



# Getting Unstuck: Heal your Life

## Day Ten – Healing to Get Unstuck

*“Healing is the return of the memory of wholeness.” --Deepak Chopra*

When I do a healing session, I’m working with a person’s higher energy frequencies, and as I’m doing it, I feel deep love for that person, even if I didn’t before the session began. It’s the nature of reality at that level; it’s the nature of our reality, despite the confusion notions of that we typically hold in our minds.

I also realize that this person is perfect, a unique, divine creation, simply temporarily separated in thought energy only from the full expression of that divine bliss. The point of the session is to take that person’s energy blueprint and to realign—or reconnect—to those higher frequencies. For healing, it’s about balancing. For reconnections, it’s aligning the continuum from ley lines to chi meridians to universal axiatonal lines. But in each case, the person is opened to the fullness of the universe and that person’s universal self. It’s very humbling for me—I’ve been in sessions where I’m working inside that person’s vortex of energy, the whole process guided by a very palpable archangel version of that person, me just a privileged observer/participant in that divine metamorphosis. What wondrous creations we all are!

That's how I see workshop participants as well. Take "Create Your Own Job," for example. Someone looking for help navigating a difficult job market or a rough economy while searching for a personal niche, even if motivated only by need and necessity, is looking for that return to wholeness, that memory of how we are supposed to be. That's my goal...to help that person's inside energy manifest in outer reality. It's not simply about finding work or income, but about finding one's proper place, that unique fit that energizes that person through love of and excitement about the work. We aren't meant to compartmentalize our lives—we're meant to be whole. Work and play is an arbitrary distinction—or should be.

Or consider "Meditation for People who Can't Meditate." Imagine the frustration of trying to relax, finding it's not happening, and getting more frustrated about that! This is itself a separateness, an unawareness that thoughts and awareness are not the same, that this very frustration makes that distinction, as one is noticing thought as separate, yet clinging to a belief that thoughts equal self. Learning to let the thoughts become calm in their own time, unattached to them, reaffirms the inner core of peaceful reality and connection to all that is, vs. all that swirls in our minds, and again, we become the whole people we always were. And when we can see that, we can see the marvel that is the people around us.

### The Journey and the Unstuck Spiral: breaking through stuckness

For a long time, I only talked *around* my experiences with Reconnective Healing. My local friends knew something had happened, but I never really got into it, fearing they'd just think it strange. Or more accurately, me strange. But why? I've been the bold free-thinker all my life, from musician to writer to alternative business to iconoclastic teacher. When did I start censoring my experiences for the expectations of others? I was in my own way.

I knew it, and took a "Marketing 101 for Holistic Practitioners" from Tad Hargrave of "Marketing for Hippies" for exactly this reason—I needed new ideas and a new perspective. What I kept coming up against was the lack of clarity and clear articulation of purpose and direction. And my own reluctance to just speak my own truth about this. I like to be the rational one in the room...but now I was forced to accept things I hadn't been able to explain—and largely still couldn't. But it's no more rational to ignore what's right in front of me.

I've been talking to friends about my mental blocks over hanging out a healer's shingle, capped finally by talking to my non-New Agey friend Doug about my spinning head and healing and what I was up to and feeling. I also finally filled him in on my experiences over the past year regarding healing. Later, over coffee at the local coffeehouse, he said, "So what is it you do?" Notice--NOT a question about the Reconnective Healing, but about the experience and how it happens. So that's what I explained. We talked about auras and energy fields and connection and balance, often with examples from things he'd experienced and understood--and he totally got it. Totally. He thought that several other people would to, if I explained it like that, and he started brainstorming all sorts of things and situations it might help. Would it help him quit smoking? What about overall relaxation? He thought

probably a lot of people have experienced similar things they're reluctant to talk about, and would find my tale reassuring. Progress.

I really couldn't jump into a practice, because I didn't really know anything about local clients—precisely because I hadn't done anything to try to practice yet, waiting on a business plan. [There's a world of difference between being stuck and just not getting going yet—people often confuse the two.] But I've promoted psychic fairs in the past, and people came out of the woodwork. So I decided to do what my friend Louise told me to do months ago—just put up a flyer in the coffeehouse with my number on tabs and see who comes (after I can start to tailor what I do to this clientele). Before I could do that, I would need a place to park my massage table though. So I called my friend Meredith, who knows everyone around here, and asked where might be good to rent space to practice, and instead of waiting around to think about it, I just emailed her top recommendation to ask. Movement. And Louise gave me homework too—each morning, I'm to look in the mirror and tell myself I'm "An Ageless, Handsome, Intelligent HEALER" (caps per Louise's instructions). No longer would she let me get away with selling myself short. Low cost market research, around a hub, with a plan for what to do with the people once they called. Downside? a few bucks rent. Totally doable.

Did it work? No. So I rethought it and tried something else. That's the process.

Next thought--How would I get unstuck if I took my own book draft's advice? I'd note my feelings reflect my thoughts, and change my thoughts. I'd take action, even small steps, especially small steps. And I'd stop trying to do it all myself and ask for help. So far so good. Now to decide who I wanted to work with. But who are "my people?" Maybe first, I needed to get clearer on who I am and what I want. I thought I knew that, but writing the book (an act of getting unstuck) and taking Tad's seminar (to get unstuck and start my practice) pointed out that I was not as happily settled as I thought--kinda sorta, yes, because I had kinda sorta done what I wanted, and that's what I had, kinda sorta. So...I started talking with Alex Baisley via email, and he pointed out that going through these experiences makes the getting unstuck material all the more real and useful and genuine. I started his Big Dream program as well—let's find out what I really wanted out of life. Then I could better serve the people I found there.

So I changed my thinking on getting unstuck...I've been successful already, early in my career, in music, in writing, in business, in teaching, in living where I want, in innovative ways to work...but that was then. I'm happy...but I had let myself get comfortable in the stagnant sense, and once I got moving again, I realized I wasn't as comfortable in the serene and content sense as I had been telling myself. Getting unstuck isn't a one time thing...it's a spiral, a continuing process, as we continue to grow and to struggle to keep up with that growth. I guess in the end, this is about learning how to do that without making it such a struggle, to enjoy the journey, including through the sticky parts.

And to ask for help--took me a LONG time to learn this. Doing it all ourselves just doesn't

work, and isn't much fun.

Expansion. Continual Expansion. And to share the journey.

How many dreams go unrealized because we're comfortable and unaware? How much growth and passion and joy and progress and benefit to all?

*"Most people aim at nothing in life and hit it with amazing accuracy."* ~Unknown  
(from Alex's site)

KISS.

Keep it Simple. So Easy. And so easy to forget.

There's a wonderful passage in Herman Hesse's *The Glass Bead Game*, where one of the main characters is so stressed over the difficulties of constructing a complicated game for the annual festival that he goes to see his old mentor, the Music Master. He goes expecting help with the complex mathematics and cultural intertwinings in a game at this highest level, but when he arrives, the Master asks nothing about the game at all. Instead, he asks his former pupil about his diet. He asks how much sleep he's getting. He asks about his meditation practice. In short, all things about personal care and sustainable health, mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual. Despite what our egos tell us when we're brain-deep in whatever imagined mess we're sorting through at the time, the way out is simple—return to fundamentals.

As a musician, I know that while talented amateurs practice complicated, flashy musical excerpts for much of their time, professionals spend the same time playing long, slow, even scales and arpeggios. Fundamentals. I remember hearing about an NBA coach who insisted his players practice lay-ups. The players protested they could do that shot in their sleep. "Good!" he responded. "I want to see 400 of them. Go!" Fundamentals. And how do we reach peaceful, deep, spiritual levels of heightened awareness and spirituality? Breathe. Just breathe.

When I was going through the mental and emotional anguish of early sobriety, my AA Sponsor, for all the wisdom he could and did impart about alcoholism and the AA program, spent the bulk of our early time reminding me to get up, eat three square meals, go to bed at a reasonable time, and not to take on too much daily. He actually sat me down with a pad of paper and helped me make a daily schedule—and forbade me to add things to it! He'd call at lunch time and announce, "Eat!" I needed the reminder. And when I claimed I had trouble getting to bed sometimes, he said, "Look—your *dog* knows when it's time to go to bed!" He was right. Keep it Simple.

I learned to watch my emotional states (because I didn't want to risk picking up a drink). And I learned that Grandma was right—somebody needs a nap, have a cookie...these things

have tremendous impact on our emotional and mental state. HALT, we say in recovery—Hungry, Anger, Lonely, Tired. All danger signs. All are out of balance. And all are readily fixed—hungry and tired are easy. Anger we addressed in Emotions chapter. And Lonely is as easy as calling a friend. Ever notice how we don't do that, just when we need to do it? Stop trying to do everything alone—reach out. Simple. Just do it. But we don't.

We need to keep it simple. We'll be happier and healthier, on all levels.

Ever notice that just when we need the help the most, we stop doing the things that help us? Instead, we should be *increasing* these things, not cutting back or cutting corners. That's just insanity, and even in the name of a busy lifestyle, it's counterproductive.

We need to think of healing in a much broader context, a literal WHOLE-istic not just approach, but mentality, consciousness, mode of living. Not just a balance in terms of being able to face the world, but rather a balance *with* the world, and not just ecologically, but one that reflects you and all that you are. Anything less needs healing.

New Mexico Lightworkers recently shared this gem on Facebook:

“In many shamanic societies, if you came to a medicine person complaining of being disheartened, dispirited, or depressed, they would ask one of four questions:

“WHEN did you stop dancing?

WHEN did you stop singing?

WHEN did you stop being enchanted by stories?

WHEN did you stop finding comfort in the sweet territory of silence?”

We are MEANT to be happy, fulfilled, joyous, surrounded by love and friends, working in meaningful ways that make real contributions, to feel vibrant and alive each day, flowing—nay, overflowing with spirit and energy. THIS is our natural state. To accept less means we need, and deserve, healing.

\*We KNOW what works!

*“There is a time in every man's education when he arrives at the conviction that envy is ignorance; that imitation is suicide; that he must take himself for better, for worse, as his portion; that though the wide universe is full of good, no kernel of nourishing corn can come to him but through his toil bestowed on that plot of ground which is given to him to till. The power which resides in him is new in nature, and none but he knows what that is which he can do, nor does he know until he has tried.”*

--Ralph Waldo Emerson, from *Self Reliance*

So how do we put all this information together to get results? How to make it work?

The answer, despite the sensationalized film, “The Secret,” is no secret. It’s been known for centuries, and not simply as some arcane treasure zealously guarded. It’s right in front of us.

I’ve always thought unfortunate Napoleon Hill’s choice of title for his famous book, “Think and Grow Rich.” Get rich books are like fleas on dogs, no rarity, and seldom worth their content beyond enriching the author, whatever the scheme du jour professed between the covers. This book doesn’t belong among that crowd.

