

From
Fear
to

Love

A Spiritual Journey

Dr. Tim Ong

From Fear to Love

A Spiritual Journey

By Dr. Tim Ong, M.B.B.S.

First Published March 2006

Copyright 2006 by Dr. Tim Ong Tien Kwan

The author has asserted his rights in accordance with
the Copyright Act

First Revision September 2009

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilized in any form, by print, electronic, mechanical, or any other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the author.

Dedication

This book is written with the sincere hope of bringing light and love to all beings. It is therefore dedicated to all.

May it bring light, hope and love into your conscious awareness. May this light further grow and expand from within you in all directions to benefit everyone near and far.

**“May suffering beings be suffering free,
And the fear-struck fearless be;
May the grieving shed all grief,
And may all beings find relief.”**

- A Buddhist prayer

Content

1. A Spiritual Adventure
 - a. Introduction
 - b. The Experiment
 - c. The Game Plan
 - d. Self-Awareness
 - e. Letting Go
 - f. The Four Foundations of Mindfulness
 - g. A Spiritual Adventure
2. The Essence of Our Being
 - a. Faith
 - b. If We are Love, Why are we living in fear
 - c. We are what we believe
 - d. Change your beliefs, and everything changes
3. Know Thyself
 - a. Higher Self
 - b. The Ego
 - c. A Look at Ego
 - d. Virtues and the Ego
4. Living in Fear
 - a. A Fear-Driven Life
 - b. Understanding Fear
 - c. The Many Faces of Fear
 - d. Fear of Loss
 - e. Fear in Daily Life
 - f. Fear and Diseases
 - g. Doubts
 - h. Anger, Guilt and Forgiveness
 - i. Fear Takes Away Our Power
 - j. The Cost of Fear
5. The Truth will set You Free
 - a. Acknowledging Your Emotion
 - b. The Psychology of Fear
 - c. False Evidence Appearing Real

6. From Fear to Love
 - a. Spiritual Symptoms
 - b. Some Common Spiritual Symptoms
 - c. Healing the Spirit
 - d. Giving Voice to Feelings
 - e. Forgiveness
7. Emotional Healing
 - a. Steps in Emotional Healing
 - b. Identifying and Naming the Emotion
 - c. Acknowledging the Emotion
 - d. Forgiving and Letting Go
 - e. Tools for Emotional Healing
8. Mental Healing
 - a. Tools for Mental Healing
 - b. The Option Method
 - c. How Our Beliefs Affect Our Behaviour and Feelings
 - d. Our Belief System
 - e. Self-Defeating Beliefs
 - f. Meditation
 - g. Purifying the Body
 - h. Purifying the Heart
 - i. Purifying the Mind
 - j. Purifying the Spirit
 - k. Resonance
 - l. Peace and Tranquillity
9. Living from the Essence
 - a. Doubt
 - b. Fear
 - c. Inertia
 - d. One Small Bite at a time
 - e. Focus
 - f. Living in the Present Moment
 - g. Slowing Down
 - h. Equanimity
 - i. Spiritual Realizations
 - j. Living from the Essence

10. My Personal Journey from Fear to Love
 - a. Early Years of Fear
 - b. Do the Things You Fear
 - c. The Power of Beliefs
 - d. Mental Cultivation
 - e. Fear is Optional
11. Appendixes
 - i. Tools to Remove Fear
 - ii. Transforming Fear to Love (Guideline)
 - iii. Beliefs and Transformation (article)

“There is nothing to fear but fear itself.”

- Winston Churchill

Chapter One
A Spiritual Adventure

A Spiritual Journey

Introduction

Hello and welcome.

I am happy to meet you through this book and hope to share my spiritual adventure with you.

I'm a medical doctor who was trained in the western tradition of diagnosing, investigating and treating illnesses based on evidence that are physical, observable, quantifiable and re-producible. So, it may come as a surprise to many that a Western-trained doctor should be writing about spiritual matters. After all, western medicine has not until today fully and openly acknowledged spirituality.

However, in the course of my work in treating people with physical illnesses, I have come across many whose illnesses are in actual fact NOT physical at all. They are either emotional or mental in nature. Even some with physical illnesses may have their root cause in unresolved emotional or mental issues.

In fact, there was a lot about how our mind and emotion affect our physical health that was still unexplained or unknown. Fortunately, there has been an explosion of studies and researches being conducted in this area in recent years. Many preliminary results from these studies support the belief that we are more than just our physical body.

I believe that one day all our scientific studies will verify this truth – that we ARE spiritual beings!

To date, medical science has not acknowledged this. In fact, medical science has been slow to even suggest this. There is still a lot of resistance within the scientific community to merge science with spirituality. Nevertheless, we are getting there.

As a medical doctor, I have always been in a dilemma as to how to approach this.

The Experiment

So, in September 2004, I decided to start an experiment on my own life based on these beliefs:

1. We are spiritual beings.
2. Our spiritual nature is perfect.

It has been described by the mystics in many ways, such as a state of enlightenment, unconditioned, luminous, unconditional love, unborn, God, Nibbana.

In this natural state, we are free from fear, doubt, insecurity, needs or wants. We lack nothing. In fact, this nature is complete and all-embracing.

3. We are now unable to experience this pure state because of the imprints, defilements, unskillful habits and patterns of thoughts that we've accumulated over and over again. These imprints or defilements lead to mental tendencies and habits that obstruct our awareness of our true nature.

4. Diseases and illnesses, whether physical, emotional or mental, is a reflection of the disruption to our natural state.
5. To heal ourselves, we must realize our true nature. To re-experience our natural state, we must purify ourselves through removing all our defilements in thoughts, words and actions. The more we purify, the more we can re-experience our true nature.

Admittedly, all these beliefs are not new beliefs. They are many authors who have written tons of books about these. We are in the midst of a spiritual explosion and I believe we are in the exciting transition to become more spiritually aware. We will continue to gain more spiritual awareness as more and more people evolve spiritually.

However, what I intend to do in this experiment is to actually live my life based on these beliefs in a conscious way. In other words, I want to put into practice what many sages and mystics have exhorted humanity to do from the dawn of time.

All spiritual masters pointed to a spiritual path that leads to a state of joy and lasting happiness, yet most of us do not follow their advice.

Why?

I believe they are two main reasons:

1. We do not have enough **faith** that we can achieve the ultimate liberation they spoke of. It seems so far-fetched and impossible to achieve. Therefore, we don't even try.

2. We are lazy. To achieve what the ancient sages and mystics have achieved required that we spend a lot of time and effort training our mind, and this is much harder than just doing what we have been doing every day.

Yet if we don't try, how can we know?

If we want to achieve lasting happiness, we must give it a try – and try with full honesty and persistency. After all, no one has come up with any other alternatives that work. And all those who have seriously treaded the spiritual path have achieved a higher level of self-awareness and contentment.

I think it's worth a shot, don't you?

In fact, I believe so strongly that it is the only path worth taking that I started to devise a plan for myself.

**“The journey of a thousand miles
begins with a single step.”**

- Confucius

The Game Plan

I reasoned that we are not able to realize our true nature of unconditional love and wholeness because our inner Essence is covered by layers upon layers of negative mental and emotional imprints. These imprints are like paths in a virgin jungle. Once they are created, we just simply follow the existing paths instead of creating new paths, new possibilities. Instead, we are stuck with old mental habits and live our life in default mode.

To re-create our lives, we need to remove all these layers of imprints. Like an onion, we will have to peel away each layer until we reach the core. That is the only way to reach into our true Essence.

To remove all these unwholesome and negative imprints within me, I realize that I need two very important skills:

- 1. Self-awareness**
- 2. Letting go**

Self-Awareness

Self-awareness or mindfulness is the ability to be consciously aware of one's thoughts, feelings and actions. This skill is the key to our spiritual development.

From the moment we wake up until the moment we sleep, our thoughts move from one subject to another without pause. Yet, we are hardly ever consciously aware of them. We function mostly on auto-pilot, allowing our habits and tendencies to drive our thoughts, feelings and behaviours.

If we are to clear our existing negative mental and emotional imprints, we must first be aware of them before we can even do anything about it. That is why self-awareness is fundamental to spiritual progress.

Letting Go

The ability to let go of all our clinging and attachments is another skill that is equally important in our spiritual transformation.

We carry too much garbage with us in our lives. It is only by letting go of all these unnecessary burdens that cloud our Essence that we can eventually experience the Essence in its natural and pure state.

Mind you, these two skills – self-awareness and letting go – may sound simple, yet they are the hardest skills to cultivate. That is because in our daily lives, we hardly ever sharpen these skills. In fact, the majority of us ignore them.

The Four Foundations of Mindfulness

I remembered once receiving an article in an e-mail from a friend. The article was called “The Four Wives”. Apparently, it was quite a popular article and was doing its rounds in cyberspace. It was thought to have a Buddhist origin but because it has such universal value it was readily shared even among the other faiths.

The Four Wives

Once there was a man who had four wives. According to the social system and circumstances of ancient India, it was possible for a man to have several wives. The man had become ill and was about to die. At the end of his life, he felt very lonely and so asked the first wife to accompany him to the other world.

'My dear wife,' he said, 'I loved you day and night, I took care of you throughout my whole life. Now I am about to die, will you please go with me wherever I go after my death?'

He expected her to answer yes. But she answered, 'My dear husband, I know you always loved me. And you are going to die. Now it is time to separate from you. Goodbye, my dear.'

He called his second wife to his sickbed and begged her to follow him in death. He said, 'My dear second wife, you know how I loved you. Sometimes I was afraid you might leave me, but I held on to you strongly. My dear, please come with me.'

The second wife expressed herself rather coldly. 'Dear husband, your first wife refused to accompany you after your death. How can I follow you? You loved me only for your own selfish sake.'

Lying in his deathbed, he called his third wife, and asked her to follow him. The third wife replied, with tears in her eyes, 'My dear, I pity you and I feel sad for myself. Therefore, I shall accompany you to the graveyard. This is my last duty to you.' The third wife thus also refused to follow him to death.

Three wives had refused to follow him after his death.

Now he recalled that there was another wife, his fourth wife, for whom he didn't care very much. He had treated her like a slave and had always showed much displeasure with her. He now thought that if he asked her to follow him to death, she certainly would say no.

But his loneliness and fear were so severe that he made the effort to ask her to accompany him to the other world. The fourth wife gladly accepted her husband's request.

'My dear husband,' she said, 'I will go with you. Whatever happens, I am determined to be with you forever. I cannot be separated from you.'

The story concluded as follows:

'Every man or woman has four wives or husbands respectively. What do these wives signify?'

THE FIRST WIFE

*The first 'wife' is our **body**.*

We love our body day and night. In the morning, we wash our face, put on clothing and shoes. We give food to our body. We take care of our body like the first wife in this story. But unfortunately, at the end of our life, the body, the first 'wife' cannot follow us to the next world.

As it is stated in one of the commentaries: 'When the last breath leaves our body, the healthy colour of the face is transformed, and we lose the appearance of radiant life. Our loved ones may gather around and lament, but to no avail. When such an event occurs, the body is sent into an open field and cremated,

leaving only the white ashes.' This is the destination of our body.

THE SECOND WIFE

What is the meaning of the second wife? The second 'wife' stands for our fortune, our material things, money, property, fame, position, and job that we worked hard to attain.

*We are attached to these **material possessions**. We are afraid to lose these material things and wish to possess much more. There is no limit. At the end of our life these things cannot follow us to death. Whatever fortune we have piled up, we must leave it. We came into this world with empty hands. During our life in this world, we have the illusion that we obtained a fortune. At death, our hands are empty. We can't hold our fortune after our death, just as the second wife told her husband: 'You hold me with your ego-centred selfishness. Now it is time to say goodbye.'*

THE THIRD WIFE

*What is meant by the third wife? Everyone has a third 'wife'. This is the **relationship** of our parents, sister and brother, all relatives, friends, and society. They will go as far as the graveyard, with tears in their eyes. They are sympathetic and saddened...*

Thus, we cannot depend on our physical body, our fortune, and our society. We are born alone and we die alone. No one will accompany us after our death.

THE FOURTH WIFE

*The Buddha mentioned the fourth wife, who would accompany her husband after his death. What does that mean? The fourth 'wife' is our **mind**.*

When we deeply observe and recognize that our minds are filled with anger, greed, and dissatisfaction, we are having a good look at our lives. The anger, greed, and dissatisfaction are karma, the law of causation. We cannot be separated from our own karma.

As the fourth wife told her dying husband, 'I will follow you wherever you go.'"

The lesson in this story is that we often focus erroneously on our body, material possessions and relationships when we should be focusing our energy on cultivating our mind.

When we focus on our body, possessions and relationships, we distract ourselves from cultivating our mind. A neglected mind is like a garden that is left unattended. It grows weeds.

On the other hand, if we focus on cultivating our mind, then all the other things will naturally fall into place. The body will be healthy and strong, abundance will flow into our lives and we will have good healthy relationships with everyone else.

In cultivating our mind, self-awareness and letting go must be directed to these four areas:

- 1. Body**
- 2. Feelings**
- 3. Mind/thoughts**
- 4. Spirit**

In some traditional teachings, such as in the teachings of the Buddha, mind and emotion are considered as one. Emotion is considered as one of the factors of the mind.

For practical purposes, it is easier to separate the two.

Thus, the entire practice of self-awareness and letting go would look like this diagrammatically:

The Four Foundations of Mindfulness

	Self-awareness	Letting go
Spirit	True Nature/ Essence of Being	Ego
Mind	Beliefs Concepts Habits Tendencies	Beliefs Concepts Judging Blaming Resisting Past and Future
Feelings	All emotions - fear, anger, guilt, loneliness, frustrations, joy	Unwholesome emotions, habits, imprints, patterns, tendencies
Body	Tension	Dis-ease

A Spiritual Adventure

When we focus on the material world, life can seem like a big struggle. The moment we decide to live a spiritual life, something magical happens. By changing a single belief, we can entirely transform our lives.

You may ask: "If it is this simple, why is it not happening more often?"

The answer, of course, is fear.

Fear prevents us from doing what we know we should be doing. We lack courage and faith.

If you truly have faith in your spirituality and the courage to live it, then you will experience the transformation. Mahatma Gandhi said, "I have not the shadow of a doubt that every man or woman can achieve what I have, if he or she would make the same effort and cultivate the same hope and faith."

To do so, you need to consciously make the aspiration to live a spiritual life, and to make sure that your actions, feelings and thoughts reflect that aspiration.

This was what I did with my life.

That day in September 2004 when I decided to live a spiritual life was the day my spiritual adventure started. Once the decision was made, all the doubts gradually vanished.

It has taken courage. It has taken a great leap of faith. Yet if I had not done that, this book would not have materialized.

Life is a spiritual journey that begins with love. Somewhere along the way, we had a detour away from love. Now that I have decided to live a spiritual life - meaning living my life with as much mindfulness as possible - it is the beginning of the journey home to love. Every step is a new adventure; every thought, every feeling and every action a new challenge to be more conscious, more aware than before.

Since the day the experiment started, I have learned a great deal, and I realize that I have a great deal more to learn.

One obvious lesson is that you need a high degree of self-awareness in order to live spiritually. Only through this self-awareness can you know and understand yourself – your thoughts, your feelings and your behaviour. This awareness allows you to see things as they really are, and from there you can then decide to let go of all the false beliefs and undesirable habits and tendencies.

You will soon realize the true nature of your being, and see how you are presently living and manifesting so little of that nature. You will begin to understand love and fear, and how your ego often misleads you.

You will begin to find answers to many questions, understand how nature works and walk the path of the spiritual warriors.

There are many more things to learn, and I am still learning each day. This experiment on life is a never-ending story. It is a life-long process of learning and growing.

This book is a result of what I have learned, observed and experienced.

It is written with the hope that it will be of use to you too. Perhaps by sharing my experience, you may get a little insight here or a little revelation there. Perhaps it will

encourage you to walk your own spiritual path. If nothing else, perhaps it will be a good read on a Sunday afternoon.

I wish you well and may you begin your own spiritual journey now.

**“I have not the shadow of a doubt
that every man or woman can achieve what I have,
if he or she would make the same effort
and cultivate the same hope and faith.”**

- Mahatma Gandhi

Chapter Two

The Essence of Our Being

The Essence of Our Being

A spiritual journey is like any other journey. You need a destination and a path to get there.

