

Life after **SURVIVAL**

Consciously Evolving Our Consciousness

Larry Gneiting

“Man with all his noble qualities, with sympathy which feels for the most debased,
with benevolence which extends not only to other men but to the humblest living creature,
with his god-like intellect which has penetrated into the movements
and constitution of the solar system—with all these exalted powers—
Man still bears in his bodily frame the indelible stamp of his lowly origin.”

Charles Darwin

Notice:

The stories shared in this book are about real people. All outcomes reported are true. However, every effort has been made to protect the actual identities of the people who were the inspiration for these events.

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Winter

“...for the illusion that we have not lived in vain...”

*Winter begins its journey into seasons less harsh,
fading, passing from the tendrils of cobwebs
created from long nights and freezing rain.*

*Ah, gone at last we seek the renewal of spring
and cherish the buds of our own rebirth;
awakened into a world gone slightly less mad
simply because we can crawl out from under our
heavy coats, our stiff joints and sluggish thoughts.*

*Summer will yet bring warmth,
welcomed at first then stifling as we labor,
like penance for the promise of payment,
in fall's gold and yellow endings.*

Daze are long and lazy only for the poet;

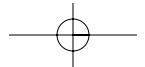
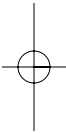
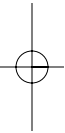
*Soon fall's abundance rests in larders
full of promise for winter
— a time to reflect and see —
has the passing made a difference?*

*We are relentless, as is the folly of wars;
fought by each of us to cast out our daemons,
or by self righteous, patriotic bands of zealots
bent on saving a world whose only curse
is humanities undying need to proclaim;
“Hooray for our side.”*

*Wars rage and men bluster, and in the end
they bring promise only in their passing,
never in their fighting.*

*Cursed by a need for meaning
we fail to see winter's glory.*

“...To be witness to living is enough for us all...”



*For my family and my friends
who first and foremost sought to support me in this journey
and to my clients who sought a way out of the fear, pain,
and confusion of being trapped into patterns of unhappiness and
inexplicable feelings, behaviors, and personal motivation.
And to everyone who ever wondered what it might be
that was keeping them from being the person that they
always knew was waiting to be expressed.*

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I could not have done this without my wife Nancy's steadfast support and my children Kent, Ashley, and Devin's willingness to be my emotional support and reminder of the unconditional love I both give and receive each day of my life. I could not have maintained the focus and commitment to deal with my own triggered/coping state if it weren't for the coaches in my life, beginning with my family and including Jeff Abel, Nikki Nemerouf, and others that took the time to keep me on the straight and narrow.

Jeff Abel lives in England and uses the Core Paradigm to further his work as a Life Coach supporting people to live into the possibilities of their life. Nikki Nemerouf travels around the country using these principles in both his business consulting with Star Quest and his private coaching. Both are remarkable coaches and remarkable individuals, and this book could not have been written without them.

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Prologue

In The Beginning...humans awoke to the world and felt the awe and wonder of being loved...and the ache of fear and pain. Today would not subside with the sunset, as sweet and bitter memories would haunt them...and tomorrow would forever offer hope for their greatest achievements...but its uncertainty held the breeding ground for their biggest worries and concerns.

We, Human Beings, are unlike any other species. We have put considerable time, energy, thought, and conversation into what makes this so and how to properly define it, but these activities illustrate our unique difference. This difference may have many permutations, but none more telling than our unique self-conscious awareness: It is the one defining aspect of being human—we are SELF-AWARE and we have the power to talk about it.

Our existence is unique in this world primarily because we have the power to communicate our self-conscious awareness. The parables, metaphors, and analogies to this basic human departure from the animal kingdom are rife in our literature, fables, and mystic utterances. Every culture has its own version of man's ascent to

sentience. In the Torah and Bible, there are two, both described in Genesis: one in the opening lines and the other in the story of Adam and Eve. I will use these not to promote an ideology but to illustrate a point.

The opening lines in Genesis read, “In the beginning, the word having been, and the word having been unto God, and God having been the word, he having been, in beginning, unto God, all being through him:...having the light of the sons of humanity.” A loose interpretation of this passage is that in the beginning was consciousness of words, consciousness of God, consciousness of self, all things being of God, then consciousness as being the light of humanity. The light that God spoke of when he said “Let there be light” was not the sun because that was not to be for another four days or so, but the light of human consciousness through words, which dispelled the darkness of unconsciousness of God. Words and God were one and the same in this parable and **Words are found in no other reality than our Consciousness.***

*In the Adam and Eve parable, the forbidden fruit was not just an apple, but fruit from the tree of **knowledge of good and evil.** God knew Adam and Eve had broken His edict not to eat of this fruit because they were “aware” that they were naked and were trying to cover themselves. In other words, they were self-aware. They understood good and evil as it related to themselves, not knowledge of generic good and evil, but knowledge of **“good for me, evil for me.”** Our original sin that drove us from the garden, that separated us from the animals we once were, was self-awareness, our human ability to discriminate and communicate that this is good for me, this is bad for me. (The actual original sin was disobeying*

* Exegeses Bibles, 1995, The Evangelism of Yah Chanan, (The Gospel of John), Herb Jahn: Literally translated and transliterated from the ancient Aramaic and Hebraic Manuscripts.

*God's demand that we not eat of this fruit; however, without the knowledge we gained from eating the fruit, we would never have known that it was wrong to disobey.) **Disobedience was a SIN only AFTER we had eaten the fruit**—it may well be the first double bind of man's self-conscious life.*

Psychology—The Study of Being Human

The single most important tenet of science is non-judgmental observation. Psychology is the science of the human mind, including human behavior and motivation. Unlike other sciences, psychology dares to judge its subject as good or bad, fit or unfit, healthy or diseased. This is done because the unfortunate assumption was made that the nature of the human mind was understood well enough to be judged on whether it was afflicted with disease. Nothing could be further from the truth.

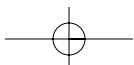
The human mind, along with human behavior and motivation, remains one of the enduring mysteries. We have made great strides in understanding the elements of the brain, but still have little understanding of the basic functions of our conscious mind. I would like to suggest that the key to understanding your behavior and emotions, and the motivations that drive them, is appreciating the nature of your own sentience.

Sentience begins with the uniquely human ability to be **Self-Consciousness of our circumstances and conditions**. This allows us to share common experience through verbal communication—it is our gift and our curse. If we “stayed in the garden,” simply reacting to our circumstances and living without the agony of attachment, expectation, and judgment alongside the other animals, we would have been kept from the knowledge of good and evil. This would

have suspended our ability to judge and evaluate what is right and wrong for us. The journey from the garden to self-conscious awareness (parables or stories notwithstanding) created our endless conversations about this awareness, conversations that include whether we will succeed or fail in life. These conversations go on within ourselves and with other individuals in a constant dialogue about how we're doing, but our success in living life will only come by making peace with our good-versus-bad survival consciousness. We must learn to tame this chatter and not be consumed by it.

This good-versus-bad conflict does not imply an unfit mind. Those who study psychology should be careful before they decide that any particular behavior or motivation is normal or natural to the human mind. The fact that some behaviors are socially unacceptable and others are desired is food for both the psychologist and sociologist, not a gauge with which you or anyone else can be labeled as having an unfit consciousness.

Human beings **had to become self-aware** to have any chance at survival (we will learn about this in the coming pages), and in the process they were rewarded with an amazing gift, the human spirit. The Torah and Bible stories referred to here are but two of hundreds of stories about man's emergence as a self-conscious being. Perhaps the first realization of our awareness was simply the stunning truth that we are aware, but aware of what? Too many of us today are aware of how unhappy we are and how unhappy the world seems to be. This is a book about breaking the grip of unhappiness and achieving personal productivity and peace of mind, which are the first steps toward reaching greater goals in our world.



“A human being is a part of the whole called by us universe, a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feeling as something separated from the rest, a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty.”

Albert Einstein

Part One

Who Are We, What Do We Want?

“Faith is not something to grasp, it is a state to grow into.”

Mahatma Gandhi

“We must learn to reawaken and keep ourselves awake, not by mechanical aid, but by an infinite expectation of the dawn.”

Henry David Thoreau

“Every individual is at once the beneficiary and the victim
of the linguistic tradition into which he has been born - the beneficiary
inasmuch as language gives access to the accumulated records of other people’s experience,
the victim in so far as it confirms him in the belief that reduced awareness
is the only awareness and as it bedevils his sense of reality,
so that he is all too apt to take his concepts for data,
his words for actual things.”

Aldous Huxley

Chapter One

Seeing Ourselves in a New Light

Huddling, shivering in the rain, Humans made their way up from the muck and filled the world with a powerful sentience never before known to earth...After eons of nomadic life they came in from the wild, settled down and began in earnest to populate the world. Would this be the beginning of an epoch of benevolence or simply an extension of the mindless patterns and rhythms known in the eons past? Only Humans could understand the possibilities of benevolence and living well...and this chance was placed squarely before them...the time for being human had arrived and the time for greatness and tragedy was upon us.

There are people among us who are in pain and in spite of, or because of, the richness and rewards of your life, and you may be one of them. It is true that I have been. It might be the pain of failing relationships or family distress, or the ache of insecurity or lacking self-esteem. It may be negative habits, or distress about your

appearance, or it might be inner psychic pain of unknown origin. It could be anxiety, depression, or just the subtle signs of discomfort in the quiet. If you are one of these people, it doesn't matter, at all, if you've amassed personal wealth or if you're just getting by: The pain is real and it can strike when we least expect it. To be human is to be vulnerable to fear and emotional pain.

Avoiding pain and fear can become a full-time job. Pain and fear, fear and pain seem to have a power unto themselves, and in many ways they actually do. The power of fear or pain drives us to seek shelter and safety, but when those become elusive, the distress we feel can send us deeper into the darkness of our feral minds.

Our self-esteem takes a heavy hit each time we fail to thrive, whether or not we win any given battle set before us. We go forth on our journey guided by our needs and desires, but confounded by the fears that drive us to conform or rebel. We become entrapped by these patterns of dealing with life. We find ourselves fighting back, or attempting to hide or vacillating between the two. We settle into our style of coping with resignation. The meek might inherit the earth, but until then they live like second-class citizens doing our bidding or avoiding our glares. The tyrants of this world, big and small, find little comfort in their bullying and little peace in their ill-gotten gains as they substitute accumulation for compassion and power for goodwill. It is time and past time to exit this dichotomy, take back our power, and surrender to the light.

In this book we will look at a new paradigm for getting better, feeling better, doing better, and being better. At this point, you might think this is a self-help book or a how-to book, except for one small problem—you cannot learn HOW TO become happy. You

can discover the source of your unhappiness and the nature of it, but the shift to being happy is a miraculous one, not a linear one. This is because happiness is a state of mind and beingness that requires a shift of perspective, and, oddly enough, a shift in the source of your self-conscious awareness. Perhaps this is more of an owner's manual for being human that hones in on the one tool each of us possesses and must use if we are to obtain happiness. This tool is your own human self-conscious awareness—the most misunderstood part of our being.

The first few chapters of this book are challenging. They will challenge your beliefs about how the world works and how you work in it. The time-honored beliefs we hold about the nature of our problems and the nature of our consciousness will also be challenged. We will delve briefly into the ancient past of our prehistory and into the lives of the people that are our ancient ancestors. We will be presented with a new way of “seeing ourselves.”

Why a new way of seeing? At birth, we were “offered” a way of seeing by our culture and could not help but adopt it over time. As we were growing up and acculturating into our society, we were unaware that this way of seeing was coloring our views and experiences. As adults, we are especially unaware of how this slant on life may actually prevent us from solving our problems.

Combined with the need to survive, this way of seeing has kept many of us locked in our struggles, despite the obvious solutions that may be right in front of us. You will find that humans were never meant to go it alone, and in this book we will look at how this impacts our ability to “take care of things” ourselves. We will give you assignments in some of the chapters, but each time we will remind you that they are best done in conjunction with a Life Coach,

counselor, or trusted friend. This doesn't mean you won't be taking some of the steps on your own, but you will need someone to debrief with after trying the various experiments. Part of the value of this book will be to help you develop this network of support and learn how to use it wisely.

We will also look at the way we form beliefs. We have formed powerful beliefs about the nature of our survival. These beliefs are the result of our need to explain the fear and pain we experience in life in order for us to act in an emergency. However, these explanations seldom serve us in the long run. Without the objectivity of a Life Coach, we are often misled by the power of these beliefs and the power of the life scripts we have incorporated into our survival makeup. For example, a client of mine believed that speaking up and having her own opinion would lead to getting hurt. She built her life around avoiding situations in which she would be asked for her opinion or even needed her own opinion; you can imagine the dysfunction in her life. She didn't even know she had committed to such a belief until she participated in the Core Profile class (see part two of this book). When she began to release from this belief, she was amazed at the possibilities that opened up. Today, she continues to build a network of supportive coaches to help her speak out in her life.

Beliefs built on the heels of a painful or frightening experience are both necessary and debilitating. They are often contradictory, as in, "I have to tell them what they want to hear, but everything I say is wrong." These dilemmas leave us feeling sad, hurt, or angry, or maybe even confused and frustrated. Without the support of a Life Coach, we are likely to live for decades in the small circles of these false dilemmas. We want to have a good, fulfilled, and happy life, but it seems that survival keeps getting in our way. When can we

begin to truly enjoy our lives without “needing” to constantly be wary? The answer is in this book.

Your mind and consciousness are all you have to determine when life is working and when it isn't. If these instruments have been fed erroneous information and descriptions of their nature (and they have), if you hold conflicting beliefs or have fears or doubts about happiness, or if you question your ability to achieve whatever you aspire to (and most of us do), then your life and your enjoyment of it hang in the balance.

We would like you to begin this journey by giving you the opportunity to write down all of the issues you face in your life that you would call chronic problems. This is any situation, condition, emotion, or circumstance with which you are struggling and not making the headway you would like—issues of family, children, finances, or relationships; self esteem, body image, or phobias; or lack of control (emotional or otherwise) in key areas of your life. Simply put, write down what is bothering you. Then, for the moment, put it aside. (If you have the workbook, there is a form to assist you.)

You will find this book and the accompanying workbook to be a supportive tool for you and your consciousness to use as you shift your search for happiness from “out there” to where it belongs in the inner workings of our unique and marvelous self-conscious awareness. Happiness and satisfaction are the destinations, but the path is the surprise.

Many of our clients came to us struggling to achieve that elusive element called happiness. Some came because their lives were clearly swerving out of control. In each case, we have found that the problems they think they are facing are not the ones whose solutions

led to their ultimate satisfaction and sense of empowerment. In fact, what we believe our problems to be and what is actually going on are seldom the same. This is reason enough for you to engage coaches to support you on your journey through the treachery of your survival consciousness and painful life struggles.

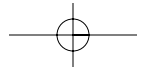
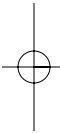
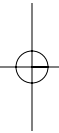
The various problems we face as individuals, as communities, as cultures, and as a species are actually quite similar. These problems start with one problem...**a lack of understanding the nature of our self-consciousness and how to use it to our benefit.** You will learn how to in these pages and in the assignments you choose to accept. I hope you will be doing this with the support of others as well.

My clients have been clamoring for years to have a book they can go to remind themselves of what they have learned. Sometimes, in the moment of being re-stimulated by their life drama, it has completely escaped them. This is that book, but it is also more. It is a book to assist you in furthering your steps on the road to well-being and peace of mind. It is a book to awaken you and your beingness to new possibilities and new ways of perceiving the dynamics that make up the challenges in your life.

The old saws of “knowledge is the key” and “the truth will set you free” may well be true because our ability to “know, communicate, and understand” is at once our salvation and our problem. When used correctly, your conscious tool (human self-awareness) will serve you in all that you face. However, when it is mired in contradiction about its nature (and human nature), it will confound, frustrate, and depress you, and lead to anxiety, alienation, boredom, and malaise. When you understand the nature of this gift of sentience and appreciate its bifocal approach to life, you will begin to clear up your unhappiness, dysfunctional motivation, and behavior at alarming rates.

To begin with, you will need to read the first few chapters and mull the information about the nature of human consciousness, and how we can truly be therapeutic for each other. Then we can get on with the business of applying some practical skill development that will help you achieve the life you only once dreamed was possible.

Thank you for choosing to enter the world of Life after Survival and for your courage and wisdom to embrace this fledgling effort to bring us one step further in consciously evolving the tools of our self-conscious awareness.



Chapter Two

Getting Help: The Core Paradigm

Once upon a time, there were three very old and very wise blind men, so old and so wise, in fact, that they were called upon by a whole village to tell the villagers how and what to think when they were faced with the unknown, or fear arose in the village. One day an elephant broke away from a traveling circus and came to the village, which had never witnessed such an animal. Much fear and confusion followed, and the three blind men were called upon to help the village understand this strange creature.

“What is it?” they exclaimed. “We have heard it is an elephant but what is an elephant. Oh please, tell us what an elephant is.”

The first blind man, having a firm hold on the elephant’s tail, said, “An elephant is like a snake, small, round and twisty, but with some hair.”

The second wise man, having grasped the elephant by the leg, said with a puzzled expression, “While it is true that this beast is round it is most assuredly not twisty and snake-like. Why it is as

sturdy as a tree trunk and as big around as my arms can stretch.”

The third wise blind man, having gotten hold of the elephant’s trunk, was beside himself with wonder at the apparent confusion of his two most-trusted colleagues. “Now it is true that this beast is indeed round and solid, but not so big around that I might not easily grasp it in two hands and it is as curious as it can be—snuffling, sniffing and grasping me at every opportunity. This is what an elephant is.”

— Anonymous story from the personal growth world

What is the elephant that has come to visit you in your village and who will help you understand it? The elephant is the unique nature of your self-conscious awareness. Whether you know it or not, you have gone to many of our society’s “blind wise men” for answers. We talk about “mental health,” diagnosis, symptoms, pathology, and cures. We refer to how a person can have a “big ego” or an “inner child,” or be “insane,” “neurotic,” or “passive aggressive,” as if these psychology terms explain and clarify our state of being. We have absorbed many beliefs about the nature of our self-consciousness and its dysfunction and, in many cases these beliefs come from the mid-1800s, which would not be a problem if these beliefs were true, or even close to true. Just like in our chapter story, these terms and other psychological jargon are little bits of the story that tell us nothing about the whole animal. The truth is that we have been blinded to the nature of human self-consciousness and its function and “malfunction” by the very nature of that consciousness. If you read nothing more or hear nothing else, at least know this: **It is highly unlikely that anything at all is wrong with you or your conscious mind. Your troubles, anxiety, depression, and emotional distress are neither abnormal nor a sign of dysfunction, and**

your path to well-being does not go anywhere near overcoming poor mental health.

You are a self-conscious human being, using your sentience to make choices and decisions that guide you in your actions, but that is not all you are. You are also a human animal tethered to the reactive and reflexive nature of your survival consciousness. What is the nature of these two states and how do they affect you? Traditionally, we have given little thought to this question, but, as it turns out, the answer can affect virtually everything you hope to achieve.

For the past one hundred and fifty years, when we exhibited chronic unhappiness, ineffective behavior, or poor social skills, we turned to the medical profession and specifically psychology for answers. “What is wrong with us?” we wanted to know. On the one hand, “mental health” seems to be a very compelling answer. We imagined that just like our body, our mind could be subject to health issues. Maybe our consciousness had a tummy ache or virus. Surely our self-consciousness must be sick if it wasn’t functioning “right”—but what was right? Everyone seemed to have their own ideas about that.

Are we really mentally unhealthy if we are indecisive, anxious, or depressed? Are those really mental malfunctions? How about confusion, anger, rage, and phobic terror? Are they sure signs of mental failure? When Freud was faced with seemingly normal women who declared they were blind for no apparent reason, he developed an entire psychosexual explanation to clarify what mentally unhealthy meant. Freud and those who followed expanded their theories to include virtually every unproductive behavior, emotion, and motivation with which they were presented. All of these were thought to be sure signs of mental malfunction.

We want to believe that functioning with ease and grace and handling life issues effectively is our natural state, and most assuredly it is. However, when this is not the case does that automatically mean we are mentally unbalanced? What if our consciousness was simply performing its assigned mission to keep us safe from the perils of living in this dangerous world? If this is true, we need a whole new vision and standard for what healthy mental functioning means. In very real ways, the analogy to health is a mistake. It is likely that our self-consciousness is not subject to health issues at all, which means we will be well served to look elsewhere for answers to our emotional, behavioral, and motivational problems.

For most of us, here is the simple truth. Everyone on this planet has issues, crises, and untold distress in their lives, and while a small percentage may have some type of brain dysfunction or full-blown psychosis, not a single one is mentally unhealthy (perhaps brain unhealthy). The truth about your self-conscious awareness is that it has a unique evolutionary, BIFOCAL nature, with more than one master to serve. This nature has led society to mistakenly decide that mental health is the problem when people cannot deal effectively with the problems they face in today's world. In reality, the problem is somewhere else entirely.

The Core Paradigm

I discovered this truth some seventeen years ago. For years, I worked with people in the personal growth field and for every gain it seemed there was a failure. Every theory had its proponents and its detractors. Everything worked sometimes and failed at other times. In discouragement, I finally left the Southern California scene and moved to Jackson, Wyoming. I thought I was done trying to un-

cover the missing piece that would fit all the different notions of our “elephant” of human self-consciousness together. I had always envisioned the possibility that one day I would find this new piece to the puzzle that would tie the understanding of our behavior, emotional distress, and mental functioning together, but it seemed, at least for me, it was not to be.

I went to Wyoming and walked in the mountains, learned to ski, and focused on other things until circumstances brought me back. I returned to California and was almost immediately reintroduced to the world of personal growth. My dear friend and past business partner Nikki Nemerouf enthusiastically welcomed my family into his home and placed me back in the middle of his various coaching and consulting programs. People and their problems and behavior were once again the focus of my life: What was it that worked when it worked and failed when it failed in helping people? Even more importantly, what would help them help themselves?

I could SEE the problem and even work with it some, and yet I could not seem to find the key that would unlock the door to personal satisfaction, peace of mind, and well-being—emotionally, spiritually, and consciously. It wasn't just the client's satisfaction either. My emotional life vacillated with each success or failure with which I found myself. Whatever this discovery was, it was going to help me as much as it was going to help my clients.

Now, I know that you may be skeptical that in the next few paragraphs you will find out about the discovery that ties all of human consciousness theory together and makes sense out of every therapy modality in use. You are welcome to hold on to this concern because it is not the focus of this discovery. What I discovered was that there was a basic paradigm of human consciousness (my

consciousness) that freed me and my mind to function better, feel better, and be happier in the long run. I also found that it will work for you as well.

I was able to make this discovery with the help of Nikki and others in this field of personal growth. It is the discovery that has freed me to write this book and live these past fifteen years in a way that was impossible before I came to this knowledge. It is a discovery I call the Core Paradigm. This discovery has helped me and my clients, and will help you change the chronic patterns of behavioral or emotional distress with which you have been living since before you can remember.

The Core Paradigm is not a panacea for everything that ails you and it is not a new theory of human psychology. The Core Paradigm is a discovery about the nature of human consciousness that will change the way you see yourself. The Core Paradigm is a breakthrough in our understanding of the nature of our self-conscious awareness that redefines what is normal and natural for humans, one person at a time. The benefit of this discovery is in making it, and that is exactly what you will be asked to do. Your consciousness will embrace or reject it based on your own personal experience of the nature of your own mental processes. There is no better expert in the world than YOU when it comes to your example of human self-consciousness.

The Core Paradigm is not in opposition to any current system or program. Anne Wilson Schaefer's book, *Beyond Therapy, Beyond Science: A New Model For Healing the Whole Person*, got it entirely right: A new paradigm is needed. She writes that the role of therapist and scientist will be changing as we continue to learn about the dynamic of personal pain. Ms. Schaefer says about herself

that she is making radical but needed changes in her life, and while I recommend her book, I am more inclined to recommend her spirit of Life Coaching that is expressed in it.

The Core Paradigm will work in concert with this spirit of change and any other modality with which you are involved. It has allowed me and my clients to utilize information and processes more effectively. It has opened the door to embracing the support of any well-meaning therapy or counseling format. The Core Paradigm utilizes a Life Coaching approach, but whom you chose as your Life Coach (or coaches) is up to you. While your Life Coaches can be greatly supported by this paradigm and would be well served to utilize some of the processes in this book, they do not need to use these to coach you. If you are pleased with the coach or therapist you have, then continue. You, on the other hand, will be enormously benefited by using this book in concert with any program with which you chose to be involved. (Bring a copy of this book to your next appointment and ask your coach or therapist if they would be willing to read it. You will both find the common language and processes to be enlightening. Many of their techniques and tools will become even more effective if you view them from this paradigm. No matter what their answer is in using this format, they will continue to have much to offer you as you work with this paradigm.)

The Core Paradigm is a deceptively simple discovery that remained hidden because of the nature of our consciousness. We are “self”-conscious beings and in order to be aware of our “self,” we have to use our self-consciousness. What a paradox. It would be like a microscope turning its power on itself to make discoveries about its self. The microscope was intended to make discoveries about the world, not about its self. For the most part, this is also true for us.

Any discovery made in the field of human consciousness had to use human consciousness to make it. For example, we CANNOT discover that humans can't know things because to know that would invalidate the discovery. This was the problem we faced as we tried to discover (or uncover) key issues about the nature of our consciousness. It turned out the Core Paradigm was something that our consciousness “needed” to keep hidden, which kept this dynamic understanding of the human consciousness hidden for so long. The nature of our self-conscious awareness can limit our ability to be aware in some instances. Discovering this limitation opened the door to the Core Paradigm.

Making the Discovery

Every time I would read a book about the nature of human psychology, I felt like my mind was being seduced by the words. It seemed tantalizingly close and yet at the same time not right. I found myself avoiding certain explanations and being afraid of others. I struggled to understand, but nothing I found seemed to truly explain what was really going on with me and the clients I saw in my work as a Life Coach or consultant.

One day, while developing tools to do mission and vision statements for business, Nikki and I decided to use these tools on each other. I did his mission and then he did mine. Lo and behold, the Core Paradigm was born. My mission in life was to help people move from “automatic” to “authentic” functioning. Both of us recognized, in that instant, the truth of that discovery, not that it was my mission, but that people actually have an “automatic self” and an “Authentic Self.” Nikki does, I do, and so do you.

Is that right, is it true? Do you actually have an automatic/pro-

tective self-consciousness capable of directing your actions when it is triggered by life events? Do you have an entirely different self-consciousness, open to you when you are seeking to understand and experience the miracles of life? In order to answer these questions (although many of you may already know it's true for you), let us look at what these two consciousness states are.

Every mammal on the planet has a fight/flight mechanism and it would be ludicrous to imagine if humans didn't have one. If you are startled or threatened or injured, you have an ability to engage behavior to battle the threat or get out of the way. Because you are human, this behavior must have a self-conscious component (an "ego," if you will, that believes it is you), and when you are triggered into this fight/flight state, you have preprogrammed actions to take to overcome the pain, threat, or loss. This seamless shift from one self-conscious state to the other and the behaviors you engage as a result, including the feelings of anxiety, depression, guilt, and self-denigration, are the source of almost everyone's problematic existence.

Your fight/flight self-conscious function is generated from a different part of your brain, uses different guidelines for its functioning, and limits your ability to reason and respond. It was this state of consciousness that drove the women of the nineteenth century to deal with the repressive nature of their society by feigning blindness and led Freud to his wildly imaginative theories of psychosexual dysfunction. We will examine the fight/flight consciousness in more detail later. Sometimes you get triggered by life events, and, once triggered, your consciousness shifts to a survival self-conscious mode. I have no doubt you know that is true.

In addition to this fight/flight consciousness, you also have

your Authentic Self-Expression, those times when you are extraordinarily kind, compassionate, caring, and loving. You can be curious, productive, interested, and imaginative, and not once defensive, self-absorbed, or excessively self-serving. This self-conscious awareness is generated from a completely different part of your brain, the neocortex, and you most likely feel that it is the “real you.”

This level of self-consciousness is the essence of your experience, a creative, thoughtful being who is capable of subtle and complex concepts and extraordinary humanity. It is the place we each seek to find when we are mired in life’s dilemmas and contradiction. It is the part of our being that must have been made in God’s image and is the part of you most closely associated with the human soul.

Based on these two very short descriptions of the two states of human consciousness, you must now determine if you have these consciousness states. Are you really two separate personas in one body? I’m betting you know the truth of this and know that you are not simply a person trying to cope, you are a person who has a coping persona. You are not simply making nice because you are truly capable of being an amazing human being. I like to say one self is a human doing, our auto/protector self, and the other self is a human being, our Authentic Self.

If you know this truth, you have just made the discovery. Two selves: One self is automatic, defensive in nature, driven by survival needs, and REACTIVE to conditions and circumstance; another self is Authentic, creative, imaginative, curious, compassionate, and productive, available to RESPOND only when survival needs can be set aside. You know intuitively that you have a persona that takes control when you are confronted by fear, pain, or loss, and you know you have a persona that dreams big dreams and seeks the wondrous and magical.

This is the Core Paradigm: one person, two selves. One self is reactive, preprogrammed, and self protective, focused on the past or fears of the future; the other self is responsive, present, in the here and now, and curious. Humans have always needed both and they are NORMAL parts of our human psyche, but today the use of fight/flight/freeze to solve our social problems has become incredibly problematic. The other day, Nikki recalled something I said to one of our first groups, “Two selves: God created one, and out of pain and desperation we created the other.”

Once we made this discovery, it was like the flood gates opened up. We were able to quickly see how this explained the apparent contradiction between behavioral and cognitive psychology, and how both could “work” and “be right” about the nature of human behavior. We could “see” why sometimes a therapy would work and why it would fail in seemingly the same circumstance. We could see why my joke about “having a bad decade” held more truth than we wished to acknowledge. This truly was a unifying principle that helped us recognize how this paradigm of our consciousness was tied to our behavior and emotions, and our dysfunction and misery. It would also lead to new ways of working with people that would break the chains of their fight/flight patterns and open new avenues to happiness and satisfaction.

The Core Paradigm can help you as well (and may already have). Just knowing this information can free your mind and open doorways in your psyche to release the pain and troublesome behavior with which you have struggled for so long. Nikki likes to paraphrase Charles Darwin, “The conscious wish to perform a reflex action sometimes stops or interrupts its performance, though the proper sensory nerves may be stimulated.” Nikki tells his au-

dience, “When you become conscious of a process previously unconscious, it causes an interruption.” This means just being aware of your auto/protector self can often interrupt its function long enough to let you think about the potential benefit or harm of engaging these driven actions—you will come to greatly appreciate this as you gain further insight into the Core Paradigm.

This paradigm can assist you in opening the door to peace of mind, creativity, imagination, and well-being, no matter what the circumstances of your life. Embracing the Core Paradigm will allow you to appreciate your struggle for what it is, a reaction to pain, threat, or loss, not abnormal psychology. You no longer need to be ashamed of your anxiety, depression, or other behavioral survival strategies because you will see them for what they are: your auto/protector’s attempt to keep you safe.

The discovery that you are not abnormal or mentally dysfunctional because you have emotional or behavioral struggles changes the dynamics of the help you need and allows you to be a more effective participant in your own well-being. You can trust that your mind and self-conscious awareness are perfectly normal. We will redefine normal, and actually return normal to its rightful place—in more than eighty percent of the human population who would naturally fall within the bell curve of normally functioning people. If you are one of the few who would fall outside of the normal range (because of a brain injury, birth defect, or psychosis), this paradigm may have only limited benefit for you. It is highly unlikely, if you have read this far, that you fall outside of normal range.

Your problems in life, mild dissatisfaction, relationship dysfunction, more serious depression or anxiety, or a host of other maladies, are most likely the result of the misuse of your

automatic/protective personality that we call the auto/protector self. When you “see” the truth, you will learn how to choose whether you wish to remain so chronically unhappy. You will open the door to expressing yourself more openly and honestly by shifting into your authentic persona, what we call the Authentic Self. The focus of your therapy or coaching will no longer be to fix you, but to support you to first be aware that you are triggered and coping (as opposed to living well), and then to support your shift of focus from automatic survival to Authentic Self-Expression when you wish to and are ready to.