Andrew Carnegie set Hill on a mission to uncover the Laws of Success, a philosophy of prosperity, and paved the way for his access to hundreds of extremely successful people, the bulk of them millionaires, back when a million dollars was truly wealthy. What Hill uncovered, despite the prosperity/success orientation of his mission, was the importance of “vibration,” of that positive and very real energy \*not\* as a nice addition to a rich life (in all senses of that term), but as \*the\* essential ingredient to success (in all senses of \*that\* word).

Hill delineated his findings and commonalities in great detail in “Law of Success” in 1925, and his most famous book in 1937. Even then, he was not creating anything essentially new, but rather pulling together what was clearly already known and practiced. My friends—Getting Unstuck is no great mystery. We’ve known how for centuries.

Among Hill’s repeated points, let me stress these.

- 1) Have a “definite major purpose.” You have to know what you want, and you have to want it enough to make it your focus. Anything short of that is going to leave you short, not because you just can’t get a break, but because you aren’t focused on it.
- 2) Have and follow a sensible vision. Be ready to adjust as needed.
- 3) Ask for and use divine help, whatever your concept of it. Hill actually had a panel of imaginary advisors. I did this as a music student—put the best bassoonists in the corner listening as I practiced. It works.
- 4) Don’t go it alone. Let other people help you; ask for help from other people. Carnegie and Hill used the MasterMind group. So do many others. Find people of like mind and compatible interests. Meet regularly. Share. I have a MasterMind group myself. It works.
- 5) Don’t stop. This is the importance of a definite vision/purpose. The stories of people who failed multiple times before success are legion. Keep at it. Learn and adjust. Do it because it’s your passion.
- 6) Help others. The best way to get past your own obstacles is to help others get past theirs. It’s easier to see in others, and you’ll see the same problems you have. Learn from the experience and apply it to yourself. Perhaps write a book about Getting Unstuck!
- 7) Grow. There is no standing still.

## “MUCHNESS”

*“You used to be much muchier. You have lost your muchness.”*  
--Johnny Depp as The Mad Hatter in “Alice and Wonderland.”

I worked for Silo/Alcazar for a while, the largest distributor of independent labels in the U.S. I had been hired for an as yet unspecified purpose, due to the success I had demonstrated as manager of Seven Rays Book Store, then the largest metaphysical book store in the greater central New York State region. I had tripled music sales, I was promoting concerts, and this caught the attention of three distributors. I went to Silo because, well—I wanted to live among the mountains of Vermont.

Once there, my tasks gravitated toward marketing. After much discussion, three approaches were considered: (1) hiring a marketing firm, (2) hiring an in-house marketing director, or (3) embracing the reforms I had been touting for months.

The heart of my plan was simple. We had bins full of promotional copies of records (then literally LP records). Thousands. We had a similar stash of cassettes.

And they just sat there.

One of the key things I did to promote music in the store was to play it. People would hear it, ask about, buy a copy, and ask for similar music. After a while, they just came in and asked me what was new and what I recommended. It works, really well. If Silo set our retailers these albums/cassettes, a few of what they thought their customers would like, sales would increase.

The Silo people, however, were dead set against this. “Who’s responsible for promotion? Why should we be doing this? Why shouldn’t the labels advertise? Or the stores pay for it?”

I continually pointed out that (1) these promo copies were already supplied, (2) serving no other purpose, and (3) by increasing our retailers’ sales, our sales would go up. Who cares whose responsibility it “was.” We would increase both profits and appreciation for the music we sold.

They wouldn’t do it. You can imagine what they said when I suggested we ourselves advertise the product. They went with a marketing manager. They offered me a position in charge of their own retail position. I moved on to work for a major label distributor instead.

But consider—how many of us are just like this? We are waiting to find how to achieve our dreams and goals, but we aren’t using the resources we already have. How many of you have, like me, when you look around your homes, plenty of projects you are going to “get to one day,” and it’s been years now? How much is invested in equipment or tools or resources devoted to these projects just sitting there? We don’t even use what we have—

and we search out more, believing the new resources will solve our problems. They won't—because we are the problem.

Now consider ourselves—we ourselves are our primary resource. Are we using it, and using it well? Or have we “lost our muchness”?

Why are we afraid to step up and shine brilliantly as who we are?

I remember thinking long ago as a music student about the “Mangione conundrum.” I was very much a fan of Chuck Mangione’s music. At the same time, as a critical music student, I recognized he certainly wasn’t the equal of any number of great trumpet players. Why, then, did I like him so much? Why was he so successful? What about his music appealed to us so much? And incidentally, even Mangione acknowledged this at a concert—he was explaining how he won the Grammys one year against a field of major jazz artists, saying “I felt like Mr. Ed in the Kentucky Derby.”

Then I realized what it was—no, he wasn’t the best trumpet player. No, he wasn’t the best jazz artist. But he WAS the best Chuck Mangione, and he excelled superbly at that. This is what I and others heard in his music. And as a music student, this took tremendous pressure off my shoulders. I didn’t have to be the very very best to succeed as a professional musician—I only had to be the very best at what \*I\*, Tim Emerson, was and did. And that I could do.

Can you imagine? What if we all did exactly this? What if we stopped trying to fix other people or other situations and simply focused on fixing ourselves, letting others be the great “muchness” THEY are as we pursue ours?

What if we measured success by how much we danced and sang? This really happened to me once. I was working at a job I liked less everyday, and one of my coworkers said, “What’s wrong?” on a perfectly normal day for me. I asked her why she said that, and she shared, “You’re not singing. You usually sing when you work.”

When’s the last time you sang at work? At home? On a walk? On a date?

You have “muchness.” Unpack it, dust it off, and use it. Celebrate a Muchier You!

## PHYSICAL HEALTH

We’re all interconnected, One with Everything. We are mind, body, spirit. And we can easily get swept up in the wonder of esoteric musings to ignore an important component of all this spirituality and consciousness—our bodies and physical health.

So at the risk of sounding condescending, I not only offer, but also insist, on the following.



### \*Starting your day

Don't just come to finally. Don't just get jolted back to the world by an alarm. Let your day start with purpose and meaning. Have a more or less standard time to rise. Have a routine that includes a spiritually meaningful beginning to your day. Have breakfast, even if that's only an orange or a bagel and coffee—but take time to sit for a few minutes and enjoy the meal, even if just ten minutes. No matter what happened yesterday, no matter what today is bringing, focus your day. The impact on ALL levels of your health will be profound—including attitude and productivity.

*WebMD* offers quite a few useful breakfast tips, stressing its role in improved concentration, better physical performance and coordination. Not only is a healthy breakfast “more nutritionally complete,” but also it offers help lowering cholesterol and controlling weight. “A healthy breakfast meal should contain a variety of foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low- or non-fat dairy, and lean protein.” Or for those on the run, fruit and yogurt, or whole-grain cereal with low-fat milk, or even a hard-boiled egg and a banana. When I find my mind wandering, or that I'm wasting time instead of being productive, I invariably realize “Oops! Skipped breakfast.” I'm working on getting better at this—and it's why I listed it first!

### \*Eat lunch

This is one of the problems with American culture. We typically cram down a quick bite in 30 minutes, fearing the boss breathing down our necks as we watch the clock. Or we shove something down our throats while running errands. Not an approach. This is inherently unhealthy in multiple ways—the foods we choose, the mental and emotional state in which we ingest these, and the complete lack of spiritual awareness in which we do this.

It's self-important. Our immediate concerns are more important than anything else in the universe—including your own long term well-being. And of course, that's just silly. Consider this PART of your busy, productive day—an ESSENTIAL part. Even if limited, give that time real peace and relaxation—no matter HOW busy you are. You will approach the afternoon with FAR more energy, enthusiasm—and productivity.

### \*Set a time for dinner

Eat dinner at more or less the same time each day. Include time to prepare the meal (or to help prepare the meal) without being unduly rushed. Yes, perhaps the kids have to be somewhere, or you just got out of a meeting or errands, but find a way to do it. No. matter. what.

Here's why—it's an interrupter. While my head might be spinning faster and faster with “What am I going to do about this???” dinner preparation ends that process: “I don't know what you're going to do, but right now, you're going to go make dinner.” Force yourself to

stop and go make dinner. You will find everything changes—in particular, far from abandoning your legitimate concerns, you will stop making them *worse*. It's time for dinner. Relax. Share with your household (if you have one). Be nourished, in more than physical ways. Take time to let it settle in.

Then you may go on to your evening, whatever your plans.

#### \*Go to bed

At a reasonable and more or less constant time, go to bed. Your days will have a regular rhythm that is in itself healing and comfortable. And you can't start your days smoothly if you're recovering from the late night before.

Before you go to sleep, take time to round out the day with something spiritually meaningful to you. Meditation, reading, prayer, a walk in nature—whatever you are happy to do everyday, without fail. Thus, no matter what happened during the day, each day ends by bringing you back into a balanced focus.

#### \*Exercise

Whether everyday, or at least three/four times a week, engage in regular, enjoyable, vigorous exercise, at least 30 minutes, with an hour even better. [If you're trying to lose weight, double that—this is a maintenance program; you'll need more to burn extra calories.]

The body is made to move. The lymphatic system, responsible for removing waste products from your cells, is twice the size of the circulatory system, but it has no pump—it relies on the action of the muscles and breathing to work. Sitting quietly continually simply isn't good for you. Movement helps mood as well—move a muscle, change a thought. If you're having a bad day—go for a walk, or a bike ride, or a swim, or a run, or a workout. You'll feel better.

Exercise has numerous benefits. The heart is a muscle, and needs exercise too to remain healthy. Keeping your metabolism running smoothly helps healthy weight maintenance. And a good hour of exercise starts endorphins going. Regular exercise will regulate blood pressure, prevent serious disease (especially diabetes), and increase energy, stamina, and well-being. It also improves your sex life: desire, performance, and pleasure (the heart's not the only organ getting more blood).

You aren't too busy to exercise—you're too busy NOT to exercise. And if you're especially busy—up your exercise. You'll feel better, and get more done.

#### \*What you eat

Different people have different diets, for different reasons, and that's fine—as long as it's

nutritious, delicious, and not excessive. In particular—rich in fruits and vegetables (barring special circumstances). Whether raw or in special preparations, find what you like and make these a major part of your diet. Certainly no one gets too heavy eating fruits and vegetables. Learn to appreciate the sweet, rich tastes of these foods once you've stopped dulling the palette with heavy foods (and salt). Everything else—in balance, in appropriate quantities.

IF that's a problem...it's not a food problem. Do you see?

When I was a child whining “Mom! I'm hungry! Can I have a cookie?” she would tell me to eat an apple, and if I complained I wasn't hungry for an apple, she replied then I wasn't really hungry.

What these signs. If food isn't the issue, what is? Separate it out so it can be resolved appropriately.

The same goes for sudden loss of appetite. Recognize the early warning sign, and address it early. If, for example, it's the onset of a minor illness, rest up early, rather than waiting to get full-blown sick. Learning just early signs has kept me very healthy for years now. I get “border-line sick” for a few days, instead of knocked on my ass with a wicked cold for two/three weeks.