There are many different roads you can take. The path I choose may not be the one for you. You will need to make your own choice. As long as every step you take leads you closer to your destination, you are quite safe. It is quite certain that you will one day reach there.

Keeping your destination in focus IS very important. To do that, it helps to know where you're going and what you can expect to find when you're there – something to keep you motivated.

Therefore, we begin with our destination, which is the Essence of Our Being.

The Essence of Our Being is:

**Unconditioned
Peace (Tranquil)
Whole (Complete, Abundance, Perfect)**

Love

To be honest, I have no *hard evidence* to proof that the above statement is true. The keyword in this sentence is "hard evidence". By this, I mean we have no concrete way to verifying this truth other than through personal experience.

Our present scientific method requires concrete, measurable, observable and reproducible results. While the

Essence of Our Being is certainly observable and reproducible, it is not at present measurable. We have no instruments that can detect and measure its presence or qualities.

However, I can categorically and emphatically declare that this Essence of Our Being is certainly observable and reproducible. We see these qualities in those who have devoted their lives to cultivating their spirituality. The more they approach closer to their inner Essence, they more they display these magnificent qualities.

These are not isolated and random cases of spiritual attainment. These are people who have made deliberate intention and effort to achieve and realize their true nature. Furthermore, each of them declares that anyone can achieve the same, if they too put in the intention and effort to cultivate their spirituality.

Faith

Since there is no concrete proof, we cannot avoid relying on faith.

If we insist on acting only when we have concrete evidence, we find ourselves in a situation where we can never begin since the very nature of our true Essence is not verifiable instrumentally. I do not foresee any time in the near future where we can actually create a physical instrument to measure or detect the presence or qualities of our subtle Essence.

Thus, we need to rely on faith.

In relying on faith, we must do so with caution. I am not one to support doing things out of blind faith. In fact, I believe there is great danger in doing anything out of blind faith.

Instead, we should investigate with due diligent and reasonable care, and gather all available information and knowledge with regards to the subject matter. We must satisfy ourselves that our subject matter – in this case, the Essence of Our Being – is more likely to be true than false, and that they are at least some indirect observations alluding to this truth.

In the case of our Essence, the implicit truth is the observable behaviour and qualities of those who have cultivated their spirituality. This truth is also observable in you when you yourself have cultivated your own spirituality. As your true Essence unfolds in you, your faith will grow stronger.

This type of faith is reasonable and justifiable, in my opinion. In fact, it is necessary for without this faith, we cannot move forward.

It is very much like the trapeze artist who dares to release his hold from his own ring in mid-air, knowing with full faith that his partner on the other ring will catch him in his fall. Without such faith, he will never release his grip from his ring, and therefore will never experience the joy of the momentary sense of floating in mid-air, and we will never enjoy the beauty of their acts.

By liberating himself from his fear and doubt, he is able to achieve what he knows is achievable, and shares that joy and liberation with his audience.

Likewise, for us to experience the sense of liberation from our fear-driven life, we must have enough faith in the truth of our Essence. Only when we have this faith can we muster

the courage to walk this path – a path many in ancient times called the path of the warriors.

If We Are Love, Why Are We Living in Fear

In a word – conditioning!

We are living in a world where the environment and conditions are constantly but ever so subtly suggesting to our subconscious mind that we are NOT our Essence.

In fact, we are living in a worldwide culture that has relegated our spirituality to the background. We have simply lost our connection to our true Essence. Many do not even believe in spirituality, given the many atrocious and inhumane acts that are being committed in the name of religions.

However, let us not equate spirituality with religion. While the true purpose of all religions is supposed to lead us to spiritual awakening, the ways most religions are being taught and practiced these days left a lot to be desired. Some methods are downright harmful and counterproductive. Some are misleading. Many in fact thrive on fear.

Little wonder that many have lose faith in religions, and so by implication, with spirituality.

But spirituality is NOT a religion. It is not institutionalized and it should not be so. It is personalized and individualized. Your relationship is not between you and your church, or synagogue, or mosque, or temple. It is between you and YOUR truth.

Our present culture and religious teachings perpetuate our fear-driven lives. We live in constant fear – fear of poverty, fear of dying, fear of loss, fear of shame and fear in many other forms.

Fear permeates the entire fabric of our lives.

From childhood, we were conditioned by our parents and teachers to be fearful of strangers and the unknown. Instead of being watchful and mindful of our children so as to keep them safe, we adults take the short cut method of planting fears into our children's mind, not realizing that the short-term advantage is outweighed by the long-term damage.

In businesses, we use fear to help sell our products. We see this particularly in the insurance, pharmacological and health industries. In fact, it is fear that helps create war and perpetuate the arm industries. Governments are often guilty of this.

Politicians are very good at using fear to hold on to power. Since fear thrives in secrecy, many governments hide behind so called official secret acts and confidential reports. In such governments, transparency and freedom of information are hard to come by.

In religion too you see fear being used. We are taught to fear punishments from God for disobeying his laws. We fear being banished to live in eternal hell.

Why do we fear?

We fear because we do not believe we are love. We do not believe that we are the Creator of our lives. We do not believe that we are complete and whole. We do not believe that we can affect our lives in any ways merely through choosing what to believe in.

We Are What We Believe

Every one of us goes through life with a personal set of core beliefs. This set of beliefs becomes our internal map that navigates every aspect of our life, from the way we think, what we say to what we do.

It has been said that **a belief is merely a perception of reality.**

Therefore, what we believe in determines how we perceive and interpret reality.

The mystics have long ago realized that we live in a world of relative reality. In this relative world, they realized that everything is empty. By emptiness, what they mean is that everything of and by itself has no inherent value. That is why an event can mean one thing to one observer and another thing to a different observer.

For example, in an accident, every witness will describe the incident in different ways. Each of them will give you a unique picture of the event from his or her own perspective.

Likewise, an object too can be of a certain value to one person and of a totally different value to another person. For example, a car may be of great value to us city folks. However, if you were to present a car to someone living in the jungle, it will not have the same value.

The same is true of a person, a place, an event, and anything else you choose.

The value of any of these is really dependant on the belief you have in its value. If you believe it is of a certain value, then it is of that value to you.

Therefore, an event can be interpreted in a positive, negative or neutral way.

And here's the million dollar "secret" –

**YOU can choose what to believe in
and your choice will influence how
you interpret the event and how you
respond to it.**

Here's a testimonial from a young lady who was adopted when she was a baby.

I grew up believing that I was not good enough for my natural mother and therefore I had some issues with self-esteem and self-worth. I also believe that my adoptive mother can never love me the way a natural mother can love her own child. Therefore, I made life miserable for her in every way. I felt that if I were to be miserable and bitter about being given away, I was going to make life miserable for everyone else too.

Then one day, it suddenly dawns on me that after all these years, despite making life miserable for my adoptive mother, she has never once given up on me. She has continued to love me and care for me, and tried her best to provide for my needs.

I felt so ashamed of what I have done to her.

Here was a woman who have showed me nothing but love when my own mother would not have me and here I was literally torturing her with my attitudes and behaviours toward her.

All these years -- just because I believe I was not loved -- and the belief weren't even anywhere near the truth.

I was loved; I just didn't know it. I couldn't even see it when it was right in front of me because I wasn't looking for it, for I believe it wasn't there.

All the years of pain and anguish, frustration and fear – all for nothing. Worse, I have hurt the one person who truly loves me.

From that moment onward, I vow I would make it all up to her, my beloved adoptive mother.

I became the daughter she never had. Our relationship gradually improved. Eventually, we were able to communicate and share, and we became good friends.

All this was possible because I change my belief.

The truth is there is no right or wrong belief.

However, there are beliefs that are wholesome because they are closer to our true nature or they help expand our awareness and lead us to our spirituality. I call these beliefs **life-enhancing beliefs**. A belief in unconditional love, for example, leads to an all-embracing attitude of goodwill and compassion towards all living beings.

Likewise, there are also beliefs that are unwholesome because they hold us back from realizing our true nature or lead us further away from our spirituality. A belief in lack, for example, leads to an attitude of hoarding and a tendency to be greedy, selfish and self-centred. I labelled these beliefs **life-limiting beliefs** for they limit our true potentials.

Once we realize this truth, we can then decide consciously to choose what we want to believe in.

Change your beliefs, and everything changes

Here are some important questions for you to ponder:

1. Do you believe that you are living in a benevolent universe?
2. Do your behaviour, attitudes and speech reflect that belief?
3. If not, what can you do to change that?

If your answer to the first question is a "no", then ask yourself why. Be honest with yourself as you probe the reason why. The answer may be very revealing.

When I first asked myself this same question, I realized that I believe this universe to be a hostile place, and that is why I put up all these defences around me. Because of my belief, I am fearful of what may be in store for me. I believe the external universe is unpredictable and I have no power to exert any form of control to influence it. Therefore, my life is at its mercy.

That makes me very small and very insecure.

It is no wonder then that my behaviour, my attitudes and my speech reflect this belief, this vulnerability and insecurity in me.

I think this is quite true for most people.

What is also true is that the moment I decide to believe in my own spirituality and the Essence of My Being, I automatically see the universe as a benevolent one – one that will provide for all my needs.

The world I live in become less hostile and much friendlier, and that is also reflected in my new behaviour, attitudes and speech.

By changing one belief, my whole world changes and my life is transformed.

I do not see myself as separate from the Universe anymore. Instead, I see myself as an integral part of the Universe. I am a co-creator of my life and I feel that I can master my own destiny by mastering my mind.

I feel less vulnerable, more in control.

This change alone is healthier and gives more value to my life.

Life becomes more purposeful.

"Courageous is the soul who adventures into time and space to learn of their divinity. For while they cannot lose, they can think they have, and the loss will seem intolerable.

And while they cannot fail, they can think they have, and the pain will seem unbearable.

And while they cannot ever be less than they truly are - powerful, eternal and loved - they can think they are, and all hope will seem lost.

And therein lie their test - a test of perceptions; of what to focus on, of what to believe in, in spite of appearances.

Courageous indeed...the pride of the Universe, and I should know."

- Notes from the Universe

Chapter Three

Know Thyself

Know Thyself

**“Know thyself. Know thy enemies.
In a thousand battles, win a thousand victories.”**

- Confucius

Now that we are clear on our destination and the path to walk, we had better learn what we are likely to encounter along the way. When we know what the possible obstacles are, we are better prepared to face them.

Well, know this:

We are our greatest strength.
We are also our greatest enemy.

To be more precise, our **mind** is our greatest strength and it is also our greatest enemy. Why do I say that?

When we are the master of our mind, it is our greatest asset. It will do our every bidding. Like a laser, we can direct the mind to focus on any situation and we'll be able to see the solution.

However, an untrained mind is our greatest enemy. Like a wild horse, the untrained mind runs in all directions, according to its whims and fancies. It cannot focus on any one thing for long and it gets easily distracted. If you have ever sat down in meditation, you'll know what I mean.

Our goal is to train our mind to become fully aware of itself, to be mindful at all time, to be still. When the mind is still,

we are able to see and experience our true nature – the Essence of Our Being.

This Essence is clouded by all kinds of mental and emotional impurities or imprints in an untrained mind. That is why in our present state, we are far removed from our Essence. Like an onion, we need to peel all these impurities away, layer by layer, until we reach the core. Only then can the Essence be revealed to us.

An untrained mind can create a lot of obstacles for us in our spiritual journey. The three most common obstacles are **fear, doubt** and **laziness**. There are other obstacles but these three are the most challenging ones for me.

As we walked the spiritual path, knowing what obstacles we may possibly encounter is important. We can anticipate and be better prepared for it. This way, we increase our chances of success and when the going gets tough we are not easily discouraged.

In fact, every obstacle is a sign of inner resistance. We are competing with no one but ourselves. When we realize this, we will realize that each obstacle also presents an opportunity for progress. How we face the obstacle will determine the outcome. Rather than be discouraged by these obstacles, we should welcome the opportunity to move forward.

In order to overcome these obstacles well, we need to know our Self. So, let's take some time to understand a little bit more about the Self.

Higher Self

**“Everything around you exist
as part of the Universal Mind...
The Universal Mind is unmanifest essence –
the substance out of which
all physical form is created.
You are part of this Infinite Intelligence.”**

- Orin/Sanaya Roman, “Spiritual Growth”

Our Higher Self is that part of us that transcend time and space, and connects with the Universal Mind, the Essence of our Being. It is wisdom, love and abundance. It is intuitive. It sees and understands the inter-connectedness of all things.

In a Buddhist scripture of the Mahayana tradition called the Lankavatara Sutra, in Chapter 5, the Higher Self is referred to as the Intuitive Mind. It is the bridge between the Universal Mind and the Individual Mind, or what is commonly known as the Ego.

The Ego

The function of each entity is to experience its unique individuality. Each entity has its unique experiences.

Each entity is at once a part of the Essence as well as a part of its physical body. The part closest to the Essence is what we refer to as the Higher Self. It has qualities closest to the Essence – more awareness, more creative and more godlike.

The part buried deep within our physical body is the Self we are more familiar with. This Self is often called the Ego.

The Ego is far removed from the Essence and it believes it is just the physical body. It has difficulty seeing the interconnectedness of all things and difficulty believing that it is love, wisdom and abundance. It is caught in the net of self-deception in this physical manifestation.

Thus, our Ego is a major obstacle in our ability to experience our true Essence. The Ego believes itself to be a separate and real entity, and fear that the loss of its identity will lead to its extinction.

Although unfounded, this fear is very real to the Ego.

Letting go of our Ego, we are able to experience our true Essence. This would result in an expansion of our awareness or consciousness, and thus leads to a greater Higher Self that is more inclusive and all-embracing than our present limited Self.

In its fear, the Ego creates resistance to our ability to experience our true Essence. To preserve its own existence, it cunningly convinces the self to grasp tightly to its own survival in a self-serving way. In such a manner, our Ego can be said to be the proverbial Devil that deceives us and leads us astray.

A Look at the Ego

**“Therefore, the sage
Puts himself last,
Finds himself first;
Abandons his self,**

**Preserves his self.
Is it not because he has no self
That he is able to realize his self?"**

- Tao De Ching

The Self is the part of the Universal Mind or Universal Consciousness that recognizes itself as separate from other entities. This Self can further be identified as having a Higher Self (Intuitive Mind) and the Ego (Individual Mind).

There are some inherent problems with an Ego that is so immersed in its physicality that it loses its connection with its Higher Self. Some of these problems are:

- Separation - I versus them, sense of disconnectedness
- Competition, instead of cooperation
- Vulnerability - fear of loss of identity, security, belonging (acceptance)

Fear gives rise to the manifestation of more negative aspects of self.

A. Fear of loss of identity - leads to behaviour promoting a bigger ego, pride, arrogance. Its near enemy is loss of self-esteem, lacking confidence.

B. Fear of loss of security - in health (sickness, death), in youthfulness (fear of growing old), in possession (leads to greed and the need to be in control)

The Mirror

Our external circumstance is a reflection of our inner world.

"We cannot have a superiority complex without an inferiority complex within. The outward superiority is a mirror reflection of the inward inferiority. They are two manifestations of the same thing."

"All great men are humble. That is how we know they are great."

Virtues and the Ego

Here is some food for thought:

*Why are some physical and verbal acts considered virtuous?
Why do we place special values in these acts?*

I believe that virtues are considered virtuous because they help us to eliminate our ego and bring us closer to our true Essence. Thus, the aim of spiritual practice is to go beyond the ego.

Our ego is the proverbial devil. It is cunning and often deceives us in very subtle ways to preserve its own existence.

Our ego is a root cause of our insecurities. In its attempt to preserve itself, it gives rise to fear, greed, anger, craving and all the negative imprints.

It is an illusion that we are our ego. We are NOT our ego.

The ego deceives us into believing that we are our ego, and that if our ego dies, we die with it. Thus, we have the extreme fear of annihilation, of total extinction. In this way, the ego preserves itself.

It is this fear of extinction that leads to our fear of death. If we truly believe that we are spiritual beings and are indestructible, how can we fear death?

