and our inner being. The mind cannot avoid the pictures coming at it from the outside world. It is as though there is a movie going on that won't quit. The mind is also subject to the messages of the body and our inner being, messages that convey cold, heat, hunger, fatigue, pain, fear, anger, and sadness, to name a few. Most of what is coming at us from both the outside and inside is beyond our control, but we can control how we respond mentally. The mind can make the problem worse by following one of its negative habit patterns, or it can contain, reduce, and sometimes completely eliminate the problem. In meditation, we can restructure the mind's habitual negative responses into positive healing qualities. With meditation, we experience ever-increasing peace of mind. There is a progressive ability to stay calm no matter what the world or body throws at us. The mind is peaceful and poised, ready for anything.
- The mind has great negative and positive power. It can lock us up in our own body-prison or liberate us into higher states of consciousness. You can remain a prisoner of your own mental restlessness, or you can use your mind to heal, manage your pain, and cultivate ever-increasing peace, joy, love, power, and wisdom.
- We gain access to a reservoir of untapped healing power by focusing the mind where we want it to be rather than letting it have its way with us.
- Stillness is key. Stillness expands healing qualities such as compassion, love, understanding, courage, strength, and patience. Then we can use these qualities to more skillfully manage our painful problems in the school of life.
- In meditation, healing qualities such as patience, kindness, and compassion grow. We feel better and become better people.
- We can more gracefully give love, compassion, and understanding when the mind is calm than when it is restless and hyperactive.
- In meditation, there is a natural progression from negative thought to positive thought to stillness to higher states of consciousness. You might want to reserve defining the nature of your Higher Power until you experience higher states of consciousness. Premature discussion or formulation might be an intellectual exercise without the benefit of experiential data.
- Positive thought is good, but the peace experienced in the room of stillness is even better; there is no thought—only stillness, silence, spaciousness, and serenity.
- The room of stillness is not just an idea—it is a place, an experience. This advanced stage is difficult to achieve. It takes years of long and deep meditation. With practice, you can get into the room of stillness. At mastery, you can stay there.

- When we get comfortable with the contemplative practices of the great traditions such as meditation, we learn to treasure our connection to the silence and stillness within. As we advance in healing, we balance our active outer life with an inner life of tranquility. The benefits of adding the dimension of stillness to our healing program are profound.
- When all is said and done, spiritual work is about stillness and expansion of healing qualities to higher states of consciousness expressed as gentle humble service to humanity. Even if we memorize, recite, and understand the greatest scripture and sacred texts, we won't have achieved the goal. All of that good stuff is to stimulate us to do the work of stillness to higher states.
- There are two forms of meditation: 1. Concentration: We bring the mind to a single point. When it wanders, we bring it back to that point of focus. We pay no attention to thought content. 2. Mindfulness: We let the mind wander and instead of focusing it right away, we see where it goes. We focus on breath but then look for the messages from the body, feelings, thoughts. Where did I go and where am I? The ultimate goal is the same: stillness and higher states of consciousness.
- Meditation works. We don't have to understand all of the theory for it to work. Just follow the instructions and the technique will do the work for you. It will take you inside, to stillness and healing.
- In the stillness of deep meditation, the ego is reduced, problems dissolve, and love expands. This speeds up our evolution.
- Meditation breeds harmony for our entire being: body, mind, and soul.
- Meditation is training in concentration and attention. This is good for learning and loving.
- Build stillness into your program. This is peace of mind. It helps everything.
- The more you meditate, the more you want to meditate. In the beginning we do not want to sit. Later, we don't want to get up. Then we know we are making progress.
- The greatest experience is in meditation but you must work for it. Results are slow and cumulative.
- In higher states, there is more space to receive the problems of life. The drama is progressively less important. It doesn't mean you don't care or do your work. Things are still important but less so.
- In meditation, we cultivate the silent witness, that part of us that is not our body or mind but pure consciousness, pure energy, pure awareness. You must stop your mind to get there.
- There is no security in this world. Security can only be found inside through meditation.
- Love, service, and meditation: this simple formula is all you need.

MEMORABLE QUOTES FROM STUDENTS IN CLASS

- Meditation will help you with everything.
- Meditation is an honest keeper. It tricks your body into a luxury state by getting rid of all the craziness.
- Inner silence is the greatest teacher.
- When we're in pain, meditation—rather than self-medication—is one of the most loving things we can do for ourselves. With breathwork and calm quiet reflection, we can illuminate a path that will take us through and beyond our pain. We can do this alone or with others.

- Riding the pain waves propels us towards the room of stillness where we find peace and ecstasy. This can be addicting. It is like a drug high at no charge and without side effects.
- The mind is like a puppy dog at first. You tell it to stay but it won't. Later, with practice and the development of the necessary brain grooves, it will sit and stay when commanded to do so. The mind takes orders but you have to practice.
- Shut out the world and commune with the person inside.
- I connect with my Higher Power. I see that God exists within me.
- In the room of stillness, there are no thoughts, only healing qualities. That's why I like to spend time there. It's free therapy.
- When you stop the mind, the whole package relaxes.
- Meditation: the heart of the matter.

AFFIRMATIONS

- In meditation, I still my wandering mind and eliminate all thoughts.
- In the stillness of meditation, I discover the deep, permanent peace that has been with me all along.
- In meditation, soul qualities replace my ego. I become strong, calm, understanding, and patient.
- In the room of stillness, I feel absolute safety and protection.
- The deepest healing is in the room of stillness.
- In the room of stillness, I commune with my Higher Power. I speak to my God with devotion. The still, small, loving voice within shows me the way.
- Stillness, silence, spaciousness, serenity.

EXERCISES

1. Describe the five stages of meditation.
2. Practice progressive muscle relaxation before meditation. This relaxes the body, making meditation easier.
3. Review and practice the meditation technique described in this chapter.
4. The key to success in meditation is regular practice, just as with playing a musical instrument. Without regularity, you will still be a beginner in twenty years. Occasional practice does not work. We need to practice in the morning and the evening. Develop the habit of meditation for ten to twenty minutes at the beginning and end of your day. If this is too long, start with one to two minutes. Expand from there in small increments. The results are cumulative, slow but sure. The more you practice, the more you feel the effects. There may be phenomenal experiences at first, but meditation is not just joy. It is work.
5. One of the keys to success in meditation is balancing concentration with relaxation. Bring your power of concentration to your mantra and relax your body and mind at the same time. Intense concentration does not require strain. The correct position is calm concentration without tension. Never strain during your practice. When you strain, you lose the goal of meditation, which is peace. When you learn how to do this, you will become progressively more awake, alert, aware, and calm.

6. This exercise defines the difference between self-knowledge born of introspection and meditation:
 - Many have a habit of thinking about their problems during meditation. This is very seductive; we think we are doing good work by facing our issues and working on them. To a degree, this is true. It is a good idea to set aside some time to reflect and learn from our experiences. The description of how to do this is in the lesson on Transformation of Emotion described in Chapter 19, page 243, of this workbook. This is self-knowledge born of introspection, not meditation. The purpose of meditation is stillness through concentration.
 - Thinking about problems is one of the tricks the mind will play on you, as it resists stillness by staying active. Your problems are important and require work and thought, but not in meditation. What is important during meditation is getting beneath the thought waves on the surface and into the stillness below, for absorption of healing qualities. In order to do this, you have to free your mind of all thoughts, including those related to problem solving. Whenever you become aware that you are thinking, return to your mantra. It is through concentrating on your mantra that you can attain stillness.
 - When you try to focus on your mantra and find your mind keeps going to a problem, you may have to switch gears to Transformation of Emotion. See Meditation and Transformation of Emotion, page 252, in this workbook.
 - When you finish working on your problem, return to Step 9 of the technique of meditation: stillness and expansion. When you stop the superficial waves of thought and are immersed in stillness, relax and feel the peace. Don't think. In this state of open, quiet receptivity and stillness, spiritual qualities grow, the ego shrinks, and problems burn up.
 - In the room of stillness, we reach the deep healing power of the spiritual qualities. It is here, in stillness, that we slowly and subtly replace our problems with spiritual qualities. Spiritual qualities are healing powers. They have more power than our problems. In the stillness of meditation, love burns up hate, kindness dissolves cruelty, courage defeats fear, and hope replaces despair. When we come out of meditation, the priceless gems of love, kindness, courage, and hope radiate their light through our thoughts, speech, and actions.
 - Bring deeper and longer meditation into your daily practice to speed up the evolution of your healing and recovery. The mind, every cell in the body, and the soul crave the serenity bred of deep meditation.
7. Describe how meditation reduces problems, shrinks the ego, and expands healing qualities.
8. When stressed, your mind can be your best friend or your worst enemy. When you are having problems, notice if your mind stays positive and poised or if it goes into one of its negative habit patterns and adds to your trouble. Try meditation for a few months and see if this makes a difference.
9. There are two outcomes you can follow from your meditation practice: First, how far in or deep did you go in meditation? Second, when you come out of meditation, how well are you able to manifest the quality you are cultivating—for example, even-mindedness under all conditions or compassion for all of humanity?
10. Meditation reduces stress and anxiety. This fact alone is reason enough to meditate. What's more, our overall physical and mental health improves with meditation. Those who go deeper and commit to long-term meditation practice will discover *stillness is the springboard to higher states of consciousness*. You don't need a God or even a theory about the cosmos to explore this terrain. Just go there and see what happens. When you get into the room of stillness, stop, wait, and be patient. Stay there as long as you can.

Does the invisible door of stillness open? Did you experience expansion, ecstasy, light, or some other aspect? Later, you can develop your theory or concept based on what happens to you in stillness. For many, it is the higher states of consciousness described throughout this book. What would it be for you?

11. Consider finding a meditation teacher and group. Group meditation reinforces individual effort and experience.

EXERCISES FOR THE ROOM OF STILLNESS

- Following are some additional exercises we can do in the room of stillness.
 1. Expand healing qualities
 2. Eliminate problems
 3. Realize the core drive
 4. Explore our relationship with God
 5. Plant wisdom pearls
 6. Negative → Positive → Stillness → Superconsciousness → Infinity
 7. Problem solving after meditation
- 1. **Expand Healing Qualities**
 - The room of stillness is loaded with healing qualities.
 - Go there, absorb the qualities, and send the qualities to all the rooms in your house.
 - Permeate all your thoughts, feelings, and actions with the qualities until the entire house and surrounding space is filled with these qualities.
 - Share the qualities with all whom you meet.
- 2. **Eliminate Problems**
 - When we meditate in the beginning, we reduce the significance of our problems. In advanced meditation, there are no problems. Here is how this works:
 - In meditation, our thoughts, feelings, and desires progressively slow down. There is less reactivity, more space, and more perspective. Our problems remain but they are not as significant.
 - In advanced meditation, in stillness, there are no thoughts, and therefore no problems. How can you have a problem when you are not thinking?
 - With this new perspective, we see the mind as the carrier of our story but not only that. We see how much trouble the mind adds to the story: fear, insecurity, worry, doubt, and more.
 - We have all heard, “It’s all in your mind.” When suffering is deep, this is an insult. We have trauma, addiction, replays, egos, and thinking-feeling habit patterns that won’t quit for years.
 - From the meditative perspective, “It’s all in your mind” reflects a deep hidden truth. When we stop the mind and get into the room of stillness, there is no mind, no story, and no worries, only healing power and healing qualities.
 - When we slow the mind, we reduce the importance of the problem.

- When we stop the mind, we stop the problem.
 - Get out of your mind and into the room of stillness.
 - If you can't stop the mind-story, you may have to practice transformation of emotion. Here we let the story unfold and spiritualize the story. Then you can get into the room of stillness. See exercise 6 above on meditation and self-knowledge, page 161,
3. **Realize the Core Drive**
- We want unlimited peace, love, joy, and safety, more time, and no pain. This is the Core Drive [see p. 51, *Healing Power: Ten Steps to Pain Management and Spiritual Evolution, Revised* (2010)].
 - We try to achieve the Core Drive in the outer world of impermanence, limitation, and suffering but this is impossible. We can achieve a little peace, love, joy, and safety through people, activities, events, and things but any attempt to get more on the physical plane leads to mental restlessness, overly reactive emotions, excessive material desires, attachments, bad habits, addiction, torment, broken lives, and heartbreak.
 - The saints say the unlimited peace, love, joy, and safety we seek is inside, in the room of stillness.
 - Meditate. Enter the room of stillness. Stay there. Wait patiently. Little peace, love, joy, and safety expand to changeless peace, pure love, ecstatic joy, and absolute safety.
4. **Explore Your Relationship with God Through Stillness and Devotion**
- For some, meditation is about the qualities and higher states of consciousness. There is no theology or deity. Others use meditation to explore their relationship with God.
 - In meditation, we can cultivate a deep personal relationship with God. God is already there in Her Omnipresence. We just have to improve our knowing. "Be still and know that I am God."
 - In the room of stillness, practice devotion. Stillness and devotion dissolve the barriers that stand between us and God.
 - a. Stillness: Meditate and bring in as much stillness as you can.
 - b. Devotion: This is an active part of the process. Bring out your love, yearning, and longing. Talk to God in the language of your heart.
 - c. Then stop, wait, relax, open, listen, and feel.
 - d. At some point in this still devotional communion, God reveals Himself as the peace, love, joy, light, power, wisdom, guidance, and safety we crave. What a thrill!
5. **Plant Wisdom Pearls**
- The brain is more plastic, malleable, and receptive during meditation. When we practice affirmations during meditation, we rewire our brain and thinking. We move in the direction of our affirmation. We experience a kind of mental health greater than we have ever known before.
 - a. Meditate. Bring in as much stillness as you can.
 - b. Then read a portion from your favorite sacred text or saint.
 - c. Drop that wisdom pearl in the room of stillness.
 - d. Let your pearl vibrate and spread through your entire being and surrounding space (see Chapter 12, *Contemplation*, page 140).

- Meditation and contemplation are a hall of fame power couple for the ages. They work together for advanced healing like no other.

6. Negative → Positive → Stillness → Superconsciousness → Infinity

- Remember this progression. It summarizes the essence of this work.

Negative → Positive → Stillness → Superconsciousness → Infinity

- When we practice PMQ, we use our painful problems as a stimulant for the cultivation of healing qualities. For advanced healing, we meditate. When we meditate, we add stillness to our program. Stillness is the doorway to higher and unlimited states of consciousness.
 - a. Negative = Painful problems: Healing starts with the identification of any painful problem: physical, mental, emotional, interpersonal, or spiritual.
 - b. Positive = Healing qualities: Match your pain with a healing quality and cultivate that quality in response to your pain by practicing the recommended methods.
 - c. Stillness: Build stillness into your program through meditation.
 - d. Higher states of consciousness: Stillness is the springboard to the superconsciousness experience: the peace that surpasses understanding, pure unconditional love, and ecstatic joy.
 - e. Infinity: There is no end to higher states of consciousness.
- Another way to express this healing equation:

Painful problem + Love + Stillness → Superconsciousness → Infinity

- a. This is like a chemical formula that works every time. It is combustible.
- b. The magical ingredients are stillness and love.
- c. Bring in as much stillness as you can in meditation.
- d. Add your love through devotion. Devotion is expressing your love by speaking to God in the language of your heart.
- e. Now in the room of stillness and love, wait patiently.
- f. Stillness plus love opens the door to higher states of consciousness.
- g. An endless variety of superconscious aspects open up to infinity.

7. Problem Solving After Meditation

- It is not a good idea to work on your problems during meditation as meditation is about stillness.
- It is a good idea to work on your problems after you finish your meditation as the room of stillness is filled with wisdom.
 - a. Bring in as much stillness as you can.
 - b. Bring God in, if you have that.
 - c. Now, look at your problem from all angles. Consider your options and solutions.
 - d. Your best option lies in the still small loving voice within.

- In the next chapter, you will study prayer, the fifth and final method of the morning and evening program.



CHAPTER 14

PRAYER

COMMUNION WITH YOUR HIGHER POWER

- This chapter introduces prayer, the fifth and final technique of the morning and evening program. We will review:
 1. Elements that contribute to the effectiveness of prayer
 2. A six-step technique integrating some of these elements
 3. Prayers that address specific needs
- This chapter has a lot of God talk. If you are not comfortable with God, modify the language to suit your needs. For example, you can replace the word God with Buddha, Tao, Universe, life, higher self, higher consciousness, Higher Power, nature, mystery, and so forth.
- There is a time for joy and a time for struggle. The brutal reality of death, suffering, and the unknown mysteriously loops its way through the show of our lives, making its appearance in a variety of costumes without apparent cause or reason. We do what we can to understand the mystery while we position ourselves in the drama. We work with will, thought, and action to achieve our goals. We use our inner and outer resources to work with and through our problems. Nevertheless, when we have finished our work, we remain vulnerable. Some problems linger. We suffer. We feel isolated, disconnected, and separate.
- To get help, we pray. Prayer is a telephone call to our Higher Power as Friend, Counselor, Guide, Protector, Father, Mother, Beloved, Teacher, Healer, Higher Self, or higher states of consciousness. We seek counsel, support, knowledge, protection, solace, power, understanding, healing, forgiveness, and communion. We try to influence circumstances, conditions, and events in our immediate environment as well as in environments thousands of miles away.
- Although controversy remains, there is scientific evidence that prayer works.
- Following is a description of some elements that may contribute to the effectiveness of prayer:
 1. **Oneness.** There is a unified field of intelligent consciousness, an Omnipotent Power that underlies and unites all. When we invoke this vast healing power, it helps those we are praying for and ourselves. We do not enter this field. We are already in it. It is already in us. There is no separation.

All is one. In prayer, we remind ourselves that this power is inside, outside, everywhere, extending forever in every direction, uniting all things and people.

2. **Humility.** In ego consciousness, we feel separate from the vast healing power in and around us. In fact, were the ego to have its way, we would not even believe in the possibility of getting help from a Higher Power. Furthermore, the ego does not like to admit we have problems. To get help from a Higher Power, we need to identify our problems and know our limitations. This requires ego reduction. When we reduce our ego and accept our powerlessness, we create a channel for the flow of God's healing power. While we do all we can to achieve our goals and solve our problems, we ask for help from Omnipresent Intelligence.
3. **Individuality.** Prayer consistent with our individuality and belief system gives meaning and comfort. We can create our own ritual and pray with our own heartfelt words.
4. **Stillness.** Prayer is most effective when the mind is still. Some methods that promote stillness are meditation, progressive muscle relaxation, breathwork, mindfulness, practicing the presence of God, yoga, and will training. Stillness is essential during prayer, allowing us to make contact with higher, subtle, vibratory realms where we can follow the command, "Be still and know that I am God." By listening to the still, small loving voice within, we can be aware of new thoughts and feelings that come in response to prayer. When still, we are more receptive to help, blessings, and guidance from God.
5. **Concentration.** In prayer, we open a channel of communication between the Omnipresent healing power and ourselves. The channel is most open when we focus exclusively on the perfect healing power of Spirit and the object of our prayer. All other thoughts should be eliminated. When we reach a high degree of concentration, we become one with the object of our prayer. The more we concentrate, the more powerful our prayer.
6. **Visualization.** In visualization, we imagine the desired goal of the prayer. The image should be as clear and specific as possible. For example, we can visualize a white healing light dissolving away disease, flaws, or imperfection.
7. **Devotion.** We can connect to the Omniscient, Omnipresent healing power through love and compassion. Prayer is most effective when it comes from the heart, from our passion, and from our pain.
8. **Will Power.** Will power is an essential element in prayer. Do not give up after one or two tries. Be patient and keep praying with intensity. Help does not come on our schedule.
9. **Faith.** Doubt and disbelief undermine the power of prayer. Faith connects us with the infinite healing power of God and the possibility of getting help.
10. **Awareness.** Remain open and aware. Help comes in many ways, often subtle and different from our expectations. There may be a response through our thoughts, feelings, desires, or actions. We might hear the still, small loving voice within. We may see changes in other people, events, circumstances, or conditions. There may be guidance or protection, arrival of resources, lessons to learn, or an expansion of healing qualities.
11. **Acceptance.** After we pray, we do all we can to solve our problem. Then we accept the outcome and surrender in peace to life as it is. We acknowledge pain and tragedy as part of the natural way of things. We resist the desire of the ego to be ruler of the universe. Rather than trying to control events, we gain an appreciation for the unfolding of the story, no matter which direction it takes.

We must be willing to bask in the mystery, tolerate ambiguity, and face the unknown. We accept on faith that what occurs, including continued struggle, is best.

We align ourselves with what is, acknowledging that God knows what we need more than we do. We surrender to God's will through attunement and receptivity, believing there is meaning and order in the face of mystery and suffering. We trust that the healing power knows what to do. "God is the Doer, not I." "Thy will be done, not mine."

12. **Peace.** While the reasons for the outcome improving, deteriorating, or staying the same may be beyond our understanding, acceptance brings tranquility of the soul. While there is a time for struggle and a time for joy, the ultimate lesson is to transfer the locus of control from outside to inside, where serenity is ever-present. When we completely accept the outcome, we contact our inner stillness and silence. In that quiet place, we accept all outcomes as part of the drama. When we make peace with life, the serenity that is always there begins to emerge. As this peace grows, the soul heals. Surrender takes us deep, to the domain of the soul, where we cannot be touched, hurt, cut, or burned.

TECHNIQUE

1. Invoke
2. Request
3. Act
4. Grace
5. Accept
6. Peace

1. **Invoke.** With humility and reverence, invoke the presence of God. Bring in as much concentration, devotion, and stillness as you can. This sets up a channel of operations for the infinitely intelligent, healing power of God.
2. **Request.** We can ask for:
 - Essential needs such as safety, food, clothing, or shelter
 - Help with work or relationships
 - Healing or purification of body, mind, and soul
 - Healing relationships between individuals, groups, races, religions, and nations
 - World peace
 - Peace of mind
 - To become a better person by growth of any one or a combination of spiritual qualities
 - Forgiveness
 - Receptivity to the help, guidance, and blessing that is always there
 - The presence of God as peace, joy, love, or wisdom
 - Insight about the nature of our problems and ways to work with them

- Help and guidance
 - Answers to our questions
 - Alignment with God's will. In stillness and silence, we pray for the experience of God's presence without asking for anything but His will.
 - Wisdom and strength
 - Prosperity and success
3. **Act.** We use our will, thought, and actions to do what we can to change or remove a condition or circumstance. For illness, we may try medicines, surgery, special diets, or other healing practices. During activity, we can practice mindfulness or the presence of God to stay connected, attuned, and receptive to Her guidance.
 4. **Grace.** There is a partnership between God and us. We do our part by exercising thought, will, and action. We maintain awareness of His healing presence and guidance, and we ask for help. God does Her part. She determines the outcome, and we do our part by accepting it.
 5. **Accept.** Surrender to whatever the results may be. When we do not get what we ask for, we can trust that this is best and look for lessons in our not receiving.
 6. **Peace.** We gain serenity of the soul by accepting the outcome, whatever it may be.

PRAYERS THAT ADDRESS SPECIFIC NEEDS

- Practice the twelve-step universal meditation technique described in Chapter 13, Meditation, page 146, in this workbook.
- If you have some time left, you may have some specific needs you would like to address.
- Bring in as much stillness as you can.
- With your gaze fixed at the spiritual eye, practice the following affirmations and prayers.
- Concentrate deeply on these words. Convert their actual meaning into experience.

BE STILL AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD

- The goal of spirituality is communion with God.
- Communion with God occurs in stillness.
- There is a place inside that is completely still no matter the condition of the world or body. God is in that stillness.
- Stillness is the altar of God.
- Stillness is the key that opens the door to God.
- Stillness provides the environment for us to receive the grace of God.
- God manifests where motion ceases.
- God works on us in stillness. We may not be aware of it as His vibrations are so high (subtle) but in stillness those vibrations change our consciousness.

- In stillness, you will find all of the aspects of God.
- Affirm: Be still and know that I am God.
- In stillness, God reveals Himself on His schedule, through His grace, as peace, joy, love, light, wisdom, beauty, and guidance. We realize His beauty and power.
- When meditation is over, we manifest Her love and wisdom through gentle, humble acts of service to humanity.

GUIDANCE AND INTUITION

- God is Omniscient love, everywhere present, silently watching, guiding, helping, and inspiring. We can contact this power at the third eye, send our message, and receive a response.

Send a Message

- Get into the room of stillness. Focus all of your attention at the third eye. There is an inflowing river of love and wisdom there.
- Ask for guidance.
- What is Your will for me?
- What do You want me to do and not do?
- Where would you have me go?
- What should I say and not say?
- What would you have me read, practice, and learn?
- Is there anything You want me to know?
- Ask the questions you want answered.
- Ask for wisdom.

Receive a Response

- The best guidance is in love and stillness.
- Listen for the still, small loving voice within.
- Recognize the blessing and the help you are getting.
- Be aware of the ego. It will take you for a ride in ordinary consciousness and make you think the guidance is coming from a Higher Order. For more details on intuition and the ego, review Chapter 32, pp. 451–458 in *Healing Power, Ten Steps to Pain Management and Spiritual Evolution: Revised* (2010).

SERVICE

- As I begin this day, I offer my body, mind, and soul in loving service to others.
- I will help as many people as I can.
- To do this work, I ask for a healthy body, calm mind, cheerful attitude, and soul filled with peace, love, joy, power, and wisdom.

- All work is sacred when offered to God in loving service.
- No task is too difficult or menial.
- I give everything as an offering to the Divine.
- I love, serve, and give without expectation of reward. This is the highest service.
- I give, give, give, give, and then give some more.

THE HEALING LIGHT

- In the room of stillness, with all of your attention fixed at the spiritual eye, you can send vibrations of peace and harmony to all people and nations of the world.
- God will direct the healing light to those you pray for. You don't have to guide it. Healing power is infinitely powerful and intelligent. It knows where to go and what to do.
- Immerse yourself in the peace and harmony born of meditation.
- Visualize the peace and harmony as light sent from your spiritual eye to the hearts and souls of friends, family, colleagues, coworkers; social, political, military, and religious leaders; and all people in every city, state, and nation of the world.
- Let these healing vibrations change fear and conflict to understanding and compassion.

A RIVER OF PEACE FLOWS THROUGH YOU

- There is a place inside that is absolutely still at all times no matter what the world or body is doing. This is the true self—the permanent peace of the soul. This is not something we can get from the outside. We can find it within. It is already there.
- Be still and know that I am God (Psalm 46:10). The permanent peace of the soul is in the stillness of deep meditation.
- Feel the stillness within.
- If restless thoughts enter, gently dismiss them and return to the feeling of peace in the room of stillness.
- Enjoy the stillness as you go deeper in silent meditation and affirm:
 - I am in the room of stillness.
 - Peace fills my brain and heart, every cell in my body, and surrounding space.
 - Peace is inside, outside, everywhere.
 - Peace spreads through the vast territory of my mind in every direction to infinity.
 - Infinite peace surrounds my life and every moment of my existence.
 - Peace is the embracing language of God within.
 - The soul connected to Spirit is peace itself.
 - I feel each breath take me closer to soul contact with God.
 - I feel God in me now as peace.

- I absorb myself in the peace of God.
- God breathes immortal peace through me now.
- I let peace surround, feed, permeate, saturate, spread, and expand through every cell, thought, feeling, desire, decision, action, and surrounding space.
- Peace spreads to every city, nation, earth, planets, stars, galaxies, and cosmos.
- I am in the ocean of peace.
- I am peace itself.
- I hold on to the peace I gained from this meditation.
- May your life be filled with the ever-present permanent peace of the soul-Spirit.

EVER-EXPANDING LOVE

- When we meditate, our love grows and purifies. When we come out of meditation, we give this refined love to others.
- Place your attention on your heart and feel the greatest love you ever felt for another person.
- Let that love saturate every cell of your body.
- Now expand that to an encircling sphere embracing family, friends, all people, the earth, solar system, galaxies, and island universes.
- Feel yourself merge with the love that permeates all creation.
- Experience everything in the universe floating in this vast sphere of love.
- Bless us that Your love and soothing peace permeate our consciousness and flow through all of our thoughts, actions, and relationships.

GOD IS LOVE AND SO AM I

- The greatest love we can experience is in communion with God in deep silent meditation.
- It is in stillness that we can know God is love and that we are made in that image.
- Feel the peace born of meditation
- Let that peace permeate your body and mind.
- Enjoy the stillness as you go deeper.
- In stillness and peace, affirm:
 - God is love. I am made in that image. I am love.
 - Everything in the world is bathed in love.
 - I am the cosmic sphere of love which holds all beings, planets, stars, and all creation.
 - I am the love that illuminates the whole universe.
- Love is always waiting for us inside and out. May our life be filled with that love.
- Hold on to the expanded love from this meditation throughout the day and give this love to all whom you meet.

PEACE-LOVE-JOY

- I go within to forget my troubles and feel peace, love, and joy.
- Peace is the inner platform upon which love is built.
- Joy dances on the stage of love.
- Peace first, then love, then joy.

THE TRUE SELF IS THE SOUL CONNECTED TO SPIRIT

- The goal of spiritual life is to discover our true self: the soul-Spirit. This is a place inside of pure consciousness and pure awareness. Here there is no world, body, senses, mind, ego, karma drama, or painful problems. There is no form or story, only the soul tied to God.
- Our current story and identity are temporary. Drop the drama and identify with the true self, the soul tied to God. We are immortal peace, love, joy, power, and wisdom.
- Without meditation, we lose awareness of our true self and get tangled in the ego and the world-body-story. The longer and deeper our meditation, the less we get caught up in tangles.
- Meditate and bring in as much stillness as you can.
- Sit in stillness and enjoy your communion with God as unlimited peace, joy, love, power, wisdom, and light. Remember this is your true nature. Become familiar with this experience. Live in it. Let each breath take you deeper into it.
- Go back to this experience again and again until you know it is your true self. You are not your body. You are not your mind. You are not your story. You are unlimited peace, love, joy, power, wisdom, and light.

GRATITUDE

- The blessing is continuous whether hidden or opened.
- I am thankful for everything at all times, even my pain.
- Pain is a blessing as it helps me grow healing qualities.
- Help me remember Your countless blessings.
- All the power to think, speak, act comes from God.
- I deeply thank You for Your countless blessings, whether hidden or opened.

RECEPTIVITY

- God's presence is continuous. Our receptivity is often lacking. To be more receptive:
 - a. Stop
 - b. Wait
 - c. Listen
 - d. Feel
 - e. Recognize the blessing and the help you are getting.

ACCEPTANCE

- Visualize yourself at the third eye in a state of calm, quiet, patient, waiting.
- Practice the following affirmations:
 - a. Surrender, accept, attune, receive, soft, yield, open, silence, spaciousness, serenity.
 - b. I work the condition, however long or severe, I wait for You Lord, until You appear.

BAD HABITS

- Use the following affirmations as coals to build your fire:
 - a. I can eliminate any bad habit.
 - b. Nothing can stand in my way.
 - c. Nothing can stop me.
 - d. Nothing can shake my resolve.
 - e. My will power grows stronger every day.
 - f. My mind is set.
 - g. I will succeed.
 - h. No matter how many times I fall, I will rise and conquer.
 - i. One by one, I eliminate all bad habits.
 - j. I am not my bad habit. My true self is calm and content.

ELIMINATE NEGATIVITY

- Healing qualities are more powerful than any painful problem.
- As soon as you see a trace of negativity:
 - 1. Stop
 - 2. Breathe
 - 3. Present moment
 - 4. Cultivate love, compassion, kindness, understanding, forgiveness, patience, or any healing quality

A DATE WITH BIG LOVE

- For the period of this meditation, focus on a love quality and renounce everything else: role, work, attachments, worries, karma, restlessness, worldly thoughts, problems, and so forth.
- You have twenty-three hours to work on your stuff but for this one hour, focus on love alone.
- Place all of your will and attention at the spiritual eye.
- Invoke the presence of love and renounce everything else.
- Let love circulate, surround, feed, permeate, saturate, and comfort you.

- Perform this exercise with any quality: compassion, understanding, forgiveness, courage, strength, peace, balance, harmony, and more.

EVEN-MINDEDNESS

- Even-minded under all conditions. What a good idea! But getting there is not so easy. Attachment to outcomes results in a high degree of emotional reactivity.
- We need to watch the movie unaffected. It's a passing show. Don't be overly involved emotionally. We add fuel to the fire when feelings are high.
- Visualize yourself at the spiritual eye remaining even-minded under all conditions.
- Affirm: I watch the Cosmic Movie with calm detachment.

RIGHT ACTIVITY AND MEDITATION

- Combine right activity with meditation. There is great power here.
- Right action: during the day practice positive thought, mindfulness, the presence of God in others, and service to humanity. This breeds peace of mind. Then bring this peace to your meditation.
- Meditation: In meditation, peace grows a little bit more. Then bring your enhanced peace from meditation back to your activities.
- Practice right action and meditation diligently and perfect both. You will see how peace builds and builds.
- Deep inner peace is the goal. Follow these routines day after day. That's how you go deep.
- Eventually you will be able to always stay calm as your energy is inside, still, and not subject to distractions.
- Right activity and meditation: a power couple for the ages.

PERSEVERANCE AND UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

- Unconditional love is my goal. This takes time, lots of time. Results do not come overnight. When tests come, I persist in my quest.
- Even if I get beat and pulverized left and right, I never give in to discouragement. Tests and trials are opportunities for expanding love. I persevere.
- I hold on to the consciousness of unconditional love. I continue my practice no matter what life brings. I go on loving and seeking even if I have a debilitating or fatal illness with terrible pain.
- This is right attitude.

MIND OVER MATTER

- My body takes orders from my mind. Affirm:
 - a. I mentally command my body to be still and relax.

- b. I consciously feel my body relaxing.
- c. Love is greater than pain.
- d. I am love.

YOGA CHAKRAS

- *Prana* is the life force present in the human body.
- We send *prana* down the spine and outward towards the world for daily activities and in and up the spine to the higher centers in the cord and brain for God-communion.
- Following is a technique that will help you first become aware of the energy in your spine and then move that energy from the lower centers, to the heart center, and from there to the higher centers and spiritual eye. This results in a shift from ordinary material consciousness to superconsciousness.
 - a. Sit with a straight spine.
 - b. Bring in as much stillness as you can.
 - c. Chant Aum at each chakra going up and down the spine several times. This brings your awareness to the energy in your spine.
 - d. Now breathe in and imagine your life-force flowing upward from the three lower centers into the heart center. Imagine this and eventually you will feel it. Repeat this several times. Your energy is now focused at the heart center as love.
 - e. Now breathe in and imagine the love from your heart center flowing to the higher centers of the cord and brain ultimately to the spiritual eye.
 - f. At the spiritual eye, affirm: Be still and know that I am God.
 - g. Love and stillness expand to infinity.

DEVOTION

- The purpose of devotion is expansion of love. We bring our little love to God's Big Love, looking to merge.
- Speak to God in the language of your heart.
 - I offer You all the love of my heart.
 - I want only love, nothing else.
 - I love You, Lord, give me Your Love.
 - I want You, Lord, only You.
- Bring enthusiasm, zeal, hunger, intensity, and thirst to your practice.
- Use your will power to cut off any thoughts that pull you back to the world.
- Give your love to God.
- Be still to receive His love.
- When your little love merges with Big Love, love is all there is.
- Love, love, only love.

COMMUNION

- In communion, we join God in stillness. There is no need to talk. There are no words, thoughts, affirmations, or prayer.
- In this sweet communion, the mind is silenced. There are no questions, problems, or needs, only love.
- Do not think. Just feel.
- Receive Her all forgiving compassionate embrace.
- Feel His unfathomable peace
- Feel His ecstatic joy.
- Affirm: It is great to be together in love and stillness. I am so happy to be here!

SHARE

- An anonymous quote: “Early on I had a vending machine version of prayer: money in, chips out. I did a disservice to my relationship with God by asking for petty things I can do for myself. Now I lend more dignity to the relationship. I have a conversation with God.”
- Speak truth to God from the deepest place in your heart.
- Share anything.
- Talk to God about your problems, needs, and desires.
- Ask questions.
- Ask for guidance.
- Pray, affirm, or chant.
- I ask for what I need. I pray for it. I work for it. I leave the details to God.

COMPASSION

- This practice is good for your health and well-being. It gets you out of yourself.
- Think about a good friend. You know your friend suffers from time to time. You don't need to know the specifics of the suffering.
- Visualize your friend's suffering as a dark cloud.
- Inhale: With inhalation, imagine the darkness going to your heart center where compassion resides. In the heart center, compassion transforms darkness to light.
- Exhale: As you exhale, send the compassionate light to your friend. Visualize the light traveling through your whole body and the entire body of your friend.
- Repeat this exercise for yourself, a relative, a neutral person, and an adversary.
- Repeat this exercise for a community of people: Haiti, Egypt, Syria, homeless, impoverished, abused, neglected, starving, war torn, victims of racism, unemployed, refugees, and more. There is no shortage of groups needing relief.

