

LASTING HAPPINESS

SECRETS OF THE HEART, MIND
& SPIRIT REVEALED

"HE SPENT 16 YEARS IN HELL, AND CAME BACK WITH THE
KEYS TO HEAVEN." MARK NOEL, LITERARY CRITIC,
THE UNDERGROUND VOICE.

T. M. HOY

Praise for *Lasting Happiness*

Lasting Happiness: Secrets of the Heart, Mind & Spirit Revealed

T. M. Hoy



Copyright 2018 - T. M. Hoy

All rights reserved.

Pan Media
P.O.Box 41132, Tucson, AZ 85717
www.panmedia.co

ISBN: 978-1-7327919-0-9
Library of Congress PCN: 2018957754

Distributed in the U.S. by Amazon.com

Front & Back Covers by Jeweldesign
author photo by Emily Em

Printed by Guangzhou YBJ Toys Co., Ltd

Dedicated to three wonderful women:
Jan Riding, for her amazing generosity and kindness;
Madeline Kiser, for her instruction from the heart, and
Anna Marie Melvin, for giving everything she could.

Contents

Foreword	1
Introduction	3
Love	9
Self	13
1. Forgive	17
2. Escape	21
3. Kindness	35
Others	43
1. Respect	47
2. Listen	53
3. Give	63
Community	67
1. Connect	71
2. Belong	77
II. Meaning	83
Self	85
1. Discover	89
2. Focus	95
3. Excel	101
Others	107
1. Caring	109
2. Sharing	113
Community	117
1. Legacy	119
2. Spirituality	123
III. Creativity	129
Self	131
1. Imagination	133
2. Perspective	137
3. Inspiration	141
Others	145
1. Play	147
2. Fun	155
Community	163
1. Change	165
Afterword	173
Acknowledgments	183
Bibliography	184
Illustrations/Photo Credits	188
Index	190



Desolation can bring clarity...

Foreword

Everyone wants to be happy. We spend our lives trying to meet our wants and needs, and – for a lucky few, working to make our dreams come true. Yet whether we're rich, poor, or somewhere in between, happiness is hard to find, always seeming just out of reach.

Your actual needs are few, and in your heart you know what you really want in life. But that's not what you work towards every day. You ignore the quiet inner voice of your true self. Instead, you listen to the much louder voices of your loved ones, of advertisers, and those in power, who push very different visions of what brings happiness. Your inner self tries to remind you of what matters, telling you the suggestions of those other voices lead away from your deepest desires. But you listen and follow them anyway, because of the benefits they give you, ignoring the costs. And so you fail to find happiness.

Sometimes it takes a tragedy to force us to listen to that inner voice again.

I admit it. I was a lost soul, chasing the wrong things, in the wrong way. I was living in Asia when my life took a wrong turn down a dark and terrible road. I refused to turn in a friend for murder. When we were caught, I couldn't afford to pay the bribe the Thai police, and later a prosecutor and a judge demanded. In the end, I was convicted of a murder I didn't commit, and spent the next 16 years in prison.

I had to face death daily, as hundreds of people died horrible deaths all around me. My life became a struggle between life and death. Harsh reality stripped me bare of illusions, and I was forced to look deep inside myself. Instead of going insane, becoming a drug addict, or dying, I paid attention to death's lessons and learned what was truly important. If you dare to look at what desolation makes clear, the secrets of your heart, mind, and spirit are revealed.

I learned that creating happiness is simple. It is within your reach right now, if you choose to take it. Once your basic needs are met, lasting happiness comes from healthy relationships, especially the one with yourself.

Take a moment to think about this. You are happiest when you're doing what you like to do, spending time with those you love and care about. This is the source of happiness – emotional connections with yourself and others. Not wealth, fame, beauty, or material things. Joy and contentment come from intimacy with yourself – doing what you find meaningful and enjoyable, and being with others you like and love.

Your relationship with yourself, others, and your community (including nature and the world) determine how happy you'll be. You only need three things for great relationships: love, meaning, and creativity – all of them free.

Bringing these into your life requires some time, effort, and a willingness to change.

This book gives you the tools and techniques you need to build a joyful existence. I have distilled years of scholarly work, and thousands of pages of research into a few paragraphs. In some passages you may need to pause and reflect, to absorb all the information given here. Please, take your time. There is no hurry.

Making your life a paradise isn't quick or easy, but it's worth it! It's my hope that together we will transform the world, and make our home a fair, compassionate place that's good for everyone.

So join me on a journey to discover your true self, and become the person you were born to be. Use the knowledge that almost cost me my life to gain, and change yours for the better.

Let's begin...

Introduction

What is happiness? Where does it come from, and how do you get it? Most of us ask these questions at some point in life, and come up with very different answers. But it's something we all seek for ourselves, and those we love.

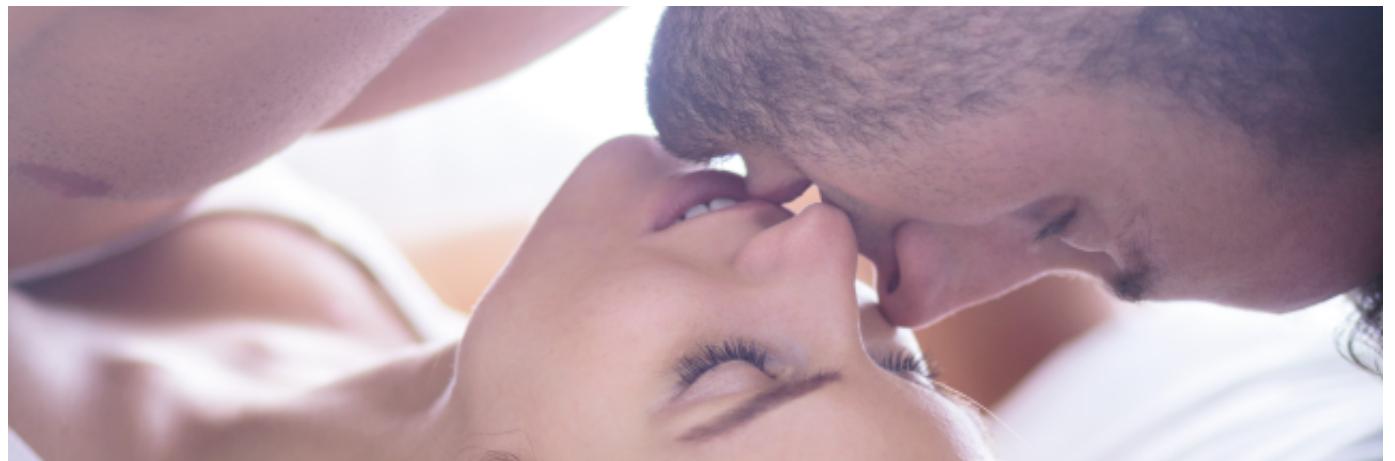
Aristotle, for example, believed all human activities are directed toward achieving happiness. Philosophers from Epicurus to Cicero agreed with him, believing pleasure and the good life are our main goals. Fortunately, science has taken the guesswork out of this debate. We now have an evidence-based understanding of what makes life rich and satisfying. A Harvard Medical School study (supported by findings in hundreds of similar studies), proves people with strong social relationships are happier and live longer than those who are isolated and lonely.

Research shows our attitudes and interactions with others determine our satisfaction with life. How you look at the world and your place in it, what you pay attention to you and devote your time and energy towards are the things that shape your perception of reality.

Sadly, a majority of people struggle to create a happy, healthy life, and it remains a distant dream for most. Poverty, war and oppression keep over three quarters of humanity from meeting their basic needs and finding happiness. But for those living in peaceful, prosperous societies, the inability to find happiness (also very common) is largely due to chasing the wrong things. We work towards goals that don't bring long-term contentment and never will.

Sonja Lyubomirsky, a leading researcher on the science of happiness, has identified the myths that keep many of us from being happy. Her work explains how happiness is not beyond reach, or is outside of us somewhere. It is inside of you, the product of your thoughts, beliefs, and actions. Study after study show external things like wealth, fame, power, youth, and beauty have little effect on our sense of well-being or lasting happiness. Of course, there are a range of emotional responses to daily life, so some of us are happier than others on average. But you control your thoughts and feelings, which control how good or bad you feel. Happiness is mostly a choice.

We are heavily influenced by the self-interested messages of the media and corporations, who push materialism as the solution to our problems. Yet the evidence confirms the fact people are no happier today than they were 50 years ago, even though incomes have more than doubled. We are much more comfortable, but aren't any happier. Part of this comes from the fact as our expectations rise, they become more difficult to achieve. Thus greater expectations defeat any progress made by improvements, as we expect more and more – creating an endless spiral of dissatisfaction. It is clear that materialism is not the answer.



Lasting happiness comes from intimacy - with ourselves and others.

Companies make ads and entertainment that promote ideal bodies and perfect lives, which we can't possibly match. Buying products, trying to make your life mirror some marketing executive's idea of heaven focuses on material goods. These are things that do not and cannot bring long-term fulfillment. We blame ourselves when purchases fail to satisfy us, and we're left alone with our stress, troubles, and debt.

The real issues are the decay of family and community ties, the lack of a sense of belonging, and the absence of meaning or purpose in life. These are the sources of dissatisfaction, and they can't be cured with money.

Intuition and common sense tell us lasting happiness comes from intimacy – with ourselves and others. To love and be loved is our most important emotional need. It's no surprise that scientific evidence for this is overwhelming. All living things, even the universe itself, revolve around interactions and cooperation between forces and species. Physicist Lee Smolin expressed this as " Einstein and Darwin... Taught us that the world in which we are embedded is nothing but an ever evolving network of relationships".

Biologist E. O. Wilson says we are hardwired for 'biophilia' (the love of living things). We get deep pleasure from green places, animals, and a connection with the natural environment. Wilson believes (with scientific consensus on his side) that intelligence itself is driven to evolve by social networks. Our minds in particular are shaped by our "obsessive interest in other people". We are social animals, and find comfort belonging to a group. We are far from alone in having this quality. Altruism, trust, and cooperation are the most successful survival strategies nature has developed. Such strategies are used by most life forms on the planet, from communities of plants on land and in the sea, to the social insects such as bees and ants, up to mammals. After all, ecosystems are nothing more or less than systems of sharing between species, where each creature contributes to and is dependent upon others.

The Bhutanese believe that "all happiness is relational". The kingdom of Bhutan, a Buddhist monarchy in the Himalayan Mountains next door to Tibet, uses Gross Domestic Happiness as their measure of well-being, as opposed to Western GDP – Gross Domestic Product, measuring economic activity.

The scientific studies they sponsored found the single most important feature of very happy people is that they devote time to cultivating relations with others. Psychologist Robert Holden sums this up as "happiness starts with love, and sadness ends with love". Emotional connections are the foundation of lasting joy and good health.

A landmark study of 43,000 people in 23 EU countries by Felicia Hubbard and Timothy So at the University of Cambridge in the UK examined those who are flourishing, defined as someone who's emotionally healthy and fulfilled. They found flourishing people are engaged with others, have meaningful lives, and experience lots of positive feelings from these connections.

The largest body of evidence for this has been gathered by Martin Seligman, founder of the positive psychology movement. His work focuses on discovering what builds a joyful life. He has applied the fruits of his research to programs teaching happiness at schools worldwide. He's also had astonishing success in the US military, with over 1 million soldiers benefiting from his courses. Seligman's formula for achieving happiness is summed up by the acronym PERMA = Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Achievement. A glance at this list reveals these things all come from healthy interactions with ourselves and others.

Both experience and science make it obvious that closeness with those around us, along with regular physical exercise, and resilience to setbacks (that is, a positive mindset when problems arise) are the main ingredients for a satisfying life. Doctors know that play, and staying active and engaged can slow, and even reverse aging. Your emotional health – getting rid of loneliness, stress and worry, contribute to a long life and happiness.

Attaining happiness requires some self-discipline, and the courage to look honestly at what's within yourself. It is important, vital even, that you allow yourself to fail during this process. Mistakes are how we learn. It's painful, but it's the price you pay for success. Don't punish yourself when things take time to accomplish, or come hard. Accept that this happens as often as not. If you keep at it, you will reach your goals. Remember that you are the one setting the goals and challenges, and you decide what success looks like.

Cicero observed "the unexamined life is not worth living", and it is as true today as it was in Rome 2000 years ago. Dare to explore your depths, spend the energy to persist with your efforts to change, and lasting happiness will be yours.

Chapter Notes

"Sonja Lyubomirsky, a leading researcher..." Doctor Lyubomirsky provides an excellent overview of happiness research in her book *The How of Happiness*, and her analysis is valuable for anyone interested in the subject.

"Yet the evidence confirms the fact..." Thanks to Bill McKibben and his *Deep Economy* for this research.

"Part of this comes from the fact..." This and other insights come courtesy of Dr. Noah Harari, and his thought-provoking book, *Homo Deus*

"Physicist Lee Smolin expressed this..." A quote from *What is Your Dangerous Idea?*, Edited by John Brockman.

"Biologist E. O. Wilson says..." Thanks to Dr. Wilson for his thoughts on human nature, the evolution of intelligence, and social networks.

"The Bhutanese believe that..." This information, and quoted studies, are from Martin Seligman's *Flourish*, his research is available by visiting www.authentic-happiness.org, and www.ppc.sas.upenn.edu.

"Psychologist Robert Holden sums this up..." Taken from Dr. Holden's work *Happiness Now!* This information is also provided by Dr. Seligman's book *Flourish*.



The Taj Mahal, built as an expression of love, one of the most beautiful buildings in the world.

I. Love

Love is the most intense of emotions, the one that excites us like no other. Sometimes even to madness, but it's always welcome. We build our lives around who and what we love, and it's the source of inspiration for many of our finest achievements and works of art.

Of the three things necessary for healthy relationships (love, meaning, and creativity) love is the most important. Very few people are content with lives of solitude, and no one is happy without at least a few loving relations – even if only with family and friends.

The word love encompasses a huge spectrum of feelings and interactions. From the giddy excitement of infatuation to the passion of a lifelong pursuit. From deep compassion and kindness to the many degrees of intimacy between friends. From family ties and bonds with pets to simple affection and the pleasure of good company. Such an enormous range of behavior seems too complex to fit under one term. But these feelings are unified by our desire for connections with others, and the delight we get from social activity.

This is because of our need to belong and be accepted. Sharing love with those we care about brings some of the greatest pleasure we can feel. Love is so pleasurable it may be addictive. Helen Fisher of Rutgers University and Arthur Aaron of the State University of New York-Stony Brook examined the brains of people in love, and found the same effects as the use of cocaine. When in love, the body produces lots of dopamine, and this chemical makes you feel the same highs and lows as drugs give.

Our experience of love is the result of the way our brains work. The brain is like a cake with three layers; the brainstem, the limbic system, and the neocortex. The oldest layer – the brainstem, keeps us breathing, and regulates basic functions like our heartbeat and temperature. Fish and reptiles have this kind of brain. The limbic system is the next layer, which we share with mammals. The neocortex is the topmost layer, found in primates and more intelligent creatures like whales and dolphins. Each has its own version of love working to keep the sex drive and reproduction going, as well as promoting cooperation within groups. Roughly, lust and erotic love spring from the reptilian brain stem. Romantic love and intimacy emerge from the limbic system. While attachment – our need for closeness and comfort with others, is associated with the neocortex.

Two of these three brain layers – the brainstem and the limbic system, ignore logic and reason. They rely on emotions alone to guide decision-making. Since they form the majority of the brain, they govern our emotional lives. This causes no end of problems, as the part of our brain that we know as consciousness(the neocortex) has little influence over feelings! We struggle with the fact we don't exert much control over whom we find attractive, and the direction our feelings take.

This deep distrust of emotions goes back to ancient times. Our intellectual ancestors – the Greeks and Romans, believed the triumph of reason and intellect over the emotions was the greatest achievement of civilization. Western culture continues to hold this bias. Unfortunately it is not true, and is a dangerously unhealthy attitude.

This Western distrust of feelings has led to the criminalization of pleasure, for example the spurious 'war on drugs', outlawing common plants, and the often absurd fanatical legal restrictions on sex in all its forms. It gives us the view that love is treacherous, unreliable, and menacing. Our culture worships the intellect, celebrating achievements, production, and amassing material things as the only correct goals.

In reality, true success – if measured by happiness, comes from our attachments. Cultivating bonds of affection, spending time with others, sharing experiences and moments, these are the ways you create a fulfilling life. We must accept that our health and happiness depend on a part of ourselves our conscious mind doesn't control. We must learn to let intuition and deep memory guide our choices in love.

You can improve this situation by opening a conversation with the right hemisphere of your brain – the seat of intuition, leading to better physical and emotional health. Talking to your right side, what many call the unconscious or subconscious, can be a revelation, possibly the most creative and beneficial one in your life.

I did this myself, pushed to it by difficult circumstances. While in Thai prison (I spent over five years there) I began studying and practicing Shamanism. These exercises – meditation and guided imagery, described in the following chapters, put me in touch with my right hemisphere. This is the part of your mind that is wordless, speaking through dreams and images. Listening closely to its messages, sent through daydreams and fantasies, changed my reality for the better. The deep relationship I formed with this primal self has been a fountain of inspiration. It is the source of our gut instinct, emotions, and pleasure.

I asked this part to name himself, and his name came to me – 'Heart-Soul'. This struck me as a true name, as he is the heart of my soul. When I'm stuck for an answer, or have a problem with no solution, I ask for his help, and he obliges. The myths and parables presented throughout this book are his work, a voice from what the eminent psychiatrist C. G. Jung called the 'anima' (Latin for spirit or soul).