The truth is we are not our ego. We are much greater than our ego. Not only that – without our ego, we are liberated. We can never be destroyed. In our natural state, we are the indescribable, the unchanging, the unconditional love that all the scriptures talked about.

We are God.

In our Essence, we know everything, we are everything and we are eternal. We are pure consciousness, total awareness, fully awoken.

This is the ultimate expression.

To achieve this original state of being, we must go beyond the ego.

Virtues are deeds, words and thoughts that help us move beyond the ego. For examples,

Humility counteracts our ego's tendency to claim recognition or glorify itself.

Generosity helps us to think of others before ourselves.

Patience prevents anger and anger is nothing but a ferocious display of ego.

Not only does ego get angry, it also likes to play the blame game. When we refuse to blame anyone, we remove an opportunity for the expression of ego. It is important to remember that not blaming anyone includes not blaming ourselves.

**Sow a thought, reap an action;
Sow an action, reap a habit;
Sow a habit, reap a character;
Sow a character, reap a destiny.**

Chapter Four

Living in Fear

Living in Fear

***"Fear is only the absence of love,
just as darkness is the absence of light."***

- Dr. Eric Pearl, The Reconnection

We live a fear-driven life in a fear-driven world, but what exactly is a fear-driven life?

A Fear-Driven Life

A fear-driven life is a life in which thoughts, decisions and actions are predominantly motivated by fear. Most people live a fear-driven life. Our present culture promotes a fear-driven life.

What are the characteristics of a fear-driven life?

1. In a fear-driven life, the driving force behind most thoughts and actions is fear. This may be fear of death, fear of loneliness, fear of poverty or fear of pain.
2. This fear arises out of a lack of understanding and faith in one's own divinity. Not believing in his own divinity and not believing that he is a co-creator of his life, he is separated from his divine nature, which is unconditional, unlimited love. The degree of fear reflects the degree of separation from his divinity.
3. This fear leads to a belief in one's own mortality, in a sense of isolation and a sense of scarcity in life, resulting in the fear of death, loneliness and poverty

respectively. The more fearful we are, the more we feel the need to control our life by controlling nature and everything else so as to avoid death, loneliness, poverty and pain.

4. Fear can paralyze us into inaction. It can numb our emotion and thoughts, resulting in poor decisions and judgments. It impairs our insights. Any decision that is made out of fear tends to lead to more fear and separation. Instead of all-embracing, it is divisive and self-centred.

Love-Driven Life versus Fear-Driven Life

	Love-Driven Life	Fear-Driven Life
Freedom	There is real freedom from the fear of death, pain, loneliness and poverty. Do not feel the need to control or manipulate life.	No real freedom from fear of death, pain, loneliness and poverty despite having accumulated wealth and power.
Present Moment	Live in the present moment.	Live in the past or in the future.
Quality of life	There is inner peace and serenity, and contentment with life.	No real peace and contentment with life is achieved.
Insight	Usually have good insight into one's own strengths and weaknesses, and have the courage to face them and act on them.	May not have good insight into one's own strengths and weaknesses, and then to resist looking inward to face the real self. Lacks courage.
Security	Have a sense of having enough and that providence will provide. A sense of security despite having little.	Always feel that there is not enough, despite having accumulated wealth and power. Feels insecure.
Consequences	Seems to live a life without stress. Has a sense of satisfaction with life.	Life seems to be a constant struggle and stressful. Sense of dissatisfaction with life despite worldly achievements.

Understanding Fear

As have been mentioned repeatedly, we are spiritual beings. In our purest, untainted form, we are Love - limitless, luminous and unconditional.

Unfortunately, we do not live as though we are spiritual beings. In fact, we live as though we are only our body. Thus, we live with very little awareness and connection to Love.

In the absence of love, there is fear.

Trapped in our ego, we feel a sense of separation from the oneness of all things. In this separation, we feel lonely and insecure, and therefore fearful.

Fear is therefore due to the loss of our oneness with our true Essence.

The Many Faces of Fear

Fear can manifest itself in many forms and it can be directed **inward** towards ourselves or **outward** towards others. For example, anger and hatred are manifestations of fear that are directed outwardly at someone else while guilt and shame are forms of fear directed inwardly at ourselves.

The many faces of fear can sometimes be difficult to see in our daily lives. Most of them manifest in very subtle ways and if we are not mindful, we can easily miss recognizing it.

For example, I once bought a car through a patient of mine. He was a freelance car salesman which means he was not formally attached to any car company. The reason I decided to buy from him was because I know he was going through some financial difficulties. I thought that since I am buying a car, I might as well let him earn the commission.

I told him the car model I wanted, wrote a check of \$3,000.00 as booking fee and handed over photocopies of my driver's license, my identity card and the most recent three-month statements from my bank as required.

That same night when I was getting ready for bed, it suddenly dawns on me that I have handed over many private and confidential documents to him without a second thought – documents that a conman can make full use of. I've read of conmen who used another person's documents to apply for loans and then disappeared, leaving the unsuspecting victim to settle the loan with the bank.

When I thought about it, I realized that I do not really know my patient very well. After all, all I know about him is his medical problems, not his personal life. Who knows what kind of a person he is. Perhaps he may be in such deep debts that he might be desperate enough to cheat.

My train of thoughts just continues to move on from one fear to another, each thought making the fear bigger and more terrible than the one before. By the time I realized what I was doing to myself, I was about ready to panic.

As it turns out, none of what I fear was true. This was an honest person just trying hard to earn a decent living. All the fear that was self-created serves only to perpetuate this negative habit.

Most of our fear arises in the same way – subtle and unsuspecting.

It starts with one fearful thought, which leads to another and another. Before you know it, it has taken on a life of its own. If we are not careful or have very poor self-awareness, this type of habit can literally create panic in us.

This fear tendency is actually very common and we can see it in ourselves almost every day. When we are not aware of it, this tendency tends to perpetuate itself each time we allow it to manifest in us.

The good news is that we can change this tendency simply by increasing our self-awareness through mindfulness. The sooner we note this tendency as it arises in us, the easier it is to stop it or replace it with something more positive and wholesome. When we do this repeatedly, we eventually loosen the power that fear has over us.

Fear of Loss

It can be said that all forms of fearful manifestation can be traced back to the fear of loss. These are some of the things we fear to lose:

Identity (Ego)
Control
Security
Freedom (Free Will)
Health (Life)
Abundance

“Transforming fear-based patterns is the road to freedom, but recognizing those patterns in ourselves is not easy.”

- Ingrid Bacci, The Art of Effortless Living

We live in fear.

Most of what we think, say and do is a reflection of this fear. Our present society is a fear-based society. We fear for the loss of our life (death), our health (sickness), our security (poverty) and our youthfulness (aging). Our fear arises because we refuse to accept that these changes are part and parcel of our physical life.

Our physical life is temporal. It does not last. Instead, what we should be doing is to accept this physical reality and to embrace it with grace. With acceptance, fear cannot continue to exist. It fades away. Then we can go on with the business of truly living and being in the present moment.

Fear directs our attention to the past or to the future. Without fear, we can more easily live in the present. We should thus transform our fear-based society to an “unconditional love”-based society.

How do we transform our life from a fear-based living to an “unconditional love”-based living? We achieve this by eradicating our attachment to our ego.

Our ego is the biggest obstacle to an “unconditional love”-based living.

By definition, the ego is that part of Consciousness that identifies itself as separate from others. Thus, the existence

of ego brings with it an intrinsic sense of separation from other living beings. By eliminating our ego, we also automatically eliminate this sense of separation from Creation or God or whatever you care to call it.

(I am careful to use the word "God" because this word usually means different thing to different people. Each of us has our own pre-conceived ideas about what God is. For our purposes, God refers to all of existence, nature or our true Essence.)

This sense of separation from God is what created fear and insecurity. Thus, fear and insecurity, together with the sense of separation, are inherent and inseparable from the ego. The only way to eliminate all these fear, insecurity and separation is by eliminating our identification with the ego.

Eliminating the ego leaves us with only our true nature – unconditional love, luminous, wisdom, knowing, being.

Fear in Daily Life

Our daily life is a great opportunity for spiritual practice. Every moment is a challenge to be more mindful of what we think, say and do. Every response is a lesson in self-awareness and letting go.

Fear is encountered every step of the way. Small fear, big fear, real fear, imagined fear - every type of fear. In reality, all fear is unreal since fear is not our true nature.

Yet we are too ingrained in our culture of living in fear.

We tried to soothe our fear by doing, achieving and searching externally – basically trying to keep our mind busy

and distracted from confronting fear -- and in the process we find temporary relief. We then wrongly conclude that doing and achieving can eliminate our fear.

In reality, they only distract us from our fear. When all is achieved and done, our fear remains. But doing and achieving have become a habit for us; a pattern of behaviour that we believe can remove our fear.

We are wrong in that belief, of course, but like the drug addict, we find it difficult to let go of our habit.

We are hooked!

Changing this habit requires effort – great effort – but I believe the result is worth it. In fact, if we want to live without fear, it is the only way to go.

Christopher Westra, the author of “I Create Reality” gave a very revealing definition of faith and fear:

**Faith is believing what we cannot see to come to pass;
Fear is believing what we cannot see to come to pass.**

The reason why I said it is revealing is because the definitions he gave for both faith and fear are the same. The only difference is in what you choose to focus on. If the focus is on something we desire, then it is faith. If instead you choose to focus on what is undesirable, then it becomes fear.

What this means is that:

Hope is expecting what is **desirable** to happen;
Despair is expecting what is **undesirable** to happen.

We therefore have to be very careful what we allow our mind to focus on.

Fear and Diseases

Clinical trials in medicine have shown that people who fall sick frequently possess certain personality traits that seem to pre-dispose them to getting diseases. That explains why, when everything else seems equal, some people get diseases like cancer while others do not.

It appears that those who worry and are constantly anxious are more likely to be ill. In other words, if you worry excessively about getting cancer, you may actually make yourself more likely to get it.

Doubts

Doubt is a manifestation of fear. Doubts arise easily in the beginning of this spiritual practice. It is one of the three main obstacles I often have to face and deal with.

This is because in the initial stage of our spiritual journey, we do not yet have the "knowing", only the believing, and believing is based on faith in others having shown us the way. We have to trust that they are not selling us a great lie.

The only way to find out the truth is to practice until believing becomes knowing – until we are able to taste the fruit for ourselves.

Our 'modern scientific' mind is familiar with and accepts only concrete observable and verifiable results. Since spiritual practice produces results that cannot be detected instrumentally nor measured quantitatively, many people

take the attitude “show me and I’ll believe it”. This attitude is really a catch-22, since if you don’t practice, you’ll never see the results but if you don’t see the proof, you’ll never start to practice it.

The loss, however, is not the believer but the non-believer.

Anger, Guilt and Forgiveness

A person who intends to lead a spiritual life must recognize, acknowledge and deal with the anger and guilt within.

Anger arises when our ego is threatened. When we scrutinize it carefully, we’ll realize that anger is also a subtle manifestation of fear.

For example, we get angry at a reckless driver who cut into our path because his recklessness endangers our life. There was a threat of loss of life or physical harm to us.

At first glance, anger appears to be an emotion that is directed at an external source – perhaps a person or an event that displeases us. However, if we were to analyse our anger further, we realize that our anger is very often directed at our self too.

In the example of the reckless driver, we may blame ourselves for not noticing the reckless driver earlier and getting out of his way.

Guilt arises when we blame ourselves for something we did or did not do that we believe is morally wrong.

Anger and guilt are both constrictive emotions. They are not only unhelpful to our spiritual progress, but may actually

prevent us from moving forward spiritually. They create blocks and resistance to the flow of our true Essence into our lives.

Negative emotions behave like cancer cells, and if not dealt with, result in toxic spread to our entire well-being – physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually.

Thus, anger and guilt must be recognized, acknowledged and confronted, and this is achievable through self-awareness and letting go. One of the most effective tools for letting go of our anger and guilt is forgiveness.

Self-forgiveness is, in fact, essential for self-healing.

As long as we continue to harbour anger and guilt within, we risk their malignant effects on us. The moment we decide to forgive ourselves, and those who caused us these negative emotions, we begin to heal at all levels – physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually.

Love versus Fear

An old man said to his grandson, "Boy, I have two tigers caged within me. One is love. The other is fear. They are constantly fighting each other."

The young boy asked, "Which one will win, grandfather?"

The old man replied, "The one I feed."

Fear takes away Our Power

Whenever we live in fear and do things out of fear, we are actually giving away our power. We are basically reinforcing our beliefs that we are NOT the spiritual being we truly are. We are saying to ourselves that we need something out there to make us feel better about ourselves.

Unfortunately, we give away our power much too often in our daily lives. Whenever we make decisions out of fear and not out of love, we diminish our power and walk a step further away from our Essence of Love and wholeness. Every act, every word and every thought that arise out of fear disconnect us from our spirituality.

To regain our power, we need to consciously and mindfully do, say and think from Love and not from fear. We need courage and we need persistency. We need to know that this can be achieved. Only then can we achieve true freedom.

The only freedom you will ever need is freedom from fear.

The Cost of Fear

We have no choice but to overcome our fear if we are to live well. The truth is fear is costly to us – costly in economic terms and more so in spiritual terms.

Fear is an expansive habit to feed economically.

We spend an amazing amount of our money and time trying to alleviate our fear. I see this clearly in some of my patients.

I once saw an elderly woman who complained of difficulty breathing and insomnia. These symptoms started a few days after a friend died from a stroke. She has all kinds of vague complaints but never once considered that they may all be due to her fear of dying or sickness.

She wanted to do all types of blood investigations and imaging to make sure that she has no cancer, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes or any chance of a stroke. When I reminded her that these tests were done just two months ago and that all the results were normal, she continues to insist on repeating them. It was for her own peace of mind, she said. Otherwise, she cannot sleep.

Traditionally, it is a taboo to bring up the subject of death in a conversation. This is more so in a normal doctor-patient consultation. The very mention of the word sends fear into the heart of the patient.

However, in this instance, I decided that she will have to face her fear in order to be able to talk about it. Only then can I help her to overcome it. So, I pointed out to her that all her symptoms arise only after her friend's death and that it is a very common presentation especially in the elderly. Most people at this point in their lives come face to face with their mortality whenever any of their friends passed away.

It never fails to amaze me how difficult it is for us to name our fear for what it is. Confronting our fear is perhaps one of the most difficult things to do, even when we know it is good for us. Most of us lack courage to face it. We do all kinds of things to distract ourselves away from our fear. In this instance, the woman is willing to part with her savings once again to repeat her tests just to re-assure herself that all is well with her.

She is by no means the only one reacting this way to fear. I have seen countless instances of this same pattern

repeating itself. I see it even in myself. None of us are immune from fear, until and unless we begin to live in our true Essence.

If you think spending on unnecessary medical investigations is a small price to pay, then consider the many industries that actually thrive on fear. Fear is a multibillion-dollar industry. It drives the insurance industry and the arm race. It even drives the medical industry, I must admit. The face of medicine has been transformed by the big and powerful pharmaceutical and nutraceutical companies. The marketing technique has changed from one based on healing to one based on fear. Even the so-called natural and organic movement is beginning to use the same tactic of utilizing fear to drive their sales. Sad, yes, but true.

However, the real cost is to our spiritual growth.

Each time we allow our fear to manifest itself, we validate its 'usefulness' and perpetuate its tendency in our lives. As its grips on our lives become stronger, so is its power over us. As fear grows, love recedes for fear and love cannot co-exist together. They are mutually exclusive.

I believe this is how we fall from grace – from a radiant light being of unconditional love to a dense physical being of fear. We now need to reverse this process and to do so we need to be aware of our thoughts so that we can catch our fear and replaces it with love as soon as we recognize it.

“Whatever we resist persists.”

- Anon.

Chapter Five
The Truth will set You Free

The Truth will set You Free

Living in fear is the worst thing you can do to yourself, yet most people are doing just that. Our ego can so skillfully distract us from facing up to our fear that we can even fool ourselves.

For example, there was a lady in her 50s who came to see me complaining of numbness over both cheeks and difficulty in breathing. She has been on treatment for hypertension for some time and she said that she was afraid she might get a stroke from it.

As the consultation progressed, I felt certain that what she had was not a physical illness but a manifestation of an underlying fear, but what the fear was I did not know.