\*Alcohol

A little is fine (unless you have a problem with alcohol, and need to stay away from that first drink). A glass of wine. A beer with dinner. Even two. But if you're relying on alcohol nearly every day, or drinking to excess from time to time, you are covering up things that need healing, and in these cases, alcohol is only making things worse in the process.

Address your real problems. Take a close look at the chapter on addiction. Trust me, I realize how difficult this is to see, let alone admit. But the truth is, we need very little alcohol, and we can get even that easily from natural sugars and starches. We all have things to face—don't cover them. It doesn't help.

\*Cigarettes

This is a tough addiction. But a very harmful one. Stop rationalizing, and quit.

Remember that first cigarette? Typically, someone offers one, and after taking a drag, your eyes water, you cough uncontrollably, you turn green—your entire body is telling you this is a very, very bad idea. And then you take another drag. This is not a logical process. Totally peer pressure rationalized. It's not cool—it's conformity. You don't need it to relax—it's actually making you tense. Not to mention high blood pressure, either now or in the future.

Replace it with deep breathing. You get the same relaxing effect, without the ill-effects.

Have a plan to deal with the cravings. As your lungs clear, you'll feel better. Much better.

#### \*Drugs

If you're still telling yourself pot is an herb, and therefore good for you, grow up. Belladonna is an herb. Don't eat it—it's deadly poisonous.

You cannot balance your energy healthily while distorting it, whatever the drug. Medical drugs are to temporarily change the body chemistry while it's in a state of imbalance—not to alter a healthy body.

If you're in need of drugs, or turning to them for recreation, something is wrong. Fix the something that is wrong, rather than running from it (or pretending it isn't there).

#### \*Caffeine/sugar

According to the Mayo Clinic, 2-4 cups of brewed coffee a day will do a healthy adult no harm. At the same time, caffeine works by squeezing your arteries like a garden hose, and it's not the healthiest, most relaxing way to accomplish alertness. I'm not preaching—I do my two cups a day, supplemented by a fair amount of decaf (which still contains some caffeine. Still, mayoclinic.com notes even moderate amounts can contribute to insomnia, nervousness, restlessness, irritability, stomach upset, fast heartbeat, and muscle tremors. I found that cutting back improved my sleep tremendously, and that caffeine after noon was a no-no. On the other hand, one of my friends drinks coffee with double shots of espresso all day long without ill effect. Know thyself.

Sugar is a drug. Craving, bingeing, withdrawal, sensitization—all part of the sugar experience. If you'd like to feel better, cut back on refined sugar. Use honey (as long as it comes from local source so you're sure you're getting actual honey) where you need sweeteners, as honey is a food (discounted the highly refined commercial kinds). Eat fruit—if you're not tasting the delicious sweetness of the fruit, you are definitely eating too much sugar. Use fruit to sweeten dishes. And when grabbing a snack—choose fruit. As a child, when I used to tell my mother I wasn't hungry for an apple, just for cookies, she'd tell me, "Then you're not really hungry." Separate cravings, and replace them with healthy eating, to when eating an apple is a treat.

### BEYOND PHYSICAL HEALTH

We often think of "health" as merely the absence of illness and limited to physical health. But far more than that contributes to our true health—not simply a "well-rounded" approach to life, but rather embracing the quality of our lives as symptoms of our real health. Consider these crucial points, all too often overlooked.

### \*Friends

Life is not about working and struggling. Anything else is a distortion. More than one study has concluded we could enjoy all we have now by working three hours a day—something we can demonstrate both through observing “primitive” cultures and by separating productive activity from merely trading activity in our own economy. That means changing some basic assumptions.

Here’s a good barometer—do you have regular time for your friends? If not, make it. No one sits up on a death bed and wishes for more time at the office. Spend time with your special people, and lots of it. This is what life is about. We are social creatures, and we’re living naturally when we’re laughing and loving and caring and listening and, well...living. If this is not part of your life design—it’s time for a redesign!

### \*Down time

We all have busy days. But if every day is busy busy busy, we’re out of balance. Frankly, many of us (including me) have hidden behind work without recognizing that’s what we were doing. And if we’re hiding, just what are we dodging? Time to recognize this red flag and step back to address it. Something other than scheduling is going on.

We all need regular rejuvenation. A few weeks vacation each year isn’t going to do it. Neither is a day off work once in a while. This important element of living is...important. If you’re living to work, you’re not living. Work on that!

### \*A Healthy Environment

What surroundings are right for you, work and home? Are they supportive of who you are and what you’re about? Are they comfortable? Do they energize you? Do others find your space attractive and relaxing? What lifestyle enriches your spirit? What would it take to incorporate this into your life not in the someday future, but now? Don’t live for the future—the time is Now!

These questions have no “right” answers. But they DO have important answers. I know people who are driven and thrive on the busy vibe of a booming city environment. I *can* do that, but day after day, it makes me jittery, and I long to escape, to get away. Those people would find my environment dull, insanely boring, without inspiration. Other people would find that, like me, my country setting is beautiful, relaxing, inspiring, invoking my best qualities, sparking insights, engaging my full energy, and leaving me charged and alive at the end of the day.

Additionally, how does your environment impact the people you work with, or interact with throughout the day? How about the people you live with (if you live with people), your family, your friends, your love? Does it resonate with them as well? If partnerships in all

areas of your life are in balance, this should be in sync. And if not—take a look at the contrasts, as they are flagging areas that need attention.

### \*Getting Organized

Yes, I hear you—all these tips sound good, but how can you possibly fit them all in?

First, don't see it as disparate details.

Make a “dream list” of all the things you want/need to fit into your life. Forget about practicality just now—get it all down. Ask your “Inner Rebel” for things you've long shoved aside...you'll be surprised what you've forgotten is important to you!

When you're done, look for things that can be combined. Could part of your busy day be done while enjoying the sunset from your back porch? Could you and some friends have coffee/breakfast in the morning before work? Could that conference call happen while you're on a stroll along a stream?

Be careful you don't just pack more work into your day—I'm not suggesting you increase your multitasking. However, you might well be able to do some of that “I can't I have to work” time and fit in things that lift your spirit and energy.

Second, what's most important?

People are more important than things. But which people matters. Family, significant others, friends—when these people need you, be there. The rest will wait. But miscellaneous email, calls, requests, “emergencies” that aren't, urgent pressures on your time for unimportant things (and you get to define which is which)—ignore or postpone them. You'll be amazed how much of what you “have” to do you really don't. At all.

You'll also find that your business contacts will (generally) understand you putting important relationships first. If you've scheduled time with the most important person/persons in your life, schedule business/work around them, not the other way around, people will appreciate the balance and the priorities. More often than not, you'll hear, “Wow, I should do that. Great idea.”

### \*Progress, not Perfection

OK, now, how to set up your life so it's in perfect balance? Don't.

Seriously, don't. You'll drive yourself nuts. And it's never gonna happen.

So why did I just tell you all that other stuff? Because that's what you're going to work toward. Think of it this way—if someone decides to follow Jesus, does that mean that

person suddenly becomes like Jesus? Or Buddha or Krishna or any other impossibly noble being? Or do they keep working closer to it? Yeah. That's the stuff. Work closer to it.

Here's the hard part, but here's the secret—learn to live joyously incomplete. Love where you are, but appreciate all that you have, all that you are enjoying in this moment.

Come to think of it...shouldn't this be the easy part? Right. Time to heal. See?

I love how Abraham (a group, not a single entity) explain this—imagine you signed up for a river rafting trip. Now, imagine arriving and telling the guide, “OK, we're practical, business-like, result-oriented people. We've got a lot to do. So, how about you just put the rafts in the water, say, 200 feet upstream from the finish, and we'll just bottom line this trip!”

Silly, yes? That's not it at all—you want a ride on the river!

Anticipate the outcome, sure, but enjoy the river journey, moment to moment, in all its richness. Be so busy gratefully enjoying what you have in each moment that you've no time to worry about what may or may not be coming. And make progress down the river. That's it. That's the secret. Progress not Perfection.

So choose your big dreams, your most important elements, remembering that your day needs balance—not all working for “someday,” but living healthy and alive today. The rest can happen a bit at a time.

I love too what Alex Bailey says about setting out on a big dream. Suppose you wanted to travel across the country, and finally, you packed the car and were ready. You'd be excited just pulling out of your driveway! Journey like that. Appreciate where you are, and be excited about where you're going. That makes today's small step worthwhile and energizing.

And small steps matter. Ever have a friend for years and one day you two find you're flirting and in love? Small steps. A page a day is a book at the end of the year. My first album, distributed nationally, was recorded in my home studio 15 minutes a day, squeezed in between my two jobs. I live today in a beautiful, lush spruce forest I planted when I had nothing...one 10¢ tree at a time. Or that seemingly small retirement account contribution that one day is a half a million dollars—how'd that happen? Small steps. They matter.

So seriously—your dreams are here today, if you decide to make them so, and start the journey. And why wouldn't you? Make the most of where you are now—because where you are now has a lot going for you—mainly, you and your dreams.

Enjoy them today!

\*Become comfortable with uncertainty

Though many of us claim we love adventure, most of us like things to stay the same. Even when we are closing in on our dreams, we hold them off, often quite observably, not mystically at all, but without realizing it. Thus, we continually wonder why things aren't happening for us—when we are the problem.

First thing—get comfortable with uncertainty. When we know exactly where we are and how things are going to be—things can't improve. By defending ourselves against what we think we don't want, we also defend ourselves from what we're wanting.

Again—here's a sign we need healing. Why? It's entirely about fear. And those hypothetical fears—which in fact rarely or even never happen—prevent us from growing into what we want, what we are, what we deserve, what we're alive to do.

At each moment, all is possibilities. Only because of uncertainty can that be the case. It's wonderful! Learn to appreciate just how marvelous this is, how rich with promise, how utterly perfect. It's exactly as things should be—uncertain.

\*Allowing possibilities

I once watched a friend who had driven a half day to have dinner with a guy she liked. There was an obvious attraction between them. He had brought her flowers to brighten her hotel room. She accepted them with a "I'll put these in my room...be right back." They talked for three hours over dinner. When he reached for the check, she pulled out her credit card. He politely handed it back, saying she had driven up; he'd pick up dinner. She made a face and took it back. Never once did she say anything close to "That's not necessary, but thanks." And at the end of the evening, when she was obviously melting at his touch, she cut the evening short, saying "You're a half day's drive away."

Now, all that's fine, but this is actually typical for her. Not at all recognizing what's in front of her, not taking time (or notice) to be grateful or thankful, always living for the certainty of what's in the future (something she can't possibly know), and always bringing in (like driving out for dinner) while keeping everything at a distance. And all that's fine too. But she wonders continually why a relationship isn't happening for her. And when she did finally settle into a "relationship" – it was a long distance one, safely on the other side of the country, with neither able to move. How...distant.