Beyond befriending your intuition and learning to speak with your brain's right side, there are many methods given in the pages that follow that will help bring love flowing into your life. Love helps us heal, to grow, builds mutuality and a sense of community, and is crucial to your sense of well-being. Working to make relationships between yourself, others, and your world filled with love is a big step towards creating your own heaven on earth.

Let us set out on that hard but unavoidable inner journey that makes lasting happiness possible.

Chapter Notes

"*Helen Fisher of Rutgers University...*" I'm grateful to Dr. Stuart Brown and his work *Play*, from which this section draws insights.

"*Two of these three brain layers –*" many thanks to Dr. Amir, et al, for their superb book *A General Theory of Love*. Their thoughts and work on love have helped improve this chapter.



Get back in touch with your true self - the childlike, intuitive side within.

Managing your relationship with yourself is the biggest challenge you face. Your parents and those with power over you often gave you negative self images, unhealthy models of interaction, and counterproductive or ineffective ways of responding to other people and the world. Society and the media reinforce these problems, and attack your self-esteem for their own reasons. You have received many mental wounds, both self-inflicted, and at the hands of others. These need to heal if you want to bring more love into your life.

A life without love is lonely, a struggle with feeling unwanted and unworthy of affection. Love brings feelings of wholeness, belonging and acceptance, crucial to your sense of well-being. Bringing love flowing into your life isn't complicated. As with relationships in general, getting what you need is simple, but not always easy.

Love isn't possible if you don't accept yourself as you are. Love flows when your heart is open and able to give of itself, which can't happen if it's broken. We all suffer from the pain of a broken heart, and often recovery isn't complete. We hold back after such a serious pain, and this makes loving difficult. To be able to love and be loved, you need to heal your heart, and reach out to heal the hearts of others in your life.

But loving yourself is impossible unless you do the work emotional healing requires. The surest voice to trust, whose advice on love is almost always right, is your intuition. I asked Heart-Soul for his help understanding this mystery, and he brought me this dream.

I found myself in a dangerous jungle, noisy with the screams and howls of things eating and being eaten. I struggled through thorns and tangled vines until I reached a towering jagged cliff face. Desperate to escape the jungle, I scaled the cliff. I nearly fell many times, the rock crumbling in my hands. My body was shaken by tearing winds. At long last I made it to the top of the cliff, and found a garden gone wild. I could see a ruined temple, a strange alien thing not built by human hands.

I pushed through the undergrowth, and entered the temple. On an altar reclined a statue carved from a single massive emerald. It was ancient, made long before humans existed. To my amazement, it was my own face and body! At my approach the idol woke up, and spoke in my voice, saying:

"Listen within".

When I awakened I understood the meaning of the dream. I must trust my intuition, a thing inherited from our animal ancestors. It is hard to get to, but holds precious wisdom. Begin by taking some time for reflection. Rainer Maria Rilke spoke truth when

- saying: "the only journey is within". Consider the health of your inner landscape. Gently look for those places that cause you discomfort and pain. These are the places that need healing, and cry out for your attention.

Don't ignore or blot out these messages. Open a conversation instead, by exploring what messages are being sent. What is your body or spirit saying is a problem or trouble? What needs fixing, and why? Get to the root of the problem, then respond to it with helpful actions.

Listen to your inner voice as you read and practice the exercises to come, and let the healing begin.



Emotional healing begins with forgiveness.

I. Love – Self

1.) Forgiveness

Emotional healing begins with forgiveness. Forgive yourself for the wrongs you've done, and those others have done to you. This is the start of opening your heart, feeling worthy of love. It builds the foundation for a happier life.

Forgiving yourself and others relieves you of the burden of guilt. That weight takes a toll on you, and holding grudges hurts no one but yourself. Letting go of old hurts lets you feel free again, so you can make new connections without the mental baggage of the past. The Catholic Church's rite of confession embraces a profound insight. Facing emotional injuries and wrongful acts, and seeking to make amends for them helps you heal. Receiving forgiveness, even from a disinterested stranger, has a powerful healing effect.

Without being harsh or judgmental, think of the things that make you feel ashamed or that have hurt others. Start small, maybe just the things you regret having done today or this week. In time, work your way up to facing the wrongs of the past as you're able to deal with them. Do this until the cleansing of guilt from your past is complete.

Contemplate the things that caused you anguish and pain, and forgive their sources. One by one, let these wrongs go, accepting they are in the past, impossible to change. You can't change the past, so let it go! Realize you are the only one suffering because of these memories. They only live inside your mind, a self-imposed punishment you need to end. Release these wrongs, forgiving yourself and others for them, so you can be free. Let them drop off of you like rocks tossed in a pond, pointless emotional weight you don't need to carry. Only by forgiveness – given honestly and deeply, will you free yourself of them.

Whenever possible, find something you can do to right the wrong, or balance it in some way. Easing the harm you've done or suffered is your 'act of contrition', and aids the process of healing. It also improves the way you feel about yourself, since you helped make the world a better place, however slightly. When you face these things, and have done what you can to correct them, it is easier to forgive yourself and others for them.

The more you're able to forgive, the lighter your past will become, until it is no longer causing you unhappiness and guilt.

The next step in healing yourself is to silence your inner critic. This internal judge punishes you for past misbehavior, and belittles your efforts to change. This unkind judgmental inner voice finds fault with everything you do, attacking you for mistakes and failures, often undeserved. When you criticize yourself over and over for the same errors, guilt makes it impossible to heal.

You can silence this critic forever with one simple act – do your best at whatever you

do. The philosopher and physician Don Miguel Ruiz suggests this excellent way to free yourself from self-criticism. If you always do your best, you are doing the most it is possible to do, and – good or bad, you can't be criticized for it. Your best effort changes with your energy level, moods, and circumstances. It may not always be a world-class effort, but in your heart you know you did all you could. This is enough to silence that harsh inner judge forever. Practice, and you'll get better at it.

It takes time to kill off this negative inner presence, but it gives you an amazing feeling of freedom. It can happen quickly once you've made an earnest effort. Make it a gradual change so you don't feel overwhelmed. Do your best at first with daily tasks, then give your full effort for larger actions, until doing your best becomes routine with everything you attempt.

Another good rule Dr. Ruiz recommends is to always make your words and deeds match. By consistently doing what you promise to do, you're following the principles of integrity, which supports this effort.

With these two resolutions – to always do your best, and to make your words and deeds match, you'll banish guilt. You'll also cure the 'emotional poisons' as Ruiz calls them, that accompany self-criticism. You'll no longer judge yourself unfairly. As an added benefit, producing good work helps everyone around you, creating a virtuous cycle of positive events.

Chapter Notes

"*The philosopher and physician Don Miguel Ruiz...*" Dr. Ruiz has written several brilliant books, filled with useful insights. The two resolutions given here are from his work *The Four Agreements*, which I highly recommend.



Cut through the limiting beliefs and ideas that bind you.

Free yourself from mental traps and cages, and rediscover your true self.

Are you living the life you want to lead? Are you the person you were born to be? Do you love and accept yourself the way you are? How much discomfort these questions cause you tells a great deal about your mind's freedom. You may not realize it, but you probably believe things that harm you. These are ideas that limit and injure you in different ways. You need to rid yourself of these beliefs to regain your freedom.

Freeing yourself – recovering your freedom of thought and action, requires you to escape mental traps and cages. These have been placed in your mind by mostly well-meaning people you loved and obeyed your entire life. It isn't easy, but you can regain your freedom by questioning the ideas and beliefs that control you. These mental chains have been locked on you from earliest childhood on into young adulthood, and beyond. The key that unlocks them is *awareness*. You have to recognize how an idea controls your actions, and then reject or change it.

As a child you were still one with your animal self, your true nature. You neither feared nor ignored your body, and instead loved to explore sensations, putting no limits on your behavior. You were still wild. Like all wild things, you searched for pleasure, and avoided pain.

Adults used these feelings and urges to tame you. Taming something – either a wild animal or a child, is difficult, a process that's never complete. Taming you meant teaching you to put the desires of others first, instead of doing what you wanted. Your freedom of choice was tamed so you obeyed those who wanted to control you. To do this, they convinced you the desires of others are more important than your own wants and needs.

Year after year, you've been trained to accept the mental controls placed within you. You've learned to chase the rewards and avoid the punishments adults in authority give out. In this process, your mind becomes trapped. You are limited to choices you dislike, in a world or mind space you feel is lifeless and unpleasant. You've been tricked into spending your time and energy on things that don't matter to the true you. How can you awaken from this nightmare, and escape the wasteland? How can you recover your true self?

To know, accept, and love yourself, you must become conscious of the mental chains binding you, then shrug them off. By freeing yourself, you'll reconnect with your heart and spirit, and the wildness that still exists within you. Awareness of these chains helps you grapple with a world that creates demands from within and without.



We are tamed very young, in early childhood...

These chains are bound to you through lifelong obedience training. Ever since you were a baby, you've been forced to do things you don't want to do. You've been shaped into someone you don't want to be. You couldn't avoid it. No one in civilized societies can.

We are born helpless, and our earliest impulse is to win the approval of those caring for us. The approval of others becomes tied in our minds with our sense of safety. This leads to strong feelings that the disapproval of others (especially authority figures) is dangerous, and a threat to our survival. This is the main tool society uses to tame us. You are controlled by a need for approval in many ways. These are designed to capture your efforts, and force you to support things the people in power want, at your expense.

Approval comes in many forms. It is used to persuade you using three main methods or strategies societies have developed over the last 5000 years. These methods of social control can be undone, if you have the courage to be different, and are persistent in your efforts to be free. These strategies are: external controls, what might also be called the 'social game'; idea structures and belief systems; and internal controls, your self image and unconscious.

External controls work by forcing you to ignore your feelings and experience, and instead accept other people's definitions of what is right and good. If you spend a moment pondering this, you'll see how often this leads to serious problems. What the people who create and enforce the rules we live by consider to be 'right' is the opposite of what most of us believe in our hearts. Look around you and see how painful life is for most folks. Society is cruel, violent, unequal, and unjust. For those at the bottom – the poor, minorities, and outcasts of all kinds, society is physically and mentally toxic. A quick visit to any ghetto or poor neighborhood quickly confirms this.

You are the one who must decide what's right or wrong for your life. Your values and visions, what you know deep in your soul to be true, must be what shapes your life. It is rare when what society says is right is the same as what you know and feel is good and ethical.

By twisting your sense of what is good, society gets you to accept and support violence and cruelty as normal. It starts very early, making children conform to gender roles. By insisting children imitate men and women's behavior, they're shown how they're supposed to act. Boys are taught relationships are based on power. They are drilled until they are convinced the domination by high status/superior men over low status/inferior men; of men over women; of people over nature, and so on, is right. Children absorb the belief this system must be maintained, regardless of the awful costs this imposes on the world. Boys are rewarded for stifling their empathy for others, and for being violent and aggressive, i.e. to "act tough". The so-called feminine emotions of love, compassion, and understanding are taught as being weak, deserving of contempt and disgust by "real men". Girls are rewarded and punished in matching, opposite ways to reinforce these beliefs.

We are trained to accept values where pleasure must be denied and controlled, and pain and sacrifice for others is good. The ugly behavior needed to keep this system of injustice and inequality going is enormous in its extent and destructiveness. Yet those who benefit most from it insist it is a necessary evil, an acceptable cost of our way of life, something that can't be challenged or questioned.

Of course, when you suppress your feelings of empathy and compassion, you kill the things that make love possible. Interacting with others this way cripples and deadens your emotional life. It makes nurturing and satisfying relationships impossible!

This point of view demands pleasure must be denied, and caged. The trauma and pain caused by dominating others is taught as something natural and desirable – the opposite of reality. Our society is obsessed with domination. Since unhealthy relations flow from the desire to control rather than love, none of us are healthy or free.

External controls go much further than sexual relations and gender roles, though these are at the roots of many painful effects on relationships. The reward/punishment controls only work if you agree to play the 'social game'. You are convinced you must join in supporting the greedy, wasteful economic system directing the lives of most people on the planet.

This game is designed so most of the players lose. It is a cruel trick, but essential to maintain the positions of those at the top. Everyone knows this 'game'. Obey those holding power or authority, and give your time and effort to do what they order. Work hard enough to please the Masters, and you will be rewarded. At schools, jobs, and every group and organization, in every public place, society sings the same song – obey! If you do, you might get a treat, a good grade, some money, a house or car, maybe a little status or power.

Disobey, and the tools of oppression instantly spring into use. For small, petty acts of disobedience, simple tools like social disapproval are used – frowns from the elders, and scolding. Slightly more serious infractions merit ridicule, shame, and peer pressure, urging you to conform. For the worst rule breakers, those who threaten or frighten the rulers, beatings, shackles, and prison await. At the end, the most dangerous rebels face torture and death.

How well you play the game determines whether you become a social superior or inferior, a winner with all the power and prizes, or - more likely, a loser, punished, despised, and poor.

In reality, you have a different choice. You can relax and play the game if you choose, or you can refuse to play. You don't need the approval of others to survive. You can be the one to decide what success or failure look like. You can decide what role to play. You don't have to spend your life chasing rewards, possessions, and ranks you don't want or need.



Unfortunately the guards, guns, and prisons don't just go away when you cease to play the 'social game'.

Decide whether or not to play, and you regain a measure of freedom if you don't care about other people's opinions (or feel their opinions are wrong). If you refuse to sweat and struggle for symbols like ownership and status, you can create your own far more satisfying game. More on this later.

The guns, guards, police, prisons, armies, and other tools of power belonging to those running the social game don't just go away when you abandon it. But your decision not to play this rigged game allows you to make other choices and pursue other goals. Build the life you want, not some tired old dream sold to you by advertisers and rulers.

The second method of control is both sly and cunning. It uses beliefs and ideas to influence your actions. These are ideas that limit your choices, and trick you into doing things you'd never do on your own. These beliefs are powerful, forcing you into servitude without your being aware of them. They are hidden in plain sight, structures in your mind, without any physical substance in the real world.

These are beliefs like religion, government, politics, debt, and fashion. Without these belief systems society would no longer exist. Our planet has been enslaved to serve these idea structures. The big ones take a massive share of human time and resources. For example, religions are concerned with creating and maintaining social order, whereas science is dedicated to power – control over the physical world and nature. Each has its own purpose and obsession. But all of these belief systems are designed to change your behavior to better suit them. Two in particular, clocks and money, have had the biggest impact on daily life. Consider the many ways these two ideas manage and control your own life.

Start with clocks and our attitudes towards time. If you are truly free, you don't need a clock. If you need a clock, it means your time – or at least a part of it, belongs to someone else. The passage of time is now regulated, and something is directing the way you spend it against your true wishes. There is an old Baltic proverb "a clock is a lock". People who have never used clocks think of them as a way to 'trap time'. To 'watch the clock' means time has become a burden, measured and ordered by machines that ignore your impulses and your body's rhythms. Your time serves someone else's desires. The clocks lock time into an artificial schedule at odds with nature, alien to the cycles of life and the seasons. When your time is no longer your own, you become a prisoner of those who control the clocks, and the machines – and their owners, command your work.

Imagine your life if you were able to rid yourself of the need for clocks. You would live life on a permanent vacation from the 'tyranny of time'. Feel the freedom such release brings, like a child released from school on a long holiday. Now that you're aware of it, plan your own escape.

Worse still at stealing your freedom are the idea structures related to money. Money is only a symbol. It has no reality or importance outside of the society using it, and in your mind. Money traps people into many destructive behavior patterns, and poisons relationships with its inhuman value system.

The most valuable things in human life – kindness, love, caring and sharing, can't be bought. They are literally priceless. In the twisted value system of money, this makes them valueless! Positive human interactions that transcend cash, performed for free, are uncounted, and are therefore without value because no prices are attached to them. They are ignored in economic planning and governmental actions. This is despite the fact that actions performed out of love and kindness account for more than half of all economic activity.

Taking care of children and the elderly, helping sick friends and relatives, subsistence farming and hobby gardening, and other caring and sustaining work are done for love or enjoyment. Together this massive gray area economy is at least as large as the monetary one. In the same way, the vital work nature does to sustain life itself has no economic value. Nature creates clean water, air, and soil, is responsible for the birth and growth of living things, yet is considered free by economists, taken for granted as an externality. In money's value system, nature is disposable, valuable only as something to be consumed, then thrown away. Life is killed, cut up, and turned into products. Natural living things – forests, the seas, animals, even people's time and effort, are used, abused, and exploited for profit. All to pile up an imaginary symbol of value (money) that exists only as an electronic blip in a computer database, or as a fancy piece of paper .

This is the opposite of traditional relationships between people and nature. For most of human history, the earth, sea and sky have been considered sacred beings with whom we share obligations and exchange gifts, ancient and holy. The battle between these two belief systems and ways of treating the world is what makes Western culture so terrible.

On the one hand, money views life as a commodity, versus the traditional worldview that sees life as sacred. This commodification of nature has spawned industries that spew pollution, destroy landscapes and oceans, and devastate communities and the world.

What you think is valuable doesn't matter to the owners of banks and financial markets. They decide what is – and isn't valuable. It's no wonder money was banned in ancient Sparta for its evil influence on people, back when gold and silver coins were a new invention, about 2500 years ago. Escaping the mental cage money has built in your head gives you a radical new freedom. The less time you spend earning money, the more time and energy you have to create what is valuable and important to you.

These are just two beliefs, out of tens of thousands of similar ideas acting as mental locks, used by society to control you and make you obedient. They aren't real, except as an agreement among us to pretend these rules are important. They are all forms of thought control.

Becoming aware of these crafty forms of mental pressure is enough to loosen, and eventually break, their hold over you. Awareness, skepticism, and a critical attitude toward experts and authorities make their power wither. Take time to think about the things causing you stress and discomfort. The actions prompted by ideas and beliefs you accept – thoughts beginning with "I should...", "I ought to...", "I must...", need close examination. These rules insist you act against your own best interests for some higher purpose. Trace them to their source. If they injure you or affect you in a harmful way, refuse their demands. Search for healthier, life-affirming alternatives. The freedom you'll feel when you do will shock and delight you.