This is a miraculous process not requiring time, hard work, or the development of new techniques. However, you most likely will take time, work hard, and develop new techniques to deal with your protective persona. The actual process is a shift of self-consciousness that requires you to surrender in circumstances you previously decided were too dangerous for you to do so. It takes great courage and my clients have shown this remarkable courage, and I am willing to bet you will too.

The shift from a life troubled, painful, and fraught with past difficulties to a life of goodwill and peace of mind will take no more than a millisecond when you are ready to surrender. The key is getting to that place of surrender and the rest of this book will aim at creating the safety necessary for you to achieve that moment. From there, the challenge will be maintaining it, or more accurately returning to this place more and more at your command.

Let me say again that you will be TRIGGERED INTO AN AUTO/PROTECTIVE state over and over again...it cannot be helped, and when triggered, you will COPE using preprogrammed and ineffective behaviors and emotions. The trick is to recognize

this state for what it is (your being triggered back into your auto/protector self) and then rekindle your willingness to surrender...time after time after time.

The gift of this process is letting go of the labels, beliefs and judgments concerning your problems and distress in order to realize a new and profound truth. **This truth is that your life issues and distress do not make you dysfunctional, define you as mentally unhealthy or abnormal, or make a statement about your worth or self-esteem.** You are asked to see your struggles in a new light, one in which you are a natural whole human being, sometimes struggling and sometimes living, and always okay—even when you are sure you are not.

You will watch as your self-esteem repairs its “self” when it no longer carries the burden of labels like neurotic, phobic, compulsive, depressed, anxious, lazy, underachieving, selfish, stubborn, or troubled. You are freed to return to the world, whole and with the potential you always knew was within, now one step closer to actualization.

This is the journey from survival to living, and the process is a conscious evolution of your consciousness. I say again, YOU are NOT sick, abnormal, or mentally dysfunctional because you are having life-living difficulties. In fact, sad to say, these difficulties are entirely too normal; you are functioning exactly the way your consciousness grew to function when it first emerged on this planet. What changed are the circumstances this consciousness of yours has been asked to face. You now must learn to turn off your auto/protector self and reemerge as the authentic being you are entitled to be. To that end, there are a few things you will need to learn and unlearn in the coming chapters. We will begin a journey of discovery about the nature of our human self-consciousness in order to reap the benefits of living LIFE AFTER SURVIVAL.

Chapter Three

Homo Sapiens, Sapiens

Og woke to the sounds of his family sleeping: Small noises reassuring him that all was well. They would be going to the big root grounds today and all would need to have care as it was bear season. He would triumph once more if the need arose, but his arm began to throb as he was reminded of his last encounter with old Jama, the biggest of the bear tribe—and sleep now left him for the day. They must go to the big root ground because that is where food could be found in this season and ancestor after ancestor had done it just this way. Many had died at the hand of the bear; it was their way. However, he had survived in each of his encounters. “This time,” he said to himself, “would be no different.” He would wear his medicine and once more all would be well—he was sure of it. Og often talked in his head this way; it was comforting and prepared him for the tasks at hand. Life was full of tests but if he remained true to the medicine he possessed, he and his family would pass another day in harmony with the spirits.

As the day passed, no sign of the bears appeared and just as he predicted, they had a full harvest and would soon return to an evening of dancing and drumming and praising the good spirits that made this wonderful life possible. Og often wondered why the spirits had chosen him to lead his people, but then he knew everyone in his clan shared a special gift...

— **Another day in paradise**

When you picked up this book you may have been seeking new ways to achieve more or feel better. You may be struggling with some issue or some problematic relationships that seem very important; the longer you go without resolution the more concern you have. This is the way of life in the twenty-first century, but it has not always been so.

If we are to believe the anthropologists and other interested parties, humans much like you and I have been roaming around this planet for a very long time, perhaps as much as two hundred thousand years. For MOST of that time, humans had a very different way of using their fight/flight self-consciousness. When ancient man coped, he coped with threat, pain, and loss from conditions outside of his tribe or small community. He seldom if ever needed to develop his coping with others in his group: This was simply because his group was a necessary part of his survival and would not have been perceived as a barrier to it. This was the way of evolution: The most adaptive groups of individuals were more likely to survive. The result was our fight/flight machine, honed by tens of thousands of years of coping with threats, pain, and loss inherent to man's extraordinary existence in the wild.

Humans developed their powerful adaptive fight/flight con-

sciousness almost exclusively to overcome the monumental disadvantages to being human in the wild. Humans were slow of foot, thin skinned with little fur or hair coat for protection, weak of limb, and dull of senses, with inadequate abilities to climb or dig. Every animal and creature seemed to have numerous advantages over this biped who clung to life in small groups of scavenger/hunter-gatherers. Without humanity's incredibly adaptive self-aware fight/flight persona, the human race would have become another dodo bird. Instead, humanity's large-brained and brilliantly adaptive, reactive, clever, flexible, and determined auto/protector self would win the day...and the day after that as well.

Survival has always depended on the recognition of dangerous situations and the ability to react quickly to those situations with effective behaviors of fight or flight. For example, a newborn fawn, never having experienced a lion, will lie down perfectly still in the weeds and allow the camouflage of the spots on its back to protect it. This behavior is instinctual from birth and works well enough to ensure the species continuation. Man would require the ability to recognize danger and need effective reflexive reactions if he hoped to survive. However, his newborn child would have no such ability and further would be completely unable to help the adults in critical situations. Evolution had a formidable task. Even our closest animal relatives, the chimps, could climb trees. Unlike human infants, chimp infants could hold on for dear life and support their own body weight while their mothers climbed to safety. Human infants were the most helpless beings on the planet.

There was a good reason behind the helplessness of human infants, which includes the solution. As our brain size increased, the infant was born more and more immature. The head size of a

human infant will nearly double in the first year of life, and the skills most animals show at birth would not happen until about the age of one in humans. Our infants would have to LEARN to walk and swim and protect themselves, but, most important of all, they would learn WHAT was dangerous.

A fawn doesn't know that lying still when predators are near is good or bad, useful or beneficial. It doesn't know what is good for it or bad for it. It just does what it does because it is programmed to do so. However, if this programming occurred out in the world, the animal would have to know what was good for it and what was bad for it. SELF-AWARENESS would have to be part of the equation of survival. Humans would have to use their big brains to learn what was useful and what was ineffective if they hoped to survive—and they did survive.

We ate of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil and we learned and programmed both what was dangerous and what to do about it. We dealt with wild animals, sickness, and natural calamities. We had to recognize and react, well before such things became fatal, and this required preprogrammed behavior that could be triggered by the slightest indication of danger.

If we were once injured by a six-foot bear with four-inch claws and later we encountered a three-foot cat with two-inch claws, we had to “see” the similarities, or we wouldn't be anyone's ancestor. Evolution would have ensured that. The caveman who ran away from a bear hide waving on a branch is the one who passed his genes on, and the one whose automatic fight/flight mechanism we still use today.

This process of facing some painful or threatening situation and then expanding it to include all the aspects associated with the

situation is called generalization. Humans are great at generalizing just about everything that can be even remotely dangerous. This worked well for Og and his kind. The individuals who had the most general mechanism survived, which set the stage for you and me to react to situations that only slightly resemble dangerous or painful events. If our red-haired mom smacked us every time we spilt our milk, now we duck and run to the bathroom if we spill a drink in front of a red-haired waitress. What served Og and his kind is now a compulsive and problematic social quirk that gets us laughed at or worse. If that isn't bad enough, when we realize our coping survival behavior is the source of our ridicule, we use more fight/flight to try to solve this social dilemma. The results are often frustrating, futile, and disastrous.

Our Family of Origin

This all started innocently enough. In our chapter story, Og had many of the same concerns that you and I have. He wanted to provide for his family, be productive, and to help his children take their rightful place in his society. He knew that his role as protector was vital to achieving these goals and he knew he could not do this alone. His association with others of his kind was an unquestioned condition of his life and the life of his family. He relied on their help and they relied on his talents; life in his world was only possible as a group activity.

Og's role of protector was not some macho male thing that the women of his tribe resented; it was the natural product of human evolutionary development. Our infants were completely dependent on their parents and these parents needed to share the burden of this dependency, based on the strength and availability of

each partner. This placed the nursing mother next to her infant, and by default required the man to take on the role of protector of the family unit. Og was simply playing his necessary role, just as his mate did in protecting their helpless offspring.

Og and his mate took their roles of parenting for granted. They were not required to manage their offspring to any significant degree because there was seldom a need to say no or limit their children's creativity or activity. "Don't break that, don't go too far, stay out of the street, you can't have that new toy, eat your peas," and other parental instructions would be unheard of in Og's day. Og's children had to form their fight/flight mentality to face external threats and cope with the hard scrabble of their existence. This minimized the dysfunction between parents, parent and child, and any other social relationship they were likely to get into. Fight/flight was a perfect tool of survival, but had little or no place in the world of human relations and human achievement.

When Og and his kind began to discover the powerful self-expressive Authentic Self, they were free to express themselves when conditions permitted. Life was rich in their cultural development and even though it was extraordinarily dangerous, it was equally extraordinarily creative and rewarding. Our neocortex was creating a new level of self-consciousness that the world had never seen before.

The early humans' need to dance and drum and decorate each other gave them some respite from the awful state of death and hardship in the wild. It was the magical times of being together and playing together that kept them going. Still, even though these moments were precious, those individuals who spotted danger in the smallest provocation more quickly were the ones who survived. It was their genes that were passed down generation to generation, until today.

Og was a survivor with an acute sense of danger, he was alert with quick coping reactions of fight or flight. He and his clan knew that danger was never far away and relied on their alert radar consciousness to detect the slightest reminder of situations that had previously led to threat, pain, or loss. Og and his clan developed coping skills that allowed them to survive in conditions in which few of us today would be able to cope. This powerful part of their consciousness was the only thing between them and extinction.

They coped and they survived, yet what was most important to them was that they LIVED. They danced and drew and made decorations and performed rituals that used their Authentic Self-Consciousness, and they helped each other return to this state over and over again after each terrifying survival event. They learned to explore, decorate, create, and imagine, and they used their curiosity to develop amazing understandings of their surroundings.

This large human brain and this amazing, unexpected side effect beyond survival had the power of sentience and the power of universal consciousness that many would come to call their Soul or God consciousness. Humans could feel their connection to eternity and they could experience, love, compassion, gratitude, and appreciation. This was surely a gift from the gods—and a strong motivation to exceed simple survival.

These gifts and talents were passed from generation to generation. We could use our hair-trigger reactive self each time a threat was posed or an injury felt, and then return to our people and our creative pursuits. The human race grew and populated the earth. Getting triggered was as natural as eating, and coping was not only a way of life but a necessity of life. We handled the art of survival extremely well until the day came when most of the bears and lions

and tigers had fled: The great epoch of human civilization was upon us. Then the problems began.

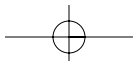
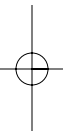
When man domesticated himself by settling down, he faced increasingly difficult conflicts and increasingly difficult situations between himself and his neighbor. Parenting became problematic as he no longer could rely on children to find their own way. The circumstances and problems he faced were increasingly more complex, **but his consciousness tool remained stubbornly fixed.** In evolutionary terms, the changes humans made in their living conditions over the last ten thousand years (and even more intensely the last one thousand) are a drop in the bucket, but **our survival consciousness and reactions are now incredibly ill-equipped to handle them.**

When parents and other people in our community replaced lions and tiger and bears as the source of our pain (and the source of our coping with frustration and distress over our relationships with each other), we began to experience how inadequate fight or flight behavior is at solving our problems. We didn't understand what was happening. New problems emerged as we strived to understand our pain. The new ways we learned to use fight and flight against the pain of being young in today's society only made our problems more intractable.

When cavemen got triggered by wild animals, fight or flight often was the best recourse. However, when we are triggered today by angry parents or the pain of being told NO, our slide into fight/flight only creates more problems and more reactions, in a never-ending cycle of trigger/cope, cope/trigger.

You are struggling with modern life, not with mental health. Your mental faculties are functioning as they were evolved to function, but it is time for us to consider consciously evolving our con-

sciousness. If we wish to live with peace and satisfaction in this crazy quilt world of modern life, we are going to have to learn HOW to live with our fight/flight consciousness. We can and must do that for our own sake and that of the planet as well. We have survived and survived well; now we must learn to live and live well.



Chapter Four

Your Triggered Consciousness

“Read my lips, I didn’t have sex with that woman. I don’t consider oral sex as having sex with a woman,” said Bill Clinton. “I don’t have a problem with alcohol,” said by tens of thousands of alcoholics. “I’m very quiet. That’s just the way I am,” said by anyone who has felt the sting of criticism for not speaking up on their own behalf. “I didn’t do anything illegal and I expect to be exonerated when all the facts are known,” said by every politician who subsequently was convicted of one crime or another. “I had no other choice,” said by everyone who must explain why they took the unsatisfying, harsh, or career-failing steps they did. “If I don’t do it, someone else will,” said by everyone engaged in supplying guns, drugs, or services that appeal to people’s vanity, avarice, greed, gluttony, or sloth. “I have to do what they say; I’m not the boss,” said by anyone who feels trapped by their circumstances or life situation. “If I don’t do it myself, no one else will,” said by every frustrated parent. “It’s not my fault that I am where I am. I never asked

to be born. No one ever gave me anything. No matter what I do nothing ever seems to work. You have no idea what I've been through. I try but it never seems to be enough. It isn't fair! All I ever wanted was a chance. I'm doing the best I can."

—Overheard in every corner of every town in America

Most people are coping most of the time. Survival is the human being's first priority. Survival means two things: getting away from direct physical threats and being able to obtain what you need. Sometimes the second category means justifying the behavior you used to get what you needed. This is what we see in the opening of this chapter, people from all walks of life and in every conceivable situation trying to justify, rationalize, and deny reality. We "have to" because we are faced with an ancient imperative—survive at all cost. Our problems arise when we use survival, fight/flight behavior to run our businesses, relate to our spouse or children, explain our addictions, or justify our urges.

To your auto/protector consciousness, getting what you want or need is survival. If it is faced with giving up the coping behavior you use to obtain what you want or need, then it is faced with giving up its primary directive to survive. The alternative is to attempt to justify the behavior, including trying to justify it to itself. It seems obvious, if you don't survive, you don't get to proceed with anything else. Today, most of the survival behavior we engage is not anything like the behavior Og and his clan engaged in order to ensure his tribe's well-being. In fact, most of our survival behavior today is problematic at best and downright self-destructive at worst.

We have eliminated the wild beasts from our midst. We have reduced foraging to going to the grocery store, and shelter has never

been a serious issue for most of us. Sex is seldom the province of propagating the species and the thirst for power serves no one, not even the power broker. For a homeless person, survival has a more urgent meaning, but more than likely you are in the majority of the population for whom physical survival means avoiding angry parents or other personal authority figures on the one side, and seeking to find ways to satisfy an ever-increasing list of needs from advertising-induced desires on the other. THIS is the beginning of our problematic existence.

When you misidentify your wants as your needs and then apply survival behavior to obtain them, you shift from Authentic, cooperative self-awareness to fight/flight/freeze behavior. The justifications in our chapter opening are just some of the chronic rationalizations of our modern world. They are spawned by fight/flight mentality to justify survival in today's jungle of consumerism and excess. Our "need" to be cool, to get a better car or a smaller iPod, drives us as much as when humans needed food and shelter. When survival becomes an escalating race to possess more and more, the justifications become more and more ludicrous.

Failing in this race to obtain riches in our culture produces the same pain our ancestors felt when they failed to secure sufficient food. Today, our complaints are only added to those of the millions of others who also are feeling the pain of failure to thrive in the race for money, power, fame, or notoriety. Where once the human tribe could be empathetic, we are now faced with competition for who is suffering most or general apathy to the overwhelming number of victims in today's society. Those of us struggling in anonymity, wanting more, feeling the burn of envy, and craving the things that always seem out of reach will inevitably find ourselves triggered and

coping to survive. Our unhappiness is real and our excuses are legion in our headlong pursuit to explain why our lack of excess is not our fault, and to garner sympathy for our unfortunate plight. Of course with so many others fighting the same battle, there is little time for the healing Og found when he turned to his community. Satisfaction in today's society is an increasingly rare commodity.

Satisfaction also eludes those 'fortunate' individuals who succeed in achieving the excesses found in today's world. Those who are fortunate enough to have wealth, power, fame, or notoriety are not immune to the ills of our chronically unhappy, unsatisfied, unfulfilled, and alienated society. Their families shatter, their children falter, and their misery is often a public drama played out before us in the media's lust to chronicle the spiraling dissatisfaction in today's world. Many of my clients have been wealthy and "successful," without finding the elusive happiness so many of us seek. If you fail to get all that you want, you may find yourself triggered and coping. However, it is equally bad to get everything you lust for and find yourself on a merry-go-round of needing something more to be happy. Using fight/flight to obtain or protect the things in our world will never lead any of us to peace and happiness.

Recognizing Fight/Flight Behavior

What does it look like to be in fight/flight behavior? Because we are human, fight and flight often take on the mask of rational reasonable efforts to obtain our goals, but it is not driven by a simple curiosity or a desire to be helpful and productive. Fight/flight behavior is driven by your auto/protector persona and inevitably has a disturbing undercurrent of demand or helplessness. The dog-eat-dog world of business is coping. The manipulation that husbands

and wives use to get each other or their children to cooperate is coping. The endless conversations by millions about their victim-like circumstances is coping. Rationalizing and justifying our behavior is coping; doing things we do not feel good about for our own personal gain is coping. Coping is the auto/protector consciousness of survival and it was never intended to make anyone happy.

Who in your life spends a considerable amount of time coping? Starting today, observe who is coping and who is actually living. Living is the enjoyment of the company of others who are also enjoying themselves. The emotional tone is relaxed and playful, the goodwill is obvious, and the people are flexible and cooperative with each other. Coping, on the other hand, is hard. The emotional tone is driven and painful, the pressure is obvious, and rigidity exists among the people.

When people shift into survival consciousness, we call it being triggered, and the resultant actions they engage in we call coping. The struggle to get what you want and the pain of not getting what you want often continue to escalate in our society of driven individuals. Can you tell the difference between situations in which people are not feeling the pressure of survival and in situations which people seem to “need” things a certain way to be okay? Of course you can.

This difference is easily recognizable if you stop for a second and look for it, which is precisely what I will be asking you to do. Look around for the next couple of days and see how often you see people in survival mode. Notice how they are striving to get what they say they need. Watch for all the rationalizations and denials. Notice how often their “needs” are really just things they want and how seldom they are actually basic survival needs (food, air, water, shelter, social intimacy). Then notice how people attempt to obtain

these needs. Watch how they are blind to their coping strategies and how often they will push away the very things they seem to be seeking. Notice the problematic aspect of trying to cope with issues instead of actually facing the reality of the need.

Listen to the problems people say they face and see if you can see the underlying survival energy they have attached to them. Notice how the choices they say they have are limited to either/or conditions. Try to see the other options they are unable to include. Notice how much pressure is on you to agree or disagree with them. Become a witness to other people's problems and coping from the perspective of fight/flight. (A word of warning: Do not try to fix or enlighten while you are engaged in this experiment. Simply observe and empathize with them because it must be difficult to be in their shoes. Solutions will come later.)

Coping can be very subtle. We would like you to get very good at recognizing when a person is coping or a situation has coping in it. We want you to begin to see the full extent of human survival behavior as it plays out in today's society. Recognition is the key to eventually overcoming the detrimental effects of coping in today's world. Soon you will be applying what you have learned to yourself and the problems you experience in your own life. You will also need to appreciate how fully engaged others are and how blind they can become in order for you to fully appreciate how difficult it may be for you.

Getting triggered and coping with it in today's world are truly the problems with which people struggle. It is the shift from Authentic Self-Consciousness and its truly creative and effective problem-solving capabilities to auto/protector self-consciousness and its ruthless, self-absorbed determination to survive at any cost. Israel

and Palestine would have no problem if they could use their Authentic Self-Consciousness to work out a solution to X number of people living in X number of square miles and sharing X number of resources. However, when it becomes a matter of survival for the tribe, every request a demand for righteous justice for one side, no amount of negotiation can bridge the gap.

Individual struggles are exactly the same. You are struggling to be safe, acquire enough, or get what you need from others, whether it is a spouse, a child, a boss, or an employee. In each of these struggles, you face either using your Authentic Self or sliding into the abyss of your auto/protector self. If you use the latter, you limit your choices and options to bludgeoning, manipulation, rationalization, obsequious agreement, denial, whining, or hopeless resignation, and none of these will bring you the promise of goodwill, peace of mind, and happiness, which we seek as we tread the path of our lives.

Take some time and observe the coping that goes on around you. Look at the person who cuts you off on the freeway or the person who cuts in line to “just get this one item” and appreciate that they are triggered and coping. Identify the survival urgency that pervades the interaction between people. Notice how often the only creativity is in how people manipulate one another to get what they want. Appreciate how blind and self-absorbed people can be when it comes to seeing the nature of their situation. Begin to appreciate that human consciousness is not simply some homogeneous rational spectrum, but a dichotomy of Authentic Self-Expression and blindly determined survival.

Find examples of people not coping. Look for moments of authentic interaction, kindness, and generosity of spirit. Make a note of when you see people expressing their Authentic Self. Notice if

these observations change the way you respond to certain situations...give yourself a chance to observe without taking anyone's actions personally. You might be surprised at what a difference this can make.

Chapter Five

The Auto/Protector Self

“Come on, hurry up, quit dawdling,” the harried mother says to her two preschoolers.

“We have to make a quick stop and get home to start dinner,” she continues.

“Come on, take my hand,” she says, a little more sternly. “Stop grabbing your sister.”

They walk into the grocery store and as they turn by the checkers, the kids spy a row of little toys and plastic gimmicks and run over to them.

“Hey, come back here, we have to get milk and eggs and get going,” she says, now becoming a little exasperated, but it is too late.

“I want this one, mommy,” her daughter shouts.

“I want this one,” her son pipes in.

“NO,” she says with increasing exasperation. “Put it down right this minute.”

“But mommy I really want it,” they say in unison and start to

hold the toys close to their little chests.

“No!” she shouts and grabs the toys and puts them back. “You know better than that. Now let’s go!”

Her son starts to go back and pick up the toy while her daughter begins to cry. With real anger now, the mother says, “Stop that, both of you. If you touch that, Jonathan, you know what will happen. Now come here this minute.”

“But I really want it mommy,” Jonathan pleads.

“No, and that’s final!” she says as she roughly grabs him by the arm and pushes the little girl along with her leg. “Stop your crying right now. Do you ever think of anyone else but you...stop it right now or I’ll put you in the car,” she says, knowing her little girl is afraid to be left alone.

“No, mommy, don’t put me in the car. I’ll be good,” she says with real terror starting to show through.

“You’re a mean mommy,” Jonathan says with some defiance.

“And you’re a very selfish little boy,” the mother replies with a biting edge. “And I just won’t take you to the store anymore if you don’t learn how to act.”

“That’s not fair.” He pouts and begins to softly cry as he starts to go with her.

“Okay then, both of you straighten up right now and let’s get going,” she says with an air of exasperated relief.

—Another moment, in a long series, shared by parent and child

Let us take a moment to examine more fully the nature of our automatic protective persona. When you shift into your auto/protector self, you do so seamlessly and without awareness that a change of self-conscious awareness has occurred. In the previous chapter you

were asked to look for examples of people in this survival consciousness. Now we want to explain more of what it is. We also want you to begin to appreciate that while being triggered into this state can be enormously problematic, it is also the natural condition of being human. As such, you would be wise not to make it wrong. Making your auto/protector self wrong will only add to your problems.

Let's start by taking a look at our chapter story. For whom should we feel sorry? The little children, in their innocence and enthusiasm, were seeking new adventures. Their only sin was captivation with the wonder of a shelf full of toys. The mom had one more stop in an endless series of things to do. She hoped and prayed she could get through this last one and get home with enough time to kick off her shoes and rest for just a few moments before the responsibilities and pressures of her home life overtook her once again. The answer, of course, is we can feel compassion for both parties and understand and empathize with both perspectives: UNTIL WE'RE TRIGGERED OURSELVES.

When you were observing others being triggered and coping, you may have been triggered by their behavior. You may have judged them and perhaps even felt a bit superior to them as you watched them struggle. In the chapter story, you may have identified with the children or the mother and made one or the other guilty, but what we want to point out is that both parties can be seen with compassion. Being triggered and then coping to try to overcome the circumstances are everyday occurrences for each of us. It is the way we are naturally wired to be.

The Core Paradigm gives you a little framework to appreciate why we are wired this way, but that is not the value of this process. The value of the Core Paradigm discovery occurs when you make it

for yourself. Somewhere in the life of each client, a seminal moment occurs in which they explain to me that the reaction they just had was “automatic.” They stop for a second and look at me kind of funny, and I generally say something like, “Gee, what a novel concept. I should consider calling it the automatic.” Talking about being taken over by the automatic self and experiencing it in real time are two very different things. The mother didn’t realize how harsh she had become or why. She was simply trying to complete the tasks of her day, but if she could have become aware of her shift, things might have turned out quite differently for her and the children.

The Core Paradigm says you have an automatic, protective mechanism that uses the words “I,” “me,” and “my” to refer to itself, but it isn’t YOU. (Sometimes in the next few chapters we will use “YOU” to represent your Authentic point of view and “you” to represent your auto/protector self.) It takes over seamlessly in an instant and begins making decisions, taking action, getting angry, or shutting down. It does this without YOU ever knowing it, so you believe your behavior and emotions are still the authentic responses appropriate to the given situation or circumstance. If you did the assignment in the previous chapter, you saw this happen time after time for other people. Their automatic reactions to perceived threat, pain, or loss put them into a different self-consciousness state, and while you could be aware of this by observing closely, you also probably noticed they weren’t aware of it. Understanding this awareness, and understanding your own triggers and coping methods, is the first step in taking back control of your life.

In evolutionary terms, it serves individuals to not be aware that this primal level of consciousness has taken over. Our Authentic persona is too slow to respond to truly life-threatening danger. Histor-

ically, an Authentic Self's critique of the automatic's every move would have proved fatal to the human race. However, most of the problems we face today, just like in our chapter story, are far from life-threatening. Without Authentic oversight, the use of heavy-handed, fight/flight tactics end up hurting everyone involved. This is the discovery you must make for yourself and as you go through the next few chapters. I have every confidence you will.

Making the Core Paradigm Discovery Personal

Have you noticed you are not always an even-handed, fair-minded, balanced, compassionate, empathetic person who handles situations with understanding, creativity, and benefit to all involved? Of course, and as you are willing to admit that, I bet you are starting a dialog in your head about why that might be so. You know excuses such as “nobody's like that ALL THE TIME,” “there's only so much a person can take,” or “it's only human to get your buttons pushed once in a while, we're not robots.” Yes, we are not always the same even-tempered, balanced being we strive to be. Sometimes our patience is strained or our frustration rises and we just can't help it. Is that true or is something else going on?

In his book, *What Happy People Know*, Dan Baker, Ph.D. writes about the power of the fear system embedded deep within our brains. The brain stem and amygdale area of the brain “through the forces of evolution... endowed this fear system with tremendous power...it alone kept us alive. It gained us the hair-trigger capacity to spring into action at the first hint of threat.” Dr. Baker writes about how this fear-based system is the biggest barrier to people living happier lives. He has developed a “science of happiness,” and you can be sure that happiness is a function of getting past reactive

survival behavior. This is another good book for you to read.

The auto/protector self was the first self-conscious awareness our human ancestors had. It is this part of our consciousness that takes over when we get triggered by anything in life that we may perceive as threatening to our well-being. This shift into survival consciousness is not simply another way we have of dealing with problems; it is the primary system we use when triggered by any threat, pain, or loss. It is a shift into an alternative you, an alter ego if you like.

The mother in our chapter story wasn't just struggling to be a good parent, she was triggered into a state of consciousness that NEEDED to quell the threat these children were presenting with their BAD behavior. She had no compunction to threaten and terrify them to get her way because her way was necessary for survival. She began seeing her alternatives in terms of black or white, and the dynamics were adversarial in nature. She needed their compliance NOW, as the threat was NOW and any delay would certainly increase the damage. This was not a mistake in her thinking but a shift of conscious perspective. I am sure you can think of many situations with which you are "forced" to cope.

This is the way your auto/protector perceives the world. Any solutions you develop using this part of your consciousness will have the following elements:

It must be done NOW, consequences be damned.

The perception of the world as either with me or against me.

Everything will be either my way or the highway, or their way is the only way (depending on whether you are in fight or flight).

Everything I do will be justified by the need I have to defend myself or protect myself.

My needs trump your needs—me first will rule.

My need to get away from the situation will either push me to defy or knuckle under.

Whatever I need to do or get is necessary for my survival.

These imperatives drive the auto/protector self, and limit the thinking capacity and creative capacity you have to solve problems. They also make your life miserable when you use them to deal with your addictions or compulsions, parent your kids, resolve issues with your spouse or those closest to you, interact with your boss or co-workers, or solve your emotional distress.

In chapter one, we asked you to write down your problems. You are used to thinking about your life as if you were a rational, free-willed individual who solved his problems by understanding and correcting them reasonably. When and if this didn't work, you redoubled your efforts to fix the problem. If that still didn't work, you may have been labeled defective by some therapeutic modality. Chronic or recurring problems meant you were personally unfit in some manner, and your self-esteem was sure to take a beating. I am now asking you to consider that none of this is true. Only part of you is rational and only part of you is capable of solving your life-living difficulties using common sense, restraint, understanding, and reason. So now I ask you to add one additional problem to those you wrote down in chapter one: **being triggered and then coping with situations and circumstances that will not be resolved so long as I use my survival fight/flight mentality to address them.**

What is most important for you to understand here is your auto/protector level of consciousness is a separate consciousness with a separate set of rules and values guiding its function. You are not going to be able to integrate your automatic behavior and Authentic Self-Expression through therapy and counseling. (The actual ben-

efit of therapy and counseling is gained by putting a person in a relationship in which the therapist can bring his authentic persona to support another who is triggered and coping. The benefit is not through fixing the thinking or behavior—much more on this later.) You do not need to learn new ways to handle your problems. If you stop coping, you already know the answers.

When you find yourself acting like the mother in our chapter story, you need to recognize that you are triggered and coping with life. The solution to your problem will most likely be found only when you can release from this level of self-conscious functioning. You need to be able to say, “I am triggered right now. I am using fight/flight mentality to try to solve problems that will not be solved using my auto/protective persona.” There’s only one problem with this solution: It often doesn’t work. When you are triggered, your auto/protector will be certain that it needs to remain in control or dire consequences will occur. This justification will drive your auto/protector’s determination to stay in control.

For instance, imagine if the mother in our chapter story were to stop and say to herself, “Wait, I’m triggered right now. I need to stop and feel my feeling until my authentic spirit returns.” The ensuing chatter in her head would be deafening, “You can’t stop and patiently explain everything to the kids. You can’t be expected to take the next (hour, month, decade) explaining every decision you make. They’re supposed to mind you when you say something.” Arguments like these are often very powerful and persuasive and will keep you locked into fight/flight coping behavior in spite of your best intentions. As we saw in the previous chapter, this need to rationalize our coping auto/protective behavior is part of the package when we are being triggered and coping. When you slip into

fight/flight, your auto/protector is determined to see it through to the bitter end...and bitter end is far too often the result.

Do you get triggered? When triggered, do you defend your right to stay triggered and coping? Take a moment and think about the last disagreement you had that turned into an argument or was left incomplete. Think of one in which you felt you were in the right and about how you handled it. Did you feel a little (or a lot) victimized, hurt or angry, or a little self-righteous? If so, you were triggered and coping. Can you see that now? Answer yes to this and begin to realize that you just made the necessary discovery you'll need to truly begin to solve your chronic and recurring life-living problems.

When you accept that being triggered means shifting to a different level of self-conscious awareness, you will appreciate that the solution is not to FIX the circumstances, but to release from the powerful effects of your auto/protector. If a bear appears, then fight or flight to your heart's content, but if you are trying to beat up or run away from the feelings you have when faced with your kids, spouse, boss, friends, an addiction, or your own self-image, then you will need the courage to challenge your urge to cope. If Bill Clinton could have seen his urge to spread his seed to every willing female as a driven need to cope, he may have found a way to be with this need without acting on it. If he sees the need as just the way he is, he will continue to act on it. His efforts to be "good Bill" at the expense of satisfying his lust will only be a bandage if he doesn't recognize the source of his struggle.