However, I listened patiently to her complaints and encouraged her to relate any events that may have caused her distress. She talked about many things which were not important until she started talking about her dog. She disclosed that her pet dog had died recently. The moment she said that, tears started flowing from her eyes.

From there, she related another incident about her close friend who has hypertension and diabetes mellitus. This friend recently has been very sick. She looked pale and sallow, and her face and body were puffed up due to water retention as a consequence of kidney failure.

Being an anxious person, she was afraid that her hypertension would lead to the same outcome, thus the physical symptoms she presented were in fact psychosomatic (mind-body) manifestations.

Once it was pointed out to her that her physical symptoms are due to her fear of sickness following the recent events concerning her dog and her friend, she felt better. Without knowing the actual cause of her physical symptoms, she has imagined all the worst possibilities; including fearing that she may be having a stroke. Understanding her own symptoms was therapeutic for her.

Surprisingly, there are many people who are truly not in touch with their conditions or circumstances. They are not able to link their physical symptoms with recent traumatic or stressful events that happened in their lives. Until somebody pointed the link out to them, they continue to suffer with unnecessary fear and anxiety.

Acknowledging Your Emotion

Another more dramatic example of the therapeutic effect of just recognizing and acknowledging the truth is in the case of another lady in her 30s.

She presented to me with symptoms of wheezing and difficulty breathing of sudden onset. There were even physical signs of wheezing in her lungs when I listened to her lungs with a stethoscope, suggesting bronchial asthma.

However, she did not respond well to anti-asthmatic medications. She came several times until one day we took the time to explore the circumstances leading to her first attack.

She related how a week or two prior to her first attack, she had a miscarriage and underwent a D & C (dilatation and curettage). Fortunately, the miscarriage happened in the early first trimester. Unfortunately, her husband refused to

talk about the miscarriage with her, making her feel guilty about it. She blamed herself for the miscarriage.

You can see that she was still hurting from it because she started to cry as soon as she talked about it.

I explored her feelings, her beliefs and expectations, and also went on to counsel her for about an hour. Eventually, having for the first time able to vent her frustration, guilt and fear, she felt a sense of relief.

After that consultation, I did not see her again for several months until one day she came in again for another matter. She confided that since that last visit, she has not had any more wheeze or difficulty breathing. In fact, she did not even take her medications.

Her physical symptoms and signs vanished just like that, once we have identified, recognized and acknowledged the truth.

Truly, the truth will set you free – free from physical, emotional and mental illness. The difficulty is in recognizing and having the courage to acknowledge it.

Having seen similar patterns as mentioned above being repeated over and over again in my practice, I have come to believe that our physical, emotional and mental symptoms and signs are merely manifestations of what I called our spiritual symptoms.

We will discuss more on these spiritual symptoms in the next chapter.

The Psychology of Fear

Fear is, for the most part, not a condition we are born with. It is learned.

This is evident by observing young children and infants. Children play without fear. They touch everything they can lay their hands on. They'll climb and they'll jump until they hurt themselves. Then they learned that certain behaviours are associated with pain.

However, some children learn to fear at a much earlier age than others. They learn fear from the people closest to them – their parents and caregivers. Parents unwittingly impressed upon their children to fear certain things, such as strangers, dark places, sharp objects, fire and other things. Some of these fears are useful to shield them from harm but others are purely imaginary fears transferred from the parents to their children.

For example, there was this young girl in her teen who was so afraid of having high cholesterol and uric acid that she was afraid to eat many foods. She was afraid to eat meat because it may be high in cholesterol. She refused seafood because it may be high in uric acid. Eventually, she ended up eating only certain food, organically grown and which she believed to be "safe" food.

Her fear led her to read about health via articles in the newspapers, magazines and anything she can lay her hands on. Sometimes, a little knowledge is dangerous and this is the case with her. After reading all these health information, she refused to eat a lot of ordinary foods.

Due to her eating habit, she has stunted growth, was very skinny and looked like a 12-year-old girl when she was in

fact already 17. She had very irregular and scant periods as a result of that.

In addition, she was often teased and stared at in school because of her small size and "weird" attitude. She became very self-conscious of what the other kids are saying about her and so her social life suffers. To compensate for this lack of stature and friends, she developed very high expectations of herself as a mean to excel in school.

These unrealistic expectations further added to her already anxious personality, resulting in a total breakdown into depression at one stage.

It was at this point that her grandmother brought her to see me for a consultation.

It was hard for me to imagine how a young girl could fear high cholesterol and uric acid until I found out that her mother was an excessively anxious person who has all kinds of unfounded fear about her health. From her mom, she learned to fear for her health, to be afraid to eat certain foods. From that point on, one thing led to another and the situation just continued to get worse until finally her coping mechanism failed completely and she ended up with depression.

Once we are able to see the cause of her fear, how it all started and how it had led from one difficult situation to another even more difficult situation, she was able to "see the light". Now we can begin to work on reversing these long imprinted false beliefs and to help her out of this self-created and self-perpetuated vicious cycle.

False Evidence Appearing Real

Many psychologists believe that fear arises out of the fear of unknown. However, I believe that fear arises out of false beliefs.

We fear the dark not because we are afraid of the unknown in the darkness. Rather we fear the dark because our mind concocts imaginary things, believing falsely that those imaginary things or possibilities are real. The more we delve into these false beliefs, the more fearful we become because we then expect them to happen.

Little wonder that many coaches now say fear is "False Evidence Appearing Real". It is in fact more accurate to say they are false perceptions or false beliefs.

Similarly, we fear loss of life, loss of security and loss of our ego because of the false belief that we are NOT divine spiritual beings. Believing that we are this physical body, we then attract the very things and circumstances that proof our beliefs to be true, for the outer world we encounter is a mirror reflection of our inner thoughts. Whatever we believe in becomes our reality. Whatever we focus on manifests itself into our lives.

So, be mindful of what you choose to believe in. After all, whatever your mind conceives and believes it achieves.

If you take a moment to examine your own belief system, you'll find that the situation you are in now is a manifestation of your present belief system.

You fear poverty or not having enough because you believe in scarcity, that there is not enough in this world for everyone. Your mind has been taught that this world's resources are limited and therefore it will become scarce as

time passes. This belief in scarcity attracts the very circumstances that will prove you right in your life. In addition, you will behave and react in manners that reflect this belief.

Thus, the vicious cycle continues.

The only way out of this vicious cycle is to first recognize that we have trapped ourselves in this cycle, and to change our belief system. The moment you change your belief, everything changes.

**“Fear is the absence of love,
Just as darkness is the absence of light.”**

Chapter Six

From Fear to Love

From Fear to Love

A spiritual journey is an inward journey into our mind and heart. The transformation occurs from the inside out. The external things and circumstances in life may stay the same but the changes within will transform your life.

A spiritual journey is a journey from fear to love. It transforms our fear-driven life into one that is driven by unconditional love.

Fear is a "dis-ease" that shows up because we are disconnected from our true Essence. Fear is therefore a spiritual symptom.

Spiritual Symptoms

What do I mean why I say "spiritual symptoms"?

Spiritual symptoms are like physical symptoms. When we notice some dis-ease or discomfort in our body, we mentioned those to our doctor. Our doctor called these complaints relating to our body as physical symptoms.

(To doctors, signs are physical manifestations of our disease that he can see, touch, smell, hear or sometimes even taste with his own physical senses.)

Spiritual symptoms are dis-ease or discomfort relating to our spirituality. They are dis-ease felt or sensed by our "intuition" or "inner being". We feel as if something is not quite right, yet sometimes we cannot recognize, identify or pin-point exactly what is "not right".

The more aware we are of our body, mind and spirit, the easier it is for us to recognize our spiritual symptoms.

Not everyone will accept this concept of spiritual symptoms. If you do not accept that you are a spiritual being, how can you accept the concept of a spiritual symptom? To accept such a concept implies accepting a belief in spirituality as our core Essence.

This body of ours does not contain all of our Essence. This body of ours is a small but significant part of our mind and spirit. It allows us (our mind and spirit) to experience the physical world. Our limited physical body is too small to contain our unlimited mind and spirit.

In our true form, we are divine beings. In our true form, we are God. Through ignorance and constant defilement of our true nature, we forget our divinity. We became attached to our self-created ego, separating our "self" from other selves.

Eventually, we forget that we are divine beings. We forget that we are God. In other words, we are lost in our self.

Spiritual symptoms arise because of this disconnectedness from our divinity. A part of us "remembers" what we are, yet a larger part of us is now stuck in our ego, and the experiences and imprints associated with it. This is our attachment to our self. Because we are not our natural self, we feel the dis-ease, as if to say, "This is not what I really am." But what am I, we often asked ourselves, and thus our perpetual search for God.

Unfortunately, we search for God outwardly. Not surprising we cannot find God, for God is found only by looking inward.

There are a lot of confusions in our search for God. One of the biggest errors is our effort to humanize God, making

God like us instead of the other way round – making us like God.

Thus, we say God favours one type of person over another, or one type of people or race over another, or one type of behaviour over another, or one type of sexuality over another - making God lesser than what God actually is. God is all of creation, all of life. God is all. There is nothing that is not a part of God. To argue that God favours one over another is like saying I favour my hands over my feet, or my eyes over my ears. It makes no sense, yet many actually believe in such thinking, thereby creating conflicts and animosities among beings.

Sadly, wars are fought in the name of God.

We humanize God whenever we give God human characteristics. We make God our judge. We make God favours one over another.

God is all of nature. God is Universal Love. God is impartial. God is all embracing and all inclusive. And these are all the qualities that we are in our true nature. We are God.

Our search for God and our inability to find peace in the process is a spiritual symptom that tells us that we are on the wrong track. We should look inward, not outward. We should "divinize" man, not "humanize" God.

Some Common Spiritual Symptoms

Here are some of the more common spiritual symptoms. Do you recognize any of them?

1. Seeking Love

We seek love externally when we do not realize that we ARE love.

This is due to a failure to recognize the divinity and perfection in our self and that we are Universal Love by nature. Deep within us we have a memory of Love and our search for it is our effort to reclaim that which was lost.

The Love that we are is not the romantic love we glorify in movies. It is much more than that. It is unconditional, all-embracing and peace. It does not judge. It does not blame.

Deep in our heart, this is the ideal love we strive for. It is elusive as long as we seek it outside of ourselves. Seek within and you will find it.

2. Seeking Security

We are taught to believe that we can have security by having enough money, or enough power or enough possessions. This is a false belief impressed upon us by our present society. Eventually, we will realize that this is not true.

No matter how much money or power or possessions we have, we can never be secure.

This is due to the wrong belief that we are our physical body. We seek security for our physical body. We believe that our life ends when the body dies. In actuality, we are larger than our physical body. Our physical body cannot contain all of us. Our mind and divinity is limitless.

The death of our physical body is not the end of us.

We merely change from one form into another form. Once we truly understand AND believe in this, the fear of death will not grip us. We will be able to slowly and progressively reduce the ego's need for security.

The moment we relinquish our need for security, we achieve freedom from insecurity. That is the paradox.

The irony of this is that we need to truly let go of our insecurity in order to have real security. The moment we let go, the Universe will connive to provide for us. To most of us, this requires a lot of faith. You'll never have that amount of faith unless and until you truly believe that you are a spiritual and divine being.

3. Sense of loneliness

We can feel lonely even in the midst of a crowd. We can feel lonely even when we are among friends.

This is a failure to identify with the divinity in us and our connectedness with all beings. The inherent quality of an ego is a sense of separation. How else can it be individualistic and unique?

We will begin to lose this sense of loneliness when we realize that we are all inter-connected and inter-dependent on each other for our existence.

In fact, spiritually, we are ONE. We are of the same source and Essence. When we hurt someone, we are in truth hurting ourselves. It is like having our hand pinched our thigh. The pain comes back to us. We just do not have the wisdom to see it.

4. Stuck in unhealthy concepts and beliefs

We go through life believing in all kinds of things. Some of our beliefs are healthy for our spiritual growth. For example, believing in compassion helps to bring out the divine in us. However, we also have beliefs that are harmful to our spiritual progress.

Here are some common concepts and beliefs that are restrictive and unwholesome, yet we continue to cling on to them:

- a. The concept of duality, such as Good versus Bad, I versus them.
- b. The concept of past, present and future
- c. The belief in self
- d. The belief in death

These are all unskillful views and stem from a failure to recognize the ultimate reality of existence and the oneness in life. They arise out of our experience in this relative reality existence in a physical universe.

This relative universe itself is an illusion, a construct of our collective consciousness.

5. Fear

Of all the spiritual symptoms, perhaps fear is one of the most palpable because we can see and experience it in our very being. The effect is almost always immediate and obvious.

Fear is due to a lack of trust in the Universe and in one's own divinity. Fear arises out of ego. Without ego, there can be no fear. Fear is the primary negative emotion. All other negative emotions arise from it.

Alternatively, we can describe fear as arising out of the absence of unconditional love or out of the lack of belief in our divinity. Thus, we do not believe we directly own our lives. Are we not co-creators?

Fear can paralyze us. In extreme fear, we may freeze our thoughts, words and actions. We feel out of control. We feel numbed and we are unable to think straight.

Here's an illustration:

About a week ago, I had the unpleasant task of telling a patient's mother that her 10-year-old son, her only child, may be having a blood malignancy, perhaps leukaemia.

This boy presented to me with bruises on his body just from scratching. A blood test was done and showed abnormal blood pictures suspicious of leukaemia. I immediately advised his parents to admit him to a hospital for further tests, including a bone marrow aspiration to get a definitive diagnosis.

The parents did admit him to a hospital but refused to give the doctors their permission to do a bone marrow aspiration. When I asked the mother why, she said that they were so frightened of the possible outcome that they dare not face it. They were too overwhelmed by emotions in the hospital. Their son was finally discharged without the bone marrow being done, delaying the diagnosis being made.

Fortunately, they came back to me for further instructions and I was able to persuade them to see another specialist for the bone marrow aspiration to be done.

This is an example of how fear can often cause us to take illogical actions that may further compound our problems.

The antidote for fear is courage.

The moment we recognize fear for what it is, it loses its power over us.

Fear strives in secrecy. It grows in doubts and ignorance. There is a great tendency to avoid fear by not confronting it, which only makes it worse. Many physical, emotional and mental illnesses arise out of fear and worsen the longer we allow it to remain in us.

Whenever we make decisions, it is good to look at what drives us to make these decisions. Are they made out of love, or out of fear? Decisions that are made out of fear tend to perpetuate the fear. Likewise, decisions made out of love create more love in this world.

Healing the Spirit

To rediscover our Divinity, we need to heal ourselves spiritually.

We can do this by first identifying and recognizing our spiritual symptoms. This first step is equivalent to recognizing the illnesses and getting a diagnosis.

Next, we need to find the courage to confront, acknowledge and accept our symptoms. This is an important step. It means giving ourselves the permission to heal ourselves or

giving other spiritual healers the permission to heal us. For some people, this can be a major obstacle because of the ego.

Finally, having pin-pointed the diagnosis and giving permission to heal, we need to initiate treatment. We need to take action in healing ourselves spiritually. These actions can be:

1. embracing our own shortcomings and allowing them expression
2. forgiveness, and
3. letting go

These are some of the main tools that can help bring us closer to our true nature.

Giving Voice to Feelings

It is important that we learn to give voice to our feelings. This is especially important for those of us who have the tendency to keep our feelings to ourselves, bottling them up inside.

When we do that, we are actually resisting our feelings, refusing to allow them full expression. Resistance arises from our ego. Perhaps it is pride or the fear of showing our real self. It could even be the fear of being ridiculed or just a long-forgotten fear – an imprint in our subconscious.

Whatever it is, we must note this tendency and put in the effort to overcome this fear. Giving voice to our feelings is not only healthy but also necessary for our spiritual growth.

The consequences of not giving voice to our feelings could be damaging to our health at every level. Anger and resentment may end up as physical illnesses. The root cause is mental or emotional but finds its expression physically.

Thus, by dealing with the causal level (emotion), we may eliminate or stop its progression to the physical level.

I used to have this tendency of bottling up my feelings. Although I have become more conscious of this negative tendency and have consciously worked to overcome it, it sometimes still escaped my scrutiny.