A real relationship is never going to happen until she allows it. And that's going to mean allowing uncertainty in her life. Even if she finally meets someone, expecting she can do so with no changes to her life is just unreasonable, let alone unrealistic. She has to allow. Until then, her cuddles are going to be with a phone or a video call from across the country. But honestly—that's what she wants. Safe. Secure. No melding of lifestyles. No changes. All certainty—and all always life with no changes.



\*Breathe

Every mystical teaching, every martial art, every meditation practice, every relaxation technique, stresses breathing. Breathing is stressed in Abraham's "art of allowing" as a means of releasing resistance. Breathing is singled out in Eckhart Tolle's "The New Earth":

*Someone recently showed me the annual prospectus of a large spiritual organization. When I looked through it, I was impressed by the wide choice of interesting seminars and workshops. It reminded me of a smorgasbord, one of those Scandinavian buffets where you can take your pick from a huge variety of enticing dishes. The person asked me whether I could recommend one or two courses. "I don't know," I said. "They all look so interesting. But I do know this," I added. "Be aware of your breathing as often as you are able, whenever you remember. Do that for one year, and it will be more powerfully transformative than attending all of these courses. And it's free."*

Is it really true? Is it really that simple? Tolle adds this:

*Being aware of your breathing takes attention away from thinking and creates space . . . Notice the sensation of the breath . . . One conscious breath (two or three would be even better), taken many times a day, is an excellent way of bringing space into your life. Even if you meditated on your breathing for two hours or more, which some people do, one breath is all you ever need to be aware of, indeed ever can be aware of. The rest is memory or anticipation, which is to say, thought. Breathing isn't really something that you do but something that you witness as it happens. Breathing happens by itself. The intelligence within the body is doing it. All you have to do is watch it happening. There is no strain or effort involved.*

I can offer one practical example from experience.

From high school through college and into my early 20s, my focus was almost entirely on becoming a professional musician, particularly a symphony musician. I studied with professional teachers. Even in college, I drove to New York every two weeks to study with a teacher from the New York Philharmonic. I practiced hours daily. I played with every ensemble I could—starting while I was still in high school with the Syracuse University Orchestra, the Syracuse Symphony Youth Orchestra, a wind quintet, and a solo performance at the Everson Museum of Art—not to mention my various bands and pick-up gigs (especially musicals). Point is—I was into this big-time. Not a mere hobby or pastime.

Over and over, as I struggled to perfect my command of this art, evening out all those scales, the spaces between notes, the smooth arc of the phrases, subtle techniques to blend and bring out the nuances in music, I kept hearing the same thing—pay attention to your breathing.

It was very frustrating. Why wouldn't they just tell me how to *really* do these things? Come on—I *was* paying attention to my breathing! And I was working really hard! But that's all I could get out of them—breathe! They were even quite adamant about it—one lesson in New York, as I set out to play my meticulously prepared piece for my teacher, he stopped

me after two notes: “Breathe first!” Ok. I started again. Big breath. Two notes. “OK, let’s get the interval exact.” I tried. “Yes, that’s it. Start again.” I did. “BREATHE!” You get the idea. In a later lesson, I got out my reed, tooted a note or two, and he interjected, “Breathe first.” I explained I wasn’t playing, that I was just checking out the reed. “Why do it wrong, ever?” he asked.

Damn. A habit of breathing right...reminded me of *Zen in the Art of Archery*, of paying attention to the small things so that they would reflect in the larger things. I did it—took time, but I treated this as a sacred part of playing. And I kept working and struggling. And breathing, damn it. Sigh.

Then one day, it happened. Everything just clicked. All those years. I was just playing, and I became entirely connected to breath. It was everything. All technique flowed from it. If I was struggling with a difficult passage, I deepened my connection to breathing, and it became easy. Just. like. that. Just as my professional teachers had told me. It was in the breathing. Today, on stage, something gets going too fast to play—I breath, and play it, like I’ve never been able to before—perfectly. And it’s not “me.” It’s breathing. It really, really, is.

We know that breathing helps us focus and calm down. So why do we wait until we’re scattered and worked up? What if we breathed perfectly all the time? What immeasurable benefit would that bring to daily life? I don’t mean also meditative breathing—when running, breathe appropriately. When having passionate sex, breathe appropriately. When laughing hysterically, breathe appropriately. But whatever is happening in the Now, breathe. Just notice your breath. Notice how it feels. Let it be. Let it balance. Let it heal.

\*Allowing instead of doing

Like many people, I was raised to work hard to get ahead. And I did. Work hard, and get ahead.

But get ahead of what? I had to look around and realize I just wasn’t enjoying my life. That lead to a series of changes and rethinking and redoing that brought me step by step to the work I do today. But I still insist on doing more than I do allowing. I still insist there just isn’t time—when I know there is. I worry about things that just haven’t happened...but hey, they *might* happen—then what? I don’t know...they’ve never happened. This worry gets in the way of accomplishing things, even when focused on doing. But it also gets in the way of joyfully living who I am.

There’s an old joke that claims successful people are just people too dumb to know their ideas would never work. We all overthink things, instead of letting them flow from our spirit and being, instead of joyfully following our path, instead of letting them happen in the wondrous unfolding of our meant-to-be fulfilling lives.

What would you do if you knew you couldn't fail? If the answer is anything other than exactly what you're doing now, there's room for healing, for fear is interfering with allowing. Step by step, let it go, getting lighter every day.

### \*Letting Go

I, probably like you, am a product of my culture, and that culture values hard work and earning what comes to us. Not a bad value, really—but a limiting one.

Remember Winnie the Pooh? Pooh and Rabbit are discussing poetry, and are very much at odds about how to go about composing a poem. Pooh likes to just let the words come to him, while Rabbit “prefers to go out and fetch them.” We are a culture that likes to go out and fetch. We are, to paraphrase a Zen story, sitting thirsty on the banks of the river.

But this is firmly ingrained. I understand intellectually the importance of letting go, and have experienced it from time to time, yet I still insist that I will need to go and fetch things. I'll bet you do that too.

So what do we do?

Ever get that feeling that we're just so close? Standing right next to who we really are and really can be, just about to realize it, if we would just open our eyes and see, open our hearts and let it be, open our minds and stop stopping it, albeit unintentionally?

I was sitting around one evening at an AA meeting thinking about my dreams, fears, plans, how-the-hell-do-I-proceed, things like this, when a friend reminded me and the group about allowing, about letting the divine steer, about an epiphany I had last year about all that, one she has now had. When removing our defects of character, those qualities we want to improve, think not just in terms of “fixing” ourselves, but in terms of growth, of letting the divine remove the less desirable traits so that our better traits and nature can grow up through. It's a continual process of growth and renewal of self, one guided by our highest natures, ever revealing them more and more, and with this growing awareness, the gradual cessation of fear, doubt, and worries. These just stop making sense, and happiness, hope, and trust in the process replace them.

Add to that what Alex Baisley told me in one of his seminars, when I shared about what it's like for me in a healing session, about how I see the person's divine self. No matter who they are, or how well I know them, once in the session, I feel deep love for them. How could I not? I am there in their energy, seeing their highest selves—and they are beautiful creations of spirit. Alex's point was about creating an experience for people, about my contribution when seeing people this way. After all, who doesn't want to be seen as the incredibly amazing beings of love they truly are! I can see Alex's point at work in whatever endeavor--like in a job workshop, seeing people as the potential they are, what they can really contribute, for example.

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So how do I do all this?

I let go. And then it's time to let go again, but more fully; let go, and let the divine. Stop worrying. Ask, and let the next right thing, the next right person, the next right opportunity just come and grow naturally as it's supposed to be. I want to truly live this way, and I want to help others who do too, to see what they can be, nay, what they already are, if they would just allow. I have to become comfortable with uncertainty. I have to let go, really this time, and rejoice in turning it over, glad to finally be on my way. How do I do something like that? Stop. Breathe. Trust. Let go. Let it happen. Grow where I'm planted. The next chapter of life will be before me in its correct form and timing. Let go.

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### \*Getting Past Projection

If you're like most people, you've got a flock of "what-ifs" flying around your head. All things that haven't happened, may never happen, and certainly aren't happening Now. Planning ahead is one thing, but the time and energy we spend on worry—a very different thing from real planning—is not only a waste, but also an actual moment to moment creation of exactly what we don't want. So what do we do?

First, once again, breathe. We don't project into the future about our breathing; we don't relive past breaths. We just breathe in the Now. It's a powerful focus, and there's a reason it has been so strongly associated with spirit in cultures globally. Like the song says, "Breathe. Just breathe."

Next, perhaps consider looking at time in the following manner.

We know from Einstein, again, at least intellectually, that time and space are different dimensions of the same continuum. We have no trouble with the idea that we exist in three physical dimensions and then move from space to space through time. OK. That's why we're always playing our journeys, our strategies...when we get "there," things will be good, so all our energy goes into that imagined necessity. And, of course, we complicate it tremendously. As Twain said, "I'm an old man, and have been through many troubles, most of which never happened."

So let's consider instead of Space/Time thinking of our world as Time/Space. Instead of stepping from space to space through time, suppose we step instead from time to time within the same space. What would your journey look like then? Where would you be going?

"One day" would be meaningless, because you could just step there. But what if all your "nows" from all your times were about one day getting somewhere else? Where could you comfortably land? And remember, we're constantly growing and changing, including our needs and desires and goals. Would there be a "there" anywhere?

That's the hell we create for ourselves when we live anywhere but the Now.

Imagine instead we appreciated each moment, were grateful for the riches in every sense each moment brings, and your journey through Time/Space was a continuum of joyous "Nows" you created at each point. Wouldn't that just be Heaven? Everywhere you go, pure joy!

Breathe. Appreciate. Be present. That's how Heaven is created; that's how "One Day" is created—one day, then another day, then another day, all joyously one day at a time. It's why we live in time. Like music, yes? In time.

\*Combine the physical and the energetic

Yoga and T'ai Chi can be powerful aids as well. Both are physical activities that involve union with energy, whether prana or chi, and along with balancing our selves, they can balance our day to day experiences as well. I find, for example, when I'm up on my T'ai Chi practice, I tend to flow through the normal personal interactions during my day much more smoothly as well.

Don't let spirituality be merely a part of your life. Integrate it into your entire life. The reason is not to be the ideal person—but to be base line practical.

I've recently started a practice I recommend. Each morning, I have a meditative "Staff Meeting" with Jesus, Buddha, Kwan Yin, my Inner Rebel, and anyone else who feels a need to attend. You will be amazed what comes out of such a regular practice. Crazy? Tell that to Napoleon Hill, Andrew Carnegie's protégé of "Think and Grow Rich" fame. Hill's research into what creates success, a philosophy developed through interviewing several hundred highly successful people, stressed heavily the importance of a spiritual "vibration." And Hill himself met regularly with an imaginary board of directors in charge of various aspects of his life and career. His own accounts in his books and lectures are fascinating—I recommend them highly.

Life is not supposed to be such a struggle. Relax. Breathe. Allow.

If enough of us learn to do it, we can perhaps turn the cultural winds to our backs and fill our sails.

\*Time keeps on slipping, slipping, slipping...

