

June & Jim Spencer
13060 Elk Run, #261-B
Nathrop, CO 81236
Phone: (719) 539-3232

23,632 Total Words
c 1999 Let Go & Live
Disk: Dos, WP5.1 and/or WP7.0

Let Go & Live Institute, Ltd.
ID# 13-3036480

ONE STEP BEYOND "SPLAT"

A MIRACLES WORKBOOK

CONTENTS

	<u>Page Number</u>
First Word	3
# 1 Duality - Right Or Wrong	13
# 2 The Only Time Is Now	18
# 3 The End Result <u>Is</u> The Means	26
# 4 The New Three Rs	32
# 5 The Great I Am	41
Another Word	78
# 6 What You Really Want Is Just What You Get	
# 7 What I Really Want Is ____	4
# 8 Relationships	60
# 9 Awareness & Love	66
#10 Body, Mind & Spirit	79
#11 To Feel Or Not To Feel	85
#12 Which Is The Real One?	91
#13 I'm Not Really Eleanor Roosevelt	95
#14 There Are Only Four Aces In Any Deck	99
#15 The Big Cs	104
#16 The Greatest Wall Is Not In China	111
#17 Fill 'er Up	116
#18 Why Don't You Like Chocolate?	123
Last Word	126

FIRST WORD

Over twenty years ago 'A Course In Miracles' was presented, and has been having miraculous results ever since. A special friend taught the very first class in 1976. The group became so unified, that it kept going for over eight years.

Since then, we have connected with quite a few 'Course In Miracles' groups. They have always been rewarding and uplifting experiences. In addition to the inspiration and impetus for self examination, there was also an unmistakable calling to probe even deeper, and discover what was standing in the way of absolute joy. For example, the message in the first four chapters in 'Course In Miracles' is, "Nothing out there has any meaning, except what I give it." This is a very profound and provocative message. Still, while most students understood and accepted the concept, they weren't quite able to make it their own, and utilize it in their day to day life. The difficulty appeared to be finding a way to make the inspirational ideas a part of themselves.

The following booklet is the result. It took over two decades to compile, but for many of us it has been well worth the time. There are seventeen chapters with seventeen processes, or exercises - each to be practiced for twenty-one days.* Please do not attempt, or even read the processes until you have read the

introduction to them. Otherwise you may not understand the purpose behind them. Why three weeks? Because, the things that stand in the way of our happiness, the things that keep us from being all the things that we can be, are our habits. We are drawn into a behavior pattern of repetition rather than the natural impulse of discovery. We are like butterflies trying to get back into the cocoon.

Have you ever noticed how people who constantly worry about things going wrong, constantly have things going wrong? How often it seems that the more we're concerned about making a mistake, the more mistakes we make. It's almost as though the more apprehensive we are about something, the faster and more vehemently it arrives.

Psychologists call this phenomenon, "a self-fulfilling prophecy." New Age people claim it's a form of "Inner conscious programming." It has also been suggested that this might represent the presence of special psychic capabilities. Whatever the reason, refuting the fact that our thoughts have a definite effect on our behavior - and our surroundings, has become increasingly difficult.

For years, scientists had us believing that our behavior was merely a result of a predetermined genetic pool. However, the discrepancy in the behavior of identical twins, for example, left the scientific community with more than a reasonable doubt.

B. F. Skinner, the father of Behavioral Psychology, was convinced that a controlled set of circumstances would ultimately determine how a person behaved. After a rather unfortunate and contradictory pattern of behavior, exhibited in Skinner's immediate family, even the most dedicated Behaviorist was given pause to question the validity of, "Personality, or behavior modification."

DO NOT LABEL, STAPLE, OR CATEGORIZE

One of today's most popular reasons for behavior, is a categorization of personality types. The problem with this compartmentalization is that people's behavior defies being "cubby holed." A man may be a type A - aggressive with his competitors, a type B - analytical with his colleagues, and type C - passive with his children.

With all due respect to Dr. John Gray, it is more than possible that all men are not from Mars, nor are all women from Venus. We've all known lots of women who, when faced with a challenge, or problem, definitely do not want to "talk it out." They quietly ruminate and digest all the material they can find before they are comfortable discussing the situation.

Conversely, we have worked with men who insist upon hashing and rehashing every disagreement, be it with women, or other men. The need to categorize and compartmentalize has reached such an extreme, that it may not be long before people will start

answering to their designated group number, rather than their name.

So, what causes us to do the things we do, act the way we act: and most of all, why do we keep doing the same thing over and over - especially when it's not fun? If our behavior is not just an inherited trait, or a learned pattern; since we tend to be repetitive in our actions, what is the blueprint - the formula for our joy or sorrow, our contentment or discontent, our compassion or impatience?

Consider that there is a distinct possibility that our behavior, especially under stress, is nothing more than a series of habits. How did we develop them? Imagine for a moment that each of us has entered this planet with a challenge or lesson to be faced or learned. The challenges/lessons are in the form of habits. Some of them are pleasurable, others less than pleasant. Who decides the habits? The answer is certainly up for grabs. It could be the fickle finger of fate, the will of God, the pattern of the universe, or, unbelievably enough, we may, at some moment in the waiting room of birth, have chosen our habits ourselves.

However, we have acquired them, habits are something we all have. Despite bad press, habits are a necessary and integral part of human life. We rely upon them to survive. They are, in and of themselves, neither good, nor bad. It is the judgment of

a specific society that labels them plus, or minus. The Bible tells us that Tithing is a most desirable habit; as is prayer. Generosity is a habit encouraged by every eleemosynary organization around. Punctuality and dependability are two habits essential for the success in the world of business. Excessive drinking of alcohol, overeating and gambling, on the other hand, are considered habits that are not devoutly to be encouraged. Nevertheless, habits have been a part of our nature since the beginning of recorded time. They have sometimes been a scapegoat for ignorance. In the twelfth century, doctors gave epileptic patients bromides, believing that this disease was the result of the habit of masturbation.

Habits are a part of nature. All animals have their habits. In fact, one of the main differences between humans and other animals is that humans can change their habits, if they wish. Other animals are not so flexible. The Mud Wasp is a dramatic example. The Mud Wasp builds a long, thin, skinny nest made, of course, out of mud. When it brings food to the nest, it must first put the food on the threshold, then it goes all the way to the end of the nest, sometimes as far as six feet, to check it out. Then, and only then, can it return for the food. As often as not, the food has been removed, or blown away, and the wasp has to start the pattern all over again. Its habit of having to go all the way to the end of the nest before it can bring in the

food, is never altered. Consequently, refusing to alter one's behavior, regardless of changing circumstances, we have always referred to as, "Mud Wasping."

Habits lend a sense of familiarity, hence security. For those less than enthusiastic about change, habits are a way of maintaining the "status quo." Even a habit that may not be particularly desirable, may give some sense of comfort. As Shakespeare said, "Rather bear the ills we know than fly to others we know not of."

Habits are great time fillers. "Well, I spend half an hour checking my phone calls, and another half hour answering correspondence. Then, of course, I need to get my coffee and check with the other salesmen to see how they are progressing. By the time I have gone over my new ideas and catalogued them, it's darn near time for lunch and I haven't had a minute to make a call."

Habits are long term commitments. Once we commit to something, it becomes our number one priority and is sure to get done. Choosing that same commitment over and over again turns the commitment into a habit.

Habits also offer us perfect excuses when we want to avoid something we don't care to do at the moment. "Oh, I'd love to come to dinner, but tonight is my night to ____."

Habits give us a "Raison D'etre" - something to look forward to. Often we use them as a real feeling of accomplishment. In the 1930's plays, "I Remember Mama," whenever Mama was upset, she cleaned the floor. Business people sometimes use cleaning up their desks to show a feeling of completion. Home-makers sometimes don't clean up because clutter represents a feeling of hominess.

Habits can be a distraction, a connection, an old friend, a bitter enemy, anything we need them to be.

Habits are like computer software. Once you have activated it, that's what will come up on your screen, or your daily life. The only way to change the screen, or your life, is to exit the old and begin with new software, or a new habit.

Why then with all the limitless possibilities of habits to acquire, do so many of us choose a habit that leads to unhappiness? So far, no one has come up with a credible answer. There are, however, at least a half dozen clues that appear to apply to habits.

1. Anything repeated often enough can become a habit.
(Every time we repeat something, we reinforce the synaptic connection in our brain.)
2. Habits, in and of themselves, are neither good nor bad.
3. A habit is anything you are uncomfortable not doing.

4. A habit can seldom be eliminated - only traded in for another habit. I.e., chewing gum for smoking - patience for rudeness.
5. A habit is anything you do repeatedly beyond what is essential for your health, or well being. I.e., breathing is not a habit. Criticizing is.
6. No matter how hard you try, how aware, or spiritual you become - you will always be the proud possessor of some habits.

Since our habits are the ones we've cultivated and nurtured over the years, it sometimes takes a while to change them. If, however, they are not too firmly entrenched, the right impetus can do the job in twenty-one days. Hence the three weeks. So far, the following processes have seemed to be that kind of impetus. They are not the only ones, of course, but using them as suggested, will make a huge dent in even the most stubborn of habits. Continued practice can actually make the difference between a life limited by habitual behavior, and a life open to the miracle of freedom.

You might also want to consider creating a small group that meets once every three weeks, and discuss your progress, insights and difficulties. Not only does group discussion help clarify the processes, but it presents new ideas and possibilities that may enhance your own practice.

While practicing the processes, you may notice times of discomfort, anger, or sadness. This is not only normal, but necessary, and best illustrated by a story, inspired by a Jules Pfeiffer cartoon, about a woman who came to visit a very wise Guru. She asked him how she could reach enlightenment. He closed his eyes for a few moments, then lifted his arm and pointed in a specific direction. The woman took off in that direction and a short while later a loud 'SPLAT' was heard. The woman returned quite confused, saying, "Dear Sir, I came to find wisdom and awareness, now I don't know which way to go?" Again, the Guru lifted his arm and pointed in the same direction. Again, the woman followed his lead, and again, a loud 'SPLAT' was heard; this time much louder than before. The woman returned rather distraught, pleading, "Sir, I came to you for guidance. I search only for enlightenment and true consciousness. Please show me the way." The same scenario took place, only this time the SPLAT was four times as loud and sounded like a bomb. The woman returned shortly with the same plea, and the Guru sent her out as before. This time the 'SPLAT' was deafening. The woman staggered back in tears, and could only utter, "Where? Where?" The Guru smiled, bowed his head, pointed again, and replied, "One step beyond SPLAT."

You will doubtlessly hit Splat once in a while, but the awareness just beyond it will be more than worth the trip. It

might even change your life. And that must start by changing a few habit.

* It is not necessary to have studied the 'Course In Miracles' to use and benefit from this booklet.

DUALITY - RIGHT OR WRONG

A syzygy, (pronounced: sisagee) sometimes known as a 'yin - yang' design, is a symbol of the connection of two polarities. It is the national symbol of Korea, as well as the logo of the 'I Ching', the ancient Chinese method of divination. In addition, the syzygy is the logo for the Taoist form of belief or philosophy. Webster defines syzygy as 'conjunction, yoked together, and paired.' No matter where it appears, a syzygy denotes the bringing together of two things that appear to be opposite. In short, the unifying of contrasts. Dictionary enthusiasts would call it "isomorphic." It is the antithesis of our modern concept of duality where everything is right or wrong, black or white, good or bad. All systems that attempt to go beyond duality see life as right and wrong, black and white, good and bad.

In today's society, to attempt to do away with the concept of right and wrong, for example, would not only be virtually impossible, but would start a bloody revolution, spurred on by outraged leaders of almost every religion, every law maker, every politician, and probably most of the existing population.

The definition of 'right and wrong,' has been a thorn in the side of evolution since the time of the cave man, despite the warnings in the Bible, Genesis 2:15. The offsprings of this

duality principle, or moral judgment, to be exact, are legend - war, bureaucracy, punishment and revenge, to name just a few. 'Anger,' is probably the most notorious child of the parents, 'right and wrong.' Consequently, we could never destroy the heads of THAT family. Whatever would we do without the response of anger and righteous indignation that makes life so meaningful for so many.

True, we all recognize that what may be right for one person is wrong for another. What is good for the cat is bad for the mouse. What is right for the Magpie would be considered wrong by the grasshopper.

Every law, no matter how strict, is open to interpretation. A man raping a woman is labeled 'wrong.' However, if the arresting officer does not accurately inform the man of his 'rights,' a mistrial ensues. The officer, not having done the 'right' thing, allows the man who did a 'wrong' thing, to be 'alright.' You can see how complicated this judgment business can become.

Therefore, the duality we are going to examine does not deal with judgment, but with separation - the method we use to distance ourselves from the rest of the world.