- Take in as much suffering as you can, from the whole world, or more focused as described in this exercise.
- Practice compassion for everything and everybody. Greet everyone as though they are family.
- At mastery, your compassion will be an unconditional, spontaneous, and automatic habit. Compassion will manifest in all situations without thought. You will run to help people without thinking.

PRAYERS FOR UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

Do It Anyway (Mother Theresa)

People are often unreasonable, illogical, and self-centered. Forgive them anyway.
If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives. Be kind anyway.
If you are successful, you will win some false friends and some true enemies. Succeed anyway.
If you are honest and frank, people may cheat you. Be honest and frank anyway.
What you spend years building, someone could destroy overnight. Build anyway.
If you find serenity and happiness, they may be jealous. Be happy anyway.
The good you do today, people will often forget tomorrow. Do good anyway.
Give the world the best you have, and it may never be enough. Give the world the best you've got anyway.
You see, in the final analysis it is between you and God. It was never between you and them anyway.

The Prayer of an Unknown Confederate Soldier

I asked God for strength that I might achieve. I was made weak that I might learn humbly to obey.
I asked for health that I might do greater things. I was given infirmity that I might do better things.
I asked for riches that I might be happy. I was given poverty that I might be wise.
I asked for power that I might have the praise of men. I was given
weakness that I might feel the need of God.
I asked for all things that I might enjoy life. I was given life that I might enjoy all things.
I got nothing that I asked for, but everything I hoped for. Almost
despite myself, my unspoken prayers were answered.

Prayer of St. Francis

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love.
Where there is injury, pardon.
Where there is doubt, faith.
Where there is despair, hope.
Where there is darkness, light.
And where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console.
To be understood as to understand.
To be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive.
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned.
And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Prayer is an expression of our unity with God and all people. In prayer, we connect to an Omniscient, Omnipresent power through the cultivation of love and compassion. With this love, we ask for help for others and ourselves.
- We can pray for something and get it. We can pray for something and not get it. We can also pray and not ask for anything. We just commune with our Higher Power. With an attitude of complete faith, devotion, and surrender, we do not attempt to change the course of life's drama. With reverence, gratitude, and humility, we extract the lessons from life and enjoy life as it is. In prayers of gratitude and devotion, we express thankfulness for our many blessings, and give our love to God.
- We can have a joyful conversation with God or speak to God with a single word. We can also pray without words. God is in our hearts. He already knows what we need. There is great beauty in communing with God in silence.
- In our prayers for world peace, we can ask God to impact the hearts and minds of our leaders.
- We can change the world by changing ourselves. Pray to become a better person. Pray for love, understanding, and wisdom. This is the practical way to change the world.

EXERCISES

1. Describe the elements that contribute to the effectiveness of prayer.
 2. Describe the six steps in the technique for praying.
 3. Annie Lamott wrote a book about three essential prayers: 1. Help, 2. Thanks, 3. Wow.
 4. What is your favorite prayer?
 5. What prayer works for you?
 6. You are now equipped with five techniques that comprise a morning and evening program. Set aside forty-five to sixty minutes and practice these techniques:
 - a. Progressive muscle relaxation: ten minutes
 - b. Breathwork: five minutes
 - c. Contemplation: fifteen to twenty minutes
 - d. Meditation: ten to twenty minutes
 - e. Prayer: five minutes
- You have finished your review of the five morning and evening techniques. In the next five chapters, we will study five techniques that comprise the daily activity program: mindfulness, practicing the presence of God, service, yoga, and the transformation of emotion.



CHAPTER 15

MINDFULNESS

I AM AWAKE

- When the people asked the Buddha if he was a God, an angel, or a saint, he said, “No.” “Then who are you?” Buddha replied, “I am awake.” What is the Buddha trying to tell us? What is it that we are to awaken from? Why is it important to be more conscious?
- The field of awareness in ordinary states of consciousness is contaminated with a variety of negative thought patterns. We remain largely unaware of these negative patterns and how they prevent us from reaching higher states of consciousness. In mindless states of unawareness, we are hypnotized, functioning like robots on automatic pilot, sleepwalking our way through life.
- This chapter will describe the importance of awakening from ordinary to higher consciousness and how mindfulness, a two-thousand-five-hundred-year-old practice taught by the Buddha, can help us with this transformation. Mindfulness is the first technique of the daily activity program.

ORDINARY CONSCIOUSNESS: MINDLESSNESS

- The story of life is unfolding in the now, the place where we learn, enjoy, help others, heal, find our courage, work with our problems, manage our pain, and experience inner peace. To accomplish this, we need the mind to work with and accept the story as it unfolds.
- The mind is at its best when it accepts and works with one moment at a time, no matter what life throws at it. This requires discipline. Without discipline, the mind will try to escape, and when it does, it creates more problems. The undisciplined mind is the biggest culprit. It is a source of untold suffering. It wreaks havoc on our peace.
- The undisciplined mind disrupts our lives by taking us out of the present moment, where our life is at its fullest. Repeatedly, the mind takes us out of our current moments when it does not like what is going on. Here are some examples:
 1. It fights when angry.
 2. It runs when afraid.

3. It competes when jealous.
 4. It creates imagined calamities.
 5. It projects fantasies from its desires.
 6. It is strongly attracted to the past and the future. While it is good to learn from the past and have hopeful plans for the future, the mind goes overboard in its replays and projections. We relive past hurts, resentments, and regrets, which only serve to recycle anger, depression, and guilt. Our projections of the future breed unnecessary fear and insecurity.
 7. It builds a rigid structure of selfish, dogmatic, overvalued thoughts, opinions, likes, and dislikes.
 8. It tries to get our needs met by controlling and pushing events and people. However, the world does not conform to our egotistical desires; when things do not fit, we create new desires. Instead of working with what we have that is good, it escapes into fantasy, to what we think we want next.
- The mind is set up to deal with one moment at a time. Instead, when it doesn't like what is happening, it tries to avoid the moment and escape. This results in negative thought patterns, which only serve to compound our problems. We end up with the original problem and an increase in mental restlessness and rumination, signs that the mind is overheated.

MINDFULNESS

- Mindfulness, an ancient technique of Buddhism, helps us manage our inner reactions to a turbulent and unpredictable world. We want to respond with poise and peace, but all too often our thoughts and feelings will not cooperate. While there can be no respite from troubles and pain, mindfulness helps us receive the tests and trials of life in calm repose. By avoiding the destructive excesses of the mind, we can receive what life brings with even-minded tranquility.
- To transform ordinary consciousness to higher consciousness, we bring the mind under control by placing it where we want it to be: in the current moment, awake, attentive, and ready. It is in this alignment that we are most able to heal, learn, solve problems, manage suffering, relax, serve, and enjoy.
- Aligning the mind and attention with the present is a crucial element in the healing process. The next step, the step we need to take, is in these moments; they hold the continuity of our story, a story pregnant with lessons, entertainment, and opportunities to produce, create, love, and serve. In the lower state of ordinary consciousness, we miss these opportunities because we are preoccupied with other fields of awareness.
- To practice mindfulness, there is no need to make any changes other than the placement of the mind as we go about our usual activities. With practice, the mind remains calm and poised no matter what occurs in the material world. We remain in balance. We get the rhythm of the story. There is no force in it. We are ready for anything.
- Mindfulness training is now provided by most healthcare clinics and hospitals. Its ever-increasing popularity is the result of its effectiveness. It helps us manage our pain more skillfully. Here is how it works.

The Mechanism

MINDFULNESS REDUCES REACTIVITY

- There are two levels to our pain:
 1. The inevitable suffering of life which we cannot change.
 2. Our reaction to it, which is reversible.
 - a. Mindfulness helps us reduce this reactivity.
 - b. When we practice mindfulness, we cultivate healing qualities: acceptance, stillness, silence, spaciousness, serenity, love, compassion, understanding, even-mindedness, courage, strength, perseverance and more. These qualities are water for the fire of reactivity.

- To practice mindfulness, we need three core skills:

THREE CORE SKILLS FOR A SUCCESSFUL MINDFULNESS PRACTICE

1. **Concentration:** In a pure concentration exercise, we focus on a single point and return to that point when the mind wanders. We pay no attention to the content of our thoughts.
2. **Acceptance:** In a pure acceptance exercise, we see what is going on inside. We pay attention to thought content. We see what is there just as it is but do not try to change it. We ride the pain waves without adding unnecessary reactivity.
3. **Transformation:** This is the same as acceptance with an additional step. We pay attention to thought content and do try to change it. We replace negative thoughts with positive thoughts. We let the story unfold and spiritualize the story. We transform the story with healing qualities and wisdom pearls.

1. Concentration

- In mindlessness, the mind is unfocused, on automatic pilot, daydreaming, in a trance, hypnotized, floating. We like to float but when floating becomes our habit, we are not in full consciousness.
- In mindfulness, the mind is focused. We train the mind to be where we want it to be. We focus on one thing at a time. Improving our ability to concentrate helps us succeed in whatever we are doing. When less prone to distraction, we are better able to work on problems and accomplish tasks.
- We can increase the strength of our concentration muscle by practicing the following exercise. When you find yourself on the train of thought and you don't want to be on the train:
 - a. Focus on your breath.
 - b. Breathe naturally or practice any breathing technique you wish.

- c. When the mind wanders, bring it back to the breath.
- d. As thoughts come by, gently return to your point of focus. Pay no attention to thought content.
- e. If it wanders a thousand times, bring it back a thousand times.
- f. Use the breath to center all day long.
- g. You can do this same exercise using a mantra, affirmation, or wisdom pearl in addition to the breath as your point of focus.

2. Acceptance

- o In a pure concentration exercise, we reduce and focus to single point. When the mind wanders, we bring it back to the point of focus. We tell the mind, get back, stay here. We pay no attention to content.
- o In this acceptance exercise, we pay attention to content. Instead of reducing and focusing to a single point, we expand to include anything or everything in the outside world, our bodies, and inner being. We want to see what is there, but we don't try to change it.
- o We accept what is happening outside and inside even when we don't like it. We accept whatever is there because it has to be there for that moment. We accept what we cannot change. We create a space for it.
- o We leave everything just as it is and detach, create space, reduce electricity, and importance. Our experience can be negative, positive, or do whatever it does. We just watch it all with calm detachment.
- o We don't analyze, judge, or try to change anything. We just breathe, see what is going on in the movie, and observe how we react.
- o With practice, we become ever-increasingly attuned to what is going on inside. We see repetitive patterns of thought, feeling, and physical sensations. Most of these are long-term powerful habits that have been around for years.
- o By sitting with and feeling everything that comes up, the full range of physical, mental, and emotional discomfort, we get better at allowing these things to be.
- o When we get in touch with our reactions and learn how to ride the pain waves, we avoid unhealthy escapes and stay on task.
- o When you are uncomfortable and find yourself running, resisting, fighting, and escaping:
 - a. Stop
 - b. Breathe
 - c. Present moment
 - d. Observe: Look at outer events and inner reactions.
 - ◇ Outer event: What's going on in the movie?
 - ◇ Inner reaction: I am anxious. I am angry. My mind is racing. My palms are sweaty.
 - e. Accept: Don't try to change or fix anything. Invite and welcome whatever thoughts, feelings, and sensations come up. Completely accept whatever is there.

- f. Let go: There is a place inside that is always still, silent, spacious, and serene. With the breath as your centering device, bring in as much stillness as you can. Relax. Detach. Let go.
 - g. Act: Each of the preceding steps helps reduce reactivity and slows things down. You have created space and bought some time. Now, even if you are still suffering, you can respond to the world with peace and poise.
 - In this exercise, we observe, accept, and let go. We observe the thought, accept the thought, and let the thought go. Content is not important. There are no good or bad thoughts, just thoughts. We welcome and invite them all while we remain calm and gentle with the self.
 - You can have a moment of not liking what is there and then accept it. I don't like it but it is here. I don't escape. I deal.
 - This is skillful pain management through acceptance, a profound healing quality, one we must cultivate to reduce and eliminate destructive reactivity.
3. **Transformation**
- With acceptance, we let the story unfold just as it is. We observe, accept, and let go. This is profoundly helpful but sometimes we need to look into the story and make some changes.
 - This is akin to going to school. We study our painful problems and look for the lessons, which always have to do with cultivating healing qualities. We get the lessons and qualities we need and move on. This is called let the story unfold and spiritualize the story.
 - When you are uncomfortable and find yourself running, resisting, fighting, and escaping:
 - a. Stop
 - b. Breathe
 - c. Let the pain story unfold. Our pain story carries valuable information about our issues and problems. When you have extracted the necessary information, infuse the pain story with healing qualities.
 - d. Spiritualize the story: Review the list of healing qualities. Choose the ones you need for this part of your story. Most of the time we need more love, compassion, understanding, forgiveness, strength, courage, patience, kindness, and humor for ourselves and others. These qualities will reduce and finally dissolve the pain story.
 - e. For a more detailed review of this process, review:
 - 1. School, Exercise 3 below, page 185
 - 2. Chapter 19, Transformation of Emotion in this workbook, page 243
 - When you practice the following mindfulness exercises, you will:
 - 1. Improve your powers of concentration, acceptance, and transformation.
 - 2. Cultivate stillness, silence, spaciousness, serenity, peace, even-mindedness, compassion, love, understanding, courage, strength, perseverance, and more. These healing qualities help us contain, reduce, or eliminate reactivity.
 - 3. You will be a more skillful pain manager. You will control pain so pain does not control you.

EXERCISES

1. A Generic Mindfulness Technique

- When you realize you have gone for a ride on the train of thought and want to get off the train:
 - a. Stop
 - ◇ When the mind lapses into one of its negative habit patterns, it draws you away from the opportunities of the moment. You go for a ride on the negative thought train. Because you identify with the negativity, you think this is who you are.
 - ◇ When you become aware that your mind is wandering, give yourself a one-word command: stop. This will help you stop thinking and then you can focus on your breath.
 - b. Breathe
 - ◇ Take a breath and gently bring the mind back to the reality of the moment.
 - ◇ By simply becoming aware of your breath, you can stop the rambling mind, relax, and return to the present moments of your life.
 - ◇ This simple maneuver of using your breath to control your mind will help you develop your powers of concentration.
 - ◇ You can develop single-minded concentration by continually bringing your attention back to your breath, every time the mind wanders.
 - ◇ With practice, you will be able to stay increasingly in the present, bringing your mind out of its aimless spin, back into alignment with the present moment.
 - c. Present Moment
 - ◇ In mindfulness training, we learn to pay attention to one thing at a time.
 - ◇ Give your full attention to each moment and see what is going on.
 - ◇ Focus on what is going on outside.
 - ◇ Focus on what is going on inside.
 - ◇ Focus on your body.
 - ◇ Focus on what you are doing.
 - ◇ Now that you see what is going on, you can choose your response.
 - d. Reframe
 - ◇ Where we place our needle of attention is monumentally important as it sets the tone and direction of our lives.
 - ◇ When we use the breath to calm our mind and place it in the present moment, we have an opportunity to focus on frames that inspire, heal, soothe, purify, entertain, and transform. We can create any frame we wish. The choices are unlimited. This is our power in the story.
 - ◇ We cannot control most of what is going on outside, but we can control how we respond. This chapter introduces six profoundly important options: witness, school, entertainment, service, warrior, ritual. Then we will study a variety of other frames to demonstrate the unlimited creative potential of mindfulness. Let's start with the witness.

2. The Witness: Even-Minded Under All Conditions

- There is a place inside that does not react. It is always still, silent, spacious, and serene. We want to remain in that place, peaceful and poised no matter what the world and body throw at us. We can achieve this state by cultivating the witness. The witness is the higher self, true self, or soul. It is a powerful antidote to unnecessary reactivity.
- Observe the events of your life and your reactions to these events: thoughts, feelings, desires, sensations, fantasies, judgment, likes, and dislikes.
- Ask yourself, “Am I in the drama over-reacting or watching the drama from the serenity and stillness of the witness?”
- When you see you are overreacting:
 1. Stop
 2. Breathe: take a slow deep abdominal breath
 3. Present moment
 4. Affirm: stillness, silence, spaciousness, and serenity.
 5. Let these qualities surround, embrace, permeate, and saturate your problem.
 6. Notice the reduction in reactivity and restoration of peace.
- The witness replaces the restlessness and ruminations of the undisciplined mind with stillness, silence, spaciousness, and serenity. The witness does this by observing the changes of life without reacting. It remains silent and serene. It watches events unfold from a position of stillness and peace.
- The witness does not try to change anything. It does not add, subtract, delete, or edit. It accepts reality as it is while we change our frame from reactivity to stillness. We focus on the outer present moment and the stillness and silence within.
- As the witness grows through the practice of mindfulness, you can slowly bring the dimensions of spaciousness and serenity to the events of your life.
- With the breath as a means of centering yourself, you can begin the process of disengaging from your identification with the negative patterns of the uncontrolled mind.
- With a single breath, you can invoke the witness. Here, there is a peaceful and compassionate space, large enough to hold all.
- Breathe and refocus on the calm witness early and often to reach for the peace and enjoyment that resides there, inhibited only by your undisciplined mind.

3. School

- Recall the three types of mindfulness exercises: concentration, acceptance, and transformation.
- In a concentration exercise, we pay no attention to the thoughts and simply return our point of focus to the breath, mantra, affirmation, or wisdom pearl.
- With acceptance, we let the story unfold just as it is. We observe, accept, and let go. This is profoundly helpful but sometimes we need to look into the story and make some changes. This is akin to going to school. We study our painful problems and look for the lessons, which always have to do with cultivating healing qualities. We get the lessons and qualities we need and move on.

- When life gets difficult inside or outside, we try to get away. We run and resist by going into unawareness or fantasy. But the school of life is merely presenting a lesson we need to learn.
- Allowing the mind to wander is the equivalent of playing hooky from school. In mindfulness, we do not fight with the teacher or run. We pay attention, listen, and cooperate in order to graduate to the next level.
- Peace is not found by running away from problems; rather, we find peace by facing the problem or difficulty and going through it.
- Through the breath, we can enter rather than run from unpleasantness. By entering deeply into the present, we can extract the lessons and move on.
- When you become aware that you have gone for a ride on the negative train of thought and you want to get off the train, practice the following method:
 - 1. Stop
 - 2. Breathe
 - 3. Present moment
 - 4. Affirm:
 - a. Life is school.
 - b. Pain is the teacher if I open to its lessons.
 - c. The lessons have to do with the cultivation of spiritual qualities.
- Consult the list of healing qualities enumerated in the spiritual alphabet. Which qualities do you need to develop to help you manage your current problem?
- Remember, the healing qualities in the spiritual alphabet are more powerful than any painful problem. By invoking and affirming these healing qualities, you create an inner atmosphere conducive to healing. As the healing qualities slowly burn up trouble-making negativity, you will experience a corresponding shift to peace and strength.
- Love, kindness, acceptance, and forgiveness are more powerful than any pain or problem. Be patient, understanding, compassionate, and gentle with yourself. This will help you face your problems, get the necessary lessons, and move forward.
- The teacher and the lessons are found in the moments of our lives. You cannot move up the chain of awareness without learning from these moments, and you cannot learn if you are not in school; that is, awake, aware, and focused on the present.
- The goal is to stay calm and suffer at the same time. We can do this if we create a healing space large enough to hold any problem or pain. Then we can allow our painful problems to exist in consciousness without the destructive aspects of denial, repression, or expression.
 - a. Denial and repression drive our painful problems into the subconscious and into the body, where they are stored as negative energy. The problem remains hidden and unresolved.
 - b. Destructive expressions of our pain manifest in a variety of ways, including exertion of power over others, irritability, anger, and aggression. In effect, we spread our pain and problems to others.

- Alternatively, we can cultivate an internal healing space for the pain. We can do this by invoking an enlarged space filled with healing qualities. When we let our pain and problems play in an enlarged, peaceful, compassionate space, negative energy is released that has been repressed over the years within our subconscious and the body. By accepting pain and problems with compassion, we end the fear of releasing negativity. By stopping the fight within, the tension of repression dissolves.
 - There is a profound feeling of peace when we turn the table on our suffering by offering no resistance. By fully accepting the inevitable suffering of life without repression and resistance, we gain internal power.
 - To shift gears from ordinary to higher consciousness, we need to think less, be aware of our breath, remain in the present, and accept pain as the teacher. Stay calm, be kind and gentle with yourself, and do the work. The result is strength, serenity, spaciousness, and stillness.
 - When we gently and courageously enter our pain, we gain the knowledge and strength that will help us take on the next set of problems or lessons. This is pain control through acceptance or surrender.
 - Do you know life is a school with classes, teachers, subjects, and tests?
 - Do you know what class you are in?
 - Do you know the subject?
 - Do you know the teacher?
 - Have you been in this class before?
 - Have you figured out the lessons you need to learn?
 - Perhaps you know you are in school but you think you are more advanced than you are. If this is the case, The Principal of The Universal School of Life will make the adjustment for you. The right classes, teachers, and subjects will make themselves known to you.
 - Perhaps you know you are in school but you sell yourself short by signing up for classes you have already mastered. That same Principal will guide you to the proper curricula.
 - Perhaps you know you are in school and you accept your classes, subjects, and teachers, do the homework, pass the test, and move on. Keep up the good work!
 - How might the practice of mindfulness help you learn the lessons meant for you?
4. **Entertainment: A Spectacular Show**
- When you realize you have gone for a ride on the train of thought and want to get off the train:
 1. Stop
 2. Breathe
 3. Present moment
 4. Entertainment
 - The unfolding drama of life is not always about school and learning. Life is entertainment. Our stories are filled with beauty, joy, laughter, and fun. It is difficult if not impossible to see life as entertainment, however, if we are immersed in the drama, consumed by our problems and suffering.
 - By taking a step back from the role we are playing, we can take ourselves less seriously. We can do this by framing life as a movie or a sport. We are actors in a role, players in a game.

- By not identifying completely with our role, we gain distance and perspective. When we reduce our tendency to exaggerate the importance of events, we eliminate some mental restlessness and high emotional reactivity. When we calm the mind and create more operating space within, we can enjoy the show.
- To remember life as spectacular show, give yourself a one-word affirmation such as “entertainment,” “show,” “drama,” “play,” “movie,” “game,” or “sport.” This frame helps us to not take everything and ourselves so seriously.
- How might the practice of mindfulness help you enjoy life more than you do now?

5. Service: Helping Others

- Gracious, warm, loving service to all of humanity and creation is a natural consequence of the sustained practice of mindfulness.
- Mindfulness practice helps us escape the influence of negative thoughts and turbulent emotions. When we are more peaceful inside, we can give kindness, love, and service to others.
- When you realize you have gone for a ride on the negative train of thought and you want to get off the train:
 1. Stop
 2. Breathe
 3. Present moment
 4. Service
- Perform all acts with loving-kindness.
- Remember, the one you are with is the most important person in the world.
- Make your ears so big they touch the ground. Listen, listen, listen with your elephant ears.
- Support and validate. Don't be so quick to give advice.
- Clarify and summarize. Don't try to fix.
- Anonymous, loving, humble service to others without attachment to outcome: such an act is sacred. Connect with people, help them, and let them go.
- To invoke the servant, affirm: compassionate service to everyone I meet.

6. Warrior: Ready for Anything

- When you realize you have gone for a ride on the negative train of thought and you want to get off the train, practice the following method:
 1. Stop
 2. Breathe
 3. Present moment
 4. Warrior
- The practice of mindfulness slowly replaces unbridled thoughts, feelings, and desires with serenity and stillness. Mental reactivity and turmoil subside. With a more powerful and resilient mind, the difficulties of life are less likely to throw us off course.

- We can deal with whatever comes and hold our ground. We do not have to run or hide. We can stay in the moment, take a stand, and hold our position. We are awake, aware, and ready for anything, including work, pain, change, the unknown, even death. This is the stance of a warrior.
- To invoke the warrior, give yourself the following command: awake, aware, ready for anything.

7. **Ritual: Magical Miracles Everywhere**

- When you realize you have gone for a ride on the negative train of thought and want to get off the train:
 1. Stop
 2. Breathe
 3. Present moment
 4. Ritual
- We spend a lot of time in routine daily activities: eating, walking, talking on the phone, standing in line, cutting the grass, running to the store, cooking, washing dishes, brushing teeth, tying shoes.... There is meaning in any of these routines, but we miss it. Because we assume the mundane is boring, the mind wanders. We lose touch with the magic and miracles secreted in every moment, everywhere, outside and inside.
- The practice of mindfulness brings awe back to the routines of life by focusing on our activities and creating a context of special meaning and importance. For example, we can appreciate the moments that might otherwise be lost in boredom by recognizing the omniscient wisdom that is always with us.
- Omniscience is the infinite intelligence that permeates our body and the entire universe.
- As we perform any routine activity, we can think of how the body follows our command when we tell it what to do.
- We can think of the unfathomable intelligence that creates and operates our vision and hearing as we go about our chores and tasks.
- When reading, we can think of the brilliance that allows us to understand these words right now.
- While eating, we can think of how the stomach and intestines digest food by breaking it into molecules that are sent to the right places in the body for energy, repair, immunity, and a host of other functions.
- When washing our hair, we can think about how the body responds to our commands.
- The intelligence that creates and operates the body is phenomenal. We are magicians, performing astounding feats throughout the day, but ordinary consciousness makes the miraculous mundane.
- Maintaining awareness of the Omniscient Power that permeates the universe is part of capturing the wonder, magic, and mystery of being alive, in what might otherwise appear to be the humdrum of everyday routines.
- We can start such a practice with any routine, anywhere, any time. By consciously looking for the positives inside and outside, we can find them. A blessing in disguise lurks everywhere; we must only work to uncover it.
- If we bring the full powers of a calm, concentrated, and positive mind to our routine activities, we can capture the blessings and make them our own.

- With breath, focused attention, and creative framing, we can extract the gifts of life—peace, joy, beauty, and the magic of being—from the most mundane activities.
- Don't miss the magic in the mundane. It is there. Give yourself a one-word command: Omniscience. This will attune your consciousness to the magnificence of creation, from particle and wave to galaxy.

8. **One Continuous Sacred Ritual**

- With practice, we can become increasingly aware, awake, and attentive in each of the moments of our lives. As our will power and concentration increase, we can begin to string the moments together. By maintaining our focus on what we are doing at all times, we learn to stay in the present more and more, even when life gets rough. We see that we can remain in reality whether it turns good, bad, or ugly.
- When our concentration is highly developed, we can stay in the present and maintain harmony and balance no matter what life does. All of our moments become part of one continuous sacred ritual in response to the truth of life just as it is—with all of its sorrow, beauty, and joy. When we recognize that all we have are these moments, that there is nowhere else to go, we gain strength and peace.
- When we bring the unruly mind under control through mindfulness, we gain access to the calm witness, the student in school, the actor in the movie, the servant of humanity, the warrior who is ready for anything, and the magical ritual.

ONE CONTINUOUS SACRED RITUAL

- The Witness: The witness is still, silent, spacious, serene, even-minded under all conditions.
- School: Life is school. Pain is the teacher. The lessons have to do with cultivation of healing qualities.
- Entertainment: Life is a movie. We enjoy the show.
- Service: In service to others, we feel peace and joy.
- Warrior: The warrior finds courage in the face of fear and gets ready for anything.
- Ritual: Transform the ordinary and mundane to magical miracles everywhere.
- Other: Choose any frame, healing quality, or wisdom pearl. Be creative.

- The key is to mindfully choose the right frame at the right time. This is not easy. We want to stay in the witness, service, ritual, and entertainment. These are the most fun. They bring peace, love, magic, and joy.
- But sometimes we need to be in school. Without school, which is what most people avoid, we lose the full, comprehensive, and deep healing power of mindfulness.

- We can get our life back at any moment but we must accept what shows up. Mindfulness teaches us to be in the moment but we don't want to be in the moment if it hurts. When you feel yourself running, avoiding, or escaping, calm the mind down and face the difficult problem, pain, or conflict.
- The key is to accept pain as the guest teacher. If we do this, we can avoid the pitfalls of unnecessary worry, fear, insecurity, fury, and fantasy that come in to steal the moments.
- Breathe, get calm and centered, have fun, enjoy the show, help others, and observe magical miracles everywhere. When pain shows up, go to school. Don't play hooky. Ride the pain waves. Get the lessons and move on to another frame. When we get the frame right, life becomes one continuous sacred ritual, offering up its knowledge and lessons, entertainment and joy, and opportunities to love and serve.
- Every moment is a sacred moment, every place a sacred place. Relax, open, listen, attune, and receive. Can you feel it?
- Every action, no matter how mundane, is a part of one uninterrupted sacred ritual. Offer every action in service to humanity-God-Buddha-Life-Universe. Then you will have strength and peace.
- Affirm: The Sacred is with me all the time. One continuous sacred ritual.
- Following are a host of additional mindfulness exercises you might enjoy practicing depending on your mood and needs at the time.

9. **Good Mental Health**

- The mind does its best work when it is calm, positive, focused, strong, and resilient. From this position, it can meet any problem, test, or lesson that life presents. It helps us achieve our goals, solve problems, shape meaning, manage our pain skillfully, and pursue happiness, success, harmony, and joy. This is good mental health.
- Unfortunately, the mind does not always work this well. It has a complex bag of tricks that create havoc in our lives. It is often negative, wrong, obsessive, restless, relentless, deceptive, and more. It has a life of its own. We try to control it but it is slippery and seemingly unstoppable.
- Despite all of this, we seem to be in an unconditional love affair with the mind. We profoundly over-identify with it, no matter how much trouble it gives us. We consider our own thoughts, likes, and dislikes to be the final arbiter of truth. We let it dominate our consciousness, even when it is hysterical or wrong. Thoughts are like glasses. We see the world through them. They determine our reality even when they are wrong or destructive. What to do?
- We can take off the negative glasses that distort our world and see the world through our new lenses: healing qualities. We can do this by practicing mindfulness or any of the methods described in this work.
- When the mind is locked in one of its many negative habit patterns, we can bring it back to its power position: positive, calm, focused, strong, and resilient. When you realize you have gone for a ride on the negative train of thought and want to get off the train:
 - a. Stop
 - b. Breathe
 - c. Present moment
 - d. Practice PMQ

- In this case, the P is restless, negative, distorted thinking.
- The M is any one of the fifteen methods.
- The Q is any one or combination of one hundred healing qualities.
- All of the methods and qualities in this work help bring the mind back to its power position: positive, calm, focused, strong, and resilient.

10. The Present Moment

- The mind is busy telling stories about the past and future.
- We can't change the past or reach into the future. We can learn from the past and plan for the future, but most of us spend way too much time ruminating on past regrets and future worries and not enough time in the present.
- The more we stay in the here and now, the less stress we have. Mindfulness helps us stay in the present where we have power and leverage through choice and attention.
- We can choose what we pay attention to. When we place our needle of attention on healing affirmations, we reduce reactivity and create healing vibrations for ourselves and others.
- When you find your mind wandering in the past and future:
 - a. Stop
 - b. Breathe
 - c. Present moment
 - d. Affirm
 - ◇ The current moment is the only one I have.
 - ◇ The most important moment is now.
 - ◇ The most important person is the one I am with now.
 - ◇ The most important thing I am doing is what I am doing now.
 - ◇ The best way to prepare for the future is to be totally present now.
 - ◇ Now is the moment that never ends.
 - ◇ My life is one continuous sacred ritual.

11. Do Not Let Pain Define You

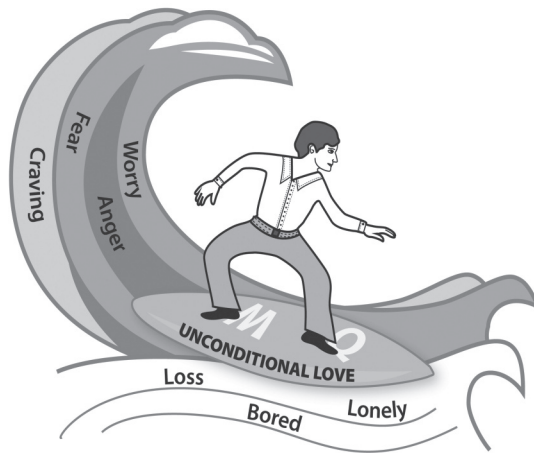
- It's one thing to have pain. It's another thing to let that pain define you, grab you by the throat, and keep you down. Healing qualities can help us with this problem.
- We have unlimited access to a bank of healing qualities. We can use these qualities to help us work through and rise above our pain.
- When pain comes in, takes over, and dominates your consciousness:
 - a. Stop
 - b. Breathe
 - c. Present moment

- d. Refer to the list of one hundred healing qualities.
- e. Choose a quality you need for the condition at hand.
- f. Remember, healing qualities are more powerful than any painful problem.
 1. Kindness dissolves cruelty.
 2. Love burns up hate.
 3. Courage defeats fear.
 4. Even-mindedness counters agitation.
 5. Hope replaces despair.
 6. Gentleness dissolves shame.
 7. Choose any painful problem, match it with the quality you need, and go to work.
 8. Affirm your quality, visualize it, feel it, let it permeate your thoughts and speech.
 9. Let the quality guide your choices and actions.

12. The True Self

- This exercise is designed to help you remember you are not your pain or problem. Your true self is a composite of one hundred healing qualities and higher states of consciousness.
- When you decide your mind is giving you trouble and you want to shift gears to a healing quality:
 - a. Stop
 - b. Breathe
 - c. Present moment
 - d. Remember, thoughts are just thoughts. They are not facts, reality, or the true self. They are passing mental events. They have a beginning, middle, and end. They arise, pass through our consciousness, and dissolve.
 - e. The true self is healing qualities and higher states of consciousness. Affirm:
 - ◇ I have an army of one hundred healing qualities. This is my true self.
 - ◇ I am still, silent, spacious, and serene.
 - ◇ I am peace, love, compassion, kindness, understanding, courage, strength.
 - ◇ Affirm the quality of your choice. These are your new lenses.
 - ◇ When negative thoughts return, breathe and affirm your quality.
 - ◇ With practice, healing qualities slowly contain, reduce, and eliminate negative restless thoughts. The mind returns to its power position of peace and poise. Then you can enjoy the show and be ready for the next series of classes and tests.

13. Ride the Pain Wave



- We want *unlimited* peace, love, joy, power, and wisdom, more time, and no pain. But this is not to be. In ordinary consciousness, we are subject to a host of uncomfortable thoughts, feelings, desires, and bodily sensations that will not quit. When we try to resist or escape these painful feelings, we make things worse. We create unnecessary reactivity that adds a great deal of suffering to the inevitable suffering of life.
- “You can’t stop the waves but you can learn to surf” (Jon Kabat-Zinn). To manage our pain skillfully, we need to learn how to ride the pain waves without the add-ons: racing thoughts, highly reactive emotions, excessive material desires leading to attachments, bad habits, hyperactivity, and egotism.
- Practice the following technique. It still hurts but this way we get the best possible ride.
- When you feel discomfort of any kind:
 - a. Stop
 - b. Breathe
 - c. Present moment
 - d. Observe the pain wave as it emerges. Imagine yourself on a board, surfing the wave. Allow the wave to emerge just as it is. It is often our resistance to giving the wave some time and space that gives it even more power.
 - e. Stay with the wave as it grows. It has a life of its own. Ride it wherever it goes. It may grow, reach a peak, and dissolve quickly or it may stick around for some time. We cannot control this.
 - f. But we can steady ourselves on the board with breathwork, healing qualities, and our favorite wisdom pearls. To stay balanced on the board, breathe and affirm the healing quality or wisdom pearl of your choice.
 - g. Stay with the wave no matter the size, shape, or duration.
 - h. When the mind races, return your focus to your breath, quality, or pearl.
 - i. When your emotions intensify, return your focus to your breath, quality, or pearl.

- j. When desires emerge and prompt you to an escape pattern that will ultimately cause more suffering, intend not to act, take a slow, deep abdominal breath, and focus on your pearl or healing quality.
- k. When any uncomfortable thoughts, feelings, desires, or sensations emerge, be aware, don't judge, be kind and gentle with yourself, and return your focus to your breath, quality, and pearl.
- l. Observe your moment to moment experience. Stay with it. The process is painful but what you are doing is important. You are getting comfortable with a wider range of experiences.
- m. Don't latch on to a particular idea, emotion, desire, or sensation. Just watch what comes and goes.
- n. Breathe, observe, accept, let go.
- o. If you fall off the board, get back on.
- p. Persevere. Keep on keeping on. This may be your time for the heavy lifting curricula sometimes assigned against our will in the university of life.
- q. Remember, effort is progress even if you can't feel it. The qualities are growing beneath the surface waves of pain. Eventually the qualities will become big enough to contain, reduce, or eliminate your pain and guide you through what is left. You will feel better, become a better person, and experience a higher state of consciousness.