I noted this when I sent my car to the workshop for service recently.

When the mechanic examined the car and suggested changing some parts of the car, I felt that some of these changes were not necessary but I did not have the courage to enquire and challenge his suggestions, resulting in changes that amount to a very large sum at the end of the day, not to mention the fact that mine was the first car in and the last car out of the workshop. I even had to miss my lunch as he worked through it.

Needless to say, I quietly paid up but I was noticeably upset and angry with myself for my cowardice in not voicing my feelings.

Why didn't I? What was I afraid of? It made no sense to me, yet this has been a repetitive behaviour of mine.

I acknowledge this weakness and is still working to improve myself in this area.

Does this sound familiar to you?

There have been countless similar situations in the past and they have all resulted in dissatisfaction with myself for not giving voice to my feelings. I ended up feeling upset with myself and being taken advantage of by others.

Since working on this problem, I have become more self-assured and satisfied with myself. I am able to voice my feelings calmly and gently, and at the same time make my message loud and clear so that there is no miscommunication. I do it without any accusation but simply clearing up any possible misunderstanding.

Forgiveness

**“Learn to forgive yourself and to forgive others.
Ask for forgiveness from others.
Forgiveness can soften the heart, drain the bitterness,
And dissolve your guilt.”
- Morrie Schwartz**

There are three areas in forgiveness.

We need to forgive those whom have hurt us. We need to ask for forgiveness from those whom we have hurt. Finally, we need to forgive ourselves.

Let's start with ourselves.

A. Forgiving Self

Most of us are too hard on ourselves. We expect to be perfect and we blame ourselves when we did things

that we felt we should not have done or did not do things that we should have done.

Perhaps we should remind ourselves more often that:

“To err is human, to forgive divine”

When we forgive ourselves, we should also make a resolution not to repeat the mistake. Repentance is meaningless if we continue to repeat the mistake.

If we are in a position to make amends, we should try to do so. Making amends may not be easy but do it and you will lessen the guilt you have to carry and the grip of self-blame will loosen its hold.

B. Forgiving Others

Being human, we know only too well the weaknesses we have to live with. Thus, we should be more empathetic towards others whom have hurt us and forgive them too.

I believe we should forgive others who hurt us no matter how painful the hurt is because forgiving the perpetrator benefits us more than the perpetrator. Forgiving is necessary in order for us to heal ourselves and to move on instead of trapping ourselves in the dungeon of bitterness.

When we refuse to forgive, what we've done is to allow the pain to last longer than it should. Thus, the perpetrator may have inflicted the wound but it is us who continue to tear the wound open, not allowing it to heal.

Remember, then that:

Forgiveness is essential for self-healing

C. Seek Forgiveness from Others

Sometimes we ourselves are the cause of pain to others. Perhaps out of anger or lack of mindfulness, we may have done or say things we regretted later. What is done cannot be undone. What is said cannot be retracted. We regretted it.

What can we do about it?

A good place to start is to apologize to the person we have hurt. The sooner we say "sorry", the easier it is on everyone concerned. If we allow substantial time to pass from the time we caused the pain to the time we apologize, it may become increasingly difficult to do so. We may even miss a chance to apologize, as the one we hurt may not be around then.

What do we do when we cannot apologize to the person we hurt, either because that person may not be around anymore or he/she refuses to give us a chance to apologize. If we are in a position to make amends, we should do so. Making amends may not heal the wound completely but it will show that we are indeed sorry for our actions and that we are willing to take responsibility for our mistakes.

Forgiving is essential for spiritual progress. Forgiving heals our emotion, mind and spirit. Remember, therefore, to forgive.

**“Love... if you don't have it, no
matter what else you may have,
it's not enough.”**

- Ann Lander

Chapter Seven

Emotional Healing

Emotional Healing

Our emotion is a very valuable instrument for spiritual growth. It is a barometer that tells us where we are in our spiritual path.

For example, whenever we have a negative emotion, we should dwell further into its real cause. Why do we feel this way? What is the belief that led us to experience this emotion? When we have the courage to explore and dig deep within for answers, we will find them. More often than not, we will discover that the root cause is fear, and that this fear arises because we do not really believe we are spiritual divine beings capable of affecting our own lives.

However, looking deeply inward is not easy, and this is especially so with emotion.

Many people are not aware of their emotion. Most cannot even identify or name their feelings at any even point in time. To be fair, some emotions are just not describable with words but there are many common emotions that many cannot even identify with.

Emotions such as love (romantic love) and anger are easy enough to recognize but most emotions are not as strong and as obvious as these two. So, the first step in emotional healing is to learn to identify and name your emotions.

There are now many programs such as the EQ programs that can teach you more about recognizing and naming your emotions. It would be good to invest in yourself by participating in such courses and programs.

Steps in Emotional Healing

Emotions that are blocked or unresolved create resistance to the natural flow of life from the Universe to our physical body. This resistance results in dis-ease and manifests as mental, emotional and physical illnesses. In addition, this resistance also prevents the flow of love and abundance into your life. In other words, your true nature of unconditional love and wholeness cannot manifest itself to you.

To heal our emotions is therefore a necessary step in spiritual healing.

Emotional healing involves:

1. Identifying and naming the emotion
2. Acknowledging the emotion
3. Forgiving and letting go

These three steps are enough to affect healing. Healing may be expressed through a cathartic process such as an obvious emotional outburst of crying or grieving, or it can be quite subtle and almost non-discernible, or it can be anything in between these two extremes.

Identifying and Naming the Emotion

We have already talked about this earlier. I only want to add that the more you learn to name your emotions, the better you are at recognizing them.

Acknowledging the Emotion

Acknowledging your emotion here means owning your feelings and giving yourself the permission to heal. You can do this by fully embracing the emotion, allowing it full expression until the emotion exhausts its energy, dissipating away into oblivion.

Each of these components is essential:

- Owning your emotion
- Giving self-permission to heal

- Embracing your emotion
- Allow it full expression

In the earlier example given regarding the lady in her 30s who presented with wheezing after a miscarriage, the therapeutic session that I had with her was when she was able to own her emotion of grief and guilt, forgive herself for the miscarriage and finally allowing it full expression through crying. It was only after this session that her physical symptoms 'magically' disappeared.

The same thing happens in any therapeutic interventions through counselling or therapy.

Forgiving and Letting Go

To forgive and let go means to allow things to be, without having to put any "self-perceived" values to the event. It means unconditional acceptance and non-attachment. It comes from a position of grace and faith in the Universe and in your divine Essence. From this position, you reduce the importance of your ego.

Your ego's need to put himself in the centre of the universe is often the reason why you cannot forgive or let go.

Forgiving is a process that takes time. It begins with acknowledging and accepting our feelings and hurt, leads to a change of belief and expectation, and ends with grace.

Self-forgiving is essential to healing. When you choose not to forgive, you are in reality denying yourself a healing that you deserve.

Tools for Emotional Healing

There are many tools that you can use to heal your emotion. These are some of the more common ones around:

1. Counselling
2. Professional therapy
3. Sharing with trusted friend(s)
4. Rituals
5. Re-living the Experience
6. Others

Most of the time, all it takes to get emotional relief is an opportunity to allow our emotion full expression in a safe and non-judgmental environment. That is why organizations such as the Befrienders and the Samaritans are effective. Their volunteers provide non-judgmental and confidential counselling with empathy and compassion.

Alternatively, you can opt for professionally trained counsellors and therapists. These are the psychologists and

psychiatrists. Naturally, they come with their professional consultation fees.

If you have a very close and trusted friend, you can share your personal pain and grievances with him or her. Having a friend you can trust and share your secrets with is a real blessing. Beware, however, of those so-called friends who may take advantage of your vulnerability.

Some people find relief by going through certain culturally accepted rituals such as blessing with holy water, cleansing the body and mind with ritualistic bath, etc. These methods offer a way out for those who believe in them.

Nowadays, there are people who relieve their emotional blocks through re-living a past traumatic experience. This can happen in hypnosis or in past life regression. The cathartic process provides an avenue to release all the pent-up emotion within.

There are, of course, many other methods you can choose to heal your emotion. The above are just a handful of them.

"A person does not have to be behind bars to be a prisoner. People can be prisoners of their own concepts and ideas. They can be slaves to their own selves."

- Maharaji

Chapter Eight

Mental Healing

Mental Healing

Mental healing goes hand in hand with emotional healing.

Emotional healing heals the heart and leads to compassion. Mental healing heals the underlying unskillful belief that is the root cause of all sufferings and diseases. It eventually leads to wisdom.

How do you heal yourself mentally? In fact, what is it about our mind that needs healing? Isn't our mind perfect already?

Yes, it is true that we have a perfect mind, but only if it is not stained by the layers upon layers of mental and emotional imprints that we have accumulated. Through our past experiences and conditionings by society, we have collected a large baggage of beliefs that are both self-defeating and harmful to our spiritual growth.

Therefore, to heal our mind we will need to remove all these negative imprints and replace them with positive, life-enhancing ones that are expansive and all-embracing.

The steps for mental healing involve:

1. Self-awareness
2. Tracing your thoughts backward as far as possible until you find the root cause; this is often an unskillful belief.
3. Realization or insight

Emotional healing by itself is already a powerful and therapeutic process of self-growth and spiritual evolution. When combined with mental healing, this can lead to even more amazing outcome and a permanent change in life.

By changing a single belief, you can change your entire life.

The end result of mental healing is the replacement of negative beliefs with positive, more useful and life-enhancing beliefs. It also leads to the realization of emptiness – the reality that all things and events are empty of any real values except those that we give to them through our own perceptions and past experience.

This in turns leads to the realization of the nature of relative reality in this physical world of phenomena, of the inter-dependent and unity of all things. It leads to the attitude of non-judgment and non-blame.

Tools for Mental Healing

Any method that can increase your self-awareness and leads to identification of unskillful beliefs and insights can be a useful tool for mental healing and spiritual progress.

The one method that I am most familiar with and which I personally favour is meditation, but there are many other ways that you can choose for yourself.

The Option Method

Bruce di Marsico's Option Method is one such method.

Bruce was a psychologist and psychotherapist. His Option Method has been very effective in identifying and changing outdated and unskillful beliefs. Counsellors use this method to help their clients identify their negative beliefs through the use of a series of probing questions.

Bruce believed that all unhappiness arises from self-limiting or self-defeating beliefs. These unskillful beliefs are unconsciously playing in the background, creating an unconscious tendency to "choose" unhappiness over happiness. Due to its unconscious nature, it creates an illusion that we have no choice over how we can react or respond to the situations we encounter in our life.

The aim of the Option Method is to guide or facilitate the client to this self-awareness through a series of questions. This must be done in a non-judgmental way.

The new awareness that our unhappiness is due to our faulty beliefs empowers us with the option to choose happiness over unhappiness.

Bruce di Marsico passed away in 1995, leaving behind a legacy of teachers, trainers and consultants who continue to promote and share his Option Method with others through various trainings and workshops. If you make a search on the Internet using the keyword "option method", you'll find a lot more resources from their websites.

With love: "Behind all feelings are beliefs, unchosen beliefs, which are the only power we have over our lives."

- Russell Ooms

How Our Beliefs Affect Our Behaviour and Feelings

Jennifer Hautman, an Option Method trainer, wrote an article that explains with a simple analogy how our beliefs affect our behaviour and feelings. Here it is. It's called The Hole Mythology:

Imagine you work in an office with ten other people. In the foyer, which you pass through each day, there is 12 x 12-foot area rug. The receptionist warned you the first time you came in the office that there was a big hole in the floor under the rug and to stay clear of it. It was dangerous. You've now been working for this company for 2 years. The rug and hole have become a natural fixture to the office. The people who work there just know to give that area of the building a wide girth. Walking in from lunch you and your co-worker don't miss a beat in your conversation as you walk around the rug. You don't even think about it much anymore.

You've had discussion with other co-workers about why the owner doesn't fix the hole, or at least put up a barrier with signs until it's fixed. There have been theories proposed like the owner doesn't care because he doesn't come in the office, that the business isn't doing well and he can't afford to fix it. Not impeding your work, you accept the hole as a "necessary evil" for working for the company.

Then one day a new employee gets curious and pulls back the carpeting. He wants to see the hole. To his surprise, there is no hole!! He calls to everyone to come and see. As you all are standing around looking at where the hole was supposed to be, you try and figure out why you all believed the hole was there in the first place.

Who started this hole (whole?) mythology?

As it turns out the owner had the hole fixed the weekend following the damage, but didn't inform the employees. "Just like management," one employee says, "they don't tell us anything." You each take a turn tentatively stepping on the floor where there was supposed to be a hole. You laugh as each person tests the area by jumping and dancing on "the hole." It's as solid as a rock. You're surprised and amazed.

After some discussion, you eventually make your way back to work. The next day when you enter the office you start to walk around the rug. You chuckle to yourself thinking "old habits" and turn and walk over the rug to your office.

With each passing day you quickly forget all about the hole and think nothing of where you walk.

Was it difficult to walk on the rug once you saw there was no hole? Did you need to go through years of therapy in order to do so? Did you need to analyse your childhood? Heal any wounds? Release your anger? No, you just walked on it. No big deal. Your actions and experience naturally changed once you knew there was no hole there.

This is how it works with beliefs. Changing what you believe changes your behaviours and feelings. You no longer make a circle around the rug. You no longer warn new people. You no longer look at the rug and think "why doesn't someone do something about that." All because your belief about the hole changed.

It can be that easy.

Our Belief System

This relative reality world that we live in is a hologram. It is a creation of our collective mind. The ancients called this great illusion "maya". There is no intrinsic value in any of the phenomena that we experience and observe EXCEPT the value which WE give to it. This is the nature of emptiness as taught by the mystics.

A belief is merely a perception of this reality.

There is no right or wrong belief since its nature is also empty. However, there are beliefs that will enhance life and lead us to realize our spirituality. There are also beliefs that diminish life and lead us away from realizing our spirituality.

The life-enhancing beliefs are beliefs in unconditional love, compassion, joy, abundance and other similar qualities that are expansive and all-embracing.

The self-defeating, limiting and restrictive beliefs are those that validate and perpetuate our separateness and our fear.

Self-Defeating Beliefs

On any given day, if we are to observe all our thoughts, we can easily jot down a long list of self-defeating beliefs popping out of our mind and influencing our behaviour.

Here are some common ones:

1. I'm not good enough.
2. I don't deserve to be rich.
3. I don't deserve to be loved.

4. I don't want to hope too much. I always get disappointed.
5. I don't deserve to be happy.
6. Being rich is bad. I don't want to be rich.
7. I always fail in whatever I do.
8. Sex is dirty.
9. Money is dirty.

This list is by no mean exhaustive. We can go on and on and still not see an end in sight.

To change our self-defeating and life-limiting beliefs, we need to have a high degree of mindfulness. We need to be aware of our thoughts. As soon as they arise, we can check ourselves and ask these three questions:

1. Why do I believe that?
2. What might happen if I did not believe that?
3. Is that true?

In the beginning when we learn to probe and challenge our beliefs, we may encounter some resistance. This is expected since we will be breaking out of our comfort zones and going into unfamiliar territories. The more we do this, the easier it becomes. Like everything else, this takes discipline and persistency but the reward is worth the effort.

Meditation

Meditation is a practice that requires discipline. It is a training of the mind. When we meditate, we focus on a single object until our mind becomes calm and quiet. It becomes still and stays still for as long as we wish.

The fruit of meditation is mindfulness, concentration and peace. It gives rise to great spiritual insights.

I prefer to meditate in the morning, before anyone else in the family wakes up, so that I can sit quietly throughout my meditation session. Occasionally, I meditate at night, just before I go to sleep.

The time you choose for your meditation practice will largely depend on your schedule. Whatever it may be, I strongly urge you to put aside some time for daily meditation. Quieting your mind can accomplish much more than you can ever imagine.

There are many ways to meditate and many objects you can choose to focus on. I suggest that you choose one method you find comfortable practicing and stick to it until you have mastered it. If you jump from one type of meditation to another every so often, you're likely to be the proverbial rolling stone that gathers no moss.

In my own meditation practice, I aim to purify my physical, emotional, mental and spiritual bodies.