Does it seem like time is getting faster? Like you keep doing the same amount of effort, but getting less accomplished for that effort? You're not alone—it's a common perception.

What's actually happening is that, just like the physical space of our universe, time is

expanding, and this makes it appear to be moving faster. We are also in a shift of ages and of time, corresponding with a universal shift in consciousness.

So this is another reason to focus on allowing—the time when “doing” was productive is dying out. Instead, it is time to focus on who we truly are inside—not so easy when we’ve all largely suppressed that in response to perceived limitation and conflict. But those dreams and wishes and hopes and desires are not dead—they are merely covered up. It’s time, more and more, to open again and let them blossom.

That—will mean conquering fear. All obstacles, really, are excuses. We can get around limitations we choose to overcome. Nor am I minimizing the serious difficulties many people face. I’m saying we can choose to give in or choose to get by them. If we accept as a choice, a choice we’re truly at peace with, inner peace, then fine. But far more often, that “choice” is really an excuse to run and quit. Healing is learning to stop letting fear run the show. It’s not real.

#### \*Light, Love, and Growth

Above all, my healing work has repeatedly shown me this: we are light and love. We are never alone. We are part of something much greater that transcends our usual sense of self. Negativity, a product of the mind, is an illusion. We live in a positive flow. Call it Tao. Call it Grace. Call it God. But to pretend it doesn’t exist is denial.

Look at the natural world, how smoothly its creations live. One of Stewart Wilder’s books suggested considering how a tiger thinks. Does it get up in the morning and think, “Damn. I’m so depressed. Every morning, I have to drag my furry butt out of my den and go hunting for breakfast. And it always tries to run away. Being a tiger Sucks!” No. That would be silly. It just calmly goes about its business of being a tiger. Even in the rain. And on Mondays.

Alex Baisley suggests we are like oak trees, always growing. Can you imagine a tree saying, “Gosh, I try SO hard to grow, and I just never seem to get ahead!” No. It grows EVERY year, continually—some years more slowly, but continually, its entire life. It’s growing or it’s dead. Why are we any different? We are not the static entities we like to pretend. It’s a lie. And it’s silly. If we are living, we are growing. The only question is how and on what path. In fact, we cannot STOP ourselves from growing. That we imagine we can is where the healing needs to start. Look at the tremendous mental and emotional prisons we build for ourselves to continue this illusion. And why would we want to? We’re afraid of what will happen when we do.

Here’s the thing—we can’t stop it. There’s no reason to stop it. Grow. Be who you really are---REALLY are. Be joyous and free. Realize dreams no one imagined were possible. Only you are the special entity created for exactly your wonderful purpose.

Set aside the fear. Set aside the mental and emotional confusion. Listen to the Love and the Light. Shine. Shine. Shine.

It is why we love you.

## WHEN TO STOP

With all this talk of allowing and growing, when is it time to just stop? I'll share a few lessons I've learned, about when to stop, and just what to stop.

### Lesson One:

When I first got my husky, then ten weeks old, I set up a puppy area in the kitchen, a safe place for her when I was at work, by blocking the hallway with a 4' high piece of plywood. She took one look and effortlessly sailed over the counter through the open area into the living room. OK. I puppy-proofed as much as possible, and left her the run of the place, ignoring her yips as I left for work. When I came home, she was lying outside—she had managed to break an outside door. I fixed it as much as possible, placing a 4x8 sheet of plywood in front. When I returned, she was inside—and the place looked like a cyclone had hit it. The day after that, she was outside again—went through a window. When the weekend hit, I decided to try short trips to calm her separation anxiety—15 or 20 minute trips to the store. On one, she toppled a wooden bookcase and reduced it to toothpicks. I'm not exaggerating. On another—she went through another window.

OK. Outdoor dog, from then on, at least when I'm not home. Since she was such a good jumper—and digger—I knew my fence would never hold her. I built a lean-to/doghouse, bought some hay for bedding, plenty of waterproof toys, and got her a 20' lead of vinyl covered aerial cable—just long enough to give her some room and some shade without getting tangled around the trees. That is, until she tore the lower branches off the trees. I also learned to regularly inspect the cables—she broke a few and went on a neighborhood spree for hours.

At six months, she was due for spaying. This meant she would have to stay inside afterwards for a few days until the incision healed; lying outside was out of the question. I was also supposed to keep her quiet. “How am I going to do that?” I asked the vet. “Well...relatively quiet.” OK. I bought a large metal dog crate and set it up in the kitchen. I picked her up from the vet as late as I could—she was yelping and yelping in the kennel when I got there, and had been all day. She was calm when I was home, but she definitely didn't like the crate idea when I left for work in the morning.

When I came home, she was outside the crate. She had banged and banged against the door until the latch lifted enough to let her out. Then she trashed the place again. The next morning, I secured the latch. She was outside the crate when I got home—she had banged and banged against the collapsible crate until one wall caved. And she trashed the place. I

secured every joint of the crate with wire. She ripped the bars from the welding and bent them back to make a hole and escape. Yes, I'm serious. I decided to risk the chance of infection outdoors.

Now she's a calm dog who (mostly) listens well. And she has the run of the place with an 80' lead tethered at one end. But if I'm ever trapped, I hope I remember to think like a husky—(1) there's another way out, and (2) you give up when you're out.

Lesson Two:

I reached a breaking point while a graduate music performance student at the New England Conservatory of Music. I had a performance scholarship, but living in Boston was not cheap; I was working full time while going to school full time and participating in a number of performance ensembles—and sleeping often just a few hours a night. I drank a pound of coffee a week (for which my stomach eventually sought payback). And finally, as I sorted out all the work for my classes the first week of a new semester, I cracked. Much as I wanted to continue, I couldn't.

And I was fed up too. I had worked so hard for music, gone so far, but it just wasn't coming. It was time to cut my losses. I decided I was done with music.

I got an indefinite leave of absence from school (I later finished at a different college). I sold some of my sheet music. I promised roommates I'd get them what I owed them. And I packed up and moved back to central New York State, with my parents for a few weeks until I could find a new job and a new place. But music was over.

Or so I thought. I was home only a few days when the phone rang—it was the Personnel Manager for the Syracuse Symphony Orchestra. “Can you come and play? We need you for a show.” I had auditioned for the extra and substitute list quite a while back, but nothing had ever come of it. I asked when the rehearsals were. The answer gave me no time—“Tonight. 7:30.” It was 5:00 now. “Show's tomorrow and Saturday.”

Honestly—I didn't want to do it. I was fed up, remember? Done with music! Hadn't even been a week yet. But...I owed my roommates money, and in good conscience, couldn't turn down a chance to get it. So I accepted.

What happened next changed my professional life forever.

Symphonic work is very difficult, but especially, it's stressful. All that's expected is absolute perfection, in a very transparent environment, while thousands of people listen silently while you perform flawlessly and artfully upon demand, one shot at it. Many people can't handle the pressure. Beta-blockers and alcohol abuse are common. That pressure makes performance difficult; what works in the practice room can fall apart on stage. It's one of the major problems student musicians seeking performance careers face. It's why I had



gotten into Zen.

But this night, that all changed. I really didn't want to be there. I wanted to do a good job, yes, but if anyone had a problem with it, here's my horn—you play. I was in no mood to take any nonsense from anyone. But the unexpected result was—the pressure was lifted. And instead of struggling to make it all work—it was all easy. Easy! I was focused on my own task, and not at all on what anyone else thought. In that space, I had talent to burn.

“Third bassoon! What do you have there?” An old conductor's trick—see if the new guy can handle the pressure. But I knew I had played fine, and knew what he was doing. I told him. “G.” Calmly, confident. He paused. “And the next measure?” Again, calm, confident, matter of fact. “G#.” It was a game. He had heard me play. Another pause. He nodded. “OK, continuing on.” And in the next six years we worked together, he never again asked questioned a single note I played. I had passed the test.

But I had never felt so calm, so free, so relaxed, and had never had so much fun playing—especially as the level of my playing had just noticeably jumped up several levels, permanently. This is the day I became a professional musician.

Stop worrying about what other people think. It only drains your energy. You will be far more amazing, and far more praise-worthy, when you just concentrate on what you do, and leave everyone else alone to think what they want.

Lesson Three:

Ever watch people chat about their troubles? Someone will start out about something negative going on at home, or how much an injury hurts, or something else about how bad life is...and the others will chime in with “Oh, that's nothing! In my home, with my injury, in my crappy life,” and go on to relate how their situations are far worse. The person with the most horrible pain wins.

Wins? Really? We want to argue for our pain?

We really do. Stunning, isn't it? We know our pain. We've lived with it for a long time. We've got a committed relationship going. And if we let go of it—worse yet, if we did something to fix it—well, what then???? What if we felt better? THEN what????!!!!

I only wish I were being silly here. But I see it almost daily.

As I write this, yesterday morning a healing patient cancelled. She had done a session previously, to see whether it would help with her migraines. And after the session, indeed, she felt terrific! No more migraine! So we set up a follow-up session a week later, so we could start to get on top of this.

The appointment was at her place, so I packed up the massage table, drove over...and found nobody answering. In a bit, her sister came down, and I told her I had a session scheduled with her sister. She went to go get her, and returned shortly, asking if it would be OK if we cancelled today—because she had a migraine.

“Seems to me that would be all the more reason,” I offered.

“That’s what I told her,” her sister replied.

So I packed the massage table pack into the car, and left my client to suffer in peace.

Not a unique occurrence, unfortunately.

My friend Mike has a number of health issues, among them a bad back—exactly the condition I had cured for me when I first came across this healing work. When he and I talked about what I do, he was very excited. “A lot of guys at the VA could really use your help,” he said, referring to the Veterans’ Hospital, where he is active in support groups. Additionally, he shared that his ex-wife, who is also his best friend, encouraged him to take advantage of the healing work, as it’s not as common up here as it is in her home state. And of course, as a friend, there’s no cost for him.

He can really use this too. As an ex-addict, he has no interest in pain medication. He’s a head chef, so he’s on his feet, often for double shifts, six days a week, which greatly aggravates his back pain.

So how’s the healing going? It isn’t. He’s never had a single session. Even though it’s right here, waiting, for free. He talks about it once in a while, usually to add some silly reason why he can’t right now. It’s OK...he doesn’t have to do it. So we watch him suffer with it, as he chooses.

So what do we stop?

What’s the first rule of the cavalry? If your horse is dead—dismount. Yet, many of us continue to sit on dead horses, waiting for an equine resurrection that’s never going to happen. Get off. Stand up. Walk away. Leave the pain behind. There are other horses.

Another friend of mine reminds people to avoid another common practice—when you’re feeling down or distraught, don’t take the problem to people you know will be judgmental and critical, whether friends or family. “Don’t dial pain.”

Choose to feel better. Choose to get better. Choose to be better. Choose to heal.

## HEALING AND SEXUALITY

We tend to think of health as the state of not being ill, but illness is the extreme of unhealthiness, not the definition. Whenever we aren't living wholly, we stand as less than who and what we are. If we can start to recognize this, and to catch ourselves in the early stages of declining wholeness, we can ward off not only illness but also malaise.