14. Love Is Skillful Pain Management

- o When love, compassion, understanding, kindness, courage, strength, perseverance, patience, and forgiveness are in control of our consciousness, we do not over-react. We remain even-minded and calm even in the face of pain or distress. This is skillful pain management. Love and associated healing qualities are in charge.
- o We are either in love or something else. Something else is a large variety of negatives: anger, judgment, impatience, irritability, fear, insecurity, worry, and doubt, to name a few. These unnecessary reactions plague us all.
- o Love and skillful pain management are the same thing. When you are in pain, mindfully ask yourself:
 - a. Am I managing this pain skillfully or unskillfully?
 - b. Am I in love or something else?
 - c. If you are managing your pain skillfully, the healing qualities or love is in charge. You are in the presence of God or acting mindfully.
 - d. When you notice you are managing your pain unskillfully, all you have to do is pick the healing quality you need most at the moment and begin breathing and affirming in that direction.
 - e. Love and skillful pain management are the same thing. Choose love.
 - f. You are either in love or something else. When you notice negativity:
 - 1. Stop
 - 2. Breathe
 - 3. Present moment
 - 4. Affirm love or another healing quality.

15. The Ocean and The Wave



- We can use the Ocean and its waves as a metaphor for life and convert this into a mindfulness exercise.
- The Ocean is the infinite source of all things. It is vast, deep, calm, never-ending, and still.
- Waves are people, activities, events, and things. Waves have a beginning, middle, and end. They come from, exist, and return to the ocean.
- We are the waves. We belong to the Ocean.
- Most of us focus exclusively on the waves. They command all of our attention. They determine our reality and our identity. A few examples:
 - a. We are fascinated and seduced by the drama: our relationships, work, school, training, hobbies, recreation, economic security, and more.
 - b. We have powerful reactions to the show. Our restless minds, overwhelming emotions, and excessive material desires lead to attachments and bad habits.
 - c. Most of us are hyperactivity junkies, busy from the time we get up in the morning until we go to sleep.
 - d. Our bodies give us trouble and take up a lot of our attention.
 - e. Our egos ramp up and create unnecessary self-importance and reactivity.
 - f. We are unduly concerned with our place in the drama.
- When we focus on surface waves to the exclusion of the Ocean below, we feel insecure and anxious as everything on the surface of the ocean is changing and some of these changes are threatening and painful.
- We have little to no awareness of the Ocean underneath the waves. This exercise is designed to help us shift our identity from an isolated wave to a wave connected to the Ocean. The result is an ever-increasing sense of peace. In the end, when the wave merges with the Ocean, we feel the changeless peace of the vast Ocean below.
- When you feel threatened, anxious, or any discomfort:
 - a. Stop
 - b. Breathe

- c. Present moment
- d. Think *Ocean and wave*.
- e. Notice the waves are in a state of perpetual flux. They are tiny, small, medium, large, or huge and encompass all possibilities: good and evil, pleasure and pain, success and failure, health and disease, praise and blame, wealth and poverty, love and hate, life and death. The goal is to ride whatever waves show up without adding unnecessary reactivity.
- f. Stillness is the antidote to reactivity. The Ocean has an unlimited supply of stillness, waiting to be tapped, free of cost. Begin your practice of identifying more with the ocean than the wave: Affirm: stillness, silence, spaciousness and serenity.
- g. No matter the size or shape of the wave, bring in as much stillness as you can.
- h. When a big wave comes in and gets a hold of you, gently label it and work your way back into the deep unchanging oceanic peace just underneath the wave.
- i. If an old familiar unpleasant wave returns, simply notice its arrival and don't get excited.
- j. The goal is to slowly identify more with the Ocean than the wave. Affirm: I am one with the Ocean: deep, vast, still, and quiet.
- k. With long-term practice, as your identity shifts from wave to Ocean, you will experience the same waves but they have less power. You react less. The waves come and go. You have room for it all.

16. Edit the Tapes

- o Look back at a scene in your life you would replay if you could:
 - a. Stop
 - b. Breathe
 - c. Present moment
 - d. Reframe
 - ◇ Ask yourself: *What would have happened had I _____?*
 - ◇ *How would I and others have benefitted if I _____?*
 - ◇ Review the list of one hundred healing qualities on page 11.
 - ◇ Which quality or qualities would help you replay that scene the way you want now?
 - ◇ Practice your quality now and into the future.

17. Which Wolf Are You Feeding

- o An old Cherokee Indian was speaking to his grandson. *"A fight is going on inside me," he said to the boy. "It is a terrible fight between two wolves. One is evil—he is anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego. The other is good—he is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith. This same fight is going on inside you, and inside every other person, too.*

The grandson thought about it for a long minute, and then asked his grandfather, *"Which wolf will win?"*

The old Cherokee simply replied, *"The one you feed."*

- a. Are you mindful of the battle between the two wolves from moment to moment?
- b. Which wolf have you been feeding?
- c. When you become aware that you are feeding the bad wolf:
 1. Stop
 2. Breathe
 3. Present moment
 4. Choose the good wolf, love, a composite of one hundred healing qualities.
 5. Often, our only place of power in the story is love. When we get this, we are really moving along.

18. Apply Mindfulness to Everything

- o We can apply mindfulness to the simple things of daily life.
- o Mindful actions include talking, listening, shopping, cooking, cleaning, walking, chores, playing, working, parenting, eating, showering, driving, any activity, all tasks, all people, everything, anything. There is no limit to where you can apply mindfulness.
- o When the mind wanders or goes on automatic pilot:
 - a. Stop
 - b. Breathe
 - c. Present moment
 - d. Choose your own frame. There are unlimited numbers of frames you can use to help you stay in the moment.
 - e. Focus on something positive in the outer world, in your body, or in your inner being.
 - f. Focus on what you are doing.
 - g. Focus where you wish. An advanced mindfulness specialist like Rumi uses the entire universe as his palette. You can do this too. Be creative.

19. Lifelong Gentle Compassion for the Self

- o It takes years to bring the mind under control. Expect it to wander from the present moment into its old negative habit patterns. Do not frame this as success and failure, as this will cause frustration and tension.
- o When you go for a ride on the train of thought and find yourself back in a lower state of consciousness:
 1. Stop
 2. Breathe
 3. Present moment
 4. Always practice mindfulness with an attitude of kindness, gentleness, compassion, and understanding for yourself.
 5. Reenter the moment with the frame of your choice.

20. Meditation and Mindfulness

- Meditation and mindfulness work in tandem. Both techniques require one-pointed concentration. Both techniques reduce the excesses of the mind so it can be in alignment with the higher purposes of the heart and soul.
- If you practice meditation and mindfulness, you will build a powerful control center at the very core of your being. Events, the doings of other people, and your own reactivity will not ruffle you because you have more space and strength inside.
- This takes time to develop. Begin your practice now.

BENEFITS FROM THE PRACTICE OF MINDFULNESS

- An all-purpose increase in awareness of everything
- Improved powers of concentration
- Enhances ability to stay on task
- More present and calm
- Better at listening
- Removes debris and rubbish from our consciousness
- Purification and healing
- Helps us accept what we cannot change
- Helps us get some distance from our train of thought
- Stops the pursuit of negative thoughts
- Detoxifies negative thoughts, takes away their power and importance, reduces their electricity, and creates more space so they don't cause as much turbulence.
- More compassion, love, and kindness to the self and others
- Reduces mental restlessness and emotional reactivity
- Better problem solving
- More skillful pain management
- Less judgmental

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- The field of awareness in ordinary states of consciousness is contaminated with a variety of negative thought patterns. We remain largely unaware of these negative patterns and how they prevent us from reaching higher states of consciousness. In mindless states of unawareness, we are hypnotized, functioning like robots on automatic pilot, sleepwalking our way through life. Mindfulness, an ancient practice taught by the Buddha, helps us awaken from ordinary to higher consciousness.
- Mindful introspection allows us to see the forces that control and distract us. Through continuous observation of the flow of our thoughts, feelings, desires, aversions, impulses, and fantasies, we come to

understand ourselves better. We can see how our desires, fears, and insecurities cause tension and how, with the technique of mindfulness, we can release ourselves into the stillness, silence, spaciousness, and serenity of the witness.

- It takes years to bring the mind under control. Expect it to wander from the present moment into its old negative habit patterns. Do not frame this as success and failure, as this will cause frustration and tension. When you go for a ride on the train of thought and find yourself back in a lower state of consciousness, remain kind, compassionate, and gentle with yourself. Stop, breathe, and reenter the moment with the frame of your choice.
- We can practice mindfulness anywhere, anytime. All we have to do is stop, breathe, get into the present moment, and reframe. It is like the simple flick of a switch.
- To be fully aware of all of the elements of our lives, we need to pay attention. Mindfulness is a walking meditation or meditation in action. We can turn every action into a mindful, meditative exercise by giving whatever we are doing our full attention.
- The present moment is both the teacher and the entertainer. There are lessons to be learned and experiences to be enjoyed. Sometimes the lessons are painful. Other experiences are enjoyable and entertaining. Stay alert to get the most out of life, whatever the experience.
- The mind is geared to deal with the present. The past and future are too much to bear. There is more than enough reality here and now. Why add to the burden by leaning forward into the future or bending backward into the past?
- Mindfulness is an exercise designed to increase our concentration and attention so we can be awake and ready for anything, including work, pain, change, the unknown, or death.
- Highly developed intense concentration in the present moment results in a sense of flow, rhythm, harmony, and balance.
- Mindfulness is a part of the performance of all of the methods described in this work. Attention, concentration, and awareness are needed for all cognitive-behavioral, contemplative, and meditative practice.
- The peace, joy, love, power, and wisdom we are looking for are right here in the moments of our lives. However, we must be awake, aware, and focused; otherwise, restless thoughts, reactive emotions, and excessive desires will take us away.
- In ordinary consciousness, we identify with the stream of negative and disruptive thoughts, feelings, desires, impulses, and fantasies that pass through our awareness. With the practice of mindfulness, we create a space large enough to hold the negativity. In this space, we do not identify with negativity, and therefore do not need to repress or express it, both of which are destructive. Instead, we go to the compassionate witness of the true self and create a healing space within. This is a furnace of sorts: here we can burn up the junk thoughts, feelings, desires, and fantasies that keep our consciousness from rising.
- Rather than being negative, panicky, or agitated when life gets rough, ride the ups and downs like a rodeo cowboy on a bucking horse. With continued practice of mindfulness, the restless mind, hyperactive emotions, and excessive material desires will not bump us off the horse. We stay calm and focused even when the ride is rough.

- You don't have to change your belief system to practice mindfulness. Mindfulness is independent of belief systems, religion, theology, or deity. It is attention training. We learn how to place the mind where we want it to be.
- We can apply mindfulness to any activity: mindful eating, mindful speaking, mindful listening, and more. Life is a string of unlimited opportunities to practice mindfulness. Everything matters: every moment, every level, every detail.
- We are afraid of suffering, disease, disability, the unknown, and death. This mental distress slows down the healing process and makes our pain worse. With mindfulness, we don't escape from the pain. We face pain just as it is without reacting. When we react less, we suffer less. We slow down and relax. We stay in charge. We get our lives back.
- Pain is both physical and psychological. All pain is experienced in the mind and can therefore be modulated by the mind. The mind often expands and magnifies the pain. With mindfulness, we contain and reduce the pain. We break the locked-in automatic rapid response between a stressful event and high emotional reactivity. We step back from our thoughts and feelings so they do not trap us or sweep us away. We create space. We go to the calm center within, a place of absolute stillness no matter the drama of the world or the troubles of the body. This is called the witness. The witness is always still, silent, serene, and spacious. It is packed with healing power and healing qualities.
- With mindfulness, we see things as they are. We bring our complete attention to our experience in the present moment. We accept. We don't judge.
- When we practice mindfulness, we recognize thoughts and feelings as mental events rather than aspects of self or a reflection of reality. This changes our relationship to thoughts and feelings rather than changing the content or meaning.
- The ultimate goal of mindfulness is love. We are either in love or something negative. When negative, shift gears back to love. Everything in this model moves in that direction. Enter anywhere. It's all taking you to the same place: The Love Field.
- With deep, sustained, long-term practice of mindful service and meditation, our inner space expands so that we can receive the harsh realities of life with peace and poise.
- Stay awake and aware in the present moment, since it is in the here and now that life offers up its knowledge and lessons, entertainment and joy, and opportunities to love and serve.
- Be compassionate, yet unencumbered. Give peaceful, joyful, loving service to all of humanity, and enjoy the show.

AFFIRMATIONS

- With the breath, I anchor myself in the present moment.
- I calmly embrace the present moment.
- I calm myself and get back to the present moment.
- I invoke the witness, watching and observing.
- I invoke the witness, still and silent.

Healing Power: The Methods

- I invoke the witness, patient and breathing.
 - I invoke the witness, serene and spacious.
 - Compassion is the fire that burns up my problems in the healing furnace within.
 - By steady absorption in the moment, I get the rhythm of the story.
 - I respond to the show with peace and poise.
 - I am kind and gentle with myself under all conditions.
 - I add love and compassion to every moment of my inner life.
 - I receive all events with gentle compassion for myself.
 - I receive all events with gentle compassion for you.
 - I live fully in the present.
 - I practice the presence of peace.
 - I live fully in the present where change and healing occur.
 - I am grateful for the blessings of entertainment and joy.
 - I accept suffering as an opportunity to cultivate healing qualities.
 - I see magical miracles everywhere.
-
- You have completed your review of mindfulness, the first of five techniques recommended for your daily activity program. In the next chapter, you will study a similar technique: practicing the presence of God.



CHAPTER 16

PRACTICING THE PRESENCE OF GOD

A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP

- This chapter introduces the second technique of the daily activity program, practicing the presence of God. We will review:
 1. One Power with two dimensions: Spirit and matter
 2. A six-step generic technique
 3. The Beloved Friend
 4. The Qualities
 5. Meditation: devotion and stillness
 6. The Messiah in Disguise
- This chapter has a lot of God talk. If this is a problem, you can practice mindfulness, which is similar to practicing the presence of God but does not include a Higher Power. Also remember, you can modify language to suit your needs. For example, you can remove and replace the word God with Life, Buddha, Tao, Universe, higher self, higher consciousness, Higher Power, nature, mystery, and so forth. You will notice I refer to God as She or He to demonstrate Her/His multidimensionality. I encourage you to use whichever pronoun works for you and to replace She with He and He with She if you wish.

A SINGLE POWER WITH TWO DIMENSIONS

- There is a single field with two dimensions: Spirit and matter. Spirit and matter are two sides of the same coin. They occupy the same space. We stand between these two worlds but most of us don't experience Spirit because the material world has all of our attention. When we practice the presence of God, we reverse this trend. We reduce the power of the material world and make contact with God.
- Following is a brief review of the nature of Spirit and matter and some exercises to help us bring out the spiritual side of the equation.

SPIRIT

- A Singular Power inhabits all space, unifying and harmonizing everything in the universe. This Power is pure formless conscious energy. It is at once the source of everything and the link that connects all. It cannot be born, confined, limited, divided, or broken. It is eternal, immortal, changeless, and one. It is inside, outside, everywhere, extending forever in every direction, unifying all things and people. The great books and teachers call it the Tao, Buddha, Christ Consciousness, Krishna Consciousness, The Changeless One, Bliss, Nirvana, God, The Field, Divine Love, The Ocean of Love, Omniscient, Omnipotent, Omnipresent Love, and more.
- We do not enter this field. We are already in it. It is already in us. There is no separation. All is one. We live in this infinite ocean as a fish swims in water. The “water” is always right here offering peace, love, joy, wisdom, and safety. When we realize our oneness with the ocean, we know we are immortal, indivisible, and connected to all.
- We can have a personal relationship with this Omnipotent Power. The All-Knowing Infinite Power can mysteriously manifest at our level bearing priceless gifts: guidance, protection, friendship, healing, purification, and expansion of healing qualities: peace, love, compassion, joy, light, and more.
- The Great Healer knocks on the door of ordinary consciousness but we don’t hear it. We have lost our connection to the invisible, subtle, higher vibrations offered by the gracious Omnipresent Power, stuck as we are in the gross vibrations of material consciousness.

MATTER

- This is the material world as we know it in ordinary consciousness. It occupies the same space as Spirit. The material world or *maya* commands all of our attention. It makes us think the show on the physical plane is all there is.
- We are addicted to the show with its fascinating stories, alluring objects, and sensual pleasures. Tests and trials come. We get trapped in our thoughts, feelings, desires, habits, attachments, and egos. Separated, mired, and hooked by the limitations of material consciousness, we remain deaf to the Friend trying to help. We want to get closer to the great God of love and absorb Her qualities. Instead we experience separation, a gap of sorts. What will help bridge this gap?
- We can talk to God and get a response. We can have a personal relationship with an Omniscient Power whose nature is gentle, compassionate, loving, and wise, a living presence beyond philosophy or belief. Contact is not only possible, but this magnificent benevolent power knows what we need and wants to give it to us.
- In order to give us the help we need, God performs one of His greatest tricks. He reduces Himself from Infinite Power to a number of aspects we can relate to: Father, Mother, Friend, Healer, Lover, Teacher, Guide, Protector, and Counselor. Then, through these aspects, He offers guidance, protection, friendship, healing, purification, and the expansion of soul qualities. As our healing qualities grow, we feel better, treat others better, and make the world a better place.
- It seems too good to be true that such a wonderful relationship is available in the world of limitation and suffering, as we know it in ordinary consciousness. If it is true that an all-knowing, infinite power can

mysteriously manifest at our level and enter our lives bearing priceless gifts, why don't we know Him? How can we find Him? And how can we keep Him in our lives?

- Material consciousness creates an invisible shield, a seemingly impenetrable defense against our experience of the subtle vibrations of compassion, kindness, gentleness, and warmth offered by the Grand Healer. We don't experience the next layer of reality just behind the veil of ordinary consciousness because we are not mindful of the possibility and we don't know how to make contact. We need a technique to help us work through the limitations of material consciousness so we can contact God, prove His existence to ourselves, explore His nature, and partake of His wondrous gifts.
- Review and practice the following techniques. These techniques will help you tap into the subtle hidden dimension of Omniscient love just behind the veil of ordinary consciousness.

GENERIC TECHNIQUE FOR PRACTICING THE PRESENCE OF GOD

- When you have gone for a ride on the train of thought and want to get off the train:
 1. Stop
 2. Breathe
 3. Present moment
 4. Reframe: practicing the presence of God
 - a. Any method described in this book: affirmations, habit transformation, progressive muscle relaxation, breathwork, contemplation, meditation, prayer, mindfulness, service, yoga, and transformation of emotion
 - b. The sacred meaning of story
 - c. Conversation with God
 5. God responds
 - a. Omniscience, Omnipotence, Omnipresence
 - b. Healing
 - c. Meditation
 - d. Phenomena
 6. Hide and seek, find and keep
- Notice the similarity between the technique for practicing mindfulness and that of the presence of God. Both focus on our experience of higher states of consciousness. The difference is in the concept of a Higher Power. Mindfulness practice does not require a personal relationship with God. Practicing the presence of God presupposes the existence of God as a conscious power with whom we can have a relationship.
- As in the practice of mindfulness, we need to employ our powers of concentration and awareness in the present moment, as we can know God best in the present.
- Follow the same steps as with mindfulness, but now, at Step 4, the frame is practicing the presence of God through any of the spiritual methods described in this work along with two additional practices:

the sacred meaning of story and conversing with God. Each of these spiritual practices results in a direct experience of God.

- When the mind wanders into one of the many variations of ordinary consciousness, stop, breathe, focus on the present moment, and bring God to your awareness by choosing one of the frames listed in Step 4. When your mind wanders and you realize you are back in ordinary consciousness, refocus on the presence of God. As in meditation and mindfulness, you will forget and remember many times for years to come; this is the nature of spiritual practice.

Step 4a: Any Method Described in This Book

- The practice of any method described in this work results in the cultivation of spiritual qualities adding up to love. When our love is strong enough, it breaks into another realm, an unmistakable transformation of consciousness to Divine Love. This is practicing the presence of God as love.

Step 4b: The Sacred Meaning of Story

- God's presence can be distilled from the sacred meaning of stories. We can experience the presence of God if we watch our personal and collective stories unfold from the point of view of God as our Teacher, training us to cultivate love through a process of purification towards perfection.
- The Teacher is eager to train us in the art of love, gratitude, reverence, humility, surrender, intuition, and faith. (S)he sets up the entire universe of human experience as a training ground for the expansion of love and associated qualities, until they become unconditional. (S)he designs events and circumstances so that we can discover, remove, and replace our faults with the healing qualities of love. Everything in our life experience is raw material to train us to be more loving in our thoughts, feelings, desires, and actions. To observe the story of life unfolding from this point of view is to practice the presence of God as the Teacher of love.
- God is untainted and unlimited peace, joy, love, power, and wisdom. We are made of these same love qualities in combination with our problems, flaws, and imperfections, which act as barriers between God and ourselves. When we slowly reduce and replace our imperfections by expanding love qualities, we approach the gateway to Her presence: She is love; it is her domain.
- The Teacher of Love does not care about our role, power, money, status, age, class, or religion. She only cares about what is in our hearts. Actions saturated with love, kindness, humility, and understanding are pleasant in Her sight. Pick a quality such as love or one of her associates: peace, gentleness, sweetness, gratitude, appreciation, or surrender. Cultivate your chosen quality by focusing on it in your meditation and through affirmations and visualizations. Bring it to every thought, feeling, action, and event. Hold on to it and make it grow. This is practicing the presence of God.
- We don't have to change anything in our life, except to respond to events and problems with God's qualities. When we respond to cruelty with kindness, to ignorance with understanding, to suffering with compassionate service, and to fear with courage, we practice the presence of God.
- In the end, when we have burned off our imperfections and become pure, we enter Her kingdom of unlimited peace, joy, love, power, and wisdom, fulfilling the sacred intent and meaning of our life story.

Step 4C: Conversing with God

- Prayer is formal, structured communication with God. We can also have an ongoing, spontaneous conversation with God. Some of us may find conversing with an invisible power strange at first. Because of our feeling of separation, we think no one is there. A few suggestions might help.
- To make contact with God, we need a workable, accessible concept of who God is and who we are. We can speak to God's Omnipresent Formless Form or to a more concrete aspect such as Teacher, Father, Mother, Friend, Healer, Counselor, Confidante, Beloved, Creator, King, Guide, or Protector. We can approach God as a babe, child, student, servant, witness, disciple, devotee, warrior, or simply a human being.
- We can pick a concept based on our need at the time. If we need advice, we can call the Counselor. If we are lonely or need to share, we can call the Friend. If we need healing or purification, we can call the Physician. If we need forgiveness, we can call the Mother. If we need to extract the meaning and lessons from the events of our lives, we can call the Teacher. If we need wisdom, strength, or courage, we can call the Father. If we need love, we can call the Beloved.
- As in any relationship, we begin by starting a conversation. The conversation can occur at any point during the day, from the time we get up in the morning to just before sleep. We can be as natural and relaxed as we would be with a friend or formal and reverent. The communication should be honest, direct, and heartfelt.
- We can weave God into the fabric of our daily lives by sharing our needs, goals, problems, joys, and successes. We can share what has happened in our day, what is happening in our lives, our feelings, idle thoughts, anything, and everything. We can be angry and argue. We can ask for guidance, protection, or support. We can ask questions. We can ask for help with our own problems and bad habits and for aid in all that we do for others. We can express our desire to be closer to Him, to be more like Him. We can confess our embarrassing secrets and ask for understanding and forgiveness. It is liberating and healing to tell the truth to the One who already knows what we have done and what is in our hearts.

Step 5: God's Response

- We can initiate our communication with God through the sacred meaning of story, conversing with God, or through any spiritual method described in this work. How does God respond?
- We cannot make contact with Him without intense, continuous, and long-term communication. We need to practice with all our hearts, minds, might, and souls until we get a response, however long it may take.
- Most of us will not get a response in the beginning. As a result, many stop practicing. Some drop their practice because of indifference or boredom. Others give up when life becomes difficult. Some quit their practice when life becomes easy.
- If we take advantage of all our moments by practicing the presence of God and never giving up, we break down the invisible shield that we have built up between God and ourselves, experience God's response, and get the help we need.
- God's response varies according to our individual predilections and our level of spiritual development. Following is a discussion of four ways that God may come into our lives:
 - a. Omniscience, Omnipotence, Omnipresence

- b. Healing
- c. Meditation
- d. Phenomena

Step 5a: Omniscience, Omnipotence, Omnipresence

- Clues and evidence speaking to God's Omniscience, Omnipotence, and Omnipresence abound. God is a conscious intelligent power whose presence is ubiquitous. Her manifestation is ever-present in all of nature and in our bodies and consciousness. She occupies every millimeter of space, from the infinitesimal to infinity. She operates every level of reality, from microcosmic particles and waves to macrocosmic solar systems. Her unfathomable power keeps the whirling atoms, planets, and galaxies moving in harmonious balance with each other.
- Her infinitely intelligent power creates, sustains, operates, and dissolves a seemingly endless parade of billions of forms, including us. The marvels and beauty of nature—birds, ocean, sky, sunsets, and flowers—are Her costume. The entire universe, all forms and every human body, are Her temple.
- The entry point to Her realm is acknowledgement of the continuous signs of Her power, beauty, and intelligence. We need to remind ourselves that Her unseen, invisible intelligence is always sustaining and guiding atoms, galaxies, and us.
- God wants us to use Her boundless resources in our daily lives. We can get Her help if we remember to connect our thoughts, will, feelings, desires, actions, and all events with Her.
- God's power and energy permeate every scene, in every moment, at every level of detail. By remembering Her Omnipresence, we can get help with any problem or crisis.
- No moment or detail is too small. It is easy to get tricked or fooled into apathy or boredom by quiet moments such as traffic jams or waiting in line. However, we can use these seemingly mundane events to see God in everything, and everything in God. If we persist in our practice, we will come to the realization that God is an unlimited source of power, love, and wisdom that we can tap into at any time.

Step 5b: Healing

- God responds to our spiritual work by healing our mind, body, and soul.
- The mind becomes positive, calm, focused, resilient, and strong.
- Destructive emotions are skillfully transformed into self-knowledge.
- Excessive material desires are transmuted into contentment and satisfaction.
- Healing power for the body expands. We can get help with any disease or disability.
- While our physical problems may not magically disappear, we can always expand the healing qualities of the soul. Soul qualities such as peace, forgiveness, gentleness, and understanding replace restlessness, guilt, aggression, and ignorance.
- As our healing qualities expand and our problems burn up, we get more space to receive the suffering of the world. Then we can respond with compassionate action, thus contributing to the healing of others and the environment.

Step 5c: Meditation

- In meditation, God manifests as unfathomable stillness, the peace that surpasses understanding, ecstatic joy, pure love, and intuitive wisdom. Some experience a breathtaking and thrilling, yet soft and gentle surge of power, a soothing embrace, or a feeling of absolute safety. Advanced meditators experience *samadhi*, the ecstasy of complete union with God.

Step 5d: Phenomena

- Some people experience phenomena such as aura, light, visions, prophetic dreams, intuitive knowing, guidance, protection, answered prayers, synchronicity, healing powers, or entrance into the “zone,” the experience of supreme flow, rhythm, and harmony.

Step 6: Hide and Seek, Find and Keep

- When we align ourselves with His will, God makes an appearance through:
 1. His Omniscient, Omnipotent Omnipresence
 2. Healing body, mind, and soul
 3. In the love and stillness of meditation
 4. Phenomena
- With continued practice, we gradually become more attuned and receptive to His will, guidance, and counsel. As we see His great healing principle at work in our lives, our trust in Him grows. However, as we go through tests and trials, God disappears behind the veil of ordinary consciousness. We feel separate again, dry, and seemingly alone as we struggle with our problems.
- God’s appearance and disappearance, His play of hide and seek, has a purpose: character development through the culture of unconditional love. God is unconditional love and associated qualities. His wish is that we become like Him through a process of purification, through expansion of our soul qualities. During difficult times when God is hiding, our job is to seek Him through the pursuit of love qualities until they become unconditional.
- We can respond to events with manifestations of God’s love such as kindness, compassion, peace, and understanding, or with cruelty, hate, violence, and ignorance. When our response is one of the many forms of negativity, we need to work through it until we get back to love and its companion soul qualities. God appears and disappears until such qualities become unconditional, spontaneous, and automatic.
- His play of hide and seek goes on indefinitely as we work through our pain and problems. He often hides as we do the work but eventually the Gentle Lover returns. We learn to trust His purification process, as He inevitably reappears with infinitely creative versions of His sweet love. The experience of even a trace of His sweetness is addicting. In our yearning for more, we avail ourselves to His healing process of purification—sometimes purification by fire. We learn to trust the process of His appearing and disappearing as we realize His intention for us: to become the tender gentle love that He is.
- Eventually it becomes impossible not to love Her intimately and deeply. She has given us the greatest possible gift: immersion in Her presence, where we can contact the unconditional sweet love of the Father-Mother, the perfect, ubiquitous guidance from the Counselor, the healing and purification from

the Physician, the training from the Teacher, and friendship from the Friend. As Her colossal, stupendous, multifaceted power plays hide and seek with us, we play find and keep with Her.

- In the end, we find ourselves permanently immersed in His Ocean. We see that everything is in Him, as fish swimming in water. Then we experience His love no matter what difficulties life brings. Surrounded, fed, permeated, and saturated with His love, we give only that to all we meet. Secure in the knowledge that we are always in Him and He in us, we bow in reverence and awe.
- Think cosmic thoughts as you fold laundry and put the kids to bed. Instead of zoning out, realize that the Great One is always right here, right now. Every moment is a manifestation of infinity, eternity, and immortality!
- You have finished your review of the generic technique for practicing the presence of God. Following are some additional ways to practice the presence of God: The Beloved Friend, The Qualities, and Meditation with devotion and stillness.

THE BELOVED FRIEND

- God is not far away although it feels like it. He is right here, right now, everywhere, in everything. We are in Him and He is in us.
- Should we decide to pursue the Invisible Gracious Power and receive Her medley of gifts, there are a number of avenues of approach.
- To bring God closer, you might try relating to Her Formless Form: Omniscient, Omnipotent, Omnipresent love.
- For those who find Omniscient love too vague or distant, the following aspects of God may be more approachable and accessible: Father, Mother, Friend, Beloved, Teacher, Healer, Confidante, Great Physician, Grandfather, Creator, Guide, Protector, or Counselor.
- Choose one or a combination of these aspects and begin your practice. For example, you might choose the Beloved Friend.
- The Beloved Friend is everywhere throughout the day no matter what we are doing or what happens to us. He is hiding in every thought, in every cell, in everything within us. He is just behind the veil of ordinary consciousness.
- Talk to your Beloved Friend anywhere, anytime, about anything. Speak to Her in truth from the deepest place in your heart.
- Speak to Her throughout the day. Share your life. Talk to Her no matter what the world or your body is doing. Include anger, elation, silence, everything.
- It doesn't matter whether your problem is tiny, small, medium, large, or huge. You can invoke your special, close, personal, intimate relationship with God as your Beloved Friend and ask for help. Her love and wisdom will guide you.
- The Beloved is with us now and forever, inspiring, helping, and guiding. See Her in all people, all creation, all conditions.
- Build a connecting link between you and your Friend that cannot be broken even if the world shatters.
- Use Her as your guide and protector.

THE QUALITIES

- Some find God accessible through the unified field of pure unconditional love.
- Others get traction by relating to Him as Father, Mother, Friend, Beloved, Counselor, Guide, Protector, Teacher, Creator, Great Healer, Grandfather, and more.
- A third option is practicing the presence of God by cultivating the healing qualities. We can understand God as any one or combination of healing qualities in unlimited form: love, peace, compassion, courage, strength, patience, kindness, gentleness, forgiveness, and more.
- God = unlimited love = unlimited healing qualities. We are made in that image. Our true self is love = the qualities. The qualities are embedded in our consciousness. We can make them grow.
- Choose a quality and practice it throughout the day.
- Use your quality to antidote your restless mind, reactive emotions, excessive material desires, obsessing about your problems, egotism, or other negative vibrations.
- Let your quality guide every thought, feeling, desire, decision, and action.
- Give your quality to all whom you meet.
- The qualities grow and eventually expand to the peace that surpasses understanding, pure love, ecstatic joy, and other wonderful superconscious experiences.
- Strive to attune to God's presence. Feel Him. His nature is gentle, compassionate, loving, and wise. He is silently guiding us through these and the other qualities listed in the spiritual alphabet.

PRACTICING THE PRESENCE OF GOD IN MEDITATION: DEVOTION AND STILLNESS

- We can make contact with God in meditation. S(he) is in and just behind the silent darkness. We can coax Her to come out and touch us when we practice stillness and devotion.
- Meditation brings us to stillness.
- In stillness, we practice devotion.
- Stillness and devotion bring out the presence of God as the superconscious love we crave.
- Following is a review of how devotion and stillness work together to bring this sacred holy experience to you.
- Practice your meditation technique and bring in as much stillness as you can. Then practice devotion and stillness.
- Here is the sequence:

DEVOTION AND STILLNESS

Meditation → Devotion → Stillness → Superconsciousness → Service → Repeat → Mastery

Devotion

- Devotion is giving God our unconditional love and gratitude.
- Love is the feeling. The expression of that feeling to the Divine is devotion.
- Devotion is active. We knock on the door of God. We ask, seek, and yearn.
- Yearning is a part of devotion. It is the magnetic ardor of yearning that draws the grace of God. We must have a fire in our heart or we won't get a response. A pure call from the heart and He has to respond. We practice with full attention and intensity. None of this is half-hearted. This is hard, serious work. The mind is awake, on fire.
- Our little love is the magnet that draws the Big Love of God. Practice unconditional, one pointed, steady devotion and He will come to you.
- Talk to God. Make devotional communion with God an important part of your meditation. Tell Him you want Him. Implore His presence again and again.
- Churn the ether with your love. If you don't feel it, act as though you do and eventually you will.
- Pay no attention to the onslaught of thoughts and drama. Instead, practice one or more of the following devotional heart calls. Seekers use these to create an irresistible magnet that will draw God. You might enjoy practicing these or create your own by speaking to God in the language of your heart.
 - Accept my devotional offering of concentration and attention.
 - Help me calm my body and mind that I might feel Your presence within and without.
 - With ever increasing intensity, I offer all of my heart, mind, and soul. I want You alone. Nothing else matters.
 - I have come to this meditation to experience Your presence. Help me meditate more deeply.
 - Awaken in me Your Divinity. Awaken my heart. Awaken my devotion. Let me experience Your Love in this meditation.
 - I am Your child, made in Your love. Open my heart and mind and touch my soul that I may feel Your Love.
 - Help me feel your presence as peace, love, joy, power, and wisdom.
 - Help me practice Your presence more continuously in meditation and activity.
 - Teach me to feel Your peaceful presence inside and outside, above and below, left and right, all around me.
 - May my every thought be saturated with the awareness of Your presence.
 - May my every feeling glow with Your love.
 - Help me to know your Omnipresence as the peace-love-joy that permeates all things.
 - Lift my consciousness. Immerse me in Your light. Immerse me in the tangible vibration of Your loving presence.
 - Be with me now and always. Be my Companion. Give me your gentle-joy.
 - You are the Reality behind all appearance. Bless me that I deeply feel Your presence inside, outside, everywhere, in all people, and all conditions.

- Bless me, guide me, be with me always.
- Help me cast aside all burdens.
- Help me be receptive to Your blessings.
- Make Your love my eternal home.
- Help me remember you are within, without, everywhere, always.
- Lord, Master of the Universe, I will never give up until You talk to me.
- I offer You all of the love of my heart.
- Fill my heart with undying devotion for You alone.
- You are my life. You are my love. You are my only goal.
- Come to me. Reveal Yourself.
- Bathe me, saturate me, permeate me with Your love. Change me forever and forever.
- Help me serve more selflessly and above all love more unconditionally.
- Help me heal myself, our countries, and the earth.