Purifying the Body

To purify the body, visualize a bright warm healing light at the crown chakra. See it glowing and growing as it courses itself through the entire body, beginning from the crown chakra, into the head, the brain and moving downward to the neck, shoulder, arms, forearms, hands and all the way to the finger tips.

It then moves down into the chest, filling the two lungs and the heart with bright healing light as it moves through the

diaphragm into the abdominal organs. In the abdomen, it fills up the liver, the pancreas, the spleen, the kidneys and the adrenals, the intestinal system and the sexual organs. Finally, it moves to the buttocks, thighs, legs, feet and the toes all the way to the tips of the toes.

As it courses through the entire body, see the light entering each and every single cell, healing it, filling it with glowing bright light and energy, displacing all negative imprints with unconditional love, restoring the cell to its original healthy condition.

At the end of this, see yourself completely immersed in a cocoon of bright healing light that glows all around the body.

Purifying the Heart

The heart represents the emotional body.

To purify your emotional body, start by gathering all negative emotions such as anger, resentment, frustration, guilt, fear and doubt and clumping them together into a ball right in front of your heart. Then, see this ball of negativity disintegrates as it bursts into a million tiny pieces and dissolves into nothingness. In its place, see pure unconditional love and bright healing energy filling up the vacuum it left behind as the loving energy that envelops your physical body earlier flows into the heart area. Allow this healing energy of unconditional love to heal the heart.

Purifying the Mind

To purify the mind, just focus on a single object of meditation.

The form of meditation can either be loving-kindness meditation, breathing meditation or insight meditation. However, it is best to choose one and stick to it throughout your practice. In this case, let us choose to focus on the breathing.

The purpose of training the mind to focus on a single object is to achieve concentration. That is to say, train the mind not to waver so that it does not jump from one thought to another randomly as is the case in normal circumstances. Concentration is necessary to experience insight, knowing and wisdom. To experience these, the concentration must be achieved to a level where one can get into the concentration at will, stay there for as long as one desires and come out at will. This is the level of absorbed concentration. At this level, the mind is still, and in that stillness or silence is our true Essence.

Purifying the Spirit

When you work on purifying your body, emotion and mind, you automatically purify your spirit as well. When all the layers of negative imprints are removed, all that is left is the Essence.

Resonance

In one of my meditation sittings, as I was getting up, I realized that my left leg was numbed. As soon as I thought of this, I was reminded of one of my meditation teachers who used to suffer from a pain in his legs.

This is an example of resonance, of how the mind works. As it thinks of one thing, it attracts a similar thought or situation to itself. The psychologist called this characteristic of the mind "association".

This principle of Sympathetic Resonance is what we call "like attracts like", and explains the ancient teaching of "as within, so without". Whatever mental imprints we have in our mind attracts the same thoughts and circumstances to our physical reality, into our life. Thus, it is true that we create our world. We are God. We are the Creator of our life. The world we live in is the sum total of our own creation.

However, there is a big difference between conscious creation and unconscious creation. What most of us experienced is unconscious creation of our reality. That happens because we are not in control of our mind. Our mind moves randomly, like an untamed horse. So, in order to have a greater control over our live, we must learn to control our mind. In fact, the degree of control we have over our live is proportionate to the degree of control we have over our mind.

Thus, we see the importance of meditation.

When we have mastered our mind, we shall be in complete control over our existence. We become conscious creators, totally awaken beings.

Peace and Tranquillity

Meditation calms the mind. In this calmness, one experiences peace. Abiding in peace and tranquillity – in our Essence - we can respond to all situations with:

Unconditional Love towards all beings
Great Compassion for the sufferings
Altruistic Joy for the Successful
Equanimity at all time

We respond in such a manner because we know:

"We are all One.

You are Me in a different manifestation.

Therefore, when you suffer, I suffer.

When you are happy, I am happy too.

That is the essence of Unconditional Love, Great Compassion and Altruistic Joy."

Abiding in such calmness, we can live a life in which thoughts, decisions and actions are predominantly driven by unconditional love. This is the essence of a love-driven life, as opposed to one driven by fear.

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

- William James

Chapter Nine

Living from the Essence

Living from the Essence

Making the decision to live a spiritual life is not an earth-shaking experience. Nothing external would have changed very much just because you decided to live your life based on spiritual principles.

Do not imagine any magical transformation to occur overnight.

More likely, you'll see your life being transformed slowly and gradually as you continue and persist in your practice. In the beginning, these changes may not even be perceptible to you. So don't expect life to suddenly turn rosy and blissful for you.

On the contrary, you may actually encounter some upheavals from within as all your negative mental and emotional habits and tendencies tried their utmost best to preserve the status quo. They are not going to go without a fight. You'll find a lot of resistance in you, and these may manifest themselves as doubts, fear and inertia. Remember, though, that whatever you resist will persist.

So, it is worthwhile knowing more about these likely obstacles in your spiritual progress.

Doubt

Doubt arises when we do not believe in the truth of what is taught by the ancient sages and mystics. One of the problems with doubt is that we normally require proof of the validity of the teachings. Yet the problem with this particular

stance is that “the proof of the pie is in the eating”. If you do not eat it, no amount of description about the pie by another will give you the taste of the pie.

In order to know this path, you must walk the path. Only then can you experience the truth of the teachings.

Even so, for those who require proof, there are ample examples of those who have walked the path and enjoyed its fruits. All the ancient sages knew and taught this truth. Deep down inside, even we ourselves know this to be true.

That is why we highly respect their great achievements. But it is a greatness we ourselves can achieve as well. We just need to walk this less travelled but proven path.

The antidote for doubt is **faith** – faith in the teachings and achievements of all the great ancient sages and mystics, faith in the universality of their teachings and faith in our own divinity. And why should we not have such faith? After all, there are many examples of people who choose to follow this path and each of them has been able to achieve the joy and happiness that is seek.

Fear

Fear is a characteristic of our ego. Our ego has a great need to preserve its own existence. In fact, our ego is the proverbial devil that cunningly blinds us to our real divine nature.

Fear arises because in walking this path, we will eventually eliminate our ego. The destination of this path is the death

of the ego. Our ego knows this and so it works to preserve its own existence by sowing doubt and fear in our mind. This results in inertia or a resistance to change.

When we resist, our present form persists. Thus, our ego remains intact. It saves itself.

The antidote for fear is **courage** – the **courage to accept** that we are indeed divine beings and that we have the capacity to love unconditionally, even ourselves, or rather especially ourselves. Many of us feel that we do not deserve love and so shut ourselves off from this unconditional love that we would so easily give to others. Yet without unconditionally loving ourselves, we cannot give true unconditional love to others.

Thus, we need the **courage to believe** what we know to be true and the **courage to do** what we know we must do in order to achieve the best that we can achieve for ourselves.

Inertia

Inertia or inaction is the result of doubt, fear and laziness. We have this inert tendency to stay as we are, instead of exerting effort for change.

This is the inertia inherent in all things, the resistance to change. We prefer our familiar comfort zone, even when we are not happy in it.

We need to overcome our doubt and fear, and then put in the effort to change – to overcome our inertia. The struggle is similar to pushing a big heavy boulder down a slope.

In the beginning, the resistance is great. It is at its maximum. We need to put in extra effort to move it. However, once it has begun to move, we only need to exert minimal force to keep it moving and soon it will be rolling down the slope on its own. As it rolls down, it will in fact gather more momentum to continue moving forward.

The same is true with our spiritual practice.

The antidote for inaction is therefore **effort**.

One Small Bite at a time

I remembered when I first started to live a spiritual life, just thinking about making that commitment was a frightening prospect. There were thousands and one reasons why I do not have to put myself through it.

I'm married.

I have a wife and three children to care for.

I need to focus on providing for them.

I'm already living a good life.

I am doing my part for society by being a doctor.

It's not going to work out.

Yet, when I looked at all these excuses, they're all created by my doubts, fear and laziness. There is an inner resistance to change, to move out of my comfort zones.

Of course, I can stay the way I was but then I'll never ever get to know what is the highest that I could achieve. I would only be short-changing myself.

At times, the whole journey seems like such a giant challenge and you just don't know where to start, and how to move forward. If you allow yourself to be awed by the "bigness" of the challenge, you'll never start.

You've heard of the saying, "The way to eat an elephant is by taking one small bite at a time."

That's the best way to approach any seemingly huge project – one small bite at a time. If you do so consistently, eventually you'll complete it. Break it down into small sizes that you can manage, and do them one at a time. Then the tasks ahead would not seem so formidable.

Focus

Focus is such an important keyword in our daily life.

You'll find that whatever you focus your mind on you're very likely to get it. You've probably heard of these sayings:

Like attracts like
As above, so below; as within, so without

What they mean is that we attract into our lives whatever our mind focuses on most of the time. If we focus on the negative, we are likely to experience the negative in our lives. If we believe in scarcity, do not be surprised that we are presently living a life of constant struggle and lack.

Consider once again these definitions of faith and fear:

Faith is believing that whatever you cannot see will come to pass.

Fear is believing that whatever you cannot see will come to pass.

And these definitions of hope and despair:

Hope is expecting what is **desirable** will happen.

Despair is expecting what is **undesirable** will happen.

I love these definitions by Christopher Westra, the author of "I Create Reality" because they very clearly showed us that the difference is in what we choose to focus on.

Someone once asked Chris this question: "How do I get rid of my constant anxieties and worries, and live a peaceful life?"

His answer to him was: "Do not focus on the anxieties and worries. Focus only on living a peaceful life. Just by doing so, your anxieties and worries will slowly melt away."

What a powerful insight! The solution is simple, yet effective!

For most of us, our subconscious mind constantly focuses on the negative without us realizing it. We see it in the words we use when we talk - "don't do this, don't try that, it can't be done, etc".

When you focus on what you don't want, your subconscious mind will see exactly what you don't want to see, and cause it to manifest in your life. Your subconscious mind cannot see the "don't".

For example, when you are asked not to think of a yellow rose, the image that comes up in your mind IS a yellow rose.

So, instead of focusing on what you don't want, focus only on what you want. That way, you'll attract exactly what you want in life.

Living in the Present Moment

Anxieties and worries are the results of focusing on the undesirable things that may happen in the future. Regrets, shame and guilt are the results of focusing on the undesirable things that have happened in the past. Either way, we are not focusing on what is in the present moment.

What is past cannot be undone. What is in the future has not happened yet. The only power we really have is in the present moment – in the "now".

So, train your mind to focus on the present moment. When we face the present with mindfulness, the experience is fuller and more satisfying and we are able to make the most out of the situation. This is called conscious living.

I was once asked these three questions:

1. When is the most important time?
2. Who is the most important person?
3. What is the most important thing?

The answers are:

1. Now is the most important time.
2. The person you're dealing with now is the most important person.
3. Caring is the most important thing.

I've remembered this because it forms an important basis in all our dealings with people. It is the key to cultivating healthy relationships. Every time we deal with someone, make sure we give him or her our fullest attention and care. If we do this consistently, all our relationships will turn out right.

This mantra is especially useful to me as a doctor. By practicing this on each and every patient who walked into my consultation room, I am able to raise the quality of my care and give him or her the attention that is required. I see the improvement to my practice from the feedbacks my patients gave me.

I therefore urge you to do the same for your relationships and business.

Slowing Down

The easiest way to live in the present moment is by slowing down our lives. More often than not, we packed our days with a long list of activities that we want to accomplish. The more activities we crammed into the day, the faster we have to finish them. This will agitate our mind and make it jump easily from one subject to another.

By reducing the number of activities we need to accomplish in a day, we can spend more time on each activity, giving it the attention that it deserves. We will not feel the need to rush and the mind will automatically slow down. It won't get agitated easily. It can be more focused and the experience will be more enriching.

When we do things in a rush, it's like seeing the world in a moving train. Everything outside the window seems to pass

by in a blur. When we slow down, it's like taking a walk in the countryside. We feel more connected to the experience as all our senses are able to experience the sight, sound, smell, taste and touch in full.

Equanimity

Every one of us chases after happiness and joy.

There is nothing wrong with that except that we must not forget that even happiness is not permanent. It will have its moment and then it will be gone. If we get too attached to happiness, we'll inevitably suffer as well.

Everything is ever changing. Nothing remains as it is forever.

Therefore, we must realize that happiness itself is a refined form of suffering. I am not saying here that we should reject happiness. Rather, we should learn to live in the present moment, enjoy it while it is here, and let it go when it is gone. There is no need to cling to it and continue to long for its return.

The following story illustrates the impermanence of life:

A long time ago, there lived an old man and his young son in a farm. The old man had a horse which helped him to work his land.

One day, the horse escaped from his barn. When the neighbors heard about it, they came by to console him.

"Oh, you poor man. Now you'll have to work your land with your bare hands. We're so sorry for you."

The old man calmly replied, "Maybe so."

A few days later, the horse came back and brought with him several wild horses. The old man was able to round them up and kept them in a corral.

When the neighbours heard about this, they came by to congratulate him.

"Oh, how lucky you are. Not only did your horse come back, he brought new horses for you as well."

The old man calmly replied, "Maybe so."

The old man's son decided he will try to break one of the wild horses. While trying to ride it, he fell and broke a leg.

Once again, his neighbours came by and said, "Oh, we're so sad to learn that your son has fallen off a horse and broke his leg."

The old man calmly replied, "Maybe so."

A week later, the King of the land declared war on a neighbouring kingdom. He sent his soldiers to recruit all young men into his army.

When the soldiers came to the old man's farm, they found out that his son had a fractured leg and so he was not recruited.

Again, his neighbours came by and said, "Old man, you're so lucky that your son need not fight in the war."

Once again, the old man calmly replied, "Maybe so."

Equanimity is being able to remain calm and compose in every situation. This is not an easy task to do but one we need to achieve if we are to find peace.

Spiritual Realizations

When I first started with my spiritual experiment, I began with several assumptions about the nature of our spirituality. As I continue to practice living my life based on these spiritual principles, what started out as assumptions slowly became realizations.

These are my spiritual realizations:

1. I am a spiritual being manifesting in a physical body to experience this physical reality.
2. My task here is to rediscover my divinity through self-awakening (self-experiencing), thus allowing my divine purpose to unfold creatively and without resistance.
3. My intuition is my divinity or higher-self communicating with me. I learn to listen to it and trust it. Its voice is still and small, drowned by all the other voices in my conscious mind such as the logical mind, my parents, teachers, friends, colleagues, society, institutions, religions, etc. I learn to recognize it by its quality. It is non-judgmental and unemotional.
4. My divinity or higher-self is pure, unconditional love. In fact, the term higher-self is a misnomer, since in its

purest form our divinity is without a self. It is one with all.

5. My ego is the source of resistance. Stripped of this ego, pure unconditional love flows right through without any impediment.

What started out as something I believed in became something I "know". It is therefore true what Wayne Dyer said – "Believe it and you'll see it."

Whatever it is you choose to believe in will come true for you. So be very careful what you choose to believe in.

Living from the Essence

Living from the Essence means living from the greater awareness of our true Essence.

At this level of awareness, we know that we are greater than just our physical body. We know that our mind is limitless, our consciousness is omnipresent and our true nature is complete. We lack nothing. We know we are a co-creator of our life and the world we live in. We know that every being is a manifestation of the same Essence.

Therefore, we are ONE.

When we realize this, we drop our tendency to judge and blame, to be critical and self-serving. Instead, we embrace unconditional love and compassion, and learn forgiveness, acceptance and letting go. We rejoice in the happiness of others for we know their joy is ours as well. We have compassion for the sufferings of others for their pain is ours too.

Living from the Essence does not mean we have perfected ourselves. We continue to improve ourselves day to day with increased self-awareness, contemplation and letting go. We acquire more faith in what we believe as we see our beliefs turning into realities.

As we continue to practice and live according to our spiritual Essence, our fear and doubts diminish, our faith grows and our ability to influence our realities increases. Each day brings us closer to mastering our destiny, to realizing our power of creation and to manifesting whatever we desire into our lives.

As we refine our ability to let go, we bring ourselves closer to a state of equanimity, a state of peace and tranquility.

Eventually, we would have completed our journey from fear to love.

“It is not how much you do, but how much love you put into the doing that matters.”