How you think, and what you believe are more important than outside events and circumstances in how you feel. Your beliefs control your feelings, and guide how you see and react to the world. As the romantic poet John Milton said in Paradise Lost: "the mind is its own place, and in itself/can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven". Norman Vincent Peale also said this well: "change your thoughts, and you change your world."

Your emotions flow from how you feel about things, not from the things themselves. What you believe about reality shapes everything in your world. For example, you may see a natural event as a danger, a problem, a challenge, or as an opportunity, depending on your perspective.

Psychologists call this framing, a mostly unconscious way we manage our feelings. You can do this with full awareness, instead. Discard ideas that empower a superior at your expense, or that make you feel unworthy or undeserving, unless you meet some goal or standard set by others.

This is the source of the third (and most painful and difficult to change) method of social control – internal coercion. Our actions and decisions are shaped and directed by our self image. These beliefs about who we are play out as patterns of behavior. They are lodged in our right hemisphere – the nonverbal part of our mind. It rules our emotional life, and guides us on what we consider important.

We find it difficult to describe our thoughts and feelings, preferring the familiar and the predictable, so we can avoid decision-making. This is to be expected when you consider that most of our daily activities occur outside of conscious awareness. Researcher T. D. Wilson points out that "we take in 11 million pieces of information a second (from our five senses), but we can only process 40 of them consciously". We process this huge everyday influx unconsciously and automatically. It only comes to the surface of our awareness as signals from intuition or instinct.



Your self-image is vitally important to your mental and physical health.

As a result, we often have limited access to our thoughts and feelings. Studies show 95% or more of our daily behavior is habitual. Since the conscious part of our mind is busy elsewhere, we have trouble explaining or predicting our own actions. We are not very self-reflective in life, to avoid being overwhelmed by our senses and the environment. These affective states (as they're called, also as the unconscious) strongly influences our behavior. It is important we understand and account for this, whenever we seek to make changes.

Your self-image is the mental portrait you have of yourself. It is made up of your experiences and the opinions of others. It is a picture built up over the years by your past actions, and the reactions of your social circle – family, friends, and loved ones. It is also heavily influenced by society. Entire industries, such as beauty products, and advertising of all kinds seek to move this part of us. In general, they try to influence your decisions by attacking your sense of self-esteem, to sell you things you don't want or need. They undermine your sense of self-worth by comparing you to perfect or ideal models. They then imply that you can be similar – promising friendship, love, and other desirable things, if you buy their product. They need you, but you don't need them. Avoid and reject such comparisons for better mental health.

Your self image is incredibly important, because this self judgment determines how much you like the world, how you expect to be treated by others, and how much you'll accomplish in life. More often than not, the fears and rejection you've experienced make you feel bad about yourself, and create an unpleasant or negative image.

You are what you believe you are! Psychotherapy is about changing your self-image and internal landscape. Change your mind, and you change your reality. If you believe you're bad at something – you will be. If you feel you have a special talent or gift, you do. In the same way, you get what you feel you deserve. If you feel you need to be punished or treated badly, that's what you'll get. If you treat yourself with respect, others will do the same. A poor self image is damaging in many ways. It brings ill health from stress, increases the likelihood of over-eating and obesity, ups the number of accidents you have, makes drug abuse more likely, and can lead to becoming trapped in abusive relationships.

Because you get what you expect, you have to consciously decide what kind of person you want to be. This will change what you expect out of life. If your current self-image is unpleasant or upsets you, change it. Imagine a new you, deciding what this ideal you looks like, and how you interact with the world. Make a list of personality traits or aspects of character you dislike, then write its opposite next to it. If you feel timid or shy, and don't like it, write 'confident' next to it. Now imagine yourself in this new positive way, and concentrate on it. Work at picturing details, scenarios, and how the new you behaves under pressure. Pour your feelings into this rehearsal, and feel a strong desire for the change. The greater the emotional intensity, the better the chances that change will become real and permanent. Put this into daily practice, and you can transform yourself.

Imagine yourself changing from the negative to the positive self-image whenever you sense the old negative one is present. Create your new self based on the best of your values and beliefs, and the way you want the world to respond to you. Persistence is the key to success, and as Andrew Matthews puts it: "you'll get what you want if you do what it takes!"

This is the same technique used to challenge and change the harmful patterns trapped in your right brain [or unconscious]. Countless books have been written about this, using terms like subconscious, alter ego, and so on. A wide range of professions devote themselves to dealing with its effects. These include marketers and advertisers, psychiatrists, doctors, and social workers. It is the part of your mind that makes sure your body functions the way it should, and handles everything when you're on autopilot. This is when skills, routines, and tasks have been learned so well they become automatic, and your conscious mind wanders off – letting the right hemisphere take over. Like the drive home you don't remember, or coming to at the end of an exercise workout where you have no memory of it.

Your right hemisphere is responsible for the patterns that keep repeating themselves in your life. The kinds of drama you experience over and over. Your habits, your health, the way you deal with money, your relationships and choices of partners – all the interactions with the world made on instinct and gut feelings. It is responsible for your success or failure, because you've already made certain choices about life. What your right brain believes is what you'll get – every time. The results of your actions will always match your beliefs, even if this part of your mind has to sabotage your efforts to do so. You always get what you expect.

These patterns are set early in your life, and mirror the patterns learned from your parents and authority figures. The way your mother and father behaved with each other, the kind of relationships you had with siblings, relatives and neighbors set future patterns and expectations. These become what you believe is 'normal'. What you were taught is right, what you believe about the world and your place in it, these establish what plays out in your life.

What you think about all the time, the things you most desire or fear – these also dominate your experiences. What you want to happen will happen, if you convince yourself change is both possible and inevitable. Concentrate on what you want, not what you fear, or don't want. Your right hemisphere (and the limbic system it works closely with) are literal, and react to emotional tones. If you create negative stuff – even if it is what you seek to avoid, it will manifest itself, if that's what you focus on.

It is necessary in this process to confront your fears. The beauty of doing this is it gives you an emotional boost for showing courage at the same time you're making your fears vanish. Fears are always worse than the reality. Fear is produced by thinking of what might happen. Your imagination blows this up into a far bigger menace than it really is.

Confront them, and they shrink and disappear like smoke in the wind. As James Baldwin noted: "not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced". Stay in the here and now. Staying active and productive is an even better cure, as you won't focus on fear, which can only come up when you're worried about the future, not when you're busy.

The key to transforming your self-image and right brain patterns is to paint clear, detailed, convincing mental pictures of your desired results, and concentrate on them. Repeat this exercise over and over, until it becomes a pattern strong enough to replace the old one. Attack these challenges with commitment; put in the effort, and change will occur. It helps if you make your surroundings match what you want. Change the people around you to those who support your new vision/self. Decide what you want, and who you want to be, and make the necessary changes so it becomes real.

It begins with a close examination of who you are, and who you want to be. Take your time, and consider carefully the personal qualities you dislike. These are the parts of ourselves we are taught are bad. The qualities and feelings you reject and neglect (the repressed emotions and character traits C. G. Jung called the 'shadow self') become suffering. Repressing your feelings and behavior doesn't rid you of that characteristic or emotion. It only robs you of energy, as you work to keep it hidden. These are things we were trained to dislike and despise. The impulses and desires we are ashamed of are things we've been taught are wrong or evil. Self-knowledge and acceptance help you become whole again, closer to your true self.

With a little courage, you can reclaim your true nature, and recover inner wholeness. Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis said it well: "sunlight is the best disinfectant". Be willing to look at yourself in that clear light of conscious awareness, and befriend the awkward, disturbing parts of yourself. With some forgiveness and empathy, negative traits can enrich you.

Shadow traits are potential engines of growth and change. Poet and philosopher John O'Donohue described the benefit of this work: "each inner demon holds a precious blessing that will heal and free you". If you look and listen carefully to the things that bring forth strong emotional reactions (especially negative ones), your suffering will reveal deep insights. If you persist in this self-examination, you'll discover a new sense of belonging within yourself. Don't be afraid to open a dialogue with your inner monsters. Show them some compassion, and have a nonjudgmental attitude toward past mistakes and failures. You can't change them anyway. You'll stop punishing yourself, and hiding things from shame.

Endure the discomfort of confronting difficult and painful memories, and you'll free yourself from emotional pain, unhappiness, and dissatisfaction you couldn't identify. Loving yourself will become not only possible, but automatic – as nature intended. Overcome limiting beliefs, and the fears that are their foundation by openly challenging them. You'll rediscover your inner rhythm, in tune with your own nature when you do.

It's a return to the eternal place within, at one with your true self. It is a place that renews, strengthens, and nourishes you. Attention to and awareness of this rhythm, of the ebb and flow of your life, is vital. Become attuned to your senses and moods. Your body doesn't lie. Listen to it. Pay attention to its likes, dislikes, when it is relaxed or tense, and let its wildness and sensuality teach you. It will lead you back to health, if you listen.

Freeing yourself from coercion and controls – both external and internal kinds, is about questioning ideas and beliefs that cause self-harm and a negative self image. The more you work to remove harmful, unhealthy beliefs, the easier a loving relationship with yourself becomes, and the closer you'll get to your personal paradise.

Chapter Notes

"*No one in civilized societies can.*" Derek Jensen's excellent analysis of coercion and our culture of domination had a major influence on my work, and this chapter in particular.

"*The approval of others becomes tied in our minds...*" Thanks to Lawrence Boldt for his insights on the techniques and strategies of the social game, discussed here.

"*External controls [what might also be called...]*", ibid (Boldt).

"*It starts very early, making children conform...*" I'm deeply grateful to Dr. Rianne Eisler for her work on how gender roles lead us to be anti-pleasure, and have created a culture of oppression in our society.

"*For example, religions are concerned with creating and maintaining social order...*" These observations on religion and science are widespread, but Dr. Noah Harari in his work *Homo Deus* does a good job of exploring this theme.

"*We find it difficult to describe our thoughts...*" This fascinating research comes courtesy of T.D.Wilson's *Strangers to Ourselves: Discovering the Adaptive Unconscious*, from an essay in *Nonverbal Communication*, edited by David Matsumoto et al.

"*Your self image is incredibly important...*" Thanks to Andrew Matthews for his summation of the workings of the unconscious in these passages.

"*As James Baldwin noted...*" This quote comes from Baldwin's book *As Much Truth as One Can Bear*.

"*The qualities and feelings you reject and neglect...*" I owe a debt of gratitude for Dr. Thomas More's *Care of the Soul*, as well as the work of Dr. C.G Jung.

"*Poet and philosopher John O'Donohue...*" Several ideas in the following paragraphs are from O'Donohue's moving and beautiful book *Anam Cara* (Irish for soul friend].



Love and kindness are like twin sisters - always together.

The quickest, surest way to create love is to be kind. The kinder you are to yourself, the greater the self-love you'll feel. I pondered the connection between love and kindness, and Heart-Soul brought me this myth, which he calls The Twin Sisters, to shed light on its mystery.

At the dawn of the world, a mother – Empathy, and a father – Attention, had two beautiful twin daughters, named Kindness and Love. They raised them as good parents do, to help each other, and those they care about, and to work to make everyone's lives better and happier.

Kindness brings Love, and vice versa, because they are inseparable friends and sisters. They work together, helping others, each supporting the other. Wherever you find one, the other is always there.

With self-acceptance comes love, and when love becomes the focus of your life, pleasure naturally enters as well. Doing things that please you, being kind, is the fastest way to establish a loving inner relationship. Feeling pleasure is the surest sign you are doing what makes your inner self happy. It puts you in touch with both your body and your intuition. It creates intimacy with parts of yourself you've been trained to ignore and suppress.

We have been taught, scolded, and punished about giving and receiving pleasure, until it has become suspect. We've been trained to feel ecstasy and joy are to be feared, and that anything that pleases our animal nature is wrong or bad. This is worse than nonsense! It's deeply unhealthy, and contradicts everything nature intends. If a pleasure harms no one, it can only be good.

Ignore the inner voices that condemn this as selfishness or hedonism. Silence them by insisting this is your life. You are not being greedy, or harming anyone. On the contrary, by pleasing yourself you're doing what's needed for self-love to grow. This is essential if you're going to love others. If you don't love yourself, you cannot love others, and healthy relations are impossible. Kindness towards others begins with kindness for yourself.

Many societies and cultures convince people their personal desires are unimportant. They insist that only by serving the needs of others are you doing what's right (a classic method of social control using beliefs). This ignores the fundamental truth of the old truism that charity begins at home. Get rid of the guilt and bad feelings that arise when you feel pleasure. Manage these doubts and fears, and fulfill the desires of your heart.

As Dr. Rianne Eisler wisely points out, pleasure is sacred because it creates love. This is the kindest thing we can do for one another. Sharing love is a sacred act, and -

-bringing pleasure to yourself and others is the best way to do it. The value of simple pleasures given from the heart is beyond price, and every healthy, happy life revolves around them.

Sit down and make a list of your wants and needs. Include all the things you most desire, the things you love, your favorite things. Your passions, what fascinates and excites you, the places you want to see, the things you want to learn and experience.

Explore your fantasies and dreams. When you're finished, make a practice of bringing them into your life, one by one. Make your desires and dreams real! You have the power to make your life into whatever you want it to be, if you're willing to make the necessary effort.

Why not? This is the beginning of lasting happiness – achievable, accessible, near at hand. Your inner self will rejoice, and you'll feel peace and contentment. These are feelings you long for, but rarely find.

Work your favorite things and activities you enjoy into your daily routine, until every day is filled with delights. Craft your life as a sculptor does a stone, so it's filled with passion. With a little thought and effort you can make your life interesting, multifaceted, focused on your heart and its hopes and wishes. Approach your life like an artist, with sensitivity and thoughtfulness. Shape it with every skill you have so it pleases you. Pay attention to details, and with a determination to build an existence that brings you joy. With care, using your imagination, your life can become intensely satisfying.

One way to create changes in lifestyle that last is to harness the power of habit. Habits are nature's way of saving mental energy. Once the behavior is established as a pattern, the brain goes on autopilot. Almost half of daily activity is done this way, and our brain no longer chooses or participates consciously in our actions. This sort of automatic behavior is great for convenience, but can also allow bad and unhealthy behavior to take root.

Habits form using a simple three step process of cue, routine, and reward. The cue is the trigger or an external hint of which pattern to follow in a given situation. The routine is the habit itself, mental, emotional, or physical activity. The reward is what makes the routine worth doing. To start a good habit like exercising, make your cue a simple one, such as putting your gym bag next to the front door every morning, or heading to the training center after work each day. The routine in this case would be a good workout session, and the reward is the rush of pleasure exercise gives. You can reinforce this habit by imagining how good you'll feel with a tone fit body. Picture how great you'll look this summer in a smaller swimsuit. A reward can be a powerful motivator and reinforcement for forming habits, so attach it to something you really want.

Changing a bad habit is mainly a matter of awareness. Look closely at the root causes -



Relax and be kind to yourself - loving relations begin with you and your body.

- of the habit; when and why you do something. By recognizing the cue and rewards of a habit you can replace or change it.

For example, a 2009 NIH study found dieters who kept a food journal, recording what and when they ate, lost twice as much weight as everyone else, and kept the weight off. People began thinking about how they ate, and as a result changed for the better. You can do this with drinking, gambling, smoking, and so on. Identify the cues that set off the habit, have a plan to change the routine, then change or allow the reward. Repeat this often enough, and a new, healthier habit will form.