Most of us behave as though we are one thing, and everything outside our bag of skin is another. This is a convenient practice if you're eating, but since we are all food for

something, its a bit futile. What is necessary for our going beyond our cosmic loneliness, is to realize that we are indeed not only connected to and dependent upon the world in which we live, but we are very much apart of it. In fact we are it. There is no such thing as 'the outside world,' unless you are differentiating between a cozy living room, and the blizzard, drenched slopes. This concept may take a little imagination at first, but shortly, the interaction and interdependence will become obvious.

Let's begin with the simple things many of us do daily. Suppose we start with cooking breakfast, which we are told is a natural, healthy thing to do. We reach for the pot or the tea kettle, and we see it as separate from ourselves. Question. What are we doing? We're cooking breakfast. Well, the pot, the water, the coffee, the cup, all the ingredients, all the utensils are part of the act of cooking breakfast. We are not one thing and the oatmeal another. We are both a part of the process of cooking.

The same is true of every activity we undertake. It does not exclude sitting and relaxing. Everything that is a part of that undertaking is a part of us, and we a part of it, and all a part of the process.

In short, the more we can see our lives as a process of going from one activity to another, the less we will play the

duality game of, 'subject/object.' 'I am the subject and my thoughts are the objects.' Instead, we might become aware that what is going on is 'thinking,' - no subject - no object.

'Thinking' is happening. In that way, we won't spend as much time categorizing, differentiating, labeling, and otherwise separating one thing from another, and us from it all. Our attention will be on the process at hand, the part of life we are involved in at the moment. Chances are we will be able to see life more clearly without the duality of the observer and the observed. They will have become united in the task.

PROCESS# 1

When you are involved in an activity, instead of thinking to yourself, 'I'm sewing,' attempt to see that, 'sewing is happening.' This involves the needle, thread, fabric, lighting, chair, plus the people who manufactured the needle, the ones who dyed the thread, and even the people who will observe what is sewn. If you argue with someone, 'arguing is happening.' Not only are the people arguing involved, but also the situation, their perceptions of the situation, and all the people who are watching and listening.

(As long as you consider yourself a thing, you cannot become a part of any other thing. Once you see yourself as part of a process, you can accept that you are a part of someone or something else's process).

This change of approach will not only begin to unite you with everything that has to do with whatever is going on, but it will let you see what is going on more clearly, and know how much we are indeed all part of the process. Watch a flock of birds as 'flight is happening;' a school of fish turning as one as 'swimming is happening;' all the elements of human creativity as 'gridlock is happening.'

THE ONLY TIME IS NOW

"Time," according to Albert Einstein, who is as fine an authority on the subject as we can get, "doesn't exist." He suggests, "Time is nothing more than what you read on the clock. It is only a thought in the mind of man. Units of time don't actually exist at all. The grids we place on time are little more than prisons of our minds. Remove the grids, fragments of the past and future disappear. The underlying vastness of reality is experienced in the here and now."

For a figment of our imagination, time certainly has a powerful effect on our lives. "Time is power," is not only an effective advertising slogan, it's a slogan of how most of us live our lives.

In all deference to Father Time, he certainly does make railroad and airplane schedules a lot easier, simplify appointment settings, and make opening and closing businesses somewhat more dependable. The problem with these convenient devices is that, since so much of our lives are built around this mythical 'time,' we've begun to not only believe it, but depend upon it. Even worse, we've come up with the inevitable invention of 'past' and 'future.' Even though you know that there is only the eternal now, I know it, and so does everyone else, none of us behaves as though we really believe it.

We spend most of our day hiding out in the future, or the past. How often are we trapped in time with expressions like, "As soon as I get my check I'll feel safe," or "As soon as this job is finished I'll feel comfortable." We forget that, that 'comfortable' feeling has a better chance of being around in the next moment, if we're willing to meet it now.

Fear, for example, could not exist if we were living in the present. Fear is all about what might happen, or what will happen. It's not about what's happening at the moment. Anger is the behemoth, or monster of the past. It builds up around what someone said, or did, not what's going on now. While we may be taken by surprise at the moment, by the time our judgment has created the anger, that moment has long gone. The further away the incident drifts, the more our resistance increases. The more the rage mounts, the less accurate the memory of the actual incident becomes. The ultimate stretch is the 'family feud,' where nobody can remember exactly how it started.

Torbin Ulrich, Danish Davis Cup champion, says that, "he stayed young because he wasn't staggering under a bag full of yesterdays." John Lennon used to say, "Today is what is happening while you are busy pondering over yesterday, or worrying about tomorrow."

We have created it for our own convenience, just as we have created all units of measure. Though we use them without question, no one has ever stumbled over the lines of longitude and latitude, or even seen them, for that matter. However, no one disputes their existence. The measure of one mile means nothing to a Parisian, any more than a kilometer does to a New Yorker. All forms of measurement are abstract and created in the mind of man. They are useful illusions. Time is no exception.

There are those who claim that time was created to insulate people from dealing with the present. There must be a grain of truth in the idea, since so few people choose to be in the moment. It's noticeable in conversations at every cocktail party, dinner gatherings, even at football games. "What have you been doing?" "I start a new job next week." "Did you see what that crazy half-back did?" I'll bet that if you approached someone, even a trusted friend with, "Hey, how are you feeling right now - right this very minute? He, or she would probably answer something like, "not as good as yesterday," or "I feel a lot better when _____."

What's the big deal about being in the moment? First of all, it is the only time there is. It is the only real place where you can be fully alive. It's where joy and actual experience reside.

Certainly, it's fun to plan for the future. Dreams are an integral part of life. However, if, an eight-year-old, figure skater doesn't start practicing three to six hours today, right now, she'll never reach the platform at the Olympics.

Memories can be lovely things and we all cherish them. We also use experiences to enhance our knowledge and performance. Postcards and snapshots evoke strong memories, but they are not life. Here and now is where everything is happening, where life is taking place. EVERYTHING EXISTS IN THIS MOMENT WHEN ONLY THIS MOMENT EXISTS. In fact, the most radical act of this age would be to live in the moment to such an extent that we could experience three straight days without one hint of anxiety for the future or regret for the past.

That would require us to be constantly mindful that everything on earth arises and fades away, comes and goes - changes. Nothing is fixed - ourselves and our hungry egos included.

It might be interesting to see living in the here and now as a sense of flowing with what's happening; in the same way we dance to music - neither trying to get ahead of it, nor dragging our feet. Hurrying and delaying are both ways of avoiding the present.

Being aware of this moment - all of this moment, letting go of the echoes of the past, and the veils of the future, is the

only way we can prevent the past from becoming our future. Its well to remember that there are those who manipulate the moment, and those who experience the moment, and whatever is manipulated cannot be experienced.

Dreaming and remembering are fanciful films that cover the truth and the clarity of what is really happening. This moment is an incredible place to live and the only one where you will never be able to say, "Life passed me by."

PROCESS #2

One excellent way of remaining in the moment is through the practice of "mindfulness." This requires being aware, not only of what you are doing at the moment, but why you are doing it.

Stanislavsky, the great acting guru, instructed his actors to, at all times, be aware of their motivation before they moved, or spoke a word. He said, that if an actor didn't know his own intention, he couldn't expect the audience to know it either. The same honesty of awareness applies off the stage too.

There is a magic, unseen force of recognizing your intention, as well as your behavior, that cradles you in the "now," and leads you away from the past or the future. This process may leave you surprised, impatient, embarrassed, or amused, but never bored. You will probably uncover intentions like wanting to control, to appear knowledgeable, to show off, as well as to help, to support, and to discover.

One thing you may discover, is that your intention to do something is often governed by the desire to create, or avoid some feeling in the future. It may also be to rectify or cover-up something in the past. "If I say this to him, he may not trust me with next

week's project," or "I'll help her now, even though she didn't help me yesterday." The problem with trying to control the past or the future, is that you've totally overlooked all the necessary feedback available in the present. He may not trust you, no matter what you say, and paying attention to his responses would tell you that. She may not need your help now, and would much prefer you wait until you are needed. In any case, being involved in the moment is the most successful way to insure a bright future and let go of the past. Please keep in mind that you don't have good or bad motivations, and one is not better or worse than the other. They are all part of your process of living and growing. Try not to judge yourself, or your intention. Just allow yourself to be in this very moment - with all your talents and foibles. After a week or so of processing, you'll begin to become aware of your intentions automatically, and you'll really get to know this person you've been calling "I" all these years.

One very productive part of the process of mindfulness, is to ask yourself, "Is what I am doing at the moment, furthering what I claim to be my #1 priority - what I really want in life?" If you ask that question many times a day, and the answer is often

"no," you'll have a pretty good idea about how dedicated you are to your #1 priority.

A not-so-hidden benefit of this process, is that being in the moment, helps unite the mind and the body. An example of a pair not united is, walking into a room and forgetting why you are there. When you are doing one thing and your mind is somewhere else, you're out of sync. Whatever you are doing at the moment does not have your full attention. The project would benefit enormously if you brought your mind along to help.

It is always advisable to check on exactly what you are feeling at a given moment. If you can't answer, if you've drifted away from the present, come back to the party. Here's where the celebration is - here's where the real work is going on - here's the only place to experience happiness and love - both of which are dangerous and courageous choices.

THE END RESULT IS THE MEANS

With all the Eastern texts written on 'detachment,' none of them specifically enlighten us about just what it is from which we are supposed to detach. Surely, no intelligent philosophy would suggest that, on one hand, we become a part of everything on the planet, and on the other, we remain separate from everything we are supposed to be a part of. Yet it certainly seems as though that's what we're being asked to do.

This paradox has puzzled scholars for generations, until some brilliant western minds like Alan Watts, Wolfgang Kopp, and Charlotte Joko Beck have decoded the problem. 'Detachment' and 'lack of desire' have entirely different meanings in Eastern philosophy than they do for us Westerners. When they say, "Be free of desire, be detached," they don't mean that we're supposed to not want anything, or not enjoy anything, and become aloof to all life's joys and rewards. What they mean to convey, or so it appears, is, in our terms, 'Don't get bent out of shape by having to let things go.' It is imperative to have goals - and end results. If we didn't make plans, clearly, nothing would be accomplished. The difficulty arises when we refuse to let go of the result of those plans. The philosophy suggests that we set goals, work toward them, and best of all, enjoy the process

along the way. Then, if the goal doesn't work out exactly according to our blue-prints, we don't tie ourselves up in knots.

We've all been brought up with the admonishment to "Keep our eyes on the goal - the end result." If strictly followed, this procedure would never let us know the joy of being in the process, in the moment. We would relegate living as merely the means to an end.

If a lawyer thought of nothing but winning the case, he, or she would have one heck of a time hearing and rebutting the opposition. A quarterback, seeing only the execution and completion of a specific play, might completely overlook the oncoming tackle.

Setting goals and planning end results are a very important part of life. However, refusing to let go or, at least amend, that goal, not accepting an alternative end result, does us no good in our next project. Why? We're back to our 'not living in the moment' syndrome. We're ignoring the current information that presents itself during every process. If our plans are thought out, and the end result includes utilizing moment to moment discovery, we will be successful. If our approach needs some adjusting, or our goal is lacking, or flawed in some way, we can only discover this during the process.

Here in lies the secret. Detaching from the end result puts the focus in the here and now - on the process - where everything

is going on - where there are things to be learned. The goal is solely to generate the process, which is what life is all about. Getting there is not only half the fun, it's the reason for the trip. Getting stuck in the destination is what causes distress and disappointment. If you're looking for an end result, you will never be in the moment. If you go to a party wanting people to tell you how great you look, your mind will be on their opinions of you, and you'll miss the party.

True detachment is not done by means of will power, it's the result of enjoying the process so much, that we are willing to let the end result take care of itself. It's the consequence of spontaneous living, instead of making everything a means to an end. When we insist upon controlling everything, which is really doing God's job, instead of tending to our own, and allow Him to lead us, we severely limit the outcome. Shocking as it may be, we do not usually have as clear an overall picture as He. We must be free to act while keeping inwardly free of our attachments to the results. This way, those results are free to turn out even better than we had anticipated.

Why does the moon, shining on the water not get wet? Because, while it is part of the water, it is not attached to it. The moon is free to move, the water free to flow. They meet, interact, become a part of one another, and move on. So it is with all our goals. We meet, interact, become a part of one

another, and move on. Goals, being a part of life, are as life -
impermanent.

PROCESS #3

For the next three weeks, whenever you find yourself involved in the outcome of a project, any project, huge or hum-drum, bring yourself back to the process of getting to that outcome. See what new information presents itself, and what part of the process you may have overlooked. Enjoy the doing and learn from the doing. Then 'Let go and let God,' which takes not only trust, but lots of courage.