Much has been written here and there about the importance of emotions. In particular, by noticing and monitoring our emotions, we get an honest mirror of where our thoughts are (whether those thoughts are honest or not is another story). By watching our emotional states carefully, we can choose to adjust our thoughts, generating better emotions. This is not simply a matter of feeling better—it's recognizing that feelings are a barometer of wellness. "How do you feel?" This tells us much, whatever our thoughts may make of the situation. In fact, ill thoughts may well be the cause of any ill feeling.

We also recognize in this question the connection between physical and emotional states, both described as how we feel. Our emotions are the tie between our minds and bodies, if it's helpful to think of it that way. But they really aren't separate, as Western science has analyzed them for the last four centuries. They are all intertwined aspects of the same holistic system. It's also why when we are "in good spirits," we are in good health, and happy.

So the role of sexuality is particularly important here. When we're healthy, we have a healthy sex drive. When we're tired, worried, upset, preoccupied, and so forth, libido drops. Certainly it's normal to go through times when life is temporarily a bit out of balance—under construction, so to speak—but this should not become our primary mode. Sexuality is a strong part of who and what we are, and when it diminishes, it's a sign we aren't feeling as whole, and we pull inward.

Nor is aging an "acceptable" factor here. Despite popular myth, my doctor makes pointedly clear that "as long as there are no other underlying health issues, there is no inverse relationship between aging and sexual function. It's a spontaneous reaction, and should happen automatically," adding that people should simply "relax." Then why do so many people seem to experience a decline? We accumulate "stuff" over the years and carry it around in our heads and energies. We don't have to—and in fact, we shouldn't. Sexual desire is one sign we can use to judge just how naturally and fully we're living.

Not that I'm advocating for (or against) any particular view or practice of sexual expression. I am, however, stressing the point that we do not typically live fully, and being realistic, natural, and true to our sexual natures (as well as the rest of our complex beings), whatever we do or don't do about that, will help us see when we need to step back and address the areas preventing us from our full express of life and wellness.

When we listen to our bodies and to our emotions, we have much more immediate and thereby more helpful feedback loop for what our minds are creating. Learning to do this well is a way out of denial, something we all practice, despite what we each may believe to the contrary. We can get past that cycle. But we have to be honest, and we have to be whole.

And again, healing should mean wholeness, not simply recovering from the extremes of illness. If we stopped pushing things to extremes, we wouldn't have the degree of illness we experience today. Happiness should be the nature state. *Anytime* we get up in the morning and aren't happy and vibrant, we should be as concerned as when we wake up ill, and we should immediately set to work to heal, whether that means physical, emotional, lifestyle, routine, balance, rejuvenation, whatever it takes. But learn to life fully—and passionately.

### SELF-HEALING

I took a break from working one day to head out for a day long hike in the Adirondack wilderness. I did this once a week a year or two ago, dubbed “Tim Day,” and it made a great difference in my week; all work and cares would wait for my return the next morning, when I felt better balanced and more clear. I let it slip away when I got extra busy, and decided it was time to reinstate it. When I find myself in my slowest time of year unable to get away because of constant work—something is wrong! I'm continually re-amazed at how many of life's problems are self-imposed.

The day got off to a perilous start—I only remembered last minute that I didn't have to schedule my new client on Saturday, that Monday would do just fine, and of course, I *just* needed to take care of a *few* work items before I headed out...and so “first thing in the morning” became lunchtime. But eventually I dropped everything, except my dog, some fruit, trail mix, and a sub for lunch, and finally headed out.

The long June day still allowed for several hours of hiking before dark, and while not time enough to hike *to* anywhere significant, time walking through the wilderness is fine, very peaceful, very centering, as my racing thoughts begin to slow. Not unexpectedly for such a long hike when I haven't been doing it for a while, about four hours in my body started letting me know. I had been thinking about yesterday's client, a young woman with cervical cancer, who said she “felt a heaviness lifting out” of her midsection. A hopeful sign.

Gregg Braden, author of “The Divine Matrix,” posted a video online showing stunning evidence of his research, a case from a “no-medicine” hospital in China. In the clip, an X-ray of a bladder cancer patient is shown next to a sonogram, while three assisting doctors create the feelings in their own bodies that the patient is already healed, chanting “already done” to aid the creation of this feeling (Braden stresses the *feeling*, not the *words*, are the important factor). The sonogram shows the tumor shrinking to nothing in just a few minutes. Braden explains this is not an outlier—the main doctor has similarly treated “over 180” other patients successfully, and that this is done throughout China.

Bruce Lipton, author of “The Biology of Belief,” has done amazing work with understanding how our cells interact. A cell is already a complete organism, able to live by itself, feeding, “breathing” oxygen, and eliminating wastes. Alexis Carrell did just that—by daily changing a solution containing all the nutrients needed for life (thus eliminating the wastes), he kept cells from the heart tissue of a chicken embryo alive for 29 years (at which point one of his assistants neglected to tend to the changing, and in the polluted lymphatic fluid, the cells finally died). After 29 years, however, Carrell was convinced they could have lived forever. Lipton points out that if diseased cells are taken out of an ill person and kept in a petri dish, the cells recover once out of the negative environment. The cells are fine—it’s the person who’s not.

My nagging muscles complained more loudly. Still a few hours of hiking to go. I thought about the time I worked on Doug. He had snowmobiled into his camp for the weekend, 15 miles into the Adirondack wilderness (different spot than where I was—his is all private land), as there’s no road going in that far. Trouble was, it was very late winter, and the snow was both deep and soft. On his return to the main road, the snowmobile kept sinking into the snow every 20-30 feet, and Doug had to get off, hoist the snowmobile back, to travel another 20-30 feet—for 15 miles. Quite a workout.

“I thought somebody was going to have to help me out of my truck,” he said about the moment he finally arrived home. He could barely move. But we had already set up a short series of healing/reconnection sessions to help him as he quit smoking, and he showed up for his session. Tired, moving slowly, but there. The next morning, he told me later, “I slept like a baby all night, and at 6:00, got up and felt terrific—not sore or stiff anywhere!” It was a story he repeated a few times to others (who became clients shortly thereafter). I thought about this as I felt my own pain and stiffness grow.

I had just grabbed a shoulder bag, not a backpack, and even alternating sides, my shoulders and sides were feeling the strain. My legs were tired, and my feet hurt—not helped by the decision to wear flat canvas boat shoes instead of supporting hiking footwear. I had also been thinking about how reluctant people are to go for healing help, even when they’ve already experienced the benefits. They’re often hesitant to visit doctors, too, of course. I was thinking about “niche,” how our niche is really ourselves. When do I go to a healer? Rarely. Sometimes. My Reconnection, of course. I have two friends who are shamanic practitioners. And my dear friend Louise is an amazing foot reflexologist (and a Reiki master)—she does wonders with relieving pain and circulating chi, and is a veritable encyclopedia of reflexology points and their connections. Do we go to each other for healing? Not often. We are all ego-driven creatures, and we like to do things ourselves. And the hippish-green-musician-writers-healers that would be my tribe prefer to do things themselves as well. They don’t want healing—they want to self-heal.

“Self-healing it is,” I thought. I focused on the healing frequencies as I walked, letting my back and shoulder pain slip away. Yes! I let it sink into my legs, and again, bit by bit, the

pain and fatigue left them, even as I continued hiking. My feet were a greater challenge; I slipped into a gentle jog to use different muscle groups, and the pain subsided, not gone, but substantially reduced. Normally, once back to the car, the stiffness would set in, and the soreness greater the next day and especially the day after. But that's just a belief! What if we didn't buy into that? What if we believed in healing instead, in the inherent wholeness of our beings, in the sustaining matrix of light that we truly are?

Bruce Lipton has some fastening talks online, where he explains the mechanics of how a cell regulates itself, all about DNA and amino acids and electrical charges changing with the needs and conditions of the cell. Thing is—it's not the nucleus that's doing this. It's the actual conditions in which the cell finds itself. It's the environment. That's why a diseased cell becomes healthy outside of the diseased environment. It's inherently healthy. That's its natural state. It's the natural state of all life, all things. We aren't supposed to be ill.

I looked around my environment. So peaceful and calm, miles away from anything but more nature. It's not a place to get lost—just more wilderness and more wilderness. So primal. I thought about toning, a practice I learned from Laurel Keyes' book (*Toning: The Creative Power of the Voice*) back when I was reading everything I could find about sound healing. This particular exercise involved relaxing “into” my feet, connected to the ground and the energy below, and just allowing my primal voice to ease up as it wished from the depths of my being. It was always an interesting experience—and a little scary, as primal moaning sounds would start and rise, shaking my body in a whip-like motion as the energy rose. Very relaxing, though, very quickly. In touch directly with deepest nature.

Lipton explains that in an organism, communication among the cells is important, so each cell responding to its separate environment no longer works. So, the central nervous system, run by the brain, sends the electrical signals that governs how and what the cells do. This can even be filmed, as Lipton has done, watching “waves” of light sweep across stained cells while they communicate. But these “waves” are generated by thought, and changing our thoughts changes the waves we broadcast, literally changing the cells' environment, and our health. And where do these thoughts originate? From our beliefs. Literally, as we believe, so we are, internally and hence experientially. Not as some mystical view on life—but measurable and demonstrable biology. The Biology of Belief. We create our own health.

When was the last I did toning? I can't remember. Years ago. Why did I stop? No idea. Should I know? I looked around. “Geez,” I thought. “No one is here, and no one is within miles. No one can hear you. If not here, *where?*” So I relaxed into my feet, settled in, and let the primal energy rise up through me.

No moaning this time—a deep, rich, laughing sound, but very different from my “normal” state, and again, a little scary in the power and force of it, and in feeling like someone else. Like a caveman—I called him “Hugo”—and the whip-like movements shook my body like a rag doll, shaking out the tension and tightness. My dog was very concerned. She's not really

musically inclined, or spiritually aware. But she is tuned in to nature quite well, so it's all good.

I stopped, relaxed, and immediately felt different, no longer Hugo. I tried a laugh as deeply as Hugo, but I couldn't. It wasn't the same, wasn't as deep, lacking the pure richness. I tried toning again, letting go of Self, and Hugo was back, laughing and rippling away. So. Powerful. And yet so scary.

But why? And why didn't I practice toning more often? Why even the hesitation today? Simple. Same reason people aren't generally in tune with their inner perfection and health—ego and fear. Even by myself, ego and fear were present—in an environment that literally could not possibly care less. That inner environment for me, for all of us, was reality, and it was totally invented by me, as it is for us all. My ego was the only thing keeping it alive. It's that easy to change, to get rid of the negativity. Simply stop creating it. So why don't we?