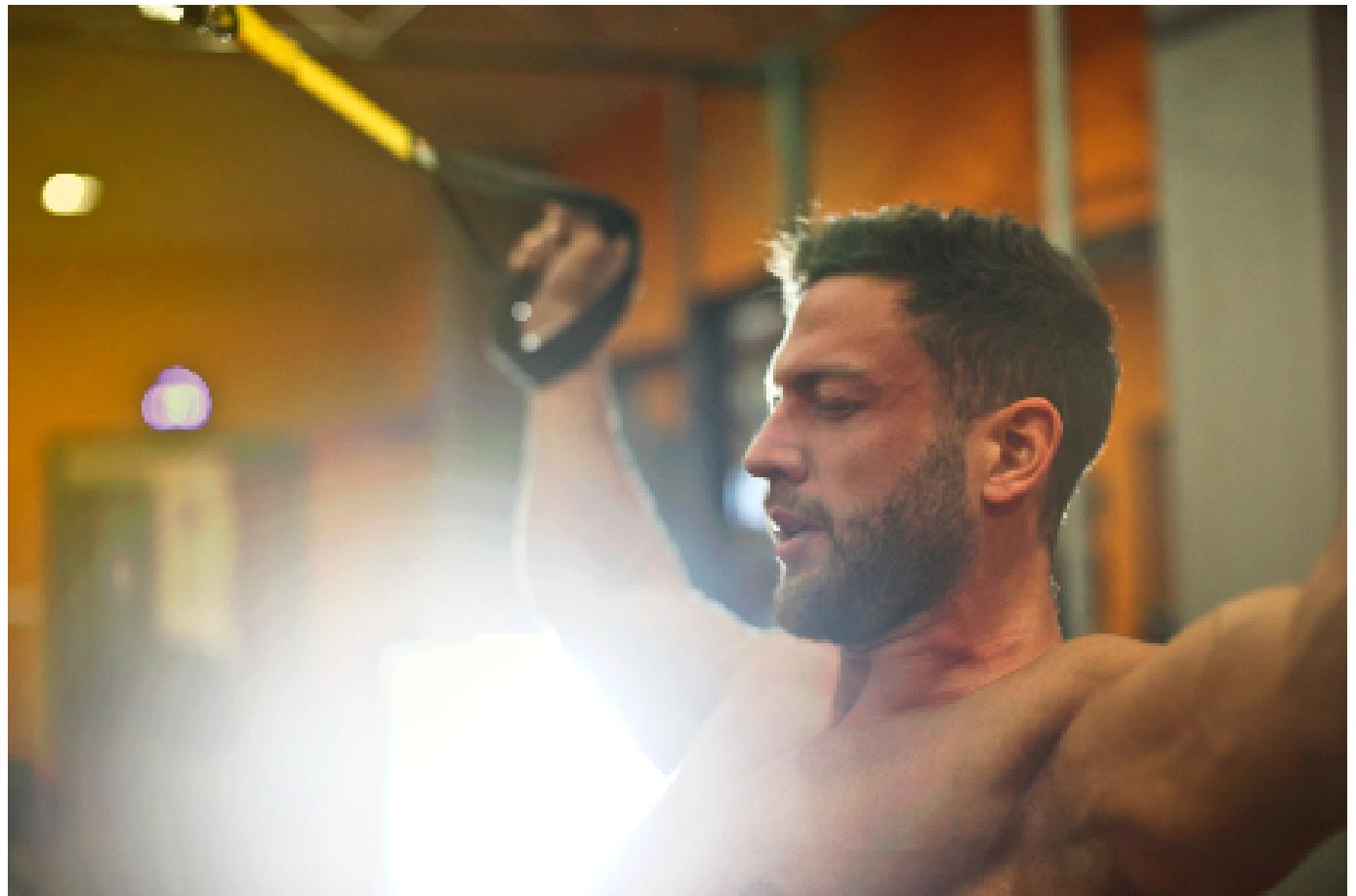
Even more critical, be kind to your body. A healthy body makes a happier mind. Good health is simple. Regular exercise, good food (lots of fruits and vegetables, a diet low in sugars and fats), and work to reduce negative stress. Don't worry about what you can't control. You hear this over and over, but the benefits of acting on this advice so far outweigh the costs of ignoring it, this kindness to yourself must become a central part of your life.

The medical science on the subject is as clear as the sun in a summer sky. Your body is always in one of two states or ways of being. You are either growing, or you are decaying. You choose which state your body is in by your actions. An active life – one with lots of exercise and engagement with others, send signals to your body that it is springtime. Time to burn off fat, repair and build muscles, so you can chase animals, gather plants, and accomplish the other tasks that faced our ancestors. Doing the opposite, withdrawing from physical activity, just sitting around, eating fatty sugary foods, tells your body it is wintertime. Time for conserving energy and storing fat. This message says shut down and do your best not to die, decaying in the process.

Being active and engaged forces your body to be healthy, while being inactive and withdrawn causes you to decay and become ill. Dr. Harry Lodge, a specialist in the science of aging (along with a host of other physicians, health professionals, and scientists with the same message) has shown the evidence is overwhelming that regular exercise – at any age, is the true fountain of youth. He suggests vigorous exercise – sufficient to make you break a sweat, for at least an hour a day, six days a week. Exercise, coupled with a proper diet, and staying emotionally connected with others, has been proven to stop and even reverse aging!

Our bodies evolved expecting us to walk about 10 miles a day, every day, with a little extra effort on top. The science on this is as solid as it gets. There are two master chemicals in our blood that govern our health, called cytokines. Cytokine 6 [C6] repairs cells and aids the growth of new cells, while Cytokine 10 [C10] controls inflammation by destroying cells and trouble spots and injuries.

Stress, loneliness, and worry produce lots of C10, and lead to aging and illness. To combat this, you need to produce plenty of C6. This requires regular hard exercise, leading to good mental and physical health.



This is the *true* fountain of youth - a daily exercise regimen, with a workout hard enough to make you sweat.

More than this, Dr. Lodge's work proves that to be lean, fit, and healthy you need to exercise both of the two types of muscle cells. There are ones for endurance, called slow twitch muscle cells, and those for strength – fast twitch cells. Dr. Lodge recommends four days a week of aerobic exercise, especially low impact ones where risk of injury is near zero. Things like biking, yoga, swimming, and rowing, for endurance. Two days a week do weight training, or other harder exercise. Things like situps, push-ups, pull-ups, and the like. Aerobic exercise gives your body endurance, and strength training gives your body power.

Circulation is at the root of it. Wounded blood vessels and poor circulation kill you, whereas exercise heals and repairs blood vessels. The better your circulation, the more a balance of C10 and C6 are produced, and the healthier you'll be. Add to this a change in diet. Decrease fatty processed foods loaded with sugar, salt, and fat, and increase the fruits, vegetables, and lean meat you eat. By doing so, you'll help your body attain its ideal shape. It's the way to get younger, and to be strong, energetic, and optimistic.

To do otherwise is to sentence yourself to a kind of living death. The statistics make this horribly plain. You are hundreds of times more likely to suffer illness and death by ignoring this advice. The normal modern lifestyle – eating unhealthy, greasy food, sitting around all day idle and bored, or sedentary but stressed out, is a life that's often lonely and apathetic. It leads to heart attacks, strokes, cancer, depression, and other ugly illnesses, and an early death. You can eliminate your chances of all of this, if you choose.

Exercise, play, and engagement lead to happiness. Exercise and mood share the same body chemistry, and work with each other – for good or ill. Don't be embarrassed if you're out of shape. Do something about it. Treat exercise and diet like your *real* job. The job of being happy, living in good health into your 90's and beyond.

For better sleep, better sex, a better immune system, strong muscles and bones, weight loss that sticks, more positive emotions, and no aging [!], Get serious about being kind to your body. Exercise, eat right, and get involved in something you care about. This path takes time, effort, and resources, no question. But the end result is priceless.

So, on the subject of developing a loving relationship with yourself, here's the summary: begin by forgiving yourself and others, dropping the burdens of the past. Then free yourself from coercion and mental chains, healing yourself by dumping harmful beliefs and negative self images, replacing them with healthy, life-affirming ideas. Finally, rediscover the things you love, fill your life with them, and be kind to your body with health and fitness.

In a matter of days or weeks, your relationship with yourself will become a loving one, and you'll soon bring a much greater happiness into your life – love with others.

Chapter Notes

"As Dr. Rianne Eisler wisely points out..." This observation comes courtesy of Dr. Eisler's work in *Sacred Pleasure*.

"Craft your life as a sculptor does a stone..." This is a paraphrase of Dr. Thomas More from his brilliant work *Care of the Soul*, which has had a major influence on this book.

"One way to create changes in lifestyle that last..." An excellent overview on the subject of changing behavior is *The Power of Habit*, by Charles Duhigg from which this brief passage is derived.

"Your body is always in one of two states..." I owe thanks for the material on health and exercise to Dr. Harry Lodge, and his book *Younger Next Year*.



Friends are a *necessity*.

I. Love

Others

To create loving relationships with others, find those who accept you as you are, and who you want to be part of your life because you like them as *they* are. It takes time, but with patience and care you can make these connections. Give it the effort it deserves, and they will flourish.

Bringing love into your life isn't difficult or dangerous. Unlike the stories we are told, love is not the prize for being beautiful, rich, or perfect. Love comes from intimacy, a thing earned by trust, respect, and kindness. Love, whether between friends, family, or lovers, grows whenever we listen to someone, and respond to their wants and needs with kindness and generosity.

Your body's biology makes you feel your survival depends on belonging to a group. For animals who live in social groups, friends are a necessity. Many species have friends; monkeys and apes, elephants, horses, whales, dolphins, and a long list of others. Friends and family provide personal protection and assistance. These relationships cause the brain to produce chemicals that give us warm feelings, and encourage us to form them. These include oxytocin – the so-called 'cuddle chemical', and endorphins, which flood our body when we have positive social contacts. Friendships are built around common interests, such as a shared worldview, people we meet while working, those with similar senses of humor, and shared tastes in music and entertainment. It seems we are adapted to a social circle of some 150 true friends, with different degrees of intimacy (this is the so-called 'Dunbar number', discovered by Oxford biologist Robin Dunbar), with about 1,500 people as the upper limit of acquaintances. In any case, our relationships with others determines our health and sense of well-being. We are social creatures, and to belong and matter to those around us – to love and be loved, makes the difference between life and death. Any doctor or nurse will tell you that loneliness and isolation kill you.

Countless studies of diseases show the same pattern. Babies raised in orphanages without being held or hugged die. Loneliness increases your chance of early death by 50%, and almost 43 million Americans suffer chronic loneliness. Those who live alone, without a spouse or pet, are over 600% – more than six times as likely to die of a heart attack as those with a person or animal sharing their home. Those who live alone are also four times as likely to suffer a second heart attack. Women with cancer who joined a weekly support group lived twice as long as those who didn't. People who do volunteer work are 250% less likely to die of strokes and heart disease than those who don't have these interactions. As social animals, when we "connect and commit", as Dr. Harry Lodge puts it, we drive away stress and illness, and improve our feelings and moods – and our body chemistry along with it.

A huge portion of our brain is used to read faces, and understand the emotions of others. Autistic children and severely depressed people don't care about faces, and don't

- respond to the facial expressions and emotions of loved ones. Perhaps it's not so strange that both first impressions and how trustworthy someone seems are based on reading faces.

We form first impressions in fractions of a second. Scientists have shown seven month old babies make the same judgments about trustworthiness as adults! Increasing or decreasing the skin reflectance of a face radically alters our first impression of a person. The more 'reflectant' a face, the more trustworthy, feminine, and submissive we judge that person to be. The brain is primed to look at people as friend-or-foe, and as powerful -or-not. We quickly size up someone's intentions toward us using this odd feature (reflectance) as the measure.

Unfortunately our judgments are often wrong. Susan Fisk, and her colleagues at Princeton University found the same kind of judgment applies to groups. We stereotype people into one of four types, based on how we perceive their status and trustworthiness. Either we feel people are competitors, both low and high status, or non-competitors (also low and high status). Competitors fit into the 'foe' category, whom we tend to dehumanize or attack. Low status competitors, for example, include people on welfare, the homeless, and immigrants. High status competitors may be professionals, the rich, or privileged minorities. Of both types we tend to feel either disgust (low status) or envy (high status).

Noncompetitors we either pity, like low status elderly and disabled people, or feel pride – as with successful members of our allies or our own group.

Fisk suggests a partial solution to these biases is getting to know people outside your group. Working with others forces you to look beyond first impressions, and breaks down stereotypes. Hopefully, researchers working on this will learn more, and help us improve our impressions of others beyond an instinctual response to a face or stereotyping.

But this is a very difficult thing to change. A person's expressions, looks, and other nonverbal communication tell us their emotional state, and how we need to respond. Emotions are nature's way of allowing us to make decisions quickly without thought. They are instant reactions to events important to us, that require action. They are a response to our environment, to things affecting our well-being. If an event has no consequences for us, we are indifferent to it, and it evokes no emotions. As the distinguished neuroscientist Antonio Damasio points out, feelings tell you if your 'life direction' is good or bad.

Emotions are an unspoken language we use to tell those around us how we feel, and in turn the emotions of others give us signals on how they feel. The limbic system – the emotional part of our brain, comes alive when you're involved with others. This is

accomplished through what scientists call limbic resonance, and limbic regulation. Limbic resonance occurs when we are attuned to someone's moods, a back and forth between two or more people, sharing an often wordless understanding of emotional states. Limbic regulation refers to how these interactions with others control the way we feel. As when a partner who is upset raises our own stress level, or the comforting presence of a mother calms a crying child. These are mechanisms used by your body to communicate with and relate to others. All that is required is some empathy, and a willingness to spend time with those you care about.

It is clear that developing relationships and fostering connections are the foundation for a fulfilling life. The 'good life' is when the emotional structure of your life is rich in relationships.

Just listening and caring about another person is the essence of friendship, a kind of magic potion for health. The easiest way to make and keep friends is to ask them questions, and show interest in their answers. Engagement with others is what creates intimacy. People love to talk about themselves and their interests, but are only rarely heard by those around them.

The steps for bringing love into your life are similar to those used it to create love for yourself, with a few important differences, and some new techniques. Openness, and a desire to engage are all you need to succeed with the tools that follow.

Chapter Notes

"To create loving relationships with others..." I'm indebted to Dr. Miguel Ruiz for this insight, and others in the chapters that follow, from his superb book *Mastery of Love*.

"Countless studies of diseases show the same..." Thanks again to Dr. Harry Lodge, from the statistics and studies cited here.

"Loneliness increases your chances..." This research comes from a meta-analysis by Juliana Holt-Lunstad, professor of neuroscience at Brigham Young University, reported in *The Economist*, November 18-24, 2017.

"Emotions are nature's way of allowing us..." From the work of J. Panksepp, in an essay by David Matsumoto, from *Nonverbal Communication*.

"Perhaps it's not so strange that both first..." This fascinating research is being conducted by Prof. Alexander Todorov. His book *Face Value* was brought to my attention by an article in *New Scientist*, August 12-18, 2017.

"Susan Fiske, and her colleagues at Princeton..." This research also comes courtesy of an article in *New Scientist*, which I highly recommend for readers interested in the subject.

"As the distinguished neuroscientist Antonio Damasio..." This observation is from *The Strange Order of Things..*, an excellent overview of how our brains and bodies create consciousness and culture.

"Emotions are an unspoken language..." The information on limbic resonance and regulation comes courtesy of *A General Theory of Love*.

Respect for others is the soil love needs to take root and grow. Respect is about boundaries – allowing someone their freedom of action, and treating them as you want to be treated. When force, or the threat of force is present, connections are poisoned. Manipulation is deadly to relationships, and fear kills love. When love is healthy, you want the other person to be happy and free. In turn, when respect is a given, love makes you feel free. Free of fear and need, free to be who you really are. Control over someone isn't love, it is oppression. Control smothers affection whenever it is the dominant emotion in a relationship.

A nourishing and positive relationship with yourself demands you know and accept yourself as you are. You must embrace your shadow self, and face down the harmful beliefs and ideas that have been implanted in you. Apply this to others. You must focus on overcoming negative attitudes, expectations, gender roles, and limitations – and accept others as they are.

Respect begins when you abandon efforts to dominate others, and reject trying to control your loved ones. Stop trying to manipulate or coerce them into doing what you want. This behavior guarantees misery, and awkward, unhappy relationships. To build respect and create a healthy dynamic, change this pattern for the better. Work to replace competition and domination in your relationships with sharing, and mutual aid. Confront and get rid of control issues whenever they appear. You can do this by letting go of your ego, and giving up a little self-importance. If love is what you want (and don't we all want it?), recognize that compassion and kindness are what's needed – not harmful actions.

By losing some self-importance, and the need to be in control, you're able to rejoin the world and connect with others without demands or expectations. This is the mindset of present moment awareness, also termed mindfulness. Being mindful is a calm, thoughtful focus on the present. Using breathing exercises, and meditation, you can fully open your senses to experiences. It allows you to see things from a place of calm, free of negative emotions. This helps make you kinder, more empathetic, and able to bond better with others. Meditation and mindfulness practice also work to overcome loneliness and depression, by boosting your mood, and affecting the way you feel for the better.

Take five minutes now, and try this simple breathing exercise. Take a deep breath counting to three. Hold the breath for five seconds. Slowly release the breath, taking five seconds to do so. Repeat this, counting as you breathe, until you feel calm and relaxed. This exercise reduces stress, focuses you on your body, and the present moment. Use it whenever you feel stressed out, uncomfortable, or troubled.

Exercises like this one help remove fear and unpleasant feelings from the present. Mindfulness gives you room to make a relationship better. Don Miguel Ruiz points out that negative emotions – anger, sadness, jealousy, and the rest are "fear with a mask". Focus on the present, calmly, thoughtfully, and respect becomes much easier.

Another way to help create healthy relationships is to set and insist on clear, positive boundaries. These are your expectations. What you will give, what you need, and what you won't accept. By being open and honest about what you need from another person, the relationship can remain good for both of you. Tell them what is unacceptable behavior, and ask them to share their needs and wants.

Of course, you must accept that such honesty may end the relationship. This is painful, but necessary. Like with negotiation, the willingness to walk away gives you a powerful tool to make the best deal, and initiate change.

When you're in a relationship with someone who refuses to let go of unhealthy behavior, refuse to participate any longer. If they can't give up the need to control you, if they criticize or belittle you, or play hurtful games, then explain how they are harming you and insist it stop. Respect works both ways. If they refuse to change, let the relationship end. No need for a dramatic 'showdown' or conflict. Just walk away, and refuse to play. Life is too short to spend time with people who cause you unhappiness or stress.

Many people are trapped in unhealthy interactions with others, stuck in negative behavior patterns. Worse, many are unaware of it, except in sensing vague dissatisfaction and unhappiness with their relationships. Bringing this disrespect into conscious awareness is often enough to prompt better behavior from those who mean well, but are playing unhealthy roles he learned in the past. Apply this to your own behavior and expectations, making respect the first principle of your connections with others.

This is harder with family members, who may be resistant to change. A way to overcome old patterns and roles is to reimagine your relations with family as characters in a drama. Psychiatrist Thomas More explains "family is what we imagine it to be". Think of family members problems as stories you tell yourself. This lets you see them in a new light. Compare your family dramas with myths and stories from history, a kind of personal mythology. You can let go of old resentments using your imagination. Change your identity for the better by the way you relate to your family with this simple approach. But always make respect the foundation, the one unalterable condition in all of your relationships.

You make this easier when you're open and honest about your need for change, and your desire to start fresh. Express your need for ties were both of you help and support each other, and are kind to one another. This is the behavior worthy of a decent person. What causes pain for both of you must be shunned.