Being involved in the process is being at one with it, in a sense, losing yourself in the process, as well as enjoying it. Obvious examples are singing, dancing, skiing, playing games and, of course, sex. The objective of singing a song is certainly not to finish it. Any more than the purpose of having sex. The things we love to do, are seldom done explicitly for an end result.

The great teacher Gurdjieff used to give his students a project, and just before completion, give the project to someone else to finish. It was his way of encouraging students to let go of their preconceived end result. It also deterred them from believing that they owned the process. During the next 21 days, any time you can allow someone else to finish something

that you have started, you will have taken a giant step toward detachment. (This, of course, does not include projects that you didn't enjoy in the first place).

You might also, at least once every day, do something with no expectation in mind - no end result - no final outcome. Let an end result unfold without being attached to it. Be open to whatever you experience. Allow the universe to provide without your demands. After a while, you will discover the absolute joy and freedom of being completely in the moment. You will also discover the secret of being thoroughly involved, but not attached.

THE NEW THREE Rs

For generations, education was based on 'The Three Rs - Reading wRiting and aRithmetic.' Then came calculators, which minimized the need for learning addition, subtraction and our favorite, ever popular, multiplication tables.

Next came television, which, by bringing entertainment right into our living rooms, sent reading a book way down the list of priorities. True, the illiteracy rate has declined, but when you listen to the vocabulary of the network sit-com stars, you tend to wonder just what level of comprehension has really been reached.

With the advent of computers, the art of letter writing has all but disappeared. Being 'on line,' has become equivalent to being, 'on the ball.' So, reading has turned into watching. Writing has turned into interoffice memos, and arithmetic is left to tiny machines, that you can fit in the palm of your hand.

Society doesn't seem to be grossly affected by the loss of the three Rs. It is, however, deeply affected by the disappearance of three other Rs - Receptivity, Responsibility and Respect. We are all not only adversely affected, by the absence of this trio, we are downright deprived.

I...Receptivity.

We are indeed inundated these days with so much material, that it's no wonder we've built up a protective shield. We are truly flooded by a barrage of frightening news, loud repetitious advertising and thousands of pieces of 'junk mail,' that invade our mail boxes six days a week. Add to this, the request for charitable donations, subscriptions, and endless telemarketing calls, all of which, all too often, interrupt our dinner. It is no wonder that we are no longer immediately receptive.

However, in order to avoid the infiltration of all the things we are not interested in invading our lives, we've thrown the baby out with the bath water. We've become so used to being unreceptive, we almost automatically close the door on requests, suggestions, and a whole world of new ideas that are constantly being presented. We have become so adept at playing the protection game, we may have protected ourselves from some truly marvelous things.

We are distrustful of a new relationship, because it might not work out the way we want. We shy away from new experiences, because they might be uncomfortable. We are suspicious of a new job or project, because we might not get it right. We are leery of new ideas and new methods, since we might blame ourselves if we try them and they're no better than the old ones. Consequently, we miss out on the thrill of discovery, surprise

and a creative life. It is as though we had completely forgotten that being receptive in no way commits us to do anything. A really receptive person is pledged only to listen, watch, and consider. We're always free to say, "no," but we are cheating ourselves if we do so before we know exactly what it is, to which we are saying "No." We might be in such a hurry to protect ourselves, that we are protecting ourselves from the very things we say we want.

II...Responsibility

Responsibility is the polarity of one of today's most popular pastimes - 'The Blame Game.' The busiest players are the ones who never accept responsibility for anything. Whatever happens, it's always someone else's fault. Certainly, we all play this game from time to time, but some people make it a lifetime career.

It's difficult to find a hard and fast rule as to who is to blame. Part of our legal system is based on where the fault should lie, and it is not always sure. Nineteen ninety-six saw one nationally publicized disagreement, over a murder case, last over a year. While a verdict was reached, there are people who, to this day, don't agree, and are still disagreeing.

We even blame God, though we may not be aware of it, many times when we pray. We ask him to change a situation, for which we put Him at fault, since only He could have created it.

Blame is an amorphous substance, which is why it is such a devious game to play. The sad part of 'The Blame Game,' is that there is never a winner - only losers. Just as healing helps the one who heals and the one who is healed, so blaming is uncomfortable for the one who blames as well as the one who is blamed.

There is one hard and fast rule about blame that is not only hard and fast, but infallible. The rule is - Whatever we're feeling is totally our responsibility. 100%. Whatever happens, we are free to feel about it any way we choose. The choice is always ours. Someone can be kind to us, or ugly to us, but how we feel about it, is always up to us. No one can make us feel any way we choose not to feel. The songs, 'You Make Me Feel So Young,' 'You Made Me Love You,' and 'You Make Me Feel Like A Natural Woman,' are tuneful, but the lyrics are totally inaccurate. They are the cry of 'The Bright Feathered, Pursed Beaked, Bristle Backed Blamer,' who will not take the responsibility for his or her own feelings.

Blamers, by blaming others, are abdicating their free will. They give others complete control, and then proceed to become furious at the very person to whom they have just given the gift.

We may not always be comfortable with taking responsibility, but it is certainly realistic to remember, that, while we may blame people for what they do or say and how they behave, how we feel about any of it is strictly our own choice. Blaming others for the choice we make is not only inaccurate, but painfully self-defeating.

III...*Respect*

Despite the old saw, which most of us have heard all our lives, respect does not have to be earned. This bit of propaganda, instituted by those same gracious folks who have lead us to believe that we have to earn the right to be happy. When we say, "I've no respect for him," what we are really saying is, "He's doing something of which I don't approve." This is not to suggest that we should approve of all the questionable, or downright dishonest things that people do. We can, however, respect their right to do it. Respect, in this context, meaning "compassion," not "admiration." Most of us have only used the word "respect" for what we already accept and admire. It may be a stretch to see that there is also respect in areas with which we do not agree and certainly have no admiration.

Sometimes we watch people behaving in a manner that boggles our imagination. It does, in a way, engender respect. They do things that we not only wouldn't, but couldn't do, and we can

respect that. We can respect homeless people who can live on the street without bathing, or washing their hair for weeks. Most of us couldn't do that. We can respect the person who lives in a constant state of anxiety. Most of us couldn't do that either. We'd buckle under the stress.

There is also respect we withhold from persons who do things that trigger a reaction to something we are trying to avoid. For example, the person who avoids being subservient to another, will have no respect for the person who is able to surrender easily. There are times in all our lives when giving way to another is called for. If that is something we refuse to do, we won't respect it in another.

We don't like to see in others anything we try to avoid in ourselves. Many of the things that we find distasteful in others, are the very things lurking in the hidden recesses of ourselves. We are all connected. We are all born with the same set of feelings. We simply make different choices. Writer, Christmas Humphreys said, "He who can enter into the vilest corners of the human mind, will purge himself of the pride that he is not, 'as other men.'" Humphreys suggests that it is this type of activity that brings one true inner peace.

Even more obvious than the lack of respect for those we know, is the lack of respect for people we've never even met. Stand in a supermarket for twenty minutes and watch how people

have no respect for another's space. Notice how often people are late, with utter disregard and lack of respect for those standing around waiting. The manufacturing of goods, these days, shows precious little respect for the product produced. We hear a great deal about 'family values.' How many families respect the values of others, while allowing their children to disturb everyone in the area?

We could go on and on about the lack of integrity, which is nothing more than a lack of respect; promises not kept, we won't even mention life on a superhighway. Even impatience is a form of a lack of respect. It is simply the insistence of wanting our needs met immediately - before anything or anybody else.

Left unchecked, this behavior could assume epidemic proportions. Our only contact with one another would look like an ice hockey rink full of out-of-control bumper cars. We would become totally isolated and lose the ability to touch, be at one, and love one another. That could be more of a threat to humanity than any atomic bomb.

PROCESS #4

This process has three parts that are guaranteed to keep you interested and occupied for the next three weeks.

A... For the next twenty-one days, every third time (every time might be a bit excessive) you feel like saying, "no," to yourself, or anyone else, imagine the worst thing that could happen if you said, "yes." Then ask yourself, "what ideal thing might happen if you said, 'yes'?" You might surprise yourself by discovering how often the latter is the more realistic; how often the joy of discovery outweighs the fear. For others who have difficulty saying "no," this response is the key to breaking the habit of putting everyone else's priorities first.

B...Also, any time you are uncomfortable, upset, or concerned about what someone said or did, remind yourself, "What that person said or did, is his or her responsibility. How you have chosen to feel about it, is completely yours. You could have chosen any feeling, and this is the one you chose."

C... Finally, each day review the times you were oblivious of another's need for respect. If you cut someone off, interrupted them, pushed them, became

impatient, or ignored their priorities. During the day, three times, make an effort to show respect to someone - on the phone, in a store, at home, any place you happen to be.

Do not, under any circumstances, overlook respect for yourself. You must learn to honor "self" before you can honor another. No, this is not being selfish. It is being realistic in the knowledge that self respect is not only the cornerstone of the respect and compassion for the rest of the world, it is the very foundation of all respect. You might try repeating the mantra, "I give each situation my respect and energy. I take a willing and interested part in whatever is being provided at the moment." After twenty-one days, you will not only have given others a precious gift, some of the magic dust will have rubbed off on you.

THE GREAT 'I AM'

Of all the components that make up an individual, the most controversial is the ego. We've all heard, "You must have a strong ego," as well as, "You must destroy your ego." Well, here's a revolutionary third rendition. "That thing we call, 'I,' is a part of an illusion." How's that for a shocker? This is not to suggest that the "I" doesn't exist, any more than a movie doesn't exist. The whole movie exists, but it is really just sound, light and shadow.

The ego or the "I" is able to assume any proportion, any size or shape to suit its needs. What are its needs? To separate us, each of us from each other, and everything else in the universe: to make and keep the 'I' separate at all costs. Why? Since this is a workbook and not a philosophy text, a tiny bibliography seems to be the only appropriate reply.

- No Boundary...by Ken Wilbur
- Ishmael...by Daniel Quinn
- Nothing Special...by Charlotte Joko Beck
- The Flight Of The Eagle...by Krishnamurti
- I ... by David Hawkins
- Almost any book by Alan Watts

How do we go about being separated from the world? The first ploy, of course, would have to be the need for definition

and distinction. We can't feel separate from something that we can't define. So, first we have to label, define, identify and categorize everything, and then we can judge it, attach to it, or try to avoid it. The sad thing about naming something is, that once something has been labeled, the experience of it diminishes, and sometimes disappears altogether.

Have you ever been fascinated by something brand new that you've never seen before. And then when someone says, "Oh that's a _____," the fascination is a lot less? You now know what it is, but the experience of it is no longer there. The minute we teach a child the word 'bird,' the child will never see a bird the same way again. Hearing something vibrate at four hundred forty times a second, we have an experience of it, we become a part of it. As soon as someone labels it - "Oh that's an 'A,'" the experience changes drastically.

The ego is what keeps us apart from things, a prisoner in our bag of skin. That 'I' or 'me' becomes the subject of all it surveys, and all else become objects. To this extent, we often say things like, "I'm going to help myself," or "nurture myself." Who is nurturing whom? We've become so caught up in the subject/object concept, that we've divided ourselves in two.

In Pema Chodron's book, 'Start From Where you Are,' she says, "Ego is like a fat person trying to get through a very narrow door. Our egos lead us to believe that we are all

separate entities, made up of individual personalities, living in a place where success is getting everything on our own terms."

Without ego, we would see that it is our judgments, our opinions, our preferences, our identification, and our expectations that keep the myth of separation alive. To see the essence of anything, it is not necessary to study it, investigate it, or dissect it; just drop our opinions of it. That is truly a revolutionary idea, for sure, because we have all been schooled in the theory that we have to know all about something before we can know it. Unfortunately, we will never know anything by knowing about it. That's the egoistic approach; to learn about something in order to judge it. When we experience it, become a part of it, and it becomes a part of us, and there is no barrier between us, then we know it. Look at all the people who know about love, and have never really loved in their lives.

Once we can see ourselves as part of everything, we go beyond the ego. We don't kill the little fella, we also don't let it rule our lives. We literally transcend the ego which we ourselves have created in the first place. As we allow our separate selves to disappear, we are alive to the fullness of life. That is truly being born again. Schopenhauer once said, "The 'me' is the blind spot of consciousness. It is only in the death of the 'me' that there is life." The 'me' of which he speaks, is not our flesh and blood, but our judgments, opinions,

preferences, identification and expectations. So it seems that if we can transcend the ego, go beyond the separate self, we will meet the magic. We will know the miracles.

PROCESS #5

The best way to go beyond the ego. The separate self, is to meditate. Meditation is the fastest and best way to increase awareness. If prayer is considered talking to God, then meditation is listening to God. Not ruminating, or day dreaming, or figuring out, just sitting, listening and watching your thoughts float through your mind like clouds in the sky. Even though the mind is a drunken monkey and is frantically active all the time, every once in a while, there will be a gorgeous blue sky in between the clouds, between your thoughts. Focus on the sky, the empty space. Clouds come and go, but the sky is constant. That's the 'here and now.' That's the moment. That's the mirror of reality with no shadows in between. The more you meditate, the clearer the mirror, the stronger the reality, the more you can see who you really are.