When the mother in our chapter story made the discovery that her parenting behavior was driven by her fight/flight, she was shocked at how cruel she had been to her children. She cried and wept until

she finally surrendered to the fact that she was simply triggered and coping. She was “doing the best she could” from a fight/flight perspective. When she finally made it safe enough for herself to look at her reaction with compassion (by allowing her Authentic Self to re-emerge), she realized that saying “I’m triggered right now,” was a solution. Sharing this thought with her children in times when she was triggered would bring positive results for everyone. The solution was to embrace the Core Paradigm and shift her perspective to the real problem. If the problem was that the children were acting badly, then getting them in line was the solution. If the problem was that she had slipped into fight/flight behavior when triggered by the circumstances, then the solution was to release from the fight/flight state of mind. Identifying the real problems is the first step to real solutions.

You must now decide for yourself: Are the chronic/recurring problems you are dealing with (such as addiction, unhappiness, anxiety, depression, self-esteem issues, relationship problems, not finding love, unsatisfying work, money problems) caused by external circumstances or are they the result of your NEED to have things better or avoid pain? (Some of you will be SURE they are caused by circumstances outside of your control.) If you can imagine the possibility that they might be a result of some internal struggle, then consider the possibility that they are also connected with your need to survive and that the solution will come with your willingness to acknowledge when you are triggered and coping. (Again, your little voice may be strongly defending the position that these are negative circumstances and that overcoming your situation is what is necessary for you to be happy. If this is the case, acknowledge it and press on.) This is the moment of truth. Are you a victim of circumstance, or are you being victimized by your perception of those circum-

stances? Your auto/protector positively knows the answer to this question, but I am not asking it. I am asking YOU. Are YOU the author or the pen? Will you write your own story or continue to struggle with the one your auto/protector wrote when you were five? Take a chance now to know that your pain and struggle is the pain and struggle of someone trying to survive and that you are ready to live. Learn about your triggers, coping strategies, core beliefs, core issue, and Authentic Self, and recapture your joy.

We will be looking into what triggers you, which circumstances cause you pain, and what you are doing when you put on your mask and play a role you feel you must play to be accepted, to be okay, or to succeed. (If in thinking about these things you begin defending your use of the mask, be aware that you were triggered by these comments. If you think you don't wear masks in different situations, this only means you have become identified with the masks you wear. Defending yourself is not part of the solution, it is part of the problem. If that didn't trigger you, you are doing very well indeed.) It's not wrong to be triggered into your state of survival consciousness and it's not wrong to cope (although some coping behavior can be very destructive). However, when we try to cope with modern life and social situations, fight/flight leaves much to be desired. The problem with using our auto/protector self to guide our behavior is that it is enormously ineffective in today's world.

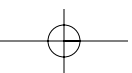
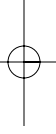
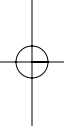
Ineffective and wrong are two very different things. When you label your auto/protector wrong, you set the stage for a huge internal conflict. On the one hand, you must cope to survive, but, on the other hand, coping is part of the problem. The solution to this, based on your auto/protector, is rationalization, justification, and denial. When those fail, more coping arrives in the form of anxiety, depres-

sion, hopeless, and despair. You must be able to say, “I am triggered right now,” yet the consciousness state you’re in will reject that as useless in the current emergency.

Take a breath, let it out slowly, and repeat after me, “I am triggered right now and as much as I feel the need to cope, I will trust that better solutions are available if I can only let myself breathe.” YOU is not you. The little you of the auto/protector self is concrete bound (either this or that), trapped in the double bind of “damned if I do and damned if I don’t.” It is also desperate for a place to rest. Your auto/protector self was programmed by the time you were eight years old, so if your coping behaviors seem a little childish, it is because they were created in childhood. You have an auto/protector level of self-conscious functioning. You use it when you are faced with the belief that your survival (obtaining your wants and needs in today’s society) is at stake. It is not who you are.

In order to better appreciate the nature of this alternative consciousness, as well as to develop your ability to catch yourself in the act, we will create your Core Profile. To that end, you may wish to get the workbook for *Life after Survival* because it will enhance your ability to do the exercises suggested by this book. This process will support you to “see” when you are triggered and coping in situations that will not resolve so long as you remain triggered. If you are to be happy and find peace of mind, you must be able to recognize when you get triggered and what you do to cope. This will allow you a better opportunity to let go of your auto/protector personality. Later on, you will have a chance to examine some of your Core Pain, Core Beliefs, and Core Issue. You will also develop the tools that will help you return to the gift that you are when in your full expressive Authentic Self.

Do you know now that you have an automatic fight/flight persona? I think you do. I'm sure you have seen others shift into this state and become their own worst enemy. You will find more support in the coming chapters as you see your behavior and feelings in a new light. We must learn to live with our survival reactions and find the tools to help us return to the place we all seek: the authentic, loving, compassionate community of self-expressive BEINGS. We are human BEINGS and we are one tribe.



“The truth is that our finest moments are most likely to occur when we are feeling deeply uncomfortable, unhappy, or unfulfilled. For it is only in such moments, propelled by our discomfort, that we are likely to step out of our ruts and start searching for different ways or truer answers.”

M. Scott Peck

Part Two

Developing Your Core Profile

“How much more grievous are the consequences of anger than the causes of it.”

Marcus Aurelius

“Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.”

Marianne Williamson

“There are only two things that trigger us in life;
not getting what we want...and getting what we want.”

Larry Gneiting

Chapter Six

Triggered and Coping with our Lives

He was fifth in line around the table. The moderator (that's what he liked to think of himself as) had asked each person in turn to do something, but he didn't know what it was. It would soon be his turn and each person was referring to their notebook and answering the questions. The moderator had repeated the questions several times but no matter how hard he tried he simply could not remember what they were. Ah, another one just finished her turn. What had she said? He didn't know and the person to his immediate right was just beginning to answer THE QUESTION...apparently it was only one, but what one? He tried to listen for clues but the buzzing in his ears kept him from getting it,

"Oh, look at that," he thought. "The blinds have an interesting pattern and, oh, you know I want to go in to work early tomorrow...yes that is important. I need to remember to reset my alarm...Hum, people are looking at me. What could this be about? Well, I guess I'll just wait, they're probably done. I don't know what

we're doing...why are they staring at me?"

"Don, do you know what the question is?" The moderator is asking him something.

"What question?" he thinks to himself, and then says aloud, "No, what. What do you want?"

"Do you know what we are doing, Don? Do you know it is your turn?" the moderator asks.

"No."

"Are you triggered Don?"

"No."

"Do you feel put on the spot?" the moderator asks him.

"Yes."

"Are you coping Don?"

"No."

"Are you confused about what is going on, Don?" the moderator says with some gentleness in his voice.

"Yes."

"How many people here think Don is triggered?" the moderator asks the room.

"No, I don't think so, he just didn't remember that we were reviewing our Core Issue page," one participant says, and two others immediately agree. Another says he may have just momentarily blanked out what he was doing. Still another says he might have been preoccupied.

"The question, 'How is this, an issue of...' and then filling in your keyword can be fairly triggering," the moderator tells the group.

"So, Don, will you turn to your trigger page and read what you wrote there? the moderator asks.

“Okay,” Don says while he opens the *Core Quest* book and turns to the trigger page. “Being put on the spot,” he reads.

“Now, Don, read your coping strategy you wrote on your coping page.”

Don turns to his coping page and reads, “Be confused.”

“So based on what you just read, Don, do you think you’re triggered and coping?” the moderator asks.

After a long pause, Don replies, “Well, I guess so.”

“Are you still coping?”

“I don’t know.”

“So how many people here think that Don now knows the question we have been answering, ‘How is this, an issue of...?’” the moderator asks everyone.

They all raise their hand and the moderator says, “Are you sure?”

Two people answer in unison, “You just said it. Of course he knows it now.”

And the moderator says to everyone, “Okay, shall we find out?”

“Yes. Sure,” they answer in near unison.

“Don, do you know what the question is and what you’re supposed to be doing?”

After a long pause, he answers, “No, I have no idea,” into a stunned silence.

—A Moment in a Core Profile Class

I know it is hard sometimes to believe that circumstances aren’t the problem. If your boss yells at you for something you didn’t do, isn’t that the problem? Don’t you need to correct his perception of the situation by getting him to see the facts? The answer is go ahead, but only if you are not injured by the accusation, you

give him the correct information to help HIM be more effective, and you can do it in a way that both empowers him and expresses your goodwill and compassion. However, if you NEED to correct his perception to be okay, to prove you are right, to point out how poorly he does his job, to get the monkey off your back by ending this misunderstanding, or correct the injustice of it all, then take a breath and say, “Boy am I triggered right now.”

What other problems might be issues of your being triggered? If your spouse is cheating on you, you face financial worries, or your child is into drugs, aren't these circumstances the problem? How about low self-esteem or being too fat? Surely these are real problems you must fix. The answer is these types of problems (and many more) are the CONTENT of your life and how you choose to deal with them (THE PROCESS you engage), will determine if you resolve them Authentically or struggle with them automatically in your fight/flight persona. Werner Erhardt, founder of EST, said, “The truth is ‘what’s so’ but it is also ‘so what.’” Said another way, the content is “WHAT IS” and the process is “WHAT WE DO.”

If someone yells at you, this is “what’s so,” and then every reaction you have past that moment in time, including feeling adversarial towards that person, is the “so what” of you being triggered. If you are in an adversarial position with anyone of importance in your life, this is the “so what” of your auto/protective reaction to them and will continue to exacerbate your problems. Remember, it always takes two to fight, but only one to stop. (If you just thought of a situation in which you have to be upset with someone and think the previous statement was terribly unfair, consider yourself triggered and take a big risk to read on.) If you NEED to make your

point, get someone to listen, or feel compelled to act in certain ways with which you are all too familiar, you are triggered and coping with life. You are making the facts of your life powerful and leaving yourself open to being the victim of these conditions, circumstances, or events. You never need to be an adversary of your spouse, children, boss, friends, or co-workers, but once triggered you will find it extraordinarily difficult to live in that perspective.

Being triggered and coping with life can be a full-time job. Coping behavior is all the stuff you do and all the feelings you have when triggered. If you are compulsive, phobic, addicted, angry, depressed, anxious, frustrated, sullen, or any number of other states, you are triggered and coping with the conditions you face in your life. These are not right or wrong, or morally good or bad, and certainly not mental deficiencies or issues of your mental health. You have developed a powerful survival mechanism to help you react to fear, pain, or loss, including loss of control. You are not your behavior, but your auto/protector self thinks you are.

There are four categories of chronic life-living problems that embracing the Core Paradigm can help you resolve: One is relationships with your children, parents, boss, friend, spouse, lover, or others with which you are close to and are in some kind of struggle with; two is your self-worth, self-image, self-esteem, behavior, addiction, or lack of self-control for which you beat yourself up; three is your sense of life, including happiness, satisfaction, alienation, success, or failure; and four is your emotional life, if you are anxious, depressed, angry, frustrated, empty, bored, or confused—anything that seems to have you in its grips. These problems overlap and interplay with each other, but they have different content that distinguishes them. In common, they are all affected by your

use of the fight/flight level of consciousness and can all be addressed by releasing from your survival state of mind.

Your survival needs and behavior developed during your formative years to help you survive the travails of being a child in our complex world. Now have the power to run your life and ruin your relationships all in the name of getting what you need. You “learned” what was dangerous from all the little injuries you’ve encountered. You developed Core Beliefs about your nature and the nature of the world in which you live. From all of these things, you developed coping strategies to handle your fear and pain and to get you what you need. This behavior does not have as its goal your ultimate happiness; its only goal is survival.

Coping is what we do after we get triggered to keep us from threats and pain, and to get us what we need in adverse circumstances. You are coping much of the time in situations that will not be resolved if you continue to cope. Even worse, so long as you cope to fulfill your needs for the love, companionship, happiness, and goodwill (things you so desperately seek), you will drive these things away. With that said, and even if you know this to be true, you will cope and cope and cope, because it is what we do. Once triggered, your automatic REACTION is to cope.

You might question why we cope if it is so ineffective. The answer is that coping is effective to a different standard, the standard of survival. It is ineffective in helping us emotionally, in social situations, or to handle our long-term goals and dreams. It was never intended for those purposes. Coping is to serve our immediate survival needs and to provide relief from pain, threat, or loss, NOW. **Coping cannot give you your heart’s desire, it can only give you a little respite from the pain.**

For instance, alcohol or other addictions are often used to cope. The user gets a buzz and feels a relief of the pain, but at what cost? His marriage collapses, his children resent him, he loses his job, but none of this has the power of the next drink to take the pain away, NOW. People use food, drugs, the Internet, or any mind-numbing, self-medicating activity to reduce their pain and anxiety, even though the long-term results of this cost far more than the pain from which they are running. This is not rational, it is coping. We NEED it and our auto/protector will do just about anything to justify its use.

People use anger, rage, confusion, helplessness, hopelessness, pleasing others, complacency, avoidance, compulsions, phobias, etc. to cope with the pain and fear in their lives and to get what they feel they NEED. They bully, rationalize, justify, negotiate, over think, clam up, knuckle under, deny, mollify, shout, and stubbornly refuse support in the pursuit of immediate gratification of their “survival needs.” When triggered, you cope. What we want is to be able to catch ourselves coping, in order to facilitate our return to Authentic Self-Expression and genuine happiness and satisfaction.

The journey to real happiness and satisfaction requires us to become aware of the consciousness source of our behavior and motivation. We must know what is driving us if we are to appreciate the journey. You might view this like the man who went to the airport to go to New York. He went to the counter, handed the attendant his ticket and asked for his boarding pass. “I’m sorry, sir. You cannot use this ticket to go to New York,” she said politely.

“Why not!” he exclaimed. “Is it not a ticket to New York?”

“Yes, sir,” the attendant said patiently, “it certainly is a ticket to New York.”

“And is it for today’s flight?” he asked.

“Yes, sir, it is for today’s flight,” she continued with waning patience.

“Then you must let me on this minute,” he said with rising irritation.

“No, sir,” she said very firmly. “You cannot use this ticket!”

“Why not, may I ask?” he said indignantly. “I shall report you straight away.”

“Do as you wish,” the attendant cautioned, “but this ticket is for a trip from Los Angeles to New York and you are in Houston. I’m sorry, sir, you cannot use an L.A. ticket from Houston.”

This is like coping: If you don’t know where you are, you are not going to get where you want to go. You need to know you are coping if you hope to get past the barriers in your life and get on with the art of living.

Let us take a closer look at the coping phenomena. People fall into two broad categories when they cope. One is people that seem to get socially appropriate results (albeit at some unpleasant hidden cost) and the other is people who get some survival value at the cost of any significant social value. (Nikki and I fall into these two categories quite nicely, with Nikki getting security and financial gain sometimes at the expense of goodwill and my getting to avoid any judgments at the expense of any significant achievement. When these two types meet, there can often be considerable friction.) Imagine, if you decide you must amass a great amount of wealth out of fear, you are coping. However, wealth is an acceptable outcome even if you become a workaholic, make some decisions that hurt others, or seem cold or ruthless. In this case, your coping APPEARS to work and you will have even more difficulty releasing from its

grip. (Your little voice may be saying, “If I’m getting rich, why would I want to?” The answer is simple. You want to be happy, and it’s not really either/or: cope and be rich, be happy and poor.) If you discover that your primary coping is such that when triggered you produce decidedly unpleasant outcomes (for example, producing failure as a means to avoid trying so hard and failing anyway), you may be highly motivated to stop. However, you face the double bind of needing to succeed at stopping this coping, which your auto/protector already knows you will fail to achieve.

If you think that giving up your coping means losing some goodies, like popularity, wealth, or getting your own way, you will have little motivation to let it go. On the other hand, if you think of your coping as self-defeating, hiding your potential or worth, and hindering you from having anything of real value, you will add the burden of making your coping wrong. This leads us to a huge dilemma: If we believe our coping is good for us, we hold on even tighter for all the goodies we think it gives us. If we make our coping wrong, we set the stage for our auto/protector to dig in its heels and hold on to the behavior for dear life. This double bind is but one of hundreds in which people find themselves when they get triggered. **In fact, if you feel like you are in a double bind anytime you are trying to solve a life-living problem, you can bet you are triggered and coping.**

About this time, your natural question probably is, “What can I DO about this dilemma?” The answer, unfortunately, is that even this question is coping. You most likely will get triggered by recognizing when you are coping, and your auto/protector self will judge this and want to fix it. Therefore, the solution will come only when you can accept the truth of your coping and release from it. Here

are five steps you can watch for as you release from the grip of your fight/flight mentality.

Step one, will be observing the triggers in your life and appreciating their power to drive you into coping behavior. (See the companion workbook. It is an excellent tool for you to discover the triggers and coping of your life.)

Step two, will be identifying your primary coping strategies as a tool to help you gain the awareness you will need when you are ready to break your vicious cycle of trigger/cope, cope/trigger.

Step three, will be developing your ability to appreciate and forgive yourself for coping in situations in which you felt triggered and acknowledging that you want more than coping can offer you.

Step four, will be your ability to surrender to the fear, pain, or loss, including the loss of the way you wanted things to be, and to reemerge as an Authentic, compassionate, courageous being.

Finally, **step five**, will be your Authentic Self reemerging to address the circumstances that will include your full expression of feelings—without blame and with the faith you have that, as a child of this universe, goodness and benevolence await your Authentic return.

Remember, your children will not improve their attitudes, your spouse will not become more supportive and cooperative, your boss will not quit yelling, and your depression, anxiety, or frustration will not lift because you exchange one coping for another. If you are struggling with any condition in your life, you are coping. At this point, coping is the problem, not the circumstance, you seek to eradicate. (“How can you say that when my child is doing drugs or my spouse is cheating or I am financially wiped out, or I am fat, addicted, compulsive, anxiety-ridden, or depressed?” If you have any

version of this thought right now, be clear that you are triggered and coping.)

The hardest part is to face your situation and, in a time-out mode, allow yourself to surrender. If you wish to do something about your circumstance, consider surrender. Surrender is not a doing, it is a being. You can do giving up, quitting, or knuckling under, but you can't do surrender. You must be in a state of surrender. When all seems hopeless—surrender! Learn a new way to trust. Discover what it means to have faith and surrender: If you try to surrender so that you can make your life better, which is entirely understandable, it won't work and you will get even more frustrated. This is coping, and you can't fool Mother Nature. Surrender is surrender, not a trick to make us better. We will look at this process in more detail later in this book, but for now simply know that everything your little voice is saying to resist surrender is part of your coping.

Triggers and Coping

The first step in our journey is to notice our triggers and to write them down. It is time for you to get a notebook or our companion workbook and begin writing down the things in your life that trigger you. Developing a Core Profile will aid you when the time comes to let go of your fear-based reactions. Being triggered means something in your environment has reminded you that you are vulnerable to pain, threat, or loss. You will trigger yourself by imagining some event, thinking about some situation in the past, or **SOMETHING COMING UP IN THE FUTURE.**

In our chapter story, Don was triggered by the process being conducted in his profile class. He was reminded of the many times

his mother would parade him in front of her friends to “show him off.” He felt humiliated. He hated being “put on the spot,” and he hated having to answer questions that everyone else seemed to already know the answer to. When it looked like Don had to perform in front of others, he was triggered. He had written this down some weeks before, but without his notebook, he would never be able to recall it once he was faced with the triggering stimuli.

If you don’t write down what has been triggering you, when you get triggered you will be less likely to know you are. This means you will have less chance to take back control when you wish to stop. You will be trying to get to New York from Houston by using a ticket from L.A. You can refer to our workbook for helpful suggestions about this process.

Once triggered, you will most often begin to cope. Don coped in his traditional ways. He checked out, got confused, used denial, and engaged in a lot of mental self-talk. He also wrote down all of these things weeks before and, once again, if he didn’t have his notebook right there in front of him, he would have had no access to the fact that he was coping. Coping is like that: When you are in it, you are sure you’re dealing with things as best you can.

Make a new page in your notebook (or turn to the Coping chapter of the companion workbook) and entitle it “Coping Behaviors.” Write down what you do to cope with life. When you get triggered, what are the first things you do? Look at your trigger page and write down what you did when you were first triggered by the events you have written about. These “doings” might be bodily sensations, thoughts, emotions, or actions. For example, if you wrote down “Sister telling me what to do” for a trigger, then you might notice the first thing you did was stiffen up your shoulders

when she started talking. Write it down so that the next time you stiffen your shoulders you might stop and recall that you “do” this when triggered.

The next thing you might notice you do when faced with the offending sister is to explain in excruciating detail why you can’t do as your sister says. If that is the case, write it down. You might get defensive and argue, yell, or tell her to shut up. Whatever it is, write it down. When coping, you are not really handling the situation; you are simply repeating a coping pattern one more time out of several thousand times when these things have occurred. (By “write it down,” I simply mean use a few keywords to recall the event for yourself. Don’t get into long-winded explanations. Our workbook will have several useful tips.)

When we get triggered and begin to cope, we do it as if we are present and engaged in the moment, but we are not. We are engaged in preprogrammed coping behavior triggered by current events that remind us of our painful history, or times when we failed to get what we wanted or needed. We believe we are reacting to the current stimuli but we are really reacting (often overreacting) to our own history surrounding this stimulus: Our coping behavior is invisible to us in this state and it is why you would be well served to write it down.

Don had his notebook and was able to see that he was acting exactly like the persona he had described weeks before. This helped him face the reality that he was triggered and coping. He closed his eyes and began to shake (another coping behavior he had previously written down), and in a few minutes was able to answer the question without further prompting. The shift back to the authentic persona was very dramatic for all to observe. Don was amazed

at how comfortable and easy it was to answer the question in front of this group of people who had nothing but his best interest in their hearts. He was able to experience a different reality than his mom putting him on display for her friends and his terror at not being able to perform correctly. All the coping in the world would not have helped Don experience the peace and freedom he found through facing his fear and surrendering.

When Coping IS Wrong: Learning Coping Skills

Just a note: Coping behavior is pervasive in most people's lives. Its goals are our safety and obtaining our wants and needs. It is not wrong to be triggered and to cope, but some coping behavior can be very wrong. When we are in a place where we need to cope, we are driven by an egocentric need to survive. We do not take into account the needs of others to survive, so it is a small step that allows us to steal, cheat, lie, and hurt others for our own gain (doing this will further trigger us and we will cope with our coping in a downward spiral). The pain of these outcomes is outweighed by the apparent gain of our needs and our safety. Coping is a real us-against-them state of mind, and it has short-term gain over long-term goals as its driving force. It may be swayed to some extent by our authentic values, but only to the degree we allow some Authentic Self oversight.

If you have coping behavior that injures yourself or others physically or verbally, or is so noxious as to be repugnant or illegal, then you will need to modify this behavior by developing a coping skill. You can modify coping in ways that both protect others and allow your fear the expression it needs until you are ready to release and surrender from these triggering events. We call this de-

veloping a coping skill because you are developing a safer method to handle the urgent need to cope.

An example of this is a father who can't seem to do anything but berate his child when the child does something not to the father's liking. When the father calms down, he will generally have great remorse for his belittling and scathing comments. He will try to understand his negative ranting by saying things like, "I can't seem to stop myself" or "Johnny just won't listen to me." The father could tell his spouse how upset he is with the children's behavior and leave to scream out of earshot. He could ask her to apologize for him until he could do it himself without further recriminations. He will most likely need a Life Coach or some other support to help him understand what is so threatening to him about dealing with childhood behavior. In the meantime, he will have a coping skill alternative to help him minimize the damage he is doing to his babies.

There are many instances in which people would do well to find coping skill alternatives: If you abuse physically, emotionally, or verbally, you need to find a coping skill alternative. If you physically hurt yourself or allow yourself to put up with abuse, you need an alternative. In her book *Children of the Self-Absorbed*, Nina Brown devotes a chapter to developing coping skills. She coaches her clients to shift the emotional pain from themselves back to the abuser. It is a good interim step.

Coping skills are not easy to develop or follow because we have formed our coping behavior in the belief that it is what we need to do in that moment of restimulation. Do not hesitate to seek out a Life Coach to help you make these necessary changes. You can modify any coping behavior enough to face the underlying need you are

trying to fill, but you may need to consult a life coach or therapist to help you modify your coping tendencies. This does not mean you are mentally ill or abnormal, it simply means you are a human being who needs human support to overcome your coping imperatives.

Developing coping skills, no matter how helpful and necessary, is not the goal of this book, or your ultimate goal for that matter. It is simply a means to an end. Coping skills are interim steps that allow the modification of particularly pernicious coping behavior. This modification may free you to work on true release and surrender. Coping is not wrong, but certain coping behaviors may be. The goal of this book is to help you return to your Authentic Self and your full self-expression.

Getting on With Your Life

You may feel that the last few paragraphs don't apply to you because you never feel the need to hurt yourself or others, or to take what they have. You may cope by other means, including compliance, rebellion, or manipulation. Your coping may take the form of flight most of the time, or you may become coldly efficient and demanding. You may turn your focus inward and only do damage to yourself by repeating actions that are frustratingly predictable. These forms of coping are simply cope of choice, or "cope du jour" variations. All coping is self-absorbed and self-serving. We all have a coping style and part of the reason we'd like you to write down your coping behavior is to better recognize this coping style.

Step two in your journey to Authentic Self-Expression is to acknowledge that you cope. You get triggered and then you cope. You use preprogrammed behavior over and over again to try to get your way or deal with the threats and pain you perceive in

your life. Learn about your unique coping style by taking some time to observe.

If you did the exercise in chapter four, you already understand that others cope. You saw people become belligerent, frustrated, uncooperative, and stubborn at the oddest times. You may have wondered, “What’s up with John?” when you saw him acting particularly strange. You watched people slip into familiar attitudes. Perhaps they said the exact same things when trying to overcome different problems. All of this was coping and now you must become aware of how you do it as well. Your task is to become a witness to your own coping style, which will allow you to release from it when the time is right.

Recently, television has taken an interesting turn in exposing coping processes to us. Reality shows open the door to people’s lives and allow us a glimpse into what often amounts to people coping with themselves and each other. You can see examples of this on *Super Nanny* or *Nanny 911*, shows in which parents scream at their out-of-control children. The parents are exasperated and so are the children, but they continue to cope with each other because they must. Then the nanny enters and quietly takes over. Before you know it, the children and parents are pouring their hearts out and beginning to cooperate.

The children can’t stand to be the source of the parents’ upset and the parents can’t stand to be the source of the children’s upset, but they are. The bears they see are each other, and they cope instead of living authentically and instead of being. When the show ends, we see people being more real with each other than they have been in years. What did the nanny do that was so miraculous? She acted as a Life Coach, allowing the participants to return to their Authentic

Selves. She fostered this from her staunch conviction this was possible, and she allowed the participants to believe in themselves.

As you watch these shows, you see that the solutions implemented are common sense and easily developed. So why don't more people simply adopt them? Because in the face of old stimulations, the auto/protector "knows" it must cope. You must exit the emergency before you can effectively apply a real solution, such as having a "nanny" or Life Coach in your life. Allow yourself to be coached and surrender to the joy of living.

Your task today is to begin recognizing when you are triggered and when you cope. Write down what triggers you and what type of coping behavior you most often use. You will begin to notice that you use the same coping behaviors over and over again. You will start to regain control of your coping patterns by recognizing them. You will open a door to your authentic self-consciousness by becoming a witness to your own coping behavior. Don't hesitate to get a Life Coach to help you. Our nature has never been to be alone, we are social beings.

In the coming chapters, we will be looking at what drives us to cope. These are things like the Core Pain we carry around with us and the beliefs we created to explain our world and our need to cope. In the meantime, observe yourself getting triggered and coping: Allow yourself to be aware of this without judgment or a need to change anything (except when you need a coping skill). The first step is awareness. With awareness will come new abilities to reclaim your life and to truly live life more fully after survival.

Chapter Seven

Core Pain

I was eight when my mom and dad got divorced. Two weeks after my father had moved out of the house, I met him at my grandma's farmhouse, where my sister and I often spent time and where he was staying. I was both glad to see my dad and scared as well. I had been wondering if it was my fault that dad was no longer in the house. I was terrified of my dad and I was always unsure of what I could do to be okay with him. He was big and loud and often very angry, but this time dad was smiling. He told me he had a present for me. "Oh, boy!" I thought, "What is it? Maybe it will be fun."

The present turned out to be a gas-powered .049 hp model airplane. It sounded pretty exciting, so when dad said, "Let's go fly it." I said, "Yes." I really didn't know what "flying it" meant, but what the heck, that's what airplanes do, so how bad could it be?

Well, it turned out that flying it meant that I was suppose to hold onto a handle that was connected to the little plane by two wires running through the wing. My father told me a bunch of things

about holding it steady and not pulling on it, and up and down rudders (whatever they were). I was pretty distracted by having to do this flying thing the right way. I was supposed to go “over there,” stand, and wait for my father to start it. Gosh, I wanted to see how you started it, but no, I had to stand in the middle (wherever that was) and wait till my dad started it.

My dad told me after it was started he was going to hold it and throw it so that I could start flying it. He didn’t want to set it on the ground, he said, because it was real dusty. I didn’t have any idea how his throwing it was going to help me fly it. I was starting to feel desperate. Next, dad started the little engine and...

“Oh my gosh!” WHEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE, it was sooo loud! Oops! Dad threw it, JERK, PULL, CRASH...quiet....

“Don’t pull it, damn it!”

“Yikes,” I thought. Dad looks really mad.

Dad explained in a much angrier voice what I was supposed to do. After a couple more JERK, PULL, CRASHES, and my dad’s uglier and uglier looks, he threw his hands up and shouted, “You’re doing that on purpose. I am absolutely disgusted with you.”

I wasn’t real sure what disgusted meant, but I sure knew the look on my dad’s face. I probably saw that one a hundred times and I was still petrified each time. Dad finally jerked the airplane away from me and left.

I couldn’t even cry I was so scared, but then the tears just seem to leak out of my eyes. I don’t know how long I stood there. I didn’t know what to do and I didn’t talk to dad the rest of the day. I hated myself ‘cause I just knew it was my fault.

— The “seed” story of Core Pain in the Core Profile Class

In the world today, people grow up with a broad range of unresolved conflicts with authority and caregivers. These conflicts seem dangerous and become barriers to getting our needs met. “No,” said to us by our parents, means not getting what we want in life, yet “No’s” are inevitable in this society. Too often, parenting is defined by what we have to limit our children from being, doing, and having.

In Og’s day, the children were not parented by limits. They did not have to face the trauma of frequently angry, frustrated parents who blocked their budding self-expression. They were free to examine anything they could get their hands on, they could eat anything they could find, they could go anywhere they felt safe enough to go, and they could play any game they could imagine. Their pain was not psychic conflict with parents or other authority figures in their tribe, so they had few if any unresolved conflicts with their people. This is not so for children today.

Today, the pain of unmet needs, unfulfilled desire, and self-doubt becomes our well of Core Pain. Core Pain is like the water in which a fish swims: invisible, transparent and taken for granted. Og had his pain based on his circumstance in the wild and we have ours based on our trials and tribulations at the feet of our parents. This is not a condemnation or opportunity to blame our parents, but it is what makes our Core Pain so hard to address in today’s world. It is simply the way life is in the twenty-first century.

Core Pain is part of our lives and a part of the auto/protector self. (If you feel you don’t have a well of pain or your memories of life with your family are wonderful, just bear with the process here.) If we didn’t have Core Pain, we wouldn’t have the basis for being triggered. The memory of all the painful, scary, or hurtful events in

our life, stored by our auto/protector, allows us to recognize future dangerous or hurtful situations. For primitive man, this made him wary and alert for danger in the wild. For modern man, it brings distress to our lives as we try to interact with each other.

Your Core Pain is mostly the unresolved pain in your life from upsets you experienced as a child. (Once again, if you don't recall these upsets, it doesn't mean there weren't any. Ain't denial grand? Sorry, that could be real triggering. Be patient as all will be revealed.) You did the best you could with your family, as they did with you, but there were numerous mishaps, unmet wants, and overlooked needs to which your auto/protector had to adapt. It is simply the way of this overstressed society. You developed self-image issues that left scars, some obvious and some very subtle (but scars nonetheless). You learned to cope with life by watching all the people around you who were coping with life, and this became the water you swam in.