With at least 90 minutes left to the hike, I changed muscle groups by breaking into an easy run. I had plenty of energy. My dog, a husky, certainly didn't mind a better pace. I let the energy circulate. I reminded myself I'm a structure of light, infinite, and let myself ride that energy. We picked it up to a faster run as we traversed the swamp, to avoid feeding the swarms of deer flies. But I felt great, and even the pain in my feet lessened with each step, if not vanishing.

We so seldom listen to our bodies. We think we're just our head, forced to let the damn body tag along. We can learn a lot from listening. I heard an interview recently with a man who had won a marathon for running backwards. "It strengthens the calves and the back," he said, extolling its virtues. One day on a forest walk shortly afterward, my back sore from gardening, I tried it—and the pain vanished instantly. I walked forward again—and the pain returned. That puzzled me. After a little back and forth experimentation, I realized my legs were supporting me better when walking backwards. By letting my feet stay on the ground just a little longer, stretching back just a little more before stepping forward, I could duplicate the effect walking forward. That easy. Instant healing.

But we don't *believe* it's that easy, or even possible. We *believe* in illness and disease. We *believe* life is a struggle. We *believe* we can't always have what we want. It's not true. It's simply a belief. If there's anything to be healed, above all other things, it's this—our completely mistaken belief, the one created by ego and fear, the one manifesting limitations that simply don't exist and that are not at all part of the natural world. We made them up.

Back at the car, reluctant dog settled back on the back seat (where she promptly went to sleep), I took off my shoes and stretched my feet. Normally, here's how this works—back in the car, no longer moving, muscles start to cramp up, stiffness starts to set in, and by the time I'm back home, moving is difficult, followed by soreness the next day that gets worse the day after, then rapidly healing from day three. Today, though, I did something different.

I refused to accept the lie. I had just healed all my other back and leg muscles. My feet would be fine. A little more stretching—done. I was healthy, not cramping up. Period.

And that's what happened. Next morning, I could tell I'd been hiking, but none of the usual stiffness. My feet were fine. Later in the day, I had some mild stiffness in my hips (that's a spot I didn't think to heal the day before), but that was easily healed the same way I healed my back and legs.

Two weeks later, I again went hiking in the Adirondacks, a full day of it, as I was looking to clear my head, and I find that takes at least six hours of wilderness hiking before things that were confusing abruptly become simple and clear. Plus it was a beautiful day.

This time, though, I didn't wait to get sore before I tried self-healing again—I applied what I'd learned from the last time right from the start. We are light. Everything is energy and frequency and vibration—Nikola Tesla and Albert Einstein, among others, told us that a century ago. Don't accept the soreness, Tim. Light, frequency, vibration.

And it worked! No back pain, no leg pain, at all, during the entire day. My feet got off to a better start, as I was wearing better shoes this time, but my toes, the balls of my feet, and a little of the sides of my feet eventually complained about the day long confinement and friction against the leather. "I'll have blisters in the morning," I thought, but then immediately, "No, don't embrace that assumption. I'll be fine." I concentrated on the healing, and walked on. I also felt connected, ending the day with a strong sense of everything being lines and light energy.

In the morning, after a long and peaceful sleep, I rose and felt absolutely fine. I could tell I'd been hiking, but with no stiffness anywhere, just a nice stretchy feeling of lines throughout my body, top to bottom, with no sore bunches anywhere. Nor did my feet have any blisters—but I did feel an intense heat in the spots where I'd normally have had blisters. If I focused on expanding the energy in my feet, I discovered, they would cool and the pain vanish. A few concentrated tries with this, and I was fine. At the end of the day, I had a mild soreness in these spots, but no pain and no blisters.

A few days later, I considered the pain in my wrist. I have been prone to tendonitis—knees, ankles, elbows—for years, with each small injury taking forever to heal again, and any sudden strain on these joints can quickly bring back the pain. In this case, gardening was likely the culprit; I'd been putting in a lot of shovel time, digging in the hard, dry clay to make homes for various new veggies, flowers, and trees I had picked up at the nursery. Not serious, and hardly a crippling pain, but to try to play guitar, for example, was excruciating. I had to turn down two requests to play, as I just would not be able to get through even one tune.

Nonetheless, I have found that when I'm active, exercising (I run or cross-country ski almost every day), and eating healthy, regular meals, I have little or no pain—everything is flowing



better, and everything feels better. More is at work than a particular part in the machine. We are whole, integral, and not a mere collection of pieces. Time for a new perspective.

I stopped accepting long recovery time as inviolately given. Using what I had learned from my hiking trip, I concentrated on expanding the energy where my wrist hurt. It would go away, then return, and I'd repeat the process each time. No miracles here, which was fine—when we exercise and eat right to lower blood pressure, for example, we're not expecting instant results, but that doesn't mean improvements aren't happening. This happens a lot in my healing work too—ten days after the session is a much better guide than immediately afterward. Once energy is flowing better, everything benefits. And indeed, my wrist improved over the week—not completely, but substantially. I could play again at least.

But something else happened too. As the week wore on, I had a growing sense of strings of light through and around my hands, wrists and forearms, extending from shoulders to past my fingertips. Just as tendons ripple through the forearm as fingers are flexed, so too these strings of light energy rippled with my activity. Very cool, and it helped significantly with releasing the energy in my wrist, since I was now concentrating on the whole, not focusing on a part, which can tend to reinforce the condition—I know a Facebook group dedicated to one particular pain syndrome; they largely post photos of their condition and complain to each other. Definitely. not. healing.

I returned to the Adirondacks. The day was very hot, so I wore flat canvas boat shoes, despite my previous lesson in foot wear vs. foot pain. I used what I had learned—I've become convinced that all pain and illness is essentially trapped energy. We don't fight it—we release it. So as I walked, I continually released energy. The strings of light in my fingers and arms also extended all the way down my back, from below the ground to over my head. I walked six hours, with no pain or soreness anywhere. Nice. Very nice.

The last two hours of my hike that day, after the first six hours of walking through the wilderness trail, was up Black Bear Mountain. While not sore, I was getting tired, especially my legs and feet, and I wondered about the wisdom of saving this climb for the end. But I concentrated on the strings of light, and something amazing happened. I climbed with ease. I had a strong sense of being one of the big cats, powerfully prancing up the territory. I felt lighter, stronger. My dog noticed the change, and changed her gait as well. I could see she was using the same energy, natural to her, rediscovered to me.

But here's the thing—as I climbed, I was \*less\* tired. Less! I could still feel the tired muscles, but I had More energy, and could have continued for quite a while past the summit. I was suddenly using ALL of my body's energy, with far more muscular strength. The same was true later descending, an activity usually murder on my knees, especially down this mountain, as the descent route is sharply down several steep rock surfaces. But my knees were fine. My legs were tired, but not sore, and I could have continued for quite a while more, even when reaching the car after the entire eight hour hike.

The next day, I got some more insight into this extra strength. While none of the traditional muscle groups were sore from the hike, I did feel a very slight soreness in my calves, easily released, and a soreness in the muscles on the outside of my lower legs. I didn't even really recognize I had muscles there before—like the muscle behind your upper arms most people find when they learn to breast stroke. I had been adding muscles to my climb that I don't ordinarily use. Letting my “strings of light” energy do the work had better orchestrated my activity. This muscle was sore for a few days—though only when walking, as it was fine when climbing stairs (conversely, my calves were fine except when *descending* stairs). I was literally stronger just by better using physical resources I already had, but hadn't recognized. Letting the energy guide me again, I realize that if I consciously kept my feet under my center of gravity when walking, even this soreness vanished.

The point here is that working from the totality of our energy, we best allocate our resources. Using total muscle groups in balance is just one example. Consider yoga practice to balance energy; often this will erase cold or allergy symptoms, simply because the body is working more efficiently and can better handle the extra stress. Same with T'ai Chi – energy is flowing, and your entire body benefits. Emotional and mental benefits accrue as well. And of course, whether we call it prana or chi, spiritual benefits accrue too. We are part of a system, a universal system, and like the economy, it's meant to flow. That's how things work.

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My next hiking trip was a return to a long time favorite—Giant Mountain, in the High Peaks region of the Adirondack. The Ridge Trail offers spectacular views the entire climb—which is especially good since the summit is often socked in by clouds. It is, however, a grueling climb. The ascent is over 3,000 feet, and most of the way is over steep rock formations. Even the “trail” parts are strewn with large rocks, the “walking” a scramble from “stepping stone” to stepping stone. The six hour hike (round trip) has always left me very sore for a few days. It's a workout.

This time, however, I put what I had been learning to work again. The day was hot and humid, made more so by a recent rainstorm the night before—everything was damp. The trail climbs quickly right from the start of the hike, so I worked up a sweat pretty quickly (and my husky visited every pool of water she found to lap up a little more), but NONE of my muscles felt any strain. NONE. Not my feet (regrettably, again in canvas boot shoes, with all the wet rocks), not my shoulders, not my legs—NOTHING. I stopped to rest/cool down a few times, snack on granola, sip some water while my dog sniffed around and explored. But nothing tired at all.

This is especially remarkable since the previous time I climbed Giant a couple years before, it was torture. I had developed bad knees, and every step was painful. Some of the large steps necessary on the rocks took me a moment to crawl up using my hands as well. Pain medication helped, and I wasn't going to let knee pain reduce my activity level, as long as I wasn't doing any further damage (my doctor agreed). Now I was climbing with perfectly good knees! Thanks to a physical therapist who noticed some original injury had been

avored, developing an imbalance in the strength of my muscles, pulling a piece of bone over my knee cap as I used my knee, causing the scrapping, inflammation, and pain. “Not only is this treatable,” she said, “It’s curable.” She was right; balance was the key.

I reached the summit and spent an hour (limited by the need to descend before dark) reflecting while enjoying the magnificent view, the semi-cloud cover ever modulating the light and the vista. I was not sore, any muscle, any joint, anywhere. A bit tired, but no strain, no pain, anywhere. I have NEVER climbed a mountain (and I’ve climbed several) and had this be the case. Especially THIS mountain! I was definitely on to something.

I wondered about the descent. As anyone who’s done any serious mountain hiking knows, up is the easy part. Down can be murder on your knees especially. In fact, as I ascended, several people passed me on their way down, complaining specifically about their knees. Several were using double poles to help (though to my mind these are more trouble than help); all were moving slowly. I stayed on the summit as long as I could (my husky crashed on her side and slept for most of this time), then set out to find out.

Things were going well—until I slipped on a wet rock and painfully scrapped my ankle against a small outcrop. “Release it!” I told myself immediately, and in fact, the pain was gone in a moment. I continued on, and realized I was going to have to pick up the pace—I had allowed for the time of sunset, and for the reality that “dark” in a forest comes about an hour before outside of the forest. But—I neglected to add that the sun would be setting behind a mountain, sooner than I had anticipated (well duh!). Time to pick up the pace, and that was not going to be easily while descending most steep rock. It also increased the risk of injury, which I had to balance against the risk of getting caught on such a trail after dark. I twisted the other ankle, twice—and again, released the energy immediately, was fine.