Stillness

- With devotion, we make a sustained intense offering with all of our heart and will to become one with God.
- After you finish practicing devotion, quietly rest and feel Him in stillness.
- In stillness, God reveals Himself secretly and quietly in a variety of manifestations.
 - A little glimmer of light
 - A feeling of comfort and peace
 - The peace that surpasses understanding
 - Ecstatic joy
 - Pure love
 - Intuitive wisdom
 - A breathtaking and thrilling yet soft and gentle surge of power
 - A soothing embrace
 - A feeling of absolute safety
 - Phenomena: aura, light, visions, guidance, protection, answered prayers, synchronicity, healing powers
 - Entrance in to the zone: the experience of supreme flow, rhythm, and harmony.
 - The unconditional sweet love of the Father-Mother
 - Perfect guidance from the Counselor
 - Healing and purification from the Great Physician
 - Training from the Teacher

- Friendship from the Friend
- Love from the Beloved
- Healing qualities expand
- Our problems burn up
- Advanced meditators experience *samadhi*, the ecstasy of complete union with God. We feel Him inside, outside, everywhere as unlimited peace, love, joy, power, and wisdom.
- Take note of your manifestation. Embrace it. Capture it. Meditate on it. It will expand.
- Recognize the blessing, guidance, and help you are getting. Affirm: “Beloved Friend, You are with me now, and I am with You.”
- When we come out of meditation, we have more space to receive and respond to the suffering of the world with compassionate action. We express our love in quiet, anonymous, gentle acts of humble service to all.

THE SECRET ESSENCE OF SPIRITUAL WORK

- With devotion, we give God our love.
- In stillness, we receive His Love.
- In service, we give love to one another.
- Practice devotion, stillness, and service. This is the secret essence of spiritual work. It will speed up your evolution. Try it. It works.

THE MESSIAH IN DISGUISE: AUTHOR UNKNOWN

High in the mountains was a monastery that had once been known throughout the world. Its monks were pious, its students enthusiastic. The chants from the monastery’s chapel deeply touched the hearts of people who came there to pray and meditate. But, something had changed. Fewer and fewer young men came to study there; fewer and fewer people came for spiritual nourishment. The monks who remained became disheartened and sad.

Deeply worried, the abbot of the monastery went off in search of an answer. Why had his monastery fallen on such hard times? The abbot came to a guru, and asked the master for advice. The guru said, “I have no advice to give. The only thing I can tell you is that the Messiah is one of you.” Then, the guru closed his eyes and remained silent.

“The messiah is one of us,” thought the abbot. “Who could it be? Brother Cook? Brother Treasurer? Brother Bell-Ringer? Brother Vegetable Grower? Every one of us has faults, failings, human defects. Isn’t the messiah supposed to be perfect? But, then, perhaps these faults and failings are part of his disguise. Which one? Which one?”

When the abbot returned to the monastery, he gathered all the monks together and told them what the guru had said. “One of us? The messiah? Impossible!” But the master had spoken, and the master was never wrong. Which one? That brother over there? That one? Whichever one of the monks was the messiah, he was surely in disguise.

Not knowing who amongst them was the messiah, all the monks began treating each other with new respect. “You never know,” they thought, “he might be the one, so I had better deal with him kindly.”

As they contemplated in this manner, the monks began to treat each other with extraordinary respect, on the off chance that one of them might be the Messiah. And on the off, off chance that each monk himself might be the Messiah, they began to treat themselves with extraordinary respect.

It was not long before the monastery was filled with new-found joy. Soon, new students came to learn, and people came from far and wide to be inspired by the chants of the kind, smiling monks. For once again, the monastery was filled with the spirit of love.

- a. Do you see? We are a part of God but don't know it. We are duped into thinking this is not the case.
- b. Behave as though you are in the presence of Jesus, Buddha, or Krishna because you are.
- c. God is inside, outside, everywhere. When we awaken to the divinity in all, everything gets better.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- On the spiritual path, there is only one desire: the presence of God.
- To enter His realm, God expects us to learn how to behave. To behave properly, we need to become like Him, a composite of pure love qualities. Then the all-powerful, all-knowing God of the universe gradually, gently enters an intimate relationship with us by revealing His compassion and wisdom.
- To find God in an event, follow the love. If you cannot find love, bring it out from within yourself. Wherever there is love, there is your temple and there is your God.
- God hides behind the veil of ordinary consciousness. We seek Him through the cultivation of unconditional love in the present moment. When we fill our moments with love, we experience the presence of God. God is love. Love is our home.
- The Teacher wants us to respond to all events and people with love qualities. The challenges are many. It is difficult to respond with compassion when we are insulted, provoked, or abused. However, the ultimate practice of the presence of God is responding with love no matter what happens in our environment.
- Pain is a directive signal, telling us where we need to do some work. It is a stimulant for the development of spiritual qualities. We accept pain as necessary for transformation and purification of consciousness towards forbearance, endurance, courage, strength, humility, patience, or any combination of qualities. Pain is an opportunity to work in the direction of God.
- Practicing the presence of God is the same as practicing the presence of any spiritual quality. As we breathe, affirm, and grow a spiritual quality, we increase our experience of the presence of God. When we realize that we have lost our peace and our mind is restless, we can stop, breathe, focus on the present, and affirm any one or a combination of the love qualities needed at that moment.
- All of the spiritual qualities are connected and grow together. For example, if we choose to expand peace of mind, we will also grow patience, compassion, and forgiveness. Thus, through the practice of peace, we connect our lives to God; it is His will that we permeate our thoughts with His peace.
- There are times when we have absolutely no control over the environment, but we always have power over our thoughts and will. This is where the battle is fought. This is where we can bring God into every thought, feeling, and action. This is where we can make the relationship personal.
- Practicing the presence of God is a secret, sacred, silent act. No one knows.

- Selfless service to humanity brings us to the presence of God: this is His will.
- Selfless service to the environment brings us to the presence of God, which is also His will.
- As our spiritual qualities grow and our experience of the presence of God correspondingly deepens, our ability to serve God and humanity is refined and expanded. We become increasingly useful.
- During the day when you are busy but have a moment between tasks, chant, affirm, pray, or speak to God in the language of your heart. This leads to attunement with the highest vibrations. Then return to the task.
- When we get into the presence and give love, we switch from ego-getting to soul-giving.
- When we practice the presence of God during activity, our meditation is easier. When we practice meditation, we will find God more easily during activity. Meditation and practicing the presence of God in activity complement each other.
- No matter what the world or your body is doing, Big Love is here, now, embracing, watching, guiding, and inspiring. Be still and receptive so you don't miss the blessing and the help you are getting.
- We stand in between the two worlds, *maya* and God. These are like two sides of the same coin: the material and the spiritual. Roll the wheel. Practice PMQ. The invisible unified love field responds with healing and phenomena. Phenomena are part of it but don't have that as a goal. The only desire is for the presence of God as love.
- Let go of the restlessness and separation born of material consciousness and join the peace-love-joy of God everywhere present.
- Devotion is the over-arching magnetic attraction to God. It's what gives meaning to meditation and to all of life.
- The world does what it does and we respond the way we respond. If we respond with a healing quality, we are already in the presence of God or being mindful.
- In stillness, the door opens. We receive the gift. God appears as the peace that surpasses understanding, pure love, and ecstatic joy. The feeling here is exquisite. Superconscious peace-love-joy is addictive. One taste and we want more. But it doesn't last. God disappears. We return to ordinary consciousness. There is more work to do.
- When God disappears, the separation is ultimately intolerable. We yearn for Her return. Yearning brings us closer to God. Yearning is part of devotion. With devotion, we close the gap of separation. This is the romance of God.
- God wants to get married but we want to play the field, the *maya* field, so He doesn't show himself. He waits while we learn our lessons. (*Maya* = the world as we know it in ordinary consciousness.)
- God first, regular meditation, devotional yearning, and service to others. This is the magic of spiritual work.
- A conversation with God might go something like this: "I read about You in sacred texts. You are described in the most glowing terms. The saints say You are a gentle, loving, compassionate being. You come as peace, stillness, and joy in meditation. Some are given glorious visions, healings, or miracles. Where are You for me? I experience nothing but separation. When and how will You reveal Yourself to me?" After you pour your heart out, you wait for a response. She says, "I want you to be with Me, but first you must learn to behave. Look for the sacred meaning in the events of your life. Purify yourself by

fostering love qualities. Then you will know Me as your Teacher. Seek my guidance and counsel. Then you will know Me as Wisdom. Practice service, and you will know Me as the Giver. Practice meditation, and you will feel Me enter the temple of your body as the sweetness that you crave. Then you will know Me as your Father, Mother, Beloved, Friend, Healer, Confidante, Protector, and Guide.”

- Every natural dog sniffs God in the stew (Rumi).

AFFIRMATIONS

- I come from and return to Spirit.
- I move, live, and have my being in Spirit.
- I am a fish swimming in the ocean of God.
- I love and serve in the omnipresent temple of God.
- I worship the Lord equally in every body-temple.
- I serve the God housed in my body.
- I serve the God housed in your body.
- I stay in the present, where I can know and feel God.
- Every person, form, and story serves as a reminder of His presence.
- I bow to the manifestation of the Divine Mother before me right now.
- I love the manifestation of the Divine Mother before me right now.
- I serve the manifestation of the Divine Mother before me right now.
- I am always in the mind of God.
- I am always in the heart of God.
- I am always on the throne of God.
- I am always at the feet of God.
- I am one with God.

EXERCISES

1. Why do we feel separate from God?
2. Describe the six steps for practicing the Presence of God.
3. What is the sacred meaning of story?
4. Describe the elements of having a conversation with God.
5. What are four ways that God can respond to the seeker?
6. Always check to see where you are. Where are your mind and feelings? Are you here and now or on automatic pilot? What are you practicing the presence of? Is it God, a love quality, or something else?

7. In ordinary consciousness, we find it difficult to believe that God is here with us right now. However, to practice the presence of God, we need to begin thinking, feeling, and acting as though we are in the temple of God at all times, because in reality we are, even though material consciousness hypnotizes us into thinking that God's presence is an illusion. How should we behave in the presence of the Creator of the universe? What would it be like to have thoughts, feelings, and actions consistent with being at the feet of God?
8. What would change if you had an appointment with God in three hours?
9. How would you behave in Her Presence?
10. How would you treat the person you are with if s(he) is God in disguise?
11. What would be different if everything is God and God is everything?
12. Practicing the presence of God is keeping our attention on God at all times. We can do this since God is always present in one or more of His aspects. We can see the hand of God in events by watching for these aspects. We can speak to God's Omnipresent Formlessness or to a more concrete aspect such as Teacher, Father, Mother, Friend, Healer, Counselor, Confidante, Beloved, Creator, King, Guide, or Protector. We can approach God as a babe, child, student, servant, witness, disciple, devotee, warrior, or simply a human being. Can you think of any additional aspects? Which do you prefer?

Try the following technique: When you have gone for a ride on the train of thought and you want to get off the train:

- a. Stop
 - b. Breathe
 - c. Present moment
 - d. Concentrate on any aspect of your Higher Power: Father, Mother, Friend, Beloved, Confidante, Creator, Teacher, Healer, Changelessness, love or any healing quality, and more. Be creative. Pick a concept, practice, and experience the results.
13. A gentleman passes you by on the street and your ego-mind thinks, "He is not very attractive or stylish and he should lose some weight." You observe this judgmental thought and counter with a thought from the soul, "God sends unconditional love to all of His children. I send love and kindness to this man as well." Do you see? It's a simple flick of a switch to practice Her presence. "Those who think Me near, I am near" (Paramahansa Yogananda).
 14. We do not need to change anything to practice the presence of God. Simply perform every action to please God no matter what the circumstances are.
- You have now studied two techniques for your daily activity program: mindfulness and the presence of God. In the next chapter, you will review service.



CHAPTER 17

SERVICE

ADDING OUR LIGHT TO THE SUM OF LIGHT

*I slept and dreamt that life was joy.
I awoke and saw that life was service.
I acted and behold! Service was joy.*

– Tagore

- In this chapter, we will explore the third method of the daily activity program: service.
- The colossal suffering of the world takes many forms: ignorance, violence, poverty, homelessness, disease, tyranny, corruption, racism, unemployment, and injustice. We want to help. We want to heal the world. This natural compassionate drive is an expression of the soul, our true identity. Although we cannot influence the vast problems of the world as much as we would like, we can do our part, however small. We can add our light to the sum of the light. The world's religions would have us do just that.
- True religions emphasize serving others in need. Spiritual giants like Jesus, Buddha, Krishna, Mother Teresa, and Gandhi name selfless service as the path to enlightenment. Masters in the art of service, they gave of themselves for the evolution of others and experienced the joy that comes as a result.
- An example of the highest service is the *bodhisattva*. The Buddhists define a *bodhisattva* as one who vows to return to Earth in as many incarnations as are necessary in order to relieve all human suffering.

THE BODHISATTVA'S VOW

*So long as space remains,
so long as sentient beings remain,
I will remain
in order to help,
in order to serve,
in order to make
my own contribution.*

– Interpreted by the Dalai Lama

- Masters, saints, and *bodhisattvas* model grand service to humanity. Although we may not have such a major role in the big picture, we can take some valuable lessons from their lead in order to be helpful in our immediate sphere of influence.
- Small acts of gentle, humble service have impact. Wherever we are, we do what we can. Mother Teresa said, “I can’t help thousands. I can help only the one who stands before me.” John Newton added, “If two angels were sent down from heaven, one to conduct an empire and the other to sweep the street, they would feel no inclination to change employments.”
- It does not matter what role we play. What does matter is how we play it. We do not need to change anything. What we do need is to bring love, kindness, and compassion to our actions. It is our attitude that counts, whether we are postal workers, waiting on tables, health care professionals, bus drivers, or staying at home with children. We can perform any task in a state of ordinary consciousness or in the consciousness of service. The difference is love. Love converts an ordinary act to service. Service is love in action.
- The greatest service is giving inner and outer resources without attachment or expectation. Ordinary action generally focuses on external rewards and recognition. When we perform an act of service, giving our time, energy, and resources as an expression of our love, the reward is inner peace, satisfaction, and joy. In this sense, service itself is selfish, since we do it because it makes us feel good.
- Service is a universal healer, a potent medicine for individuals and the community. For individuals, it works as an antidote to the poison of guilt and as a powerful antidepressant. It takes us out of our tiresome self-ruminations, bolsters our self-esteem, and replaces feelings of insecurity with confidence. As service places us on the common ground with all of humanity, we grow in humility and equality. When we connect to others through service, our internal agitation is silenced.
- Service is also a powerful medicine for the community. It works against those forces that tear us apart. Political, religious, sexual, racial, and national identities create division and conflict. Loving service, by nature expansive and inclusive, is the glue that binds us back together. Service is anesthetic to our troubles. It stops the internal wars, heals the divisions between us, and shows us who we really are.
- Unfortunately, the very religions that promote service are often guilty of blocking its full expression. When a religion claims to be the one and only true way, it contributes to separation. All too often, when we think we are saved and safe, we become complacent and arrogant. Busy trying to convert others, we neglect the critical necessity of transforming ourselves. We hamper our ability to help others if we are not in an ongoing process of self-reform at the same time.
- Self-reform is integral in effectively serving humanity. The work starts inside. We need to deal with our own issues before we can successfully understand and assist others with theirs. We can do the necessary inner work by practicing the methods described in this book. Such practices as introspection, affirmations, habit transformation, and meditation are digging tools that reach the deepest recesses of our being to root out all traces of negativity. It is only through rigorous inner work that we can eliminate our flaws and replace them with spiritual qualities. Then such jewels as humility, reverence, gratitude, and equality decorate our service to humanity.
- Each of us has a unique way of expressing love. With daily practice, we can find our distinctive service identity and personality. Next is a daily routine that may be of use in helping you discover your service voice. When we find our service voice and rhythm, our actions are naturally permeated with passion, focus, joy, warmth, and enthusiasm.

LOVE AND SERVICE: A DAILY ROUTINE

- **Morning Program and Evening Program**

1. Progressive muscle relaxation
2. Breathwork
3. Contemplation
4. Meditation
5. Prayer

- **Daytime Program**

1. Mindfulness
2. Practicing the presence of God
3. Service
4. Yoga
5. Transformation of Emotion

- **Morning Program.** The morning program is designed for self-healing. We start with progressive muscle relaxation and breathwork, which calm the body and mind. Contemplation converts spiritual ideas into reality; we fill our brains with wisdom. Meditation, affirmations, and prayer generate healing power that permeates every cell in the body and surrounding space. When we finish the morning program, we are aligned with love and Her consort qualities.
- **Day Program.** We can maintain the momentum gained in the morning program by practicing mindfulness or the presence of God. These disciplines convert ordinary acts to service by introducing compassion to our actions. Without changing anything, we can focus on the presence of God or perform each action mindfully.
- If we pay attention to the details and the routine connections between us, we won't miss the myriad opportunities throughout the day to give and receive love. We have all had experiences with waiters, doctors, teachers, or any worker performing their task with indifference or disdain. In the consciousness of service, we infuse the same tasks with kindness and joy. *Spiritual qualities are the currency of service.*
- **Evening Program.** After the day's activities are completed, repeat the morning exercise program. During the period of contemplation, review the day's activities with attention to successes, challenges, and ways to improve your ability to love and serve.
- **Balance:** Many of us have a difficult time dealing with our own suffering, let alone the monumental pain of the world. We may try to avoid all suffering by denying problems and escaping into the distractions, entertainment, and pleasures of life. Some of us take on too much suffering of others, resulting in high emotional reactivity and burnout. How much is enough? Is there a way to find balance?
- The daily routine described above offers a way to stay in balance while we help others and ourselves. The morning and evening programs are for self-healing. The day program is for helping others through mindful action or practicing the Presence of God.
- Through the practices of the morning and evening programs, we can withdraw from the pain and problems of the world and ourselves. In meditation, we leave suffering behind and enter a place of freedom,

joy, peace, and beauty. We come out of meditation refreshed, ready to take on the next wave of problems. This is the full cycle of healthy spirituality, a way to stay balanced through renewal and regeneration.

SUGGESTIONS

- It's not what you do but how you do it. Add love to every action.
- Start by taking care of yourself. Be kind, gentle, and loving to yourself. Then widen your circle of service to friends, family, and community.
- Pick a cause.
- Transmit your gift of compassion to the victims of social injustice and inequality.
- Go on a campaign to lift the spirits of the sick and dying or the poor and homeless.
- Volunteer at a soup kitchen.
- Read to a lonely senior.
- Fight religious and racial persecution.
- Stand up for fairness.
- Protect the meek and vulnerable.
- Be a big brother or sister to a neglected child.
- Talk to those shunned by others.
- Shop for a senior.
- Take a disabled person for a walk.
- Hold the door open for everyone.
- Let cars go ahead of you.
- Let someone ahead of you in line.
- Ask a sales person how their day is going.
- Thank the bus driver.
- Affirm loving-kindness for everyone who goes by.

THE HEALING POWER OF LOVE

In service to humanity, we discover who we really are and what really helps. We come to know love as the power that heals the self first and then others. As we change ourselves, we change the world. The healing power of love is a magnet that draws to itself all good things.

I sought my soul, but my soul I could not see.

I sought my God, but my God eluded me.

I serve my brother and I found all three.

– Anonymous

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- The goal of all spiritual practice is love and service. Compassionate action is part of the wisdom of the universe. When we apply the law of love, we solve problems. When you help others, you help yourself.
- Service is a universal healer, a potent medicine for individuals and the community.
- In Hinduism, selfless service is called karma yoga or right action. All actions are performed in the consciousness of love in service to God, to please God. While there is an attempt to excel and succeed, the results of action are left to God alone. We gain peace of mind when we leave the outcome to God. No matter what the world does, just keep helping.
- Work done in the consciousness of love is itself a sacred ritual. You are in the presence of God when you help others. This is the real church. This is mindfulness.
- Our ability to serve improves with practice. People are complex. As we practice, our understanding is increased, so we can serve in a more refined and sophisticated manner. We become more useful.
- Service = Love in action → joy
- The person you are with at any given moment is the most important person in the world.
- Balance meditation and service for maximum spiritual growth.
- Seek guidance and direction in your routine meetings and relationships. You can do this by invoking stillness and silence at the start of an act. When calm and attuned, the still, small voice within reveals the best way to express love in that situation.
- No matter what the world does, cultivate love and practice service. Maintain a positive, calm mind and open, compassionate heart. Receive the good, the bad, and the ugly, and return only good. The ones who make a difference bring anonymous, humble service to others. They are healers. They will quietly change the world.
- We may not be able to solve or fix other people's problems, but we can support them with compassion. We can be there and listen so they know they are not alone. We may not tell them what to do, but we can tell them what gets us through. We can help them do what they can. We can support their power, which can get them through any physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual barriers.
- No matter what happens, we can love and serve. We can do the work of ego reduction and the expansion of love.
- Follow love, serve all of humanity, and keep your eyes open. You will find your place in the world. You will see healing and transformation. You will see expansion of love and her sister qualities. You will experience ever-increasing joy.
- The purpose of life is to enhance each other's humanity, to make even one life better.
- When you think about a life of greatness, think about a life of service. Love is the currency.
- To be a complete person, you must be in service.
- Service is the expression of love without attachment to outcome. We don't want to slip into conditional love or manipulation.
- Service is like a two-way pill. When I serve you, I heal myself; when I heal myself I serve you. Be a messenger of peace, love, joy, wisdom, and kindness.

- The size of your service offering does not matter. Small acts of gentle, anonymous, humble service can change the world.
- Do small things with great love (Mother Teresa).
- Service is not about what we get. This is the ego. Service is about what we give. This is the soul. It's a simple flip of the switch from what I get to what I give.
- You are a soul sent here for service, joy, and entertainment.
- Service can be informal, whatever shows up, or formal like as a volunteer.
- We don't need to be perfect to help others.
- When you love, serve, and give, you are moving closer to God as this is Her nature.

AFFIRMATIONS

- I help everyone.
- I am here to love and serve.
- I serve others with love.
- I meditate on love and give only that.
- I focus on love and forget everything else.
- I fill every moment with love.
- I fill every breath with love.
- I fill every action with love.
- The person I am with now is the most important person in the world.
- The person I am with now is God in disguise.
- I serve on the altar of the God within you.
- I serve on the altar of the Buddha within you.
- I think of others. I am sensitive to their needs.
- I give my time to others.
- I give what I can.
- I am a peaceful servant of God.

EXERCISES

1. What is the difference between an ordinary act and an act of service?
2. There is a balance point between helping others and taking good care of yourself.
 - o Some do too much for others and not enough for themselves.
 - o Some do too little for others and too much for themselves.
 - o Some aren't doing for others or themselves.

- Are you stuck in a pattern?
- If so, what would it take to find your balance point?
- 3. Describe the morning, daytime, and evening routine of love and service.
- 4. How does the daily routine for love and service help maintain balance?
- 5. Make a list of ways you already serve.
- 6. Do you have a desire to expand your service?
- 7. Make a list of ways you might like to serve in the future.
- 8. What are some of the barriers keeping you from expanding your service?
- 9. Anytime you feel bad and do something, however small, for someone else, notice the effect. You will feel better. It may be subtle, but it is there.
- 10. Most of us are comfortable serving those closest to us. It is natural to help family, friends, and neighbors in need. To expand love and service to those that we do not know can be more challenging.
 - a. You can start by extending loving-kindness affirmations, common courtesies, and thoughtful gestures to all who cross your path.
 - b. You can formally volunteer in an organization that helps those in need.
 - c. You can begin to see all people as members of one family, as brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles, cousins, grandchildren and grandparents, as though they are your own.
 - d. When you practice mindfulness or the presence of God, you transform an ordinary action to service by adding compassion.
- 11. We can't take away other people's pain but we can stand with them while they figure it out on their own schedule. Practice being with others without judgment and without giving advice. Just be there, understand, and validate.
- 12. There is a dangerous neighborhood in the mind. It shows up against our will. To get some help with this:
 - Find good people.
 - Get support.
 - Fill your brain with wisdom.
 - Help everyone.
- 13. The goal is pure love and service without attachment to outcome.
 - This is tricky, difficult, and sometimes impossible. The ego, operating without our awareness, attaches itself to the outcome. When there is success, it claims victory for itself and feels good. With failure, it feels bad. These reactions are natural but they get in the way and don't go away so easily. The ego's works are hidden, subtle, invisible, and sticky. We don't even know it is there.
 - The antidote to the problem of the ego is the soul connected to Spirit. What matters to the ego does not matter to the soul. The soul's concern is pure love and service. The story and the outcome is up to God-Life-Universe.
 - Perform your service act with love and leave the consequences to God. At the highest level, (S)he knows what is needed and we don't.

- Whether people get better, worse, or stay stuck, our job is the same: serve and help in whatever way we can, however small. The story and outcome is not ours.
 - When we practice love and service, we learn a kind of detachment that is not intellectual. Our hidden attachments come out and get burned off quickly or they burn us. When ego attachments burn off, soul qualities expand. We get peace, love, joy, wisdom, courage, and strength and give these to all whom we meet.
 - Practice these affirmations:
 - a. My job is pure love and service.
 - b. The one I serve may go forward, backward, or stay the same. That part is not up to me.
 - c. I help in the way that needs to get done. I give the results to God.
 - d. Service in the eternal present is the highest. There is no past or future, just helping.
 - e. I do the best I can in the moment.
 - f. Immersed in peace, love, and joy, I give what I can.
 - g. Pure service is sacred and holy. No one needs to know.
14. In response to your pain, practice love, service, and meditation. This is a powerful variation of the universal healing wheel or PMQ:
- (P) This can be any pain or problem.
 - (M) The methods are meditation and service.
 - (Q) The quality is unconditional love. There is no attachment to outcomes. We work for but are not attached to the results.
 - Love, service, and meditation: a simple, powerful formula for dealing with any of life's problems. Try this. It works.

MEMORABLE QUOTES FROM MEMBERS

- We are all needed and important.
- Vertical axis methods like meditation get my stuff out of the way. Then I am ready for service on the horizontal axis, the people part.
- The ultimate reward is people.
- The whole is greater than the sum of its parts. In the Living Room, I am bigger. (The Living Room is a drop-in center with groups and activities.)
- In service, we connect on a deep level. So much love and joy there.
- In order to keep what you've got, you have to give it away. Help others.
- Hurt people hurt people. We can reverse this trend with service.
- The purpose of life is simple: help others.
- A reality check is very important, as I am so hard on myself. I need to hear that I am not that bad, especially if I am going into my schizophrenic mind.

- When depressed, I get into my head and isolate. It gets worse and worse. This is when I need to find the right people so I can get comfortable and feel safe.
 - I can take just a little bit of inner work at a time. When I try to do too much and get overwhelmed, I go to people and tell my story. It helps especially when it starts to feel out of control.
 - I can be in the abyss. There is a lot of fear and hurt in my heart. Isolating in my room with cigarettes doesn't work. It will do me in. It is vital to get out of my room. I need to see people every day. If I don't smoke, it's much better.
 - We get to help each other in any way we can.
 - I struggle to go to groups. But I don't listen to the voice that says don't go there. I go. I sit there. Even if I don't feel like it. It's the best place to be.
 - My partner gives me unconditional love every day even when I'm in a bad mood. It is so nice to have someone who loves you.
 - A friend wanted to drink. I took him to Burnside (a street with many homeless addicts) so he could see where he will be if he drinks. Then to my house. He took a shower. It helped.
 - Understanding is the most important thing. Don't jump in with advice. Listen. Try to get me first. Then ask me if I want your advice.
 - We can inspire each other with our stories. Take what you need and leave the rest. Eat the chicken. Spit out the bone.
 - Helping others is easier than helping myself.
 - I would like to pay back my debts and then some.
 - I have to focus on myself right now.
 - Sometimes we have to serve ourselves by setting boundaries.
 - My service work is encouragement.
 - Connect with people, help them, let them go.
 - Bring your love to brutal reality and serve there.
-
- In the next chapter, we will explore yoga, the fourth method of our daily activity program.



CHAPTER 18

YOGA

A WAY TO BRAHMAN OR GOD

- **What Is Yoga?** Many think yoga is practicing a variety of physical positions on mats. No. This is Hatha yoga, a small part of something much bigger. Yoga is a scientific body of principles, steps, tools, and instructions for God-realization and liberation from suffering.
- This chapter introduces yoga, the fourth method of our daily activity program. Yoga is a gift to the world from the Hindu tradition, a system of principles and methods designed to help us achieve a great reward: making contact and getting help from a compassionate, all-knowing power that exists just behind the veil of ordinary human experience. Yoga is a scientific body of knowledge with precise instructions to dissolve the layers of ordinary limited human awareness and discover that we are in reality one with the Grand Spirit known as Brahman or God.
- **A Secret Buried Treasure.** A yogi is one who practices yoga. The yogi learns how to break through the confining boundaries of ordinary perception to make the spectacular discovery that we are carrying with us at all times the promise of the core drive. Eternal peace, pure love, and ecstatic joy—what we have been looking for in the external world—is a secret, buried treasure in the center of our very own being. What we really want is right here, right now, inside.
- **Liberation from Suffering.** Yoga is God-realization through the union of soul with Spirit. We are created in the image of God. God implants His image in each human body as the soul, His representation of Himself in each person. The first stage of yoga is to make contact with the soul. Then the soul merges with Spirit. When we make contact with the soul, we experience expansion of peace, love, and other spiritual qualities. In the end, when the soul unites with the Spirit, there is complete liberation from limitation and suffering, and entry into infinite, immortal, eternal peace.
- **The Veil of Ordinary Consciousness.** In ordinary material consciousness, we do not experience the unlimited power of the soul and Spirit. Why? What is in the veil that prevents us from entry into the vast eternal kingdom? How do we get through these barriers to make contact with the soul and Spirit?
- **Identification.** The central problem is one of identification. We accept ordinary material reality as normal. We believe impermanence and change have ultimate power. We experience limitation because

we identify with our body, personality, and role in the drama of life. We think we are our desires, habits, attachments, flaws, and problems. We identify with our ego, which causes us to feel separate from others, creation, and the Creator. Because of these identifications, our perception and experience are limited to the vibrational frequencies detectable by the ordinary mind and five senses.

- **Purification and Attunement.** The soul and Spirit, on the other hand, are vibrating at a frequency too subtle to detect by the mind and five senses. Any attempt to experience the soul and Spirit with the mind and senses is doomed to fail. This is where yoga enters the picture. Yoga offers a variety of methods to refine and purify our consciousness so we can attune to the more subtle frequencies of soul and Spirit.
- **The Grand Prize Within.** To uncover our true self as eternal peace, pure love, and ecstatic joy is a tall order. We need a set of spiritual practices that address everything that pins us down to the status quo, the level that we have come to know and accept as our home or normal consciousness. Because we cling to our current understanding and perception of reality, no matter how painful, difficult, and chaotic it might be, we cannot solve the cosmic puzzle and find the grand prize within. *However, when we have finally had enough suffering, when we have a passionate, burning desire to change, when we are ready to do some work, yoga answers the call by helping us unplug from the material world as we know it, so we can finally enter the kingdom of Omnipresent Love.*

FOUR PATHWAYS TO GOD

- Love, service, meditation, and wisdom are basic to any spiritual path. Tapping our innate faculties of feeling, action, concentration, and reason, yoga offers four powerful techniques to help us plow our way through the multiple layers of ordinary reality to discover the God of the universe. The four techniques are:
 1. **Love, or Bhakti Yoga:** the way of transforming feeling to devotion
 2. **Service, or Karma Yoga:** the way of transforming action to service
 3. **Meditation, or Raja Yoga:** the way of stillness through concentration
 4. **Wisdom, or Jnana Yoga:** the way of transforming thought to wisdom
- God can be known through love, service, meditation, and wisdom, but not until we reduce the restlessness and excesses of the body, mind, emotions, desires, and ego by practicing one or a combination of these four yogas.
- We can practice bhakti, karma, raja, and jnana yoga in a variety of combinations, depending on individual preferences and circumstances. Some practice all four methods daily in a balanced way. For others, one or two of the practices may dominate. These are not distinct categories. They overlap. It is a matter of emphasis. The common denominator of any combination practiced diligently over time is the gradual replacement of restlessness, hyperactivity, destructive emotions, and excessive material desires with stillness and peace, compassion and kindness, courage and strength.

Bhakti Yoga

The Path to God Through Love and Devotion

- **Love Is Greater than *Maya*.** God is eternal love, and so are we. Everything else is *maya*. This is bhakti yoga; its purpose is cultivating an immutable union between the love of the soul and the love of

God. *Maya* is a Hindu term that describes the impermanence, limitations, separation, and consequent suffering of the material plane. The bhakti yogi remains in the consciousness of love no matter what troubles or difficulties arise in the world of *maya*. In bhakti yoga, we accomplish this by loving God with all of our hearts, minds, might, and souls, and by loving our neighbors as ourselves. *It doesn't matter what happens, Lord. All that matters is that I love You and You love me. I don't care about position or projects. I just want to be in Your heart.*

- **Channel All to Love.** In bhakti yoga, we capitalize on the feeling of love that is naturally in our heart by directing it toward God. We also channel likes, dislikes, emotion, passion, dependencies, and attachment in the direction of love. We leave no trace of our being behind. We channel all to God as love.
- **Only Love.** The bhakta strives to be within God's love at all times. This is a difficult task, as stressful events often provoke a response of tension, irritation, annoyance, impatience, and worse. The bhakta wants no part of this, for a negative response is a return to the hypnotic sleep of *maya*. To be awake is to be aware that we are always in the presence of God's love.
- **Devotion.** To remain in God's love, the bhakta cultivates a real, intimate, personal relationship with the Divine. We can do this by choosing an aspect of God that arouses devotion. That aspect becomes a point of focus for the bhakti yogi's love.
- **A Personal Relationship with God.** God is both personal and impersonal. For most people, it is difficult to apply love to an impersonal aspect of God, such as an incomprehensible, abstract power. However, we can form a personal relationship with God as the Father, Mother, Friend, Beloved, Teacher, or as one of the Divine incarnations such as Christ, Krishna, or Buddha. These aspects naturally evoke a loving response.
- **Hide and Seek.** Loving God does not come easily or early on the spiritual path. In the beginning, we do not know God; it is not natural to love what we do not know. We can start the process by thinking about God. Then we can talk, share, and listen, as in any human relationship. With consistent meditation, service, and conversation with God, at some point She responds by revealing Herself as peace, joy, love, power, wisdom, ecstasy, or some other manifestation. Then She goes back behind the veil, playing hide and seek. We return to ordinary consciousness and resume our spiritual work. During dry spells, we develop and mature our unconditional love, surrender, devotion, trust, strength, and courage. How else would we develop our spiritual muscles?
- **Find and Keep.** Nevertheless, we yearn for God's return. Our heart's desire is to find and keep Her. We want more than just a taste of Her sweetness. If we persist in our spiritual work, God appears again, perhaps with the Mother's tender love, warmth, and exquisite beauty. God may manifest as our unconditional Friend and Confidante, One who knows, understands, and accepts us no matter what we have done. If attuned and receptive, we may know God as our infinitely wise Father, Guide, and Protector. When we are in pain, we can know God as the Teacher, giving us the experiences that we need for spiritual growth. As we get to know our Father, Mother, Teacher, and Friend, it is easy and natural to love Him in an intimate, ever-evolving, ever-new romance.
- **Unconditional Love.** God is an infinite ocean of pure, unconditional love, an ocean we cannot enter until our love is likewise pure and unconditional. In bhakti yoga, we accomplish this by applying all of our spiritual muscle to respond with love to all people in every circumstance. All we have to do is love no matter what happens and not worry about the rest. This is following God's will through attunement with His aspect of all-powerful love.

- **Eternal Romance.** We can apply God's love, the most powerful healing force in the universe, to any pain or problem. When difficulties come and we find ourselves reacting poorly, we can find our connection to God's Omnipresent love by going to the deepest part of our hearts, where He resides. By repeatedly returning to God's love, we break our identification with *maya* and reduce our suffering. In our eternal romance with the almighty, gentle Father-Mother God of the universe, we get the peace-joy we crave.