We then grew and matured, but our problems didn't. They went with us into our adult lives and into our relationships with others. Every unresolved situation we had with our parents and significant others became a call to our auto/protector to set up a coping counter strategy. We learned how to live based on beliefs we developed surrounding these unsettling circumstances and the conditions we faced on a daily basis. We were molded, in part, by our pain, and then we were sent forth to find happiness, peace of mind, and satisfaction.

We put aside our Core Pain from our conscious focus to get on with the business of living. We are so good at this that most of us are completely unaware that we have any deeper issues driving our actions, thoughts, or feelings every day. We get caught up in daily

activities and hectic schedules and imagine we are responding to events as they unfold, but this is seldom the reality. Our well of Core Pain is suppressed by our auto/protector (part of its job), but it is not without cost.

Columbine is a warning about what happens when the extensive pain experienced by our children goes unnoticed until it is too late. A lament we heard over and over again regarding Columbine was, "I never knew they were so upset." The level of pain we inflict on each other is taken for granted, but to a child being teased and bullied it is often too much to bear. We have become inured to the painful effects of dealing with each other and our competitive needs to win. Our caregivers faced social indignities and learned to cope with their pain, and assumed this is the natural state of living, but it is a relatively recent phenomenon in the long history of *Homo sapiens*.

We want to see tragedies such as Columbine as an aberration and we want to blame the participants for having defects. We rationalize this because "not everyone shoots up their school," so there must be something wrong with the individual. However, we are seeing more and more anger expressed in inappropriate ways. Columbine is not an isolated event. Violence and murder are common today as people struggle to cope. This the result of people in pain who have no safe outlet and receive too little sensitivity from others.

We are commonly hard on each other because we have been raised in an environment that is commonly hard on us. We do not see it as such because it is so pervasive and seemingly necessary; we have lost our sensitivity to the pain. It hurts to have someone say no to you. Yes, it does. It doesn't matter that they have to say no

“for your own good.” It still hurts. It hurts to have someone be disappointed in you, angry with you, or frustrated with you. It hurts to play a game and lose. It hurts to fail at a task. It hurts to have people be so preoccupied that they can’t pay you any attention. It hurts to be considered inadequate or not acceptable the way you are. It hurts to watch your parents break promises, drink themselves into stupors, lash out over the most trivial things, or mope about depressed or full of anxiety. It hurts to be sent to bed when you want to stay up and be part of the social gathering. It hurts most of all when people you love seem to not even notice that all of these things hurt.

For parents, it would hurt too much to remain aware of the pain their children feel when they can’t do as they wish or roam as they want. It hurts parents to say no and to be the source of all the hurts they must impose in order to be good parents. They build a wall around themselves so that they might do what is necessary to parent their children. They begin to not even notice the little hurts that go on around them daily. They are triggered and coping with being parents, which means they will frequently parent by fight or flight and accept our fight or flight as a satisfactory answer that all is well. If the little girl spends most of her time trying to please or the little boy is dutiful we praise them. However, these behaviors are driven by pain and need. Once again, let me be clear: This is not an opportunity to blame or condemn your parents for an unfortunate childhood, but to understand the building blocks that developed your auto/protector persona.

In the fight mode, parents have numerous justifications and rationalizations to support their harshness. “Well, it’s about time they see life isn’t all sweetness and light.” “It’ll prepare them to live

in the real world.” “Toughen up, time to face reality.” “You don’t always get what you want.” Parents may try to get their children to quit “being a baby” and may be punishing around any “negative” emotional expression. In the flight mode, parents try to shield their children from life events by either giving them anything they want or by hiding unpleasantness from them. This results in terrifying the children with the unknown “badness” that is never talked about, or spoiling them with unrestricted self-indulgence. In either case, we fail to learn how to be with our pain and share our pain in an empathetic environment.

The one door that remains closed so often to both parent and child is the authentic sharing of painful life experience in a social setting. Yes, when you were a child and fell off your bike, your mom or dad may have been glad to “be there” for you, but as we’ve said, most of our scarring pain comes from angry or confusing interactions between parent and child and it is here that we have no real adult support. Siblings often share their pain with each other and give comfort, but their mutual helplessness in dealing with the adult power makes this only partially effective. Finding sufficient settings in which to share our painful experience and coming up with effective solutions to the unresolved burdens of youth are difficult at best.

Sharing is not therapy, but it is therapeutic. The vulnerable “we are in this together” state that was the hallmark of our ancient ancestors served an important purpose for Og and his kind. Today, we do not grow up to experience and express our feelings in a tribal setting. We grow up in an environment where people are often the cause of our pain; we were either denied our pain or ignored altogether. As a group, we barely know how to simply be with each other while we experience or express our pain.

It is such a helpless feeling to be with someone who is hurting, terrified, or grieving, and to do nothing. We are so stoved up ourselves that to simply be with someone else's pain is too reactivating. We feel we must do something because any expression of feelings or strong emotions triggers us and our own well of Core Pain. Doing something generally consists of saying "it's all right" or "get a grip," or agreeing that there has been victimization. It is seldom quietly crying along and encouraging even more self-expression. (Your little voice may say, "What good would that DO?")

In therapy, the therapist is asked to go a hundred and eighty degrees in the opposite direction from her client: Avoid any personal involvement or personal emotion, make it about the patient, and remove yourself to a comfortable distance. This has only limited benefit and unfortunately defines the relationship as "okay doctor" and "not okay patient." In Life Coaching, there are no such restrictions, but Life Coaches risk being reactivated into their own unresolved fear and pain when they are helping the client. This continues to be a major barrier to sharing and empathy. The art of being a therapeutic partner for others in the throes of pain has largely been lost in the confusion over what that role should be and what to DO about it. How strange to consider the possibility that it isn't a "doing" at all that is needed.

When human pain and suffering became the province of doctors and the behavior of fight/flight became the stuff of mental health, we were lost as a society of humans with human problems and human needs. When our Core Pain became illness and when our efforts to mask it became dysfunction or socialization, we became a society of individuals struggling with, and hiding even deeper, our individual pain. This has proven to be dramatically

problematic and no matter how many gifted therapists we have, the need continues to outstrip the supply. We have turned the natural process of recovering from our life-living wounds (by returning to the womb of our tribal society) into an illness or diagnosis of shameful failure and aberrant psychology. No wonder people resist “going to the shrink” or getting their “head examined.”

The reality of dysfunction and pain lingers. You may notice that the oddest things in life can bring you to tears. Many people find certain movies evoke powerful feelings in them that they didn't know they had. The biggest, strongest guys can be choked up over some small recognition or kindness. We may see people get flustered over a compliment, or become very dismissive of it. If they let it in, they are afraid of what emotions it might unleash. We try to keep our eye on the goals we have in life. However, there are powerful undercurrents to these goals that, if we wished to explore them, would tell a very different story about how we are doing in our life.

Each of us is aware of the alienation of our teenagers and the rampant drug use in general society, including alcohol, tobacco, and food. We are an addictive society trying in vain to assuage the pain with which we live but must not or cannot share. Oh, we may talk about it endlessly, and we may be victimized by everything from alcoholic parents to co-dependency, but this is far, far, far from the authentic experience of truly sharing our pain in a nonjudgmental and open expression of societal compassion and empathy. We have malaise of all kinds and we have questions of what it is to be happy. Life is becoming filled with people who are mildly depressed, moderately anxious, questioning, dissatisfied, plastic-surgery enhanced, or self-esteemed obsessed. We are obsessed, addicted, driven, and

needy individuals, wrapped in a shroud of fashionable, pseudo self-esteem. “The one with the most toys wins,” the bumper sticker declares, but that could not be further from the truth.

We have grown up injured and damaged by the way we must be treated in our modern world. This is not a condemnation of the amazing advancement in human development, it is simply a fact of life. In our busy world, many of our childhood needs went unmet, and our self-image was tainted by the pain from that. We have lost our innocence, our freedom of self-expression, and our cherished sense of simple joy to the complexity of domestication and civilization. When modern humans contact tribal people, the one comment that occurs most often is how innocent and happy they seem. This same innocence and happiness is soon a distant memory after these people interact with our modern culture. As sad as that is, it is inevitable.

Our minds and our self-conscious awareness are primitive tools of the primitive human. While we have come a long way in the domestication of our existence in the wild, we have not dealt effectively with the survival mentality with which we were born. The well of Core Pain and the way in which nearly everyone lives with it is stressful, occasionally disruptive, and moderately draining at best, or wildly inappropriate, uncontrollable, and exhausting at worst. You are most likely somewhere in between these two extremes.

We cope with our pain as best we can and we succeed more often than not, but this is done at a terrible price of inner peace and social intimacy. Furthermore, we visit the pain we have onto our children. We raise them either as we have been raised or in some variation and reaction to that pain. We are either too permissive or too strict, and seldom do we respond to the present situation with

a clear mind. Our Core Pain is directing much of our parenting activity, just as our parents' pain directed theirs. This cycle, when left unchecked, will inevitably produce unwanted pain and hardship on the entire family and, as a result, on the entire community. Today, this results in teenage-gang activity, increasingly high student dropout rates, and events like the Columbine massacre.

Core Pain starts with events like the one in our chapter story. This young boy would go on to do many things, but he reported that everything he learned how to do he did for himself. He was unable, for the most part, to take instructions from others, or to believe he was truly okay the way he was. He lived in an isolated world of either doing things himself or not at all. This story was developed as the seed story for the Core Profile class. Each student took a turn to develop their own. If you wish others to follow, you will have to go first, so the story was mine and it opened the door for each of the profile participants to develop their own. You will want to work with someone to help you develop your Core Pain story too. It will help you identify the feelings that drive your triggers and coping behavior.

We helped each student to develop a story to help them access their pain when they wanted to stop coping. In the last chapter, you saw the scope and nature of being triggered and coping, and you wanted to know how to stop coping. Well, the answer is always the same, **“If you weren't coping right now, what you would be feeling?”** You'd be feeling your Core Pain. If you want to stop coping, you are going to have to start feeling, and what you are going to be feeling is the pain behind the trigger that started your coping.

This truth became obvious to us as we worked with the Core Paradigm in a program called the Core Profile. The only way to

exit the auto/protector mentality was to face the pain driving it. We wanted our students to have an easy access to their Core Pain. We didn't want them to wonder about the answer to the question, "If you weren't coping right now, what would you be feeling?" Instead, we wanted them to immediately have an answer. "If I weren't coping, I'd be feeling terror, just like in my story of flying the airplane." When you are ready to surrender from your coping strategies you will need to answer the question, "If I weren't coping right now what would I be feeling" and the answer will be the feelings you experience in your Core Pain story.

You have a Core Pain story as well. Take the time to discover it. When you have this story of a seminal event in your childhood that caused you pain, you will be one step closer to taking back control when you wish to exit your triggered and coping behavior. You can ask yourself anytime you wish, "If I weren't coping right now, what would I be feeling?" Know with confidence that the answer is in your Core Pain story. If you still can't access the fact that you have a well of pain driving your reactions or you are only too aware of how overwhelming this pain is, get yourself a Life Coach and do this process with them. Learning that it is safe to feel your pain almost inevitably takes time with a trusted Life Coach. You would not be coping so often if you knew it was safe to feel your feelings, so be prepared to have coaches in your life who will allow you to process your pain without interference.

At this point, you may be saying, "Why should I do this? What is the value of opening old wounds? As you said, my parents did the best they could and what is the point of crying over spilled milk?" You have worked hard to get over your trauma and drama, maybe you've had years of therapy, your auto/protector self reasons, so

why should you have a story that only reminds you of something you can't change anyway? If this is your reaction to writing a Core Pain story, consider yourself triggered. Your auto/protector's job is to keep you from pain and now we are asking you to seek it out.

You have a dilemma. Who are you going to listen to? Someone you don't know and have no reason to trust (this book) or your trusted advisor (the auto/protector self) who only has your survival, protection, and getting you what you need as its sole duty? It does seem like an obvious choice, doesn't it? Yet it is this trusted advisor who has become so problematic in your life. So go ahead, take a risk. Remember the comment we made about our clients being the most courageous of people: Find a coach and write down your story.

The need is there and the time is now, but in order to change the results you are getting in your life, you will have to do things differently. The only definition of insanity that ever made sense to me was "doing things exactly the same way, at the same times, in reaction to the same stimuli and expecting a different outcome." You can know this for certain: "that ain't goin' to happen." So go ahead and take the risk to recall a time and the surrounding events in which you were greatly distressed. Find an environment that works for you to do this in, then write down your thoughts and reread them, allowing yourself to re-experience the pain and feelings you had at that time. Make a page in your notebook entitled "Core Pain," and take some notes about the nature of the pain this story evokes.

The purpose of this exercise is to give you a tool to use for the rest of your life. This tool is going to help you over and over again to overcome distress and problematic conditions in your everyday life, when you are ready to move on. It is a powerful weapon in your new arsenal to help you deprogram triggers and coping be-

haviors that have outlasted their usefulness. We will see how to use this later in the book, so for now simply know that while your pain awaits you, so does your joy and well-being.

The essence of this book is to explain that you are either triggered and coping and generally making more trouble for yourself than is necessary, or you are authentically self-expressive and feeling your feelings. The question everyone asks me when they finally accept that the problems they are having are really problems of fight/flight and coping is, “Okay, so what do I do about it?” My answer is always the same: You can’t DO anything about it, but you can answer the question, “**If I weren’t coping right now, what would I be feeling?**” Then allow yourself to feel it.

So, tell your story and describe the feelings it evokes. When the time comes and you want to know what to DO about your problems, you can look at your page entitled Core Pain and say, “Okay, if I stop coping *right now*, what would I be feeling?” The answer will stare back at you from the depths of your being.

Your mind may still be saying, “What good will this do?” The answer is simple: You are not a human DOING you are a human BEING. When you stop doing and begin being, your choices change and your life clears up just in the process of living it. This is truly LIFE AFTER SURVIVAL.

Chapter Eight

Core Beliefs

“If I do what I want, people will leave. I mustn’t cry. Even enough is not enough. I’ll let myself down again. I don’t have the right to be upset. If I make a wrong choice, I will be cut off from God. I’m a failure. I must be secretive. I am not worthwhile. I’m stupid. His anger is my fault. There is no point to feeling my feelings. I’m insignificant. I should have done it better. I’m not supposed to have fun. If I feel, I’ll come unglued. I am unlovable. I’m different. Once a goof up, always a goof up. The whole damn thing will fall apart if I stop. I can’t do anything right. There’s something missing in my life that I have to have to be okay. I’m not going to get it. I don’t deserve good things. Any setback means it’s falling apart. I’m invisible. I’m damaged goods. I can’t let myself feel because it would kill me. If I stay in my body it would hurt too bad. I must be perfect. I can’t have what I want. I’m not worthwhile because I’m a girl. When I cry, I’m not a loving person. I don’t fit in. I’m going to disappoint. I’ve got to be perfect or it doesn’t work. I’ll never get a

chance to rectify it. I'm fundamentally inadequate. I don't matter, I'm a bother. I must perform to get what I want. I'll never be good enough. Life is a game rigged against you. I'm a stain on the universe. Love hurts and always will. Everything good I get is a debit on my account I will have to pay with interest. Life is tragic. I don't matter. I'm so in the way, you'll just have to leave me."

— **Core Beliefs from thousands recorded in profile classes over the last fifteen years**

When I was studying psychology, I went to work for a psychiatric hospital. In order to attend class, I worked the graveyard shift. Each night, they would lock us in with the “crazies” and in the morning they would try to figure out who should be let out to go home. When I started, I was thoroughly intimidated by having to interact all night with patients that were diagnosed as psychotic—patients who seemingly couldn't tell reality from the hallucinations that coursed through their brains. Soon enough, however, it became clear to me that the crazy part of these patients had little to do with the person they were capable of being and that if I called to their Authentic persona, they would most often respond accordingly. The director of the hospital told me on more than one occasion, “You can't talk to paranoid schizophrenics like that,” meaning in a direct and confrontational manner. The truth was he couldn't talk to them like that because he couldn't see past their severe coping strategies. I never had a problem with any of them, and, in fact, was asked to take on the role of their day group leader. It was an eye-opening experience for me as I continued to learn about the nature of our collective human consciousness.

You might think that the beliefs in the beginning of this chap-

ter came from the patients at the hospital, but these beliefs came from my clients years later as we profiled the Core Beliefs that “normal,” successful people carried around with them every day. The self-talk, judgments, and decisions normal people make based on the circumstances that caused them fear, pain, or loss are no less crazy than those of the people we lock up at night in our psych hospitals. The only difference is those of us on the street have better controls in place (perhaps because of genetics) to cope with our distress.

Core Beliefs are formed by your auto/protector to help you survive. Og and his tribe needed to form opinions about why bad things were happening so that they could take appropriate action. When they faced drought, they believed that the rain gods were angry. When they sacrificed or danced and then it rained, they were convinced of the truth of their beliefs. Humans have to have some idea what is happening and what the cause is or they can't act. We must develop our “reactive instincts” based on judgments and understandings formed in the heat of fear, pain, and loss. We often have a gap of information and perspective about the circumstances prior to our perceived need to act. Core Beliefs fill that gap.

Core Beliefs have a specific nature: They are based on incomplete information. *“I'm not allowed to have my own feeling. People just don't know me. I have to show them. No one is here for me. I have to protect myself.” Joe*

They are full of shoulds, nevers, and musts, language we call P.D.L.s (parental directive, language). *“I must be perfect to be okay with you. I must talk fast to hold your attention.” Patsy*

“I must fix whatever the problem is. I must avoid conflict at all cost.” Kathy

They are full of judgments and condemnations. *“I'm out of*

it. I'm not deserving. You don't trust me. Life works for others but not for me. No one will ever see my value." Robby

"No matter what I do it's not good enough. I will never measure up. I have to do better than I want to do. People are undependable." Janet

They are opinion masquerading as fact. *"I must be highly successful in order to have what I want. I have to say what I think they want to hear. I may get hit if I give my opinion."* Becky

"I can't be the kind of person I want to be. My true person and character will never be seen." Don

They are full of fear. *"It's not safe, I'm not safe. It's not okay to fight back. I'm stupid. I'm alone there is no one to trust. I need things perfect."* Bill

"I am too powerful. I have no place for my power. I'm a bad boy." Ben

They demand we act a certain way. *"I can't be true to myself. I have to act to their requirement. I must do it correctly. I must sit on my passion or be squashed."* Gunter

"If I don't explain myself people will think bad about me. I must not feel anything. I'm empty. If I'm just myself no one will like me." Dan

They limit our options and choices. *"I can't depend on anyone. I can't trust anyone. People always leave."* Jack

"No one will want me. I should do it on my own. I am not normal. If I don't stand up they will run over me." Danny

They deal in absolutes. *"Nobody can love me. I'm a shrew. I'm not liked or likable. Under it all is this mean, ugly person. I can't get out of it."* Jean

"I'm never enough. I'm not capable. My emotional life must

not be exposed. To have what I want is impossible. If I have to repeat myself, they don't care." Betty

They will almost always contain self-doubt and outright self-denigration when turned inward to try to understand WHY life is dishing out so much pain.

"I'm not worthy of being nice to. Rules are made to be broken. I don't need anyone." Megan

"I will never amount to anything or be part of anything that amounts to something. Everyone will leave eventually. I am disgusting. I'm always wrong." Lawrence

"I'm insignificant. I always get used and thrown away. No one remembers me. I'm doing it wrong. There's no place for me." Alisa

Core Beliefs drive our coping behavior and modify our ability to respond to situations for what they really are. The auto/protector uses the Core Beliefs it has formed to direct the behavior you will use in the triggered situation. If you are in continuing arguments with your child or your spouse, you will have certain beliefs about the situation, your need to continue to argue, and what would happen if you stopped. If you are confronted about the incessant arguing, you will at best be conflicted because you know arguing is unpleasant, BUT it must continue or ??? will happen. "???" is an access to your Core Belief. This is true for any coping behavior you are using in any of the triggered situations you find yourself. If you question the need to continue coping, up will pop a Core Belief.

You will uncover some of the Core Beliefs running (and ruining) your life by observing the triggers in your life and your coping behavior, which you use to extract yourself from the pain and frustration you

feel when dealing with triggers. You may also uncover them when you notice you are coping by asking yourself why you are always in these situations. Inevitably, “why” will produce a Core Belief.

People seem to need to answer “why” questions, but they seldom have real truth with which to answer. In one study, people were shown words with multiple meanings. At the same time, they were given a subliminal message through earphones they were told were being used to keep out distractions. A word like “bank” was shown and then a whispered “money” or “river” was delivered subliminally. After a list of ten words, they were asked to list the words and give their meanings. In each case, a very high percentage of people chose either financial institution or side of a river as the definition of the word bank, based on the subliminal message they received. However, when asked why they chose a certain definition, they all had other reasons readily available. None of them said, “You gave me a subliminal hint,” but that was the most likely reason for their choice.

When we answer “why” questions, we will most often believe and defend our answers. However, we will seldom be correct when it comes to guessing people’s motives in dealing with us, or the reasons why negative things happened, or what is actually involved in a good and happy life. In those situations, we will trot out Core Beliefs and defend them to the death.

In our workbook, we have suggestions for you to work with your Core Beliefs. If you are using your own notebook, begin observing what things you think are true about life and about what you need to act in life; many of them will be Core Beliefs. Get yourself a Life Coach and discover more beliefs that keep you stuck in life scripts and behavior patterns that continually frustrate your desire to have a happier and more satisfactory life. Taking back con-

trol of your goodwill and peace of mind, saying nothing about your compassion and generosity, will lead you to face your own vulnerability and to embrace the truth of, “I don’t know.”

While “I don’t know” may be the truth, it is not useful to the auto/protector, which has a need to act. Og and his clan could have said simply, “I don’t know why it isn’t raining like it use to,” but that would not give them any comfort or activity to “do.” So, they beat the drums and danced the night away, and when it finally rained they were convinced it was because of their efforts. The auto/protector is driven to act as the best means of ensuring survival. The urge to come up with an answer (any answer) and to act on that answer is hardwired into the survival mechanism of each of us. If we wish to be effective and happy in life, we have to face this urge and be willing to release from our attachment to the answers we developed to explain “why” problems, pain, and loss happen to us.

The wife who believes her husband is insensitive and thoughtless, just like her dad and the last three men she was with, and the husband who is sure that his wife doesn’t care about what he wants and what he enjoys, just like his parents and ex-girl friend, both need to stop and look for the Core Beliefs they formed that keep them from solving these dilemmas. They each can stop and say, “I don’t know why my spouse is doing what she or he is doing. I know what I believe and what I am afraid is true, but perhaps I don’t really know at all what is going on here and now.”

If you can admit that you don’t know, you take the first step in releasing from the life scripts you formed in childhood. Core Beliefs color our view of present reality. They keep us from finding real solutions and they keep us from truly connecting with those people in our lives that mean the most to us.

When you have uncovered several Core Beliefs, you might try an experiment. Write them down and, on the side of the page, add “I’m afraid that...” Then say the belief in its original form, such as “Everyone is out for themselves, so I have to be too.” Then say it by adding, “I’m afraid that...everyone is out for themselves, so I have to be too.” Which of these two feels and sounds more true to you? If it is the first, then it simply means you are more attached to this belief as a fact and it will be very difficult for you to respond authentically in situations in which you judge this to be happening. If the second seems to be more true, then you are ready to face the reality that the problem is your fear, not that everyone is out to get you. Do this with each of the beliefs you have discovered.

Overcoming the attachment to our Core Beliefs is the key to overcoming the problematic conditions in our lives. If you are in a fight with your spouse and you are feeling misunderstood, underappreciated, vilified, or picked on, you can bet you are in the grips of one or more of your Core Beliefs. If you can verbalize them and release from their grip, you can get on with the process of solving the domestic crises; if not, you can expect the outcome of this encounter to be very similar to every outcome you have had when trying to defend your rights and good name.

Core Beliefs keep you from dealing with your most stubborn problems with kids, spouses, bosses, co-workers, or friends. They also have much to do with your general success in life, financially, romantically, spiritually, and emotionally. They are at the base of your stubborn issues of weight, addiction, or inappropriate anger- or fear-driven behavior. If you discover your Core Beliefs and release from the power of their grip, you will be well on the road to living life after survival.

Chapter Nine

The Core Issue and Fear/Pain Intentions

“I have no appetite, I don’t seem to care about anything, I sleep most of the day, and then I’m tired when I finally do get up. I cry for no reason, I keep having thoughts of death and much of the time I would welcome it. My life is hopeless and I can’t stand to be this way much longer. I know what a horrible burden I am to everyone.”
Melissa K.

“I can’t leave the house. I had my sister and boyfriend drive me to your office because I can’t be out alone. I can’t work any longer. I can’t go to my kids’ school or any of their school events. I can’t walk down the street or go to the gym for exercise class. I haven’t been anywhere alone outside of my house in more than a year. I’ve spent more than ten thousand dollars trying to deal with my agoraphobia, but it just seems to be getting worse.” Janet M.

He: “OK, in a nutshell this is the way it is. We fight all the time. I can’t say anything without somehow starting a fight. I’m at the place now where I’m begging her to leave. We can’t say good

morning without fighting and I'm exhausted."

She: "I don't know what's wrong. He attacks everything I say. I can't have an opinion or react to anything without his yelling or breaking down. If I ask him if anything is wrong, he screams at me that everything isn't about me. I don't know what to do or say."
James and Sandy K. (Married less than six months)

"Yeah, I gamble, but I can afford it. I like being the life of the party and if I drink a little too much everyone seems to have a good time. Yeah, I know I've been wrong in my marriage and I realize I have a problem when it come to women, but even when I try to be good opportunities happen. I'm trying to be faithful but my wife and kids are really angry with me and no matter how long I go I'm always reminded of the past. It seems like even when I try to be good it isn't enough. I'm trying to do everything I'm suppose to do, but one little slip and all hell breaks loose. Maybe I just can't do it."
Ernie Q.

"Yeah, I owe the I.R.S. about sixty thousand, but I'm working on it. The bank just cancelled my bank account. I just got my phone turned back on and I may be late on my rent, but I'm trying. I forget things, can't find my keys, am distracted and disorganized, but you should have seen the great chick I was out with last night. I got several people interested in my art work and I'm suppose to pick up a big check next week as soon as the guy's brother gets back into town. I'm good, things are workin' out." Jed P.

The Core Paradigm took me by storm—how could I not see this before? Once I digested the reality of the discovery I made that day with Nikki, I went back and looked at some of my writing and sure enough it was right there: helping people shift from their au-

automatic personality to their authentic personality. I had written it more than once, but it hadn't registered or been accepted for the breakthrough I now knew it to be.

The first thing I wanted to know was what is the automatic persona. The answer at first was that it was what I experienced as incongruent about people; they seemed self-absorbed, short-sighted, scripted in the sense that they were predictable, and they became easily defensive (in time I came to appreciate that this was all defensive). I could see that when people were in their automatic, it looked a certain way. There seemed to be a theme to their behavior and reactions.

When people were in their automatic, they would react in the same way to situations in every aspect of their life. Was that just their personality? I didn't think so because in other times they were creative in their responses and open in their manner. The automatic part of their personality had a very specific nature and motive force behind it, and I wanted to know what that was. It soon became apparent that the automatic saw the world through the lenses of the fear and pain it faced, and had adopted a worldview to explain these circumstances. It had incorporated beliefs about itself and what abilities it had, including what it had to do to survive. It was driven by these beliefs and by its understanding of its place in the world. It even determined what the primary issue was it needed to solve in order to flourish: This became the auto/protector's Core Issue.

I thought that my clients would be well served if they could "see" themselves when they were operating from this persona because it was so obviously dysfunctional. We developed a consultation to help them "see" their automatic persona and the themes that seemed so clear to me. We assisted them by helping them de-

scribe this persona that we dubbed the automatic self. Soon we called the summation of this consultation their Core Issue. We found that each person had at the core of their survival a primary issue with which they were struggling. We also found that this issue could be described in a few words, which they could easily use when faced with their struggles.

The Core Issues with which people were struggling included words like Visible, Worthy, Caring, Appreciation, Connection, Intelligence, Humility, Respect, and Regard. When clients used their “keyword,” it served to remind them that they were fighting their old losing battles. They came to appreciate that they were acting on their primary Core Belief that was encapsulated by this “keyword.” This belief that the pain or fear of their world made sense because of a lack of “respect,” “self worth,” or a “connection” could be seen in each aspect of their coping persona. This was their Core Issue.

The Fear/Pain Intention

One day, while working on developing the Core Profile program (a hybrid of the original consultation), Nikki, Raphael Natale, and I were outlining some possibilities on the blackboard. I asked Raphael if he would take some notes for later. Raphael was a previous client of the automatic/authentic consultation and was now my partner in the Core Profile class project. He looked up and said sarcastically, “Oh, so now I’m just the secretary, huh? Heh, heh.” He was pissed. “Interesting,” I said. “What is your issue word we used, Raph?” He replied, “Respect. I don’t get the respect I deserve. I don’t think that applies here though, does it?”

Raphael’s Core Issue “keyword” was respect. He was serious

when he said he couldn't see the connection my request and his reaction had to his issue of respect. His angry reaction at being treated as a "lowly secretary" (my apologies to all the outstanding personal assistants in the world) was so automatic that he was unaware and unable to see how it related to his issue of respect.

When he finally saw it, he was distressed and wanted something more to help him catch when he was triggered. In spite of working with his Core Issue for quite a while, he still found instances, like the above example, in which he simply couldn't recognize when he was triggered. Raph wanted to be able to recognize when he was slipping into this Core Issue struggle. In effect he wanted to catch himself in the act, but just knowing his Core Issue word, at that time, didn't seem to be enough. In the course of that conversation, we came up with what we called the Fear/Pain Intention.

The Fear/Pain Intention is what your automatic self needs to get and what it needs to hide. As we developed this, it made discovering the Core Issue that much easier. When you are faced with stimuli that relates to your Core Issue, it will blind you to seeing when you are triggered and coping. Your issue is like a special pair of lenses that colors the most innocent of situations and then refuses to see its role in the drama. ("Ah," your little voice enjoins, "but what if it really is an indication of disrespect?" Maybe he was being treated as just a note taker. How can one ever know?) When Raph was able to release from this trigger, he was certain that his reaction was not appropriate to the situation.

(Nikki has since developed a more extensive and comprehensive approach to clarifying the Core Issue, which he refers to as a Key Word in his seminars, entitled *Becoming Mentally Prepared for Extraordinary Performance and Living an Extraordinary Life*. He

guides people to utilize one of fifteen keywords to refer to their Core Issue. This becomes their access point to both relate to the circumstances that trigger them and to reflect on their natural Authentic State. He includes processes about the source of a person's Fear/Pain Intention, and the root of their Coping Mechanisms.)

Your Fear/Pain Intention is the social goal of fight/flight behavior. When Raphael began to see that his coping always intended to get respect, but that it was actually pushing it away, he gained greater access to when he was in the throes of coping. Knowing your coping behavior's intention can often cue you to look more closely at the situation. If you are running away from a bear, your intention is simply to avoid being mauled or eaten, but if you are cowering at the feet of your angry father, your intention is not only to be safe but to find a way to be okay with your specialness. Being okay with those in authority and with those whom you love equates to survival of your uniqueness on the social plane. The Fear/Pain Intention was a key element for both the coach and the client because it exposed the intent of the behavior generated by the client's Core Issue.

Your results in life will always be guided by the intentions behind your actions. If your intentions are your authentic conscious intentions, which you are confident are within your grasp, then they will be the intentions directing your achievements. However, if your intentions are usurped by the fear and pain of your auto/protector, you will achieve the goals of those intentions. You can know for sure what your intentions are by looking at the results in your life. In Raph's case, his intention to fight for respect is what he got: a fight, not respect. If you believe you are trying to achieve success but you are continuing to have financial problems, or you want a deep and meaningful relationship but you are in a series of short-

term ones, or you want the best for your kids but they are continuing to struggle, you are in the grips of your fear/pain intention. If things are not working out in an area of your life, you can bet it is being fueled by your Fear/Pain Intention.