Respect begins with freedom from violence and abuse.

Search your beliefs, and those of others, for stereotypes, and patterns of inferiority/superiority, domination, and anything that causes pain or discomfort. Replace these with efforts to be compassionate, kind, and easy-going. In a word – truly respectful.

In your interactions with lovers, problems are magnified by the intensity of your bond. Intimacy depends on trust and honesty. Make sure your words and actions improve things, and aren't meant to hurt or manipulate your partner.

Regardless of who "wins" an argument, the relationship suffers. The singer and songwriter Jackson Browne expressed this well; "You win. I win. We lose". What you give is what you get – and being tender, rather than confrontational, leads to true success. Open a dialogue with your partner on life-affirming love, and what is needed to make your ideals a reality. Consistent acts of generosity and thoughtfulness should precede discussions. 'Actions speak louder than words' applies here with double force.

One way to turn conflict into harmony is to acknowledge the other person's feelings. Listen to what upsets them, and show some empathy. Don't argue or contradict them, just accept the way they feel. By appreciating their point of view, you show you value their opinion. This reduces harm, and strengthens links with them. Ask for their ideas and suggestions, including them in making decisions about future changes. Ask questions, and be open to what they have to say. Use a tone of voice that's relaxed, and inspires trust. Make your lover aware you love and value them, before discussing a problem that involves criticism. This will improve the outcome, and ease the discomfort of a talk trying to bring positive change. Let them know we all make mistakes, and it's okay to be wrong. But also that change is necessary to improve the relationship. Doing this increases the chances for a successful discussion.

We are forced into many associations and interactions with bureaucracies, and hierarchies, with unequal power relations. These sometimes unpleasant patterns are imposed by social rules, roles, and structures. Unfortunately, it seems people need a Big Brother, or big daddy figure, because so many hate to take responsibility for their actions. It is part of being an adult. But making someone else choose a course of action for you, and thus answer for the consequences, is a very old trick. Power is mostly an illusion – something we can give or take away on a whim, by obeying. Yet power is also destructive, and must be limited.

Do your best to adjust to or change these inequalities, to minimize their harm. Avoid them if you can, or keep transactions to a minimum if you must deal with these power structures. Whenever possible, discover how much of their power is granted by your belief and by consensus. You can even things up a little by withdrawing some of that consent, and insisting on fairer and more equal treatment.

Love is not and cannot be healthy in an oppressive relationship. Love arises from mutual respect that flowers into desire and joy. This is a feeling that can't be forced.

Lasting affection occurs only when people are there by choice, free to do what they want.

You remain intimate because you feel wanted, needed, and supported by your partner. Rejecting controlling behavior, and demanding respect, is the only sensible choice. When force and the threat of force are removed from your relations with others, creating love is simple. Love grows when you listen to someone, and respond appropriately, with kindness. These are the next steps explored on the path of a life filled with love.

Chapter Notes

"*This is the mindset of present moment awareness...*" An excellent overview of the value of meditation and mindfulness practice is found in *The Science of Meditation*, by David Goleman and Richard Davidson.

"*Don Miguel Ruiz points out...*" This quote comes from *Mastery of Love*.

"*This is harder with family members...*" I'm grateful to Dr. Thomas More for this technique to change family dynamics.

"*The singer and songwriter Jackson Browne...*" This lovely piece of poetry comes from Browne's beautiful song *Tender is the Night*.

"*One way to turn conflict into harmony...*" This discussion on conflict reduction and resolution owes much to psychologist Christine Aschworden.

"*It seems people need Big Brother or big daddy...*" Many thanks to Hilton Als for this insight, from the February 26, 2018 *New Yorker*.



Giving someone your full attention is a quick way to create intimacy.

Listening to someone, giving them your full attention and really hearing what they have to say is the most powerful and rapid way to create intimacy between two people. Understand the meaning of their words, read their body language, and listen to what is left unspoken.

When you focus your whole attention on someone, you can form an instant bond. Make the effort to empathize and understand what they're saying, and respond with questions that show you care – ones that go to the heart of what they said. Few things are as wonderful as being heard and understood. It means – for that moment, at least, you are the most important person in the world to the one listening. Communicating fully with someone can be a kind of peak experience, an emotional communion, and an intense sharing.

Listening with your heart and mind opens the door to intimacy by helping you learn the needs and desires of others. It only takes patience, some sympathy, and a little time. If you are willing to forget your own wants for a few minutes, and attend to another persons, you can forge a deep emotional tie with them. This is the essence of engagement.

Body language is especially important, as it is the surest way to know a person's true feelings. A study at Harvard University showed communication in the average conversation is 7% words, 38% tones and inflections, and 55% body language. When a person's arms and legs are crossed, holding their limbs tight and rigid, or locked in an uncomfortable position, their body is "closed off", shouting their feelings of discomfort or fear. It is a strong signal they are unwilling to open up on whatever you're talking about. By contrast, an open posture sends signs of interest and engagement. These are things like leaning forward, making and keeping eye contact, reaching out and touching frequently, and being close to you physically. When another person makes relaxed gestures, with fluid movements and lots of contact, it is obvious they're excited by a conversation. We are not very conscious of body language, but by paying attention to it, and focusing your awareness on someone's posture and physical responses, you will learn a lot. Are they tense or relaxed? Are they making or avoiding eye contact? These and similar signals speak volumes about their unconscious attitudes.

Body language of course is only one part of what might be called "nonverbal communication". These are the messages we send without words. These take many forms. It may be the expressions on your face – the most complex kind of 'signaling' we do. Your clothes and accessories, such as glasses, jewelry, watches, and so on send messages. Your posture, gestures, and expressions. Your tone of voice, your gaze, your personal appearance and choice of vehicle and home. These things and more communicate 'who you are' to others. Without knowing it, you are constantly sending signals that express yourself, your feelings, and your emotional state. Sometimes this is intentional, but often it's not.



Body language communicates far more than words.

Nonverbal messages are crucial to reading people, and understanding their emotions. Building trust and rapport with others this way is key to good conversation, and what are commonly called interpersonal skills. Having these skills helps you understand how people make decisions, and helps to influence others. It allows you to deal well with problems, and leads to better relationships. For example, caring is communicated through deep, reflective listening, accompanied by sympathetic, appropriate responses. Furthermore, openly addressing nonverbal signals, by asking questions like "you seem unhappy...", or "am I making you uncomfortable?" can be transformative, opening a dialogue on unspoken, sometimes unconscious attitudes.

The essence of making sense of people's nonverbal behavior is to first, be aware of the nonverbal messages being sent and received. Learn what is normal for that person, and then look for changes. Behavior that differs from the usual. Engage with them – adjusting yourself according to the changes you see. Finally, follow up by addressing the issues raised by that person's actions and emotions.

When someone tries to deceive you, nonverbal behavior is even more important (as it can tell you when someone is lying). 'Polite' lies make society bearable, avoiding insults to others by not looking too closely at their appearance or behavior. But when deceit violates your trust, it is unacceptable.

Since lying (defined as intentionally misleading you for gain) is one of the worst things you can do, the fear of being caught causes lots of nonverbal signals when it happens. These include more blinking, shifting of the eyes, pursed lips, and shorter, sharper answers. Body movements and gestures tend to be more rigid, facial expressions often show a flicker called 'micro-expressions', a very brief expression of fear, distress, or contempt. These sometimes contradict what the person is saying. Lying requires more mental work, so concealing, fabricating or distorting information causes longer pauses in speech, and sometimes aggression. It's difficult to guess at though; most people do no better than chance at detecting a lie (50% or so) and police do only slightly better on average (about 65%).

Being sensitive to both spoken and body language is essential to make a connection with others. Most importantly, this is true of connecting with a potential mate. It can be difficult to take that first step, and approach an attractive stranger. This is the hardest part of getting the lover you want – establishing a bond with them. It takes some courage, and a willingness to accept rejection. But if you can do that with good grace, and are persistent, you will find the lover of your dreams, and bring them into your life.

There are three steps in this process: open a conversation, establish trust and intimacy, then learn who they are as a person. None are difficult, if you can summon a bit of bravery, and are sincere.

Opening a conversation with someone you find handsome or beautiful can be intimidating. But if you consider that everyone wants to be liked, and feel wanted and needed, approach them with this in mind and it becomes much easier.

One simple but effective way to start a conversation is to ask for their help. Most people want to help others. If your request is reasonable, and you are being truthful, it is a way to quickly form a connection. Once you've helped another person, you have established a slight bond with them, and this is a good way to begin a heart-to-heart talk. Approach them and ask "can you help me?", Or "I need your help...". Follow it up with a real question, and the conversation has begun.

Another good opener is to share something that is meaningful or important to you. It can be anything – a recent achievement or success, failure or disappointment, a picture or story of an event. It doesn't matter – as long as it comes from the heart, full of genuine emotion. By asking "excuse me, can I tell you about something important/meaningful that happened to me...". Or "I would really like to share this with you...". Being vulnerable and open creates a connection, and opens a path to intimacy.

Yet a third great conversation starter is to tell a joke. A good sense of humor is very attractive, and laughter is among the best of all feelings. Find a joke that's inoffensive, surprising, and funny, and share it. "Have you heard the one about the goats?..."

Once you've begun talking, the next task is to establish trust and intimacy. Trust is based on honesty and transparency, followed by being supportive and dependable. Intimacy is closely related, but relies more on openness, vulnerability, and sensitivity to another person. Start by being honest. When it is appropriate, tell to your partner; "I like you a lot, and want to get to know you better...", or "I really find you attractive, and want to get to know you...".

This kind of transparency is the foundation of trustworthiness. Though it may also lead to rejection, it is the only decent, fair way forward. Accept that rejection if it comes. It is hard, but very common. If they decide they don't want to get to know you, at least you know it now, and can try again with someone else.

If they do respond positively, then you're a few minutes away from success! The third step is to learn who they are as a person. There are many ways to do this – discovering the things that matter most of them. Their likes, dislikes, passions and dreams. A fun, straightforward method of creating instant intimacy is to play the "Truth Game". Ask them if they're interested in playing a game that's a little scary, but exciting. If they agree, give them these rules.

To play the 'Truth Game', players must be totally open and honest. No ducking, hiding, shading, or sidestepping. "Tell it like it is", completely and fully, or don't bother. You can decide not to answer a question – and the other person gets to ask again. But, three no answers in a row, and the game is over. Why continue if one player won't respond or open up? The person requesting the game answers the first question. With each answered question, the person gets to ask one in return. The game depends on decency. If someone doesn't want to answer a question, don't try to ask questions about the same subject – leave it alone, and respect their privacy. The game is over whenever either player tires of it, or both agree.

Some good questions include – what is your biggest fear? What is your best memory? Describe your greatest love? What was your worst day? Are you happy with your life? Avoid yes or no questions, as open-ended questions are better at getting to know someone.

If you have managed to achieve a little more trust with someone, you may ask them to share in an ancient exercise that creates instant deep intimacy. Sit facing a person in a comfortable position from a few feet away, and stare into each other's eyes without speaking for 15 minutes or so, the longer the better. Tibetan monks used a ritual called the Trespasso Exercise, silently sitting and staring into another person's left eye without blinking for as long as possible. The left eye was thought to be the window to the soul. After a few minutes of staring, the monks believed you can see the faces you wore in previous lives flicker across your face. Whether or not you have a mystical experience of this type, simply sitting close to someone, silent and attentive, and stare at their face can be a dramatic kind of sharing, wordless but amazing.

The key is getting to know if you love and accept them as they are (and they with you). One very important factor, often ignored or misunderstood, is to learn how much intimacy a person wants. We all have a need for intimacy, but we differ in the amount of it we're comfortable with. Each of us have our own comfort – or discomfort level with emotional closeness. To avoid relationship problems, it's best if you can choose a partner whose needs for intimacy are similar to your own.

Dr. Amir Levine and Rachel Heller are experts on our need for attachment, and found we all have one of three attachment styles. The styles are universal, and the same ones are found in cultures and countries worldwide.

These attachment styles are: Secure, Anxious, and Avoidant. People with a secure attachment style (found in about 50% of the population on average) are comfortable with intimacy. A secure style person is consistently warm and loving, and responds well to affection.

The Anxious style (about 20% of the population) tends to crave intimacy. Those who are anxious are preoccupied with relationships, and worry about being loved. Someone with an Avoidant style (found in about 25% of people on average) see intimacy-

- as a loss of independence. They keep a distance from others, and need little emotional closeness to be happy. Another 3 – 5% of people have a combination of the anxious and avoidant styles.

The interaction between these three styles accounts for most of the problems people experience in their romantic relationships. At root, it's a mismatch of different desires for closeness.

As Dr. Levine notes, "people are only as needy as their unmet needs". To meet your partner's need for closeness, follow some simple principles. For secure successful relationships, be available, work for their well-being, encourage them, communicate your needs honestly, and don't play games.

A good model for a secure relationship is the one we have with pets we love. Pets are a secure presence in our lives. They are dependable, and are always there for us emotionally. We don't hold grudges against them, and love and forgive them despite their occasional misbehavior. We care for them, and are rewarded with faithful love and affection in return. In a true partnership, you are concerned with the other person's well-being. You are consistent and trustworthy, and the intimacy you share brings peace of mind and love. Discovering a person's attachment style requires you to pay attention to how they respond to your need for closeness. Then adjust accordingly. This depends on listening to the signals, both verbal and nonverbal, your partner is sending you.

It is also important to think about what's not being said. These are the subtle messages sent by what's avoided or ignored. It might be a subject they don't want to discuss, or a sign of dislike or discomfort with some activity. It may be a matter they want to keep private, or that they dislike thinking about. It is possible they fear change or disapproval for their feelings and desires. Whatever the reason, if a person cuts off a discussion, gives an answer that changes the direction of conversation, or talks in mono-syllables, pay attention. They are giving you a strong message. Understand and respect this by backing off. Alternatively, ask openly about it. Either way it shows you're hearing them clearly, and are sensitive to their needs.

The power and importance of listening can't be stressed enough. Loneliness, depression, and many mental illnesses benefit from a sympathetic listener. Physician Stephen Ilardi, an expert at treating depression without the use of drugs, emphasizes engaged activity (preferably with others) and social support as key tools. Along with regular exercise, some daily sunlight, a good night's sleep, and a dose of fish oil (Omega - 3 fatty acids), finding people to talk to and who will listen sympathetically can cure one of the deadliest modern diseases. Finding such listeners depends on creating intimacy with others.

Another study found that eating fermented foods, such as yogurt and sourdough bread, seem to greatly improve your mood and give an emotional boost to those with -



Showing sensitivity and kindness to your lover is the key to intimacy.

- depression and anxiety disorders. Lastly, it is important to understand that depression, anxiety, and addictions are more than just brain disorders. These are diseases driven by social factors; problems caused by the way we live.

Modern society tends to isolate us into roles as buyers and sellers, reduced to consumers stripped of other meaningful relationships. We also suffer from power imbalances. When you feel you have no control over your workplace, endure extreme inequality, and experience other kinds of trauma, depression and anxiety are the result. The cure in one word, is connection. We crave connections. We feel a deep need to belong, to feel valued, and have a secure future. Connecting with others heals these disorders. So does exposure to the natural world. The three things that help most in treating anxiety and depression are to explore natural surroundings, take part in meaningful activities, and reconnect with others.

Love begins with intimacy, which grows when you're sensitive and aware of a person's needs, and respond to them with kindness. This is the secret to being a great lover. Show sensitivity and awareness of your lover's body, and respond eagerly to their signals and desires. By doing what pleases them you'll increase pleasure and intimacy for both of you. Be open to new things, and your lover's suggestions. Be inventive, considerate, and willing to satisfy their desires. Use your creativity and your body to excite them, be sensitive to the messages of their body, and you'll spark incredible love, intimacy, and sexual pleasure.

Becoming a fantastic lover requires you to earn your lover's trust. Trust is earned when your words and deeds match (the foundation of integrity). It is given when you meet your obligations and fulfill your responsibilities. A deeper, more profound trust grows when a person feels, and knows you want to help them, and mean them only good. This happens when you consistently work to make their life better, and help them achieve their goals and passions.

Once you've earned this kind of trust, let them know you're willing to do whatever it takes to please them. Reassure them you'll do whatever they like to excite and thrill their body. There's nothing wrong, bad, or dirty about sex (nothing a good shower won't cure!). Sex is the source of life, love, and pleasure, a thing of beauty and magic. If your lover trusts you enough to share his or her sexual fantasies, you can become their dream lover by making their fantasies real. Fulfill their desires, and you're close to creating your own paradise. The same recipe applies to all relationships. Be aware and sensitive of the other person's emotions, wants, and needs, respond in ways that show you care, and intimacy is assured. When you listen, understand, and respond with kindness, you are creating the conditions for love to flourish. We are seldom heard by anyone, and are rarely understood. Choose to be the exception.

Once the bond of intimacy is established you are able to do the things that generate love – giving a person what they want or need.

Chapter Notes

"Nonverbal messages are crucial to reading..." My thanks to David Matsumoto and his colleagues work in *Nonverbal Communication*, one of the best books on the subject of body language.

"We all have a need for intimacy, but we differ..." Many thanks to Dr. Levine and Ms. Heller for their work on attachment used in this chapter.

"A good model for a secure relationship..." This model was developed by Suzanne Phillips in *Healing Together* (which came to my attention via Dr. Levine's book *Attachment*).

"Physician Stephen Ilardi, an expert on treating depression..." Dr. Ilardi has a treatment program he describes in his book *The Depression Cure*, which I recommend.

"Lastly, it is important to understand that depression..." These insights are a gift from author Johann Hari and his work *Lost Connections: Understanding the Real Causes of Depression - and the Unexpected Solutions*, Bloomsbury, 2017.