If you have difficulty quieting the drunken monkey, bring your attention to your breathing. Don't change your breathing. Just watch it. Once your mind has quieted, go back to your thoughts. If the monkey becomes obstreperous, attend to the breathing, and then return to the thoughts once more.

You can begin meditating for as little as three minutes. As you feel more comfortable, increase the time bit by bit to twenty minutes. You may find that you may want to continue the practice past the twenty one days. Let not your heart be troubled. There are millions of us who meditate joyfully every day. Who knows? Meditation may even become a relished ritual and a part of your life.

Another excellent way to outsmart the ego, is to spend one or more hours, if you can manage it, not exerting your will at all: letting anything and everything that happens – happen, without attempting to change it, becoming a part of the process. Letting everything be just as it is; accepting someone's statement that you know is incorrect; having your special priority overruled; a process going in the opposite direction from the way you wanted; interruptions; contradictions; and the daily quota of mishaps. You might be surprised to discover that if you don't try to change things, if you allow them to flow, even though you may disagree with the direction, you may still get what you want in the long run – maybe even more.

WHAT I REALLY WANT IS _____

Since denial is the most common obstacle to happiness and joy, honesty would seem to be the most obvious antidote. There are few processes as honest promoting as #7. There is no place for denial to hide.

This chapter opens with a four part process. The process makes the philosophy that follows easier to understand. The following process includes sections A, B, C, and D. You may alternate A and B for ten days, or do A for a few days, then B. During the ten days, you may feel a need to do A more than B, or visa versa, or B in the midst of a series of A. Do whatever feels right for you. While it may seem redundant to do this every day, you'll be surprised how the list has a way of changing. When it has stopped changing, or even if it hasn't, at the end of ten days, proceed to C. You'll find this one a little more difficult, and a lot more revealing. While process #6 may seem the most convoluted, by the time you've practiced it three times, you'll find it the most definitive. It will definitely let you know if your life is about running to the castle or from the dragon.

PROCESS #7...A

Write down five things that you want most in the world. If you can't think of five, write as many as you can. Prioritize the list, making #1 the one you want the most. Then start at the bottom of the list, and say, "In order to have #4, (whatever #4 is) I'd be willing to give up #5 (whatever #5 is) forever." If you find this is not true, reverse it. "In order to have #5, I'd be willing to give up #4 forever." Then #4 becomes #5. If neither seems to be true, pick one. You have to make a choice. Pretend a space ship is leaving for one of two planets - you can go to #5 or #4, not both. Then re-prioritize your list if necessary. Keep going up the list. "In order to get #3, I'd be willing to give up #4 forever." Be sure to say, "forever." That's an important part of the process. Also, be sure to make the declarations out loud. For some reason, saying things out loud seem to have more effect on the psyche, and they are not glossed over as easily, and the process is more effective. Remember to title this list...A

PROCESS #7...B

Make a list with the things you want to avoid. Only the declaration changes. "In order to avoid #4, I'd be willing to put up with #5 forever. This is where the 'forever,' really makes a difference. This is where you see which dragon it is that you are fleeing. Be sure to title this list...B

PROCESS #7...C

Now mix them. "In order to have #5 on the A list, I'd be willing to put up with #5 on the B list forever." You can also switch. "In order to avoid #5 on the B list, I'd be willing to give up #5 on the A list forever." By the time you get to #1, you'll find out which dragon tracks are really keeping you from your heart's desire.

You may use this process for any list you wish to prioritize, or decision you wish to make. "In order to get the new job, I'll be willing to give up certain conveniences forever." When you finally come up with priority #1, you will have uncovered the priority that is ruling your life, the motivating force behind everything you do.

PROCESS #7...D

Once you know your priorities, you may want to write them down and see how closely you honor them each day.

Once this way of thinking becomes a part of your life, you'll be astonished at how much more quickly you can make decisions, and how much simpler they become.

TILL LIFE DO US PART

One of the most urgent reasons for using Process #7...A & B is for partnerships, especially marriage. The divorce rate in America has recently topped the fifty percent chart, which might lead the rational mind to suggest a slight revision of the marriage vows. Of course, we glorify the good old days of family values, forgetting that the reasons that couples stayed together had little to do with their love and respect for one another.

The most popular cry against divorce was, "We have to stay together because of the children." It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out, that if staying together had been a good thing for the little tykes, they wouldn't have so little respect for marriage, now that they are grown. In fact, seeing mom and dad showing little spontaneous affection while living under the same roof, only because of you, doesn't endear marriage as much as it promotes guilt. Psychologists pretty much agree, that being brought up in a household with a loveless marriage, is even more difficult than having divorced parents.

The second reason for uneasy relationships was, "What will people say?" There are an incredible amount of people who lived their lives to coincide with other's opinions. This was not a service to others, it was making the outside world more important than personal experience. Consequently, suffering an empty

charade of connubial bliss, for the sake of the neighbors, has been a lifestyle for millions, for years.

Following right on the heels of this self-sacrifice, is staying in a marriage, no matter how miserable, because of a religious belief. Since religious beliefs are a pact between the individual and God, there are no required, or even appropriate comments from anyone outside the partnership.

The final deterrent to divorce, at least until recently, has been the fact that women couldn't be self-supporting. If they were able to have jobs, their pay was seldom enough to allow them to raise a family. Today, more and more woman are paid according to what they can provide, rather than their gender. There are exceptions, of course, but a divorced woman now has more alternatives than joining an order, or becoming a whore.

Whether or not we believe in divorce, or whether or not divorce is the answer, there are - and always have been, an inordinate amount of unhappy marriages. Why? Many would reply, "Because they married for the wrong reason.?" Since none of us is really in the exalted and unenviable position of judging what's right or wrong for someone else, we might look at another possibility. Instead of marrying for the 'wrong' reason, how about marrying for 'different' reasons. Any two people who have the same commitment, the same number one priority, have a pretty good chance of being comfortable with one another. This is not

the same thing as having the same interests in common - both liking sports, or both loving opera. To truly commit to something, is to make a pact with yourself to make that intention your number one priority. When two people share the same intention, it's a match. Neither rain, nor snow, nor any third party can cause a real problem. Sharing the same number one intention and priority is what the ideal story book marriage is based upon. That's why there are so precious few. Perhaps that is why the divorce rate has soared, and many couples don't even bother to take vows.

Find your number one priority or commitment in life. Process #7 should do it. Ask your partner to do the same. Don't do this together. There is often a tendency to oblige. For the process to work, you must both know what it is that you really, really want out of life. When you compare the final results, you'll see how much adjusting needs to be done. If the commitments are similar, you have a great foundation. If not, you may need to reassess, and alter your blueprints. There is never a chance of hearing, "We always do what you want, and never what I want," if you both really want the same thing. However, it's hard to build a dream house from two diverse plans.

WHAT YOU REALLY WANT IS JUST WHAT YOU GET

It is generally conceded that our life's flow is determined by the priorities we set. If we want something enough, and we're willing to pay the price, which means postponing or letting go of other things, what we really want becomes our #1 priority. A priority is very much like happiness. It's not so much getting something as letting go of something else. Our #1 priority gets all our attention and our energy. It literally becomes a signpost for the direction in which we are going. We've all known people who have said, "I want ____, and nothing will stop me," and nothing ever does. Oh, they may get delayed from time to time, but their #1 priority at any moment, is what their life is about at that moment.

"How come," you may ask, "sometimes when we want something, we get just the opposite?" Actually, we are, even then, getting exactly what we want.

You see, there are two types of priorities. One is what we want, and the other is what we want to avoid. Since God and His Universe are most benevolent, they will give us either one without an argument; no questions asked. Our confusion arises from thinking that we want one thing, when we actually want another. Often we think we are asking for security, when we are really asking to avoid insecurity. Isn't that the same thing?

Absolutely and unequivocally not! Think of it as running to the castle, or running from the dragon. If your #1 priority is to get to the castle, the chances are that it won't be long before you arrive. Running from the dragon, on the other hand is a lifetime career. It lurks behind every tree and in every shadow.

Let's say your #1 priority is to experience security. You will then experience that feeling even in the midst of an insecure situation. The house can burn down, the stock market can tumble, your loved one can leave and your strong, solid sense of security will not be threatened.

If your #1 priority is avoiding insecurity, you will see it everywhere you look. Why? So you have the opportunity to fight it; so you can keep running from the dragon of insecurity. After all, that's your #1 priority - and you've gotten what you wanted. Let's face it, you can't get rid of what isn't there. Consequently, insecurity - for you - is there so that you can spend all that time and effort running from it and avoiding it at all costs.

Consider the principle of cause and effect. If you are fighting insecurity, the only effect you will see is insecurity.

You are not alone in this dilemma. If you were to say to people, "You will be granted any one wish you desire: all you have to do is say what you really want," you would be astonished at the number of people who couldn't answer. The average is

somewhere around fifty percent. Of the remaining fifty percent, forty-five would say, "happiness." If you were to tell them that their happiness could be obtained by making what they wanted more important than what they wanted to avoid, they'd probably look at you as though you were speaking a foreign language. The fact that they had not made happiness their #1 priority, that they had put other things first, would never have entered their minds.

True happiness depends upon opening up to receive something. Most of us will settle for a lot less, which is simply the relief of getting rid of what we don't want. Then, getting rid of something, not happiness has then become our #1 priority. Receiving brings happiness. Getting rid of brings only relief.

HAPPINESS COMES FROM MAKING WHAT YOU WANT MORE IMPORTANT THAN WHAT YOU WANT TO AVOID. CONSEQUENTLY, IT IS NECESSARY TO KNOW TWO THINGS: 1. WHAT YOU WANT; and 2. WHAT YOU WANT TO AVOID.* These might be the two most important pieces of information that we ever need. Once we get the answer, we are free to pursue living in any castle or cottage of our dreams. If we don't know the answer, or don't ask the question, we're limited to a life of never ending escape tactics, trying to run and hide from the dragon. The sad commentary is, that dragons live forever; or at least as long as we do.

* Some people call what they want, "positive," and what they don't want, "negative." Whatever you call it, the desire

and aversion are the same. A person who exhibits "negative" thinking is simply concentrating on what he or she doesn't want.

PROCESS #6

If you don't seem to be progressing with what you believe is your #1 priority, check for dragon tracks. When you spot him - or her, forget the rifle or the bow and arrow. Simply change your priority. For example, if you think that your #1 priority or commitment is to being important, and everybody is ignoring you and acting as though you don't even exist - you might suspect that the dragon of trying to avoid being unimportant, is probably breathing fire on your efforts. If you want to be important, you must be willing to be unimportant as well. In the syzygy (the yin/yang symbol), each polarity contains a bit of the other; like everything else in life. Consequently, a commitment to being important must allow for the presence of unimportance too.

Another superb and indispensable way of tracking dragons, is to observe every day how often you want to change people, or situations, or your own perceptions. Since you want to change them, you are obviously attempting to avoid something - - there is the breath of the dragon. What to do? Nothing! Just observe, and the very observation will clear the air, and you'll be surprised how quickly the dragon retreats.

Dragon tracks are simply imprints of ways to attempt to fight, avoid, or try to change something. Most of the time we're not even aware that we are doing it. The following is a list of fifty different ways we create dragon tracks. It is by no means complete, but it will suffice to give you an idea of how often you are not in the mode of acceptance.

ARGUE...ATTACK...AVOID...BATTLE...BICKER...BLAME...
COPE...CRITICIZE...DEFEND...DEFY...DENY...DISPUTE...BE
AGGRAVATED...BE ANGRY...BE APATHETIC...BE BORED...BE
BITTER...BE DEPRESSED...BE DISAPPOINTED...BE
DISCONNECTED...BE DISCOURAGED...BE DISGUSTED...BE
FEARFUL...BE GUILTY...BE INDIGNANT...BE IMPOSED
UPON...BE IRRITATED...BE REGRETFUL...BE RESIGNED...BE
TRAPPED...HAVE SELF PITY...HASSLE...HATE...OBJECT...
OPPOSE...OVERCOME...POUT...PUNISH...QUARREL...REBEL...
REJECT...REPULSE...RESENT...RESIST...RUN FROM...SHUT
DOWN...SQUABBLE...STRUGGLE...SULK...WORRY.

You will also get a hint at how adept you are at following dragon tracks.

The best Dragon tracker of all is to recognize which of these above or any other creative reactions, you use when you are upset. Then when you notice "I'm doing it again" you'll know the Dragon is not far behind.