We often use the example of playing golf. Even if you know nothing about the game, I think you will appreciate the example. Golf is like a microcosm of life because you have the goal, the hazards, your efforts, and the results. Let's say you intend to hit a golf ball onto the green, but there is water just a few yards in front of you. You know you have the ability to easily hit the ball over it, but are surprised at how often the ball ends up in the lake or eighty yards over the green. Why, you may ask, would it end up like that? You certainly don't intend it to go there, and yet it does time after time. The answer is the essence of why our coping is so dysfunctional in today's world. You set out to achieve some worthy goal and then fear shifts your focus to:

What you don't want;

What you are afraid is expected of you;

What you believe is or is not possible;

What will happen in spite of your best efforts?

Your auto/protector is afraid and does not trust that you can achieve your goal. It will take the path of least pain. For some, that means overcompensating and hitting the ball a mile too far, for others it means paralysis and a complete miss, and for still others it means hitting it squarely in the water just to get the anxiety over with. If we see the water as a trigger, then the results we achieve will come from our preprogrammed automatic reactions, not our authentic abilities. When the water ceases to be a trigger, we can then allow our skill to surface.

Many of us have learned (the auto/protector, that is) that failing in spite of our best effort is far more painful than either giving no effort at all or proceeding directly to the failure. It leaves us the emotional out of, “That wasn’t really my best effort. I could have done it if...” It’s the double bind of your desperately seeking something that you prevent yourself from having. Your auto/protector needs to run or fight, and has no room for your easy, relaxed swing. The person acting on their Core Issue is often acting with this same intent. The intent to minimize the pain in your own unique way is the essence of your Fear/Pain Intention.

Learning what you intend when you are triggered and coping will help you see more easily the uselessness of staying triggered. Get your workbook and ask yourself or have your coach ask you, “What do you intend to do when you are yelling at your spouse or child?” “What are you trying to do when you denigrate yourself, your looks, or your position in life?” “What do you intend to accomplish with your anxiety and depression?” “What do you want to get from the people in your life when you are triggered?” “What are you not getting from people that you need?” You will also want to ask, “What do I want to hide from people or keep them from knowing about me?” The answers to these questions will form the Fear/Pain Intention of your Core Issue. (They will also help you formulate your Core Issue in the next section of this chapter.) You may begin to see that each time you are in a triggering situation, the things you want from others are always very similar and the things you do not want them to know about you are similar as well.

When triggered, we are incongruent in many ways. Our stated goals will not match our behavior, the meaning of our words will not match the emotion, and our stated intentions will not match

the outcomes we get: “Yes, that’s really exciting,” stated by someone with a dead expression. “I really want a loving, happy family,” stated by an angry, work-obsessed man.

We are supposed to be rational and in control, but our auto/protector has its own version of those. The auto/protector uses coping behavior to get some survival result that is seldom obvious and often must be hidden for the sake of our self-esteem. Making this intention conscious is an important step in releasing from the grip of this dysfunctional behavior. Raphael’s Fear/Pain Intention was to get others to honor his position or respect him, while simultaneously keeping them from seeing that he was angry or scared. He began to see how this dynamic intruded on every aspect of his life, and he saw that he was often perceived as being high maintenance, which he translated as disrespect. His ability to quickly recover was enhanced by his understanding of his Fear/Pain Intention.

The Core Issue

The brief bios at the beginning of this chapter are from a number of clients who developed their Fear/ Pain Intentions and keywords to remind them of their Core Issue. The problems described were those with which they had struggled for years. More than the life scripts we talked about in the last chapter, these problems had become themes in their lives. Each of these clients was locked into old patterns of behavior. Their problems with relationships, jobs, authority, and life in general were chronic complaints that simply recycled over the years and were restimulated by the most trivial of incidents. Not being able to overcome these chronic issues kept them from enjoyment, satisfaction, and success in life, and from a sense of their own well-being.

Melissa K. was able to address her depression and begin to take control of her life because she was willing to see that her issue of “recognition” had driven her to avoid others’ judgments. When she saw these patterns as part of her coping behavior, she began to face her fear and come out of her shell.

Janet M., who had seldom left her house in the last year, spent ten thousand dollars for a diagnosis of agoraphobia, only to find in the Core Paradigm it was just her style of coping with fear. She began to work with her issue of “integrity,” and found the courage to get a job and drive herself to class by the third week of the program.

James and Sandy K. broke up within a year when James couldn’t finish the class and Sandy realized her life wasn’t over because he wouldn’t give her the “respect” she felt she never got from her dad. She began to appreciate James and could allow him to go his own way without falling into the trap of feeling disrespected by him.

Ernie Q. has given up trying to defend his coping behavior and is now a faithful and reliable partner. As he worked with his issue of “trust,” he saw how he had destroyed both the trust of his wife and himself. He finds there is almost nothing to defend any longer because there is nothing to prove.

Jed P. still struggles at times, but shows up in his life spectacularly just before he slips back into old habits. His issue of “knowing” has made it hard at times for him to trust the knowledge he has, but he has made great strides in facing his old patterns of survival.

Each of these people recognized the power of their coping history and the false solutions of trying to cope by using their fear and pain. They came to understand their Core Issue was the driving justification to get what they needed. As they worked with their new understanding of their Core Issue, each was willing to be present in

the face of the reality of being triggered and retriggered time after time. Discovering their triggered intentions and Core Issue, and developing a keyword assisted them in facing their pain. Each was now aware of how powerful their Core Issue was in directing their lives when they were caught in the double bind of their auto/protector self.

One of the most enlightening discoveries of the Core Paradigm is that people have formed a Core Issue. Now you must discover how to use that knowledge to help you in your life and to relate to who you are in relation to your fellow travelers. In Og's time, his issue was how to live in the wild, but today your issue deals almost exclusively with your self-assessment and the battering of your self-esteem. Your Core Issue is the auto/protector's explanation for why life is the way it is for you. It tries to explain why people treat you like they do. In Raphael's case, he saw the world in terms of respect. He saw every action between people as respectful or not respectful, which explained his triggers and coping behavior. You too have this worldview mentality as part of your auto/protector. You may not be conscious of it, but it is there, waiting to thrust you into action.

Our Core Issue develops because our auto/protector needs an explanation to formulate a plan of action. Just like the ancient people needed to explain the rain, we need to explain why we are treated the way we are. The auto/protector needs to know why bad things happen and how to make changes so that they will stop happening. It needs to feel it has control. If stopping the bad things is out of the question, it will settle for making fewer bad things happen. If that fails, it will settle for controlling bad things by making them happen intentionally. To illustrate this, you might recall the last time you saw someone virtually shoot themselves in the foot

when success was just around the corner. We have what we believe we can have and no more. For some that is a lot, but for many it leaves much to be desired.

We are hardwired to gain control over our situations—it is a survival imperative. The more our circumstances seem unpredictable, the more likely we are to fall into predictable and unproductive behavior. You already know what that means for your life.

Discovering the Core Issue for Yourself

When clients react to comments like, “You seem upset,” or “Why are you sad?” with denial, they are afraid that their feelings are showing. Sometimes they will try to explain away the feelings. (People do this with children all the time. “Why are you angry, mommy?” the child asks. “I’m not angry. Now stop bothering me,” the parent replies in an angry voice. The child is shocked and confused, and soon will develop their own answer for “why” this happened.) Eliciting this incongruence and uncovering what the client was trying to hide helped define the Core Issue for me and ultimately for the clients. It also helped them begin to see that the events in their life with which they struggled had a common thread.

We work with the Core Issue for quite a while, and participants in the programs we lead appreciate knowing the impact this issue has in their lives. After doing their Core Issue, they do their gift, which is the essence of our beingness. Nikki had developed the gift process earlier, and now it is part of the Core Profile we provide to clients (we will look at this in the next chapter). One evening, while concluding a Core Profile class, I was struck cold with a thought. I turned to the room and asked, “Do you know what your Core Issue really is?” Everyone stopped what they were doing and

looked up. “YOUR ISSUE IS YOUR GIFT. It is the struggle you are thrown into when you perceive your essence is being invalidated. The theme of your issue is the theme of your gift when you mistakenly believe it has been rejected.”

The dawn of recognition was amazing. I get goose bumps just writing about this again. You have a Core Issue because you have a specific nature, a way about you that stamps you as the unique individual you are. In Raphael’s case, he decided that respect and disrespect were the hallmarks of understanding his life BECAUSE he is naturally the embodiment of respect. In his untriggered state, people naturally feel respected and respectful when they are with him. When he was treated like children often are in our society, he could only see it as disrespecting his gift, and his long journey to gain respect began.

This is true for you as well. If you experienced insults, your auto/protector concluded it must be because of who you are and began defending that accordingly. Your gift is your issue in the world of the auto/protector. Your keyword points to both the being you are and the battles you fight. Your Core Issue is who you are when your auto/protector no longer trusts that it is enough. If the theme of your essence is that you are naturally inquisitive and your parents screamed at you to sit down and shut up when you were a child, then eventually your Core Issue will surround inquisitiveness or knowing. If you have a natural gift of connection in relationships, then when you seem to experience rejection, your issue will be surrounding connection in relationships, sometimes expressed by the word “support”. Our gift is the natural expression of who we are, and when we feel rejected it is our gift we will come to believe is being rejected. This belief will become our Core Issue, and we will

see our difficulties through this perspective.

Some of the Core Issues my clients have had are issues of intelligence, value, caring, openness, trust, appreciation, and significance. Each of them would ask the question, “Is this an issue of _____?” (filled in with their keyword, such as respect). They would immediately have a powerful reaction, “Of course it is.” Your Core Issue is the theme you see in life. What is your theme?

When we asked our clients, most didn’t know their theme. Then, as we developed their profile, it became increasingly clear. Look at your triggers and coping and see if you can come up with a theme (or keyword). Look at the Fear/Pain Intention and see if it is pointing directly to your Core Issue. Begin to make conscious the script you make out of the difficulties you face. Use the Life after Survival workbook to help you in this process AND GET A LIFE COACH. It might be an issue of respect, understanding, or worthiness. It might be one of tradition, visibility, recognition, or being included. These are all words used by my clients or associates that helped them understand the theme of their coping behaviors and triggers. Nikki has developed a proprietary list of fifteen words that he is confident everyone can fit their issue into, so do not hesitate to contact StarQuest at www.untriggered.com and get involved in one of their seminars.

Remember, an issue is all sides of the keyword you use. If “regard” is your keyword, then “disregard” will trigger you, and a chance to be highly regarded may trigger you as well. Seeing others being highly regarded will bring you to tears, and disregard, wherever it is encountered, will be hard for you to experience. You will tend to describe situations using your keyword, so if your word is caring, you would say, “It is uncaring of you to act that way.” A per-

son whose word is integrity would say, "It shows a lack of integrity for you to act that way." A person with the word knowing would say, "How ignorant of you to act that way." Your Core Issue is the tint you see the world through. It is the skew you place on situations with which you are struggling.

Remember, when we feel rebuked, we decide that what is rebuked is our unique point of view and our unique self-expression. People who are mean to us must not appreciate our essence, and we must find a way to cope with that. Think of a time you felt dismissed or shut down and ask yourself what part of you was underappreciated. This will help you locate the words for your Core Issue.

Once again, you will want to work with someone to help you develop your keyword or Core Issue. Once you have it, you will be amazed at how many of your struggles will be explained by the use of this word or phrase. Nikki says one hundred percent of a person's triggered life can be seen and appreciated through the use of their "Key Word," a statement he has backed that up on hundreds of occasions.

Your auto/protector self-consciousness needs the clarity of your Core Issue to form a worldview that includes your role in it. It seems to allow you to make sense out of the chaotic mess of growing up and dealing with the frustrations you face with authority and people's reactions to you. Ask yourself, "What is the issue?" Then listen as your little voice explains it to you. Pay attention and write this down on a new page you entitle "Core Issue."

If your issue is respect, your intention is to fight disrespect at every turn, but the actual result will often be disrespect for you and everyone around you. Like we said, when triggered, you are desperately seeking something such as respect that your coping behavior will prevent you from getting. If it is visibility, you are charged

with being visible, facing invisibility, or making others invisible.

Your intention to cope is to specifically mitigate some circumstance you believe is causing the problem. Let yourself see this intention and allow yourself to appreciate the possibility that trying to be okay is not the same as being okay. Fighting for respect is not the same as acknowledging respect. The need to fix the problem is often the only problem with which we are dealing. Raphael was not being disrespected. As soon as he relaxed, he could see that. He reacted as though he were being treated with disrespect, instead of noticing how important his contribution was.

Remember the truth about the unique and special gift you bring to this party we call life—it can never be diminished by others; it can only be hidden by you. Your Core Issue seeks to explain life and provide you with control over it, but, unfortunately, it only reinforces the auto/protector's vision of you versus them. Allow yourself to appreciate that possibilities begin only after we have surrendered the weapons of survival.

Chapter Ten

The Gift of You

Nan walks with grace and a sense of purpose. Her focus is on beauty and form. She is steeped in tradition and yet holds it with a light touch, using it to enhance and to bridge the gap between the past, the present and the breathtaking future of possibilities. She is at home with the classics of fashion, ritual, education, and family, and yet her look is always to NOW and the excitement of current trends. She is able to make each person feel important and is an agent to allow the holidays to be full of meaning. She is mother to her children, but also mom and mommy. She holds dear and true her life as partner, friend and spouse to her mate. She embodies tradition with the richness of being and allows those around her to experience the rewards of holding fast to these values. Nan is the center of her family, the core of love and evenness in the turmoil of life. She brings joy, peace, and undying loyalty to the art of life. She is a creative, patient, and vibrant presence in all that she does...she is the foundation of trust and consideration.

— The Gift Process narrative of the Core Profile

My client Art said it best in a Profile class several years ago. He came to class feeling particularly stuck in a life crisis and was very quiet for the first half hour or so. We did a guided imagery meditation and afterwards people were encouraged to share their experience of the process. Art raised his hand and said, “As I was sitting here, I was feeling so angry and so upset about a problem with my wife that seems to just never go away. I felt so victimized by her badgering. Then when I started doing this exercise, I decided to look at this problem as a wall...when I got closer, the wall turned into a molasses-like substance that I fought and pushed against until it became a heavy fog...I continued to walk in the fog and it became a mist and then a sheer veil until finally there was nothing there at all...I realized that as we were coming back into the room my problem was gone. **When I was a victim, I couldn't forgive, and now I realize that there is nothing to forgive because no injury was done.**”

Art left that evening, apologized to his wife, and, after eight years of trying, finished his doctorate. He quit fighting the demons and began living his life. This is not to say that Art no longer gets triggered, but Art has never forgotten that moment in class. He always knows when he is triggered and coping that the truth lies somewhere else.

You are searching for ways to resolve your struggles as well. This search is part of your survival behavior. You will seek to overcome problems and pain throughout your life—it is as natural as eating and sleeping. However, it is also severely overused and misused in circumstances in which coping simply **WILL NOT WORK.**

We have tried to share with you how the auto/protector keeps us from achieving the joy and satisfaction we seek as we travel our path. We are far more than our auto/protector self and real human

survival requires far more than triggered and coping behavior. If we are to live successfully, we must find our way back to our authentic persona. This journey is made easier if we have participated in the process of discovering our own unique gift. You will have a chance here to do just that.

The best format for you to complete this process is in the company of a Life Coach. However, there is no reason you cannot start the process right now. You are always YOU, the big YOU, even when the veil of fight/flight is upon you. Doesn't it strike you as odd that no matter what has transpired and no matter how many years may have past, the moment you look into the eyes of a dear old friend, you see a flicker of recognition? What is that? They are who they are through it all and you are you, no matter what. Exactly what is it that makes us who we are? It can't be physical because every cell in the body regenerates over and over again. It must be something else...an essence that we just know and struggle mightily to explain.

You can discover or uncover who you are by recognizing it is not the triggered you of whom we speak. When you are triggered and you do some of the exercises to release from the triggered persona, it will help you recall what it feels like to be the you your friends and family know at a glance. You will find that who you are, when not coping and surviving, is amazing: Opening up to your higher self and allowing yourself to experience Authentic Self-Expression is the solution to your life-living problems.

Being in Authentic Self-Expression is the solution to your coping consciousness. Coping is short-term living in a long-term life. Coping is a reaction to distress in the past or to fears of the future. Coping narrows your focus and limits your options. Coping re-

quires you to suspend your good judgment and react. Reactions stemming from Core Pain blind us to our goals and dreams in a way that seemingly forces us to cope. One truth is that we cope because we wish to live another day. Yet another bigger truth is that no matter how hard we try, we ain't gonna' git outta this alive. While coping may SEEM to be the answer, AUTHENTIC SELF-EXPRESSION is truly the solution.

If being triggered is living in the past or future, then Authentic self-expression is living in the NOW. When we think of now, we most often think of a "moment of now," but, simply put, there is no moment of now. Now is dynamic. Being in the now is simply allowing our consciousness to be present to the dynamic flux of the universe. Now is like a raging river, as we enter it, we might feel the same disorientation that would accompany entering such a river: This may be why most of us are not present much of the time. To be sure, a small part of our consciousness is always in the now, but most of our thoughts, focus, and attention are directed to what has already happened, or thinking and worrying about what is to come. We are so caught up in these thoughts that little focus is left for us to respond to the opportunities of the moment.

Being present and living in the now has great rewards for us, but the question seems to be, "How do we get there?" Once again, asking that question is part of the problem. If it is NOW, you never need to get there: You are always there and have always been there. The seduction of thinking about our past and future is so strong that it makes us believe we are somewhere we are not. Eckhart Tolle, in his wonderful book *The Power of NOW*, offers many tools to support people to achieve this NOW perspective, and you should include this book in your library. This shift you seek and the con-

sciousness of living well is the consciousness of your Authentic Self. You are always who you are, and your task is to quit DOING long enough to appreciate that truth. This is where faith and surrender come in.

Most religious, personal growth or therapeutic programs seek to teach us to live with temperance, prudence, courage, and justice. Others add honor, humility, kindness, and peace of mind. Yet we still end up trapped in the temporal world of life and death. We try to learn and we seek this path less traveled and more divine, but we still seem doomed to failure by pressing needs. This does not have to be the case. “Will anything allow us to go forth with dignity and grace and a generous perspective about the things that trouble us?” Yes. Each time you can stop long enough to appreciate your Authentic Self-Consciousness as it releases you from your struggles with the past and future: Letting go of being triggered by feeling your feelings of fear, pain, and loss will start you on the path. Letting go of your coping behavior, including terror, rage, frustration, and depression, will allow you clarity of vision and a sense of goodwill. (“Fine,” your little voice says, “but how do I do that?”) Ultimately knowing who you are will have a powerful effect on your ability to return to it time after time after time.

You must start by embracing the fact that the ME you speak of is really two levels of conscious awareness: your survival needs with fight or flight activities and YOU the authentic being. You will begin to open the door to more frequent visits to NOW when you identify your triggers and coping behavior AND surrender your NEED to cope. Your Authentic Self is the essence of life, the proactive, curious, creative Self who loves and is loved, and is a conduit to the universe. You will have a chance here to describe your Au-

thetic Self and to embrace the possibility that this level of consciousness is your natural state.

NOW is the time to surrender and discover who you really are, when survival is not at stake. Your auto/protector thinks survival is always at stake, so you will have to take it on faith that you are safe enough and whole enough to find peace and goodwill in spite of survival. The very good news is that you are. We will start the journey now and you will then have it to return to whenever you chose to release from the struggles of your survival.

The following process has helped thousands of people find a moment of clarity about who they are when not triggered or “surviving.” The ideal setting is with a group of your friends or in a seminar in which life purpose or discovery of your gift is the focus, but you can make gains alone as well. If you take some time when you are not pressured with other duties and do this questionnaire with a sense of dignity and respect, you may find the results highly rewarding.

Allow yourself to hold this process as sacred because you deserve no less. Be willing to open your heart and discover that the essence of who you are is constant and visible to others, no matter how stressed you may be. Be willing to recall days long ago when you found life more carefree than it is now. Do this with honor, faith, and trust.

The Gift of Who You Are

Who are you when you are not troubled, harried, fearful, or confused? When you see someone you once knew well after ten, fifteen, or twenty years, there may be a moment of surprise, but then recognition blooms and you see your friend no matter what changes may have taken place. There is something in the eyes and manner

that is so telling, and a spirit, troubled or not, that is still there. Often, we look at a picture of ourselves when we were three or four and there is instant recognition of the being within. What is that? Let's find out.

The Authentic You

Nikki Nemerouf created this version of the Gift Process when he returned from a trip to Bali twenty-five years ago. He uses other forms of it today, but this is still a format that works well as a guide for people who are not in his presence. Nikki's unique and special ability to facilitate this process has been embraced by many and will continue to be refined in his continuing effort to help people find the true gift of themselves. We have used a variety of forms in the Core Profile, but each has at its core the discovery of the CONSTANT that is you.

Answer the following questions on a sheet of paper at a time when you will not be interrupted for at least an hour. Do this with your spouse, the whole family, or a small group of your closest friends, or simply do it alone in a quiet spot.

1. What do you love to do? Answer with at least three or four activities, more if you wish.

What is it about these activities that you love the most?

What part of you is expressed by engaging in these activities?
(answer with more than one word or phrase)

2. What do you have that you cherish?

What do you wish you had?

What about these things (both that you have or wish you had) do you love?

What part of you is expressed in these things?

What value is expressed by having these things?

3. What do you love being or would you love becoming?
What about these states do you love?
What about these states reflects who you are?
When you were young, did you have a special friend? If yes, answer the following questions with this person in mind. If not, answer as it was for you.

4. When you were a child, what did you love to do (and what did you and your best friend love to do)?
What was so special about these activities?
What did you contribute to these activities?

5. What was your favorite toy?
What did playing with this toy express about you?

6. In your childhood, recall when you contributed something unique and personal to someone or something.
What was it you contributed?
How did it feel to contribute?

7. What would your best friend say was so special about playing with you?

8. Recall the last time you contributed something unique and personal to someone or something.
What did you contribute?

How did it feel to contribute?

In what way was this contribution uniquely yours?

Pick three people in your life who know you the best. They can be alive or dead. Ask yourself what these people would say about what makes you who you are. What are your special gifts? What about you do they love, and what about you makes you unique? What would they say are your most outstanding characteristics? Do this separately for each person and write down the answers you believe they would say.

If you are doing this with others (be sure they answer these same questions also), ask them to write down and then tell you what they believe are your most unique and lovable qualities, and what you contribute to their lives. Let each person have a turn and then answer the same questions for them.

At the conclusion of this exercise, go back through all your answers and circle the ones that are repeated more than once. You should find at least a few answers repeated many times. Write these down and look at them. Add whatever else is true about who you really are when contributing to life and each other and make a story out of these answers (see the following example). Then frame your story and each time you find yourself feeling negative, angry, helpless, or frustrated, read it and remember who you are. You can refer to the narrative in the opening of this chapter, and here is another from a Profile class lead by Jeff Abel, a very gifted and talented Life Coach.

Larry's path is walked with the heart. It is one of kindness, filled with passion, love, and decency. He travels with a deep appreciation of our humanness, without judgment and full of forgiveness. It is a path that transports us through our valleys of fear

in safety, leading us to a place of possibility, joy, and expansiveness. His path cuts through confusion and brings us to our true selves. He treads tenderly upon the pathway, seeking not to possess it, but to share the way with others. He makes the journey over and over again, accompanying other seekers of the heart: A courageous and loving soul and true friend.

—Jeffery Abel, Life Coach and profile leader

You do not have many tools to help you dig your way out of being triggered and coping, but one powerful tool is ANY reminder of who you are when you are NOT triggered and coping. This description of you is one such tool. It is who you are: loving, kind, curious, friendly, supportive, and playful, or a hundred other combinations that are uniquely you. You are a gift. Never forget this and never allow yourself to be so far down that you are unwilling to acknowledge this truth. Create a narrative or have a loved one create it for you so you may always remember who you are. The story above is mine.

If, for some reason, you are unable to complete this process, do not be discouraged. You are simply triggered and coping. For some reason, it is too dangerous to let yourself experience how amazing and special you really are. We will have other processes here to help you release from your survival consciousness and return to the light.

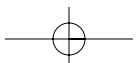
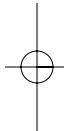
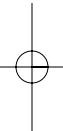
Og: Wild Man, Peaceful Man

Og did not need to find a book in order to express his uniqueness. The primitive tribes had MANY rituals that honored tribal members and supported an appreciation of how special they were

to the tribe. Og could slip easily back and forth between triggered/coping survivor and playful/peaceful tribal member. We cannot. We do not have the support within our society to come down from the stresses of our day. We are the same species as Og, living in a world that has solved most of his worries at the cost of most of his support. We are strapped with pain he never knew and we have failed to provide avenues to help us return to the amazing human beings we really are.

Often, the reason people struggle with allowing the above Gift process to free them from their pain and life troubles is because their auto/protector mind simply will not allow it. We have trouble allowing for the possibility that our difficulties could be simply the fault of a shift of our conscious awareness. Your little voice may rail against the possibility that your troubles could be solved by simply releasing your distress about them. This little voice may be shouting at you that life isn't that simple. Your problems are REAL and cannot be swept away by a few good touchy/feely moments. If this is something you are feeling (or you are now feeling this way after reading it), take heart: This is simply the duty of your auto/protector self in its attempt to keep you focused on the threat. The auto/protector thinks the situations with which you live are worthy of your fight/flight attention. As mistaken as this is, it is no less real and distressing.

Come to the light of your Authentic Self, your beingness, and allow yourself the joy of being in a world that welcomes your joy.



Chapter Eleven

The Authentic Declaration

We sat in a room overlooking the marina and listened as she spoke. If you meet a man holding onto life with the tips of his fingernails, step on them. The truth is that clinging on is the problem. An affirmation is like putting whipped cream on top of a bowl of worms, it will not improve the taste. The “not I’s” of our life keep us from experiencing who we really are, and your task is to dis-identify from those scripts that have you locked into your own personal struggle. Darlene Goth Newman

We subsequently learned that certain truths could be declared...Life is not fair, it just is; however, that means it is also not unfair. You are a child of the universe; you belong here and you are perfectly adapted to thrive here. You are loved and loving even when you don't acknowledge either one. Life consists of opportunities to be your gift and to appreciate YOU ARE THE GIFT, just as you were on the day of your birth.

— Some Authentic Declarations of Profile Clients

People want to be able to counter their fear and coping behavior, but being in an adversarial debate with coping behavior and rationalizations is futile. We realized almost immediately that making the auto/protector self wrong was playing right into the hands of survival and coping behavior. When we started our experimental group on the nature of this new discovery, we would open the class with, “It is important to not make the auto/protector wrong,” and each week we would end up doing just that. It was hard for us to look at the damage we caused ourselves and others when we coped and not make the source of this wrong. It took quite a while in working with this new material before we realized just how subtle we needed to be in order to embrace the auto/protector and free ourselves to return to Authentic Self-Expression. We discovered the futility of debating the auto/protector and triggered rationalizations and set about to find other ways to support each other’s return to our awake being.

We saw the need to create another section in the Core Profile entitled “Authentic Declarations.” An Authentic Declaration differs from an affirmation in that a declaration is a statement of truth. Affirmations were once described to me to be like whipped cream on top of worms. What this means is that people doing affirmations (including yours truly) start their minds in a counter dialog something like this:

Affirmation: I am getting better and better in each and every way.
Counter dialog: Yeah, sure you are. And that gray hair is food coloring, right?

The affirmation is often challenged by the auto/protector personality as a way to protect you; this will not happen with Authentic Declarations. Affirmations affirm a higher truth, but a

declaration is simply the statement of what is true. In an Authentic Declaration, you must appreciate the literal truth of the statement. You may realize your auto/protector self has trouble allowing the statement to have power in your life, but that fact need not contradict the truth of the declaration. For instance, you are a child of the universe. This is simply true. You are a carbon-based being in a carbon-based universe. You are a natural result of natural events and your being is in complete harmony with all the laws of this universe...you are well suited to be here and you do belong. If your auto/protector says, "So what," you counter with, "It's what's so."

You get the idea. Each line of the following Authentic Declarations is a literal statement of truth. Go through them slowly on the first reading and see how you react. If you have any doubt about the truth, find a way to validate the line or remove it. Do NOT read a line that sets your auto/protector up to protest. When you find yourself triggered and coping, you may use this as a meditation and add other truths as you discover them. Many of my clients find this process to be very effective in returning them to their Authentic Self. Try it for a week or so and see how it works for you.

Pick a calm place where you will have fifteen minutes or so to relax and meditate (feel free to add your specific faith as part of this). Read through the following two or three times, allowing yourself to go deeper on each reading until you experience a calm. You are well on your way to Authentic Self-Expression.

"I am a child of this universe, I belong here. The universe is unfolding precisely as it should and my place in this unfolding, no matter how challenging, can be rich in love, peace, goodwill, and deep satisfaction. My task is to find the truth of this and to release from the fear and pain with which I suffer and to surrender to the

peace and light of belonging to the universe and the people whom I love...I am a loving and lovable being, capable of well-being and satisfaction, no matter the circumstances. Happiness is my birthright and a natural state of being as I experience the joy of being alive...I am capable of being bigger than the thoughts and fears that take me away from this loving presence. When I am in pain and anguish I am never more than a moment away from the peace that is my birthright. Life is a joy meant to be lived in harmony with all things and my acceptance and surrender to this will allow me to experience increasing levels of well-being. My dynamic journey through life is always enhanced by my service to others and my knowledge and acknowledgement of kinship with my fellow travelers. I have the ability to be kind, courageous, peaceful, and generous, and, if I choose, I can forgive myself for any misstep along the way. When I recognize that I haven't, I can strive to do so...I am not wrong for being and acting afraid, I am simply reacting to fear and pain, and my attention to love will allow me to return to my peaceful center."

This meditation can be enhanced by softly playing your favorite music and the careful maintenance of your surroundings, however you wish that to be done. If your mind sends you a message saying you are too busy to take ten or fifteen minutes to stop and read this two or three times a day, consider carefully whether this is a survival message from the part of your consciousness that would best be served by taking these few minutes. You will be amazed that taking the time is saving time. When you complete this brief meditation, you will find your day is filled with more productive solutions to your distress. If you simply MUST do something instead, then do it. When it is complete, return to this

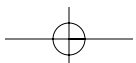
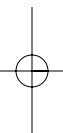
meditation immediately.

You have been struggling for years with your upsets. If you could solve them by DOING, you would have done so long ago. Your answer is in BEING—returning to beingness. And you will still have about twenty-three hours a day to pursue “doing,” if that is your wish.

Life after survival is simple, except for one thing...survival is screaming with everything it has for you to become a HUMAN DOING. You are not a human DOING. You are, in every way, a human BEING.

Try these exercises in exactly the same way a scientist does an experiment. Do the test and anticipate nothing. Simply observe the various results as they appear. Watch for self-fulfilling prophecies and negative, judgmental thinking. Continue to observe until you become witness to your surrender.

You have nothing to lose and everything to gain. Your mind wants an answer and the answer is the unfolding of the truth. You will find yourself saying, “I don’t know” often and beginning to make peace with it. You will find that not knowing is a good first step and will lead to openings, never expected, and solutions, never anticipated. Try it...your joy and life may depend on it.



Chapter Twelve

The Core Profile Summary

“All right, you have the next forty-five minutes to go over your notebook and summarize each of the categories. You need to have no more than three or four triggers, three or four coping mechanisms, three or four Core Beliefs, and your primary driven intensions. You are to have a keyword for your Core Issue, as well as a few key Authentic Declarations and a phrase or two to summarize the gift of YOU. YOU can do this and you will be amazed at how well you will do it. You will use this summary page to help you see again and again when you are triggered and coping with your life, and what the consequences are for continuing to do so in situations in which survival should not be the issue. You want to live and prosper, not just simply survive. In order to do so, you will need to be increasingly more effective at catching your triggers and minimizing your coping. This summary will help you with that effort. We will check back with you in the next half hour or so to see how you’re coming.”

— Instructions to the class on their last session of the Core Profile program.

In the companion workbook, you have a Core Profile Summary page. If you are not using the workbook, you can copy the one on the following page. The whole purpose of the last few chapters was to give you tools to help your Authentic Self to remain awake and in charge in the face of triggering circumstances in your life. When you get triggered by any circumstance or condition in life, your awareness shifts from the neocortex-driven consciousness to your amygdala-driven consciousness, and you lose the awareness of who you really are as a whole, creative, spiritual being. Your Core Profile Summary will allow you to acknowledge this shift, which can help you defuse the auto/protector's powerful urge to use unproductive fight/flight methods to deal with the important people in your life.