Giving pleasure to someone is the greatest gift you can give.

To gain love, you only need to give your attention.

Accept others as they are, and choose those who accept and love you as you are. This is the basis of healthy love. When this is how you feel about the people around you, your natural impulse is to be generous. To win someone's love, learn their desires, dreams, and fantasies, and make them real. When you love a person, you want to give them what they really need, to make them happy, expecting nothing in return. This generosity opens the floodgates of love, unconditional, free, and beautiful.

Giving someone pleasure, when done with love, is the greatest gift it is possible to give. I contemplated this mystery, and asked Heart-Soul to help me understand. He told me this tale of a love affair, which he calls the Marriage of the Sun and the Earth.

Long ago, when the earth was still a young girl, she dreamed of a lover who would make her warm, for she was cold and lonely in the darkness.

She was very lovely, and a brilliant boy – the sun, found her and worshiped her. He stroked her with light, kissing her tender and sensitive places. She grew warm, then hot and wet. The water of her pleasure flowed, and life sprang forth. The greater the heat of their passion, the more creatures were born, until the land and seas were alive with their children.

And so it is that all living things share her love of pleasure, the source of life itself.

Giving pleasure is a sacred act, because it is the source of life, recognized by many religions and cultures through the ages around the world. Sharing pleasure with a loved one can be a kind of holy communion. It is a profound and sacred interaction because life isn't possible without it. It's the highest act of kindness, the desire to make someone else happy. When you please your lover, friends, and family you are giving them something priceless. You're showing you care about them, seeking to fulfill their needs. Sharing and caring are wonderful sources of love (and of meaning, as discussed in the next section). They are infallible ways of creating bonds of affection and intimacy. When you are simpatico with someone – empathetic and sensitive, it is natural to work to meet that person's wants and needs. It is how you bring love flowing into your life.

Getting the lover you desire is simplicity itself. Once you find someone you love just the way they are, open a conversation with them, and learn the things they love. Just as you did with yourself to build love, do the same with others. Get them to trust you enough, through consistent acts of helpfulness and kindness, so they share their desires with you. Learn what they want. Discover their passions, what fascinates them, what they want to experience, the things they love and enjoy. Learn what pleases them most. Their answers reveal their inner selves.

Now bring these passions and dreams into their life. If they are willing to tell you their fantasies and dreams, you will create love by giving these to them.

If you do your best to make their wishes a reality, you will instantly become one of the most beloved people in their life. Think about this for a moment. Of the people you care about, those who care for you, who gives you what you want or need? Chances are, it is probably a short list, and the ones who give you what you like are your closest loved ones. Your parents and grandparents, a favorite aunt or uncle, a lover, a best friend, these probably top the list. If you're lucky, a few others help you achieve your desires.

But such people are rare, and if you fill that role in a person's life, love is almost certain to follow your actions. If you want someone to love you, listen to them, discover their desires, and work to fulfill them. Look at the relationships in your own life, and the truth of this will be obvious.

There are many kinds of pleasure, and there are as many different desires as there are humans. Whatever a person's wants may be, if you want them to love you, your response is always the same. Be thoughtful, considerate, giving and kind. Anyone who doesn't respond with delight, or who doesn't want your generosity is not the lover you want. Find someone among the vast majority of people who will welcome you into their life with joy.

The media – corporate owned and controlled, is biased in favor of materialism. They try to convince you expensive gifts are needed to win someone's love. This is false. Think of what you most need and desire. First, your basic needs must be met – and it helps if you're able to provide a person's basic needs of food, clothing, and shelter if they are not being satisfied. Once these are met, most of us seek affection, attention, respect, support, and kindness. Expensive gifts are nice, of course. But they can't compare to a sympathetic listener, real concern about your feelings, a good massage, or snuggling with a lover. Giving emotional comfort and support beats material objects every time. The greatest gifts are not material. Give the gift of your attention, and concern. Take actions that further their goals and passions, and work to make their dreams real. Do this consistently, and you'll earn their trust. Be sensitive and kind, and love and intimacy will flow.

Lavishing attention on someone, loving and caring for them, makes physical things pale into insignificance. Reflect on this, and let it guide your actions. Your life will be filled with loving relationships. Reverence for life and love is the path to fulfillment.

Love and intimacy require trust, respect, caring, and empathy, leading to mutual benefit and pleasure.

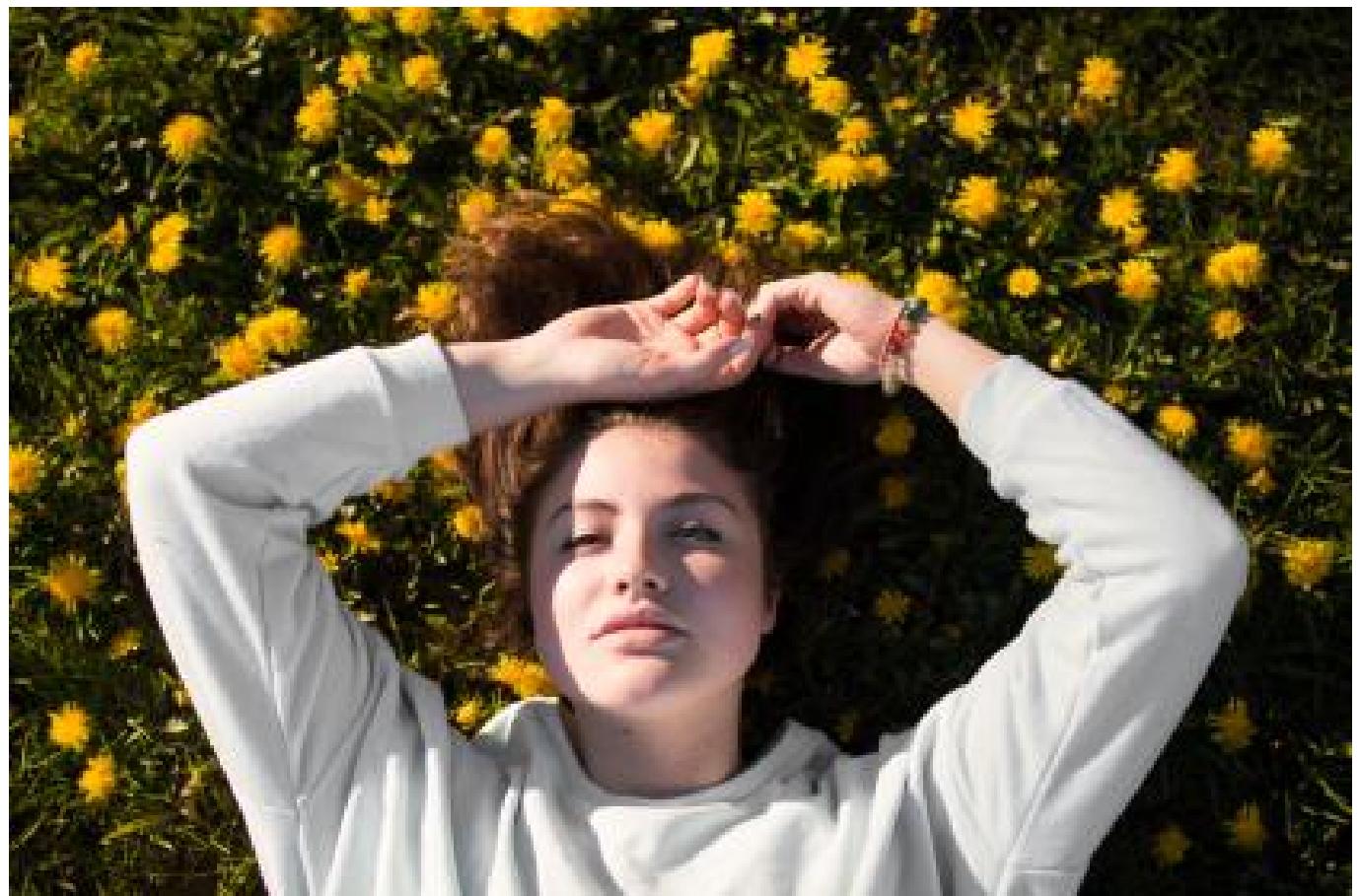
It begins with loving yourself, forgiving, healing, then pleasing yourself. Once healthy

- self-love is established, feeling worthy of love, you can extend that love to others. Base your relations on respect; listen to them, and work to please them. The result will be a love like springtime. As poet Pablo Neruda said: "I want /to do with you what Spring does with the cherry trees". Love as an awakening, bringing new life and joy.

The final set of loving connections are those we share with our neighbors and our environment. Forming a loving relationship with the landscape where you live and your community is more complex, but follows the same principles.

Chapter Notes

"*Giving pleasure is a sacred act...*" This is the heart of the argument made by Dr. Rianne Eisler in her book, *Sacred Pleasure*.



Love emerges when you care about the world around you.

To become intimate with your community and the landscape where you live, including nature and human society, you need to feel you belong. Find a place you love as it is, with people who accept and want you. Such a place can become your community of the heart.

Everyone is unique, and needs differ greatly. You may not need or desire strong social connections, and instead yearn for a deeper bond with the land and nature. Or you may be happiest in human-made surroundings, concerned with people who share your goals, interests, and definition of the good life.

Choose the place where you want to sink down roots based on what's most important to you. Love emerges when you care about the world around you. We are alienated from each other and nature, and true communities are rare. This disconnection from a sense of place and belonging makes forming a relationship with the community difficult. It is a major step in the right direction to reconnect. Rejoin the family of living things, grounded in a physical location, to regain a healthy spirit.

Heart-Soul offered a story on this subject, which he calls the Forest Fire.

One hot, dry summer, a little boy was lost, and wandered in the woods. He was alone and afraid, unsure where to go or what to do. He had some matches, and decided to start a fire. He piled up leaves and twigs next to a dead tree, and set them alight. The forest was dry as tinder. Though the boy was frightened by the speed with which the fire took off, he was excited by the sight of the flames. After a short while the fire raged, and the forest was reduced to smoking ashes.

The boy trudged through the wasteland he had made, even more miserable than before. The dead bodies of animals killed by the fire sickened him, and he looked around in sorrow and terror at what he had done.

A crow landed near him, and croaked: "Come home. Your mother calls you."

The boy answered angrily: "I have no home! And no mother. I am alone in the world."

The crow replied: "Not true. You have forgotten them. Come now. Your family is waiting."

The boy was surprised and curious, and followed the slow flight of the old crow over the hills down to the sea. A crowd of plants and animals waited on the beach. Many were injured survivors of the fire. The boy could not meet their eyes.

The crow said "HERE is your family. We share the same blood, and come from the same parents. The sea is our mother, from whom all living things were born. You have forgotten. WE are your brothers and sisters, and the earth is your home."

The boy's anger change to guilt and remorse. He wept, and asked their forgiveness for what he had done.

The crow told him: "we forgive you. But you must stop hurting us. Don't be a stranger to us. We are not toys. We are not slaves. We are not things! We are your family. Treat us like one. Stop killing everything. The earth, sea, and sky are the home we share. You must change, before our beautiful home is destroyed. Do you understand? "

The boy understood, and changed his ways. They took him in, and he was no longer angry, alone, or afraid.

A sense of connection and belonging are the keys to love between you and your community, however you choose to define it. Here are some ideas and tools to help that love grow.



Become one with the land...

I. Love – Community

1.) Connect

Get close to the land.

A community is more than just people. It includes the landscape where you live. To truly love a place is easy when it is beautiful in your eyes. Whatever appeals to you – mountains and forests, the seaside, deserts, anyplace that touches your heart is one you can love. Think about who and what exactly you want a connection with. The majority of people now live in urban areas, places where human structures and activity dominate the landscape.

But nature is still there, underneath and in the spaces between our things. It is visible whenever we bother to look for it. To form a bond with your natural surroundings, you need to make a small effort. Be still a few moments in nature's presence. Look closely, and a connection can be made.

In choosing a place to love, ask yourself what matters most. Do you care about a place because of a history you identify with (such as a place your ancestors came from) ? Is it a culture you like or feel comfortable with? Is it the beauty of the landscape, or its climate or geography you enjoy ? What makes it a place you are drawn to?

Farmer-philosopher Wendell Berry suggests your native ground is the source of ultimate value. This is true in the sense we need a place to call home. It is where all other relationships are formed. But we are nomads. We have traveled out of Africa to settle the rest of the planet, and wanderlust is in our blood. Berry makes a good point, though. "Cultivating a sense of home" where you live is how you create intimacy with the land, instead of the homelessness and estrangement many of us feel.

To understand a place, learn the nature of the soil and rocks underfoot and the source of the waters you drink. Learn the different kinds of winds and how they affect life in your area. Learn the times to plant, forage and harvest, and the cycles of the seasons. Come to know the places under too much stress, the treasures they hold, and the things the land keeps secret or won't yield. Get to know the local birds, insects, animals, plants and trees, until they become as familiar as the neighbors they are.

In a healthy community, members share their emotional responses to life with each other – both in crises and celebration. Without community, we are alone, lost, and lose our humanity. Without emotional ties, people are strangers, living in isolation, competition, and fear. This leads to collective disharmony and alienation. Pursuing your own self interest while ignoring others well-being is ultimately self-destructive.

The Okanagan people of British Columbia call this social sickness a "people without hearts". They mean people of European descent no longer feel a bond to others or the land. We are surrounded by so much pain and sadness it is too much suffering to endure. So we cut ourselves off from it for self-preservation.

To heal, we must commune with each other and the land where we live. To commune is to create compassion for someone or something, to reconnect. Once again, as the Okanagan say we can "share a covering", their definition of community – protecting and loving each other through concern and solidarity.

Let your interactions with your home become, in Berry's beautiful phrase "a celebration of the life of the senses". Something that invites a deep feeling of being kindred with it. Awareness of the land, and intimacy with it create a bond that comes from knowing the life of the earth through experience. Learn the ways of the living things that inhabit it. Become a conscious participant in the life of the land where you live, aware of its patterns and rhythms.

You will come to know the land by spending time there. Approach it with humility. Pay close attention to wild beings. Observe wild things, both plants and animals clearly and honestly. Use all of your senses. You will soon be able to read the land. You will understand it when you feel allied with its health.

This is a starting point for exploration. Your own well-being depends on the health of your surroundings, and the wild things living there. By wanting to heal a landscape, you will learn some profound truths about living in the world. Help restore it as best you can so it provides a healthy place to live. Work to bring health and resilience, even in badly damaged places. You'll begin your own healing process as you do.

We have been deeply hurt. Our lives are often filled with fear and despair, both our own and those of loved ones. Trauma, loss, pain, and alienation spring from, or are made worse by our lack of connection with whom and where we live. The bond holding communities together is a mixture of trust, respect, and an expectation of decency. In times of trouble, we expect concern, and hope for charity and caring from our peers. If these are missing, our sense of community vanishes, and we feel people are hostile strangers, not neighbors. This is the root of trauma.

Kai Erikson, a sociologist at Yale University, has spent his career studying trauma, and has found it is much more widespread than believed. There are many sources. Exposure to battle; brutality and violence; abuse; from disasters and other violent events. But homelessness and poverty can also be traumatizing. Though not as dramatic as surviving genocide or war, they are far more common. Traumatized people are everywhere, and recovery is painful and difficult.

Those who have been traumatized feel estranged from the rest of humanity, and find the world to be random and cruel. Symptoms of trauma include helplessness, hopelessness, pessimism, feelings of abandonment, anxiety, and a lasting sense of dread. Trauma survivors often feel despised and rejected, unable to relate to others who haven't shared their experience. They feel they have lost their membership in a larger human community, unable to connect with a sense of place.

Trauma cannot be resolved until the victims understand and accept its causes. This doesn't happen when others don't care. As discussed in previous chapters, the cure for trauma lies in the healing power of connections, both social ones and with nature. You need strong roots and a solid sense of belonging somewhere for good health.

Regain this harmony by restoring what Hawaiians call your 'Kala'. This is a beautiful term meaning pure, forgiven, and light of spirit. The Kahunas believe magic flows from this clean place within. Ask when you are Kala, and the gods will respond. Attunement comes from openness, and actively seeking balance with the rhythms of life and nature. Kala and alignment can happen when you gather and direct your life force for this purpose. Use breathing exercises and mindfulness meditation to focus on the world around you.

Align your heart with the earth and its creatures, and bond with what is wild. Engage your senses with the landscape. Quiet your mind, and be present, without expectations. Get out of your head and into your body for a while. You have joy, freedom, and a need for play within you. Engaging with wild things helps you recapture them. Living fully in a place where things are wild allows wonder to reenter your life. It is a chance for re-enchantment, sensing the mystery of life.

Another point of entry into the life of your community are the seasonal holy days established by people native to your area. These are often a communion with nature in a place, a recognition of and delight in life arising from the land's unique character. Ancient celebrations occur everywhere people interact with nature and its changes throughout the year.

These are patterns like the annual return of the swallows to San Juan Capistrano, and the Monarch butterfly migrations to the coast of California. The many festivals across Asia at the return of the monsoon rains, or the joy felt by those watching the whales journeying near beaches and coastal areas each year. Examples like these are found everywhere. As seasons bring change, the beauty and importance of nature, and its effects on humans spark the celebrations. They are a good first effort at connecting with a place and its lifecycles.

It is also simple to foster a direct experience of nature and the wild. With a few steps you can turn your own backyard into a miniature wildlife sanctuary. Who wants to mow lawns anyway, right?

Find out what plants are native to your land, and what plants growing in your yard are foreign or invasive. Replace the invasive ones with local flora. Add a water source – a shallow pond, hollow log near a faucet, or a birdbath. Plant some bushes where creatures can hide and nest. You've now created a wildlife sanctuary! Sit back and watch the wildlife return to your land. Let plants go wild. Turn off your back yard lights at night, and reduce the noise you make. Doing this will quickly make your home a haven for wildlife.