Karma Yoga

The Path to God Through Action

- **Selfless Action.** Karma yoga is union of the soul with Spirit through selfless action. Here we take advantage of our activity throughout the day. In karma yoga, we transform ordinary action to selfless action dedicated to God; service becomes the principal means of union of the soul with Spirit.
- **Loving Service.** Every thought, feeling, and action is an offering in loving service to God. There is no thought of personal gain or impressing others. We surrender the results, outcomes, expectations, and rewards to God. *I work to please God alone. Thou art the doer, not I. Thy will, Lord, not mine.* Every action is powered by His energy and will.
- **Non-attachment to Outcomes.** The ego is attached to outcomes. The ego derives its power in the battle for victory over defeat, gain over loss, and pleasure over pain. When the ego takes credit for success, it puffs up; when it fails, it grieves. In either case, it maintains its territory. To the yogi, however, the ups and downs of life are one and the same; the outcome is in God's hands. When motivated by the ego, we add to the separation between God and ourselves. The same act performed selflessly moves us closer to God. As servant to the King, the karma yogi claims nothing for the self, no matter what level of personal sacrifice.
- **Ego Reduction and Soul Expansion.** In the practice of karma yoga, the sole intent is to follow God's will with every action. The Creator is the Author of the act. The yogi is the worker. Once the act is completed, the yogi disconnects from the results of the action, letting the story of life unfold as determined by God. When we surrender the results of our actions to God, we deprive the ego of consequences. The ego shrinks, allowing the soul to come into awareness.
- **Even-minded, Enthusiastic, Grateful, Humble.** We play our service-role, fulfill our tasks and responsibilities, and do the best we can. We strive for success in all endeavors but remain even-minded in any outcome. We perform each act with calm concentration and efficiency. Understanding that all work is God's work, we perform every act, however mundane or routine, with enthusiasm, gratitude, and humility. We avoid indifference, an aspect of laziness and selfishness. Accepting difficulties as coming from God the Teacher, we learn and move on.
- **One Continuous Sacred Ritual of Loving Service.** Wherever we are and whoever we are, we can turn this moment into serviceable action by dedicating it to God—life—humanity—the greater good. Then every movement and action powers our way to God. It does not matter what we do. Our task may be simple or complex, routine or important, painful or enjoyable. What matters is that we hold the consciousness of God at all times, seek His guidance as we perform, and give our best. Then all tasks merge into one continuous, sacred ritual of loving service to God.
- **Stillness in Action.** By non-attachment to the results of action, we can enter the arena of worldly activity, serve with compassion and understanding, and remain calm even in the face of turmoil. The stillness of the true self remains constant in the midst of activity. The *Bhagavad Gita* refers to this as

inaction in action. As stated by Paramahansa Yogananda in *Autobiography of a Yogi*, “I, the soul, watch the cosmic movie with calm detachment while at the same time I play my assigned role perfectly with zeal, ambition, and the supreme desire to please God.” Karma yoga, meditation in action, is a source of joy. Joy is in the action, in working for God and humanity, in service. The outcome belongs to God.

Raja Yoga

The Path to God Through Meditation

- **An Invitation to Meditation.** *Be still and know that I am God* is an invitation from the Bible (Psalm 46:10) to meditate. In meditation, we can achieve the motionless state, which profoundly facilitates our ability to commune with God. Raja yoga describes the way to a direct experience with God in the stillness of meditation.
- **Patanjali.** Patanjali, an ancient master of yoga, outlined an eight-step model designed to achieve stillness and communion with God. By following the eight steps, we learn how to achieve stillness by stopping the world, body, senses, and mind. To understand the eight steps, one must first understand prana, pranayama, and the chakras.
- **Prana.** Prana is the life energy present in the human body. We send prana outward towards the world for daily activities, and in and up the spine to the brain for God-realization.
- **Chakras.** There are seven centers of concentrated prana in the spine and brain, called chakras. Yoga opens up the chakras, so that energy can travel upward into the higher centers in the spinal cord and brain, resulting in God-communion.
- **Pranayama.** We want pure unconditional love and try to find it on the horizontal axis of people, activities, events, and things, but this is impossible. We can get a little of the love we crave from the outer world but Big Love can only be found inside. Yoga provides the scientific method for getting inside. The method is pranayama or energy control.
 - Pranayama is control of prana by reversing the outward flow of life energy, directing it to the higher chakras in the spine and brain. Pranayama is not just an idea. It is a practice involving the movement of energy. It changes our pattern of thought, emotion, action, and corresponding flow of life force. The result is expansion of peace, joy, and love
 - **The Eight Steps of Patanjali**
 1. **Yama** is moral conduct. All religions have rules for moral conduct, such as the Ten Commandments. Yama refers to abstention from harming others, falsehood, theft, and greed.
 2. **Niyama** is religious observance. Devotion, service, moderation, discipline, study of scripture, purity, and surrender, along with the moral conduct described in Step 1, provide a platform from which all else is built.
 3. **Asana** is right posture. Hatha yoga is a set of body positions and exercises that prepare the body for meditation. In meditation, it is essential that the body is still and the spine straight.
 4. **Pranayama** is control of prana or life energy. Energy directed outward in ordinary activity keeps us locked in the status quo of mundane consciousness. Pranayama reverses the flow of

outward energy and directs it inward and upward, toward the spinal cord and brain. This stills the mind and senses.

5. **Pratyahara** is interiorization. Pranayama (Step 4) results in interiorization of the mind, energy, and consciousness from outer attachments and bodily organs to the higher centers in the spinal cord and brain.
 6. **Dharana** is concentration. The interiorized mind is completely still so it can concentrate on a single point, such as a mantra.
 7. **Dhyana** is meditation. This is direct concentration on God.
 8. **Samadhi** is union of the soul with God. This is the most advanced stage of meditation. There is complete union or merging with God.
- **Stillness, Superconsciousness, and Service.** When the mind slows and finally stops, consciousness and energy shift from the outer world, restless thoughts, and sensations of the body to the higher centers in the spine and brain. In stillness, God reveals Himself on His schedule, through His grace, as peace, joy, love, energy, light, wisdom, beauty, power, and guidance. When meditation is over, we manifest His love and wisdom through service to humanity.

Jnana Yoga

The Path to God Through Wisdom

- **From Ordinary Thought to Wisdom.** The path of jnana yoga capitalizes on our God-given gift of reason by transforming ordinary thought into wisdom. Through the practice of jnana yoga, intellect evolves to intuition, or direct knowledge of the truth. For those inclined to practice jnana yoga, thought is an enjoyable, stimulating, vibrant source of inspiration and realization.
- **The Realization of Wisdom.** In jnana yoga, we do not just think or theorize. We embody wisdom and become one with the truth through a process of listening, perceiving, and assimilating. The process starts with the study of scriptural truth. Then we bring the idea to contemplation and meditation for realization. We maintain this wisdom during activity, through affirmation, concentration, and will.
- **Oneness.** For example, in the beginning, we think the world as we know it in ordinary consciousness is the only reality. The jnana yoga thinker, however, is convinced of the oneness of it all underneath the complex surface of ordinary consciousness. Despite the appearance of complexity, the jnana yogi affirms God is One. (S)he maintains the affirmation of oneness in the face of the counter-pull of mundane thoughts and the senses that support the illusions of maya. The jnana yogi understands through discrimination that the nature of the world and its phenomena are illusory, and that only the oneness of God is real. This is union of the soul with God through discriminatory intellect and wisdom.

THE YOGI IN THE SCHOOL OF LIFE

- In the practice of yoga, two key processes converge to accomplish the goal of union of soul with Spirit:
 1. The school of life
 2. Pranayama

- **The School of Life.** God sets up His school of life, where we have the opportunity to learn critical lessons for purposes of evolution of the soul towards Spirit. There are many classes, subjects, and tests. When we learn the lessons and pass the tests, we transform and heal. In a process of purification, the ego shrinks and spiritual qualities expand.
- **Pranayama.** Bhakti, karma, raja, and jnana yoga similarly lead to evolution of the soul to Spirit. Practice of the four yogas slowly and progressively opens the higher chakras in the spine and brain. Consciousness and energy travel upwards through the chakras to higher centers in the brain and spine, eventually resulting in a tangible experience of God's wisdom and power.
- **Tailor-Made Lessons in the School of Life.** Each person learns their tailor-made lessons in the school of life. Ego, problems, and flaws burn up in the fire of devotion, service, meditation, and wisdom. The higher chakras in the spine and brain open. Consciousness is refined and the soul evolves. With sustained practice, we reach a critical mass, tipping the scales in favor of the soul over the ego.
- **The Secret Veils of Maya Lift.** In the end, when we conquer the ego, when the secret veils of maya lift and when the soul dissolves in the one true reality, we find that God has hidden Himself as joy and peace in the human body-temple itself. Then, in perfect attunement with God's will, we can follow the command of the sacred scriptures: to love God with all of our heart, mind, might, and soul and our neighbor as our self. Such a servant of the King can give patience, sweetness, kindness, and gentleness to all of humanity.
- **Eternal Peace, Pure Love, and Ecstatic Joy.** God's eternal peace, pure love, and ecstatic joy are the highest states of consciousness, the beginning of all creation, the endpoint of evolution, and the ultimate grace. We are made of this pure and perfect, unending love. We come from, move, live, have our being, and ultimately melt back into this sacred consciousness. This is yoga, evolution of the soul, and God-realization.

YOGA AND THE TEN STEPS

- Review the Ten Steps on pp. 45–93 in *Healing Power: Ten Steps to Pain Management and Spiritual Evolution Revised* (2010). Inherent in these steps are the key principles of yoga. Following is a summary of these principles. After that, we will review how to implement these principles in our daily life by practicing pranayama.
 - Step 1: We have an absolute need for unlimited peace, love, joy, and safety. This is called the Core Drive. The Core Drive is the motivating force behind all of our actions. It does not shut off. It can't. It is built into the genetic code. We have to have it. We want unlimited healing qualities and higher states of consciousness.
 - Steps 2–3: We try to achieve the Core Drive exclusively on the horizontal axis of people, activities, events, and things but this is impossible. On the physical plane, suffering is inevitable, time is limited, and death wins in the end.
 - Steps 4–5: When we persist in our efforts to achieve the Core Drive on the physical plane, our motor overheats. We get stuck in the mud. We become unnecessarily reactive. The restless mind, highly reactive emotions, excessive material desires, attachments, bad habits, hyperactivity, physical pain, and the ego present an imposing array of problems.
 - Step 6: We see the need to get help. We become seekers.

- Steps 7–10. We discover the teachings of the saints and masters of the great faith traditions. They diagnose our problem: we are trying to achieve the Core Drive outside. They give us the good news: it can be realized inside. In fact, they tell us, it is already there waiting patiently for our discovery as the true self. They call it the Buddha, Image of God, child of God, soul, love, or higher self. It doesn't matter what you call it. Just practice love and watch everything improve.
- In summary, Steps 1–5 describe our pain. Steps 6–10 focus on healing that pain with love.
- Here is the key to understanding Steps 1–10: Love is the great healer. It is more powerful than any painful problem. We know how to make it grow. As it grows, our pain is contained, reduced or eliminated.
- Enter yoga, the science that reveals a great hidden truth: our bodies come equipped with a secret factory that manufactures a very special product, love.
- The factory knows how to produce love and associated qualities: peace, joy, power, wisdom, and more. Here is how yoga works.
 - The definition of yoga is union of the soul with Spirit through love, service, wisdom, and stillness.
 - In the first stage of yoga, we make contact with the soul. This is the true self, a composite of healing qualities adding up to love. When we make contact with the soul, we experience expansion of love qualities. We feel better, become better people, and experience higher states of consciousness.
 - In the second stage of yoga, the soul merges with Spirit. There is complete liberation from limitation and suffering. We experience the unlimited love of Spirit.
 - In effect, when we practice yoga, we take our little soul love and merge it with the Big Love of Spirit.
- Yoga deals with energy or prana. It defines and locates the anatomy and physiology of the energy that corresponds to these principles. Let's take a look at the workings of this inner factory.

The Inner Factory: Prana, Pranayama, and the Chakras

- Prana is energy or life force. There are seven centers of concentrated prana in the spine and brain called chakras.
- Pranayama is control of prana by reversing the outward flow of life energy from the world, directing it to the higher chakras in the spine and brain. Energy goes from down and out to in and up.
- Following is a review of how pranayama relates to the ten steps.
- Steps 1–5: Energy goes down and out.
 - In ordinary consciousness, energy travels down the cord and out to the world through the lower three chakras. This corresponds to Steps 1–5 described above.
 - We are creatures of habit in thought, feeling, and action. Every thought, feeling, and act has a corresponding flow of energy and consciousness. When our thoughts, feelings, and actions are focused on the outer world, our energy and consciousness flow outward and get attached and habituated to the objects of that world: people, activities, events, and things. This results in material or ordinary consciousness.
 - We do get some satisfaction but it is mixed in with the limitations and suffering inherent in material consciousness.
 - We get a piece of the love we are looking for but it is mixed in with some undesirables: attachment, addiction, and reactivity.
- Steps 6–10: Energy goes in and up.

- When we practice pranayama, energy flow is reversed from down and out to in and up, to the higher chakras in the cord and brain. This results in expansion of the little love we can get from the world of people, activities, events, and things to the Big Love we get in superconscious states. This corresponds to Steps 6–10 described above.
- Yoga reverses the flow of energy and consciousness from down and out to in and up the spinal cord and brain where the soul is connected to Spirit. Here we experience Big Love, the superconsciousness we crave.

FOUR KEY YOGA PRACTICES

FOUR YOGA PRACTICES

1. Bhakti Yoga or love
2. Karma Yoga or service
3. Jnana Yoga or wisdom
4. Raj Yoga or stillness

- When we practice love, service, wisdom, and stillness, we bring energy and consciousness from the world and body to the higher centers in the cord and brain where it is subjected to a purification process. Karma or debris is burned off. Our consciousness is refined to an ever-increasingly higher grade of peace, love, joy, power, and wisdom which we then give back to the world as ever-more useful service.
- Through the patient daily practice of yoga, we slowly and gradually change our long-term thought, feeling, action, and corresponding energy patterns from down and out to in and up.
- We shift the locus of control from the outer world of people, activities, events, and things to the inner world of soul connected to Spirit.
- We learn how to eliminate debris and cultivate a higher grade of peace, love, joy, power, and wisdom in the inner factory of the higher centers in the cord and brain.
- This is yoga, a way of dealing with painful problems through energy control or pranayama.

PRANAYAMA REDUCES ATTACHMENT, ADDICTION, AND REACTIVITY

- The horizontal axis of people, objects, events, and things is not the cause of our misery. It is our attachment to these that gets us into trouble. When attached, we react. When we react, we are miserable.
- When prana is down and out in the world, we get attached, addicted, and reactive.
- When prana is in and up, we have the qualities in greater measure. We react less. We go through the same experience with less bounce. At mastery, we are even-minded under all conditions.
- Everything gets better when the energy is in and up the cord. Our problems may still be there but we are not reacting as much or at all. This is the whole story of yoga, a story about ever-increasingly skillful pain management.
- Yoga is not easy. Pranayama is work. We can't just turn the boat around because it is a good idea. Our attachment-addiction to the outer world is very strong. Our reactive mind and emotions are powerful

habits locked into well-worn brain grooves. Reversing the flow of prana from down and out to in and up takes time and effort. The results are subtle, slow, and cumulative, and sometimes it hurts.

- Sometimes we have to have more pain to have less pain. When we move energy from outer world attachments and habits to higher centers in the cord and brain, we will experience discomfort akin to withdrawal from any habit. We crave a return to our familiar comfort zone. The world as we know it calls. What have you done for me lately? If we answer that call too quickly, we lose the chance to burn off the impurities that keep us from experiencing higher states of consciousness. It is only in the higher chakras in the cord and brain that we can burn off dross and create the more refined and distilled product of the secret inner factory: ever-more pure and perfect love. This is the goal of yoga.

Pranayama Football

- There are two teams in the pranayama football game: Maya and the room of stillness.
- Maya is the world calling you to familiar habits, which keep you from doing vertical axis work.
- Imagine you are in meditation and experiencing a good result. You are in the room of stillness, absorbing the higher vibrations of peace, love, joy, power, and wisdom available only there. You enjoy the experience. You know you are doing good. You resolve to stay in meditation and go deeper.
- Now comes an impulse or idea consistent with one of your well-traveled brain grooves, usually in the form of a person or activity in the horizontal axis: find a friend, watch television, check your e-mail, go for a walk, shop, eat something, and so forth. This is maya calling you to familiar habits, which keep you from doing this work.
- There is some fire here, some heat in the pranayama football game between the outer world of maya and inner room of stillness. Here are a few of the battles.

PRANAYAMA FOOTBALL	
Maya	Room of stillness
Horizontal Axis	Vertical Axis
Outer World	Inner World
Energy down and out	Energy in and up
Lower three chakras	Upper four chakras
Ordinary consciousness	Superconsciousness
Little peace, joy, love, power, and wisdom	Big Peace, Joy, Love, Power, Wisdom
Ego	Soul connected to Spirit
Action	Stillness
Locus of control outside	Locus of control inside
Suffering	Transcendence
Fear	Love
Terror at the abyss	Omniscient Love

- In the tug of war between maya and the room of stillness, stay in the room of stillness as long as you can even when you are uncomfortable, especially when you are uncomfortable. It is in this heat, this friction, that the magic happens, where dross is burned off, where consciousness is refined. Sit with this heat. This is the key to yoga.
- Watch this pranayama football game. It's a good game. You win some. You lose some. Persevere and you will win more than you lose. Eventually, your energy locks into the upper four chakras. Stillness takes over. You expand. You feel the unfathomable peace, pure unconditional love, and ecstatic joy of the soul connected to Spirit. You score a touchdown.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- The science of yoga teaches us how to still the waves of mental restlessness, excessive material desire, and emotional reactivity in both meditation and activity.
- The way to God is paved with unconditional love. This is devotion or bhakti yoga.
- The way to God is paved with service to humanity. We add love to every action. This is karma yoga.
- The way to God is through stillness, the doorway to higher states of consciousness. This is meditation or raja yoga.
- The way to God is through discriminative intellect. We convert ordinary thinking to wisdom. This is jnana yoga.
- Bhakti, karma, raja, and jnana yoga work together. The practice of one feeds the other three.
- Love, service, wisdom, and stillness create heat, a karma burning furnace of sorts. Love burns karma, mine, yours, ours. Or, if you prefer, healing qualities are more powerful than any painful problem.
- Yoga is not easy. It takes a lot of work and a long time to reach such superconscious states as Omniscient love, the changeless peace of the soul, pure light, or ecstatic joy. Nevertheless, yoga works.
- Results are slow, cumulative, and definite but mostly occur underneath the surface while we think nothing is happening. Many quit here because they want a quick fix but practice, patience, and perseverance are prerequisites for success.
- If we persist and do the work, karma or painful problems are burned off in the purifying fire of love, service, wisdom, and stillness, and our consciousness is refined to an ever-increasingly higher grade of peace, love, joy, power, and wisdom. We feel better, become better people, and eventually experience the superconscious love we crave.
- Unconditional love is part of the solution to every problem but this is not easy. Energy does not necessarily flow in that direction; it contracts, gets tied up in knots and stuck in dark places. Pranayama helps reverse this trend and return the flow of energy to its natural free-flowing expansive state.
- We are more than our ego, body, personality, problems, symptoms, flaws, or disabilities. We are the peace, love, joy, power, and wisdom of the soul connected to Spirit. We need to transfer our identity from our problems to soul qualities. Soul qualities will take us to higher states of consciousness.
- We can experience what is just underneath the world as we know it when everything we understand as reality is reduced to zero in the absolute stillness of yoga meditation. This includes the ego, personality, body, senses, mind, personal story, world story, and fund of knowledge. When we escape from

everything we think we are and enter the domain of stillness, we can experience the ecstatic joy of the soul and God.

- In the beginning, the goal of selfless service is not possible because of the ego. However, if our intent is selflessness and we continue to practice yoga to the best of our ability, the ego slowly dissolves.
- Service work is not about success or failure. The work is our responsibility. The outcome is not ours.
- The yogi cuts into the ignorance, suffering, and injustice of the world by adding compassion, humility, and understanding.
- Attention and concentration are integral to the practice of yoga. We are inundated by sensory input. Our attention is distracted: TV, Internet, computers, smart phones, and more. Success in all fields comes from concentration, which usually stems from deep interest. It is amazing what you can accomplish if you concentrate fully and avoid distraction. Yoga shows us how to develop our attention and concentration muscles.
- The ego is about self-importance, attachment, and consequent emotional reactivity. It keeps us attached to our story and makes everything bigger. The hook is likes and dislikes or attraction and repulsion. We want the good and try to avoid the bad and ugly. Both sides keep us in the drama. The physiology and anatomy of this is energy going down and out into the world where it attaches to things and outcomes. Yoga reverses this trend by moving energy in and up the spine towards one unified love.
- In the largest sense, we are addicted to the world. Yoga pranayama moves energy from our worldly attachments to the higher centers in the cord and brain where we find the hidden treasure and the secret of all creation: God has hidden Herself as the peace, love, and joy we crave in the body temple itself. Moving energy in and up the spine to the brain and spiritual eye is more holy than any place of pilgrimage.
- We worship or have respect for saints, masters, stories, and deities but we don't give the same respect to our body temple: our thumb, nose, heart. The human body is the ultimate place of pilgrimage and the spinal axis the holiest site in the body. When we practice pranayama, our energy goes in and up to the higher chakras in the spine and brain where we experience the superconscious state of God-realization.
- I respond with love no matter what the world or body does. This is Bhakti Yoga.
- My activity is at Your service. This is Karma Yoga.
- I lock my mind in the wisdom of the ages. This is Jnana Yoga.
- In stillness, my love expands until love is all there is. This is Raj Yoga.
- We need training in the workings of the secret inner factory where the soul connects to Spirit, where little love transforms to Big Love. The Big Love we are looking for is actually in the upper four chakras of the spine and brain.
- The game is love and Infinity. I am little love seeking Big Love in a romance with the Infinite.
- This entire workbook is yoga in one format or another—we practice PMQ to expand our soul qualities until we become love itself.

AFFIRMATIONS

- I conduct this act immersed in Your love with the sole desire to please You.

- I am always at the feet of God.
- I am always on the altar of God.
- I serve every person as a manifestation of God.
- I love unconditionally.
- Love is the only reality.
- God is one.
- God is stillness.
- God is in the stillness.
- God is beyond the stillness.

EXERCISES

1. What is yoga?
2. Why is it impossible to experience the soul with the ordinary mind and the five senses?
3. What keeps us locked up in ordinary consciousness?
4. Describe in detail the four types of yoga.
5. What are the eight steps of Patanjali?
6. What does stillness have to do with knowing God?
7. Describe how the school of life and the four types of yoga work together to advance the soul in its movement toward Spirit.
8. The Four-Fold Pathway of Yoga
 - o Love, service, wisdom, and stillness are the pathways to God.
 - o When a yogi is in alignment, these four conditions are met.
 1. Wisdom: Our mind is locked in affirmations of wisdom.
 2. Love: Our heart is immersed in love.
 3. Action: We serve all of humanity without attachment to outcome.
 4. Stillness: Our consciousness is centered and still.
 - o Place all of your attention on love, service, wisdom, and stillness.
 - o When you find yourself out of alignment, when you are reacting in an unfavorable way, bring your car to The Shop. The Supreme Mechanic will realign your love, service, wisdom, and stillness wheels. (S)he will tell you, "Upgrade your program on the four-fold path of yoga. Everything will eventually fall back into place."
9. The Ultimate Mind Body Technique: Pranayama
 - o Pranayama is a pain management technique for any kind of pain: physical, mental, emotional, interpersonal, or spiritual. How does this work?

- Pranayama helps us move our energy, consciousness, and mind from our identification and attachment to the world, body, and drama to the soul connected to Spirit.
- The result is a shift from unnecessary reactivity to an ever-increasingly powerful base of peace, strength, courage, compassion, and associated healing qualities within.
- As healing qualities expand, we react less. We may not be able to get rid of the inevitable suffering of life, but reducing and eliminating reactivity is a major stride forward in skillful pain management.
- Moving energy from down and out to in and up is a new way of looking at problem solving. Pranayama is a part of the solution to every problem.
- To become a more skillful pain manager, add pranayama to your tool kit.

10. Yoga Practice in the Moment: Neutralizing the Waves

- A yogi is even-minded under all conditions. We can't do it because of our reactivity but this is the work of yoga. Our energy is wavy. Yoga neutralizes the waves.
- Watch your reactions.
 - a. Are you prone to argument, debate, or defensiveness when stressed or provoked?
 - b. Is your mind restless, hyperactive, have a life of its own?
 - c. Do you suffer from excessive fear, worry, insecurity, and doubt?
 - d. Are your emotions out of control?
 - e. Are you habituated and addicted to the people, objects, places, things, and events of the world?
 - f. Are you a hyperactivity junkie, constantly running on the horizontal axis, with no time built into your program for contemplation and meditation?
- Yoga neutralizes these waves. It helps us turn it down a notch so we can enter a difficult situation with even-mindedness. When we practice love, service, wisdom, and stillness, we react less. At mastery, we are even-minded under all conditions.
- When you realize you are reacting poorly and want to shift gears:
 1. Stop
 2. Breathe
 3. Present moment
 4. Affirm: love, service, wisdom, and stillness.

11. The House, the Wheel, and Yoga

- Review The Three-Story House on page 285.
- The first floor of the house is compelling. It captures all of our attention, sucking into its vortex our entire consciousness.
- When we practice yoga, we face everything on the first floor and rise above it to the second-floor soul qualities and third floor Spirit.
- This is done by rolling the wheel or practicing PMQ.
- P is our pain and problem, whatever is there. M and Q are the means towards transcendence.

- This is a very simple formula but difficult to do. It requires patient daily practice, moment to moment, for the duration.
- Every day we use the circumstances of our life as the springboard for the work. We don't change anything. We just go about our business and roll the wheel. That's it.
- If you do this work, you become a more skillful pain manager, expand healing power, and evolve. You feel better, become better person, and experience higher states of consciousness.
- PMQ is the essential healing principle or $e = mc^2$ of all psychosocial, spiritual, and religious healing systems.

12. Omniscient Love vs Terror at the Abyss

- The ego has no root or connection. It remains separated, isolated, an island unto itself. It fears even a little change, sensing it might unravel to the abyss, break into a thousand pieces, or be annihilated.
- The soul connected to Spirit is locked in Omniscient Love: safe, secure, and immortal.
- The ultimate battle is between Omniscient Love and terror at the abyss. PMQ is the means of conducting this battle. If we keep practicing M and Q, we slowly move from the world to Spirit, from maya to God, from fear to safety. See Chapter 27, page 302, in this workbook for more on this topic.

13. Mental Yoga Technique

- Yoga is merging the soul with Spirit through love, service, wisdom, and stillness. Mental yoga is keeping our needle of attention on these four disciplines.
 - We can practice mental yoga every day, every moment, at all times, in all situations.
 - Practice the following steps in the morning when you get up and anytime during the day when you have a moment between tasks.
 - We have to focus on our tasks but we can practice this technique so we will not be totally immersed in the world.
 1. Gently focus your attention at the spiritual eye, the point just above and between the eyebrows. This pulls energy inward and upward.
 2. Open up your heart.
 3. Visualize a saint, a master, light, or any manifestation of Spirit that arouses your devotion. Ask for help.
 4. Affirm love, service, wisdom, and stillness.
- In the next chapter, we will study the fifth and final technique of our daily activity program: the transformation of emotion.



CHAPTER 19

TRANSFORMATION OF EMOTION

CONVERTING EMOTIONAL PAIN TO SELF-KNOWLEDGE

The Guesthouse

*This being human is a guesthouse.
Every morning is a new arrival.
A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
as an unexpected visitor.*

*Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they're a crowd of sorrows,
Who violently sweep your house
empty of its furniture,
Still, treat each guest honorably.
He may be clearing you out
for some new delight.*

*The dark thought, the shame, the malice,
meet them at the door laughing,
and invite them in.
Be grateful for whoever comes,
Because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond.*

– Rumi

- Most of us do everything we can to avoid emotional pain. We don't know how to ride the pain waves, extract the necessary lessons, and move on.

- Instead we run, escape, hide, minimize, delay, avoid, numb, distract, distance, control, and manipulate.
- We deny and repress our painful problems into the body and subconscious, where they are stored in latent form as negative energy waiting for recognition and work.
- We express our unresolved painful problems in destructive and abusive ways towards others.
- We indulge in self-destructive, addictive behaviors: eating, drinking, and drugging ourselves to the brink of mental, emotional, and physical exhaustion time and time again, looking for pain relief but making things worse.
- Painful emotional problems are like hot potatoes. A hot potato lands in our lap. It is too hot to handle so we flip it to our friends, partners, children, strangers, or enemies. They don't like it so they flip the hot potato back to us and most of the time, add a few of their own. The result: an unnecessary, escalating, destructive fight. Sound familiar? Rare is the person, relationship, or family that does not do this. What to do?
- In this chapter, we will review the fifth and final technique of our daily activity program: the transformation of emotion. Here you will learn how to transform painful emotion into self-knowledge. The first step is letting the pain story unfold. Then we need to spiritualize the story by infusing it with healing qualities. Below is a review of some key principles followed by a technique that puts these principles into operation.

LET THE PAIN STORY UNFOLD

Introspection

- **Horizontal Axis Options.** Often, we can successfully work through painful emotions by practicing any one or a combination of the other techniques described in this work. Most of the time, we manage painful emotion by activating horizontal axis methods: people, activities, and belief system. We tell our story to those we trust. We get busy with work, school, training, volunteering, exercise, culture, hobbies, sports, and so forth. We go to church, synagogue, mosque, twelve-steps, or other healing groups.
- **Vertical Axis Options.** If these options do not suffice, we can turn to vertical axis techniques such as affirmations, habit transformation, progressive muscle relaxation, breathwork, contemplation, meditation, prayer, mindfulness, practicing the Presence of God, service, and yoga. Sometimes, however, even these methods do not liberate us from the grip of painful feelings. In such instances, it may be necessary to stop all of these practices, stay alone, sit with the pain, and let it teach. This involves introspection or self-analysis.
- **Introspection.** Introspection allows us to see our strengths and virtues, flaws and limitations, and the needs and desires that motivate our actions. Material for review includes attitude, thoughts, emotion, behavior, habits, conflicts, character flaws, relationships, and our ability to love, serve, give, and be useful.
- **Pain Is the Teacher.** Introspection is necessary for deep healing. There are times when we have to examine our pain and extract the necessary lessons in order to go forward. If we choose any other option, the pain lingers.
- **Meaningful Information.** To succeed in introspection, we must learn to successfully navigate our way through painful emotions. Painful emotion is a teacher bearing the gift of self-knowledge. Self-knowledge is information gained when we explore our emotions. Most of us experience emotional pain in response to ordinary daily events. These feelings carry meaningful information about our story.
- **Natural, Normal, Healthy, and Intelligent.** Emotions are natural, normal, healthy, and intelligent. They are like flashing lights on the dashboard of a car, telling us to look under the hood. When we learn how to do this, within the painful emotion we find problems and solutions begging for recognition,

work, synthesis, and resolution. When we extract this important information from within our emotions, suffering is contained, reduced, or eliminated. It is only when emotional pain is not processed that it causes us additional difficulties.

- **Potential Danger.** Anger, depression, fear, guilt, and other painful emotions are powerful energy forces that need to be managed wisely or they can overwhelm our defenses, cause us to lose control, and, in the worst-case scenario, endanger others and ourselves. Yet most of us have had no training in emotional pain management.
- **Repressed Emotion Stored in the Subconscious.** Because we don't know what to do with painful emotions, we instinctively try to keep them from conscious awareness by denying their existence, drowning them in substance abuse or pushing them into the subconscious and the body, where they are stored in latent form. While in storage, unprocessed emotions can have a negative impact on our physical, mental, and spiritual health. We develop negative attitudes and distorted thinking, and behave in destructive ways. For example, unprocessed anger leads to judgment, criticism, blaming, and fighting with others. Instead of processing the anger into self-knowledge, we pass it along to others, making their lives more difficult.
- **Setups.** We attract events, circumstances, and people who elicit the painful feelings and problems hidden in the subconscious and body. These are setups. A setup is any circumstance that brings forth painful emotions. Setups come to reveal the issues requiring some work. The painful emotion, the carrier, tells us where to work.
- **Attraction.** If we do not do the work, the problem remains. When we miss the opportunity to get the necessary lessons, we continue to attract people and circumstances that bring out these suppressed feelings. We continue to attract similar circumstances until we learn the necessary lessons.
- **Codependency.** For example, if we are codependent, we continue to attract codependent partners until independence is learned. We may remain stuck in a codependent relationship or find new people and repeat the codependent pattern until we sufficiently process the underlying, unresolved pain related to dependency into new knowledge and strength.
- **Self-knowledge.** The alternative to these negative scenarios is to learn how to extract the messages embedded within the feelings. We can process the emotional pain into a story with knowledge and lessons. Our feelings carry problems, solutions, and strategies that contribute to understanding life. To get this knowledge, we need a fearless, objective, honest introspective process. The ego is the greatest opponent to such a process.
- **The Ego.** The ego will try to tell the story solely from its point of view. Self-justification is one of its greatest tricks. It does not admit to mistakes. Since it lacks introspection on its own problems, it remains self-righteous while it treats others as scapegoats. It projects problems rather than taking responsibility. The ego is selfish, insecure, defensive, controlling, and self-important. In the face of criticism, it becomes frightened and aggressive. While it may accurately discover others' faults, it is blind to its own.

SPIRITUALIZE THE STORY

- **The Soul.** To combat the ego, we can turn to introspection guided by the higher self. The higher self is not afraid to look inward. It wants to find flaws and replace them with healing qualities. It is ready to look in every secret chamber of our consciousness in order to root out the barriers that prevent our full expression of love. Our true self knows we will feel better when we do this work. It is willing to suffer any pain in order to rise.

- The soul reviews our story, looking for the root cause of our pain.
 - What am I to learn from this?
 - Where am I at fault in this story?
 - Where can I improve?
 - How could I have behaved more skillfully?
 - How can I use this pain to find and replace my flaws with spiritual qualities?
 - Where did I fail to express love in thought, feeling, and action?
 - Am I giving the best of my love, humility, understanding and gentleness to everyone throughout the day?
 - Do I give understanding, compassion, and forgiveness to others but not enough to myself?
- **Positive Horizontal Axis Action.** Upon introspection, the ego and soul fight for control. For example, when we are mistreated, we are quickly angered and name what the other person has done wrong and what the remedy should be. We take defensive actions, such as setting boundaries, deploying interpersonal communication for problem solving, and correcting injustice. This is good.
- **Self-Righteous Anger, A Double-Edged Sword.** Often, however, the wrongdoer is not cooperative, leaving us angry and resentful. It is easy to get stuck here; the ego tends to act like a self-righteous victim, defining the faults and weaknesses of others as the source of our discomfort. It may be right but this only serves to prolong our suffering since we end up bearing the pain given to us by the wrongdoer.
- **The Transformative Power of Love.** The true self, on the other hand, assumes responsibility for any lingering pain as a stimulant for the development of spiritual qualities, even if the pain comes to us by way of injustice. The soul uses the transformative power of love to counter any remaining anger and resentment. By responding to cruelty with strength, to ignorance with understanding, and to suffering with compassion, the soul spiritualizes our story, consequently giving us the peace of mind we seek.
- The implications of the introspective process are profound. We stop blaming others for our problems. We abandon the victim stance and take responsibility for our emotions. We become more concerned with our own behavior than we are with another's. Regardless of whether others are right or wrong, we use our suffering as an opportunity to cultivate strength, courage, endurance, and peace.
- Following is a systematic technique designed to help us extract the knowledge embedded in our emotional pain, so it becomes our ally rather than our adversary. Before reviewing the technique, please read the next section regarding risk.

RISK

- Processing raw emotional pain into self-knowledge is not for everybody. Opening a dialogue with emotional pain can be frightening, requiring a dive into uncharted territory and facing the unknown. We must explore and even become friends with our fears. We stand alone and ride the pain waves. There is likely to be considerable resistance. We should never underestimate how frightful this may be. We should never push anybody into such a process.
- Some cannot and should not engage in exploring their pain in such a manner without seeking professional help; it might flood their defenses, causing alarm or panic. In such circumstances, the individual

can work with the other techniques described in this work. If you feel that processing emotional pain to gain self-knowledge is too intense, please avoid it at this point and consult with a professional counselor. For those ready to review the technique, the steps are outlined below.

PROCESSING PAINFUL EMOTION INTO SELF-KNOWLEDGE

- Emotions are packed with meaning and purpose, story and self-knowledge, lessons and qualities. Try the following technique: It will help you extract this knowledge and move on.
- This technique applies to any emotion.
 1. Create a safe healing space.
 2. Ask for help from your Higher Power.
 3. Let the pain story unfold.
 4. Spiritualize the story.