In order to make a summary, you will need to go over your worksheets in each category and pick the one or two most frequent or troubling items. You will probably see a theme in the items you have written down. For instance, if you have written down several triggers such as “spouse saying I left the counter dirty,” “boss coming in to watch me work,” “friend telling me I was late,” you might write down “any criticism” under “triggers” on your summary page. You will find that two or three of these “super categories” will cover about eighty-five or ninety percent of all the triggers in your life. Then, when you find yourself triggered, you can more readily see that you have taken the comments or actions as potential criticism. You can look at your Core Belief Summary to appreciate why criticism seems so dangerous to you. Look for the themes that will allow you to quickly gauge when you are triggered and coping with life.

In the category “Benefits of Coping,” you must look for what you are getting by continuing to cope. If you display your anger, what does that do to protect you? If you are always quick to agree, how does that serve you? Don’t use “it doesn’t” for an answer. If your auto/protector self got nothing, you wouldn’t still be doing it. Look for answers like “don’t have to try and fail anyway” or “keeps me from being hurt.”

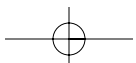
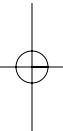
In the category “Cost of Coping,” you can look for the cost of your anger, stubbornness, addiction, phobia, etc. If you are in a struggle at home or work, be sure to list all the costs, including the loss of goodwill and support. Some people find it easier to list the benefits. Each of us has a few key benefits that keep our coping styles in place, but we continue to pay the costs year after year.

Core Profile Components

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Core Pain | 2. Triggers |
| 3. Coping Mechanisms
– Comply | 4. Benefits of Coping
Rebel Behavior |
| 5. Core Driven Beliefs | 6. Fear/Pain Driven Intention |
| 7. Cost of Coping | 8. The Core Issue |
| 9. Authentic Core Values | 10. Authentic Declaration |
| 11. Core Gift – The Authentic Expression of you | |

The summary page works as a tool to help you break the cycles of trigger/cope in your life. It integrates the various aspects of your auto/protector into a quick reference that can allow you to more quickly identify and release from the triggering effects of everyday living. It also is a quick reference to your Authentic Self to remind you that you are a gift and that there are alternatives to the survival perspective. So take some time and review your workbook pages to develop a snapshot of your coping persona. When you have completed this, make sure you have something to help you return to the Authentic Self-Expressive being of whom you know you are capable. Write down a description of YOU at your best and what you know is possible for you. Later, you will be introduced to Core Values, which you can include on your summary page.

If you don't already have the *Life after Survival* workbook, now is the time to get it. Do this with a Life Coach and with the certain knowledge that you can live Life after Survival to the betterment of everyone in your life. Change will only begin when you are willing to see the value of being more than a driven, reactive doer; happiness will exist only for those who allow their circumstances and conditions to be opportunities for contribution and growth. It is inescapable that you will get triggered, but you need not let that be your defining light. Develop your Core Profile and allow yourself the opportunity to bring light where there was only fear.



“The best remedy for those who are afraid, lonely or unhappy is to go outside,
somewhere where they can be quiet, alone with the heavens, nature and God.

Because only then does one feel that all is as it should be and that
God wishes to see people happy, amidst the simple beauty of nature.”

Anne Frank

Part Three

The Keys to the Kingdom

“Happiness cannot come from without. It must come from within.

It is not what we see and touch or that which others do for us which makes us happy;
it is that which we think and feel and do, first for the other fellow and then for ourselves.”

Helen Keller

“Consider the following. We humans are social beings.
We come into the world as the result of others’ actions.
We survive here in dependence on others. Whether we like it or not,
there is hardly a moment of our lives when we do not benefit from others’ activities.
For this reason it is hardly surprising that most of our happiness
arises in the context of our relationships with others.

Nor is it so remarkable that our greatest joy should come
when we are motivated by concern for others. But that is not all.
We find that not only do altruistic actions bring about happiness
but they also lessen our experience of suffering.
Here I am not suggesting that the individual whose actions
are motivated by the wish to bring others’ happiness necessarily
meets with less misfortune than the one who does not.
Sickness, old age, mishaps of one sort or another are the same for us all.
But the sufferings which undermine our internal peace — anxiety, doubt,
disappointment — these things are definitely less.”

H.H. The Dalai Lama

Chapter Thirteen

Finding Faith, Peace and Spirituality

Siddhartha sat down late again. Jesus, Mohammed, Krishna and the others were here ready to begin. "I died for their sins," Jesus was continuing, "and yet this sacrifice seems to have been in vain."

"I know." Lamented Mohammed, "How often is my name used to justify the most savage and brutal acts which I abhor and sought to end in my life time."

"Do not judge them too harshly," Krishna broke in, "they are struggling right now and need all of our love and divine wisdom."

"Yes, but I was late again today because I was seeking Atman and Nirvana for these children in an epoch of meditative bliss which lasted two eons." Siddhartha said by way of explanation. "And still it does not reach them as the number of practicing Monks declines as their lives continue to fill with ever expanding distraction."

"What are we to do?" Abraham broke in, "We see them blindly go to synagogue to shout down any and all reason and sanity for living together in peace and harmony. They choose to listen

to the least wise among them.”

“The spirit that is with us all,” Jesus incanted, “has asked for our help. We must have a plan for them as they are all of our children and we love them all—each and every one.”

“I have one.” Said a voice coming from somewhere in the back of the room. “Is it not true that each of you has taken your turn to help and guide them?”

“Yes.” They all spoke in divine oneness.

“And is it not further true that each time they turned your words into dogma and your spirit into justification for their own frantic misguided sense of survival for each tribe, group, sect, religious order and political designation?”

“Yes again.” They intoned in glorious voice.

“Then it is time for them to get out of this on there own.” Gandhi said, and all were amazed and at peace with the wisdom of this offering from the spiritual representative of the little world, third planet of an insignificant star, leader of the only successful nonviolent movement to free his people from colonial oppression.

— Minutes from one of a number of emergency sessions in progress on the celestial plane.

...And get out of it ourselves we must do.

There are many troubles today. We are troubled by the state of affairs in our world and we are troubled personally by the difficulties of living full and satisfying lives. We have come to know that consumerism is not the road to happiness and jumping to other hedonistic pleasures is no better an answer. As we talked about in the first chapter, psychology and psychoactive drugs, while helpful to some, do not necessarily bring us peace and satisfaction. However,

one option, practiced my many, but often turned to in desperation, is faith, religion, and other organized spiritual practices.

Faith, Beliefs and Surrender

Spirituality is a necessary part of every human life—for the atheist or agnostic reading this, let me clarify—religion is not. Spirituality requires the individual to discover his or her experience of faith, and faith is a necessary part of everyone's life. (If atheists say they have faith in themselves, so be it.) Don't get me wrong, people can and do live without faith or its power, just like people live without adequate vitamin C. You can do it, for a time, but why would you want to? In the same way, love is a necessary part of every human's life. Many people feel they live a loveless life, but no one aspires to it, except those, perhaps, too broken or too afraid to give it a chance.

Spirituality and faith have been co-opted by the powerful religions to the extent that many who question the need for religion also question the need for spirituality and faith. This is a huge and sorrowful mistake. Your Authentic Self thrives on the experience of faith and on your expression of spirituality, in whatever form you see fit to express it. (In this context, spirituality is the expression or practice of anything in the world of beneficial intangibles: Love, Peace, Serenity, Giving, Surrender, Lightness of Character, etc., as well as the more traditional views of God, Universal Oneness, Enlightenment, or a Connection with Nature and the Natural World.)

Faith versus Belief

The experience of faith is completely misunderstood by most people. They want to know what to have faith in, but this is the

point: Faith is a mental process, not a dogma. You must be able to proceed with faith when you do not possess all the facts, and you never have all the facts. Faith is the state all humans are in when they are not triggered and coping. No matter how much we know, it is never EVERYTHING and seldom even enough on an objective plane. Using faith instead of absolutes allows us to exceed our physical and mental limitations and live in the sublime.

If you have faith as a mental process, you proceed without the need to know. Perhaps it is the authentic way of knowing the gestalt of the moment. If you believe in something, you proceed as if that thing is true and you are confined by its nature. For example, if you believe Zen Buddhist principals are the only way to enlightenment, your practice of them may or may not lead you to enlightenment. However, if you have faith that enlightenment is possible to all humans and you fully experience this faith, enlightenment will exist for you and all you meet along the way. Faith that you have a right to be here and are a natural part of the universe is faith in the truth of our condition. If you believe this truth, you reduce its stature. If you have faith that Jesus is God, or Mohammed is the prophet, or Hinduism leads to nirvana, then you are in a space to allow this faith to have power in your life. In contrast, if you believe one of these, it becomes dogma and a source of conflict within you/YOU and between you and others.

Faith is “knowing” without reason, believing is a reasonable use of knowledge to enhance your survival, and knowing is logic. (When people say seeing is believing, they really mean seeing is knowing, as no belief is required.) All three, faith, belief, and knowing, have their place in your life, but they should never be confused. A simple example of this is a man who wishes to build a house for

himself and his family. He knows the strength of his construction materials, he believes them to be adequate to withstand whatever nature has to offer, and, if he is enlightened, he has faith that this is a labor of love and will serve him and his family for years to come. In primitive times, humans used the incredible gift of faith by focusing on the natural world and the incredible mystery of their own conscious awareness. They believed many things erroneously, which is the pattern of all human beliefs. Although when it came time to go deep within their own soul and psyche (whether it was a vision quest or rhythmic dance) to bring forth their faith in the universal oneness of life, these early humans often got it right. These primitive people I speak of predate any form of civilization, yet lived successfully for tens of thousands of years, and they created the basics that we have built on for eons since.

Our beliefs have changed, fragmented, and modified over many tens of thousands of years, but our innate human ability to use faith and to express our spirituality has remained the constant. As a human being, you possess this unique ability and the need to extend your focus beyond earthly survival.

New conscious needs were developed in humans as the neo-cortex developed. We ceased to be a survival machine, sitting idle when sated, and became human. We began to experience and express our unique connection to the universe, which was the birth of our Authentic Self. Faith is the tool of the Authentic Self. It is the gestalt of life...the "whole-istic" view of nature, with human consciousness's role in it. It is what allows us to imagine, create, and soar as human beings. It is our path to freedom from fear, pain, and loss, and from living in the world of the auto/protector.

Faith is to the Authentic Self what rationalizations and justi-

fications are to the auto/protector: Logic and reason are tools both your Authentic Self and your auto/protector have access to, but logic and reason can (and do) easily become rationalizations and justifications. When the auto/protector uses logic to build a weapon, it serves our physical and mental needs, and when the auto/protector uses the weapon against others, it does so in the belief it will protect us. It will use logic to justify this belief and soon it will rationalize and justify more uses for this weapon. We are always rationalizing or justifying our coping behavior, no matter how violent and destructive a turn it might take. However, when the time comes to put down our weapons, faith can allow us (our Authentic Self) to counter such urges, and open the door for us to experience the incredible and wondrous magic of peace, in spite of any reason to continue the fight. The use of logic and reason need not be at odds with our use of faith; they can and do, at times, work in concert. Faith is a specific human ability that when exercised allows us a fuller expression of being human.

Surrender

When we have faith, it allows the Authentic Self to surrender. Surrendering is a process of letting go of our fight/flight mentality and fully experiencing our beingness. Surrender is the functional part of faith. You may have all the faith you want, but if you fail to surrender, you will miss the experience that your faith has to offer. Oprah spoke one day on her show about a time that she surrendered herself. She was staying at a health spa and simply knew she was going to fail to achieve something for which she ached. She woke up and began singing one of her favorite hymns about surrender. Within this hymn were the words “I surrender.” (Imagine “I

surrender” as surrendering the “I” of the auto/protector self.) She was truly at her emotional end, and as she finally allowed herself the experience of this complete surrender, peace washed over her. At that moment, an employee of the spa called out to her that Steven Spielberg was on the phone to offer her the part in *The Color Purple*. It was the part that she so desperately wanted to play and simply knew she would not get, but here it was in the very moment of her surrender.

“True story,” she tells us. You can choose to believe it or not. The point is that as she surrendered completely, she began feeling peace and acceptance. She was in a place that allowed the universe to unfold however it might. Almost immediately, hundreds of miles away from the decision process, she was contacted in what some might call coincidence, and what I would call synchronicity. This is NOT an exceptional story. I have experienced it, my wife has experienced it, and hundreds of my clients have experienced it dozens of times. I hear these stories every week, and while it is not scientific data a scientist would covet, it is a perfect opportunity for us to exercise our gift of faith, if we choose to act as if certain things are possible to us.

Axioms cannot be proven and faith is axiomatic. Surrender, allowing the universe to unfold exactly as it should while trusting that you and your desires are part of the process, so often leads people to fulfill their heart’s desire that coincidence is not an adequate explanation. I am not here to require your belief in this process of obtaining the things you seek. I am here to tell you that faith and surrender will set you FREE.

If you obtain nothing more than the peace of mind and serenity that comes from surrender, you will say it was worth the effort.

So, it is a bonus that surrender actually has a functional, real-world component. What you struggle to achieve with fight/flight may often be achieved through surrender: This is the gift of faith. However, do not be fooled into thinking you can do this SO THAT you can get the goodies. If you surrender SO THAT you get what you want, it will not work because then it is not surrender, but manipulation. It is not a linear process, it is a miraculous one.

Oprah also had some beliefs involved in her story. The song she sang was not just surrender, but surrender to Jesus. It is highly unlikely that Steven Spielberg, a practicing Jew, would say that Jesus moved him that day. Steven and Oprah have different beliefs. My clients have a range of backgrounds. Some are agnostics, Muslims, or Buddhists, while others are self-proclaimed atheists. Regardless, they all have experienced and reported the power of surrender. They have added their particular beliefs or dogma as they surrender, but when they really got past “trying to believe,” they each reported remarkable stories of synchronicity. The universal experience of faith need not interfere with your specific beliefs. The trick is **TO NOT LET YOUR BELIEFS INTERFERE WITH YOUR FAITH.**

Beliefs are part of the culture...faith is a function of being human. Beliefs are content, faith is process. Simply told to have faith, the **KEY TO THE KINGDOM**, people are too often uncomfortable in faith without content. This is why, in most cases, specific beliefs have been added. It seems that beliefs were used in ancient times (and even today) to bond the members of the community together. When control of some event was required and hard work, craftiness, or cleverness failed, the tribe turned to its wisest members, who were steeped in the obscure arts of the gods. These wise men were charged with making sense where “no sense” could be

made, and so the beliefs and stories began.

As we pointed out in chapter three, humans required two things in order to survive in the wild: self-conscious awareness and a tribe to help them return to Authentic Self-Expression. This tribal community encompassed the source of their reality, the collective beliefs about who or what controlled the events that affected their survival. Beliefs were developed tribe by tribe and group by group to explain the common cause of their collective survival. However, when one group's beliefs about the best way to live the "good life" didn't match another group's story, the seeds of conflict were sown.

Having something to believe was very important to our distant ancestors. As long as the tribes were widely scattered, their separate beliefs could be practiced with harmony, respect, and dignity. This is not the state of the world today; what was once so important to us as individuals is now the cause of great strife and difficulty. Every great religion has devout followers, and all the minor ones do as well. To whom should we listen? What group has the inside track on spiritual reality? Who is right? If, like in our chapter story, we were to put all the gods and godly messengers in a room together, would they argue or would they know immediately that they were in unity? Whose fault is it that we have so many disagreements, interpretations, and competing beliefs? Are the disagreements among Muslims, Christians, Hindus, and Jews due to God's obscurity about what is true and authentic, or the fault of man's pernicious misinterpretations? (I'm sure we each know the answer to this one.)

Can we carry this logic a bit further? Who is right between Shiite and Sunni, Baptist and Catholic, or Orthodox and Reform? Where do these disputes arise? Is God confused or do our clerics and religious authorities fail us? We all know the answer to this one

as well. (Now, your little voice might be acting up considerably. You are sure your beliefs are directly from God...or no belief is right...or this is a waste of your time. For now, just notice this dialog and please continue as this is simply fear speaking.)

Disagreements among our many different “competing faiths” (what a concept) are the reason many of us cannot find, or fully embrace, a spiritual community. We do not want an exclusionary community, but this is often the case. Many of us need and seek an inclusive one, but even this has its drawbacks as disputes continue to arise. As we said earlier, different groups with unique beliefs were not much of a problem when there were great natural barriers to separate them. Although when these groups met, invariably they would clash for supremacy. This is the auto/protector’s driven need—not God’s. We now live in a world where everyone is within a day’s journey, but we have yet to bond as a single tribe. Disputes are everywhere, on virtually every topic, and none is more destructive than a belief in God. Separation seems more the goal than unification.

We start with “who is right” in disputes with our boss, our spouse, or our kids, and any other disputes in which we see ourselves embroiled. We then carry this on with our spiritual undertakings...Who is right? (The answer given by your auto/protector is, “Me, of course! Why else would I be talking?”) I’m sure you’ve heard this question before: “Would you rather be right or happy?” Yet still we cling to our disputes as if life depends on it...and, of course, we BELIEVE it does.

Traits of loyalty to OUR group and individual survival are what traditionally have kept us strong as a people. Now, however, they keep us from reforming as a single species with a more universal view of spiritual practice. Our misplaced loyalty does not

allow us to accept the possibility that any view may be acceptable for others to practice. In the auto/protector mentality, we must be right because our life may well depend on it. We fight or isolate in order to protect OUR WAY. These are human failings, not God's.

Beliefs and faith are important and necessary to us. They are unlikely to ever disappear as human consciousness processes, but they needn't be the cause of our continuing failure to embrace the tribe of humanity or to embrace the peace of mind we so desperately seek. It may be true that we will never hold a unified belief about anything, but **if we are to live more effectively on this planet, we are going to have to find a way to both increase our powers of faith and embrace our diversity of beliefs.** In spite of our auto/protector, we will need to come up with a benign strategy that allows for the diversity of our beliefs, so that we may experience the benevolent effects of our spiritual practices binding us together as human beings dependent on each other for survival.

Maybe there are many ways to God and spirituality. I certainly think so, but for those who are convinced there is only one path, read the following truth: **If there is THE WAY, you are not the keeper of it: YOUR WAY is just that.** Embracing this thought should allow you to step back and realize that while you are personally certain your practice is absolutely THE WAY, you are not the final judge; therefore, you must allow others to be certain as well. Harmony can only come when people of faith find it safe enough for other people of faith to coexist. **We need not have consensus as much as respectful tolerance.**

The tools of this book are aimed at just such an effort. The problems we face collectively and individually are not arguments among the gods or their historical messengers. These problems are

all too human, and are spawned from the collective misuse of our self-conscious awareness. Every day that we fail to thrive both individually and as a harmonious species, we fail to embrace these truths. As a species, we are chronically failing to use our tools of consciousness effectively, in both interacting with each other and resolving distress in our own personal life. You are invited to become part of the solution as you continue to learn about your auto/protector and Authentic Self and the barriers to solving the seemingly impossible dilemmas created by their conflicting agendas.

We can and must find tools to bring us closer to living the dream we hoped was possible when we began this life as a trusting and loving child of the universe. Ask yourself now what is stopping you from releasing into your goodwill and love of life. Find out what is troubling you and be prepared to release these issues in the coming days. You are a child of the universe, you belong here. It is your right to be happy, to share your love, and to be loved by those around you. You are loved and if you chose to surrender, you will find this love and declare it to be enough. Self-righteousness and “my way or the highway” thinking is the natural province of automatic survival, and our choice is clear—we need not fall prey to these as we seek a new way of living LIFE AFTER SURVIVAL.

Fourteen

The Great Depression

I don't even know why I came tonight, nothing matters to me anymore and nothing seems to help. My doctor wants me to take anti-depressants and that only depresses me more. I see on television where they say depression is a medical disease and I should get treatment, but I just don't want to. My husband is going to leave me if I don't straighten up even though he says he won't and I feel like I can't even take my kid to school anymore. I don't even know why I'm saying any of this it doesn't matter anyway. I wish I would die.

Are you going to die?

What? I don't know. I hope so. Sometimes I think that maybe that would help everybody.

Do you think of suicide?

Yeah, maybe I could get some pills and just take too many.

Will you do that?

I don't know, probably not.

That's not good enough; if you're going to kill yourself then I

won't work with you and you'll need to get help elsewhere.

Yeah, I'm not going to do it tomorrow or anything.

I see, but you have it as an option if things get worse.

I don't see how they can get worse, but I guess so.

Well, they can get way worse and probably will and in order for us to proceed you must convince me that 'no matter what' or how bad it gets you won't intentionally do anything to harm yourself physically: unless you can do that I won't work with you.

I said I wasn't going to right now.

Not good enough.

What do you want from me...a guarantee?

Yes, exactly that, a guarantee that you will not injure yourself in anyway. Now if the pain you're in kills you, okay, fine, you can die of the pain, but if it doesn't you will guarantee that, no matter what and under no circumstances will you harm yourself. If you do not eliminate that option then we are wasting our time together. If you do eliminate it then you will overcome this distress no matter how bad it might get.

(long Pause) Okay, I promise I will not hurt myself no matter what and that suicide is not an option for me any longer.

Is that true? You do that for you not for me or anyone else?

Yes, I will honor that promise no matter what.

— A client of *Perspectives on Living* in their first session interview.

One of the most insidious coping behaviors is depression. Depression has become an epidemic in our society and is considered an "illness." Depression is a good thing...like all coping strategy is "good." It is here to serve the purpose of keeping us from pain and getting us what we need. It is why we cope and why depression is

a good thing. But you and I know depression is a bad thing. Depression ruins our lives and relationships. It intrudes into every activity or eliminates everything we once thought was pleasurable. It keeps us from enjoying ourselves and from reaching our potential as an individual. Depression is a bad thing...or is it?

We need to distinguish between bipolar disorder and depression (clinical or otherwise) in people who at one time seemed to be functioning normally in life. If your short- or long-term depression is not associated with psychosis, manic episodes, or a brain injury, you probably have coping depression. Bipolar disorder seems to have a physiological component in the brain that inhibits the use and production of various enzymes and hormones. I have had several clients with bipolar disorder who continued to take medication, albeit smaller doses, to maintain their balance and good health. However, some of my clients who arrived with the diagnosis of clinical depression were able to stop taking their medication and return to drug-free living.

Depression caught the attention of the medical field because depressed people clearly have changes in the chemistry of their brain. Recently, researchers discovered that many depressed people have fewer open dopamine receptors, meaning they cannot process serotonin and dopamine as effectively as non-depressed people. Sounds compelling, doesn't it. It seems logical that if you correct this imbalance, you will greatly reduce or eliminate the depression. Lo and behold, this is often the case. Many patients report marked improvements in their moods and morbid thinking after taking Prozac or other mood-altering drugs. This seems to confirm that these people have an illness best treated by a medical professional in concert with counseling. Actually, the results are far more mixed.

Some patients get better, but many report unpleasant side effects. Many antidepressants have serious and sometimes fatal side effects. The belief that depression is an illness is mostly mistaken. Depression is most often a coping strategy and while it is important to examine the role physical factors may play in your condition, be prepared to face the reality of your depression as a coping tool. By treating symptoms, not causes, the results are predictable: some will be pleased to have the symptoms subside; some will recognize that the underlying cause is untouched, and some will have very bad reactions. If you have a brain tumor, taking aspirin may improve your headache, but it will not make the tumor disappear.

The Chicken and the Egg Dilemma

Treating the symptoms of depression instead of the causes is a chicken and the egg problem: Is our brain chemistry off, causing behavioral and emotional problems, OR are our behavioral and emotional problems causing our brain chemistry to go askew? It could be some of both, but there is one thing we know for sure. When you are faced with a terrifying or painful event, your brain chemistry changes. If that event seems to persist for most of your life, those changes will seem to be permanent.

If you told your doctor that you didn't feel like living and you thought you might be depressed, he might ask you about your home life. If you told him you were living with people who constantly forced you to do their bidding, ridiculed you at every turn, took your children from you, watched your every movement, took away anything you valued, and abused you, he would say, "Of course you're depressed. Anyone would be in those circumstances." Depression is a reaction humans have when all the choices in life seem to be eliminated.

In today's complex world, most of us faced daunting circumstance as children (although this is seemingly NORMAL today). During our formative years, we were inundated with NO's, DON'T DO THAT, and ACCIDENTS that displeased others. We had DEMANDS, PRESSURES, and UNCERTANTIES, and were unaided by close tribal relations. A variety of parenting styles unintentionally forced a view of what reality was on us, in spite of our own experience. We were then asked to plunge headlong into a world NOT OF OUR MAKING, and, without a strong tie to our just and rightful place in society, to MAKE IT as best we can. The cost for many of us has been chronic anxiety, depression, and alienation.

The greatest likelihood is that you do not have an illness causing your depression; you are engaged in depression to solve life-living crises. If you are supported in facing the underlying false dilemma inherent in your crises and you receive support in facing the false alternatives your auto/protector created, your depression will lift and your brain chemistry will balance.

Electroshock therapy was introduced many years ago as a treatment for depression. The rationale for this treatment was fuzzy at best but the results were undeniable—people often got better. Why? Practitioners had a variety of theories but the fact remained that a person would go in depressed and come out with a far sunnier disposition. This treatment fell into disfavor for many years until more recently, when patients were treated with a variety of chemical shocks that forced them to relinquish their mental grip on the no-win situations in which they believed themselves to be. Patients are shocked into actually losing track of the dilemma and the behavior that keeps them locked into their depressive state. (Unfortunately it also causes them to lose large chunks of their

memory altogether.) Shock therapy acts somewhat like a reset button. The auto/protector mind must reboot, which eliminates depression-causing, dead-end thinking or actions. Odd as it seems, shock therapy's benefit validates the Core Paradigm's approach to dealing with depression.

If you are depressed, you are locked in a life-and-death struggle, with all the avenues to resolution seemingly cut off. You may have noticed that whenever anyone suggests a solution, you will have thought of it already and discarded it. If you are depressed, your mind cycles round and round the same thoughts. No possibility exists for joy, only for more of the same pain, or choices that seem even worse. If you could exit this no-win corner you have found yourself in, you would exit your depression. This is the consistent result we see when people shift from survival consciousness to Authentic Self-Expression. If you are depressed, feeling trapped by circumstances and with thoughts that life seems bleak and hopeless, then you are coping and locked in your flight level of consciousness: When you understand this, then there may be an important role that drug therapy can play in supporting the process to unlock your spirit and release you from this insidious self imposed prison.

Depression is a contradiction the auto/protector faces when it attempts to fulfill its primary missions. Remember, the auto/protector self-consciousness is charged with keeping us from pain AND getting us what we want. For depressed people, the problem is the behavior needed to avoid the pain keeps them from getting what they want. You'd be depressed too if you believed you were only good for helping others, and the more you tried to help, the more criticism that came your way. This was one example of a client who couldn't seem

to enjoy any of the success she and her family had. Life was a drudge, and the better things were for others, the worse she got.

Depression is your auto/protector's solution to the constant pain of no-win situations. It dulls the senses so that the pain of failure and the ache of longing for what we can't have will not kill us and when that fails we will see death as a final answer. We shut down all access to our feelings when we face the double bind of "needing to cope/coping is wrong" dilemma and yet this effort only drains us further.

Your feelings are the scorecard of your life. When they seem to be universally bad, you shut them down—you depress them. Without your feelings about your life you have emptiness and apathy and yet that is preferred to the dread of the unspoken pain of your life crisis. You are trapped, helpless and obsessed with the thoughts of your impossible dilemmas, whatever they may be, and the one system you have to help you, your fight/flight persona, is the source of your problem—is there any wonder depression is so destructive?

Your Authentic Self seems to have vanished and you are locked in the prison of your auto/protect. If this is true for you allow yourself the thought that, "**Depression occurs when we are DEEPLY ATTACHED to our auto/protector self and the conflicting Core Beliefs we hold as WHO WE ARE.**" Look at your Core Beliefs and see if you can discover others you hold when in the throes of your depression. You can use the same process we used in the Core Beliefs section to assess your attachment to remaining depressed. Simply look for the conflicting beliefs you hold about your life choices and apply the belief process of, "I'm afraid that..." to each of them. Do this with a Life Coach and start the process of finding out what the

benefits are for you to remain depressed. (You may see all the negatives of depression, but it is the benefits that are keeping it in place.) Allow yourself to be coached and trust that your Authentic Self and authentic perspective await your efforts. Releasing from the grip of depression may seem impossible, but what do you have to lose in trying? (Your mind may have an answer or two to that question, but pay as little attention to that as you can.)

If you will recall, the auto/protector was used by man to fight beasts, cold, illness, and hunger. It used the tools of cunning, manipulation, and cleverness, as well as anger, rage, and withdrawal. It aligned with people of like interest to hunt and protect. All was well until the day we began to use these patterns on each other. When we try to manipulate each other to get what we want through cunning, rage, anger or helplessness, bad things tend to happen. If we withdraw, play the martyr, or try to please by giving up our self-esteem, we do it as long as it seems to work, but are devastated when it fails.

When we can no longer align with people because they are the source of our pain, doors begin to shut, one by one, until we find ourselves scared, alone, in pain, and too afraid to feel that pain. What would happen if you felt your pain? You might want to write it down. Get yourself a journal and begin to write. Show the journal regularly to your coach. We alienate ourselves from people who might be able to help us because we no longer believe help is possible. We are trapped in a vicious cycle: The auto/protector is trying to do its job of survival while survival itself is perceived to be the problem. It's a wonder more of us are not depressed. Of course, more of us are, every day.

Depression is the auto protector's final attempt to protect us. We just won't feel anything, want anything, or do anything, and

then everything will be all right. Sure it will. Just stop feeling and wanting and doing and you too can have an all-expense-paid trip into the abyss of the chronically depressed.

Most depressed people have thoughts of suicide and some carry it out in a last ditch effort to achieve their goals of safety, recognition, or peace. When it appears all the behavior in which you engage fails to achieve your goals, fails to make you happy, or causes more problems, the resultant psychic pain leads many to conclude the only reasonable solution is death. Suicide is a coping strategy and the ultimate contradiction: "I will kill myself to be okay."

The client in our chapter story is one of hundreds we have seen over the years with various suicidal thoughts. Each was holding onto suicide as a way out of pain. It was clear that if suicide was held as a possible solution, they would not be motivated to face their pain. When this issue came up in their program, they were asked to guarantee that they would not act on these thoughts. Each was willing to give up the option in order to work with the Core Paradigm. You may wonder how it is that these people can guarantee they will not act on this behavior. The only answer I have for you is they can't lie about it convincingly. (My guess is they don't wish to lie about it convincingly or they wouldn't have put themselves in this position.) We have been blessed in that NONE of our clients has ever attempted or succeeded in suicidal behavior. These clients all have been true to their word, and as a result they were forced to reexamine the false alternatives of the auto/protector's way of survival. (This self-selected sample is not, of course, a scientific study, and it is self-limited by the fact that these people were still looking for a way out of their dilemmas.)

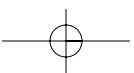
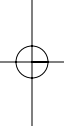
The solution to depression (and your depression if that is your

concern) is to help you see it for what it is: coping behavior. As soon as you begin to appreciate that depression is a behavior you are using for safety or to get what you want and believe you need, the depression lifts. More accurately, your conscious focus is no longer stuck in believing you are the auto/protector self. In order for you to see depression, you must awaken a part of your consciousness that can look. This process of “looking” at the depression helps you to become less attached to the self that is so mired in the hopelessness paradox. Use your profile in section two to help you with this looking.

Depression is insidious and robs the individual of happiness, peace of mind, and well-being. The person inevitably feels like they are in a double bind of no-win situations, which we will deal with in chapter seventeen. If you suffer from depression, it is time for you to surrender. You will surely need SOMEONE to be there while you engage in that process. It might be a family member (if you can reach out to one) or a Life Coach or therapist, but you will need a person to be a “place marker” for you while you deal with your pain and surrender.