Sit still, watch, and listen. You will get in touch with the natural rhythms around your home, and you'll build relations with the plants and animals that share it with you. If your presence isn't intrusive or threatening, you will become friendly with the creatures your sanctuary attracts.

If you are more active, join an organization or local group helping restore balance in nature. These groups remove garbage and pollutants, and work to clean up the environment. These are people like the Riverkeepers, who dedicate themselves to protecting rivers and their banks. They fight polluters, and restore fish and wildlife communities. There are many groups doing similar work, rebuilding healthy ecosystems, forming good relationships with both nature and like-minded people in their area.

Have the patience to observe the living things sharing your world, as they change with the seasons. Learn the habits and lifestyle of these plants and animals well enough to recognize individuals, until you know them as neighbors. When you have a relationship with them, you have found a home. This is the truest, deepest kind of connection – a personal one, based on intimacy.

Chapter Notes

"Farmer - philosopher Wendell Berry..." These quotes come from Barry's book *Hidden Wounds*. I highly recommend his nonfiction work for insights on connecting with the land.

"Align yourself with the health..." Much of the material in these paragraphs comes from *Black Seed*, Winter 15. The group Knowing the Land is Resistance interviewed in that magazine offer good guides for restoring a sense of place with the land. Two pamphlets in particular are excellent – *Learning from the Land*, and *Towards an Anarchist Ecology*.

"The bond holding communities together..." From Kai Erickson's profound work – *A New Species of Trouble*.

"Regain this harmony by restoring..." Wonderful stuff on alignment from a great book – *Witches of America*, by Alex Mar.

"These are people like the Riverkeepers..." This group was founded by John F. Kennedy, Jr., and one hopes his actions will be widely imitated.



Find a place and people that love what you do, and you'll find your true home.

I. Love - Community

2.) Belong

Find your people.

The old saying 'home is where the heart is' holds a deep truth. Feeling accepted and valued by those around you makes a place feel like home. In the same way, a sense of community is present wherever there's a group of like-minded people, who share your goals and support your efforts. As psychiatrist Thomas Moore said it is essential for our soul "to be profoundly connected... to the many communities that claim our hearts." This is the source of the feeling that you belong.

Choosing a community to call home, with people who make you feel comfortable and accepted (or challenged and alive, depending on your needs and desires), isn't easy. You may feel close to those you were raised with. People who share your beliefs, your history, and are native to your region. This is true of most of us. On the other hand, you might not be native to where you live. Your home community may feel foreign to you in some way, or you may not be familiar with its customs and traditions. Find the place that feels right to you.

There are communities, cultures, and countries that reveal what's possible when the right elements are in proper proportion, creating little pockets of paradise around the globe. There are good cultures and countries that foster happiness, and bad ones that produce lots of misery. Culture is generally associated with creative intelligence and the arts. But culture is also a body of meaning and knowledge. Culture can be thought of as "solutions for living, things the group needs to overcome the challenges of our environment". It includes gender roles, hierarchies, social networks, norms and values, and they can – of course, be positive and life-affirming, or not.

Bhutan for instance, is poor but largely strife-free. It has a culture that reduces stress, with an unhurried pace of life, and promotes simplicity. As a result, it is a happy place, with very little violence and few negative statistics. It has many positive ones, indicating citizens are healthy and doing well, despite a lack of resources. Switzerland also has a calm, content culture. In general, the Swiss love nature, have fair, dependable institutions, and there is strong trust between citizens. The Swiss aren't as happy, however, as the healthiest cultures prevailing in the Netherlands and Iceland.

The Dutch are famous for their tolerance, love of pleasure, and their low stress lifestyle. The Netherlands consistently ranks among the most content and happiest of countries. Iceland is possibly the happiest society of all, among postindustrial nations, anyway. Iceland has many creative people, and is a culture that is okay with failure. This is important, because win or lose, you are trying something different, and such courage is rewarded. The Icelandic people also love nature, and have retained a sense of the mystery of life and a connection with awe, wonder, and the magical. This may have

something to do with Iceland's stark, strangely beautiful landscape, and its unbroken connection with Viking ancestors who settled there over 1000 years ago. But any society and culture whose members are roughly equal in income, with a vibrant public life, are creative, relaxed, non-materialistic, and at peace, will enjoy a fair share of happiness.

Contrast this with places that are wealthy but miserable, such as the United States, or Qatar. The US has lots of comforts and conveniences. But it is unequal, unhealthy, and has terrible rates of suicide, depression, mental illness, violent crimes, and other indicators that people are deeply disturbed.

So what is the magic formula for paradise? First, people's basic needs must be met. This is a huge problem, as most of Africa, Asia, and South America are poverty-stricken, with billions of people living in desperate circumstances, and suffer high rates of disease and premature death. If basic needs are met, happiness becomes possible. Societies are happiest when there is equality and trust among members. Natural beauty helps, as we get pleasure from green places, and are healthiest when we live in natural environments. Studies repeatedly show people are happiest living in pristine and beautiful places, and have jobs working with plants or animals. The main ingredients for happy societies are: a love of pleasure – especially simple ones; a closeness to and respect for nature; fostering toleration and creativity. Healthy, happy communities and countries are the result.

History shows that humans, like most species, insist on 'in' versus 'out' groups. People only thrive when they feel they belong, sharing the beliefs and culture of the group. We have come a long way toward greater tolerance in the last hundred years on the whole. But a majority feel more at ease with those who look, think, and feel as they do. It's possible to rise above this and choose your group, your beliefs, and change them to what you feel is right.

Still, communities dwell more in the valleys of experience than on the heights of the soul. Common denominators among people tend to be earthy, and a feeling of belonging comes from sharing simple pleasures and desires. The Renaissance scholar Erasmus (a Dutchman) said, "people are joined in friendship through their foolishness". By foolish he meant things that bring physical pleasure and fulfillment, rather than philosophical pursuits (the life of the body versus the life of the mind, the latter considered the higher pursuit at that time). Find the place and people that love the things you do, and you will discover your community of the heart; your true home.

A sense of belonging is crucial to feeling secure, and to your well-being. Choose a group that shares your vision of what's ideal, and build your life there. Love comes from intimacy with others, which requires opening up to people so they get to know you. Becoming vulnerable this way is risky, which is why we usually have only a few close friends. But that is what is necessary, choosing a community and becoming intimate with it. It also means you must know your own heart and nature.

Heart-Soul shared this tale with me about this search, which he named The Initiation.

A youth was making trouble in his village because he didn't fit in, and felt awkward among his peers. The elders took him aside, and asked him "You're a troublesome boy. Do you want to become a man?"

The boy was eager. "Of course!"

The men told him; "Go up the mountain. Ask the spirits of earth, air, and water to speak to you. Come back and tell us what they said. If they don't speak to you, don't come back!"

He took a little food and water, a warm cloak, and made the long climb. He sat behind some rocks near the peak, shivering and miserable for several days. Despite repeated pleas to the spirits to speak, he heard and saw nothing unusual. He gave up when his supplies ran out. Unsure where to go, he headed down the mountainside. He stumbled going down a steep cliff path, and knocked his head against a stone as he fell.

He found himself staring down at his body through the eyes of a hawk, flying high above him. He flew as one with the hawk for many days, and he forgot his name. The Hawk snatched at a salmon, and he found himself swimming away in the river, living as a fish for an untold time. Spawning season came, and the salmon leapt onto a riverbank. He became one with a boar who ate it. He roamed and rooted in the forest with the boar so long the youth forgot he was human.

He was shocked when he awakened, and found himself in his body again, weak but alive. He made his way back to the village, to discover he had only been gone a week. The elders asked him:

"What did the Spirits say?"

The youth thought for a while, and then admitted:

"They said nothing. But they showed me by example. I must follow my own nature."

The elders smiled, and clapped him on the back. "Ahhh. Now you're a man. Welcome!"

You can share that self with the community, and become a member worth welcoming. There are thousands of communities committed to creating sustainable, loving, and satisfying places to live, free of fear and violence. Places that support systems working to achieve abundance and pleasure for all. People who value the needs and desires of our bodies in nature, refusing to ignore or injure them.

This is the driving force behind utopian communities, groups that moved to remote or wilderness areas, in search of their own ideas of freedom, and isolation from their

- surrounding society. There are many alternatives, both urban and rural, people uncomfortable with the way things are and working to create their own societies. They share the desire to be free to do what you want, being who you wish to be, without limiting or harming anyone else's search for fulfillment.

You may not want or need to go to these extremes, and feel at home where you live. As long as the place you call home treats you with decency and dignity, love of community is possible.

Abandon unhealthy institutions and models. Replace them with ones seeking social and environmental justice. Respect for others and nature is a good starting point for making your dream of community a reality. Work to create a place where you want to live, that is healthy and nurturing. Seek it out or build it – one way or another, your love of community will flourish.

Chapter Notes

"As psychiatrist Thomas More..." This quote is found in Dr. More's *Care of the Soul*.

"There are communities, cultures, and countries..." I am grateful for Eric Weiner, and his book *The Geography of Bliss*, for the various statistics and information given here.

"Culture is generally associated with creative intelligence..." Thanks to David Matsumoto and his colleagues for this insight on culture, from their book *Nonverbal Communication: science and applications*.

"Still, communities dwell more in the valleys..." Thanks to Dr. More for bringing this quote from Erasmus to my attention (from *In Praise of Folly*, please see bibliography).



Sharing your skills and passions is a major source of meaning.

II. Meaning

What is meaning?

Your values and passions create meaning, and shape your identity. Your core convictions guide you, and determine who you are. When your values are clear, and influence your daily life, you feel energized, motivated, and have a sense of direction. Survivors of the genocide of World War II, notably Viktor Frankl and Primo Levy, credited their survival of that horror because of their ability to find meaning in life. In contrast, a life without meaning or purpose is a burden to those living it. The lack of meaning in people's lives is a root cause of dissatisfaction, addictions, hopelessness, despair, and unhappiness in general.

The uncertainty and rapid change in modern society make values rare and hard-to-find. They act as anchors in our lives, and without them we suffer drift, and life seems pointless. Relativism – the belief there are no universal standards of good or evil, and that one course of action is as good as any other, is very widespread. This has had a very corrosive effect. Without values and meaning, your identity and character are shallow, lack substance, and your self-esteem is easily wounded.

Technology offers substitutes for meaning, friendship, and community. People seize on these and adopt them, as they promise qualities we associate with values. Technology promotes itself as being important, wants to run the world, and creates an enormous number of artificial networks and pseudo-relationships (like social media, and celebrity culture). Unfortunately, these aren't real, but are copies. Technological toys only make pale imitations of the things that create true meaning. They are not a foundation for a lasting value system.

Most people find meaning in their lives by providing for and spending time with their families and loved ones. Women tend to feel meaning and love are tied together, as nurturing children and families are a central part of life. Men tend to find meaning through creativity, making and building things, and passing along the skills to do so.

Meaning also arises from participating in the rites of passage we all experience – births, marriages, graduations, funerals, and the like, that we share with family and friends. Whatever you choose, if you're making the world a better place for yourself and others, a sense of meaning is present. It is about giving more than you take.

There are many ways to bring purpose into your life. Once you know what is important to you – your life goals, and pursue them, you will find meaning. In your relationships with others, meaning comes from sharing and caring, using your skills and talents to improve their lives. Within your community, meaning can be found by leaving a legacy or gift for the future. It can also be discovered by exploring spirituality. Connect with something greater than oneself, and experience the eternal and the infinite.

Tools and techniques for bringing meaning into your life with yourself, others, and your community now follow.

Chapter Notes

"*The uncertainty and rapid change in modern society...*" This observation on technology comes courtesy of Kevin Kelly, and his work *New Rules...* (Please see bibliography).

II. Meaning

Self

The search for meaning begins with discovering the things that are most important to you. Find out what matters most to your core self; your life goals. These are the things you want to achieve in this lifetime, the things you feel you were meant to do. Learn what they are, and these will fill your days with meaning and purpose.

The way to find these is through inner work, stripping away trivial concerns clogging up your mind. Get in touch with a deeper part of yourself; your intuition. We seldom consult it directly, though it governs our emotions, feelings, and – unnoticed, the direction our lives take. As discussed in previous chapters about the true self, once you've opened a conversation with your intuitive side, personal revelations and the shape of your inner landscape become clear. With this knowledge, your true nature, and your desires are made plain to your conscious mind.

My own intuition – Heart-Soul, offered this myth on the origin of meaning. He names it The First I.

For ages beyond counting, there was life. Beings lived their season, had offspring, then decayed and rejoined the earth. It was enough just to live.

Then Thought was born, and the First I emerged, to ask:

"What is life? Why am I alive? What is the point of it all?"

The Dark One who takes life itself, always waiting, heard and answered:

"Now you are aware, you know you must die. This causes you pain. I give and I take – so I give you this gift in return.

"The point of life is to make order out of chaos. Rise above your limits, and take part in something greater than yourself. Do this, and your purpose will be clear."

The journey within to find your purpose in life requires you to slow down, and take the time and effort to question your inner self. Western cultures teach this is distasteful or a waste of time. Our society worships rationality and distrusts contemplation and subjectivity. Yet self-examination is exactly what's needed to get in touch with your values, and find your purpose in the world.

To do this, ask - what is your story? Stories are a natural way of making sense of our lives, and understanding experiences. Good stories break down barriers, evoke emotions and forge connections. Stories are the purest form of communication, powerful and moving. It is why they are embedded in our myths, legends, and help us express ideas and values.

Imagine your life as a story. Tell it as you wish it to be, then live it.

Here are some doorways that lead to meaning, essential for a satisfying existence.

Chapter Notes

"To do this, ask - what is your story?..." This simple yet beautiful insight about stories comes from Kendall Haven's *Super Simple Storytelling*, which I discovered through Blake Mycoskie's book.



A whimsical recreation of Abraham Maslow's 'hierarchy of needs', with self-actualization (becoming your true self) at the top.

II. Meaning – Self

1.) Discover

Discover your true self and nature.

To open an inner conversation with your unconscious, set aside 15 minutes a day, or half an hour if possible a few days a week, at a time when you won't be disturbed. Find a quiet place to sit back and relax. These exercises work best if they are repeated for a few weeks or months. This gives your inner self time to mull things over, and will give you better, more in-depth answers and insights. Remember, this part of yourself prefers images, feelings, and symbols rather than words. It uses the stuff of dreams to communicate. It is fickle, and hates to feel controlled. Be patient, forgiving, and gentle, and your conversation will improve dramatically.

Meditation and mindfulness practice speed up this process, and are easy to do. As discussed briefly on page 32, a calm focus on the present, and a simple breathing exercise are a good start. Lean back, close your eyes, and concentrate. Breathe into a count of three, taking a deep long breath, hold it first three seconds, then release it slowly counting to five. You can change this interval to a rhythm you're comfortable with, longer or shorter as you prefer. Focus on this in and out of breathing, until you are relaxed and peaceful. This exercise brings oxygen to your brain, and clears your mind of thoughts, so you can concentrate.

Now imagine yourself in a completely safe place. Picture a beautiful scene, your own idea of paradise. Maybe a long stretch of deserted beach. Feel the sun and sand warm on your body, and see the ocean waves sparkling and clear. Make it restful, perfect for a contemplative walk. You may prefer to imagine a mountain forest near a lake or stream, or a garden with a fountain or waterfall. Anywhere you feel calm and tranquil. Use as many senses as you can, to help make the place real. Smell the sea salt, pine trees, or other odors. Feel the breeze or warmth of the sun. Call up sensations that will bring the scene to life for you. Allow the peace and harmony to relax you, and bring a sense of contentment.

When you are relaxed and your mind is calm and clear, you can pose questions to your inner self. Be patient. It may take several sessions before the inner chatter of your everyday mind fades, and tranquility takes over. With practice, you can summon this peaceful state just by remembering how it feels. You'll instantly return to that calm inner state. Once there, ask your inner self to tell you what you want to know. In time, it will answer, perhaps in a dream, a daydream, a sudden flash of inspiration or insight, or when you are resting. Keep practicing, and a conversation will begin.

You can also simply pose questions to your conscious mind. One way to discover your life goals is to imagine you are free of need. Imagine you have the means to supply every

- need and desire. What would you do with your life if you didn't need to work? How would you spend your time and energy? What things would you do if you had no limits, and were free to decide the direction your life takes?

Think on the subjects that fascinate you, and the activities you enjoy most. What are you willing to suffer and struggle for? What do you want to be known for? What cause do you serve? The answers to these questions define you, and shape your life. These are how you measure success or failure; the things you value. Good values improve life for yourself and others. Bad values lead to irrelevant, unimportant acts, and make things worse.

Explore this fully. What appeals most to you? What interests are worthy of lifelong dedication? If these don't reveal what's most important to you, or you feel you are getting answers that aren't very significant, you can dig deeper with a more intense technique. Facing your mortality.

Some philosophers believe adulthood begins when we recognize that someday we will die. This is perhaps the greatest of human fears – the fear of death. Death is certain. All living things must die someday. It is the way of life, a fact all know and must confront. From those who have died and returned (people who have had near-death experiences) we know that passage is not to be feared. You emerge from an eternal place at birth, and return to it in death. It is more of a homecoming, unity with the cosmos.

Without doubt, death brings an end to suffering. Let these facts help you face your mortality, and accept it. We fear and dread death as an end to what we love and cherish. But you can put that dread to good use. Facing your death can be a valuable experience. A quick way to find your life goals, one of the best methods of doing so.