1. **Create a Safe Healing Space**

- An honest look at character flaws can be threatening, even shattering to the ego. However, the goal is not to tear the self to shreds. The purpose of introspection is to discover those aspects that need to change without causing unnecessary guilt, low self-esteem, or humiliation.
- Sit quietly. Use your breathing and meditation techniques to bring in as much stillness as you can.
- Be gentle and compassionate with yourself. Remain calm and accepting. Rather than feel bad that you have problems, feel good that you have the courage to face them and the integrity to change for the better.

2. **Ask for Help from Your Higher Power**

- We are connected inside to an infinitely intelligent healing power whose nature is love and compassion. We can ask for and get help from the Great Physician, the Healer within.
- Open yourself to the wisdom of your Counselor and Friend, asking for help to understand the nature of your suffering. Ask for the necessary courage and strength.

3. **Let the Story Unfold: The Pain Story**

- The first phase of healing is letting the pain story unfold. We allow painful emotions to surface so they can tell their story.
- Our stories are a complex mix of great, good, bad, ugly, terrible, right, wrong, distorted, painful, heroic, humor, success, failure, gain, loss, and more.
- The painful part of the story can be tiny, mild, medium, severe, or huge.
- Our pain can start with a seed thought that creates a storm; the pain feeds itself into a ruminative fury.
- It can be chronic low grade and smolder for years while some of us go from 0 to 60 in a fraction of a second.
- Emotional pain manifests as anxiety, anger, depression, fear, guilt, shame, embarrassment, humiliation, rejection, loss, resentment, and much more. These feelings can add up, overlap, and overwhelm our best defense, drain our energy, and lock us up. The pain story can be fierce. What to do?

- You cannot stop the waves, but you can learn to surf (Jon Kabat-Zinn).
- The first step in healing the pain story is acceptance. We ride the pain waves just as they are. We accept and validate it all.
- Surfing or riding emotional pain waves is not easy. A pain wave has its own way and time, a kind of natural rhythm to it. When we let a feeling have its playing time, it is in control and we are not. The waves come, have their way with us, and go on their own schedule. We can't successfully make it go faster, slower, or not go at all. We don't like this arrangement but often the quickest way to get rid of it is to enter the feeling at its very center.
- There is a pressure inside of each emotion, pushing it to tell its story. Right or wrong, the feeling wants to be heard, accepted, and validated. We need to let our emotions tell their stories without judgment.
- We are afraid of this kind of surrender. However, by accepting and riding the pain wave, we get crucial information, messages, even wisdom.
- Go to your serene and spacious witness. In a relaxed, receptive state, with your defenses down, observe your feelings.
- Feelings such as depression, anxiety, fear, anger, guilt, shame, jealousy, and abandonment may surface. Identify and label them.
- Feelings often overlap and merge. It is possible to feel angry and sad or other combinations all at once. With practice and patience, you will be able to identify overlapping feelings.
- Relax and breathe.
- Feel each emotion fully. Let the feeling come through without resistance. Do not fight. Take full responsibility for the emotion. It is there for a reason. It is intelligent, pointing you in the direction of work that needs completion. When you experience the feeling and take responsibility for it, it releases the intelligent information it carries. In a context of compassion, gentleness, and understanding, let the emotion tell its story.
- In the story, we can find our strengths and acknowledge the spiritual qualities we already have. However, we should not stop there. We can build on our strengths only if we define and work on our remaining problems and issues.
- Introspection allows us to see the recesses of our mind that otherwise remain hidden. Without fear, go to the deepest, darkest places in your consciousness, to those recesses needing exposure and work. Take out your inner mirror. Turn on the light of introspection. Ask the pain:
 - Why are you here?
 - What am I to learn from you?
 - Show me why I repeat the same mistakes.
 - What flaws do I have that contribute to my current problems?
 - Show me anything and everything I need to learn to become a better person.
 - Direct me to the work I need to do in the external world and within myself.
- If we stay with our feelings long enough, we can determine the significance of our suffering. Our pain takes us to the root cause of our troubles. This is good news; once we discover our flaws and attachments, we are en route to deep healing.

- While it is good to find out what our pain is about, we don't want to identify with it, ruminate on it, and get stuck there. When you have completed the first phase of healing, let the story unfold, switch gears to the second phase of healing: spiritualize the story. We transform the pain story to a healing story by infusing it with healing qualities.

4. Spiritualize the Story: The Healing Story

- You can see how important it is to find your problems; for if you do not find them, you cannot improve. However, it is equally important to avoid reliving your problems. In this step, we replace our flaws with healing qualities. Guided by spiritual qualities, the story unfolds in the direction of love.
- Never identify with your weakness. Dwelling on flaws actually makes them stronger. Our flaws and problems are reinforced through the repetition of thought. The self becomes confused, identifying with negativity, thinking this is its nature. Always remember: you are not your problems and flaws. This is very important!
- In order to avoid obsessing on errors or flaws and thinking that is who you are, discover the problem and construct its opposite positive healing quality. Focus on that quality. When you discover a negative quality in your nature, do not concentrate on it. Instead, direct all your energy to the cultivation of the opposite good quality. For every negative quality, there is a polar opposite, positive quality. For anger, there is patience. For selfishness, there is love. For anxiety, there is peace. For resentment, there is forgiveness.
- Review the list of healing qualities.
- Choose the ones you need for this part of your story.
- Most of the time we need more love, compassion, understanding, forgiveness, strength, courage, patience, kindness, and humor.
- Create affirmations related to the healing quality you wish to cultivate. As you weave your affirmation into your pain story, one by one, problems are contained, reduced, and dissolved, replaced by positive qualities and habits. The true self emerges as peace, strength, courage, and compassion, overwhelming all traces of negativity.
- We learn many valuable lessons from our emotional pain as our life story unfolds. By completing an introspective process, our emotional pain exhausts itself and disappears, leaving in its wake new knowledge and strength.
- When we permeate our strategies for dealing with life's problems with love and understanding, we spiritualize our story. In clearing and healing our emotions, we gain the peace of the soul.
- To summarize, the first phase of healing is let the story unfold. The second phase of healing is spiritualize the story. In this phase, painful emotions are reduced and replaced by strength, courage, endurance, love, compassion, understanding, forgiveness, peace, harmony, and a host of other love-qualities.
- The healing story trumps the pain story, takes over the dominant position in consciousness, and determines our true identity as peace, love, joy, power, and wisdom manifested as serene and compassionate service to humanity.
- Healing qualities are the spiritual solution to any pain, problem, conflict, symptom, disease, or disability. Guided by healing qualities, the story unfolds in the direction of love.

- When we let the story unfold and spiritualize the story, the emotional pain wave has a half-life and ultimately disappears, leaving in its wake the love-qualities we need.
- The degree to which love is in charge of our story will determine our direction, the quality of our interactions, and the quality of our experience.
- Bear in mind, transformation of emotion will not eliminate the inevitable suffering of life: illness, old age, the unknown, and death but it does help us contain, reduce, and eliminate unnecessary mental restlessness and excessive emotional reactivity.

Transformation of Emotion into Self-Knowledge: An Example

Joe's wife has been complaining that he has been irritable with her and their children. He decides to see if she is right. First, he reviews the lessons in this book on affirmations, will, habits, and introspection. Then he finds some quiet time. He asks for help from his Higher Power. He looks inside with an attitude of honest, fearless compassion.

Joe surrenders into his pain. He adopts an attitude of total acceptance to whatever story his emotions have to tell. As Joe lets the story unfold, he realizes he has indeed been impatient and angry with his family.

Further exploration of his feelings leads him to realize that he has been struggling at work. His boss treats him poorly. Colleagues are more competitive than cooperative. The work itself has become boring. Joe realizes that he needs to change his job, but until he can make that change, he does not want to abuse his family. He fights off his ego's tendency to blame others and seeks to spiritualize his story.

Joe knows that there are times when he has absolutely no control over the environment, but he always has choice about his will, thoughts, and actions. Joe decides to fight the battle against his anger. He consults the list of healing qualities. He finds a number of qualities that he can use to antidote his irritability. These include peace, patience, kindness, tenderness, gentleness, sweetness, understanding, compassion, forgiveness, tolerance, acceptance, openness, and surrender.

He writes some corresponding affirmations on note cards: "I am patient, kind, and understanding under all conditions. Sweetness of speech is the rule of the day. I accept the things I cannot change." Patience, kindness, understanding, and sweetness of speech are the watchwords he uses for every action. He practices these qualities in all of his actions throughout the day.

Joe finds it difficult to respond with spiritual qualities when the demands are great at work and at home. Nevertheless, with perseverance he sees slow but definite results. His family is happier. Joe gradually becomes more patient as he looks for a new job.

In allowing his emotions to tell their story, Joe discovered his issues and problems. Then he infused the story with healing qualities, realizing another degree of his true self.

Although Joe's problem may be minor compared to many, we can apply the same principles to more severe problems.

BALANCE THE PAIN AND HEALING STORY

- When we ride the pain waves and let the story unfold, we discover where we need to do some work. We find our issues, problems, weaknesses, and flaws. There is a risk, however, of dwelling too long in the

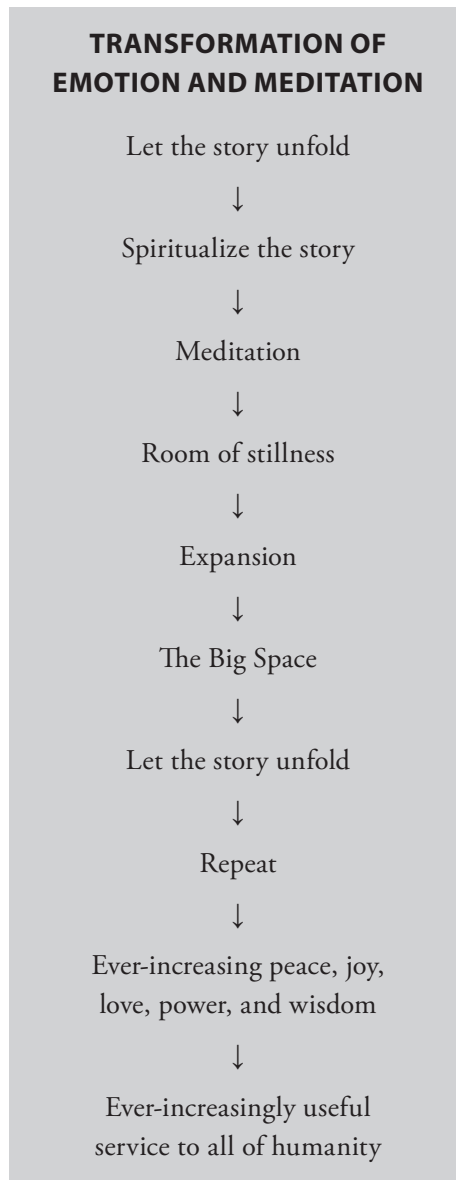
pain story. We can get stuck in rumination or negative cyclical thinking. It isn't helpful to commune with our pain when all we are doing is repeating the same thoughts. How will you know when you have finished letting the story unfold and are ready to spiritualize the story?

- Watch your thoughts as you journal or take your emotional pain out for a walk. There will likely be a lot of repetitive thoughts but interspersed with these repetitions, you will notice some new insights. As long as there is new information coming through the repetitions, there is likely a need to continue letting the story unfold. When there is no new information coming through, you are likely at the end of that round or layer of work. Then you can spiritualize the story. If there is another layer of work buried in the subconscious but not ready to come out now, it will come out later.
- In summary, when pain is telling your story, there will be a lot of new thoughts. When you have completed the pain story, there are no new thoughts, only ruminations. Then move to the healing story.
- Getting the right balance between the pain story and healing story is not easy and sometimes impossible.
- Some dwell too long in the pain story and get stuck in rumination or negative cyclical thinking. All of us know people who are stuck in their pain story and unable to get out. All you hear from them is the problem and painful side of their story.
- Others move too quickly into spiritualizing the story and miss finding some of the negativity that needs to be dug out. We have all met people who are “very spiritual,” but filled with tension and darkness. They have spiritualized their story but have not spent enough time letting the story unfold. Consequently, their subconscious problems, flaws, and conflicts weigh them down and interfere with the love they profess. This is easy to do. No one wants to go to the dentist. Yet here we are our own mental dentist, drilling into the dark hidden recesses of our consciousness, looking for problem areas that need work. This hurts. It's much more fun to spend time with the healing qualities: patience, kindness, compassion, love, and so forth.
- There is a tension between letting the story unfold where we give our emotional pain time and space and spiritualizing the story where we shift gears and focus on a healing quality. We need to swing in and out of both. This is an ongoing process. Just look for and try to approximate the right dose of each.
- Letting the story unfold and spiritualizing the story may take longer for some problems than for others. For deep long-term problems, these two steps may alternate and overlap for months, even years.
- We can trust the intelligent healing power inside. It will let us know if we are dwelling on the pain too much and need to move to the healing story. On the other hand, if we are avoiding pain and need to continue working with the inner dentist, this too will make itself known. Listen to the still small loving voice within.
 - a. Do you need to practice the two phases of healing?
 1. Let the story unfold
 2. Spiritualize the story
 - b. Analyze your pain and healing stories. Observe how they interact.
 - c. Are you stuck in your pain story?
 - d. Does your story have enough healing qualities?
 - e. Are you hiding in your healing story and avoiding an overdue appointment with your inner dentist?

MEDITATION AND TRANSFORMATION OF EMOTION

- The goal of meditation is stillness but sometimes, when we try to meditate, all we experience is our problems. Bad habits, hard feelings, conflicts with others, the need to forgive, insecurity, worries, resentment, and a host of other problems beg our attention and recognition. We can try to meditate but sometimes these problems require work, which must be done before we can get into the room of stillness.
- If this is the case, we may have to switch gears from meditation to transformation of emotion. We may have to let the story unfold and spiritualize the story. Then we can meditate and get into the room of stillness.
- For example, it is difficult or impossible to achieve stillness when we are angry and harbor resentment against those who have done us wrong. We may need to sit with our pain and let the story unfold to discover who remains in our inner prison. Then, if we choose to do so, we can spiritualize the story, in this case applying forgiveness to these individuals, thus liberating them from the inner prison. Then we can get into the room of stillness and absorb the deep healing vibrations that reside only there.
- When you try to meditate but find yourself ruminating on your problems, try the following method.
 - a. Stop
 - b. Breathe
 - c. Present moment
 - d. Let the story unfold
 - Observe. See what is there.
 - Note the medley of thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations. Embedded within these sensations, there may be a story you need to discover, lessons you need to learn, tests you need to pass. I am afraid of loss, humiliation, rejection. I feel a pit in my stomach. I am not sure I can do this. I don't care. I want a drink. I am angry at my girlfriend.
 - Ride any pain wave that shows up. Stay with the wave as it grows. Ride it to its peak. Don't try to escape. Don't jump off. Let it all come out.
 - Breathe into the pain. Use the breath to steady yourself as you ride the pain wave, trusting it will naturally subside if you stay with it.
 - You may feel like you can't do this or that you are going to break but most of the time, if you ride the pain wave and get the necessary lessons, it will dissolve.
 - If you are new at this and feel overwhelmed, it may be wise to seek professional help.
 - e. Spiritualize the story
 - When you have extracted the necessary information, infuse the pain story with healing qualities.
 - Review the list of healing qualities. Choose the ones you need for this part of your story.
 - Most of the time we need more love, compassion, understanding, forgiveness, strength, courage, patience, kindness, and humor.
 - These qualities will reduce and finally dissolve the pain story.
 - f. Now we can meditate, enter the room of stillness, and participate in the deep healing that occurs only there.

- See the diagram below. Meditation and transformation of emotion are very powerful tools. Together they help us transform painful problems into ever-increasing peace, love, joy, power, and wisdom expressed through quiet acts of humble service to all humanity.



EXERCISES

1. What is introspection?
2. What is self-knowledge?
3. Overwhelming emotions reduce our intellect, imagination, and choices, and may become destructive or dangerous. Describe the technique for transforming emotion into self-knowledge. How can you use this technique?
4. Can you think of some occasions where your emotional discomfort carried the lessons you needed to learn? How did you extract that knowledge from the pain?

5. How can you spiritualize your story?
6. Release Negative Energy from Its Subconscious Prison
 - o When we repress our problems, they take up residence secretly in the subconscious mind and body. They occupy space, tie us in knots, create tension, and make us gloomy. This repressed energy wants to be released from its subconscious prison to join the free-flowing river of peace, love, joy, power, and wisdom.
 - o Stop running, resisting, and repressing, all of which perpetuate trouble, increase tension, and rumination.
 - o You have the intelligence to understand and the power to overcome. Trust the healing power within. It knows what to do. Armed with this knowledge and faith:
 - a. Face your pain.
 - b. Gently name it.
 - c. Relax into it.
 - d. Be a compassionate nurturing presence for the pain.
 - e. Breathe into it and affirm soft, yield, open, surrender.
 - f. If you are afraid, pray. Ask for help and grace so you can stare down the monster and reduce its power.
 - g. Talk to a friend, partner, family member, or counselor.
 - h. Journal, draw, walk, dance.
 - i. Go to a twelve-step meeting, church, synagogue, mosque, other healing ceremonies.
 - j. Create a ritual to honor your feelings.
 - k. Practice progressive muscle relaxation or do a body scan.
 - l. Practice affirmations.
 - m. Contemplate wisdom pearls from sacred texts.
 - n. Meditate.
 - o. Practice mindfulness.
 - p. Practice yoga.
 - q. Work, volunteer, help others.
 - r. Eat popcorn and watch TV.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- How we manage painful emotions can make the difference between success and failure, health and disease, poverty or prosperity, love and despair.
- Painful emotions are a part of the normal, natural, intelligent healing process. When we learn how to process emotion into self-knowledge, we gain strength and peace.

- We can process feelings daily or as they arise. If we wait too long, they add up and may become too hot to handle, forcing us to express them destructively.
- Emotions are a rich source of information. If we are able to experience sadness or anger without excessive use of alcohol, drugs, food, gambling, sex, or violence, we may discover why we are experiencing these feelings. Emotions tell a story with lessons having to do with the cultivation of spiritual qualities. When we finish the story, it will not keep coming up.
- Emotions are packed with meaning and purpose, story and self-knowledge, lessons and qualities. We need to extract this knowledge and move on. If we don't do this work, emotional pain waves may get bigger and cause even more trouble.
- During introspection, the ego tells the story from its point of view. This is good. We can learn many things about ourselves by listening to the ego and seeing how it works. However, the ego tends to be self-righteous. It blames others, making itself into a victim. The soul, on the other hand, looks to replace our imperfections with spiritual power. It spiritualizes the story by bringing out our soul qualities.
- Emotions come in waves. Learn how to surf the waves. If you ride them, they dissipate, leaving behind a story packed with meaning, lessons, peace, and power.
- True self-analysis is essential for deep healing and recovery. Be honest with yourself. To have a clear conscience is one of the greatest joys.
- The ego keeps us tiny by inflating the importance of its story. When we reduce and finally replace the ego with the soul, we realize the true self as a composite of the great healing qualities: love, compassion, understanding, forgiveness, strength, courage, warmth, and more.
- The mind is like a jukebox. It plays a record such as D4 sometimes at our request and sometimes against our will. Most of the time when a record plays against our will, it is because there is unfinished business in that domain. If we let the story unfold and then spiritualize the story, we bring the story under our control and lay down a record that can now be used for wisdom and power when we need it. Instead of D4 playing against our will, we play D4 when we choose to do so.
- In ordinary consciousness, a problem is like a big fish in a small pond. It creates lots of waves. As you advance, after you have done some deep inner work, you enter the ocean of ever-expanding space where the same size fish has less and ultimately no effect on you. At some point, you will be ready for anything: pain, change, the unknown, and death.
- You have completed your review of the fifteen methods. In the next chapter, you will learn how to create a balanced healing program.

PART 3

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER





CHAPTER 20

A BALANCED HEALING PROGRAM

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

- In this chapter, you will learn how to create a personal, balanced healing program to use for any painful condition, including major life crises or long-standing problems.
- This work describes fifteen methods that help us manage the inevitable suffering of life and our reaction to it. These are the methods we can turn to when doctors and other healthcare professionals cannot solve the problem.

THE METHODS

Horizontal axis: external work

1. People
2. Activities
3. Belief systems

Vertical axis: internal work

4. Affirmations
5. Habit transformation
6. Progressive muscle relaxation
7. Breathwork
8. Contemplation
9. Meditation
10. Prayer
11. Mindfulness
12. Practicing the presence of God
13. Service
14. Yoga
15. Transformation of emotion

- In this chapter, we will review how these methods work together to help us meet challenges head-on.
- Problems can be tiny, small, medium, large, or huge. These methods work no matter the size, shape, or complexity of your problem.
- For chronic severe problems, we will need to practice these methods in a variety of combinations for years.

BALANCE HORIZONTAL AND VERTICAL AXIS OPTIONS

Horizontal Axis: Action and Distraction

- We always want to get rid of our pain in the easiest possible way, usually by engaging our family, friends, work, sports, hobbies, entertainment, nature, and possessions. This is good.
- Action and distraction in the outer world of people, activities, events, and things have their time and place. They work. Our pain is contained, reduced, or eliminated.
- Often however, this is not enough, doesn't work, or makes things worse.

Vertical Axis: Sit with the Pain and Go In

- Sometimes we need to sit with the pain as the teacher and stimulant for the growth of healing qualities.
- When we do this, the pain may get worse before it gets better. This is hard to accept and even harder to do, but the reward is great.
- When we practice transformation of emotion, affirmations, prayer, meditation, contemplation, and other vertical axis methods, we gain peace, power, strength, compassion, love, understanding, humility, wisdom, and more.

Balance

- There is tension between finding something positive like a person, activity, event, or thing on the horizontal axis and giving space and time for inner being work on the vertical axis. We need to swing in and out of both.
- Balanced healing occurs when we find the correct ratio of time on the horizontal and vertical axis. How do we know when to distract ourselves through action or sit with the pain?
- If we try to use the horizontal axis to solve problems that must be resolved internally, we become frustrated, angry, depressed, and anxious. Some people develop codependency, bad habits, and unhealthy attachments. Many become hyperactivity junkies, immersing themselves in activities from morning to night, trying to avoid the work that must be done inside.
- Some use vertical axis options like meditation and spiritual study as a way to escape painful issues needing work on the horizontal axis.
- Over time we can learn through trial and error how to navigate our way through and balance horizontal action-distraction and vertical axis options.
- The balance point varies according to our stage of life and responsibilities. If you are a parent with young children or in medical school, there will be very little time for meditation and contemplation. However, one can always practice mindfulness, breathwork, and affirmations.
- Choose the method that fits your need at the moment. Balance horizontal and vertical axis methods. Practice these methods until they become your new mental habits locked in brain grooves that will not quit.
- Doctors try to prescribe the right medication, at the right dose, at the right time. The fifteen methods prescribed here are similar but you are the doctor. You prescribe the method and dose.
- Pay attention to the dose. When the dose is too low, we don't get the full effect. When we get too much, there are side effects. Through trial and error, we can discover the right method, at the right dose, at the right time.

ABYSS PAIN VS TIME RELEASE PAIN

- We want to be able to sit with our pain and learn from it. Sometimes we can do this but sometimes life presents complex and overlapping problems that overwhelm our defenses and bring us to the abyss.
- Abyss pain is dark, scary, overwhelming. We are afraid of being swallowed, breaking into a thousand pieces, unable to put it together again.

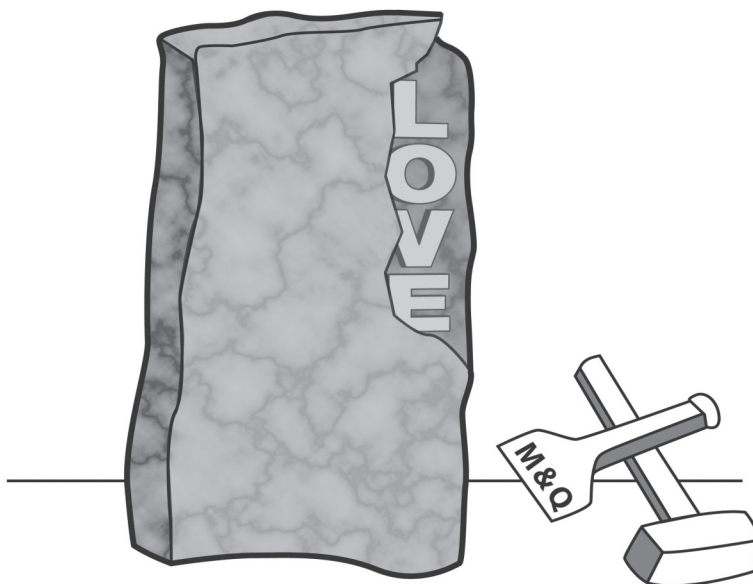
- What is the best way to manage abyss pain or severe pain of any kind?
- When pain is very intense, we can balance methods in two categories:
 - a. Methods that distract, soothe, and comfort.
 - b. Methods that may cause the pain to get worse before it gets better.
- For the most part, soothing methods are people, activities, church, synagogue, mosque, twelve-step meetings and similar healing groups, progressive muscle relaxation, breathwork, contemplation, prayer, affirmations, mindfulness, the presence of God, service, and yoga.
- Methods that may cause the pain to get worse before it gets better are meditation, habit transformation, and transformation of emotion.
- The combination of techniques we need on any particular day may vary depending on how we feel. When we feel strong and ready to take on some pain, we might schedule an hour for transformation of emotion. If an overwhelming pain wave emerges while doing deep inner work, we can shift gears and turn to more soothing methods—TV, popcorn, friends, twelve-step meetings, breathwork, and affirmations—until we are ready to go back inside.
- Although some might profit from scheduling an hour, others may prefer a less formal approach. For example, we can practice transformation of emotion and meditation for as long as we wish or until the pain is too intense, at which point, we can shift to more soothing actions like being with friends or going to the gym.
- We can move from emotional processing to being with a friend for dinner, to emotional processing, to watching television and eating popcorn, to prayer and meditation, to physical exercise, to going to a meeting, and so forth.
- Through trial and error, we can discover which option or combination of options will work for any given problem. For some problems, good friends and activities will suffice. On other days, contemplation, reading sacred texts, and meditation are most effective. If a technique causes too much pain, you can turn to another less invasive method.
- The combination of methods used on any particular day may vary. As our experience grows, our ability to match techniques to problems improves. We become more effective pain managers. Eventually, we reach the point where we can handle anything, including the unknown and death.
- With this balanced approach, we can learn how to:
 - a. Move into pain we do not know.
 - b. Release some of the pressure without breaking apart.
 - c. Ride increasingly bigger pain waves.
 - d. Control pain so pain does not control us.
- You will find more information on this topic in Chapter 27, Omniscient Love and Terror at the Abyss.

A BLOCK OF MARBLE AND THE CHISEL OF WISDOM: CHIP, CHIP, CHIP

- Pain has a purpose: the cultivation of healing qualities and higher states of consciousness. This is a lot of work. Change is slow, painful, and difficult. It may seem overwhelming.

- Try the following metaphor. We start with a big marble block and the chisel of wisdom.
- The marble block is the sum total of our being. We are a combination of problems and the Image of God or Buddha.
- The Buddha = The Image of God = one hundred healing qualities and higher states of consciousness.
- The chisel of wisdom is the methods (M) and qualities (Q).
- Chip, chip, chip. Begin the process of carving out the image.
- When we practice the methods, the qualities get bigger and our problems get smaller.
- Having fifteen methods is an advantage. One day you might practice breathwork and affirmations; the next day, mindfulness, the presence of God, or prayer.
- Choose the method that works for you in the moment. Change methods according to your need and feeling.
- Work your way through the fifteen methods in any combination and go around again.
- Throw the PMQ book at your problem and be patient.
- Give yourself time to heal.
- Be patient, disciplined, and persevere.
- Don't put a schedule on how long the pain will last.
- Hang in there. Work the condition, however long or severe, and wait for the qualities to appear.
- Don't identify with the pain or problem. Identify with the qualities. This is your true self.
- Practice peace no matter what.
- Practice positive thought no matter what.
- Practice the qualities no matter what.
- Forgive yourself no matter your mistakes or problems.
- Forgive others.
- Practice compassion for others.
- Practice compassion for yourself.
- Get some momentum and keep going.
- At some point, you will see the Image of God or Buddha manifesting as ever-expanding love qualities and higher states of consciousness.

A BLOCK OF MARBLE AND THE CHISEL OF WISDOM



DAVID AND GOLIATH

- The phrase *David and Goliath* denotes an underdog situation, a contest where a smaller, weaker opponent faces a much bigger, stronger adversary.
- All of us have *David and Goliath* moments. Problems seem too big, overwhelming, frightening, even terrifying.
- Remember this: the universal healing wheel applies to any problem: tiny, small, medium, large, or huge. The rules are the same for big problems. It just takes longer.
- We can practice PMQ for the most severe, complex, long-term, deeply embedded problems: chronic illness or disability; brutal reality; the cave of darkness; the dark night of the soul.
- Big tests require more work, time, patience, and discipline. When we do the work, the reward is even greater: healing qualities expand until they become unconditional. The soul merges with Spirit. Big Love takes over. We experience the peace that surpasses understanding, pure love, ecstatic joy. How grand!

GO TO YOUR ROOM

- Sometimes, we have had enough. We get frustrated, irritable, angry, depressed, anxious. There is no room in the inn. All the rooms are filled. We have no space. What to do?
- The best thing to do at a time like this is:
 - a. Go to your room.
 - b. Read “The Guesthouse” by Rumi, page 243.
 - c. Practice transformation of emotion and meditation. These two powerful techniques clear the zone and create more space. See Chapter 19, Transformation of Emotion, pages 252-253.

SHIFTING THE LOCUS OF CONTROL

- Please review Chapter 8, Shifting the Locus of Control, in *Healing Power Revised* (2010), pp. 115–123.
- Following are some additional points to remember.
 - Through a series of painful lessons, life teaches us that the unlimited peace, love, and joy we seek in the outer world can and must ultimately be found within.
 - This necessitates a shift in the locus of control from outside to inside.
 - This model presents fifteen methods, three on the horizontal axis and twelve on the vertical axis.
 - How much work we do on each axis is personal and individualized.
 - Most of us do most of our healing and pain management work on the horizontal axis of people, activities, and belief system. This is good.
 - The horizontal axis does give a little of the peace, love, and joy we crave, but the unlimited peace, love, and joy of the Core Drive can only be found inside.
 - For deeper healing, we need to do progressively more work on the vertical axis.
 - Readiness is key. We are not ready for a deeper level of vertical axis work until we are ready for a deeper level. For example, no one is going to meditate in a consistent way until the timing is right.
 - We must be motivated, comfortable, and ready for the next step in vertical axis work.
 - This model attempts to speak to you at your current spot on that spectrum, recognizing your experience is universal.
 - It hopes to receive you just where you are: at the brink between the outer world and the inner true self.
 - It receives you at the doorway where the shift occurs and guides you to your inner being as the very thing you have been looking for the whole time.
 - But you must be ready and ready means saturated with the external world to some degree. If not, you will go back to it again and again until you finally figure out what it will give you and what it won't give you.
 - When you have finally had enough suffering, when you have a passionate desire to change, when you are ready to do some work, you can upgrade your vertical axis practice. But you must be ready, world saturated, and hungry. Otherwise, the world or maya will have the predominance of your attention.
- The following exercises are designed to help you create an individualized balanced healing program.

EXERCISES

1. Review the list of fifteen pain management options on page 260.
2. Which of these methods are you currently using?
3. Which of these methods might you add to your program?
4. Discuss how people, activities, a belief system, (horizontal axis) and the twelve vertical axis methods work together to help manage pain and suffering.

5. What is the nature of a balanced healing program?

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- We want *Big Peace, Love, Joy, and Safety*, more time, and no pain. This is the Core Drive. We try to achieve the Core Drive in the outer world of people, activities, events, and things. This is impossible. On the physical plane, suffering is inevitable, time is limited, and death wins in the end.
- We can achieve little peace, love, joy, and safety in the outer world but any attempt to get more on the physical plane leads to attachment, addiction, and reactivity.
- The saints bring us the good news: The *Big Peace, Love, Joy, and Safety* we seek is inside, waiting patiently for our discovery as the true self, Buddha, or Image of God. We can prove this to ourselves through direct personal experience when we practice vertical axis methods.
- You may not be able to control outer events, but you own the space within. It is your house. All the rooms belong to you. You can choose the furniture and the decorations. Why not fill your house with the attributes of love? Practice outer and inner methods in a healthy balance. You will see love fill the rooms of your house and surrounding space.
- Quote from a member: I don't do big pain alone. I thought I could do it myself. I can't. I need horizontal axis people and activities balanced with the vertical axis methods I do alone.
- As you build your external world of people, activities, events, and things, you can also build an inner world of peace, power, strength, courage, and wisdom.
- Balance healing with horizontal and vertical axis methods. Cultivate love, compassion, acceptance, humility, faith, understanding, and forgiveness in response to your problems. Do this for years and decades. Love grows and takes new shapes and forms. We learn how to serve in ever-increasingly useful ways. There is no limit to love's creative powers.
- Many of us have long-standing problems that may take years of work. We should not be discouraged if these problems do not respond immediately. Effort is progress. If we do the work, our problems slowly burn up. We stop attracting the same negative circumstances and people. The positive experiences in our lives increase. Peace, courage, strength, and wisdom grow.
- There are times in all of our lives when there are too many problems to handle at once. Problems compound. Our pain grows from moderate to severe. We go into crisis. There may be symptoms, impaired functioning, and danger. We can get discouraged or frightened. This may be a time to seek professional help. Some are reluctant to do this, thinking it to be failure. However, life is painful. At times, suffering is great. Getting help is a sign of strength and wisdom.

AFFIRMATIONS

- I am a stronger and wiser because of my tests and challenges.
- Better to have pain than to remain the same.
- Every problem is an opportunity in disguise.
- I work on smaller problems now so when bigger ones come later, I am ready.

- Rather than seek pleasure and avoid pain, I accept both as having benefit.
- I develop spiritual muscles by working through my painful problems.
- I accept the difficulties of life as necessary for spiritual growth.
- I am strong and calm in any outer condition.
- Time and love heal all of my wounds.
- I thank Spirit for providing me with opportunities to grow and transform.
- Suffering leads to compassion, strength, and wisdom.
- Suffering leads to peace, love, and joy.



CHAPTER 21

SKILLFUL PAIN MANAGEMENT

A DEEPER LOOK AT PMQ

- When we do all the right things and it still hurts, it may be helpful to remember some key points. In this chapter, we will review important principles designed to help manage any painful problem skillfully. These dynamics apply no matter the size or shape of our problem. We need to understand and practice these principles even more when confronted with our biggest problems. Topics covered are:
 1. Roll the wheel
 2. Hold PMQ in the same space
 3. Four stages of growth
 4. What to do when pain does not go away
 5. Embrace the gap: getting comfortable with the uncomfortable
 6. Find your power in the story
 7. Ride the pain wave
 8. A mindfulness exercise: two doors
 9. Trust the process
 10. Deep suffering and deep healing: how far are you prepared to go
 11. Start slow and build to one continuous sacred ritual.
 12. How to manage a backslide
 13. Physical healing and spiritual healing
 14. Pain and healing: a marriage of wisdom
 15. Saints are skillful pain managers
 16. A palette of colors

1. Roll the Wheel

- Let's start with a review of the universal healing wheel or problem-method-quality.
- (P): The problem can be any problem of body, mind, or soul. Remember, this is about the residual suffering that cannot be relieved by your doctor or other healthcare professionals. This pain-ball is in your court and can only be managed by you through self-help, self-healing methods.
- (M): To address these problems, the workbook describes fifteen self-healing methods.
- (Q): The result is the cultivation of one hundred spiritual qualities adding up to love.
- To evolve, all you have to do is find a problem, practice a method, and cultivate a quality.
- When we practice PMQ:
 1. Healing power expands.
 2. We become more skillful pain managers.
 3. We evolve. We:
 - a. Feel better
 - b. Become a better person
 - c. Experience higher states of consciousness
- The first step is to realize mindfully that we are in a reaction (P) and don't want to be there.
- Then we need to pick a method (M) and quality (Q) to reduce that reactivity.
- Here is a simple technique to help you do this:

GETTING OFF THE TRAIN

When you realize you have gone for a ride on the train of thought and want to get off the train:

1. Stop
2. Breathe
3. Present moment
4. (P) Pain: Any painful problem
5. (M): Method: Choose a method
6. (Q): Quality: Choose a quality

- (P): Problem:
 - Find a problem you would like to work on.
 - This can be any problem: physical, mental, emotional, interpersonal, or spiritual.
 - It can be any size: tiny, small, medium, large, or huge.