RELATIONSHIPS

How many times do we hear the cry, "I want a relationship?" It is a truly pathetic request, because we are all surrounded by relationships. There is no way to avoid them. Even hermits are forced to relate to their surroundings. There is nothing to seek. Relationships are already there. There is no space where things are separate from one another. We relate, every second of every day, to everything around us. Everything we do is a form of relating. Relationships are the way of life. They are our universal language; the only real manifestation of who we are. In fact, we are how we relate. We are seen by others by the way in which we relate to people, things and situations.

"She's a generous person." "He's a tyrant." "They are so secretive and stand-offish." All of these are descriptions of the way those people relate. Our personalities, our personae, is a distillation of the manner in which we relate. Modern physicists have gone so far as to speculate, that there are no 'things,' only connections and relationships.

Why do we relate the way we do? Because of the way we perceive things, and we all perceive things differently. Though we are all part of one thing, we are not all the same. All forms of life are simply variations on a single theme: we are all, in fact, one being, doing the same thing in as many ways as

possible. These different ways, these different perceptions are based upon our extraordinary ability to see things the way we need to, in order to act out our priorities. For example, the way they need to be in order for us to act out the intention we have chosen.

This is a very challenging concept, especially if you've not heard it before. More simply put, whatever others do or say, we will perceive in a way that justifies the way we relate to them. We don't always relate to what someone says or does, but the persona, or emotional character we've decided they are, the role we have cast them to play.

One pattern we tend to keep repeating is, TYPE CASTING people. We keep relating to them as though they are playing the same character, or type, all the time, which is seldom true. Actors who are typed cast have a very limited career, which is why a fine actor seldom plays the same type of role again and again. The same applies off stage and screen as well as on. The more we insist on playing only certain roles, the more limited our life becomes.

Some people might say, "But I try to see people as they really are." Who really are they?

For example, one person sees the grocer as a kindly man. Another sees him as an opportunist. His wife sees him as the

generous provider. His teen-aged daughter, as the inflexible jailer. Which one is really the grocer? All of them, of course.

Suppose that a dear friend whom we've always related to as, 'the trusted friend,' suddenly lies. What do we do? Well, we have the choice of continuing to see him as, 'the trusted friend,' who, under extenuating circumstances lied: or, because we have such animosity toward 'the liar,' we never relate to him as we did before. The choice is ours. He is not either, he is both. "He lied to me. I can never trust him again," is simply saying, "I'd rather relate to the character of the 'liar,' whom I dislike, than relate to 'the trusted friend,' whom I admire. From now on, I will only relate to the part of my friend that I really despise. That's like saying, "If you do something I don't like, I'll punish myself by being unhappy.

The same holds true for people who say, "I want a lasting or fulfilling relationship," but have so many characters or personality traits they don't like, that the minute a prospective candidate appears on the scene, they will find some character in that prospect that they want to avoid. They will then eliminate him or her altogether.

These characters that surround us can be compared to the light that surrounds us. There is ultraviolet, infrared, microwave and many, many more frequencies and ranges of frequencies that co-exist, but are invisible to us. We choose

the one we want for a specific use, just as we choose from the multitude of characters to meet our needs.

The manner in which we relate to someone depends solely on the character we have cast them in, the role we have chosen for them to play. That's why things don't happen to us, but through us. We all function in this manner. When we say, "Why doesn't so and so like me?" We're really saying, "So and so is relating to me as a character she doesn't like." That's all. It may have nothing to do with us. It is one hundred percent her casting.

Shakespeare said, "All the world's stage, and all the men and women merely players, and each, in his time, plays many parts." We all do. The more parts we play, the more versatile we become. Even more important, the more parts, or characters we can accept in others, the happier we will be.

PROCESS #8

During the next three weeks, any time you are relating to someone in a manner that is in the least uncomfortable for you, ask yourself what character you've cast them in, what role you've chosen them to play. Then, if at all possible, recast them. Perhaps you can find it in your heart to change 'the tyrant,' to 'the frightened little kid,' making all that fuss, because no one ever pays any attention to him. It's never easy to do it at that very moment, but the longer you practice the process, the faster the process kicks in.

On the reverse side, when someone is treating you in a manner that's unpleasant for you, recognize that the other person is just acting out his or her type casting. You can't change that. The only thing you can change is what role you see him or her playing. You might also benefit by noticing what character you play when faced with something you don't like. It might be very revealing to ask yourself what characters, if any, do you refuse to play, or play with great reluctance. If you can become adept at recasting, you'll not only feel better, you'll become

amazingly more aware of the whole casting system in which we live.

Whenever you want to simplify someone's complicated tirade, you can always ask. "How can I help you?" It will reduce any relationship to its simplest and most honest form.

AWARENESS

As a general rule, most Christians know very little about Buddhism, just as Buddhists sometimes know very little about Christianity. If you asked either, they would probably say that there must be similarities, and there must be differences, which of course must be correct. The similarity appears to be that they are both aiming toward the same place, even though they have different names for it. The Christians call it, "Paradise," "Christ Consciousness," "Epiphany," etc. The Buddhists call it, "Nirvana," "Samadhi," "Enlightenment," etc.

The difference seems to be in the path taken to get there. For Christians, Paradise is reached through Jesus, on the path of unconditional love. For the Buddhist, Enlightenment is reached by the path of total awareness. Christians are more concerned with paradise in the after-life, while Buddhists are more concerned with the end of suffering in this one.

This, of course, is a gross oversimplification. However, if it is possibly, or even partially true, finding a path of utter joy seems worth investigating from both angles. When we meet in the middle, we won't be surprised to find that you can't have love without awareness, or awareness without love.

To try to describe awareness or spirituality, is to realize that, at best, the description will be little more than a finger

pointing to the moon, and not the moon itself. The most we can do is to recognize some of the clues.

The first one is a profound sense of impermanence, an understanding that everything on earth is in a perpetual state of movement; ascending and descending, increasing and decreasing, expanding and contracting, appearing and disappearing. Things that are born, grow old and die. Nothing remains: and in this pattern of life, each moment is filled with incredible joy. We need only to be present to experience it.

Another clue is the ability to let go of attachments; the attachment to wanting, protecting, and/or, avoiding and getting rid of. We are attached, not only to what we have or what we want, but we are also attached to avoiding or even destroying what we don't want.

The next, and perhaps the most significant clue, is the knowledge of the lack of any separation between what we call 'self,' and anything else. This evolves from seeing that all things that live are constantly moving, and are consequently processes rather than entities. Since we are part of the process of life, we must therefore be connected, in some way, to everything else in the entire process.

How in the world does anyone reach this level of experience? The good news is that awareness doesn't require anything new. It does demand that we remember the interconnectedness and

impermanence of all things; and remind ourselves each day that "Nothing is separate and nothing lasts."

That's certainly a big order, since most of us are still baffled when other people don't see things the way we do. We are not able to look at them as one piece of the intricate jigsaw puzzle of life. We often overlook that fact that each and every piece is necessary for the whole puzzle to be complete. No piece is better, or more important than another. We depend upon one another. Surely, the expanding list of endangered species has shown us that. There is nothing in this universe that does not depend upon something else. Yet, when something does not match our ideas, our blueprint of life, we resist it. We put up a wall between ourselves and what we refuse to accept. Then, after years of this behavior, we wonder why we feel so separate and alone. We talk a lot about consciousness, but we are like the man who, while expounding his theory of awareness, runs over a goat.

There is an old fable about a little angel who tripped on his robe and dropped the priceless mirror that reflected the ultimate truth. It fell all the way down from heaven and crashed on the earth below. Every now and then, a wise man finds an infinitesimal sliver and says, "Aha, I've found the ultimate truth." We've continued picking up slivers ever since.

We've all had moments of awareness, instants of bliss, and though they are short lived, we never forget them. Since nothing is permanent, perhaps we were only meant to know them for a short time. However, we certainly can attempt to strengthen those doses, and allow them to last longer; return more often. Even doubling our times of absolute joy would be a tremendous and worthwhile achievement.

(Part two of this chapter is about LOVE.)

If we were to give an award for the best performance of unconditional love, it would most assuredly be won by someone's pet. Very few of us humanoids are adept at loving unconditionally. Yet, we all come into this world knowing how to do it. Modern scientists find that, far from being an unorganized brat, the newborn baby is one of the most highly organized creatures on the face of the earth, and organized, not for brattishness, but for loving.

What happens to us as we grow up? If we are born recognizing that love, without any question, is the most important experience in our lives, how do we forget? Actually, we don't forget. Underneath all our busyness, our endless need to acquire and achieve, even our aggressiveness, we know that if we could only get to our ability to love, we'd be O.K. However, since we learn by experience and not theory, and we see everyone around us making something else more important than love, we end up doing the same thing. We continue to place more and more priorities ahead of loving, until loving is so far down the list that most any crisis supersedes it. Then we are faced with the undeniable pain of not loving. Contrary to popular belief, we are not saddened by not getting love. We cannot feel another's love for us, only our love for him or her.

That may be because, in our urgent need to acquire things, we have turned the verb 'love' into a noun. We keep talking, writing and singing about the glories of love, and everybody goes out looking for it. Unfortunately, it can't be found. It can't be bought, borrowed, leased, or stolen. It can only be done. The more it is done, the more joy we experience. The less it is done, the more pain we experience. Eventually, we will do anything, including killing ourselves with drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, food and dozens of destructive habits, rather than face the excruciating pain of living without loving. Consequently, we fill our lives with work, travel, sex, sports, anything to anesthetize ourselves from the brutally painful truth that we are not loving.

Religion doesn't help by telling us, "God loves us." So what? That makes God feel great, but it isn't enough to create the miracles we want, until we love Him in return. It's loving our God - and our neighbors - and ourselves that gives us a truly religious and spiritual life.

There are times when we say, "But how can I love her under these circumstances?" Love doesn't depend upon circumstances. Circumstances do not make us, they simply reveal us to ourselves. To love unconditionally, is to be totally aware. It is to fully comprehend reality - to know God - to know ourselves. To be

totally aware, is to recognize that we can love anyone, anywhere, anytime and rest in Samadhi, or Paradise.

Since loving is impossible to explain or define with any real sense of accuracy, it might be interesting to see how some famous people have struggled with the task, and what they have to say about it.

"Loving is an act of endless forgiveness."...(Peter Ustinoff)

"It is by loving alone that we succeed in penetrating the very essence of Being."...(Igor Stravinsky)

"Love all God's creations, the whole and every grain of sand. Love every leaf, every ray of light. If you do, you will perceive the divine mystery in everything, and at last you will learn to love the whole world."...(Fyodor Dostoyevsky)

"Whosoever loves, can do the impossible."...(Elisabeth B. Browning)

"Loving dies only when growing stops."...(Pearl Buck)

"Whoever I love, I wish to be free, even from me."...(Anne Morrow Lindberg)

"When one loves, everything is clear, where to go, what to do, one doesn't have to ask about anything."...(Maxim Gorky)

As complaining perverts and clouds the eye, so loving clears and sharpens the vision."...(Helen Keller)

"The greatest tragedy of life is not that men should die, but that they cease to love."...(W. Sommerset Maugham)

Though a man excels in everything, unless he has loved, his life may be likened to a jeweled cup that contains no wine."...(Yoshida Kenko)

"Not where I breathe, but where I love, I live."...(Robert Southwell)

"Love does not consist of gazing at one another, but in looking outward in the same direction."...(St.Exerery)

"We think much less than what we know. We know much less than what we love. We love much less than what there is. And to this precise extent, we are much less than what we are."...(R.D.Lang)

"I may have the gift of prophecy, know every hidden truth, have faith strong enough to move mountains, dole out all I possess, give my body to be burned, but if I have not loved, I am nothing."... (Paul...Corinthians I)

"Your love is as deep as the love you show for the person you love the least."... (An old friend)

PROCESS #9

(A.) At least three times a day sit quietly, close your eyes, and get in touch with that part of yourself that you trust, that you respect, that is always reachable and ask it, " Do I feel totally blissful at this moment? Am I loving at this very minute - loving with no strings attached?" If not, ask yourself, "What have I made more important than awareness, and loving?" You can then choose to let whatever it is go, or keep it. At least you will be aware that you have not made awareness or love your first priority.

Remember, "I love him but not when he's doing that," is not unconditional love. Loving is not logical. It is neither safe nor secure. It is simply what makes life worth while, regardless and irrespective of what 'he' or 'she,' or 'they' are doing. Whatever is happening, you always have the option to love. That choice will determine how happy or sad you have decided to be.

This process can take a lifetime to perfect, or several lifetimes, if that's your belief. However, once you are able to let go of everything you have made more important than awareness and love successfully -

just once - just for a few moments, you will have glimpsed infinity, and passed the point of no return.