Not for 90 minutes down this steep descent did I feel any knee strain AT ALL—a minor miracle right there. “Let go of assumptions,” I reminded myself. “Don’t assume that now the pain is here and will get worse. Release!” I did. And I kept doing it. And it worked. My body was being used in balance, and I was letting go of incidental pain instead of harboring it.

The final half hour was darker than I’d have liked, but still light enough to follow my white husky—assuming she was on the trail, and not (1) some other dog’s version of the trail and (2) not following a wildlife trail she wanted to investigate. But she was tired, and even though she was perking up as the day cooled, she was ready more or less to stick to business and return to the car.

And when I got back to the car—I was not sore, anywhere. A bit tired. But not sore! No pain, anywhere. Balance and self-healing are that available—to everyone. All that’s needed is awareness and the willingness to let go of past assumptions. The next day, and especially the second day, when traditionally soreness would *really* set in before getting better, I again

was fine. I noticed a slight trace of stiffness in my legs, which readily went away as I walked and released. Self-healing is that easy. Really.

My wrist was a bit more of a challenge. It felt great—until I turned it; then I felt a “clicking” followed by a return of the pain. I’ve had enough of these injuries to know what was happening; the internal swelling had gone down enough that now things could move. Progress—not yet healed. I could go to the doctor, get an X-ray, find nothing, and be told what I already knew—it wasn’t broken (I had a badly injured ankle once. The doctor gently touched it and asked whether that hurt. I told him it didn’t. He said “Well, we can get an X-ray, but I can tell you right now it’s not broken.” I asked him how he knew that. “Because you’d have jumped off the table just now!” he replied. Of course, on the other hand, when my friend had an avulsion fracture in her foot, I had to talk her into going to the hospital). So the treatment would be 800 mg. of ibuprofen three times a day for a few days, and keep my wrist immobile. Harder to do than I thought—I realized driving was irritating it, but I could get something from the drugstore if needed (it got better before I remembered to do that). But again...release and heal. A few weeks, instead of months.

And if not, there’s still the doctor. I have nothing at all against doctors or the medical profession generally. They are very, very good at what they know and do. If you have a heart attack or a stroke, for example, these are the people you want! Of course, you also want a good nutritionist, a good physical therapist, and so forth. Alternative healing isn’t an either/or proposition; it’s part of holistic living, just as the other pieces. It’s living well, in balance, just as I learned on my hikes, letting one’s entire energy flowing throughout the experience.

Nor is alternative healing anything mysterious. I’ve often heard people talking about making sure they have protection. From what? Their Higher Selves? This is a misconception, and it goes back to our gradual evolution. At one point, people learned to shift conscious perception from the purely physical to the emotional/astral. Sure, floating around a realm of raw emotion is dramatic. But with a higher mental vibration, emotion becomes a reflection of conscious thought, revealing the qualities of those thoughts. At higher vibrations, the limits of thoughts are also transcended, letting spirit jump past limiting beliefs, until we learn that our beliefs are, as Abraham would say, nothing but a thought we continue to think. And as Bruce Lipton has demonstrated, these beliefs govern our health. Only our belief that such things are silly prevent them from being commonplace practice. We choose our pain and limitations, making them real, living them—but needlessly.

And the same is true of our lives. It’s not a new idea at all, but still one we resist, erroneously. We are what we think. Napoleon Hill knew it. Andrew Carnegie knew it. People through the centuries have known it. Einstein and Tesla knew it—we are energy, frequency, vibration. During the same time I learned self-healing on my hikes, I began to feel terrific. Happy. Balanced. Love. Gratitude. Hopeful. And clearly aware that the only things holding me back from any of my goals, hopes, dreams, are my own mental

barriers. We are meant to be whole and happy. Always. Nothing but we ourselves can ever change this basic reality. Not one day possibility—today's reality.

Healing is that important. And that real. It's facing and embracing our true nature, in joy.

### STUCK IN A RUT? GETTING UNSTUCK.

Sometimes we just feel stuck in a rut. Nothing's wrong, really...it's not a negative thing. We just ... aren't ... something. Something's missing. We want to be doing more.

So what to do when there's not really anything wrong?

Don't settle for being in the rut!

First—change. Anything! Since there's no specific problem you're addressing, literally, change anything. When I was a music student, sometimes I'd move to a corner of the practice room, or stand on a chair, or walk around outside, anything to make monotonous practice different. So move around! See things from a new perspective—literally.

This happens periodically in the classroom—I'll be teaching something that's working great, and after a couple years, it stops working. What happened? I'm no longer jazzed up about the “new” approach, and it inevitably shows. I'm bored. Time to try something different. New books, new subjects, new projects, new pedagogy, really, anything. Change. Things don't change unless there's change.

Second—have some fun! Not everything has to be measurable productivity! Go hiking. Get away for a few days in some lovely vacation spot. Sit on your patio and watch the clouds go by. Read those books you've been meaning to get to someday—it's Someday! Play ball with the dog. Call friends. Rent a kayak. Doesn't matter—enjoy life!

Third—get out of yourself. Help someone. Mow the neighbor's lawn. Volunteer—hundreds of opportunities there, and you're truly needed. Surprise someone with a plate of freshly baked scones. Go to the park or the supermarket or a coffee shop and smile at the first 50 people you see. Strike up a conversation with a stranger and really listen to their stories. Donate pet food to the local animal shelter. Help out while you're there.

Or maybe it's just time to shed your skin again. You keep growing, after all—did you expect to stay in the same condition forever? Let your mind relax, and ask your heart and your higher power for what's deep inside, waiting to come up. Then let it! Live with it for a while, contemplate it, let yourself be shown how to take the next steps to get going again.

Embrace the opportunity to get in touch with who you are again. And be grateful! If you were struggling, you wouldn't be feeling this generic in-a-rut thing. Life is good for you, and

will soon get exciting again. Look for where things have settled, where they're mediocre, and spice things up again. Get passionate! It's who you are, when you're really listening.

And enjoy!

## THE HEALING POWER OF GRATITUDE

I sat down one morning to sketch out my bio; I had a radio interview coming up in a few weeks, and they had asked for the information, naturally.

So I was thinking about the different things I had done and how to present them, when I was hit by an epiphany—

Wherever I go, doors open for me.

I felt a little stunned. How could this have escaped me up to now? All the thoughts and tales of struggle and hard work—all of which happened, yes—pale next the reality of how much has been repeatedly handed to me. Not by a wealthy ancestor, nor by society nor government, but simply open pathways, whatever I've pursued.

I started with music—hours and hours of hard work, dedication, passion, and the fear I would never be good enough. I attended Ithaca College, which my parents were concerned they couldn't afford, on a performance scholarship, and graduate school at the New England Conservatory of Music on a performance scholarship when I didn't even apply for admission. I've performed summers with members of the New York Philharmonic, invited to a music camp by the conductor. I've performed all over the state, from the New York City Ballet to the Syracuse Symphony and a host of regional orchestras and opera companies. I became the principal bassoonist of the Utica Symphony back in 1984, when the conductor called and simply offered me the job, as he had heard me perform several times already. It was that easy.

When I needed a job, looking for meaningful work, I walked into Seven Rays Book Store, explained to the owner why I wanted the job and that I was familiar with much of the metaphysical and spiritual material in the books, and not only was hired on the spot, but also made the first ever manager two months later. My work and the connections I made there lead to offers from independent music distributors, one of which I accepted, which later led to a major distributor. My management work has included retail petroleum, finance, executive director of the local civic center, and later my own independent business consulting. Just like that.

My first college teaching job was out of the blue—the Assistant Dean at Cazenovia College called and asked me to teach music. When I asked why, he shared he had asked six other people, all of whom recommended me instead. A few years later, the Interim Dean at SUNY Morrisville asked to meet with me, intrigued by my philosophy of education—

particularly interdisciplinary study—and hired me to teach philosophy (and later economics). I would proceed through a host of lectureships and artist-in-residence positions in a dozen central New York colleges, from Hartwick to Colgate to Syracuse’s University College, before settling into my current positions part time at Onondaga Community College (music) and full time at SUNY Cortland (writing). Life is good.

Amid all that, I was already a working writer, all without the angst of starting a free-lance career. I was doing promotional writing all over the country. I wrote a regular business column. I wrote reviews, columns and articles for publications from Syracuse to Long Island’s *Newsday*. My anonymous blog, with no features but the written word, attracted 40,000 hits a year. I co-authored a book on effective speaking. And just when I was wondering what I was going to do next and where I should go, SUNY Cortland asked me to teach in their Professional Writing program. I said I’d love to.

Twenty-five years ago, when housemates and I went our separate ways, I wanted to move to the country, but had no money. I bought a field, a trailer, and planted trees—today that field is a beautiful forest with orchards, vineyards, berries and vegetables. When I wanted to build a house filled not with frills but with practical considerations, a friend pointed out a mutual friend was an architect skilled at designing just what I wanted—a passive solar/partially earth-sheltered home, open to the outdoors, well-lit, with near-zero energy costs. This summer we’re building that beautiful house he has designed. Again, right person in the right place at the right time. My “struggle” has turned to paradise.

More recently, I had been casually looking for a new venture, some new way to grow. I didn’t want to simply add to my workload—just the opposite, in fact. I wanted something independent I could get behind passionately. Enter first my experience with healing, then a seminar came up just when I had time to do it in nearby Cape Cod. Then after a few months of sharing my new craft, but unable to see how I would assemble a workable trade, along came Tad Hargrave of “Marketing for Hippies” with a seminar specifically for Holistic Practitioners that opened my eyes to how the various pieces of what I was doing fit into a unified and viable practice. Kwan Yin Healing was born. And my heart sang.

What’s so unique about me and my life?

Nothing, I believe. Try it. Write down the highlights of your life. Look at your story. See just how amazing you are, how incredible we all are, and how many wonderful opportunities have been handed to us.

I’d never have guessed. I was grateful, but I thought that was amid the struggle and the pain. Now I see none of that was my lot. It happened—but that’s not the way it happened. Not really.

Truly, we live \*IN\* Love, that is, *within* it, just as fish live in the water, perhaps not even noticing the element that allows them the buoyant mobility that would be flying in our above

ground world. It is time—long past time, perhaps, but time nonetheless—to recognize the essential nature of our environment, the medium in which we live and work—Love.

I recently saw this shared on Facebook:

“Sometimes when things seem to be falling apart, they’re actually falling into place.”

Amen. Om shanti shanti.

How do we get unstuck?

We aren’t stuck. Not really.

Enjoy!

### FINAL THOUGHT

We create our world. We’ve all heard that, multiple times. But we don’t use it.

We create our world. Why are we believing it can only be created as it has already been? Decide what you want, hold the intention, feel how that makes you feel, and believe your creation already exists. That’s what create your world means. That’s what we do all the time—within the realms of what we believe. It’s time to change beliefs.

Honestly. It’s just that easy.

Now to apply it to all aspects of our lives, the beliefs and limitations that create the illusion of problems and limitations. It’s that easy—once we stop creating the problem.

Your life is supposed to work out for you. Stop accepting anything else.

Believe it. Nothing else is true.

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