- (Q): Quality
 - Go to the list of one hundred healing qualities.
 - Pick one or a combination of qualities you need right now to help you with your problem.
- (M): Method
 - Pick one or a combination of methods that will help you grow that quality.
 - a. Now, gently bring the quality and method to the pain. Everything is done gently.
 - b. Focus on the method and quality, not the pain.
 - c. Practice your method and quality for a day, a week, or longer.
 - d. Read about that quality.
 - e. Think about it.
 - f. Discuss it.
 - g. Contemplate it.
 - h. Affirm it.
 - i. Breathe it.
 - j. Feel it.
 - k. Visualize it.
 - l. Concentrate on it.
 - m. Permeate your being with it.
 - n. Invoke powerful memories about it.
 - o. Create from it.
 - p. Make it your faithful guide and companion.
 - q. Write your experience.
 - r. Share in a group or with a friend.

Example

Perhaps you want to reduce your tendency to judge others harshly by practicing compassion. When you have gone for a ride on the judgmental train of thought and want to get off the train:

1. Stop
 2. Breathe
 3. Present moment
 4. (P): Realize you are in a judgmental frame of mind.
 5. (M): Affirm: My heart is always open and willing to forgive.
 6. (Q): Compassion
- With any painful problem, fifteen methods, and one hundred qualities, there are countless options. For some examples, see the Universal Healing Wheel Examples illustration below.

- Choose any problem and match it to a method and quality. Practice the method and cultivate the quality in response to the pain. The quality is more powerful than the painful problem. As the quality slowly grows, it will contain, reduce, or eliminate your pain and guide you through any pain that is left.
- We must still deal with the inevitable suffering of life. But now there is less reactivity and more strength and peace. This is skillful pain management by rolling the universal healing wheel.

THE UNIVERSAL HEALING WHEEL EXAMPLES		
PROBLEM	METHOD	QUALITY
<i>Any problem of body, mind, or spirit</i>	<i>15 methods</i>	<i>100 qualities</i>
Lonely	People: meet a friend	Joy
Bored	Activity: volunteer	Generosity
Loss	Belief system: go to church or AA meeting	Community
Physical illness	Affirmation	Acceptance
Addiction	Habit transformation	Contentment
Fatigue	Progressive muscle relaxation	Energy
Anxious	Breathwork	Peace
Confusion	Contemplation	Wisdom
Restless	Meditation	Even-mindedness
Fear	Prayer	Courage
Irritable	Mindfulness	Patience
Judgmental	Practicing the Presence of God	Unconditional Love
Guilt	Service	Forgiveness
Worry	Yoga	Harmony
Anger	Transformation of emotion	Understanding
Worry	Yoga	Harmony
Anger	Transformation of emotion	Understanding

2. Pain, Method and Quality in the Same Space

- Once you define your pain, method, and quality, the goal is to focus on the method and quality, not the pain. Often, however, our concentration muscle is not strong enough to do this. We try to focus on the method and quality but the force of the pain is compelling and commands our attention.
- We can manage this common scenario by gently holding the pain, method, and quality in the same space.
- Place your needle of attention on the method and quality. When the mind lapses into one of its negative habit patterns, bring it back to your method and quality.
- For example, your PMQ might be anxiety–breathwork with affirmation–peace.

- (P) anxiety
- (M) breathwork and affirmations
- (Q) peace
- When you feel anxious, breathe slowly and deeply while you affirm: “Breathing gently, calming down. Breathing gently, problem melts.”
- When the mind lapses back into anxiety or fear thoughts, all you have to do is shift your attention from the anxiety back to slow deep breathing and your affirmation and hold it there until it wanders again. And it will.
- The back and forth movement between the old negative habit pattern of anxiety and the new point of focus on your breath and affirmation is called the yoyo effect.
- The yoyo effect applies to all of the exercises in this workbook and is a natural part of the healing process.
- As your concentration improves with practice, you will be able to focus more and more on the breath and affirmation until you can stay there at will.
- This is hard and counterintuitive. Holding the pain, method, and quality in the same space hurts. There is friction, conflict, and discomfort. There may be more pain before there is less pain. It feels like going to a mental dentist, jumping off a cliff, or a wrestling match. In this example, the wrestling match is between anxiety and the affirmation “Breathing gently, calming down. Breathing gently, problem melts.”
- We don’t want this fight but there is no healthy alternative. We must sit with the pain, quality, and method in the same space for however long it takes.
- Being aware of the pain, method, and the quality at the same time is the key. This is where the magic happens. Peace wrestles with anxiety and pins it to the mat eventually. But to get to the pin, you have to sit with the wrestling match.

3. Four Stages of Growth

- When we roll the wheel, change occurs in four stages:
 - Stage 1: *No change is noticeable*: We do the work and nothing happens. The qualities are growing, but the increase is subtle and imperceptible. Many people quit here, as they are looking for immediate gratification and are not prepared for work, struggle, and discipline. Don’t put a schedule on this stage. If we do—and our expectations are not met—we may become discouraged and give up our quest.
 - Stage 2: *We feel better and become better people*: There is a tangible experience of ever-increasing peace, love, strength, courage, compassion, and the other love-qualities.
 - Stage 3: *Superconscious experience*: Love qualities inflate by nature. At some point, they cannot contain themselves. They break into superconscious states that defy description. Words are only signposts. We have to go there. When we reach an expanded superconscious state, we know it, experience it, and feel it. Having said this, these experiences are often referred to as the peace that surpasses understanding, pure love, ecstatic joy, unfathomable stillness, intuitive wisdom, a feeling of oneness with everything, and other wonderful expressions of Spirit. These experiences

may last from a few minutes or hours to several days, but there is inevitably a return to ordinary consciousness. Back to school. Back to work.

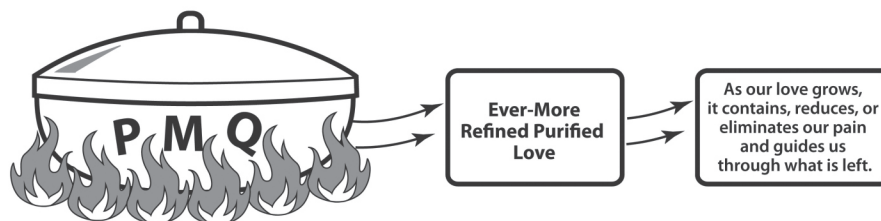
- Stage 4: *Mastery*: There is a sustained state of superconsciousness. This is a very advanced stage and requires decades if not lifetimes of work and discipline. With continued practice, our spiritual qualities become strong enough that no external drama or condition of our bodies can shake them. We remain peaceful, positive, and poised no matter what life throws at us. We experience the soul and Higher Power as a durable love born of ever-expanding compassion, understanding, wisdom, and joy. We know we are the immutable peace of the soul, connected to Spirit, eternally safe and protected. We know our love is greater than any pain or problem. We can get through any barrier, no matter how insurmountable it appears. Nothing can stop us. Nothing can touch us. We are awake, aware, and ready for anything. Serene and compassionate service to humanity is the natural outcome of this state of consciousness. For a more detailed description of this stage, you can study the lives of Jesus, Buddha, Krishna, Rumi, or any God-realized master.

4. What Do We Do If We Roll the Wheel and Our Pain Does Not Go Away?

- This is a very important question. Most of us want a quick fix. If we don't get it, we quit.
- It is not possible to predict how long we have to roll the wheel or practice PMQ before we experience pain relief. Some may feel better right away. Others will have to practice for a while before they feel better.
- Review the four stages of growth in #3 above. Stage I has no defined timetable. We don't know how long it will last. However, if we persist with our practice when there are no apparent results, we will progress to stage 2, 3, and 4.
- To illustrate how this works, let's use the PMQ: anxiety—breathwork with affirmation—peace as in #2 above.
- At first, we experience anxiety while practicing the breath and affirmation. There is no peace. We repeat the affirmation: "Breathing gently, calming down. Breathing gently, problem melts." In the beginning, the affirmation is stuck at the level of thought. It is not realized. The thought stays in our head and there is no pain relief. The anxiety persists untempered by the affirmation. In PMQ language: we have the P (anxiety) and the M (affirmation/breathwork), but there is no Q (peace).
- This is the critical zone. In the beginning, the new brain groove is not big or strong enough to hold against its bigger opponent brain groove carrying the anxiety habit pattern. This is a difficult phase of the work. It hurts. We are in pain. The pain may be severe.
- However, if we persist in our practice, we build up the brain groove carrying the new good habit: affirmation, breathwork, and peace. *Persevere. Keep on keeping on. Practice your method and quality whether or not your pain goes away.*
- In response to your pain, focus on your method and quality as much as you can. When the pain captures your attention, gently return your focus to your method and quality.
- Notice the back and forth yoyo effect between the pain and your method and quality. In the beginning, the pain has its way with you. With practice however, your ability to maintain your focus on the method and quality improves. *The growth of concentration is key.* Eventually you can concentrate on your method and quality no matter what the pain is doing.

- Back to our example of anxiety–breathwork/affirmation–peace. Anxiety is intense. It draws all of our attention. Keep breathing and affirming into the anxiety. The back and forth battle between anxiety and breathwork/affirmation and peace is slowly being won by peace because of our *work, effort, and practice*.
- When we do this work and do not try to escape, we will succeed. The new brain groove carrying our affirmation and breathwork slowly grows. Peace fights off anxiety and finally takes over.
- Riding the pain wave without acting out is the most important principle of skillful pain management. In this case, the pain wave is anxiety. You ride the wave with your breathwork and affirmation. Peace wins in the end.
- The goal is to shift your pain story to a healing story by practicing the methods and qualities recommended in this work. But we may not be able to shake our pain story easily when it is loaded with prior negative actions, personality flaws, symptoms, attachments, bad habits, and addiction. We want the healing story to dominate our consciousness but there are times when we have to hang out with and travel through the pain.
- There will be many layers and many rounds. You don't just do an affirmation and get the cure. The healing quality must go to progressively deeper layers to soothe, ease, and quiet the pain down. And it will. The quality will sink into the deepest part of your consciousness, become part of a foundation that cannot be broken. It will become a new and eventually unconditional habit, housed in a brain groove that will not quit.
- It doesn't matter what pain or quality you pick. The dynamics are the same. You may be countering resentment with compassion; anger with understanding; or craving with contentment. Hold your pain and quality in simultaneous awareness. The pain and quality wrestle, dance, cook, simmer, marinate, merge, overlap, and play. Eventually the quality will soothe, ease, and replace your pain or guide you through what is left.
- When the pain is reduced or gone, keep up your practice. It is a good idea to practice when you feel well as you are building a reserve. You are putting qualities in the bank so you can call them out for tests and trials that are sure to come. Practice with intensity and duration. You are creating new neurocircuits that contain the methods and qualities. To do this you need to practice when you feel well and when you are in pain.
- In summary, when pain persists, keep practicing your method and quality. The magic happens when the P and M and Q occupy the same space. In this heat, the healing quality slowly grows and takes over. This is transcendence. This is where you rise. This is where you find your power in the story. This is when you feel better. If you don't feel better, at least you won't make it worse.

THE CRUCIBLE



- Love is the great healer. Roll the wheel. Love grows. All you have to do is apply your will, thought, and concentration to your method and quality and persevere. Love will come in to save the day.
 - Remember this: armed with the healing qualities, you are ultimately bigger than your pain. But you must practice this to prove it to yourself.
5. **Embrace the Gap: Getting Comfortable with the Uncomfortable**
- To become ever-increasingly skillful pain managers, we must become familiar with the great variety of ways pain manifests.
 - Pain hits our inner being and body with a medley of uncomfortable thoughts, feelings, cravings, and sensations. It can be frightening and overwhelming.
 - This is why mindfulness, meditation, and the other recommended techniques are so important as they help us get in touch with our pain so we can navigate our way through it skillfully. We learn how to get comfortable with the uncomfortable.
 - We drop our resistance to the pain, name it, face it, and move with it and through it to go forward.
 - To do this, we must tune into the varieties of stress and how it manifests in our thoughts, feelings, sensations, desires, fantasies, impulses, choices, and actions.
 - Feel the pressure of the problem. As it takes shape and form, use it to propel yourself in the direction of the healing methods and qualities.
 - If we persevere, we will see the quality is more powerful than the painful problem.
 - Love, understanding, compassion, forgiveness, patience, kindness, courage, and strength will contain, reduce, and eliminate reactivity and guide us skillfully through any pain that persists.
 - Practice PMQ as much as you wish. More is better.
6. **Find Your Power in The Story**
- When overwhelmed, we feel frail or inadequate. Nevertheless, we always have more power than we are using right now; this is true no matter where we are on the path of healing and enlightenment.
 - We can tap into our latent healing power by rolling the universal healing wheel = practice PMQ.
 - To find your power in the story: 1. Define your painful problem. 2. Choose a method. 3. Choose a quality.
 - You have one hundred healing qualities. The qualities are your power in the story no matter what form or direction your story takes.
 - Find healing qualities most useful to you in the moment and cultivate these with your method or methods of choice.
 - The universal healing wheel is packed with wisdom. Practice PMQ and you will see how it works. You will learn how to sit with your pain, ride the pain waves, and find your power in the story.
7. **Ride the Pain Wave** (see illustration, page 194)
- Our instinct is to run away from the pain.
 - Skillful pain management is to do the exact opposite: to sit with the pain as the teacher and stimulant for the growth of healing qualities.

- Instead of running, let the pain in, face it, name it, work with and through it. How?
- Imagine yourself on a board, surfing the pain wave.
- The goal is to stay on the board no matter what shape or form the wave takes.
- Sometimes the wave gets bigger before it dissipates. There may be more pain before it gets better. This can be frightening.
- To stay on the board no matter the size or shape of the wave, match your problem to a method and quality.
- Focus on the method and quality as the wave changes size and shape.
- Eventually, the quality comes in to manage the pain skillfully.
- I am anxious (P), I practice meditation (M) and cultivate peace (Q). Peace eventually comes in to contain, reduce, and eliminate anxiety.
- We fall off the board countless times on the way to mastery. This is a natural part of the process. Be gentle with yourself when you make mistakes. Make kindness and generosity toward yourself, your new mental habits.

8. A Mindfulness Exercise: Two Doors

- Life is painful no matter what route we take, but how we manage our pain will make or break us.
- The difference between a cocaine addict and a saint is how pain is managed. A cocaine addict is an unskillful pain manager. A saint is a skillful pain manager.
- Pain-killing devices such as excessive use of drugs, alcohol, money, Internet, power, sex, gambling, food, and shopping work in the short run to reduce suffering but create long-term greater pain and destruction. We get locked in powerful negative brain grooves carrying bad habits and addiction. Our pain story takes hold and we can't get out.
- Skillful pain management techniques such as meditation and mindfulness sometimes bring more pain in the beginning but lead to strength, power, peace, and courage in the long run.
- Here is a good mindfulness exercise. Everyone has two doors:
 - a. Door #1: unskillful pain management: Make a list of your unskillful pain management practices.
 - b. Door #2: skillful pain management: Review the list of fifteen skillful pain management practices recommended in this workbook. Which of these do you already have and what would you like to add to your current program?
 - c. Review the list of one hundred healing qualities. We always have all of them but always need more. Which of these qualities do you need to cultivate now?
 - d. Mindfulness exercise: When you find yourself reacting and want to shift gears:
 - 1. Stop
 - 2. Breathe
 - 3. Present moment
 - 4. Notice which door you are choosing from moment to moment.

5. Ask yourself, is this door #1, unskillful pain management, or door #2, skillful pain management?



9. Trust the Process

- Healing qualities are more powerful than painful problems. We have to prove this to ourselves through direct personal experience. There is no other way to gain trust in the process.
- We have to let the pain in, match it with a method and quality, experience the growth of the quality and observe how it slowly contains, reduces, and eliminates the problem and guides us through what is left.
- We can start by riding small pain waves and then building up to bigger ones. Practicing on and having success with smaller waves gives us the confidence to handle bigger waves.
- Breathe into your pain instead of pushing it away. Give the pain its due respect by inviting it in as a guest teacher.
- Use your pain as a teacher and stimulant for the growth of healing qualities.
- Embracing our pain this way can be frightening. But after several successful experiences with this, we come to trust our ability to ride the pain waves without drowning.
- After many cycles, you will learn to trust the process. When new problems show up, you will not doubt yourself or the healing process. You will know your job is to roll the wheel and persist. The healing quality does the rest. It comes in to save the day but not on our schedule.
- We would like healing and pain reduction to occur more quickly but it doesn't work that way. We have to wait and be patient. True lasting value only comes with patient daily practice.

10. Deep Suffering and Deep Healing: How Far Are You Prepared to Go?

- The universal healing wheel works for any problem: tiny, small, medium, large, or huge. The dynamics are the same.

- Take any problem and match it to a method and quality. Practice the method and cultivate the quality in response to the pain. The quality slowly grows and will help you contain, reduce, or eliminate your pain.
- Don't miss your smaller problems. They are training for bigger problems.
- Bigger problems present the biggest opportunity. They require more time, effort, work, and struggle. But the reward is great: even bigger peace, love, joy, power, and wisdom.
- The deepest suffering requires the deepest healing. How deep are you prepared to go?

11. Start Slowly and Build to One Continuous Sacred Ritual

- PMQ is a simple formula but difficult to do. It requires patient daily practice, moment to moment, for the duration.
- Every day you can use the circumstances of your life as the springboard for the work. Don't change anything. Just go about your business and roll the wheel.
- Start slowly and build your practice until you are always practicing a method and a quality.
- It's good to practice when times are good so when times are difficult, you will be able to maintain your practice. If you don't do this, and really bad things happen, you can be so overwhelmed that you won't be able to do the work.
- A pain wave will come that is bigger than you. Build some reserve in the bank. The goal is to have the qualities in place so strongly that they can field the pain and manage it for you when it comes.
- There will be times however, when the pain is greater than your ability to manage it skillfully. For example, you may become more patient with practice but a big stressor might overwhelm your patience. You become irritable and inadvertently share this negative feeling with others. When this occurs, intensify your practice until patience replaces irritability.
- The greater the pain, the bigger the quality needs to be. This is a lot of work and it doesn't go in a straight line. When you master a certain level of difficulty, the bar is raised for the next problem, pain, or test. There are ups and downs. We are skillful and then unskillful pain managers. We go forward and backward on our way forward. Pain is the driver. It forces us to upgrade our program to one continuous sacred ritual.
- Notice how your progress is not in a straight line. This is normal. We all go forward and backward on our way forward.
- Practice your methods and qualities until they are a part of *one continuous sacred ritual*.
- Practice your methods and qualities until they become *unconditional, spontaneous, automatic habits*.

12. How to Manage a Backslide?

- You may have made some progress and then go backwards. Join the crowd. All of us go up and down on the way up. Healing is not a straight line. Sometimes we make bad decisions. Old habits return. Character defects replay. We lose control of emotions. We get lazy or discouraged. We stop going to church, synagogue, twelve-step or other healing meetings. We stop practicing methods and qualities. The pain story gets bigger. Self-esteem takes a hit. We are more locked up. What to do?
- When you go backward, you can say to yourself, "I know how I got here and I know what to do. I still have the qualities. The qualities are always inside waiting to be tapped, free of cost."

- To get back on track, start another cycle of hope, power, and responsibility. Then roll the wheel. You will experience success, renewal, and mastery. (See *Healing Power: The Workbook*, Chapter 8: Setting the Stage to Roll the Wheel: Seven Steps to Mastery, pp. 45–49.) Here is a brief review of that seven-step cycle.
 1. Hope: Hope opens the door to possibility.
 2. Power: We have more power than we are using right now. See the story about two frogs in trouble, page 61.
 3. Responsibility: There is work to do.
 4. Roll the wheel: This is the work.
 5. Success: The qualities are growing.
 6. Renewal: It's one thing to light your fire. It's another thing to keep it lit. Look for sources of inspiration.
 7. Mastery: I am evolving. I am an ever-increasingly skillful pain manager. I feel better. I am a better person. I am ready for the challenges to come.

13. Physical Healing and Spiritual Healing

- When you roll the wheel, your painful problems may get better, worse, stay the same, or disappear. However, no matter the pattern or direction of your pain, the qualities are growing. Spiritual healing or the growth of healing qualities occurs no matter what the body is doing.
- Always roll the wheel and don't worry if problems get worse, better, or stay the same.
- Just do your best moment to moment, day to day, year to year, decade to decade, and lifetime to lifetime; you will see the slow but definite increase in love, compassion, understanding, strength, courage, and wisdom.
- You may or may not get a physical healing but you can always heal spiritually by growing the qualities in response to your pain.

14. Pain and Healing: A Marriage of Wisdom

- There are two phases of healing: the pain story and the healing story.
 1. **The Pain Story = Let the Story Unfold**
 - ◇ This is the first step of the healing process. This is the P in PMQ.
 - ◇ We learn how to face our pain.
 - ◇ We accept the painful conditions of our current reality that cannot be changed.
 - ◇ We ride pain waves without resisting, running, or hiding.
 - ◇ We let the pain story unfold. We learn how pain is the teacher. It carries our personal story, meaning, and lessons.
 - ◇ We face our pain thoroughly and completely, as our most triumphant assets, the qualities, reside in the depths of our suffering.
 - ◇ Ask the pain:
 1. What do you want?

2. What do I need to learn?

3. What are the lessons?

- ◇ For more information on how to let the pain story unfold, review: Transformation of Emotion, Chapter 19, page 243, in this workbook.
- ◇ It is necessary to go through the pain story but we get stuck here. This is not a good idea and can be dangerous to our health.
- ◇ We need to shift gears and focus on the healing story, the second phase of healing also called spiritualizing the story.

2. The Healing Story = Spiritualize the Story

- ◇ The second phase of healing is called the healing story or spiritualizing the story. This is the Q in PMQ.
- ◇ To shift gears from the pain story (P) to the healing story (Q), infuse the pain story with healing qualities such as strength, courage, endurance, compassion, understanding, peace, harmony, and a host of other qualities.
- ◇ Healing qualities are more powerful than any painful problem. The healing story trumps the pain story, takes over the dominant position in consciousness, and determines our true identity as peace, love, joy, power, and wisdom manifested as serene and compassionate service to humanity.
- ◇ This sounds good and is the right thing to do, but we can't just make this happen without practicing the methods.
- ◇ When pain is unbearable, we try to kill it with unhealthy actions such as overeating, sex and substance abuse, excessive shopping and so forth. We don't bring in the healing qualities. Pain and healing remain separate or get a divorce.
- ◇ The alternative is to match the pain with one or a combination of methods and qualities. The methods are the matchmaker in the marriage of wisdom between pain and healing. When we get this right, when we marry our pain to a quality with a method, the product is ever-increasing love. When we get it wrong, when pain and healing get separated or divorced, we are in trouble.
- ◇ There is great power and wisdom in the pain–method–quality healing dance. Follow it. Watch it. Get the rhythm of it. Master it. Teach it.

15. Saints Are Skillful Pain Managers

- Look at the lives of the saints.
- Many had tremendous pain but they were highly skillful pain managers. They learned how to endure in the cold hard light of day.
- St. Francis, St. Theresa of Avila, and Sri Gyanamata had great pain but their love was greater. By practicing techniques similar to those recommended in this work, they learned how to be in pain and maintain their love and higher states of consciousness at the same time.
- We also are bigger than our pain but to know this, we must integrate the following principles in our lives.

- We have the qualities.
- We are the qualities.
- We can make the qualities grow.
- The qualities are more powerful than any painful problem.
- The size of our problem determines the size of the quality we need to manage it. Big problems are good as they offer a big opportunity to grow the qualities to a corresponding level. *The bigger the P, the bigger the Q has to be.*
- We need to manage our pain well or it recurs until we get it. When we master a certain level, the bar is raised. Pain and tests escalate. When we pass a test, class, and grade, we get another class, test, and grade. We must respond with ever-increasing qualities to pass a test and transcend to the next level.
- Those who continue their practice become ever-increasingly skillful pain managers. A profound sense of peace and strength come to those who maintain their practice. We have to prove this to ourselves through direct personal experience. There is no other way to gain trust in the process.
- There can be no love without pain on this plane of existence. Let the pressure of your pain push you deeper into love until your love is greater than your pain. Let love be your relentless taskmaster until love is all there is.

16. A Palette of Colors

- PMQ is like a palette of colors. The pain, methods, and qualities are your colors.
- With any pain, fifteen methods, and one hundred qualities, there are so many options, so much room for play.
- There are virtually unlimited possible combinations to fill a variety of moods and moments. Paint your own picture.
- You decide which method and quality you want to use for your problem.
- The method and quality can vary over time. For some problems, affirmations and breathwork will suffice. Other problems require deeper work such as transformation of emotion and meditation.
- Matching problem, methods, and qualities is an art that can be developed over time through patient trial and error.
- As you practice and try different methods, you will see which ones work for which kinds of problems, thus becoming increasingly skillful at the matching process.
- Enter anywhere. By attuning your intuition, you will be able to identify which healing qualities and methods are best suited for you in any given moment.
- This highly individualized approach is the advantage of this model. You are the one who knows what is going to work best for you.
- We can roll the wheel 24/7, any place, anytime, anywhere, at home, work, or play in a variety of combinations to fill a variety of moods and moments.
- Affirm: One continuous sacred ritual. I roll the wheel every moment of every day at work, home, and play.

A SUMMARY OF PMQ DYNAMICS

- Healing qualities are the spiritual solution to any pain, problem, conflict, symptom, disease, or disability.
- You already have an army of one hundred spiritual qualities. You can call up any one or a combination of these qualities to help you win the battle of life.
- Healing qualities are part of the wisdom of the body. We need them for deepest healing. They are the jewels of this life. They are the healers. They buffer the pain of life.
- Our muscles are weak or strong depending on how much exercise we get. Healing qualities are the same. Without exercise they remain dormant and flabby. With exercise, they become strong and powerful.
- Roll the wheel. Exercise your qualities. Make them big and bigger still. Armed with healing qualities, we are ultimately bigger than our pain.
- The qualities are circulating in our system with everything else—all the junk, all the negatives. When overwhelmed with pain, we can't know this. We won't feel them. All we feel is pain. But the qualities are there. Don't panic. Go to work. Pick a method and dig them out.
- Remember, pain has two levels: the inevitable suffering of life and our reaction to it. We are afraid of the inevitable suffering of life: disease, disability, the unknown, and death. This fear or stress makes the inevitable suffering of life worse and slows down the healing process.
- While we may not be able to eliminate the inevitable suffering of life, we can always reduce reactivity. We can calm everything down. We can turn down the idle point. We can bring the whole machine to homeostatic balance. We do this by reducing reactivity and replacing it with healing qualities such as compassion, love, understanding, strength, and peace. Healing qualities put out the fire of reactivity.
- It doesn't matter what method we choose, where we start, or how much we practice. Start anywhere and build from there. If we persist in our practice, we will see the qualities slowly grow and contain, reduce, and eliminate unnecessary reactivity.
- Bring out the healing qualities in response to life's difficulties and you will see how much better you will feel. The qualities will help you in every aspect of your life. Your life will be smoother and easier.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- PMQ is the essential healing principle common to all religions and other psychosocial healing models.
- PMQ is the $e = mc^2$ of psychosocial spiritual healing.
- PMQ is the backbone of any and all of the processes described in this book.
- PMQ = Buddhism = the link to all religions
- PMQ is cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) in which we shift from a negative painful problem to a positive healing quality.
- Jesus, Buddha, Krishna, and other God-realized masters are supernova cognitive behavioral therapists.
- PMQ cannot be reduced any further. It is necessary and sufficient.
- PMQ addresses the root cause of much of our suffering
- PMQ is the inner physician-healer-counselor.

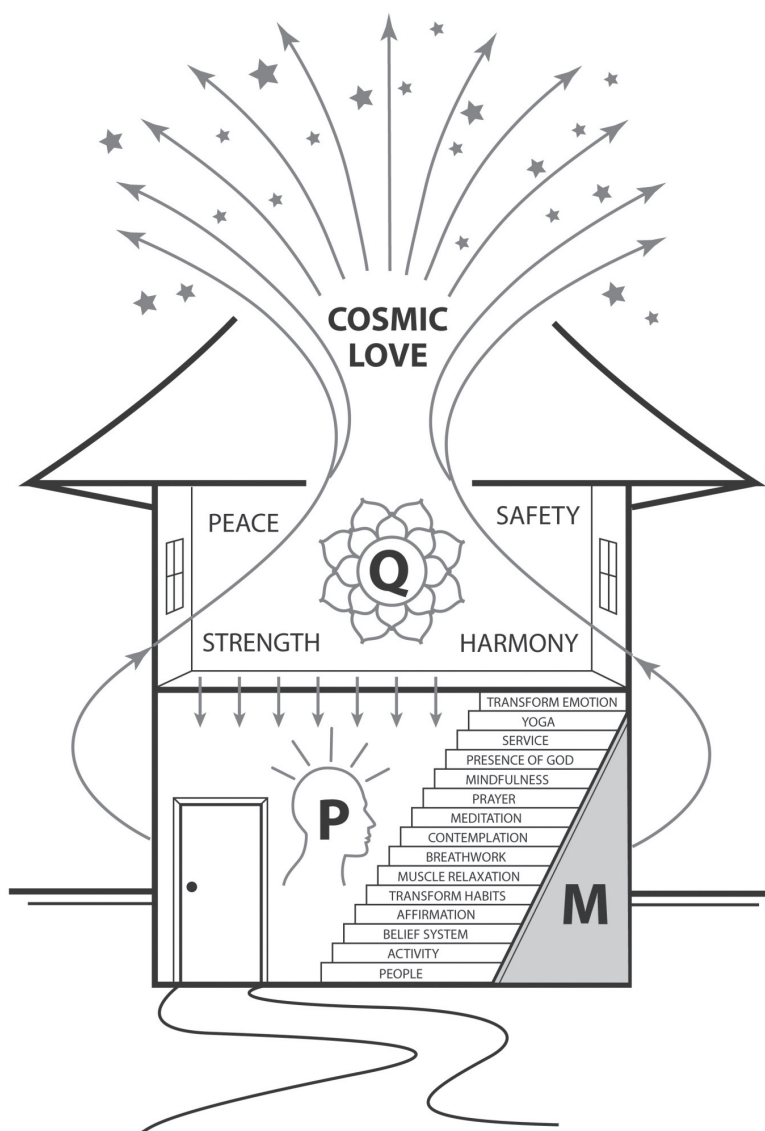
- PMQ is universal. Everyone has this.
- PMQ is the least invasive, threatening, or noxious. It solves the problem of traumatic religious history and toxic language as there is no theology or deity.
- PMQ is enough for some people. That is all you need.
- Some need traction devices. Traction devices are equivalent to the stuff of religion, described in detail in *Healing Power, The Workbook*, Chapter 14, pp. 116–127.
- Any question of religion can be answered with PMQ. Then add traction devices or not.
- The wheel is and is not a stand-alone tool. We can plug it into our belief system or operate it independently. We can use the wheel to just get through the day and not make any connection to religion, spirituality, or enlightenment. Or we can connect it. It plugs into any belief system.
- PMQ is the essence of Mind-Body-Spirit medicine. We can build the methods and qualities into the brain as a tool.
- To practice PMQ, all you need is will, thought, concentration, and the breath.
- With PMQ, we work with, through, and past any painful problem so it doesn't define us. We are not our problem. We are the qualities.
- We must have PMQ for full recovery and deep healing. When we roll the wheel, we evolve. We become love itself.
- In the next four chapters, you will review the house, the movie, school, and the car. These metaphors deepen our understanding of self-healing and skillful pain management.



CHAPTER 22

THE HOUSE

THE THREE-STORY HOUSE



A THREE-STORY HOUSE

- The first floor of the house is ordinary human consciousness. It is under the control of the ego. This is where our individual and collective stories play out. As the story unfolds, we see the entire human condition: beauty and goodness, triumph and tragedy, humor and sadness, trials and tests, the good, bad, ugly, terrible, and great.
 - The second floor of the house is filled with unlimited healing qualities. (See page 11) This is the higher self or soul. We can go there for solace and comfort. No matter the problems we face on the first floor, the second floor offers peace, safety, harmony, and strength.
 - The third floor is the land of Higher Powers.
-
- Imagine we live in a three-story house. The first floor is our story. The second floor is our higher self. On the third floor, there is a Higher Power.
 - The goal is to infuse powerful second-floor healing qualities into the first-floor story. When we add patience, kindness, love, understanding, compassion, forgiveness, strength, courage, and humor to the story, everything gets better. This is called spiritualizing the story or skillful pain management. The story and problems are the same but there is less reactivity and therefore less pain. The goal is to work with anything that shows up on the first floor and remain even-minded, patient, kind, and calm.
 - Our imperfections preclude our ability to succeed at this 100 percent of the time but what a wonderful goal. Go to the second floor of your house and bring healing qualities down to the first floor to help you manage your pain and problems. How do we do this?
 - The steps to the second floor are the fifteen recommended methods in *Healing Power*: 1. People, 2. Activities, 3. Belief systems, 4. Affirmations, 5. Habit Transformation, 6. Progressive muscle relaxation, 7. Breathwork, 8. Contemplation, 9. Meditation, 10. Prayer, 11. Mindfulness, 12. Presence of God, 13. Service, 14. Yoga, 15. Transformation of emotion.
 - If you practice these methods and the qualities become strong enough, they can no longer contain themselves. They inflate by nature. Gradually, they take over the first floor and expand through the ceiling of the second floor to the third floor of the house. Here there are no walls, no ceiling, no roof. This is the Big Space, the land of Higher Power and higher consciousness, sometimes referred to as nirvana, ecstasy, or God. Here you may experience a superconscious state: unfathomable peace, pure unconditional love, ecstatic joy. This pure consciousness expands to infinity. Blow off the second-story ceiling with your ever-expanding compassion and love. You will see the stars, then touch them.

EXERCISES

1. How does the three-story house apply to your life?
2. Do you have a second- and third-floor philosophy?
3. What is your belief system?
4. Do you have a higher self and or a higher power?
5. What are your practice methods?

6. Pain Has a Purpose

- o Our pain is important but not as important as how we respond.
- o We can turn the tables on our pain and make it work for rather than against us. We can make medicine out of our pain.
- o No painful experience is wasted on the first floor. We can always use our pain to propel ourselves to the second and third floor.
- o Every painful problem, all tests, trials, tribulations, temptations, character defects, ego, pride, emotional reactivity, anger, resentment, guilt, shame, anxiety, and more has but one purpose: to get us to grow the qualities. Use the pressure of the problem on the first floor to push yourself in the direction of expanded second-floor healing qualities and third-floor superconscious states.

7. Transforming Problems into Invited Guest Teachers

- o In this exercise, we transfer the healing power of second floor qualities to the first floor to help us manage our painful problems.
 - a. Introspection
 - b. Guest-teachers
 - c. Healing and purification
 - d. Action
 - e. Repetition
 - f. Mastery

a. Introspection

- The first floor represents the physical plane. This is where we struggle with issues, problems, flaws, and symptoms. Some of these we can fix. Others do not respond so easily.
- All of us have problems that take up residence on the first floor of our home against our will. We do everything we can to eliminate them. However, no matter what we try, some problems will not budge. We cannot fix them or evict them. On the contrary, the more we struggle, the more upset and agitated we become.
- Make a list of problems you are unable to eliminate from the first floor of your house. For example, you might choose highly reactive emotions.

b. Convert Problems to Invited Guest Teachers

- When agitated, it is often because we have not created enough space for the problem. We have treated the problem as an uninvited guest. When we find ourselves in this dilemma, we can accept the problem in our home as a resident instructor.
- Go to the second floor of your magical house where there is unlimited space. Bring a portion of that space down to the first floor and create a guest room for your problem. Fill the room with an atmosphere of acceptance, thus making the uninvited problem a guest-teacher.
- We can create as many rooms as we need. There is an infinite supply of space on the second floor of this magical house. We can do this with all of our problems so that on the first floor all we have are invited guest teachers in the school of life.