(B.) A variation on the same theme for those addicted to choices and more than one selection - When you have the urge to change, or manipulate a situation or what someone else is doing, get in touch with that same trustworthy part of yourself, and remind it, "I want to change this situation or person so I can avoid feeling and doing the very thing I've chosen to feel and do."

For example: if someone is yelling at you and you are fussing about being yelled at and feeling victimized, remember that there is no law forcing you to fuss, or feel victimized. You have chosen to do so. Out of all the millions of responses you might have selected, fussing and feeling victimized are your choices.

This is one of the greatest lessons in self-awareness that you could possibly practice. The ultimate awareness, and ironic part of the entire procedure is that, if nobody was yelling at you, you'd doubtlessly be creative enough to lead yourself to some other situation, where you could logically fuss and

feel like a victim. Remember - the formula is - "_____ has happened, and I have chosen to feel _____, or fight feeling _____." It is as simple and as difficult as that. Whenever you hear someone say, "I feel this way because," know that the 'because' is not the cause. It's the excuse.

The beauty of this process is that once you become aware of what you are doing, you no longer need to pretend that your behavior is someone or something else's fault, rather than your decision. Then you have two choices. You can change your behavior, or continue to fuss and feel victimized, and truly enjoy doing it. Either way you will know that you are the person in charge, and that's true freedom.

ANOTHER WORD

So far, this booklet has concentrated on concepts that are reasonably familiar - being in the moment, setting priorities, accepting responsibility, in general, what most people consider accentuating the positive. Now we are going into the extremely powerful, and not very popular land of what we may mistakenly consider negative. We're going to examine life's contractions, as well as its expansions. Since they are mutually dependent, ignoring either would leave us emotional and spiritual invalids.

While the ideas may, at first, seem a little foreign, and the processes more specific and demanding, the experience of absolute awareness and unconditional love would not be possible without them. Up until now, we've talked about what we've wanted. Now we enter into the area of what we don't want. To be a whole person, we must learn to deal with both - consciously.

Its an exciting trip, and if ever there were a promised land, it would sure be located - one step beyond splat.

BODY, MIND & SPIRIT

We hear a lot these days about 'body, mind and spirit' - how to treat them, how to control them, and, what to do with them when they're not following our orders. Since we have relegated much of body function to the medical profession, and a lot of spiritual function to organized religion, the only part left in our jurisdiction seems to be the mind. The situation is further complicated by the fact that the mind is a drunken monkey. It is never still. It races from one situation to another; creates one illusion after another, and above all judges one thing after another. Whenever we discuss mental function, we can honestly say, "here come de judge." That's what the mind does. It remembers all things past, and projects into the future, based on what it has judged each situation to be. Nature creates expansions and contractions. The mind judges them good or bad. Let's say that it has judged the feeling of 'ordinary,' unfavorable. No amount of reasoning can keep the mind from trying to avoid it. The mind will then shut off all access to the 'ordinary,' and the spirit, which does not recognize the separation of special/ordinary, consequently closes to them both. It is as though there were some kind of synaptic gap that erased the pair; because they are indeed a pair. You cannot have one without the other. Opposites co-exist. They are not at war with

each other. There can never be special without ordinary. If everyone were special... - I think you have the point.

By the time the body gets the message that 'ordinary' is not good, it reacts accordingly. By that time, all three of the trio is suffering. The body, through daily activities, and in all situations is expending its energy trying to avoid ordinary, while fruitlessly searching for special.

The mind, having rejected ordinary, has also eliminated its partner and can't see anything special. The spirit can do nothing but stare vainly at the closed door.

It appears that our greatest difficulty comes when the mind has judged, "we don't want to be this, and we wouldn't be caught dead being that." When the mind has judged a part of our spiritual self unacceptable, that part of ourselves is not available, and we are no longer a whole person.

This world is full of spiritual paraplegics: people who refuse to acknowledge a part of themselves. The spiritual path is open to us only as much as we are willing to accept all the things we are.

A truly open and balanced trio would be in a human who is not caught up in all that he or she is not. Each time we try to avoid a part of ourselves, the trio is no longer harmonious, but a duet slightly out of tune.

While practice of process #10 for the next three weeks, may not insure instant ecstasy, 21 days of repetition is enough time to penetrate the most judgmental mind.

PROCESS #10

WE CREATE OURSELVES BY OUR PRIORITIES AND OUR BOUNDARIES. NO BOUNDARIES ARE AS POWERFUL AS OUR FEELINGS.

* * *

The purpose of this process is to acquaint you with the world of feelings. Don't attempt to do anything with them, change them, deny them, or like them, just begin to recognize them. Believe it or not they ARE all your friends. The following list is divided into 4 parts - four reactions and the feelings that usually elicit them. The list of feelings, as well as responses and reactions, are multitudinous. These are the most popular ones. Look through the list and see if you can recognize the ones you attempt to avoid. Remember, the more you resist one side of the list, the less you will be able to experience it's partner on the other. If you are one of the very few who are not able to find any feelings that you acidulously avoid, if you are comfortable with them all, see which ones you'd like to eliminate in others. During the next three weeks see how often you can

detect a resistance, or fight with a feeling, both in
yourselves and those around you.

Response = Fear

Adequate / Inadequate
Good Enough / Not Good Enough
Perfect / Imperfect
Prepared / Unprepared
Secure / Insecure
Special / Average
Successful / Unsuccessful

Response = Discouragement

Complete / Incomplete
Effective / Ineffective
Focused / Unfocused
Important / Unimportant
Organized / Disorganized
productive / Unproductive
Purposeful / Purposeless

Response = Disappointment

Abundant / Lacking
Creative / Uncreative
Free / Confined
Full / Empty
Gain / Loss
Limited / Unlimited
Wanted / Unwanted

Response = Anger

Acknowledged / Unacknowledged
Appreciated / Unappreciated
Connected / Disconnected
Included / Excluded
Understood / Misunderstood
Validated / Invalidated
Fairly treated / Victimized

TO FEEL, OR NOT TO FEEL.

That's not really a question. There is no way of not feeling. It's as fundamental to human behavior as breathing. We may not be aware of what we are feeling, but rest assured, there is always a feeling there. True, most of us are not in touch with our feelings at any given moment, unless, of course, the feeling is so strong it can't be denied or overlooked.

Why do we play this purposeless game of denial? We've all been taught to ignore our feelings. Most of us see feelings as things we are born with, but no longer need - like an appendix. If by some accident we do feel something, we certainly don't let on. Consequently, most of us have buried our feelings, poured concrete over them, and put up a wall of sophisticated superficiality. We've become expert at charming, compassionate, uninvolved, gracious behavior. We're seldom touched anymore. If we were, we'd never allow present day violence to run rampant, on and off the screen, and what's more, find it entertaining. Movies, T.V. and sporting events are about the only places left where people are not too uptight to allow their feelings to surface.

We've been taught that feelings are a sign of weakness, immaturity, and feminine behavior. "Big girls don't cry, and boys don't cry at all," is a bumper belief that is shared by

quite a few. This may be one explanation of why more men have heart attacks than women. Some sociologists say, that it's because men have more stress. Those sociologists have obviously never spent much time with the home C.E.O. who has three children, a house to keep clean, meals to plan, shop for and cook, chauffeuring, laundering, meetings to attend, and perhaps, a very occasional few minutes of a solitary creative outlet.

Many medical diagnosticians agree that 'tears that have no outlet cause the body to weep.' Feelings are, indeed, a part of our very nature that we sometimes lock off in that back room. The average person's idea of a perfect existence is, where he or she is never challenged, afraid, angry, or upset, in any way. It is an interesting and very common fantasy, but it is just that - a fantasy. We keep forgetting that humans are a part of nature, and as such, are subject to cycles. We have, not only our exits and entrances, as Shakespeare noted, but our contractions and expansions as well. Stop exhaling for a few minutes and you'll get the point. Try interfering with the contractions of a delivering mother, and you'll cause her excruciating pain.

Feelings are not excluded from this natural process. Having ups and downs are not only natural, but essential to our well being. No matter how perfect our lives become, we will always experience expansions and contractions. This is not suggesting that temper tantrums are healthy. They are not. Wallowing in a

feeling is just as self defeating as subjugating it. Recognizing it, accepting it, experiencing it, and then moving on to the next one, is the formula that seems to leave us with the most fulfilling lives.

Feelings are the basis for all human behavior. They are the things that all humans have in common. What we wear, what we eat, the jobs we have, the friends we choose, are all selected to either enhance or avoid some feeling. A big problem arises when we try to avoid a feeling, because that is not possible. What we resist persists, and the more we try to destroy a feeling, or run from it, the more dragon tracks we find.

One of the most difficult things for us to accept is that circumstances mirror our feelings, they do not cause our feelings. So often we say, "I'm angry because such and such happened." Though it may seem true, it's not. We've put the cart before the horse. We are not frustrated because of a traffic jam. We led ourselves to the traffic jam so we could act out our frustration. Case in point, not everyone is frustrated in a traffic jam, even if they are in a hurry to get to their destination.

This may be a difficult concept to accept, but the more we realize that our feelings will be with us regardless of the circumstances, the more we can make peace with them, and learn to experience them without so much judgment. This is more than

psychological guess work. In nineteen twenty-seven, at a scientific convention in Copenhagen, Einstein, Bohr, Plank, Heisenberg, and quite a few other notables came up with what they called, The Copenhagen Interpretation. It said, as follows, "Everything out there depends upon a rigorous mathematical sense, as well as a philosophical one, upon what we decide in here." This brings us to a side note about truth. The truth of any word, or any situation lies solely in the one perceiving it, or translating it through his or her feelings, beliefs and judgements. Consequently, every word or situation, is translated through the mind of the perceiver. It's interesting then, to realize how much time we spend studying words, and situations rather than the perceiver or translator in whom their truth lies. Since no words are disconnected from the person saying or hearing them, the only universal truth that can possibly exist is one that has not yet gone through the process of perception.

Our feelings, indeed, are in charge and who is in charge of our feelings? We know we are, but, often we remember that we are in charge, only to the extent that we can experience and enjoy them. Often we pretend that they don't exist. However, that doesn't work for long. We can't make them go away, or dissolve. Fighting them is futile. It's an ever losing battle. All we accomplish, is creating more dragon tracks, denying ourselves a full life, and probably making ourselves sick. Quite a tradeoff

for keeping our feelings a secret. The humorous part of this scenario is, that any feeling person will instantly recognize what we are really feeling. The only person to whom it is a secret is ...guess.

PROCESS #11

Whenever you are faced with a difficult situation, ask yourself, "What unwanted, undesirable feeling is about to surface?" Once recognized, accept it as a part of who you are, experience it, as a part of your process of living, and then, and only then, will you be open to the next feeling - which may just be one that you enjoy. It may help to remember that the extent of your next expansion will depend upon how well you allowed yourself to go through your last contraction.

If no difficult situations are on the horizon at the moment, play the nightmare game. Think of something that you really don't want to happen, and see what feeling it represents. Then go through the same process as above. Recognize it, experience it fully, and then accept it - if not 100%, as much as you can, and get on with the rest of your life. Remember, all feelings are your friends. Feeling Not Good Enough allows us to discover. Insecurity, more than any other feeling, provides us with excitement. Feeling excluded provides us with the freedom of choice, that inclusion does not. Success means nothing unless we've failed along the way. Every feeling has something to recommend. If you have difficulty identifying the

feeling, go back and check the two columns in Process
#10, page 83.

WHICH IS THE REAL ONE?

Once we are able to recognize our feelings, we're faced with a real dilemma. While feelings are very deep meaningful experiences, and probably the most spiritual part of us, they cannot be explained, defined, or in any way reduced to words. How do we manage, then, to communicate, or even understand this important part of ourselves? By utilizing symbols. The number of them we use to express and pin point our feelings is staggering. Think for a moment about the number of symbols you have for the feelings of celebration, security, abundance, freedom, validation. The list is endless, and the symbols beyond counting.

The process is an extremely creative and productive one. The only difficulty arises when we mistake the symbol for the feeling it represents. Even more confusing is believing that the symbol created the feeling - i.e. 'traffic jams make me feel anxious;' 'rain depresses me;' 'parties make me feel alive.' None of these statements are accurate, as true as they may seem. The reality is that at one time, when we were anxious, we found ourselves in a traffic jam, and ever since, traffic has been a trigger mechanism for feeling anxious. It reminds us of the feeling. It doesn't cause the feeling. Having been reminded, it is easier for us to call up the same old feeling from the file,

than change the feeling, and allow the object to symbolize something else.