- Mother Teresa

Chapter Ten
My Personal Journey
from Fear to Love

My Personal Journey from Fear to Love

Early Years of Fear

Some people find it difficult to share their fear. They cannot talk about it and even take the effort to hide it from view. I was like that too.... once. That was why most people who knew me did not really know my fear. I hid it well.

I am happy to say that today I am a very different person from who I used to be. From the outside, I still look very much the same but deep down inside I am no longer the guy with the hidden struggle to overcome his fear. Fear is an energy sapping emotion. It completely drains you, making you tired and withdrawn from the many beauties that life can offer.

I remembered clearly one incident in my childhood that anchored a fear in me - one that took me years to overcome, but overcame it I did eventually.

I was about 6 years old and there was a racial riot in the city where I lived. The government imposed an emergency curfew and the soldiers were sent out to prevent rampage, killings and the destruction of properties.

Being young and naive, I did not know the danger we were in at the time. When I overheard my mom talking to a neighbour that there were soldiers in our neighbourhood, I was curious to take a look at them for I have never seen a soldier in uniform before at the tender age of 6. So that day about noon, when I heard the sound of a jeep nearby, I quickly ran out of my house onto the middle of the road. I wanted to take a look at the soldiers. Little did I know what

was in store for me.

As I stood in the middle of the empty road in front of my house, I saw an army jeep approaching with two soldiers inside. One was driving it. The other was standing at the back of the jeep, holding on to a machine gun. He was looking in a different direction. However, when my mom saw me running out, she panicked and screamed for me to get back into the house. The scream and commotion alerted the soldier with the machine gun and he instinctively turned around pointing his gun right at me. I was so shocked by it.

My mom ran out of the house and quickly grabbed me and pulled me back into my house. I could feel fear in my body.

When I reflected on the incident as an adult, I realized that it was at that moment that fear was anchored into me and I associated my fear with the soldier in uniform. Ever since that incident, I became fearful each time I see anyone in uniform or in a position of authority. I was particularly fearful of policemen in uniform. The fear became so bad that each time I saw a policeman patrolling on the road, I would walk in the other direction, like a criminal trying to evade the law.

Even in schools, I got into troubles with the principal because I simply froze in front of him. I could not respond to him as a normal student could. Naturally, the principal did not know about my fear and I was not able to even talk about it.

Fortunately, I was a good student getting good grades in school, so I did not have to face the principal too often. On the whole, school life went pretty well for me.

At the end of my secondary school year, I was awarded a one-year scholarship to be an exchange student under the American Field Service program. I stayed for a full year with

a wonderful American family in Virginia, attending the senior high school there as a senior. As a foreign exchange student, I was frequently invited to give talks about my country, culture and lifestyle. This was where I discovered my second fear - the fear of public speaking.

There was one incident where I was invited to a high school gathering together with other foreign exchange students in the neighbouring areas. As they introduced us to the gathering high school students, one of the emcees suddenly invited me up the stage to talk about myself. What I could recall about that event was that I went up to the stage, stood silently for what seemed like eternity and then the emcee had to rescued me from the highly embarrassing situation by diverting the attention of the audience to something else.

Knowing that most people are afraid of public speaking is no consolation.

Do the Things You Fear

One good thing that came out of that experience was that I made a promise to myself to never be caught in the same predicament again. That eventually led to me enrolling myself into a public speaking course when I was in the university. Today I am able to give speeches in public as and when required, even giving impromptu speeches at times. To be frank, I still feel a little bit of the butterflies in the stomach but they are now much more manageable.

How did I overcome these two fears?

I overcame them by following this advice:

"Do the things you fear and the death of fear is certain"

In the first case, I overcame my fear of people in uniform and in authority in general, and policemen in particular, by actually forcing myself to do what I fear most. Each time I see a policeman, instead of following my instinct to walk in the opposite direction, I forced myself to walk normally towards him and then passed him. Doing this repeatedly eventually led to diminished sense of fear and impending doom that I used to feel before. In addition, I started to enjoy the liberating feeling of relief each time I succeeded in overcoming my fear. Today, I can walk into a police station without any abnormal fear and anxiety.

I used this same method to overcome my fear of public speaking. By enrolling myself in a public speaking course, I basically forced myself to talk first in front of the course participants and eventually in front of an audience. This was a weekly course that ran for 6 months. Every participant has to talk in front of the other participants in each session, so you can imagine that I had a lot of practice.

Eventually, through the many times of speaking in a controlled environment, I became desensitized to the fear of public speaking. As the butterflies and anxiety subsided, I actually began to enjoy it. One thing I learned from this course was the five P's - Prior preparation prevents poor performance. When you are well prepared for your talk, your self-confidence grows and you are able to deliver the speech better.

Although these are two examples of fear in my life, they are by no means the only fears I have. However, it was these two fears that propelled me into improving myself. I began to thirst for knowledge and information that could help me to transform my life for the better. I laid my hands on just about any self-help books available in the market, and in

those days there were not many.

From my reading, I soon learned more and more about fear, its nature and the root cause. That led me to learn as much as I can about the working of the mind, and its effects on the emotions. Eventually I realized that we are more than just this physical body. We are mind-being. Our thoughts influence how we feel and act. It is the forerunner of all our emotional and physical states. Today, science has accepted this as fact but in the 80s and 90s, not many scientists and doctors knew this. We were not taught this in medical school.

Our mind is so powerful yet most of us do not really know it and understand how it works. So, by default, we let it run wild and are therefore slaves to it. On the other hand, if we are able to master our mind, we become the master of our own destiny. We become godlike as we redefine and recreate our own lives.

The Power of Beliefs

One of the things that I realized was that our underlying beliefs dictate how we perceive and experience ideas, things and events. Yet a belief itself is nothing more than a perception of reality. There is no right or wrong belief. As far as you are concerned, once you believe in something, that belief is the right belief and you will experience life according to that belief. Thus, instead of fighting for our beliefs and arguing about whether this belief is right or wrong, it is much more beneficial to see whether a certain belief that we hold is going to enhance our life and experience or going to limit it. Is that belief that we are holding going to enrich our life? Or is it restricting and constricting it? Is it going to add

more love, compassion and joy or is it adding more fear and miseries?

The more I learn about how mind works, the more I realized that we cannot separate mind from spirituality. As you cultivate your mind, you grow spiritually. That is why I call this process of personal transformation a spiritual journey – a journey that takes me from where I was before to this new perspective of the universe and life. Reality, seen from this new perspective, is very different from how we normally view our world.

Do you remember at the beginning of this book I mentioned that I started my life experiment in September 2004 based on the beliefs below?

1. We are spiritual beings.
2. Our spiritual nature is perfect. It has been described by the mystics in many ways, such as a state of enlightenment, unconditioned, luminous, unconditional love, unborn, God, Nibbana.
3. In this natural state, we are free from fear, doubt, insecurity, needs or wants. We lack nothing. In fact, this nature is complete and all-embracing.
4. We are now unable to experience this pure state because of the imprints, defilements, unskillful habits and patterns of thoughts that we've accumulated over and over again. These imprints or defilements lead to tendencies that obstruct our awareness of our true nature. Diseases and illnesses, whether physical, emotional or mental, is a reflection of the disruption to our natural state.

5. To heal ourselves, we must realize our true nature. To re-experience our natural state, we must purify ourselves through removing all our defilements in thoughts, words and actions. The more we purify, the more we can re-experience our true nature.

Well, at this point in my life, I realized that these beliefs which I set out with in my life's experiment earlier were really life enhancing. They have led me to live a fuller and more enjoyable life, and allow my love and wisdom to grow.

I can imagine that if I had allowed my life to be based on fear-based beliefs, it would have turned out very differently now. This is why I urge you to be mindful and be very careful what you choose to believe in.

The best advice I can give you is to cultivate your mind. Learn how it works. Understand it thoroughly. Master it. Then, you will have nothing to fear.

Mental Cultivation

From the Buddha's teachings more than 2,500 years ago to the modern self-help gurus and psychological teachers, it is pointed out to us that all our feelings and actions are preceded by thoughts. Even in quantum physics today, many scientists are aware of the *observer's effect* where the state of mind of the observer actually influences the outcome or behaviour of a quantum particle.

It is clear to us now that thought gives rise to feeling, which moves us to act, as is shown in the sequence below:

Thought  Feeling --> Action

However, in our daily living, we are barely able to note or be aware of the thought that precedes our feeling. The movement from first event (thinking) to the next event (feeling) is so fast that for most of us it is as good as an automatic response. Indeed, it is precisely because we are unaware of this sequence of events operating within us that we are led to believe that life is fated or that difficult situations we are caught in are impossible to change. This conclusion is untrue but unfortunately most people are unaware of this error in their thinking, thus perpetuating the vicious cycle in life best described by Henry David Thoreau when he said, "the mass of men lived lives of quiet desperation".

Once we are aware of this error, we begin to have an option which we were unaware of before. We begin to realize that if we can master our thoughts, we can determine our emotional states and thus our actions and behaviour as well.

We now begin to realize the importance of mental cultivation to sharpen our mind to the point where we can be constantly mindful or aware of our thoughts. In my experience, meditation is one of the best methods to sharpen our mindfulness. Thus, this motivates us to practice meditation diligently.

As our meditation practice becomes more constant and our focus becomes better, our mindfulness gradually increases. We then reached a point where we realized for ourselves how our heightened sense of self-awareness or increased mindfulness now afford us more options and control over our lives than we were previously led to believe. This is because the more we are aware of our thoughts, the faster we can choose to abort negative thoughts that are arising or has arisen. When this happens, the negative emotions that would normally follow the negative thoughts are nipped in

the bud and they do not arise, leaving us with a peaceful or undisturbed mental state.

So, how then can we incorporate this important information into our daily lives?

The answer is mental cultivation. The goal of our mental cultivation is to sharpen our mindfulness so that we can be fully aware of the thoughts that precede our feelings and actions.

Let me share with you how we can do this.

Mindfulness of Feelings

1. Watching your feelings

We can begin by watching our feelings, especially the negative emotions since they are the ones that trouble us. For many of us, this first step in itself is a challenge. Most people are sorely unaware of their own emotions. Even when they are aware, many find it difficult to name or describe their emotions clearly. The good news is that with repeated practice, this process of identifying and naming the emotions become easier.

2. Catch the thought that precedes it

This step requires a certain level of mindfulness and honesty. Why honesty? This is because very often we are fearful to face up to our own thoughts. Only when we are truly honest with ourselves can we find the courage to face our thoughts and attempt step 3.

3. Examine that thought for its truthfulness

By this, I mean we compare our thought with things as they really are. We measure our thought against reality and see if it still holds true. Inevitably, we will discover for ourselves that what we initially hold to be true in our thoughts are nothing more than assumptions, beliefs and concepts that are ultimately seen as not true.

It is here that I find the Buddha's teachings and the work of Byron Katie and Michael Ryce to be really helpful. Byron Katie introduced a simple process of examining and challenging our thoughts for its truthfulness, eventually revealing what we initially thought of as true to be untrue. Michael Ryce's work is similar although his approach is slightly different. Both are valid and effective methods of discovering things as they really are.

Mindfulness of Actions

We can apply the same method to our actions.

1. Watch your action

The actions that you would want to watch for early in your practice are those that were reactions from negative emotions. In this way, you can trace back and see the emotion that moves you into action and the thought that precedes that emotion. However, as your practice progresses, you would also want to watch your good actions and examine their intentions.

2. Catch the motivation (thought) that precedes the action

Psychologists believe that our actions and behaviours are motivated by our needs and desires. So here we want to

be able to catch the motivation that moves us into action. What was the need or desire that we were trying to fulfill in that action?

Needs are things we require in order to live, such as food, air, clothing, shelter and medicine. Desires are things we want to have but can do without. We won't die if we do not get them.

3. Examine that motivation (thought) for its truthfulness or pureness of intention

Once we are able to identify our motivation, we want to look deeply into it. When we examine it with great honesty, we very often discover for ourselves that many of our motivations which we initially regard as coming from pure intentions are actually subtle manoeuvres by our ego or self to fulfill its own selfish needs or desires.

In addition, when we examine those needs or desires, we realize that many of those which we initially classified as our needs are nothing more than strong intense desires or wanting, and that we can actually do without or let go.

When we do not see all these things clearly as they really are, we could not even see the options or choices available to us, let alone think of letting them go. With increased mindfulness and clearer understanding, letting go becomes automatically easier.

Here too, I find two other methods helpful in making the process of letting go easier. One is Lester Levenson's release technique and the other is the Hawaiian system of healing called ho'oponopono.

If you are observant, you will find in the above two methods of cultivating mindfulness in our daily lives to be in

accordance with the Four Foundations of Mindfulness that we discussed earlier, that is, mindfulness of the body (actions), mindfulness of feelings, mindfulness of our thoughts and mindfulness of things as they really are, free from our own delusional assumptions, beliefs and concepts.

Mind training in this way is very much like physical training. In the beginning of the training, it will feel like a chore. We will need to discipline ourselves and put in the effort to do it. It feels unusual and abnormal part of our lives. As the training progresses, this becomes easier and eventually we will reach a stage where not doing the training will seem abnormal and unusual. By then, we will know that we have habituated it and it has now become an integral part of our lives.

Finally, here's how I can sum up what I have learned about fear.

Fear is Optional

1. Fear is optional.

While fear may be quite real in our lives, there is a state that is free from fear and it is possible to achieve it. Since there are two possible states – one with fear and one without it – we have a choice but this choice is only available to us when we have the wisdom and insight to see it.

2. Fear is mental.

While pain may be unavoidable in our physical body, we do have a choice not to be fearful of it. As a doctor, I have seen patients who experience similar bodily pain, yet one may suffer more than the other. The one who suffers more is the

one whose mind is totally absorbed in the pain, creating stories around it and embellishing it with all kinds of fear.

3. Fear is an error in thinking.

It arises out of a wrong view, belief, perception or thought. When our thought departs from reality (from *what is*) or when we want things to be other than *what is*, then we become fearful.

4. Resisting reality is futile.

No matter how hard we try to resist reality or want things to be other than *what is*, we will fail and suffer for it. The more we resist, the more we suffer as we are going against the flow of *what is*.

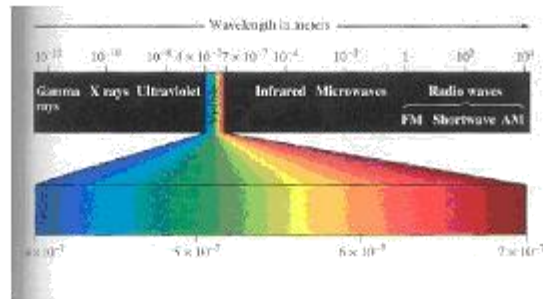
5. We resist out of ignorance.

We believe the story we have created around our experience. We do not realize that our views are wrong. In truth, no belief is true. No perception is real.

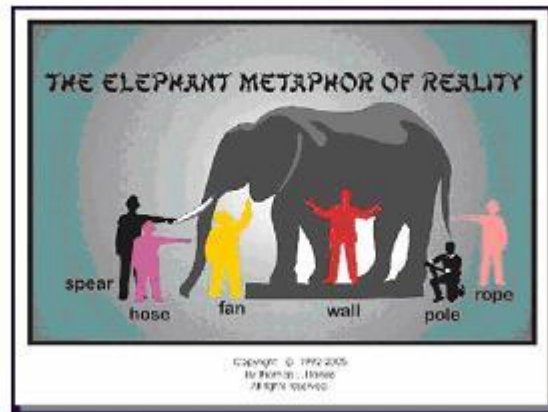
6. A belief is merely a perception of reality.

We must realize that our perception has severe limitations. There are at least 3 ways our perceptions are limited.

a. We are first limited by the limitations of our sense organs. We can see light only between a specific range of wavelengths but unable to perceive those beyond this range. Further, our eye structure allows us to see an image that is different from the compound eyes of a fly. Our other sense organs are similarly limited.



b. Secondly, we are limited by our perspective. We can see things only from a specific point of reference, very much like the story of the blind men and the elephant.



c. Lastly, we see things through our own filters. These filters are our mental prejudices, concepts, assumptions, beliefs, experiences and ideas. It is like a camera catching a shot through a certain filter, changing its original colour.



With so many limitations to our perceptions, how can we be absolutely sure that our perception is true? Is it not more likely wrong?