- This sets the stage for healing and purification.
- c. **Healing and Purification**
 - When we respond to first-floor painful problems with second-floor qualities, we heal and purify.
 - The atmosphere on the second floor is still, silent, spacious, and serene. Here there is unlimited love and associated qualities. The goal is to bring these qualities to the first floor to help us manage our painful problems.
 - Go back to the second floor to get whatever qualities you need to manage your problem. We have one hundred qualities to choose from up there!
 - The steps to the second floor are the recommended methods: affirmations, mindfulness, meditation, loving service, and more. When we practice these methods, we climb to the second floor, where we draw from an unlimited supply of space and healing qualities.
 - Practice meditation, mindfulness, service to humanity, or any other methods that you enjoy and absorb the qualities you need to skillfully manage your first-floor problems.
 - For highly reactive emotions, you might choose peace, even-mindedness, and patience. Permeate all of the rooms in your house and their invited guest teacher problems with these qualities.
- d. **Action**
 - Bring your expanded peace, even-mindedness, and patience to all of your thoughts, feelings, desires, decisions, and actions.
 - Give these qualities to all whom you meet.
- e. **Repetition**
 - All first-floor problems are teachers with the goal of helping us expand healing qualities until these qualities are unconditional.
 - Repeat this process of healing and purification until the qualities become unconditional.
- f. **Mastery**
 - In the end, we become patient, peaceful, and even-minded under all conditions.
- 8. **Spaciousness**
 - When we practice spiritual disciplines, we expand the space in our house so it will be big enough to hold our problems. When we have a lot of space, problems can show up with barely a ripple.
 - What happens if we do not have enough space in our house to hold our problems?
 - Did you know you can create more space and make your rooms bigger?
 - Did you know you can fill the rooms with love, light, and any of the other one hundred healing qualities?
 - Is your house big enough?
 - What will you do to create more space?
- 9. **Right Attitude**
 - Right attitude is when our thoughts, feelings, decisions, and actions are aligned with the healing power of love and associated qualities.

- Bring love, compassion, understanding, forgiveness, courage, strength, perseverance, and other second floor healing qualities to your first-floor problems.
- With right attitude on the first floor, knots are untied. Problems melt. Balance and harmony result.
- Cultivate right attitude for first-floor problems.

10. Who Owns This House?

- We cannot get rid of all of our problems but we can learn how to live with and above them.
- We can do this by learning how to live on the three floors of the house at the same time.
- Painful problems are on the first floor.
- Unlimited healing qualities are on the second floor.
- The third floor is Higher Power or Spirit.
- Find your problems on the first floor but don't identify with them. They are invited guest-teachers but they do not own the house. Welcome these guests into your home but not as permanent residents.
- Instead, identify with the second and third floor. This is the soul connected to Spirit. This is your best self, higher self, true self. Focus there as you work with your first-floor realities.
- While we face everything on the first floor, we transcend and rise above it by getting to the second and third floor.
- Remember, your problems are teachers, helping expand your healing qualities until these qualities are unconditional.
- Call up your army of one hundred healing qualities from the second floor of your house and send them down to the first floor to take charge of the story.
- When your pain or problem persists, never forget this is not who you are. You are not your problems. Problems are guests. The owner of the house is love. You are love itself.

AFFIRMATIONS

- I am not my problem, defect, illness, or symptom. These first-floor identifications need to be managed but are not who I really am.
- It doesn't matter what the world or my body does. I am the serene and compassionate space within and without.

11. The Compelling Nature of the First Floor

- The first floor is the human condition.
- The second floor is love.
- The third floor is infinity.
- There are many layers on the first floor: the world story, our personal story, our roles, relationships, responsibilities, personalities, attachments, and problems.

- The first-floor story is compelling and magnetic. It grabs all of our attention, sucking into its vortex our entire consciousness. It is important but we make it too important. It consumes all of our attention and energy.
- Don't let the first-floor story define you. Cast off these layers by spiritualizing the story with the love qualities from the second floor and contact with the Infinite One on the third floor.

AFFIRMATIONS

- I hold all of my problems in a compassionate space.
- I hold all of your problems in a compassionate space.
- I will work with this condition, however long or severe. I respond with love.

12. Our True Identity

- Problems are on the first floor of the house where we live in ordinary consciousness. But we are not our problems. We need to face our problems and work on them, but they are not our true identity. Never, even for a moment, assume the identity of the problem. There is something deeper: the soul and Spirit.
- Our true self is second-floor healing qualities and third-floor higher states of consciousness.
- The higher self is unconditional peace, joy, love, wisdom, courage, strength, warmth, harmony, balance, beauty, and a host of other healing qualities listed in the spiritual alphabet.
- At some point the qualities expand into superconsciousness: the peace that surpasses understanding, pure love, ecstatic joy.

13. Soul and Ego

- The ego is in charge of the first floor.
- The soul is in charge of the second floor.
- The goal is to have the soul take over the first floor. This is going to take some time. The ego resists the soul's attempts to take over. They fight with each other.
- Continue your practice. Persevere. Keep going. Soul qualities slowly grow and replace the trickster ego. Eventually, the soul takes over the first floor.

14. Reactivity

- We may not be able to fix or eliminate all first-floor problems but we can reduce reactivity by infusing the first floor with healing qualities: love, compassion, forgiveness, understanding, acceptance, and more.
- When we find ourselves over-reacting, there is a shortage of healing qualities on the first floor. When we have enough healing qualities on the first floor, we do not over-react.
- Go to the second floor. Here you will find an additional supply of any one or a combination of healing qualities you need. Decorate every room on the first floor of your house with the beautiful and loving healing qualities of the second floor.

15. Provocative People

- Make a list of people who provoke you.
- In a meditative state, visualize each one of them in a room with plenty of space.
- Then permeate the room with understanding, respect, compassion, forgiveness, patience, tolerance, kindness, light, and love.
- Picture yourself with each of these people in harmony and peace.
- Do this until your love, compassion, understanding, and forgiveness are unconditional. Then give these qualities to all whom you meet.

16. Guilt and Shame

- When you feel guilty, ashamed, or embarrassed by your mistakes, visualize yourself in a spacious room filled with understanding, compassion, and forgiveness.
- Absorb these qualities.
- Practice this until your love for yourself is unconditional.

17. Resentment

- It is all too easy to get stuck in self-righteous anger and resentment for the wrongs done to us by others. Anger is seductive, attractive, and magnetic, difficult to shed. But righteous anger is not love and it steals our peace.
- To reduce your negative ego-driven anger, go to the second floor and stay there even when other people are wrong and you are right. This is a big part of spiritual work as it involves ego reduction and soul expansion towards unconditional love. How else can you get to unconditional love unless this condition plays itself out again and again? Not getting your way is the only way.
- Righteous anger is a lower vibration of consciousness. Get to the second floor and stay there no matter what other people do. Otherwise we are filled with emotions about what other people are doing to us. This does not mean you are a doormat. Protect yourself on the outside. Reduce your ego on the inside.

18. Growing Love Is Most Important

- Of course it matters what happens on the first floor, but how we respond matters even more.
- Let the pain story unfold on the first floor and then spiritualize that story with second-floor healing qualities.
- The greater the pain, the bigger love has to be.
- When love is strong enough, the first-floor story dissolves and love is all there is.
- Painful tests recur until love is unconditional. And even then, there may still be painful tests but you will be a skillful pain manager.

19. The Greater the Pain, The Greater the Victory

- The deepest suffering requires the deepest healing.
- The bigger the pain story on first floor, the more work we have to do with methods and qualities to manage it skillfully.

- For example, problems can be 1–100 in severity. If you have a 1-unit problem, you need 1 unit of a healing quality to match. I am a little anxious so a little meditation can work to calm me down.
- A 20-unit level of anxiety would require deeper and longer meditation.
- An 80-unit problem will require day-to-day, hand-to-hand combat for weeks, months, or years. Despite the long-term effort required, the payoff on bigger problems is great. The healing qualities we need to manage that pain skillfully will have to match and exceed 80 units. Big doses of peace, courage, strength, compassion, and the other qualities can then be enjoyed, shared with others, and deployed for tests to come.

20. Endure with Courage

- When we get stuck with first-floor problems that will not go away, we can endure with courage while we use our will power to practice methods and cultivate qualities. This is the work.
- First floor: accept and endure your problems with courage
- Steps to the second floor: apply your will power to the methods.
- Second floor: apply your will power to cultivate the qualities.
- As you practice, the quality is growing but you may not feel it until later.

21. Lifelong Practice

- Expect bouts of unskillful pain management on the first floor of the house due to old brain grooves carrying negative thought and emotional habit patterns that take over against our will.
- Go to the second and third floor early and often and stay there as long as you can.
- The way forward is practice. Practice is lifelong. Be patient.

22. What House

- In the beginning, we understand the goal of all first-floor pain is to get us to the second floor and then the third floor of the house.
- Go to the second floor and bring the qualities down to first floor. This may be hard at first. You may find yourself stuck on the first floor and find it difficult to get to the second floor, let alone stay there. All you experience is your painful problem.
- If you persist, however, you can get to the second floor for short periods of time and progressively stay there longer. The qualities are growing and you feel them. There is more peace, love, compassion, strength, courage, patience, and more. You feel better.
- When advanced, we stay on the second floor all the time and the second-floor qualities take over the first floor. We remain even-minded under all conditions.
- Eventually we break through the ceiling on the second floor and enter third floor superconsciousness: the peace that surpasses understanding, pure love, ecstatic joy, bliss, nirvana, God.
- With practice, superconsciousness occurs more often and lasts longer.
- Masters live in a house filled with unlimited healing qualities and higher states of consciousness. What rooms? What walls? What floor? What ceiling? What roof? What house? Only love. Pure love. No forms. Disembodied consciousness. Infinity. Eternity. Immortality. Absolute spaciousness.

- Blow off the second story ceiling with your ever-expanding compassion and love. You will see the stars, then touch them.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Healing qualities already exist on the first floor of the house but we always need more. Go to the second floor early and often to improve your ability to manage pain skillfully. Practice when you feel good and when you feel poorly.
- An uninvited problem that we cannot eliminate creates agitation. We can reduce this agitation by giving the problem a spacious room filled with stillness, silence, and serenity.
- When life does not change, our response to it can. We can accept all problems with serenity. When we practice the methods described in this work, we create an increasingly serene space to hold our problems.
- We can bring second-floor qualities to first-floor tests and trials. When we focus on the qualities instead of our problems, we slowly spiritualize the entire first floor of our home. Eventually, love, compassion, understanding, courage, perseverance, and strength permeate our atmosphere.
- In the beginning, in ordinary consciousness, a problem like a big fish creates many ripples in a small pond. In higher states of consciousness, the same fish has little or no effect, as our consciousness has expanded. We have the space inside to handle anything, including death.

AFFIRMATIONS

- I add love to every moment.
- I accept every problem as a guest-teacher.
- I accept all problems with serenity.
- I surround, feed, permeate, and saturate all of my problems with healing qualities.
- I burn karmic problems with love.
- Love burns karma, mine, yours, ours.



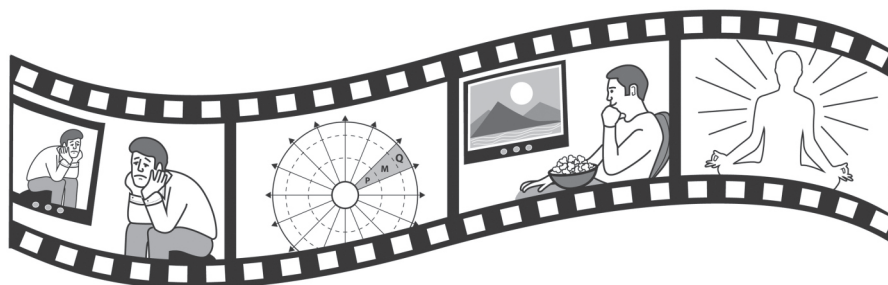
CHAPTER 23

THE MOVIE

- Our identification with the drama causes unnecessary reactivity. We can reduce this reactivity by rolling the universal healing wheel. The process below illustrates this principle using the movie as the metaphor.
- When we roll the wheel, the movie of life goes through four stages.

THE MOVIE

1. Immersed in the movie
2. Spiritualize the movie
3. Watch the movie
4. What movie?



1. Immersed in the Movie

- We are actors in a movie. When we completely identify with our role, we have the feelings of that role. This is a necessary stage. We all start here.
- Part of the story is painful. The pain story is seductive. It successfully grabs and keeps all of our attention.
- We are immersed in the pain story often without being conscious that this is happening, and even when we are conscious of it, we still can't get out.

- To change this pattern, let the story unfold. Give the pain its day in court. Let it tell the story from its point of view. But don't stay there. Move on to the next step: infuse the pain story with healing qualities.
- 2. **Spiritualize the Movie**
 - Roll the wheel. Practice PMQ. Permeate the story with ever-increasing love and her associated healing qualities.
 - Keep weaving, working, and massaging the pain story with love qualities.
 - As we roll the wheel and the qualities grow, we begin to develop a little space between us and the movie.
- 3. **Watch the Movie**
 - Now we can watch the show without being completely absorbed in it.
 - We are still in the movie as a participant but we are watching it as entertainment at the same time.
 - Affirm the witness, "I watch the cosmic movie with calm detachment."
- 4. **What Movie?**
 - In advanced meditation, when love is so great it completely dissolves the story, we enter a state of pure consciousness and pure awareness.
 - In this state of superconscious love, there is no form but the formless form.
 - There can be no story or form in a love this strong.
 - What movie?

EXERCISES

1. **Roll the Wheel**
 - Practice PMQ and notice:
 - a. How you rotate through the four stages: 1. Immersed in the movie, 2. Spiritualize the movie, 3. Watch the movie, 4. What movie.
 - b. How you go in and out of the drama.
 - c. How sometimes you can't change anything in the movie but you can always reduce reactivity by increasing the qualities.
 - d. How the ego is slowly reduced and replaced by the qualities.
 - e. How the qualities are slowly becoming unconditional, spontaneous, and automatic habits.
 - f. How your mental power increases.
 - g. How you can ultimately face anything life throws with courage and strength.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- The four-stage movie takes us through a process of purification, sometimes purification by fire. The ego is reduced and replaced by unconditional love.

- Recall the two levels of pain: the inevitable suffering of life and our reaction to it. The reactivity factor is huge. We get carried away. All recovery is about choosing from a variety of methods to help us respond differently and better. We learn how to step back and gain some perspective by cultivating the witness.
- Be full of love, compassion, and understanding. Be in the flow of the movie without attachment to the outcome. Stay out of the drama as much as possible. There is no control over most of it anyway. Watch the cosmic movie with calm detachment.



CHAPTER 24

SCHOOL

- Life is school. Pain is the teacher and stimulant for the cultivation of healing qualities and higher states of consciousness.
- There are classes, subjects, teachers, pop quizzes, and scheduled tests. When you finish a class, there are new classes. When you pass a grade, you go to the next grade.
- In the school of life, there is always another class, teacher, subject, and test. No matter how far you get, there is always more to learn.
- School keeps going until you finish off your ego and realize your higher self and Higher Power as unconditional love, compassion, understanding, forgiveness, and the other healing qualities listed in the spiritual alphabet. This is the universal lesson plan.

CLASSES

- There are a great variety of teachers, classes, and subjects in the school of life.
- Everyone has different classes. We get what we need.
- Some classes are required and some are elective. If we don't sign up for all the required classes at registration, the Principal of the university of life school will assign them for us.
- What class are you in? Who is the teacher? What is the subject?
- Have you taken this class before and didn't finish or is this your first time around?
- What are the lessons?

TESTS

- There will be many tests and battles on the first floor of the schoolhouse: tests of the world and tests of the body.
- The spiritual purpose of tests is to get you to the second and third floor of the house. The second floor is unlimited healing qualities and the third floor is higher states of consciousness.

- We want to win every battle but we can't. Tests are designed to bring out our weak spots so we can make ourselves stronger. Failure and mistakes are a natural part of the process as they show us where we need to do some work.
- The only bad mistake is the one we don't learn from. When you fall off the horse, brush off the dirt, figure out why it happened, what you need to do differently, and get back on.
- As you go through this process of purification and sometimes purification by fire, be courageous, strong, and persevere. Be gentle, compassionate, and forgiving toward yourself. Get help from your higher self and Higher Power.

REPORT CARD

- If life is school, is it possible to know our grade and report card? Am I in kindergarten or graduate school? Am I getting an A, B, C, D, or flunking?
- When we respond to tests with healing qualities, we pass the test. When we react poorly, we stay in that class and continue practicing PMQ.
- With continuous practice of PMQ, you will respond to the tests and trials of life with less reactivity and ever-increasing patience, kindness, love, understanding, and other healing qualities.
- The grade and score are less important than doing the work as best we can, learning from mistakes, and moving on. It doesn't matter if you are a beginner or advanced, if your problems are complex or severe, or the degree of your imperfections. If you do your best, you get an A.
- Recall the three-story house, page 285. Some try to be on the second and third floor of the house without dealing with their problems on the first floor. This is a consequence of the spiritual ego. It is blind to our current state and makes us think we are higher than we are. Stay on the first floor and roll the wheel. You can't get where you want to go without being where you are. Just do PMQ and you will go forward and rise. You can only lay one brick at a time. The second and third floor arrive on their own schedule through grace.

RECESS AND VACATION

- There is scheduled recess every day for rest and relaxation, and when we finish a set of classes and pass the tests, we get a vacation.
- When the bell rings, we return to class. School is in session. There is more work to do.
- What happens when the bell rings, the teacher calls, the class starts, and we don't show up?
- What happens if we stay in the playground of life too long?
- If we don't find our way to class, does the class have a way of finding us?

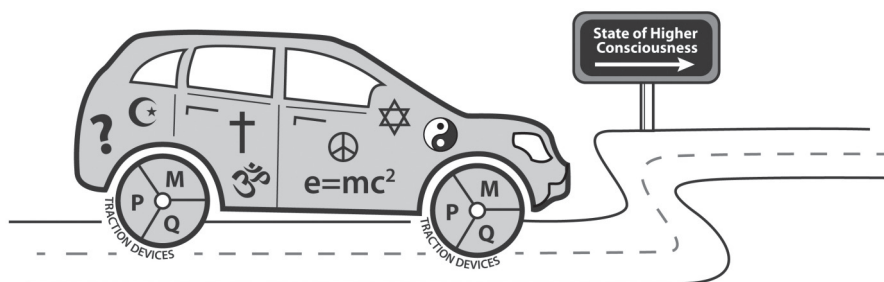


CHAPTER 25

THE CAR

- The healing model described in this workbook works for persons of any persuasion: atheist, agnostic, religious, or spiritual. The only absolutely essential component is the universal healing wheel. Everything else is optional. To illustrate how this works, think about building a metaphysical car.
- You can build a metaphysical car that will take you wherever you want to go on your recovery and healing journey. Even when you get stuck in a rut, it will get you out of trouble and help you move toward your destination.
- The car has three parts: a body, a wheel, and traction devices for the wheel.
 - **Body:** The body of the car is atheist, agnostic, spiritual or religious. Which of these best represents you?
 - **Wheel:** This is the universal healing wheel or PMQ. The wheel is for everyone.
 - **Traction Devices:** Traction devices for the wheel include the stuff of religion. What gives you inspiration so you can deal with whatever shows up and not get stuck in the mud?

THE CAR



- Everyone gets a car.
- What does your car look like?
- We can park the car in the driveway or garage and take it out for a ride later. We can rent it out. We can sell it. Or, we can drive it as far as we want all the way to the Big Space.

- What will you do with your car?
- In the next chapter, you will study a universal healing method, including the dynamic relationship between will and grace.



CHAPTER 26

A UNIVERSAL HEALING METHOD

SPIRITUALIZE EVERY PROBLEM

- Please review Chapter 9, A Universal Healing Method, pp. 125–140 in *Healing Power: Ten Steps to Pain Management and Spiritual Evolution Revised* (2010). Following is a review of this method with some additional points and pearls.
- Life is a series of tests and trials every step of the way. Tests have a deep metaphysical purpose: to bring us to a higher state of consciousness through the cultivation of healing qualities. Following is a method designed to help us fulfill this purpose. If we practice this method, we can turn the tables on our pain to make it work for rather than against us. We can turn a seeming barrier into an opportunity. We can spiritualize our problem.

UNIVERSAL HEALING METHOD

1. Define problem: This can be any problem: physical, mental, emotional, interpersonal, or spiritual
2. Higher Power: Ask for help from your Higher Power
3. Horizontal Axis: Take necessary action in the outer world of people, activities, and belief system
4. Vertical Axis: For residual suffering, practice any of the twelve recommended vertical axis options
5. Quality: Cultivate any one or combination of healing qualities
6. Will: Apply all of your will power to the chosen method and quality
7. Grace: When we do our part at maximum effort, ask for help, and endure the problem as long as it is there, grace follows
8. Expansion of healing qualities
9. Repeat steps 1–9
10. Mastery: Finish the problem. Go around again with a new problem.

EXERCISES

1. **Will**

- Review the ten-step universal healing method above.
- Steps 1–3: It is our job in the healing process to define the problem, ask for help from our Higher Power, and take action in the outer world.
- Steps 4–5: For residual suffering, we pick a method and determine the quality we need.
- Step 6: We exert maximum effort on our method and quality for as long as it takes. This means putting our whole being into the work. Review will, from spark to bonfire on page 61. You will find affirmations related to will on page 69.
- When we apply all of our will power to our chosen method and quality, grace follows. (Steps 7 and 8.)

2. **Grace**

- We have access to a vast intelligent healing power within and around us.
- We can tap into this power and get help with any type of suffering through work and grace. When we do our part at maximum effort, ask for help, and endure the problem as long as it is there, Grace follows.
- We can conceptualize Grace coming from a conscious God of love or from healing laws of the universe, which work for us when we cooperate with them. We can use whatever concept gives us inspiration and traction. The healing and transformation process works no matter how we label it.
- Grace opens the gate to the unified field of omnipotent healing energy. We have no control over the gate. The Keeper of the gate, a mysterious intelligent force or law, opens the gate for us. The gate may or may not open for elimination of disease, disability of other painful problems. However, if we do the work, the gate will always open to allow expansion of healing qualities such as peace, love, strength, courage, wisdom, and joy.

3. **Will and Grace**

- Will and grace work together to add another dimension of healing to the healing power equation.
- Spirit steps in when we can't help ourselves, but we cannot get this help unless we make the effort.
- The formula for success in working with any pain or problem is:
 - a. Ask for help from your Higher Power.
 - b. Take action in the outer world.
 - c. Apply maximum effort to your chosen vertical axis method and quality.
 - d. Accept and endure as long as the problem remains. "I will work the problem however long or severe, I will wait for You Lord, until You appear."
 - e. Grace comes on its own schedule. An Omnipotent Power responds with an answered prayer, resources, expanded healing qualities, a superconscious experience, synchronicity, and other phenomena.

- In the next chapter, you will find a discussion of the ultimate spiritual battle: Omniscient Love and terror at the abyss.

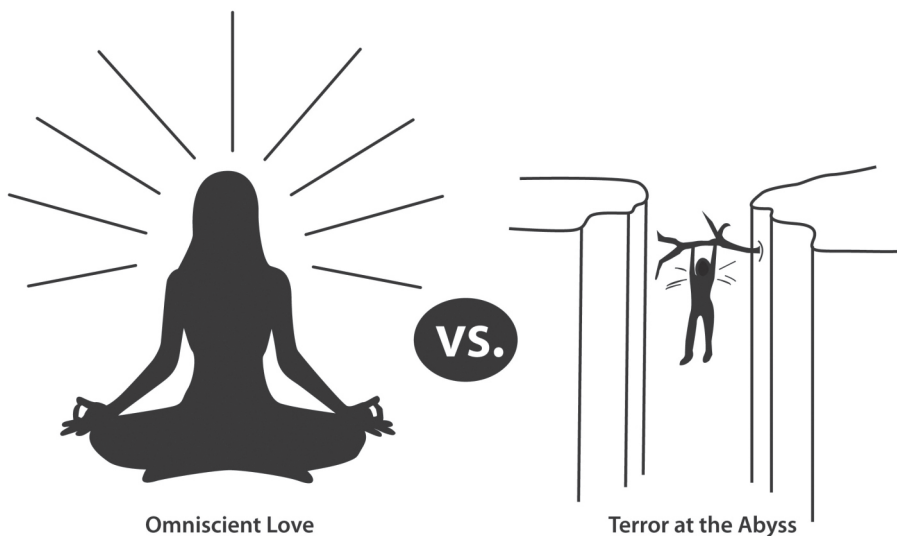


CHAPTER 27

OMNISCIENT LOVE VS TERROR AT THE ABYSS

OMNISCIENT LOVE AND TERROR AT THE ABYSS

The ultimate spiritual battle is between Omniscient Love and terror at the abyss.



- Recall the definition of the gap-abyss: the feeling of anxiety-panic we encounter when we introspect to find and work on our problems. Fear is the number one barrier to self-healing. Even making little changes can create a panicky feeling that we might unravel to the abyss. For deep healing, we must learn how to manage the feelings in the gap-abyss.
- In the gap, we feel anxiety.
- At the abyss, we experience panic.

- Even when just in the gap, it feels like we might enter the abyss and break.
- The gap-abyss is the rate-limiting factor in growth. It occurs when we introspect and find the need to make some changes. Fear stops us from moving forward.
- Healing is like remodeling a house. We have to tear down some structure in order to rebuild. We deconstruct to reconstruct.
- When we deconstruct, it feels like God is holding us over the Grand Canyon by the scruff of the neck and asking if we trust Him. We say, “No! Put us back on land. Give us back the illusion of control and safety.”
- Deconstruction feels like death. A part of us dies when we move from one spot to another but spiritual practices help us fill that seemingly empty scary space with a *higher grade of Love*.

FIXED AND OPENED BELIEF SYSTEMS

- We can look at Omniscient Love and terror at the abyss through the lens of fixed and opened belief systems.
- In a fixed system such as orthodox religion, everything is in place. No changes are made in the system.
- In the opened system, changes are made.
- It is very difficult to go from fixed to opened beliefs. In a fixed system, everything is known and accounted for. In the opened system, there is mystery, the unknown, and the corresponding feelings of the gap-abyss.
- Some need more religious structure than others but the ultimate spiritual battle is between love and fear or, if you prefer, Omniscient Love and terror at the abyss.
- We can go to church, synagogue, or mosque, read sacred text, appreciate spiritual community and our respected spiritual leaders, but the love vs fear battle occurs inside the body temple. No one can do this part of the work for us. We have to fight this battle within ourselves.
- The gap-abyss is a frightening and lonely place to be. It can be dangerous if we don’t learn how to manage it skillfully.
- On the other hand, facing the gap-abyss and learning how to manage the deep suffering that occurs only there opens the door to a corresponding level of deep healing.
- What will help? In the next section, you will find some suggestions.

THE CAVE OF DARKNESS: HEAVY LIFTING IN THE GAP-ABYSS

- Please review Chapter 27, Humility, The Way of Darkness, in *Healing Power Revised* (2010), pp. 398–400. Here you will find a description of the cave of darkness and some suggestions on how to manage it skillfully. Following are some additional ideas.
- First, we must remember a few key concepts.
 1. The dynamics of healing are the same whether our problems are tiny, small, medium, large, or huge.
 2. Sometimes we have to have more pain to have less pain.

3. Love qualities are more powerful than any painful problem.
4. The bigger the pain, the bigger the quality must be.
5. The mechanism to carry out these principles is rolling the wheel.
6. When we practice PMQ, at some point, love comes in to contain, reduce, or eliminate the pain and guide us through what is left.
 - Here is the typical sequence.

Comfort zone → Problem → Gap-abyss → Roll the wheel →
Increase love → Comfort zone → Repeat → Mastery
 - We feel comfortable and safe. The abyss is in the living room, hiding and silent; we don't feel it.
 - A problem shows up and sweeps away our illusion of safety. It points us in the direction of some work we need to do.
 - We understand the need to face the unknown and the gap-abyss as this leads to the next level of power the healing qualities have to offer.
 - Roll the wheel. Love burns up our problem and fills in the gap.
 - When we finish this layer of work, we feel safe and comfortable again.
 - Then another problem shows up. We are tested beyond our current capacity and go around again.
 - It's a process. We get thrown back into a painful problem and rediscover the healing powers of the wheel.
 - As we practice PMQ, the qualities are slowly moving towards unconditional and the locus of control shifts from outside to inside.
- This sounds good and it is, but it is not easy to do. When the anxiety at the gap transforms to terror at the abyss, it not only blows away our illusion of safety but seemingly takes out our belief system and knowledge. Some call this the dark night of the soul, the cave of darkness, brutal reality, or a personal ground zero.
- This is a tough place to be. We don't want to be here without any tools. We need a plan to manage the powerful feelings of the abyss so we can be as ready as possible.
- Following is an example of how PMQ works at the abyss.
 1. P might be fear or terror at the abyss.
 2. Q would be any one or combination of healing qualities adding up to love. Qualities that come to mind for the abyss are acceptance, courage, strength, endurance, perseverance, patience, trust, faith, compassion, and surrender.
 3. We can use our two great powers, will and thought, to cultivate these qualities when tested beyond our capacity.
 4. We can fill the seemingly empty and terrifying space of the gap-abyss with love qualities by rolling the wheel.
 5. No matter how rough it gets, we persist. We keep rolling the universal healing wheel choosing the methods and qualities that work for us when pain is great.

6. We can do this whenever the abyss shows up and for however long it takes.
 7. If we do this work, eventually the light of spirit enters the cave of darkness bearing gifts of peace, love, wisdom, and strength.
 8. The illusion of safety based on an external locus of control gradually shifts to the reality of safety rooted in an internal locus of control.
 9. We eventually discover the absolute love and safety we seek in the outer world can only be found within.
 10. At mastery, we find the ground of all being is not terror at the abyss but the safety, security, and immortality of Omniscient Love.
 11. Make the effort. Effort is progress. This is heavy lifting at the gap-abyss.
- What PMQ will work for you when suffering is at its peak at the gap-abyss?



CHAPTER 28

CONCLUSION

- Buddha and Christ discovered the secret connection between skillful pain management and healing. Recognizing pain as a law of life, the Buddha teaches us how to transform personal suffering into compassion for others. Christ on the cross demonstrated masterful skill in pain management when he forgave his tormentors at a time of excruciating suffering. We can follow their lead if we experience our pain and learn from it.
- The ultimate goal of pain management is love. When we stop running and accept pain as our teacher, we learn the necessary lessons that inevitably have to do with expansion of love. There is a powerful narrative embedded in our feelings having to do with unconditional love, friendship, and service. When we understand and forgive others and ourselves, the way is opened for healing and purification.
- With love as your tool, dig deep. Eliminate all traces of negativity. Get rid of your bad habits. Practice affirmation, mindfulness, the presence of God, and meditation. Contemplate the great sacred texts. Transform emotion to self-knowledge. Learn how to spiritualize your story. Serve all of humanity.
- With people, activities, a strong belief system, and the twelve internal practices described in this work, you can field whatever life throws at you. Design a pain management program for yourself. Work with these practices for the rest of your life. Arrange and rearrange the methods to find the combinations that best suit you.
- Accept pain as your teacher and allow the healing power to do its work. And remember, you can play hooky from school and go to the movies, but eventually you have to return to class. You need to do your homework first. You need to learn how to be a good pain manager. Then you can enjoy the show.
- Whether your problems are physical, mental, emotional, interpersonal, or spiritual, love is the answer. It doesn't matter whether your problems are tiny, small, medium, large, or huge, throw love at them. When you regret the past, throw love at it. When you worry about the future, throw love at it. When you find yourself in the gap-abyss, the cave of darkness, or the dark night of the soul, hold onto love. Bring your love to brutal reality and serve there. Respond with love no matter what the world or your body does. Love is the great healer and the great pain manager. It is needed now more than ever. Take the love pill. Practice love until love is all there is.

- The Great Physician prescribes love as the medication for all our ills. Follow love and keep your eyes open. It will take you where you need to go. Even if you must pass through the cave of darkness, love will light the way. Let your pain take you to the next level of higher consciousness. For every problem you navigate, you rise. When you complete all of your problems, you will rise above all of creation. Then you will know the foundation of the universe is eternal peace, Omniscient love, and ecstatic joy.

May you find the peace, love, and joy that are your soul.

The Love Religion

*The inner space inside
that we call the heart,
has become many different
living scenes and stories.*

*A pasture for sleek gazelles,
a monastery for Christian monks,
a temple with Shiva dancing,
a Kaaba for pilgrimage.*

*The tablets of Moses are there,
the Qur'an, the Vedas,
the Sutras and the Gospels.
Love is the religion in me.*

*Whichever way love's camel goes,
that way becomes my faith,
the source of beauty, and a light
of sacredness over everything*

– Ibn Arabi



APPENDIX

CURRICULA AND APPLICATIONS

- Applications of *Healing Power* include:
 - Personal, professional, and organizational healing
 - The avoidance of burnout for physicians and healthcare professionals
- There are now five books:
 1. *Healing Power Revised* (2010)
 2. *Healing Power, The Workbook* (2015)
 3. *Healing Power: Physician, Heal Thyself* (2018)
 4. *Healing Power: One Hundred Days of Love* (2019)
 5. *Healing Power: The Methods* (2019)
- There are a number of ways to study this material. If you have all five books and you are a new student of this model, scan the table of contents of each book to see what is there and how it is organized. Then choose from the following options.
 - READ IN ORDER OF PUBLICATION
 - START WITH *Healing Power Revised* (2010). This is the introductory textbook elaborating the ten steps, the universal healing wheel, the methods, and a detailed discussion of ten qualities.
 - START WITH *Healing Power: The Workbook* (2015). If you do this, you will find references to corresponding sections in *Healing Power Revised* (2010), should you want additional material on that topic.
 - START WITH *Healing Power: Physician Heal Thyself* (2018). If you are interested in my story and how Healing Power evolved out of that story, you can read this book first. If you have already read one of the other books, you may notice some overlap and repetition. This is necessary to create a sequential understanding of events and principles for the first-time reader.
 - STUDY THE QUALITIES: You might want to focus on the qualities.

- For the most complete review of the qualities, read *Healing Power: One Hundred Days of Love*. Here you will find one hundred healing qualities with corresponding pearls of wisdom.
- Read Chapter 43, Fill Your Brain with Wisdom: One Hundred Healing Quality Pearls, in *Healing Power, The Workbook* (2015), pp. 288–312. There are a few pearls and wisdom quotes under each quality.
- You might want to focus on a quality in detail. There are ten qualities each with a chapter in *Healing Power Revised* (2010) and *Healing Power: The Workbook* (2015): love, peace, humility, faith, courage, forgiveness, truth, intuition, oneness, and healing. I recommend you read the chapter in *Healing Power Revised* (2010) first, as the material in the *Healing Power, The Workbook* is supplemental to that chapter. Most of this material can also be found in *Healing Power: One Hundred Days of Love*.
- STUDY THE METHODS: You may have enough theory and are ready to practice.
 - Read this workbook, *Healing Power: The Methods*.
 - You can build your program of practice methods in the sequence and combination of your choice. We all need the three horizontal axis options of people, activities, and belief systems. A recommended core curriculum of vertical axis options would include affirmations, breathwork, mindfulness, meditation, and service. This is a good place to start and will suffice for some. You can build from there as necessary.
- FOCUS ON THE UNIVERSAL HEALING WHEEL: If you want to focus on the dynamics of the Universal Healing Wheel, read Chapters 8–15 in *Healing Power, The Workbook* (2015), pp. 45–132.
- CHECK OUT THE ILLUSTRATIONS AND TEXT BOXES: These are found in *Healing Power, The Workbook* (2015), on p. x and in this workbook, page ix. Here you will find a list of illustrations, metaphors, exercises, and pearls of wisdom. I recommend going through these carefully. They are important and fun.
- READ ANY CHAPTER: Scan the table of contents in one of the books and choose a chapter that captures your interest at the time.
- QUALITY CLUSTERS: Some students may enjoy studying the qualities in groups or clusters. Following are suggested groupings. You may want to create your own clusters.
 - Unconditional Love, Compassion, Understanding, Forgiveness, Mercy
 - Acceptance, Surrender
 - Belief, Faith, Trust, Positive Thought
 - Balance, Rhythm, Harmony
 - Fun, Laughter, Humor, Play
 - Cheerful, Enthusiastic
 - Courage, Strength, Endurance, Perseverance, Forbearance, Will, Fearlessness
 - Usefulness, Practicality
 - Confidence, Success

Healing Power: The Methods

- Contentment, Desirelessness
 - Honesty, Integrity, Sincerity, Introspection
 - Patience, Kindness, Sweetness, Tenderness, Gentleness
 - Stillness, Silence, Spaciousness
 - Acceptance, Courage, Endurance
 - Surrender, Trust, Humility, Devotion
 - Love, Truth, Beauty
 - Peace, Love, Joy, Power, Wisdom
 - Love, Service, Courage, Faith
 - Simplicity, Oneness, Humility
 - Changelessness, Unity, Oneness, Interconnectedness, Infinity, Eternity, Immortality
 - Pure Consciousness, Pure Awareness
 - Create your own cluster
- FOCUS ANYWHERE: You might want to open the books anywhere and focus on whatever shows up.