We can do that on a moment's notice. If philosopher, Rene Descartes were alive today, affirming his belief, that man is a machine, and likening us to computers, he would have a hard time explaining how the mind is able to make it's own software and transform it. What he would have a hard time explaining away, is how the mind is able to make it's own software, and transform it at any time. The mind, in addition to being the ultimate judge, is a master creator of illusion. Ask any child who is afraid of the dark. Ask anyone who is afraid of anything. All fear is an illusion. It's an image of something undesirable that might happen in the future. It is not happening at the moment, and is, therefore, not authentic. The feeling is authentic, to be sure, but the actual situation is VIRTUAL reality, not reality itself. With this same precious gift of creativity, the mind attaches our feelings to the objects that represent them so adroitly, that we often cannot tell them apart.

The woman, for example, who is widowed, and says that since her husband died, she can never love again. Not true! She can love again. She simply chooses not to, because the symbol of her love is no longer present, and she won't select another, but would rather bury her feeling.

Money is perhaps the most popular symbol of all. However, even money represents many different feelings to different people - freedom, obligation, opportunity, and distrust, to name a few. This means that money is never the cause of a feeling, it is the symbol.

Explaining any symbol is very like the five blind men trying to describe an elephant. One tells about the trunk, another the tail, one the ear, one the belly, one the tusk. They are all the elephant, and all only a part of the elephant. Each symbol is only what we perceive it to be, the value judgment we have given it, and the memory meaning it holds for us. A symbol is a myriad of messages, a multitude of impressions, but it is not the real thing, any more than the map is the territory. It is an imposter; a clever, creative, authentic imposter, and we often forget that it is not the genuine article. We are a genuine article, because we are more than any symbol. The symbol is a representation of only a small part of us. We, on the other hand, are oceans of emotions surrounded by continents of creativity. The symbol is but a drop in that vast ocean. It is a part of it, to be sure, but only a very tiny part. Once we are able to see symbols as our choices and not our victimizers, we can enjoy them, fuss about them, challenge them and create any game we want. They will oblige us by playing any role, at any time, without uttering a word. That's quite enough.

PROCESS #12

The best way to distinguish a symbol from a feeling, is through practice - of course. One of the easiest ways is to look around, find an object and say, "I like ___ (the object). I've chosen to let me feel ___" (whatever the feeling is.) If you wanted to be totally honest you could say, "I use it to express my feeling of ___" You may use an object that is currently visible, or one from your inexhaustible memory bank. Be sure to also include - "I don't like ___. I've chosen to let it help me feel ___." You may discover that there are several feelings connected to one symbol, which, by the way, may be a person, an activity, or a concept. Use them all. The more the merrier. Shortly you'll be able to stop blaming the poor little symbol, whose only job is to help you find an expression for your feelings. Once you stop confusing the feeling and its chosen symbol, you can use any symbol for any feeling and your creativity will know no bounds.

Another excellent process is to ask yourself "when in my life did I resist feeling _____? Go through each of the four categories, fear, disappointment, discouragement, and anger. Since we must all

experience each of this universal quartet, if you are unable to recall feeling one of them, watch out! It's just around the corner to remind you of your humanness.

I'M NOT REALLY ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

Choosing a role model is an activity that has been in existence since man first became a biped, and perhaps even before. From childhood, we've all had people we've looked up to, wanted to emulate and copy. Sometimes it is an obvious fantasy, while in some cases, we really try to pattern our lives after our role model. Parents are usually the first role models we have. That's why sociologists say, that parenting is such an important task. "I want to grow up to be just like my Dad," is a very common wish. Unfortunately, the opposite is just as common, and the child selects a model that is the exact antithesis.

We claim to have chosen our mentor because of his position, her appearance, his fortune, or her fame. While we make up a myriad of excuses for our choice, the real reason for our selection is - "If I were ___ (whoever my role model is,) I'd be able to feel ___ (something I love,) or never have to feel ___ (something I detest.) No kidding. This is the only purpose in having a fantasy ideal.

Think for a moment of someone you really admire and might like to be. Then ask yourself, "If I were this person, what would I be able to feel, or what would I be able to avoid feeling?" For example, "If I were Michael Jordan, I'd get to feel powerful and important." "If I were Julia Roberts, I'd feel

successful and wanted." "If I were Michael Jordan, I'd never have to feel weak and unimportant." "If I were Julia Roberts, I'd never have to feel like a failure, or feel unwanted."

Michael Jordan has said, that many times during his life he's felt unimportant. Julia Roberts has admitted that more than once she's flirted with failure. We, however, give our idols certain roles, while denying them others. That's why they're called "role" models. They are playing only the roles in our fantasy that we want to see.

This is not to suggest that there is anything wrong with having role models. It's a very healthy practice. It's even healthier and happier if we can experience the feeling with which we have endowed our mentor, without having to follow in their footsteps. Most of us don't want to actually be that person, and go through all their trials and tribulations that we know nothing about. We don't have to live Eleanor Roosevelt's challenging life to experience awareness and compassion. If we can just xerox the feelings, we won't have to trade identities.

PROCESS #13

Picture yourself as though you were your ideal role model, and experience the feeling that you believe them to have. Take at least one minute to revel in the experience. Feel it in every part of your body, your chest, your arms, your hands and legs. Then let the image of the person go, but keep experiencing the feeling.

You don't have to be Donald Trump to feel affluent. You can do it on your own, any time you want. The more you practice this process, and the longer you practice, the more you will allow your feeling to surface, and the more you will make it a part of your own role.

As for the flip side, think of a situation that mirrors a feeling you don't like. Again, experience it, let the situation go and keep the feeling. Why do you want to bring up a feeling that you don't like, and don't care to experience? So that you can recognize first hand, that the feeling doesn't come from 'out there.' You might like to jump from a feeling you don't like to one that you do and back again. You will not only think but experience how feelings are a part

of your life, and it originates with you. In other words, THINGS DON'T HAPPEN TO YOU, BUT THROUGH YOU.

Feelings are like cards on a Rolodex. The Rolodex keeps turning and the feelings keep changing - unless we start resisting. Then the Rolodex sticks, and the next feeling is held back. Once the feeling that is stuck is no longer resisted, the Rolodex starts turning again, and we're free to move on. If, however, we'd prefer to fight and resist, rather than doing something else, we can stay stuck as long as we wish. If we're totally dedicated, we can turn resisting and fighting into a way of life. We all know people who have.

There is an old saying that suggests that what we see in others, simply mirrors what we like, don't like, or even deny in ourselves. It might be interesting the next time you are suddenly drawn to someone, or put off by them, to remember this. Nothing to do about it. Just watch, observe and be aware.

To further enhance your ability to be conversant in the language in feelings, you might spend a minute or two each day acknowledging to yourself "here and now I feel _____" or "here and now I'm fighting feeling _____." It's a superb way of becoming aware of just what you are feeling at any given moment. You'll

also be surprised at how quickly your feelings change - almost faster than you can name them. Never again will you honestly be able to say, "I've been feeling _____ all day."

THERE ARE ONLY FOUR ACES IN ANY DECK

It would be nice, wouldn't it, if the cards the universe dealt us in life, were four aces and a single suit run. Unfortunately, that is not always the case. Religious people claim that "This is God's will." Fatalists say, "It's predestined Karma." Some say, "It's the chosen lesson." Others, "It's the luck of the draw." Whatever the belief system, the workable components leave us with only two directions. We can play our best with the cards we are dealt, or we can try and change our hand.

All of our teaching leads us to expend our energy on the latter. "Make something different of yourself." "Don't ever settle for anything less than what you want." This is the popular method, 'If you don't like something, change it for something else.'

The current belief system is, 'If you accept a situation that is not exactly the way you want it, you are doing it with resignation.' For the average person, any situation that doesn't fit into his or her paradigm has to be changed, ignored, denied, or at the very least, lived through stoically. This type of behavior leaves us incapable and unprepared to deal with any part of life that's not to our taste. We become emotional dilettantes, inexperienced at living a full healthy life.

Attempting to live only with expansions, and no contractions is unrealistic. We see physical challenges as deformities, emotional challenges as retardation, and financial challenges as bad luck.

The alternative to this futile behavior, is the process of taking 'what is,' and making it interesting and fun. As for this being resignation, nothing could be further from the truth. Resignation is simply resistance with no energy behind it. Acceptance is taking a less-than-asked-for situation, and turning it into something desirable. That takes talent, creativity, guts, and most of all - trust: Trust that everything happens, not necessarily for the best, but for us to experience, to work with and learn from, so that we can better understand and enjoy the next hand dealt to us. This may be a totally foreign concept to many people, but it's a lifesaver to those who employ it. They have learned to see challenges as opportunities to discover and investigate. They also let go of the fear of possible uncomfortable situations, since they play with the situations, rather than trying to change them.

When you consider that the highest rate of suicide occurs among the rich and famous, who have more opportunity to control situations than most, working and playing with 'what is' doesn't look like such a bad alternative. Let's say that life is a game, and for the sake of the metaphor, a card game. If we learn how

to play each hand with interest and finesse, rather than folding every time we have a less than ideal hand, by the end of the game, we will have won much more, and had much more fun.

PROCESS #14

Whenever you feel you've been dealt a bad hand, follow the dragon tracks to the feeling you're running from. Remember, it's never the situation that's really bothering you, it's the feeling behind it. Once you've discovered the feeling you're trying to avoid; then fuss at it, yell at it, swear at it, tell it how you are going to totally destroy it - the feeling, not the situation. Do this out loud. If you feel foolish, remember that there are probably two billion people in the world who are feeling exactly as you do this minute. After one full minute of chastising, congratulate yourself on how well you've been fighting the feeling. Tell yourself how good you are at fighting, and how splendidly you have been performing. Do this out loud also, for at least thirty seconds.

By then, you will be able to see the situation with much clearer eyes, and creatively find things in it that you can play with and learn from. The next time this hand comes up, you won't feel as much like a victim, as dealing with an old friend. Whatever you do, don't ever try to make the feeling go away. Instead, once the feeling has been identified, the best way to integrate it and make it a part of your process

of living is to breathe that feeling into yourself. Take a deep breath and breathe the experience of that feeling in. It is a part of who you really are. Attempting to destroy it, or deny it, can only cause pain and discomfort. Breathing it in is a way of accepting a very human part of yourself. Trying to make any feeling go away diminishes you. Accepting any feeling expands, not only the mind, but the spirit as well.

If you are constant in this practice, you will find that you are not as easily thrown by unpleasant happenings as you were before. Once you have uncovered and made friends with the real culprit behind the scenes, the universe will stop dealing you the same hand, time after time.

THE BIG C,s

If it's true that joy and peace come from being a part of all there is, and pain and loneliness come from being separate, then why do any of us in our right minds choose the latter? The only acceptable answer would have to be that we don't recognize that we are doing it. We think we're connecting and merging and fitting in, when all the while, our egos, which are committed to separation, are screaming, "I my, me, mine." While we give lip service to 'us' and 'we,' our egos don't want real partnership for one single moment. In fact, they are terrified of it; like the little wave that was frightened of crashing on the shore, because it believed that it would disappear. It didn't realize that it would still be a part of the whole ocean; that it had never been separate from it. Because of our need to assert ourselves as something different from everything else on the planet, we have slowly, but surely, become estranged from just about everything else on the planet - including one another.

How is it possible to reverse a pattern of which most of us are not even aware? By simple and constant observation. Observation of what? Of habits that we might, for brevity's sake, call 'The Big Cs.' They are the harbingers, the clues, the beginnings of the end result of separation and despair. They are *COMPLAINING - CRITICIZING - CONTRADICTING - COMPARING* and

COMMENTING. One at a time they are destroyers of oneness. Together they destroy all ability to experience reality.

COMPLAINING

Nothing we do in life is more self-destructive than complaining about it. Its not really fun for the complainer, and its tedious, to say the least, for those who have to listen. One interesting side note about the habit of complaining is, that it can become addictive. We all complain now and then. Real complainers, the pros, complain all the time, about everything - the food, the prices, the weather, their health, their family, other complainers, life in general. One of the funniest dialogues is between two complainers trying to top one another about how much more each one has to complain about. Its a veritable contest in which the most miserable one wins.

One of the problems with complaining is that, not only is it less than pleasant to hear, but the complainer is so busy resisting what is unacceptable, that there's no energy left to enjoy the rest of the acceptable things around. Complaining is basically saying, "This is not the way I want it, and it's not acceptable. I want my will to be done."

CRITICIZING

Criticizing is very much the same behavior. It presents the same resistance, the same unacceptability, the same separation. The big difference is that criticism usually purports to be a universal judgment, while complaints are merely the judgment of the complainer. I. E. "This steak is too rare for me. I can't eat it like this. It's barely cooked. Please take it back." The criticizer sounds more like, "What did the chef do, pass a match under the cow? He's a butcher, not a chef." The complainers believe that everything should be the way they want it. The critics believe that everyone concurs with their criticism. The other difference between the two is the change of voice tone. It has been said that complainers are just critics who whine. In either case, the joy and discovery of what is, or what might be, is immediately traded for what should be and isn't. The result is that neither the complainers nor the criticizers are ever able to experience the reality of anything outside of what they want, and where they have set their standards. They consequently live a very limited existence. The multitude of all the things that life can present, will forever elude their notice.

