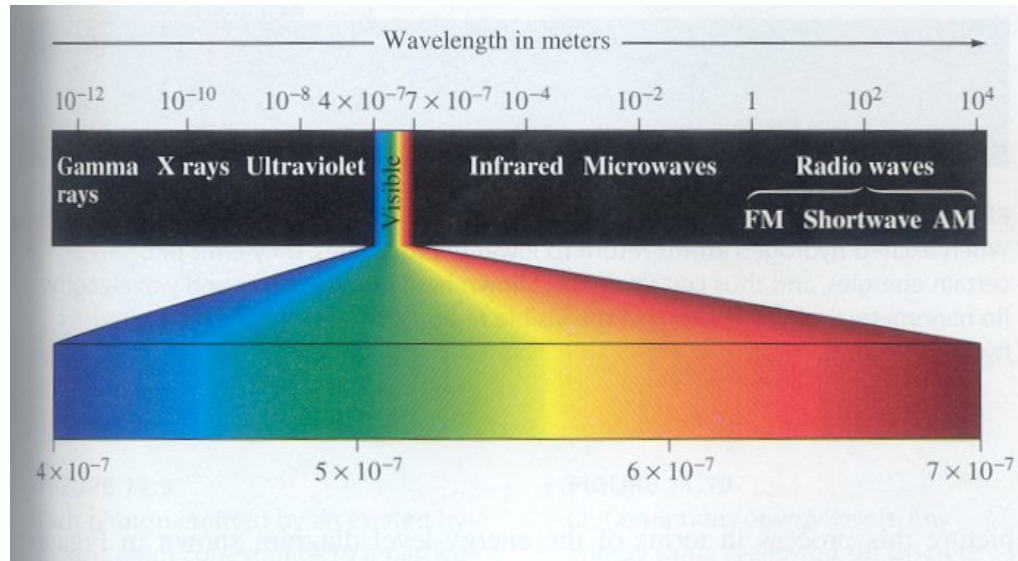
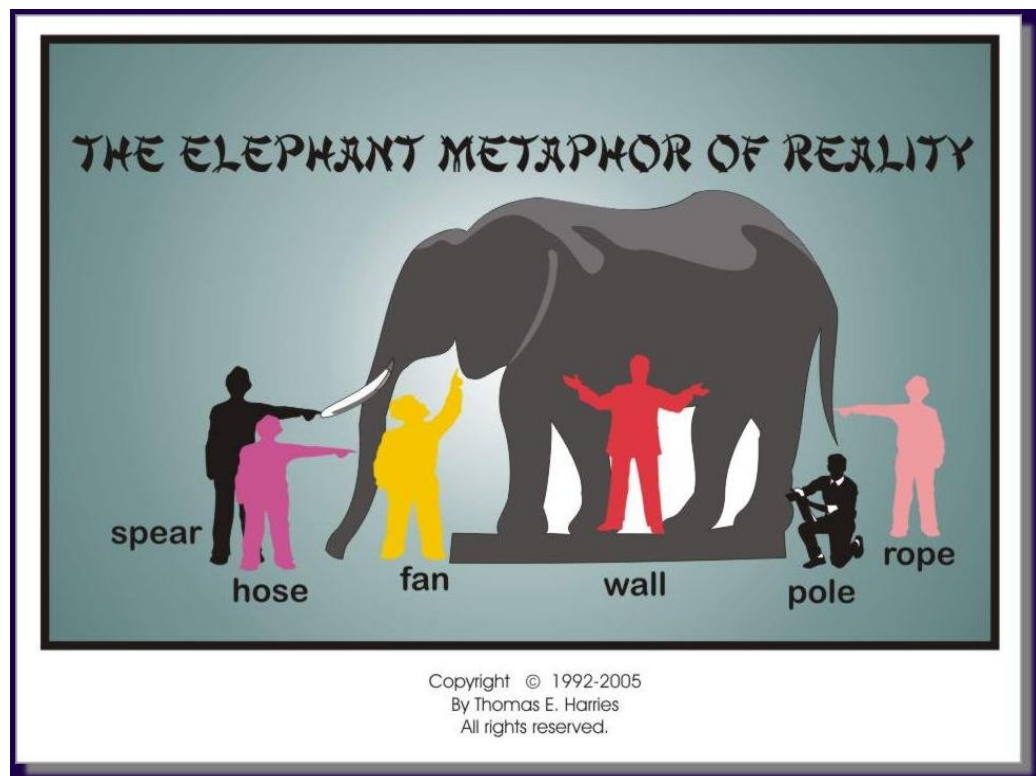


# Fear is Optional

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.

# 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 behavior 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 behavior 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 or ember 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.

1. The Work of Byron Katie
2. Why is this happening to me again? By Michael Ryce
3. The Release Technique of Lester Levenson
4. 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.

### 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. However, his definitions of the Christian terminologies may differ from the norm.

You can download a free ebook copy of his book from his website at <http://www.whyagain.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 packaged and called "The Sedona Method" by Hale Dwoskin and "The Released Technique" by Lawrence Crane, two of his earliest students. Unfortunately, the courses are commercialized and quite expensive, and beyond the reach of many people.

However, 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, visualise 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.