A place marker is someone who will stay committed to who you are in the NOW; the true spirit of your Authentic Self. Depression and the thoughts that drive it are locked in the past and in the fear of the future. When you chose to face these thoughts, you may be tangled up in past failures and future hopelessness. You may have a difficult time mentally arriving in the NOW. A Life Coach can maintain that sense of the here and now for you while you journey through your pain. Whomever you choose, it must be someone who can be unaffected by your pain and fear and will support your return to the NOW of your consciousness. This person will be em-

pathetic and compassionate, but not seduced by the power of your depressed logic and hopelessness. Holding NOW for a person is a valuable dynamic between two people—for the seriously depressed it is a true blessing. So find a person you are willing to trust to stay out of your way but who will be there for you to release from your false alternatives of the auto/protector consciousness. **YOU ARE NOT A DEPRESSED PERSON, you are DOING depression.** You are coping and **ALL OF YOUR THOUGHTS ABOUT YOUR PROBLEMS ARE MISTAKES** made by your survival consciousness. Have faith...this too shall pass....



Chapter Fifteen

Life Scripts, Facing the Pain

“I can’t hear very well,” he says. “I’m hard of hearing. It may be because I’m not very smart.”

“Why do you believe you aren’t very smart?” the group leader asks him.

“Huh?” Pause. No one speaks for a moment and he then goes on without prompting. “Well, that’s what my folks always said and I flunked the third grade. I’ve always been stupid.”

“You were held back in the third grade?”

“Huh?” Pause. “Yeah, everyone made fun of me except my best friend.”

“That must have been very hard.”

“Huh?” Pause. “Yeah, I guess so.”

“What did you and your friend do for fun when you were little?”

“Huh?” Pause. “We used to sit on the back porch and read Huckleberry Finn and imagine ourselves floatin’ down a river.”

“Wow, that doesn’t sound like an activity a stupid third grader

would do!” the leader responds with some enthusiasm.

Without pause, he says, “Yeah, I guess.” Longer pause. “I never really looked at it that way before,” he continues hesitantly.

“Did you say ‘yes’?”

“Yeah,” he says promptly.

“You’re hearing pretty good right now aren’t you?”

“Yeah, sometimes it seems I can hear.”

“Did you say ‘YES’?” the leader emphasizes the word “yes,” which everyone in the group knows is the preferred way of acknowledging an affirmative in this group.

Pause. “Huh?” Pause. “Yeah.”

“Say ‘YES,” the leader tells him gently.

Pause. “Huh?” Pause. “OK, yeah.”

“Did you say ‘YES’?”

Pause. “Huh?” Pause. “Yeah.”

“Say ‘YES,” the leader requests again.

Pause. “Huh.” Pause. “OK, yeah.”

This continues a few more times and the others in the group are getting restless. Some say, “What’s the difference, ‘yeah,’ ‘yes,’ so what.” The leader continues, however, and the group gets back into it. Finally...

“Say ‘YES,’ Paul, not ‘yeah,’ not ‘OK,’ not ‘I guess.’ Say ‘YES.’ Will it make a difference to you Paul if you say ‘YES’?”

Long pause. Everyone in the room is dead silent, and tears begin streaming down Paul’s face. “Yes, yes it would.” He breaks down sobbing and each person in the room begins openly crying, including the leader.

“Can you hear me now, Paul?” the leader asks very quietly, almost inaudibly.

Paul answers immediately, “Yes.” Pause. “I can hear you fine.”
— (A moment in a Core Paradigm Class)

Survival is a powerful motivator. Even a whisper of the need to survive sets us off on a journey run by the only tool humans have ever had to allow for survival: our linear fight/flight consciousness. This level of consciousness operates from cause and effect. It uses facts and truth to justify behavior. “A” isn’t only “A,” it is also the reason that justifies “B.” Maybe it is the reason I must hit you. “This–follows–that” thinking has made us one of the best survivors of our age, but it has also led us into painful dead ends.

We depend on our linear consciousness because we think it mirrors reality. The same holds true for logic. Logic is a marvelous mental tool humans have to work things out, to build with, and to uncover the mysteries of the world. Logic seems to be so basic as to be the very building blocks of reality, but it is not. There is something far more basic than logic—that something is reality. Logic is nothing without its unproven and un-provable axioms. It is what you start with that will determine the value of your logic, and the sequential steps in any logical train of thought begin with axiomatic truth.

Your Authentic Self is one such axiomatic truth. Cause and effect seems to be the way the world works. “So that,” “therefore,” “because,” and “why” are commonly used to justify our behavior. At this moment, your mind may be saying, “So? What’s wrong with that?” It seems logical and inescapable. Push the switch, the light goes on. It’s black and white, either/or, right or wrong. The only drawback is that cause and effect mostly isn’t true. Authentic Self-Consciousness is “knowing” and “truth” because it is. It is the “bolt upright startled awakening” that many scientists and thinkers refer to when a break-

through is made: The moment when the individual “knows” what the solution is and then goes on to prove it. It is the gestalt, the wholeness and totality of truth as experienced by the Authentic Self.

The truth is that life and reality are miraculous, not linear. This means everything exists right NOW. The process that allows for change is miraculous as well, although it has many understandable elements. When we look very closely, as in quantum physics, things are not always what they appear to be. The linear component of life is a seductive function of time, but time is a very misunderstood abstraction that may be very misleading when we contemplate the nature of existence. You don’t need to be a physicist or a philosopher to appreciate the hazards of viewing everything as a linear progression. Time and space are mental abstractions that do not exist separately from each other. They are certainly a problematic variable in human consciousness. Werner Erhardt, the founder of EST, once said, “The truth is ‘what’s so,’ but it is also ‘so what.’” Coming to understand this is the key to enlightenment.

If you use one fact to justify another, you are triggered and coping. “My alarm clock didn’t go off and that made me late.” Did it? When you can allow for a thing to be what it is without it justifying something else, you are on the threshold of Authentic Self-Expression. “My alarm clock didn’t go off.” “I am late to work.” These are two separate declarative sentences, not necessarily related and certainly not related in the manner we hope the boss will accept. We didn’t say we were up very late and may have forgotten, accidentally on purpose, to set the damn thing, and could have dressed and gotten to work on time anyway if we hadn’t dawdled another fifteen minutes trying to decide if we even wanted to come in. Few things are as related as we try to make them out to be.

“A” is “A.” It is not the justification for “B.” You hit me THEREFORE I hit you back is not the answer to your ultimate peace of mind. Yes, it seems to protect you, and, if you are big enough or powerful enough, it might keep the offending party away for a time, but God help you if you falter. If you wish to seek enlightenment, you must be willing to see the truth. “You hit me.” My nose is bleeding and your fist is bruised. It is simply a fact: “You hit me.” I may or may not hit you, this is yet to be determined, but if I do, I will not use your hitting me as an excuse. I will hit you or I won’t, my choice and not associated with your hitting practices.

You can try this exercise throughout the day. Start speaking in simple declarative sentences. State facts and intentionally avoid connecting them. Statements like, “I can’t seem to listen to you right now without being triggered.” “I’m scared.” “I’m afraid to say what’s on my mind.” “I seem angry when I talk about this.” It can be a useful exercise in breaking your coping patterns and the mental sets that wants to justify your behavior, ultimately to your own detriment. In the NOW, things simply “are.” They are not tools for justification or explanation.

When you are able to be in a state of consciousness of “turn the other cheek” or hold the conviction as Gandhi did to remain non-violent in the face of ‘horrific’ provocation, you are in the miraculous state of NOW. You have broken the linear barrier of reaction and reactive thought and become free to choose. You have become enlightened. Hitting is a severe example, but it is a type of behavior in which we justify our RIGHT to be in reaction and fight/flight. You do not need to justify fight/flight, but you need to recognize you are trying to justify it, if you ever hope to overcome its powerful grip. (“If people are hitting me, why would I want to

overcome my fight/flight?” your mind might be saying. The answer is because you want more than fight/flight has to offer.)

In our chapter story, Paul found safety in the linear explanation that he must be stupid because he was held back in the third grade. He was small and clueless, like so many of us were in third grade. He thought he failed third grade, but he actually was held back by his parents because of his size. Because he was small, his parents thought it would be better for him to remain another year with children more his size. He was not stupid; on the contrary, he was quite smart. In third grade, he and a friend could be found on his back step reading *Huck Finn* as a play activity. However, none of this made any difference to Paul or lessened his horror at having “failed to advance.”

Paul didn’t find out (or really let in) that he was held back for other reasons aside from “being stupid” until late in his life, and by then the damage was long done. He lived a life of menial jobs, with constant fear of being found out. He was afraid of saying something stupid to the point of “not hearing” what a person was saying to him in order to give himself time to think of an answer. He was never too definite, in order to keep from being pinned down to one of his “stupid” answers, and he tried to avoid confrontation at all costs. These were all protective behaviors figured out by his linear consciousness to protect him from the “truth” of his stupidity.

What are the “truths” with which you are living that keep you from being your full and vibrant self? Perhaps you are financially successful, popular, and happy with your lifestyle, but struggle to find meaning to your life. You may have trouble with your children or your parents, or with unexplained troublesome emotions, or you may have unexplained behavioral problems that seem to have a

mind of their own. Whatever the case is for you, you are not having trouble because of your Authentic Self-Consciousness. These difficulties occur because you are acting out life scripts created by your auto/protector self.

Paul's life script was hiding his stupidity, which only served to highlight it. You cannot hide any of your faults, but that will not keep your auto/protector from trying to. (Your little voice may have just reacted to that statement with, "What are you talking about? I hide things all the time I don't want people to know about me. Everyone does." Just be aware you got triggered. Besides, if everyone was successful at hiding, how would you know?) Hiding is a form of flight and we do it now in the modern jungle of human society. There are many life scripts and you probably have more than one. Some people call their script their "racket." These coping strategies help us avoid pain while we are trying to meet our needs.

Some people try to be agreeable even when they can hardly stand it. Others rebel at the slightest sign of authority, and still others may argue any point that someone seems to be making. We often play our games without ever becoming fully aware that we are playing. Paul thought he really was hard of hearing. We have such strong needs to cope that the games we play are often invisible to us. However, they aren't invisible to others and they aren't invisible to anyone willing to be a keen observer. This is why creating a role for a Life Coach can be so important.

When we interact with others, we create all kinds of unspoken rules. One rule is "I will pretend to not see your hidden secrets if you will pretend to not see mine." We do this in very subtle ways upon meeting. Our auto/protectors are on guard for anyone not willing to play and will turn away if someone seems to be looking

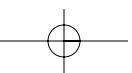
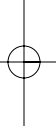
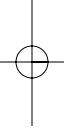
in places where we do not wish to be seen. We are used to establishing these agreements with the people we are working with, socializing with, or just meeting for the first time. When you engage a Life Coach, you must specifically give him or her the right to not play this game. Ask your Life Coach to see what you are unwilling to see for yourself. Ask your Life Coach to look where you chose not to look, and ask him or her to point out what you don't want to see. It will take courage on both of your parts to do this.

One of the more difficult aspects of working with a Life Coach is facing the motives for your behavior. What are you doing when you are fighting with your spouse? What are you doing when coping with anything you cope with in life? You will have many justifications and explanations, and may indignantly defend your right to behave as you do. The truth is that you are trying to survive and get what you need. While this is laudable, it is also manipulative, subversive, calculating, insincere, dominating, abusive, self-serving, selfish, short-sighted, and childish. How do I know this? I know this because everyone who copes (and that is everyone indeed) acts in these ways.

It is hard to hear these things. We do not wish to be made wrong for only defending ourselves and trying to survive. Being called short-sighted or manipulative is offensive, but being called insincere, calculating, and selfish may be too much to bear. You don't want to hear that your coping behavior is perceived so badly, but what if these perceptions were not judgments and were merely observations that could serve you if you (your Authentic Self) could look at these behaviors from all perspectives? This, in fact, is the truth of coping. These judgments are fixed in place not by others, but by the pain they once caused you as a child. Your auto/protec-

tor has tried to help you by denying these things and defending your “right” to continue using the behaviors. Having to cope and then defending your right to cope is part of the reason you must be so circumspect in living your life. Your Life Coach should be able to help you face these judgments while not allowing you to fall into the trap of agreeing with them.

What are some of your life scripts? What games do you play to get what you need and protect yourself? Do you know? Chances are good that you know some of them, but not most of them or even the ones that are causing you the most grief. If you are less than pleased with the behavior of your spouse, children, parents, boss, co-workers, or friends, you can bet you are playing out some of your life scripts. While your focus is on them it belongs on you. (If that didn’t trigger you, you have come a long ways.) Look at what triggers you and look at some of your Core Beliefs. Then look to see if certain feelings repeat themselves and certain conditions seem to reoccur. If so, you are in the midst of your life scripts and the good news is with the help of a good Life Coach you will soon have the power to release from them and return to the light of your own natural goodwill. peace of mind and authentic living.



Chapter Sixteen

Life Coaching

“I’m here because my wife wants me to be here and she said I only had to come once. I know all about this psychobabble and mumbo jumbo and I’m here, so what are we supposed to do?”

“Yeah, I’ve strayed, but now I’m straight and she won’t give me a break. I go to my church and the pastor tells me to make amends and I do, but she never lets it go. It’s hard, you know, with girls always throwin’ themselves at ya.”

“I’m doin’ it right now because it’s what I’m suppose to be doin’ but she just won’t give me a break. She doesn’t trust anything I say...I’m doin’ everything she asks and still she isn’t satisfied. I might as well go out and do it again for all the credit I get”.

“What are you goin’ to do for me, anyway?” Jim, in his first and perhaps only session of Life Coaching

The next week I got a call from Jim saying he wanted one more appointment. “Really,” I said. “How did you decide to do another?”

“It was one thing you said in the last session and I just want to

find out what you mean,” he said by way of explanation.

“What was it I said?” I asked, knowing that there could be really only one thing.

“You said that if I wanted to, you could help me be more comfortable in my own skin. What do you mean by that?” he asked in a very challenging voice. “I’ll give you one more try, but if you give me any mumbo jumbo, I’m outta there.”

This took place four years ago, and he still comes every now and again. He is not even close to being the same man he was four years ago. People see him and ask him what happened, and he always says the same thing, “I finally got comfortable in my own skin.”

— An experience from the Core Paradigm

Human development is studied and dissected by thousands of people every day. We try to understand ourselves...it’s what we do. We are concerned about knowing so that we might be better, we are concerned about others and how to help them overcome illness and life difficulties, we are extremely curious and industrious. This is the joy of being human. Much of the time, this is the motivation behind our Authentic Self. However, all of this “understanding” ourselves can easily be co-opted by our auto/protector. When that happens, we head down the rabbit hole of Alice’s adventures (in anything but Wonderland).

When you are struggling in life or you find yourself frustrated by life circumstance, you are triggered. That’s it, nothing more. No need to debate nature or nurture. And if you stop long enough to release from this survival state, you will open up other channels of consciousness that will allow you to overcome your chronic state of depression, anxiety, worry, or distress. It is hard, very hard, and few of us are able to do it without the help of a Life Coach.

The problem you will find is that an important, potent, and insidious aspect of your auto/protector consciousness is its ability to establish allies. When you get triggered, you begin to establish who is with you and who is against you. If you are in a struggle with your spouse, you tell your friends what he/she did. You begin to see in their faces the same outrage you have and you are comforted. You seek support from those who agree with you and shun advice from anyone who might have a different perspective, especially a perspective that suggests you have a part in the dispute.

If you lived in Og's day, this process would serve you well in fighting to survive illness, wild animal attacks, or drought. Today, however, establishing allies' only keeps us locked into our Core Beliefs. We think we need allies who see and agree with our victimhood to boost our strength and power, so that we might overcome this great menace. We grant nothing to the "other side" because it would weaken our case, and we admit nothing. However all this does is keep us from resolving our problems, because not listening or conceding valid points, along with portraying ourselves as the unwitting victim of others, offends them and keeps reminding us of how helpless we are. To make matters worse, we soon find the person on the other side is doing the same thing.

Disputes with our bosses, co-workers, spouses, children, siblings, and others continue endlessly, with each side claiming the moral high ground while doing more damage to each other and neither taking any accountability for their own part in the fray. No one can own their part because now we have allies who depend on our righteousness—and the fight goes on. Next time you have a chance, look at the struggles you have with your family or anyone with whom you seem at odds and see how little give there is in both

of you. Do this and ask yourself, “Is this the way to Happiness?”

The auto/protector seeks allies to join in the fight or flight, but when fight/flight is not the answer, no amount of allies will solve the problem. What we all need are people in our lives who we will allow to coach us. We need other people in our life who have the skills to remain outside of the box into which we climbed when our fight/flight mechanism took over our conscious awareness.

Humans are social animals. Throughout history, we have needed each other to survive. A lone human in the wild was a dead human. We are slow of foot, dull of senses, thin-skinned, and inadequate in every way, save one—we are the most adaptable mammalian society on the planet. This meant survival was only possible as a group activity. Now we need to develop new ways to support each other in our new jungle of human society.

The predators we face today are greed, isolation, hoarding, and self-absorption, and the deadly conditions are time pressures, money issues, material concerns, and chronic worry. This new jungle requires new alliances and new rituals to help us navigate the dangers of modern society—Life Coaching can be the answer.

Life Coaching is a phenomenon today. My friends who are psychologists point to the increase in Life Coaching literature and information available to them, and many have added this service to their repertory. The key to Life Coaching is YOU are not a patient and your problem is not PATHOLOGY. It is two or more people sitting down to learn ways to be more effective in achieving their heart’s desire. The process may well support you to release from emotional states that trouble you or to alter behavior that is self-defeating. You may discover past pain or open up new avenues of understanding about your past, but the goal is always to focus on the NOW.

In our form of Life Coaching, we use the Core Paradigm as the basis for helping you become the person you know is hiding just below the surface. We offer the tools of this paradigm to support the ability to lead a more effective, joyful, and spiritual life, however someone perceives that to be. Your Life Coach can see when you are blind to your reactive nature. The Life Coach can provide tools and skills for you to try in your quest to release from pain and fear. He or she can also be the witness you need while you journey past the agony of your negative self-esteem to enlightenment.

Life coaching is our society's appropriate replacement for the tribal relationship, which is so important to man's NEED to come down from triggered events. Everyone needs coaches. You may have coaches in several aspects of your life. Mentoring is on the rise, and it needs to continue to grow ten-fold as we coach and mentor each other to becoming more loving, compassionate, and fulfilled human beings. However, you must be on guard that you are choosing coaches, not allies.

Life Coaching is also the beneficial answer to the therapist's dilemma. Too many therapists today face burnout and personal struggles because of the pressure of being responsible for their patients' well-being. Therapists are often drained by the weight of their practice as they shoulder the burden of an obligation to heal the patient. They fall into the trap of seeing their patients as troubled, broken, and in need of their skills to overcome this terrible state. They worry about whether they have done a good enough job and despair when it seems like everything they do has no beneficial effect. Often, their patient's pain restimulates their own pain; their credo of staying objective wears on them terribly. Psychologists are supposed to know the keys to help the patient out of their dis-

truss. When they fail to do this, they often take it personally. Life Coaching is much different. In Life Coaching, there are no experts and there are no patients. Each of us has a perfectly functioning Self-Conscious Awareness, and we are often served to gain others' insight into our processes.

In Life Coaching, we discover our ability to allow people into our lives who are willing to know us and be aware of our trials and tribulations. Life Coaching is a structure that supports but does not interfere with our struggle to actualize our self-expression. The Life Coach does not take responsibility for our agony, despair, anxiety, or "acting out." The Life Coach instead supports us to rehabilitate our consciousness to see these things for what they are: fight/flight/freeze DOINGS. This includes guiding us in rituals that allow us to pass through states in which we have remain trapped. In our chapter story, Jim was one such person. He was trapped by the macho, rebellious nature of puberty, and he had nowhere to turn and no one to help him when it was time to lay down the impulsive and hedonistic pursuits of boys and become a man.

Jim challenged authority at every turn. He was a self-made man with all the toys and all the joys of hedonistic self-absorption, but he was also a forty-year-old troubled boy wanting to be a man. He "knew" what was right and "tried" to live it, but it felt to him like living in someone else's life. He was different, he could see that, but he imagined that he was probably like these other "good" people, except they were too afraid to be like him. He was a hero in his own story, living out every man's dream, and although he knew it was wrong, secretly he really knew he was the one to be envied. Drinking, gambling, carousing, and cheating made him "who he was."

Anyone who thought otherwise was probably just a hypocrite. He didn't need any Life Coaching, psychobabble nonsense, really.

So, why did Jim come back? He gave me lots of reasons not to, but each time he was stuck on one possibility I gave him, "to live life comfortable in his own skin." Jim knew SOME part of him was neither comfortable in being the rebel nor satisfied in being the angel, and compromise was no answer at all. (How do you cheat on your wife a little bit?) He wanted to be comfortable living in his own skin. Socially, he was a well-respected businessman with a million-dollar home and all the toys a Southern California hot shot should have. Surely HE didn't need to spend time talking touchy-feely with some Life Coach...but he did anyway. Soon others began noticing a difference in him. He began noticing that the promise made to him was being kept...he was becoming more comfortable in his own skin.

What was the difference for Jim? Was it the phrase "being comfortable in your own skin"? "No," he could have easily said to me as he would have said to anyone else. "What are you talking about? I'm perfectly comfortable in my own skin." What made the difference for Jim was someone seeing the opportunity for a coachable moment and bringing it to him. Jim didn't deny his discomfort because he was caught by the truth of that moment in time. It was a moment in which someone else had reached into him and told him a truth that he knew was right, but could not admit before that moment. He was intrigued enough by this unusual approach to ALLOW himself to take another small step. His defenses were high, but this brief incursion into an authentic connection with another human being gave Jim a way to begin his long overdue maturation process.

Authentic connections occur all the time around us. Each time, we are amazed that what was once an intractable problem becomes

an easily dealt with opportunity. However, reliance on happenstance social interaction to assist you in letting down your defenses is asking too much of our society. We need to find coaches who can stay away from trying to fix us and support us to be everything we always wanted to be. First and foremost, this means seeing us as we are without judgment of any kind, including the judgment that our troubling condition is not okay.

If you come to a coach with depression, anxiety, relationship turmoil, or anything else that may be troubling you, you first need to EMBRACE the condition and see it for exactly what it is. You will have come to your session to rid yourself of the condition, but the Life Coach's first job is to help you embrace it by showing you how you are served by being in that state. Now, it is all too obvious how the condition is not serving you, but this is unhelpful until you unmask the motivation for the condition and deprogram the Core Beliefs that keep you stuck in this "intractable state." It is only after you have embraced your pain and fear that the problematic nature of the condition may be addressed with power and effectiveness.

Jim is but one of thousands who have benefited from the Core Paradigm, and you can too. Whatever is bothering you is more than likely a function of your fight/flight persona directing your behavior and running (read: ruining) your life. You have what it takes to be everything you ever wanted to be and, most importantly, you have what it takes to be happy. **The keys to the kingdom (as you have heard so often) rest within you, but the path to the keys rests with your ability to find others who can point to the doorway.**

Being a Life Coach, Having a Life Coach

You can be a Life Coach by being willing to be a witness to the

auto/protector consciousness wherever you encounter it and participating with your Authentic Self whenever you can allow it. You may find that this is not your calling in life, but you will often be confronted by opportunities to sidestep the coping behavior of those you are closest to. You will always have the choice to support them to be more of who you know them to be, by choosing to be more of who you can be in the face of triggering stimuli. This is your task in life, in general, and is the minimum you owe to yourself. However, frequently this may translate to simply walking away from the stimulation instead of engaging your coping dynamic any further. Of course there are those from whom you simply can't walk away from. Your children need you to be their coach, your spouse will need you to be present in difficult situations (walking away may be a momentary necessity, but it is no solution). You will be faced with many opportunities that, at a minimum, will require you to know coaching is required. Here's the rub...**COACHING IS REQUIRED.**

Coaching is a life necessity, not a necessary evil for those of us who believe we are broken and need fixing. We are social beings and we need each other to succeed in this life. The onus of therapy has kept millions of us away from support we desperately need to be fully actualized individuals. Life Coaching is today's answer to the tribal healer or the wise council of our elders. It now is a professional relationship, and simply the way of today's world, not a negative comment on society. Everyone needs Life Coaching, including the coaches. A discovery awaits you: You are not broken and you never needed fixing. The easiest route to this awareness is often in the presence of a Life Coach.

As human beings, we are not designed to both have our reactions and recognize and resolve them. The dynamics in place for us

to go off the rails are powerful and automatic. Without the perspective of a Life Coach, we will INEVITABLY make serious errors in life-living situations. While we can be effective with each other at times, do not hesitate to establish a relationship with an objective Life Coach.

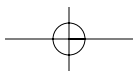
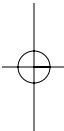
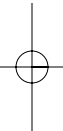
Your best move when triggered and coping with life may simply be to establish a coach and to recognize when it is time to utilize his or her services. This alone requires great discipline. This discipline includes resisting the temptation to believe your assessments of the problems you face as you make the slippery descent into your own private inferno. In today's world, we have to create relationships that support coaching as a regular and viable alternative to the drama played out in so many of our lives. You are not weak, different, or defective because you seek council when struggling with life-living issues; you are demonstrating wisdom seldom seen in today's world.

The auto/protector self seeks agreement from relationships. A Life Coach is someone who can neither agree nor disagree while making you comfortable and safe enough to proceed. If you find yourself seeking agreement and votes, it is time to stop and seek a Life Coach. Agreement is the booby prize in the world of enlightenment.

For those of you who wish to pursue Life Coaching as a profession, your best avenue will be to apprentice to a coach you esteem and who seems to have the ability to teach the skills you admire. You will know if this is a calling you wish to pursue through your willingness to work on yourself, not your willingness to work on others.

Our society in general will need thousands of Life Coaches to support the shift from determined, fight/flight/freeze survival to Au-

thentic Self-Expression. You will know if this is right for you through your own surrender. The keys to the kingdom are the keys to the door that will take you past THE NEED TO SURVIVE, which is one step closer to living consciously, authentically, and beyond distress.



Chapter Seventeen

The Double Bind

I don't have the time to plan, but my disorganization takes all my time. If I leave my wife, I can't be with my kids, but if I stay it's no good for any of us. If I crack down on my teenager, she gets really angry, but if I let her do what she wants she'll kill herself. I need more time, but I have to keep up appearances. I don't have the money to complete my degree, but I need my degree to make more money in my field of interest. I want to have more self-esteem, but I'm always messing up. How can I have self-confidence before I am able to do anything well? My husband wants me to be more available to him, but each time he approaches me like that I feel more distant. If I give the boss what he wants, he thinks I'm just his lackey, but if I try to stand up for my point of view I'm perceived as a troublemaker. I try to make a good living for my family, but the more I work the more distant we seem to be.

These are but a few of the double binds in which my clients find themselves. They are cruising along in life and WAMMO,

smack into a double bind—damned if you do, damned if you don’t, with no good solution in sight.

The auto/protector consciousness today will inevitably lead you into a double bind. When we attempt to cope in today’s world, we are using fight/flight behavior to solve issues of relationships, work, parenting, money, society, and the environment, to name a few. NONE OF THESE THINGS will be solved by your beating them up, running away from them, or remaining frozen in the face of them. However, since these are the only alternatives anyone has in fight/flight/freeze, you have a problem. **Life is not an either/or proposition; it is a rheostat of possibilities.**

If I stay and fight for my rights, I alienate everyone. If I give up and leave, I’ll never get where I want to go. I can only stay or go and neither is going to work: double bind, ala crème de la crème. The further we sink into survival behavior, the stronger the stench of the double bind. The more a client of mine tried to parent his child, the more the child rebelled, but when he tried to “trust” him, the child got into even more serious problems. What was he to DO? There’s that word again, DO. Remember, we are not human DOINGS, we are human beings. When my client began being a human BEING with his son, the problems began to dissolve. “How do I DO that?” your mind is probably asking. It is simply the curse of the auto/protector consciousness—it needs to do something in times of need. You can’t “do” BEING. You can’t, that’s just the way it is. Being is. If you try to do it, you aren’t being it.

The key for you to have a chronic problem clear up is to quit trying so hard. Easy advice to give, hard advice to put into practice. (Also, it usually will put you into another double bind, “I have to do something, but doing something will only make it worse.”) The

motivation for you to keep trying to do something about your problems can be overwhelming, and that is why you need the Core Paradigm. **You must first be aware that you are triggered and coping if you are to have any chance of resolving the distress in which you find yourself; one of the best ways to tell when you are triggered and coping is to recognize you are once again in a double bind.** You will need every clue you have developed in your notebook to remind yourself that being triggered is the problem, not the content about which you are triggered. Your mind will reject this, “What do you mean my child doing drugs isn’t a problem? You want me to do nothing?” No, we don’t want you to do nothing. We want you to overcome being triggered by it and let your Authentic Self reemerge to face the reality of your child taking drugs—**BE THAT.** You have many clues to help you recognize when you’re triggered and the double bind is one of the best. If you feel that you are in an either/or dilemma and that neither choice is a good one, then you are in a double bind. You are triggered and coping, and your job is to surrender. Allow yourself to reemerge as a feeling, compassionate, caring, loving, productive, awake human **BEING** who is willing to be witness to reality.

If you have coaches in your life, you will want to use them to help you come down from your adrenalin-soaked consciousness and refocus on the person you are when not so driven by the fear and pain of the emergency. This does not imply that you should not engage the emergency measures to keep yourself or your children safe in a moment of danger. It simply means that, after the emergency is over, some ritual will be required to come down from the frantic pace of facing danger.

We are talking about not letting a situation become chroni-

cally restimulating and chronically full of anguish, and to not let it continue long after the time for immediate action has past. Yes, there is still much that must be done to find a solution, but once the emergency has past, you will need your Authentic Self directing the activities, not more of your auto/protector carrying on in emergency mode. Look at the issues you have that continue to haunt you and ask yourself if forcing the issue, running away, or standing like a deer in headlights will be a wonderful solution. If not, then look to see if it feels like you are in a double bind. If so, have the courage to try an experiment.

The experiment is simple. Ask yourself, **“If I weren’t coping right now, what would I be feeling?”** Now look at your Core Pain page. If you are struggling with this, find a coach and ask her to help you surrender to your fear, pain, or loss. Learn some meditation techniques, or do some physical exercise like walking, swimming, or jogging, something in which you can immerse yourself in the movement and then surrender. Let go. Notice that you may want to tell your story, and only share it if you include how scared you are and how hard it is to let it go. Do NOT tell your story to anyone who might agree with you or see you as the victim. Do this until you begin to appreciate that other options are available. In the problem involving a child doing drugs, a solution might be in finding a way to listen, so that your child really gets that you want to hear. Or you may have to face your fear of the child’s rejection of you.

Being the victim of your story will keep you stuck in fight/flight. You are not the victim of your child’s drug use, your spouse’s infidelity, or your boss’s meanness. You must find a place within yourself where they are the victims of these things and you

are the source of strength and calm resolve. That does not mean stubborn self-righteousness, it means being in a place where you may well say, “I don’t have an answer and I’m okay with that for now.” It may mean prayer, meditation, or another means that allows for you to fully surrender to being. We have used extreme examples like drugs, infidelity, and threats at work only because they are so reactivating for us, and so seductive for your fight/flight to stay the victim. We want you to see the full extent of the need to release from victim behavior and viewing events in your life as “reasons” to stay in emergency thinking. Even in these extreme examples you are better off not being the victim and not using fight/flight as your solution.

When you embrace that your chronically unresolved problems are issues of your being triggered, you will be faced with the double-bind dilemma more and more often. This is simply your auto/protector’s attempt at clarifying the problem to overcome it by motivating you ONE WAY OR THE OTHER. It will seem logical. It will seem inescapable. However, the solution will never be found in fight/flight motivation, beliefs, or behavior. You want to be happy—yes, you do. You want to be satisfied, but life keeps getting in the way. In this scenario, life has all the power and you are simply its victim. In the Core Paradigm, life is what happens while we embrace (and often enjoy) the ride.

The double bind in life is the bind of having to survive. In reality, what makes life worth living are all the things available to a species that has the incredible gift of sentience...after survival. You are okay, you have made it, you are safe, and you are free to choose, within the framework of your situation, to be a loving and satisfied human being. What does not kill you will allow you to be

stronger, to grow, and to be whole. Still, in the end, we will not get out of here alive. Be happy much of the time, be well as best you can, be loving and compassionate every day, and remember to surrender to the light.