CONTRADICTING

Contradictors are very close cousins of the complainer and criticizer siblings. However, instead of choosing to be separate by resisting what they consider below standard, the contradictors choose to separate by resisting what they consider incorrect. 'Not good enough' is the foe of the complainer and criticizer. 'Wrong' is the mortal enemy of the contradictor. Contradictors are adamant, positive, didactic. They are not, however, always direct. Remarks like, "Are you going to do that?" as though 'that' was something totally incorrect, is one example. "Strange, I was always told the opposite," is another. The contradiction is not blatantly obvious, but the covert message leaves one wondering if the contradictor really means to be confrontive. Those who contradict, who are steeped in right and wrong, are interested only in the extreme ends of the spectrum of judgment. They deal only in black and white, and since reality is all shades of grey, their reality too, is limited. They set up a duality with 'either - or,' and totally loose all the 'ands' and 'alsos' in between.

COMPARING

Of all the clues of separation, none is more insidious than comparison. It instantly splits, 'this one,' and 'that one' into two total opposites, then getting to any similarity, or seeing

the connection between them, becomes increasingly difficult. It also keeps the one comparing out of the moment. Comparing yesterday's meals with today's, or last years vacation to the present one, doesn't allow us to fully appreciate, or completely investigate what we're experiencing right now. As a result, we are left unsatisfied. Have you ever noticed how people who are constantly comparing, are seldom satisfied? They are always left wanting. Acquiring and having are not the same thing. We become a part of whatever we have. We are still separate from what we acquire. That's why we have to have more, and, of course, the very best. More about this in the last chapter.

COMMENTING

Like it's predecessors, commenting is something we all do. We must! All the Cs are an important and necessary part of our lives. It's when we do them out of resistance, out of a lack of acceptance, and lack of awareness or respect, that it shows us how painfully separate we are feeling. None of the Cs are the cause of separation. They are the clues, the hints to the discomfort and limitation we won't often reveal. Commenting on everything said, needing to put in our two cents on every subject, every conversation is a flashing light saying, "Hey, I feel separate and disconnected. Maybe if I make a few sounds the feeling will go away." Unfortunately, what we resist persists,

and nothing is less inviting for a connection than a running commentary. Once we learn to trust silence, we find that it can join and meld things far greater than any words.

All the 'Big Cs' are precious and helpful clues for us to find a part of us that needs loving, needs to be told it's not separate. Process #15 can help us find that fragile part. Once found the rest of the T.L.C. is up to us.

PROCESS #15

Each day - all day, check for clues (which are really disguised dragon tracks). Notice how often you must comment or contradict. You'll probably be astonished at how often you compare. If you think that you can't monitor honestly, ask a friend or a partner to help you. If they're a good friend, they'll remind you by nodding their head, or saying, "now," not "See you're doing it again." After a few days, you'll start observing your cries of separation. After that, you will probably start seeing how you truly are one with everything that exists. If you take time to enjoy the moment without fixing it, comparing it, or changing it, like the little wave, you'll see that you've been deluding yourself, you've never been separate after all.

THE GREATEST WALL IS NOT IN CHINA

You'd think we would have learned by now, that walls and barriers don't protect us from anything. They just contribute to conflict and war. Even the Great Wall of China didn't accomplish its purpose of keeping the barbarians at bay. The greatest feeling of security was present when the Berlin Wall came down, not when it went up. Still, we keep erecting mental boundaries as though their presence beautified our internal landscape, while rendering us invincible.

We conveniently forget that boundaries, barriers, and walls of any kind, serve one primary purpose - to separate. Once we are separate, we have a valid excuse for our behavior of suspicion and distrust, leading almost immediately to protection, and eventually combat.

We will, of course, deny any aggressive motive in our bid for privacy. Some of us truly believe that boundaries are a bastion of peace. We don't see that our protection racket miscarries into an addiction to separation. Why don't we see? Because we don't want to do what the person on the other side of the wall wants us to do. Think about it! Think of the people who set boundaries. They don't want you to 'step over the line.' They don't want you to 'invade their territory' - or interrupt them 'doing it their way.'

The obvious alternative to putting up walls is to simply say, "no." Those of us who put up walls are either too timid, or feel too obligated, or guilty to straight out say, "no," or "enough." Consequently, we put up boundaries, so that it appears, more or less, against the rules to ask us for anything. There are still a few psychologists who are telling their clients to set boundaries with their friends, and even family. This type of last ditch barricade is only truly effective when the client is incapable of refusing a request. The rationalization is, "If you can't say 'no' to your neighbor, put up a fence." While the suggestion has a certain validity, the resulting lack of participation in life seems like a lop-sided trade off.

The problem with putting up a protective wall, or shield is that, not only can nothing get in, nothing can get out either. There is no flow of give and take, only an incestuous repetition that leaves the atmosphere inside, stale and uncreative. The decision to protect ourselves comes from the belief that there is something 'out there' that is going to hurt us. (Hurt us psychologically or emotionally, not necessarily physically.) However, since, as Eleanor Roosevelt aptly put it, "no one can hurt you without your permission," putting up boundaries with every little concern, seems a bit excessive.

All protection rackets seem to be born from the 'bummer belief' that the world is a dangerous place. It's quite a common

belief too. The fact that after all these years, we're still here, more or less alive, and reasonably well, seems to exonerate the universe's benevolence. The suspicion that the most serious threat to humanity stems from our own actions, in the name of self protection, doesn't appear to count.

Individuals act out their boundary and barrier building in many different and creative ways. Sometimes they come across as disinterested, sometimes as aloof, sometimes frightened, even superior. However it is perceived, 'B & B building' is not pleasant for the viewer, and downright unhealthy for the builder. It closes them off from all the things that life has to offer, and while it may be safe, it is also suffocating.

PROCESS #16

There are two parts to this process.

Part #1. - See something you have been resisting on the other side of a brick wall. Slowly and courageously take out a few bricks. Connect with, respect, and accept what you see. When you are comfortable, take out a few more, until you can do away with the wall altogether. This is a very effective process. However, if you are ready to dynamite those walls and come face to face with your ego, try -

Part #2. Do this one only if you feel its appropriate. If its not, save it and use it at a later date. Follow the suggestion in Chapter 9. Find our what you have made more important than being aware and loving. Then, each day, make a concentrated effort and see how close you can come to truly letting go of, 1. all that you think is important, - 2. all that you think you are - and, 3. all that you think that belongs to you.* Once you are able to truly accept all three of them for three whole days, you'll see that all those walls, all those boundaries, all that separation, was created to safeguard things that didn't even need protection.

* Believe it or not, most people find #1 the most difficult.

FILL'ER UP

It stands to reason that, if we don't have a full meal, we'll leave the table hungry. The same thing applies to an experience. If we don't have an experience fully and completely, we're left unsatisfied. As a result, we want more; and if that next experience is limited, we crave still more and more and more. The desire is never ending. The appetite is never surfeited - all because we didn't fully enjoy what was happening in the first place. A complete experience leaves us content. An incomplete experience leaves us discontented.

With the frantic pace most of us keep, very little time is allotted for the savoring of each moment. We have become so busy achieving, collecting and acquiring, that we've all but forgotten how to truly 'have,' to absorb, to appreciate. The presentation of television commercials is a shining example. Many of them are edited at eight different cuts, or shots a second. That's almost faster than the eye can distinguish, and certainly faster than the mind can absorb. Consequently, we retain little bits and pieces of the message, and never fully digest it.

The same is true of today's constant bombardment of information. There is such a vast amount, that there is little chance to really assimilate it, much less turn it into usable

knowledge, and almost no opportunity to transform that knowledge into wisdom.

So, information, the code word, the bench mark of this era, is left isolated as facts, figures and ideas, and not an organic part of our basic experience. The joy, the excitement, the delight in the discovery of one bit of meaningful information, is far greater than a shelf full of unpersonalized Encyclopedic data.

While work is obviously a giant arena for unfulfilled experiences, so are vacations. We are usually so busy with our plans, our activities, that we seldom stop to truly and fully 'have' the moment. We don't 'seize the day.' We don't take advantage of the now. We don't totally 'have' it.

Unfortunately, the same is often true of weddings. The bride and groom become so engrossed in the details, they forget why they're there. They have to wait and see the video tape to find out what really happened.

When people say that they want it all, chances are that if they got it, they wouldn't appreciate it. If they were absolutely 'having' the moment, they wouldn't want any more. The reason they want more is, that they are not 'having' what they already have. They haven't the foggiest notion what fully experiencing means. Consequently, they think that the pleasure

is in the next experience. Furthermore they believe that since they don't have it, everybody else must.

It's truly astonishing how many people honestly have never been aware of having a truly complete experience. One of the most obvious clues is the constant need for acquisition. Frenzied buying occurs when we aren't really having the things we acquire. When we need to buy a lot of things, we are manifesting our inability to really 'have' and truly experience. Unchecked, this behavior can evolve into a very painful habit. Greed itself is the signature of not being able to fully experience. Greed hurts, not only those who are being deprived, but the acquirer as well. Greedy people can never be satisfied. Their lust deprives them of the joy of fulfillment.

The paradoxical irony is that once we do find something that we like, we tend to become completely attached to it, which, also prevents us from totally enjoying it.

Process #17 is the end of the series. It is hopefully not the end of your processing. You will doubtlessly come up with exercises of your own. You'll repeat some of the ones most useful to you, try some of the alternatives, and probably a little of all three. Which ever ones you continue, don't forget #17. It has the potential of bringing more joy to you than you can imagine.

PROCESS #17

Every single day - at least three times a day - more if possible, take the opportunity to fully experience what you are doing, or saying, or eating, or certainly feeling. Seize the moment and experience it totally. See it, smell it, touch it, hear it, feel it, revel in it. Remember, Everything in the world exists in the moment, when only the moment exists.

One little secret. Don't try to hold on to the moment. It's not possible. The minute you do, it disappears. However, if you stay open and willing and receptive, the next moment may be even better.

This is a perfect example of the difference between involvement and attachment. The spice of life is being involved and a part of it. The pain comes from becoming attached to, or identified with, any part of it. In fact, it's safe to say that all pain is the result of our refusal to let go of JUDGMENTS, OPINIONS, PREFERENCE, IDENTIFICATIONS, and EXPECTATIONS.

Recognizing our specific attachments often enough, will allow us the inevitable ability to become dis-attached and free. It never happens according to our schedule, so becoming attached to a time frame isn't a great idea either. This process is one we cannot

control. All we can do is watch ourselves - with absolutely no judgments; appreciate ourselves and our incredible creativity; and love ourselves for the beautiful, stumbling, inept, ever learning precious beings we are.

Once we are able to have the fun of enjoying what we're doing, experience it fully, and then letting it go, we have found the pattern for making miracles.

Your joy in life will
depend upon just what it
is that turns you on.

Your pain will depend
upon how long you hold on
to your attachment.

LAST WORD

Now what? Do we start all over, pick up the ones that seem to need more practice, or are we finished? We're never finished. Not if we wish to continue on the path of awareness and love: awareness of who we really are, and how we fit into the world around us; the joy of being in harmony with the universe and the master plan.

No one can teach us these things, because this is wisdom, and wisdom comes from the inside out, not from the outside in. Wisdom is not external. It cannot be found on the Internet. It requires intuition that by-passes the intellect, and that's what these processes promote. Strengthening the intuition is finding the path to truth and reality - our truth, our reality. The further we delve into ourselves, the more we learn about who we really are, the more we know about the world around us. Once we have become aware, we realize that we are not only connected to every other being in the cosmos, we are, at some level, one and the same; and we are all part of a greater whole.

Finding our uniqueness and oneness is a fascinating journey. That is why processing, and then sharing experiences with others, is twice as helpful. Meeting in a small group every three weeks, is tremendously effective. Not only is it comforting to recognize that we are not alone in our difficulties and

frustrations, but hearing other's ideas often presents alternatives we might never have found by ourselves.

Once the fire of discovery is lit it cannot be put out. It lights our way to the myriad of interesting choices we have along the path. There will, of course, be challenges along the way, as well as endless, unexpected miracles. We all start with the first step, and continue, knowing that we are never alone for one moment. We are always being led. There will be times that we are surrounded by dragon tracks, but if we keep going we will get to the castle, and when we get there - well, no sense spoiling the end. By that time, you'll know anyway.

It's not easy to face our fears, our anger, our ineptitude, or our conceit. However, if we are to see the real miracles that are our birthright, and know the undescribable love that is the path to paradise, we must walk in the footsteps that God has made and we have chosen. One step beyond splat is where we will find Him. It's where he lives.