7. We are deceived by our thinking mind.

Our thinking mind is coloured by our ego or self. It's rich with its own experiences, assumptions, beliefs, concepts, desires and expectations. Ultimately, our thinking mind itself is limiting our life experience. It locks us into a self-created reality, a world of our own creation – an illusion of reality.

8. We can live intuitively beyond the ego-mind.

Beyond this thinking mind is another that serves us intuitively. It has the ability to dip into the all-knowing, all-pervading universal mind. It is free from judgment and prejudices, and is therefore free from error.

9. There is no fear in this mind.

Living like the lotus is then possible – to be in this world but not of this world. We can then live in this physical mundane world and still not be afflicted by it.

Where you find fear, there you will find a wrong belief.

Appendixes

Tools to remove Fear

Understanding Fear

Let me share with you how I have come to understand fear. Fear is mental. Fear is a state of mind that comes with holding on to a particular thought or belief.

All fears can be traced back to a thought or belief.

Here's how we become fearful:

1. We encounter someone or experience something.
2. We hold a thought or a belief about that person or experience.
3. The thought or belief is incongruent with reality.
4. We deny (not accept) that reality and thus we become fearful.

For example, as a parent I often find myself wanting my children to be better – better in their studies, better behaved, better manners, etc. I also notice that I get very stressed up when their behaviour do not match up to my expectations.

When I recognized that I am feeling stressed, and I looked at the source of my stress, I realized that it arises from a thought I hold in my mind – a belief that my kids should behave in a certain way.

The stress arises when their behaviour is incongruent or do not match that expectation.

The moment I drop my hold on that thought or expectation, I am free from the stress. It is exactly like the analogy of holding on to a burnt charcoal in your hand. Just open your hand and it drops off on its own.

Pain gone! Suffering stopped!

Stop grasping on to your thoughts, beliefs, perceptions, concepts and ideas and you will stop your fears

Acceptance and Letting Go

Spiritual teachers talk a lot about acceptance and letting go. When someone encounters an unpleasant experience, we readily offer the advice to accept and let go but how exactly do we do that?

What is it that we are asked to accept? And what are we letting go of?

Often, we tried to *force* ourselves to accept the circumstances but that only makes it worse because then we feel that it is incongruent with our feelings. We end up feeling like a hypocrite, being unauthentic with our true emotions.

Working through a proper process of examining and tracing our thoughts (such as using the structured tool introduced by Byron Katie), we can see that what we need to accept is the *what is*. *What is* is the reality as it is, without it being plastered over by our perceptions, beliefs, prejudices, concepts and ideas.

And what we need to let go is the clinging or grasping to our perceptions, beliefs, prejudices, concepts and ideas. We need to let go of our thoughts.

Byron Katie's tool provides us with a simple, do-able and reproducible method of identifying our root cause of our fear and abandoning it.

Once we identify and recognize the erroneous thought, acceptance comes naturally and letting go becomes automatic.

There is no effort involved. All resistance simply dissolves.

Simple but not Easy

For most people, the entire process of fear outline above is very simple to understand. In fact, it is precisely because it is so simple that many do not regard it as useful or transformational.

Yet, all we really need to transform our lives is just this bit of understanding AND practice the tool to change it.

However, as the saying goes, "Even an 8-year-old can understand it, but even an 80-year-old cannot practice it."

Understanding Fear makes us Free

Once I truly understood the root cause of my fear, and have learned the tool to observe and trace my thoughts to its root, it becomes easier for me to simply let go. I know that going against reality is a hopeless situation and resisting

what is only creates more fear for me. Thus, the logical and sensible choice is simply to let go of grasping to the thought.

However, this process needs to be put into practice constantly until it becomes second nature to you. Only then can you let go easily.

In the beginning, before you are familiar with the process, the going can be quite tough. It takes courage and honesty. It takes discipline and effort. The end result, however, is worth it. In fact, it is priceless.

Once you have become an expert with the process, you may wonder how you could have survived for so long without it.

Tools for Transforming Fear

I am aware that people with different temperaments, beliefs, characters and attitudes may benefit from different methods and tools for personal transformation.

Thus, I have here a few different tools that are extremely powerful in bringing transformation and insights.

The Work of Byron Katie

Why is this happening to me again? By Michael

Ryce The Release Technique of Lester Levenson

Ho'oponopono by Dr. Hew Len

The Work of Byron Katie

Byron Katie's work leads us directly into identifying and recognizing the root cause of our fear, which is an erroneous thought, belief or idea that we cling on to and refuse to let

go. She offers a structured method that guides us to do this and to look inward until we achieve insights.

You can follow this simple process using a worksheet that can be downloaded for free at her website at <http://www.thework.com>. The worksheet is called **Judging Your Neighbor** worksheet.

The same website also offers free short video clips on how she uses the same process with others as she guides them through their thoughts, self-understanding and insights.

There are also a few books written by Byron Katie. I urge you to read them and become familiar with her philosophy and work.

Why is this Happening to me Again?

Michael Ryce, who authored the book "Why is this Happening to me AGAIN?", offers a similar method of identifying and recognizing our erroneous thoughts. He also offers a worksheet to guide you through the process, albeit with slight variations from that of Byron Katie.

Michael says his work is about **forgiveness**. However, his definition of forgiveness is the letting go of erroneous thoughts.

Coming from a Christian background, you may find a lot of Christian terminologies being used and referenced in his work. Note thought that his definitions of the Christian terminologies may differ from the norm.

You can download a free e-book copy of his book from his website at <http://www.whyaagain.com>. His worksheet is also available for download there.

The Release Technique

For you to benefit from the work of Byron Katie and Michael Ryce, you need a certain degree of maturity in thinking as well as the honesty and courage to see things as they truly are. Such criteria may not fit everyone.

The Release Technique introduced by Lester Levenson, on the other hand, does not require the above criteria.

All you need to benefit from this technique is the ability to recognize and accept your negative emotions, and then let them go. There is no need to identify your erroneous thoughts or beliefs.

For some, this process is easier to do and is needed to remove the resistance and blocks to their spiritual progress.

Lester was a physicist who was suffering from an incurable heart disease and was sent home from the hospital to die. Instead, he stumbled upon this method to release all his negative emotions and eventually not only healed himself but lived on for many years to share his techniques with others.

Lester's work is now being commercially packaged and called "The Sedona Method" by Hale Dwoskin and "The Released Technique" by Lawrence Crane, two of his earliest students.

The technique itself is very simple to learn and practice.

Here are the steps:

1. Tilt head downward as in prayer

2. Choose an unresolved issue and focus on it
3. Feel the negative emotion that arise in the heart or stomach areas, recognize the emotion and acknowledge it
4. Ask yourself 3 questions:
 1. Could I let it go?
 2. Would I let it go?
 3. When?
5. Once you have decided to let it go, visualize the release of the emotion. There are many ways to do this. One simple way is to visualize the negative emotion as pouring out of a hole in your heart (like oil sprouting out) until it clears completely.
6. Feel the light feeling that accompanies the release
7. Repeat 1 to 6, doing it repeatedly like pulling out pieces of tissue from a tissue box until it is empty.

Ho'oponopono

Ho'oponopono is a Hawaiian system of healing that was popularized by Dr. Hew Len and Joe Vitale in their book "Zero Limits".

This method also does not require you to identify your erroneous thoughts but simply accept that all negative feelings and experiences that you encounter in your life arise from erroneous thoughts.

Like the Release Technique, you then simply let go of your thoughts without having to identify them specifically. This is done using four simple phrases:

1. I am sorry
2. Please forgive me
3. Thank you
4. I love you

You can learn more about this technique by reading their book "Zero Limits".

Meditation

In my own practice, I have found meditation to be an essential tool in personal transformation. Meditation, done regularly, makes us become more aware of ourselves – our thoughts, feelings and body – how they change, arise and pass away.

With the heightened sense of self awareness, it becomes easier to use all the other tools mentioned earlier.

Therefore, if you are not meditating, I suggest that you get yourself a good meditation teacher and start meditating now. If you are already meditating, continue to do so regularly.

Transforming Fear into Love

7 Simple Steps (A Supplementary Guideline)

**Transforming Fear into Love
A Simple Guideline
© Dr. Tim Ong**

This document provides you with a simple yet effective guideline to transform your fear into love.

By 'simple', I refer to its ease of understanding. However, although it may be simple to understand, it is not easy to practice, which is why so few people actually do it.

If you *truly* want to transform your fear-based life into a love-based life, you will find within you the determination and energy for this change.

There are 7 steps to transformation, each of which is important on its own but step 3 is of particular importance because it deals with a change in our core belief system.

I have specifically devoted a separate section on *Beliefs and Transformation* to provide you with a more comprehensive explanation of how our beliefs influence our lives.

1. INTENTION

Make a sincere commitment or a strong aspiration to overcome Fear completely. Our intention is the spiritual seed we plant that will grow and manifest in our physical reality. The clearer your intention, the faster you can achieve your goal.

2. FOCUS

Recognize that this will require persistent and continuous effort. So, pledge to yourself that you will stay the course. Giving your intention constant and consistent attention is like watering your seed. It creates the condition that is conducive for its growth.

3. RECLAIM YOUR SPIRITUALITY

Begin by reclaiming your spirituality and recognizing that you are Unconditional Love. You are not merely this physical body. You are much more than it.

This is a crucial step to transforming your fear into love. To understand this more thoroughly, please read the section on **Beliefs and Transformation** (see below).

4. REMOVE OLD IMPRINTS

Work towards removing and clearing all defilements or negative imprints, mental habits and tendencies.

Remember that it has taken us years to accumulate our beliefs, habits and tendencies and they have been imprinted into our subconscious. To change them requires constant and consistent effort to remove and replace them with better, more positive and life-enhancing beliefs, habits and tendencies.

There are several methods to remove old limiting beliefs. Here are some I recommend:

The Release Technique of Lester Levenson
Ho'oponopono, the Hawaiian method of Healing

The Option Method of Bruce Di Marsico

5. REPLACE WITH NEW IMPRINTS

Put a new positive daily habit or routine into place. Your new habits will become your new imprints.

There are several ways you can replace old imprints with new ones.

The oldest method is mindfulness. This means being mindful of all your thoughts. This makes it possible to catch any negative thoughts that arise and therefore you can consciously and quickly replace them with more positive thoughts. For most people, this method is also the most difficult. It requires constant effort of mindfulness that can be cultivated through meditation.

However, there are several newer and less strenuous methods. Among them are affirmations, subliminal messages, hypnosis, binaural beats and NLP. You should explore each of these methods and find out for yourself which is most suitable for you.

6. REPEAT & REINFORCE

Repeating and reinforcing make sure that deeply seated imprints get to be removed and replaced by more positive imprints.

Again, use tools like affirmations, subliminal messages, meditation, hypnosis and binaural beats to augment your effort.

7. PERSISTENCY

Motivate yourself constantly through reading books and mixing with like-minded people. Surround yourself with spiritual friends who will encourage you and support your effort.

Beliefs and Transformation

Introduction

We live a fear-based life because we think, feel and do things in a certain way. At the root of this conventional way of thinking, feeling and doing things is a **belief** that is based on our separation from our true Essence, which is Unconditional Love.

Our Present Belief

We believe that we are primarily this physical body and nothing more. This belief is very limiting and is based on the theory that modern science has advocated and advanced to the public only in the last few hundred years.

This was not always the case.

For a very long time, before the emergence of modern science at the beginning of the Renaissance period, man knows and acknowledges his spirituality, and he lives in accordance with that belief.

I am not saying that one belief is right or the other is wrong. In fact, there is no such thing as a right or wrong belief. Beliefs are merely perceptions of reality. As a physical being, our perception of reality is truly limited and therefore can never be completely true.

Our Erroneous Perception

There are at least 3 reasons why I said so.

1. Our perception is limited by our sense organs.

We perceive the world with our physical sense organs – our eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin. We also have a sixth organ which is non-physical and that is our mind. Since our sense organs are themselves able to perceive only limited range, we cannot perceive all that can be perceived.

A simple example is our hearing. We can only hear sound that vibrates within a certain range. Anything out of that range is beyond our hearing. Yet we know that animals can hear sounds that we cannot hear. The sounds are there; we just cannot hear them.

The same is true for all the other physical sense organs.

2. Our perception is limited by our limited perspective.

Two persons experiencing a single event can interpret the event differently. This is very much like the simile of the blind men and the elephant. When each touched a specific part of the elephant, each thought that the elephant is only that particular part that was touched.

With our physical limitation, we always perceive an experience from our personal vantage point, which is very different from that of another person. Yet, we cannot say that our experience is true and the other person's experience is inaccurate or not true. Both are experiencing only limited truth and not the whole truth.

3. Our perception is limited by our own beliefs, concepts and meta-programs.

Within our mind are already pre-imprinted programs, beliefs and concepts that filter how we perceive our world. These imprints make us bias towards a certain conclusion. Thus, influences such as our upbringing, family traditions, cultural differences and education as well as subtle media conditionings can all skew our perceptions.

What this means is that our perceptions are never able to get the whole picture and therefore always fall short of the absolute reality. This is the limitation of perceiving with our physical sense organs.

Beliefs are not Ultimate Truths

Since we base our beliefs on what we perceive, it follows that our beliefs are never accurate as well.

Another way to realize that our beliefs are not ultimate truths is to look at the way beliefs have changed throughout history.

We once believe that the earth is flat and that it is the centre of the universe. Today, we know that both these beliefs are not true. People in the past also believe that it is impossible to fly until the Wright brothers proved them wrong. Both the concepts of microscopic germs and digital information were once beyond our imagination and knowledge but are today our realities.

So, what we believe today is likely also to change in the future.

Now, why do I go to great length to explain why our beliefs are not ultimate unchanging truth?

Two reasons:

1. Whatever we believe and conceive, we achieve.
2. While there are no right or wrong beliefs, there are self-limiting and life-enhancing beliefs.

Whatever we believe and conceive, we achieve

Although beliefs are never the ultimate truths, they are true as far as our own mind is concerned, and that is good enough for them to influence the way we create our reality.

Napoleon Hill once said that whatever we can conceive and believe we can achieve. I want to make it even more specific and say that whatever we conceive and believe we achieve, without fail.

After all, this is precisely how we create our reality. Through our thoughts we create but whatever thoughts we generate is dependent on what we believe. So, our beliefs directly influence the way we create.

Self-Limiting and Life-Enhancing Beliefs

Since beliefs are ever changing, it would be wise for us not to group them into right or wrong beliefs. Rather, it would be more useful for us to group them into self-limiting and life-enhancing beliefs.

Self-limiting beliefs are beliefs that restrict our growth. For example, a belief in the lack of one's own potential is a self-limiting belief. A person holding such a belief stunts his own growth. It leads him to see only the negative in his own

potentials instead of focusing on what he can do. It also limits his ability to recognize any opportunities that come his way.

On the other hand, a life-enhancing belief is a belief that propels one to further growth. It leads him to self-actualization and expands his awareness. Such a belief affords him greater self-confidence and the ability to recognize and grasp opportunities that come his way.

Transforming Fear into Love

Now, here is the crucial point I want to make.

You will recall that I mentioned earlier that the root belief we hold that leads us to live a fear-based life is the belief in separation from our true Essence.

I want to impress upon you that the way to transform our fear-based life into a love-based life is by changing that self-limiting belief in separation and replace it with a life-enhancing belief that is based on the belief that we are Spiritual Beings.

This single change in belief, once you can reinforce it and internalize it completely into your being, will completely change the way you perceive your life. In so doing, you will begin to create a new reality for yourself that is in accordance with your spiritual growth and self-actualization.

This is the one single step that you must accomplish in order to truly transform your life.

When you have internalized the belief that you are a spiritual being, you will begin to see yourself as a co-creator of your world, and that you are complete in itself. You are the unlimited source of all that you need and desire, and you are

fully and totally responsible for the experiences you created and attracted into your life.

With this understanding, you will lose the sense of separation as well as the belief in lack. You will not fear the world because you know you are the determinant of your own life. Your life is not determined by fate or by chance. You recognize that there is no accident. You begin to see the orderliness and harmony of the entire universe.

You know that your true Essence is Unconditional Love and Peace, and nothing can change that.