Chapter Eighteen

Core Values

When humans leave the security of their triggered and coping persona, they begin their journey into the uniquely human world of creative self-expression. Often the truth is found outside of our words and beyond 'meaning' to essence. Truth is art and being and LOVE.



When Love Has Fled

*Indeed, what is left to say
or way to have it said,
when magic has become
a skill, a con,
the cheapest trick.*

*When heroes fail
their heroines
and center stage becomes
the props and sticks
to use and discard
as we please.*

*Where ever did the wonder
and awe of dreams flee,
what land holds the promise,
what world the sea
of our fragile touch
and tenderest embrace?*

*Indeed, where is the morning,
dawn's stretch and yearning,
daybreak's promise of renewal,
noon's moment reaching out
to caress the thought of you
in single lines of poetic grace?*

*And evening shall never fall
as peerings cease
and poems flutter
to the ground
unread, unseen
unloved...*

Shall death be so cold

*as a life that can hear
the poet no more?
Has love fled
and if so...
to where should I write?*



You are born into this world a gift. You are also born into this world with a sentience that holds the capacity to value, honor and cherish. As an infant you were cherished, if not by your parents, then by others who made your acquaintance for the first time: The nurse who helped to deliver you and the people who got only a glimpse of you as you past them by. Babies bring that out in us. We value them and their precious life and seek to protect them. This is only the beginning of our Authentic Values. Survival isn't what makes life worth living, expressing our love and cherishing those that are most dear to us does.

When we can get past our NEED to survive, we naturally value compassion, justice, fairness and goodwill to our neighbors and friends. We value art and creativity and we value honesty, and forthrightness. You have your own authentic priorities and values that define you and your Authentic Self Expression. You have a natural way about you that is drawn to certain values and certain expressions of your joy. It is part of what makes you unique in this world. Perhaps you have discovered some of these as you did the processes in the Gift chapter or other processes in this book or life in general.

When you find yourself losing that perspective and slipping into, blame, revenge, retribution or complaining, remembering this can be one more tool for you to use to identify that you are triggered and coping. Perhaps you are coming to believe that recognizing your triggered state or seeing yourself coping is not as difficult as we portray; I hope that is true. If the ‘YOU (of the Authentic Self) has slipped into the you’ (of the auto/protector self) do not be surprised that YOU will need every advantage possible to recognize that shift. Recognizing when you’ve been triggered and are coping will be your second biggest challenge in changing your life for the better. This is because the shift is so seamless as to be virtually invisible to our Authentic persona. (Your biggest challenge, of course, will be finding the courage to face the choice to surrender after you recognize you are coping.)

Who you are is not your auto/protector; that is what you seemingly must DO. Who YOU are is your Authentic Self and the values YOU hold when YOU allow yourself that level of focus in the world. Seeing what values YOU are representing by your actions can tell you a lot about whether you are acting from being triggered or YOU are responding to the possibilities of life.

When you become irritated, disappointed, frustrated, confused or worried you are no longer honoring your true values or the people you value the most. You begin to act on the values surrounding physical survival and personal needs. You may find yourself in the double bind of WANTING to act on your values of sportsmanship but needing to win at any cost. You may find yourself struggling with questions like only a sucker passes up an opportunity like this, even though it clearly compromises your sense of honesty and fair play.

Many of our top executives at fortune five hundred companies found themselves faced with these seemingly difficult choices. They heard things like, ‘this is the new way of doing business,’ “the ends can justify the means,” “and we have a responsibility to our stock holders” and many, many other rationalizations to ‘maximize’ profits at the expense of honesty and fair play. Is it really dog eat dog and are you really willing to be satisfied as a participant in the dog eating contest?

Core Values are those values we hold most dear to ourselves when we can see past the pain of immediate survival. When YOU take a minute to actually “smell the roses along the way” that in itself is a Core Value. If YOU take the time to sit on a cliff overlooking the sunset and reflect on the peace of the moment and share the beauty of it with a loved one, this again is a reflection of your Core Values. When YOU stop to help a stranger pick up their papers they’ve accidentally dropped, or lend a hand to someone in need YOU are acting on your Core Values: And when you turn away, too busy to stop or are irritated by the clumsiness of the person YOU might catch yourself and ask, as the opening poem said, “where has love fled and where is it I must seek to find it once again?”

When YOU allow it, there is never a child YOU meet that YOU couldn’t love, or a stranger YOU wouldn’t be willing to help if the need arose. YOU are not simply a survival machine in spite of having one as part of your conscious make up. YOU are a natural collection of Core Values that if you will take the time to examine and perhaps write down in your notebook, will help to remind you of what is really important to YOU in this life. Do YOU value creativity, friendship, family, and honor? Where does productivity and community service fit into your code of conduct?

Make some notes and have them available to remind you when YOU most need it.

You can answer these things by taking a moment to enjoy yourself and reflect on the dream with which YOU began as a child. Remember when YOU wanted to be a fireman, or adventurer, or doctor? YOU were expressing your values and if you can only recall wanting to be bossy or having all the money then even then you were triggered and coping with your own survival. All dreams are not created equal and if your needs started so early that you can not recall ever wanting to soar then you will be even more excited to discover that part of YOU that truly is a reflection of love, peace and satisfaction.

Core Values are those values that include the well being of everyone on this journey called life. They are your way of honoring the golden rule of, “Do unto others as YOU would have them do unto YOU.” YOU must value yourself and honor yourself and seek to value others in just the same way until you experience the moment where you can no longer tell which is YOU and which is them. This state of sharing, of being, is the state of grace we all seek when it is safe enough to acknowledge it. YOU are capable of joy and YOU are capable of living life full of richness after you have put down the weapons of survival. Take some time to write down what is most important to YOU and then imagine how that can be part of what is valued by everyone. Find harmony and you will find happiness.

Chapter Nineteen

What Can You Do About It?

One day a few years ago, the sun and the wind were having an argument about who was the strongest. The wind proclaimed he was the strongest of all the elements and finally persuaded the sun to join a contest.

“See that man down there with the raincoat on?” the wind asked the sun. “Let us see who can get that coat off of him the fastest. I shall blow it off in only a few seconds.”

So the sun agreed and the wind moved his clouds in front of the sun and gave a mighty blow. The coat flapped open, and the man grabbed hold of it and wrapped it tightly around his body. The wind angrily blew even harder, knocking the man down and blowing him against a building, but still he held tightly to the coat. Then, after a final blow that did nothing to loosen the man’s grip, the wind turned to the sun and said, “Well, we have found a worthy trial. He is very strong and you have no chance at all.”

The wind took his clouds off to the side. The sun came out and slowly turned up his radiant smile. The man looked around at the storm moving off and soon began to perspire. In a short time, a very brief time, he took his coat off.

When you are triggered, you are the wind, and in your mind you believe that it is from here that your strength and power to sur-

vive resides...but in most things the power of your vulnerability, warmth, and compassion is the strength you need to accomplish the goals of happiness, goodwill, intimacy, and love.



Now

*Before, when flowers bloomed unnoticed,
I noticed,
made the bed as I was told and shined my shoes.
Before, when gran'ma's lap spoke up to me
and I listened
to the sounds of soft folds of gingham . . .
I spoke.
Before, when all was quiet, nodding softly in my bed,
throwing off the peach white tendrils of consciousness,
I dreamed.
Before when alabaster shirts were sure signs of stiff,
unyielding words, meant for my betterment,
I chased...
after Alice and her time obsessed Hare.

Then after . . .
I grew, the birds sang and flowers bloomed,
but now I too did not know,
or see, or care...

Soon,
I would be...better, richer, wiser, happier . . .
soon.
Oh, the exquisite ache for promises
not kept and those that will never be . . .*

*frantically,
I yearned...
For those things to do,
Places to go,
people to see...
No time TO BE...*

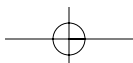
*Or too much time spent
on the pursuits of youthful follies
at the feet of desperate
Ambition...*

*Now, I am . . .
not what I was or yet may be . . .
the flowers bloom,
the birds sing,
and I am now born anew.*

*Once again to see,
Once again to hear,
Once again to be
...Me...*

*Between each shrill echo
of moments gone and siren's songs
of those yet to come,
I notice now, all that life was . . .
is
. . . and will be.*

"NOW is not just a state of mind, in fact it seldom is...."



Okay, I get it, Larry. I'm triggered and coping to beat the band...I get it, so what do I do about it? I see it plain as day, I'm messin' up, I'm coping almost all the time, so what do I DO? This is spoken by almost all of my clients, and I am sure you are wondering about it yourself. I am sure of this even though we have stated often that DOING IS NOT THE ANSWER. YOU started reading this book because you wanted answers. You want a way out of your pain and distress, and you invariably want to know what to DO about it...so here goes. (We will use "YOU" to represent your Authentic point of view and "you" to represent your auto/protector self throughout the rest of the book.)

When triggered, you will not WANT to do any of the things here, but these are some of the things YOU can do to help exit your coping and self-defeating behavior. Each time, YOU or you recognize a repeating problem. YOU can apologize to everyone for coping with them instead of showing up authentically. YOU can apologize no matter what or who started it and no matter whether another person was coping worse than you were. We can always apologize for our coping behavior when it applies to others because it is always hurtful to them. YOU can apologize even when it sticks in your craw to do so. You can apologize until YOU mean it. It is something YOU can do.

You can look for your role in the upset. YOU can look at your behavior and YOU can look at what you didn't do or say because you were hurt or mad or upset. YOU can do this whether it is your fault or theirs. YOU can look to see what judgments you hold concerning others and how these judgments are distressing them. YOU can look to see that your judgments are being reflected back, to determine why you are being judged. YOU can look at

your attitude and admit that it is not the best attitude to solve the current problem. YOU can look to see what you are not listening to that has caused someone to not listen to you. YOU can look to see what injury you inflicted to understand why an injury is being inflicted on you.

YOU can give rather than try to receive. YOU can listen instead of talk. YOU can grant instead of claim. YOU can stop sending your demands and start receiving requests. YOU can show up instead of you. YOU can make requests and support responses instead of you making demands and getting reactions. YOU can look past their auto/protector self and speak to who YOU know they really are.

YOU can notice you are feeling like a victim and stop being the victim. YOU can notice how your being a victim makes them your persecutor, and making them your persecutor makes them a victim of your victimhood. YOU can see that being a victim makes victims of us all. YOU can look at how your willingness to be a victim stops the process of resolution and dialog. YOU can look at your need to be a victim and apologize for it.

YOU can cease to be a willing victim of others' coping behavior. YOU can stand up and declare your unwillingness to participate. YOU can speak your truth, including how scared you are to speak your truth and begin at the beginning. YOU can tell the truth about your being triggered and your need to cope. YOU or you can admit that coping will most likely exacerbate the problem, and that you are responsible for your continuing coping. You can tell those around you how hard it is to stop and how scared you really are, and YOU can reemerge within the safety created by your own courage.

YOU can DO all of these things, and they may help or they may not. DOING from a triggered and coping spirit will probably only create more triggered and coping behavior. YOU can know that and surrender. Most of all, you can surrender to YOU. YOU/you can remember COPING ISN'T WRONG; it just mostly doesn't work.

Surrender is the willingness to acknowledge that coping will not work. When you finally embrace that coping is not the answer to a problem, you may open the door to YOU. **Surrender is the knowledge that being triggered is a necessary reaction, but will not produce a useful outcome** with most people with which we work, play, or live. Surrender is releasing into the feelings of fear pain or loss and allowing ourselves to return to the light of Authentic Consciousness. Surrender is facing your torments and tormentors and turning the other cheek.

YOU can be grateful and give thanks for all that YOU/you do have. YOU can be gracious and giving in the face of anything. YOU can appreciate something in every transaction. YOU can know of the blessings of your life, and cultivate appreciation, thankfulness, admirations, and goodwill. YOU can do these things at any given moment. Most of all, YOU/you can feel your feelings of vulnerability without a need to hide or cover them up. You can be the sun and allow the wind within you to subside.

You can seek the NOW. YOU are always in the NOW, and you can surrender fears and believe in the power of being in the NOW. You can identify past and future thinking, and reject it in favor of faith in yourself and the courage to be YOU. You can be dedicated to the discovery of your Peaceful Warrior and to finding your own path to letting go of judgmental thoughts—NOW.

You can stop whatever it is you are doing and surrender into the prayer/meditation/harmony of the power of the universe, however you conceive that to be. If it is God, then you can surrender to God. If it is your inner light, you can surrender to that. You can be at peace with knowing love, that which is available to you and that which is innately in you to give if you will only allow it. You can surrender hate and fear and embrace love and peace even when you are sure no such feelings exist for you.

These are some of the things YOU/you can do each time you are faced with distressing circumstance. You will not want to do any of them because that is the nature of your fight/flight self. What you may be thrilled to discover is that YOU can be these things and YOU can be them sincerely, not as a coping trick but as an expression of another part of your being. If you try to do them, you will fail, but if YOU be them, YOU will succeed and your life will change.

YOU can do anything that supports you when you have been triggered and you have a great NEED to cope. YOU/you can know that COPING IS NOT THE ANSWER. Your auto/protector self wants answers in the form of Core Beliefs. It wants action in the form of coping strategies. It wants results in the form of relief from the pain, threat, or injury that it perceives is upon us. YOU/you must not make that wrong, yet you have only one choice open to you from the level of your auto/protector: cope or feel your authentic feelings. Cope at your own peril.

You have been struggling with life for a long time or you would not be sitting here reading these words. The struggle is at an end. Look at the first page of your notebook, where you wrote down your problems and issues. Look at the content of these issues

and then look at the right side of the page where I had you write, **“being triggered and coping when the circumstances don’t warrant this.”** It should be the only problem left on the page because it is your only chronic problem. Everything else is just logistics and Core Beliefs. If this is not yet true, it will be. You can read and reread your notebook until you see it. Your only task is to trust the process.

YOU are free to face the pain and fear that has kept you locked away from the light. Your distress will lift as you are able to surrender. If God is your answer, then surrender to God and allow Him to shoulder the burden of survival. If a universal consciousness is your answer, then allow yourself to merge into this peace and face the pain and fear with which you have been coping. If self-reliance is your truth, then allow yourself to be the being YOU have been born to be. Release to the inner peace and love that awaits YOU by your surrender of your triggered and coping persona. Return to the beingness of Authentic Self-Expression.

Faith is a powerful tool of your Authentic Self. Have faith in a universe that is unfolding as it was intended to unfold. Have faith in your rightful place in this benevolent universe. Have faith in the perfection of goodwill, joy, and serenity in the face of all things. Have faith in feeling your feelings and letting go. Have faith in your own perfection and the power of goodness, however YOU envision this.

You are not struggling because YOU are not enough or because life is not benevolent. You have been struggling because you (the little you) is too afraid or in too much pain to surrender. Coping is the problem, not the solution. Fight if you must or shiver with fear for as long as you need, but remember this is only your pain speaking for you. Join with others that YOU can trust to see this truth and come to the light. Surrender is your task until such time

as it is your salvation. Do this as if your life depends on it, because your happiness does. Live LIFE after survival by taking survival out of the equation. None of us will get out of this alive, which is a fact of little consequence, but we all are alive right NOW and it is NOW that awaits your joy and well-being. No matter how dire the circumstance, ask for forgiveness, peace, and joy, and surrender to the light—it is within YOU and awaits your being.

These are the things YOU/you can do and be, and YOU CAN. Your mind may wish to argue, but that is as it should be. YOU are past that now. Refer to your notebook when these arguments start, thank your auto/protector for sharing its concerns, and surrender each time YOU wish to have things be truly different in your struggles in life. YOU have the power to surrender in the most difficult of circumstances. YOU will chose when and where, when the time is right for YOU—trust that!

Life after Survival is the conscious evolution of your consciousness.

You must allow yourself to know the truth that YOU are not mentally defective because you have been living in the throws of pain and struggle. There is nothing wrong with YOU because you are failing to find happiness and peace of mind. If you struggle, you are normal. If you have life-living problems, join the club. If your emotions overwhelm you, you are alive in the twenty-first century. If you agonize and fight wayward urges, desires, and secret longings, you have arrived at the inevitable end of our society's headlong decent into hedonistic survival. This is the price of a modern society bereft of the healing power of tribal solidarity.

We are at a crossroads to bring back intimacy and ritual for the twenty-first century. We are ready to open a new chapter of humanity for experiencing what it means to be human in our world

today. We are on the threshold of joining together as a single tribe whose aim it is to respect and cherish our uniqueness while simultaneously celebrating our common ancestry and common needs for love and respect. YOU are free each day YOU surrender to the light, and humanity can begin to live life after survival...

...Be the light, and so be it....

Epilogue

Og joined his people and together they marched off into history. They created pyramids, Rome, and the Renaissance. They industrialized and grew to four billion strong. In the process, they lost their way. They walk around now, confused, hoping to catch the brass ring (or win the lottery). They struggle more than ever, in the absence of wild predators, with the issues of survival. They want to be happy and joyful. They seek peace of mind, but in the seeking they validate the truth that they do not have it. They come to this earth naked, born to parents who hope their children will have better than they have had, but it is in such hope that the trouble begins.

Og, of long ago, did not want his life to be better than it was, nor did he want his children to have any more or less than he himself was blessed to have: It was perfectly okay just the way it was. The universe was perfection and his place in it miraculous. He gave thanks every day for the bounty around him, the richness of his tribe, and the miracle of the amazing awareness that he and his kind alone possessed. Og was a man of gratitude and thankfulness—his kind were glad to be alive. Everyone born to his tribe was welcomed and important to the tribe. Each had a gift to give and they were en-

couraged to give of themselves freely. Og would wish for you to know of this peace and joy because, in truth, you too are born to his tribe.

If you have been left with the impression that you can't do it alone, it is both true and untrue. In a sense, you are always alone. You have the power to see and the power to be whole in the face of any emergency. Just knowing that you are not your auto/protector self has power. Being Authentic in the face of highly stimulating circumstances will allow for solution and resolution where previously there was only pain and heartache. Allowing yourself to see the triggers in your life can and will make a difference in your attachment to coping. You need not do any more than that: Acknowledge you are triggered, feel your feelings, and let go of the belief you are broken and NEED to fix anything. If you do this, you will cease to have any chronically problematic circumstances in your life. Although it will not happen unless YOU are extraordinarily watchful.

Many of my most profound personal breakthroughs came when I perceived myself to be alone. Today I would be lost without the coaches I have created in my life, the community I enjoy, and the family of which I am blessed to be a part. However, there was a time when I imagined going to my center required me to be utterly alone.

I can remember spending three days, mostly on a park bench in Munich, crying. Not because of the letter I had received telling me my wife had left me to be with another, but because this leaving had proved once and for all, to my satisfaction at least, that to know me was to want to discard me. Everything seemed pointless

and hopeless. I tried so hard, struggled so much, and in the end those closest to me judged me too worthless to keep around. “Why even bother to get into another relationship when sooner or later the outcome would be the same,” my mind kept repeating. “If I were honest, every complaint my wife had about me was true in some way,” I thought with brutal honesty, too tired to pretend any longer. “She left because there were better things waiting for her,” I kept thinking. “And I now have all the proof I need to confirm my inability to have anything deep and real.” I cried and then I cried some more.

Each morning I would get up from my small room determined to go see the grand museum of Munich. I’d have a light breakfast, walk one block to the park, and hesitate, realizing that my experiencing beauty would be wasted on someone so empty. I’d slowly turn into the park, go to the first bench, sit down, and begin to sob. The same phrases repeated over and over again in my head, “I really am not worth being around.” “I never will have anything I really want.” “No one will ever love me when they really get to know me.” Each time I would think these thoughts I would be driven into uncontrollable tears and further heartache.

I didn’t blame her for leaving. I knew she would the moment I got on the plane to take my hundred-day journey in Europe. We parted on the tarmac where she swore her love for me and begged me not to be gone so long. All I heard was, “If you are gone this long, I will leave.” I took off my ring as I was looking at her through the plane’s window. I knew it would be the last time I saw her as my wife.

We were not compatible. I knew she didn’t want to be married to me in spite of her protestations to the contrary, but the re-

ality of her letter struck me savagely. It wasn't that I wanted to be married to her, I didn't. It was that she didn't want to be married to me. She didn't want me because I wasn't good enough to want. I was terminally flawed and I hoped, even begged for the pain of this to kill me. Then three days into this abyss, about noon on the third day, I sat bolt upright. "My God, she didn't leave because of me, she left because of her. It didn't matter how good or bad I was; it was her choice to leave for her reasons." These thoughts came to me in a flash of insight. I was okay just the way I was. No matter how rocky or good things might be, she left because she had to for her reasons, not because of me.

I knew this was true in the only way a person can in the moment of insight: It was true for me. I knew my pain was all of my doing and all of the self-pity my fear of not being okay (the Core Beliefs I would one day write down on my Core Beliefs page). I looked around at the beautiful summer day and was filled with love, joy, and peace. "Her leaving was her journey, and no matter how many mistakes and missteps I made, they were not the cause of her leaving and would not be the cause of anyone else's leaving. They stay or go because of them, not because of me." Now, this was not a whitewash of my culpability. I was full of faults and insecurities. It was not about blame or fault, it was about people making choices; some would chose to be with me, some would not, but I did not have to be condemned because of it. I was neither so good nor so bad as to make any difference to the outcome. Oddly, that was enormously comforting. People did what they had to do for them, not because of me. If my behavior was bothersome, it could be changed as I saw fit, but my essence was not at issue. The worthlessness and emptiness I felt was fear, not fundamental truth.

I arose from the park bench, walked into the plaza, spoke what little German I could muster to people, and felt more alive and connected than I had felt in years. The museum was spectacular, and the people I met warm and gracious. I never looked back from that day forth. I was okay, no matter how confused and messed up that might be from time to time. I was whole, no matter how often I pretended otherwise. I could fall in love and be loved forever. My beautiful wife Nancy and I have now been in love for thirty years, and we look forward to thirty more.

Did I do this alone? Alone in a crowd, perhaps, and alone in my head where I would later discover were Core Beliefs. The same beliefs I built or reinforced that day flying the airplane with my dad. I never imagined anyone could really be there for me and had no tools to find a Life Coach. I allowed myself the time and luxury of going through this process alone in a foreign city where I knew no one and no one knew me, but I was not alone. I was in the society of human beings and when I arose from the park bench, I could not wait to interact with anyone who might come my way. Their kindness and generosity stood out to me like neon and the ease of social intercourse filled me with joy. I was not alone; I was always part of the community and I had personal work to do. In the years that followed, I came to appreciate how much coaching could be a part of my life.

You can face your frightening bears and personal nightmares of negative self beliefs without designating a coach if you wish. I cannot say I recommend it or not. If you choose to face your misery and agony by yourself and you are up to the task, then by all means go for it. Eckhart Tolle, the author of *The Power of NOW*, talks about his private journey to enlightenment in which he

stopped and faced himself. I strongly recommend his books. You will have to decide which the right path is for you. Find a coach to share the journey, or surrender to the pain alone in the crowd, either will work. The Core Paradigm will help.

The Core Paradigm will also help us in other ways. Just imagine Israel and Palestine co-existing in harmony because the individuals involved no longer see the issues as those of survival. Imagine if they sought justice for each other and felt the desire to be generous, caring, and compassionate. Just imagine the possibilities if FIGHT or FLIGHT were taken off the table, if each side asked of themselves to open up to their Authentic Creative Self to find the win/win solution for any dispute. Imagine the conversation if you started with “I’m triggered right now and although it is hard for me to see, I know that is not helpful to solving this upset.” Imagine if your partner said in response, “Thank you for that, and I too am triggered by this issue and I want to apologize for bringing that energy into this conversation. Let’s see if we can find the solution that supports both of us.” Imagine if you sat down and listened to John Lennon sing and the words were simply the reality with which you lived your life each day. Imagine and remember that it is never more than a moment away. YOU are safe. YOU are loved. YOU are wanted. YOU are the source of your own happiness.

Wisdom, Sayings, and Authentic Declarations

A quick summary to be read
when you need a little reminder

The Core Paradigm

Remember, your chronic problems in this life are a state of mind, otherwise they are just the facts you have to face. Everyone has a survival nature that includes a survival consciousness. It is your armor, your mask, your ego. It isn't a part of YOU, it is simply the little "you" trying to survive. It really is a separate self for all intents and purposes, and does not need to be fixed as much as it needs to be turned off. This consciousness is limited by the nature of survival. It requires focus on the immediate problem. You (the little you) is always the victim. You must act now without regard to the future. You attack, flee, or play dead when faced with these perils. You are aware of what is dangerous and hurtful based on what has happened to you in the past. You are capable of assessing whether these things may happen in the future and you will be impacted by this future thinking. You cope with life when you are triggered by negative life events, the possibility of negative life events, or the imagination of negative life events. If you lived in the

wild, none of this would be a problem. Since you don't, all of it is highly problematical.

This is not the only you. There is another YOU: The YOU of your Authentic BEING. This SELF is your true and loving self. It is where compassion, respect, gratitude, appreciation, curiosity, adventure, imagination, and love of all things reside. It is the gift of who you are and the gift we each experience in your presence. It is the essence of truth and reality. It is your salvation and healing and wholeness; it never goes away and is always available to you.

“A” is “A,” a thing is what it is and that doesn't mean a damn thing about you, your self-worth, or your ability to be a loving spirit. “A” does not justify “B,” nor does it give you any rights or entitlements. It just simply is “A,” and that is neither good nor bad, it just is. When you use facts to justify your behavior, you are triggered and coping. This is not bad, it just is. It is worth repeating, **THE TRUTH IS “WHAT'S SO.” IT IS ALSO “SO WHAT.”** If you have a “so what,” you are coping.

If you continue to cope, you will continue to live without joy because the highest emotional state in the auto/protector is relief. When you are seeking to overcome, you are perpetuating the problem. However, making the auto/protector wrong will not bring you peace, allowing it to be and surrendering to the reality of the moment will.

The Virtue of Nothing

When faced with COPING/DOING, remember, NOTHING WORKS. If you don't know what to do, allow for doing NOTHING. The art of doing, being, and creating into nothing is not what your mind thinks it is. It is not letting them “get away with it,” giv-

ing up, or quitting; it is, however, choosing not to cope. (If your little voice is arguing, you know by now what that means.)

“Sure,” you say, “easier said than done.” But is it? Surrendering your need to cope is the hardest thing in the world to do until you embrace it, and then it was never hard in the first place. Agony is not nothing. Misery is not nothing. Worry is not nothing. Fretting is not nothing. The art of doing nothing is letting go of both doing and becoming. It is also letting go of hope, struggle, anxiety, depression, hurt feelings, anger, and resentment. If you feel stubborn or frustrated, this is also not nothing.

You may not wish to do any of these things, but even wishing is doing something. The only thing that works is surrender into nothing. You can't do nothing, you can only surrender into the emptiness. Emptiness is scary, but being scared is not nothing. If you surrender everything, then nothing is left and you can experience something from nothing. If that seems mind boggling, allow that to be and let it go. Seeking is not nothing and desperation is certainly not nothing. Serenity is something that comes from nothing (but can that really be, your mind may ask). Allow that and allow yourself to be.

If the last few paragraphs seem crazy, then remember the only part of your mind that can be crazy is your auto/protector. In your Authentic Self, there is no confusion or mixed-up questioning (such as if you're good enough or not). In the Authentic Self, there is simply a point of view: The place from which you view the entire universe. Your view is uniquely yours: your place. You are the source of this view and the receiver of it. You are the essence of sentience from this perspective...it is good if you declare it so, but bad actions are still hurtful actions, without which we would all be better off.

Consequences of our actions (good or bad) should be welcomed as

you would an old and trusted friend. Embrace them and the world will embrace you. Consequences and results are the currency of living, paid to you each time you or YOU go forth. Learn from them and let them go. If you try to avoid the consequences or force the results, you will win some battles and lose everything you hold precious and dear.

Just because you say you are happy doesn't make it so. The only thing that makes you happy is being happy. If you are happy, sometimes bad and painful things may happen. If you feel the pain of this, you will experience the joy of fully feeling your feelings; if you resist you will become chronically unhappy.

Happiness, from the root "happens," is the joy of being alive while things happen in this benevolent universe. It is time for you to accept the fullness of that. You are free to cope, and, we should say again, what you so desperately need your coping to give you will be pushed away by it. You are not free to injure others simply because you have been injured in the past...find coping skills if you need them. YOU must return to forgiveness and compassion if YOU wish to surrender, and you will not wish to surrender much of the time. Always remember there are two selves. Only one of them is in need of survival at the cost of your joy: YOU already know that.

Anger is a secondary emotion and depression is something you do. You can find the primary emotions under these if you will only allow it. Anger, rage, hostility, helplessness, hopelessness, and cowardliness are the emotions of the auto/protector. Their only value is in serving your needs to survive. In this world, they are almost always mistakenly used. The need to survive is an oxymoron—you have already survived. You are alive and well if you will only trust it.

You will often be well served by the strength and support of a Life Coach who knows these things and will bear witness to your BEING while you struggle to return to your essence. You will choose to surrender or not as you have the courage to do so in the face of overwhelming “reasons” not to. You can and will do this alone in the midst of your world. However, if you choose to do this very private work in front of a Life Coach, it might be the one link you need to support you to make the choice to surrender.

We do need each other it has always been so, but we do not need to tell our victim story or gain votes for our side. We need each other to be there, witness our courage, and support our return to our Authentic Self-Expression. Choose wisely and be cautious of anyone too willing to see your side. There are no sides.

You are perfect just the way you are. You are exactly as you should be and if you choose to acknowledge it, you have all the things you need to allow for your happiness, satisfaction, and peace of mind. You do not need to wait to become happy. You are already the source of your own happiness and it simply awaits your acknowledgement and declaration of it. **YOU MAY NEED TO START WITH YOUR DECLARATIONS OF PAIN AND FEAR UNTIL SUCH THINGS NO LONGER ARE TRUE FOR YOU.** You are being asked to awaken from a nightmare—you must awaken in order to appreciate your unique gift and marvelous contribution. **You are a gift.**

The universe is a benevolent place to live. No matter how dangerous it is, it is the most perfect of all places for you to find your happiness, peace of mind, and well-being. You deserve to be happy and to have joy in your life. You deserve to feel all the emotions you have available to you without fear of them making you wrong. You

are free to surrender and to live with harmony and dignity in the face of all odds. You are loved and your task is no more than discovering the wealth of this love.

Surrender to the light. It is within you and the emptiness is your friend. Go gently into your day. Find opportunity to acknowledge the contribution you are in each and every moment. Be at peace or be with your feelings until you are. Sleep well and enjoy the moment of waking to a new day born to be yours...you are a child of the universe. It is what it is, so be it and let it be so...or as our children say today...

It's all good...WORD!

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Grace
to the beginning of world sanity

*At dawn, and without the wisdom of years
the beginning spoke of promises fulfilled
on the shadows of deeds done for love of life.*

*Self was known to be the center of
all that whispered to us
during the sandman's visits,
and spared us no time to seek peace
or find practical applications
within the genius of grace's*

*mysterious presence...that we
would be, too sure, to deny in any case.*

*Then, afternoon came and
we woke to the alarming sensation
of imagined limitations.*

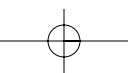
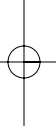
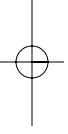
*Time was not our friend,
nor was much of the natural world
we were so determined to conquer.
We sought but did not find,
and yet, remained confident
in our powers and of those
gauzy insubstantial virtues
of self desires...Grace? Surely not!*

*As night approaches,
Grace speaks to us
and for the first time
– we listen –
undeserved and so welcomed.*

*“Grace is many things,
but nothing if not a way to seek peace between nations.”*

— (●) —

THE END



Bibliography and Selected Readings

These are some of the books still in my library that have impacted me or are mentioned in the text. I'm sure I have forgotten to include some that belong here and for that I am sorry. These books are here for those who want to explore some of the territory I have covered in writing this book. Some offer alternatives that are very complimentary to what you have just read. Most of them carry long source lists and we must take it on faith that the authors have built well on the sources they have relied upon. It is the only way as a people we can expect to go forth. The volume of material in any one field is too much for a single person to digest, and in this project we have touched on perhaps a dozen different fields of study. If you find something here that takes you one step further on your path, then I am pleased to have played my part.

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