The Japanese perfected a version of this at the height of their feudal period in the 16th and 17th centuries. This was the time that samurai culture flowered, and the cult of Bushido (the Way of Honor or Way of the Military Man) reached its height. When a warrior – a samurai, prepared himself for possible death in battle, or was called upon by his Lord to commit sepuku (ritual suicide) for some failure or dishonorable behavior, he took an hour or two to contemplate his or her own death. After a thorough review of their life, expecting they would soon be dead, they would compose a poem. This was the famed death haiku, a short couplet of three lines of five, seven, and five syllables each.

Ideally, the death haiku has several layers of meaning. The samurai would seek to capture the essence of their time on earth, their experiences, philosophy, and any wisdom they chose to pass on to the reader. A well composed or witty poem could bring fame. Death haiku composition became a competition among samurai for renown, for their courage in the face of death.



Facing your own mortality is a rapid (though intense) way of dicovering your life goals.

In Thai prison, certain I would be dead shortly, I composed my own death haiku:

"No destination/is reached by clouds in the sky/only endless change".

I plan to use it as my epitaph.

You needn't compose a haiku, though it is a wonderful exercise if you do. But this method can be practiced by anyone, and will clarify your life. Isolate yourself for a few hours, picking a time and place and you won't be disturbed. Concentrate hard, and imagine you will die in a few short hours. Enter this belief completely. Let it fill your heart, mind, and soul, and see your own death. Accept that you *will* die, and nothing can stop or change this. Let the emotions this brings flow through you. You may weep, or be overwhelmed with sadness and regret. This is natural. Give your feelings full rein, and embrace this intense reaction to your own death, without holding back.

See the events of your life pass before you, and let the feelings this brings do what they will. Examine your relationships with others. Contemplate the things you wanted to do but never did; the words unspoken and deeds undone. The might-have-beens and could've-should've-would've thoughts will show you what you didn't grasp in life. When the intensity fades, your deepest regrets and desires are left behind, plain to see. The life you wish you'd created, but failed to make real. Yet, you are not going to die (not for a while). Now you know what is important to you, the things undone you most regret. Your life goals are the work that will build a meaningful existence.

If you are not good at visualization or using your imagination, you can achieve the same effect by visiting those who are dying. Contact a hospital or nursing home chaplain, or one of the humanitarian groups that ease the suffering of elderly and terminally ill people. Ask if you could try out as a volunteer to visit such people who are lonely and would like some company.

It is emotionally intense, but you will be doing important, valuable work at the same time as coming face-to-face with your own mortality. Your priorities, regrets, fears, and desires will be made clear through contact with the dying. It will give you a vision of the life you still have an opportunity to build. Confronting death tells your heart, gut, and mind that life is fleeting. Death is never far away. This makes everything obvious. Your shortcomings and failures along with your skills and talents, pointing the way to self-fulfillment.

These exercises can help you realize what you need for a useful life. What you would've done differently, what you've left undone – this is knowledge to guide your future actions. The next step is to make these things the focus of your life.

Chapter Notes

"*What are you willing to struggle and die for?*" Thanks to Mark Manson for his insights on values to help transform your life.

"*What do you want to be known for?*" I'm also grateful to Blake Mycoski for his ideas on values that enriched this section.



Concentrate, and focus on what matters.

II. Meaning – Self

2.) Focus

Simplify your life, and focus on what matters.

Once you know what's important to you, and your life goals are clear, you need to make changes in your life so these ideas can become a reality. You need to focus on action that will achieve these goals. Simplify your daily routine to make time for it to happen.

Reordering your priorities and changing your routines and habits requires self-discipline. This can be made easier by taking small steps. The Japanese concept of kaizen is useful here. Kaizen is starting small, making tiny improvements or increases in an activity that is doable. Practicing kaizen every day leads to massive overall improvements, like a 500 pound man who can get barely out of bed, taking one extra step each day. A year of such effort, and he was down to less than 200 pounds and walked several miles a day. Once begun, this path becomes self-reinforcing, as the benefits and results become obvious with your achievements. Start with tasks or changes that are easy to implement, so changes are gradual and painless.

Break your goals down, and fit them into your daily life, so they are a regular part of it. Making your goals into habits increases the chances they will become real. As you enjoy success and your goals come closer to fulfillment, it gets easier to dedicate more resources towards doing what's important. This starts a virtuous cycle, as your achievements become more solid, the more time and energy you are willing to devote to them.

The biggest factor is self-discipline. Your self-control depends on your mindset. If you believe your willpower and ability to change behavior are unlimited, they will be. Stanford University professor Carol Dweck has studied the subject in depth. She has proven that what you believe about your willpower and your abilities become self-fulfilling prophecies.

Dr. Dweck gives a few tips to increase your willpower. First, remind your right side brain/subconscious with messages by putting them in places you see frequently. Things like goals written on Post-it notes, or pictures placed around your house and workplace that offer concrete examples of what you want to achieve. Second, give yourself some little rewards as encouragement for reaching milestones. Also, laugh occasionally. This helps you persist, so include some humor in this process. Finally, making abstract goals visible helps your motivation. Use a chart, graph, or other visual aid to keep track of your progress, so you can see your goals being met.

Many people benefit from writing to do lists, and get satisfaction and motivation from crossing off tasks as they are completed. Others like collecting images from magazines

- that illustrate their dreams. Make collages or displays you can put in prominent spots to inspire you by repeated viewing. Whatever helps make your goals feel tangible, real, and present will support your efforts to change.

One way to create changes in lifestyle that last is to harness the power of habit. Habits are nature's way of saving your mental energy. Once a behavior is established as a pattern, the brain goes on autopilot.

Almost half of daily activity is done this way, and your brain no longer chooses or participates in any conscious way. This sort of automatic behavior is great for convenience, but can also allow bad and unhealthy behavior to take root.

Habits form using a simple three-step process of cue, routine, and reward. The cue is the trigger, or an external hint of which pattern to follow in any given situation. The routine is a habit itself – mental, emotional, or physical activity. The reward is what makes the routine worth doing. To start a good habit like exercising, make your cue a simple one, such as placing your gym bag next to the front door every morning, or heading to the training center after work each day. The routine, in this case, would be a good workout session, and the reward the pleasurable endorphin rush exercise gives. You can reinforce this habit by imagining how good you'll feel with a tone, fit body, or how great you'll look this summer in a smaller swimsuit. A reward is a powerful reinforcement for forming habits, so attach it to something you really want.

Changing a bad habit is mainly a matter of awareness. Look closely at the root causes of the habit; when and why you do something. By recognizing the cues and rewards of a habit you can replace or change it. For example, a 2002 NIH study found dieters who kept a food journal, recording what and when they ate, lost twice as much weight as everyone else, and kept the weight off. People began thinking about how they ate and as a result changed for the better. You can do this with drinking, gambling, OCD, smoking, and so on. Identify the cues that set off the habit; have a plan to change the routine, then change or allow the reward. Repeat often enough, and a new healthier habit will form.

The ultimate method of boosting your self-control is to make a habit of doing it. Willpower is like a muscle, the more you exercise it, the more powerful it gets. As described earlier about forming and changing habits, pick great rewards for when you show self-control. Choose simple cues, establish good routines, and practice them often enough to form a habit that leads to success. Self-discipline grows from overcoming challenges, adversity, and blocks to progress. Whether your goal is to eat better, smoke less, be healthier or more productive – more self-control spills over into the rest of your life, and improves it. Make exercising willpower a habit, and it will transform your existence.

Success at anything, including personal change, depends on a few character traits and ways of doing things. Investors Business Daily, an investment newspaper, distilled some

- commonsense principles for success that help make changes. These will assist you in achieving your goals.

These principles are: "how you think is everything"; think positive and avoid negative thinking, as success depends on believing it is possible. "Never stop learning"; get the training, and acquire the skills you need for success. "Be persistent and work hard"; in other words – never give up. "Communicate with people effectively"; learn to understand and interact well with others. "Be honest and dependable"; this makes all the other steps possible, as people will want to work with you and help you. These simple principles are both effective and powerful. Work at them until you're successful, creating your dreams in the physical world.

The mythographer Joseph Campbell summed this effort up in his slogan "Follow Your Bliss". It captures the essence of your quest for meaning – pursue whatever brings you joy. Of course, for most of us, quitting your day job isn't possible. But think hard about how to change your life to make room for ways to fulfill your dreams. Map out your daily and weekly routines, with an eye to how they compare to the priorities of your inner self. Single out things that have little value or meaning, and replace them with activities that will move you closer to creating what your true self wants.

The curse of modern life is the lack of time. Our time is consumed getting to and from work, working long hours, fitting in domestic chores, child care, and so on. It has reached the point where leisure time means collapsing on a couch in exhaustion, trying to recuperate from our overly busy schedule.

Search for ways to simplify your life. Time can be carved out so you can work on and achieve your life goals. One huge time-waster is our worship of material possessions. Our slavery to the accumulation of things is mindless materialism, consumption for consumption's sake. Paying for and maintaining objects we seldom use and don't really need takes a lot of time, energy and resources. We are convinced by clever marketers the ownership of this junk is necessary or fashionable. Cast a critical glance over your buying habits. Look around your home, garage, and workspace, and pick out the unnecessary items. Costly but seldom or never used things, taking up space gathering dust. Get rid of it! Don't buy things you don't need, and not buying more of them frees up time and space. Don't buy goods you don't really need, and you won't have to work to earn money to pay for useless stuff, or spend time organizing and storing it all.

Do the same for your activities. You may be spending long hours of driving a long distance to work when a local job paying less is available. This is a time-for-money trade that is worth considering. This might free up time better spent on doing what brings happiness than money does. Social conventions can also be time-wasters. Things like keeping a lawn, sucking up time, effort and money on useless ornamentation. A useful groundcover plant like mint or lavender is both beautiful and far less costly in maintenance. There are many of these in daily life you can discover if you cast a critical eye over your habits and routines.

Don't waste time on busywork, or accept jobs as normal without thinking and judging their real value. Like trips to the gym – when doing situps and push-ups at home would save time, money, and provide the same workout. Obsessive interest in social media, watching TV, playing video games, net surfing and the like are another huge waste of time. Trips to convenience stores and fast food restaurants for unhealthy snacks we don't need; unnecessary shopping, long hours on the phone gossiping or texting friends, all of these give no lasting benefits or improvement in your life.

Experts have found that 20% of the things you do waste 80% of your time with distractions and interruptions. Write down your top time-wasters, and stop doing them. Time management specialist Tim Ferris suggest you define a few important things, and let the small stuff slide. As Ferris puts it, focus on the critical few activities that matter, not the trivial many.

By cutting these out, making your life simpler and less cluttered, will help you focus on what is meaningful to you. Part of the problem, in the US certainly, and to a lesser extent in other developed countries, is our addiction to comfort and convenience. There is a commercial obsession with making things quick, easy, and comfortable for consumers. This is encouraged by massive propaganda campaigns paid for by the businesses that profit from it. This wastes enormous amounts of resources, when a little patience and effort would save money and time. By doing it yourself whenever possible, instead of purchasing things ready-made. you'll end up improving quality and enriching your life.

Poet Kahlil Gibran put this unhealthy way of life in perspective when he said: "Comfort and convenience come into the house as servants, and stay on as masters."

Go through your life like a spring cleaning, and get rid of what is unneeded, unwanted, and unnecessary. Replace them with things that help create what is truly valuable to you.

Chapter Notes

"Your self-control depends on your mindset" Dr. Dweck's TED talk on this has been viewed over 6 million times. Her work at Stanford has helped millions achieve more willpower and self-discipline.

"The ultimate method of boosting your self-control..." Thanks again to Charles Duhigg and his excellent book *The Power of Habit*.

"Investors Business Daily, an investment newspaper..." Thanks to the IBD for their *10 Secrets to Success*. The other five secrets are similar to steps to innovate or actualize, given in the next chapter.

"Experts have found that 20% of the things..." Tim Ferris's book *The Four Hour Work-week*, and his website www.rescuetime.com, came to my attention thanks to Blake Mycoskie.

"Poet Kahlil Gibran put this unhealthy..." I appreciate Kahlil Gibran's insight, from his classic poem *The Prophet*.



Put your best effort into what brings you joy...

Choose to excel, and create flow.

You have discovered what matters most, and cleansed your life for time to do it. Now, choose to excel. Making a conscious choice to achieve mastery will transform whatever you want to accomplish. You may have several things you want to achieve in life. You may be blessed with many skills and talents, and have many interests that fascinate you. By deciding to excel at what you choose to pursue, meaning finds its most complete expression. Give your best efforts, spend the time and energy, and you will make it real – finding purpose in the process.

Achievement is the result of effort combined with skill. You don't need incredible talents, or be a genius to excel. A genius is sometimes defined as a person capable of changing the world. Yet genius is less a matter of high intelligence than of having lots of motivation, tenacity, and a bit of luck. A Stanford University professor – Lewis Terman, tracked 1500 children with high IQs (of over 140, considered genius or near-genius), in northern California for decades. Few of them did much with their brainpower. He found that achievement and accomplishment don't come from high intelligence. Two main qualities – passion and perseverance, are the real power behind trailblazers – those who do change the world.

You can become world-class at anything if you have some talent for it, and are willing to spend 60 hours a week for 10 years practicing. This is the formula Olympic athletes follow, documented by Angela Duckworth, a psychologist at the University of Pennsylvania. Neurologist Daniel Levitin made a similar finding, who did an overview of research into the subject. 10,000 hours of practice is the magic number for expertise in any field. It works out to about 30 hours a week of practice for seven years to achieve mastery. It is amazing to think that anyone can become an expert at the very top of their field in the world, with enough passion and a willingness to practice.

Character and self-discipline are necessary (obviously!). But it is mainly passion that drives people to practice, practice, practice. Self-discipline is driven by intense desire, the strength that powers all the others. Passion is the fuel.

You can transform your life with a fraction of such effort. Researcher Josh Kaufman has collected convincing evidence that after only 20 hours of focused, deliberate practice you can achieve basic competence in many fields. Find experts, get their material or instructions, create an action plan, then make the commitment to study and practice. Follow these simple steps, and within a few hours you will be able to perform reasonably well at your chosen skill.

It is a matter of putting your best effort into whatever you're gifted at doing, and do this consistently.

Choose the life goal that is closest to something you enjoy and that you are good at. You are most likely to succeed if you already have a talent that furthers your goal. This was the message of *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*, a classic parable of the 1970's by Richard Bach. It's about a seagull who goes against the social norms of his fellow birds, and chooses to excel at flying. We seldom devote ourselves to any one thing, or allow our passions to run free. It is the stuff of myth – the mad scientist or transcendent artist, who throw themselves into a pursuit, ignoring everything else, and succeeding wildly at it. Of course, obsession isn't necessary.

You may need to learn new skills, understand and study a subject thoroughly, and familiarize yourself with the techniques and strategies of those who have preceded you. Hone your skills or talent with patience and love for what you are doing. Part-time effort is fine. Simply keep at it until you succeed, and your efforts become self reinforcing. Fulfillment will follow.

A consulting company called Fishbird has some advice on actualizing your desires, and spurring innovation while doing it. Their ideas are very close to five of the secrets of success listed by *Investors Business Daily*. These are really common sense, but are still an effective set of steps for making dreams real. First, describe your dreams and goals in detail. Imagine the future, what you want to happen. Second, make your goals concrete. Analyze the details, get the facts you need, and learn from mistakes. Third, identify the things blocking your way forward. What do you need to overcome these blocks? Money? Time? Other resources? And don't get distracted. Fourth, make a plan of action. Set a timetable. Be willing to be different. Following the herd often leads to mediocrity. Finally, take action. This is the only thing that will make your dreams real. You can have all the ingredients – commitment, vision, passion, experience, and whatever else you need. But if you don't take action, nothing will happen. To boil it all down – imagine, plan, then act.

The hard part (beyond exerting yourself) is accepting the pain that accompanies this effort, and persisting regardless. Failures, reverses, errors, pain and loss are natural. They cannot be avoided in the process of gaining mastery. These experiences are your teachers, not obstacles or reasons to abandon your quest. Step back for some perspective after a mistake or setback, and refuse to give up. Realize pain and loss can be great sources of insight. Your failures will teach you more about the right way to do something than success ever will. If you understand the cause of a mistake, it reveals the correct way to accomplish the task.

This is similar to the lessons taught by the 'Osogbo', the Spirits of Misfortune in the Santeria tradition. The Osogbo are believed to bring troubles and disasters to confront us with problems that strengthen us, not out of malice. They motivate us, and bring evolution to the world. Without misfortune, we don't know what it is to be blessed.



Life is filled with pain, suffering and loss. Use these emotions as powerful engines for change.

It is a standard belief in Western philosophy that character and self-esteem are built by dealing with difficulties you cannot avoid. Getting through a crisis, dealing with the ups and downs of life, helps create a challenge mindset. This gives you resilience, making you feel good about yourself and your ability to handle problems.

With this perspective, you can turn your pain and dissatisfaction into powerful tools for change. Life is full of pain, suffering, loss, failure, and death. Understanding this is just the way life is – the first step. Accept that painful experiences are part of life. Second, refuse to run away or avoid this fact, and face it. Confront the pain honestly. Whether it is a personal failing, a problem with loved ones, or some negative event, stare it in the eye. Lastly, use the pain as an engine for growth, improvement, or change. Accept that pain is natural, face it squarely, and use it to spur action to change things. These steps transform problems into power, and a source of confidence and courage.

Rising to meet a challenge can also lead to the intense satisfaction of flow. Learning to create flow is the goal of Chinese Taoists, what they call non-ado, or effortless achievement. Psychologist Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi has spent his career studying flow. Flow is when you're completely absorbed in an activity, immersed in what you are doing.

The rest of the world disappears, and you become one with the task you are busy with. It brings a kind of natural high, an ideal state of being. Flow is when a process or action brings you fully into the present moment, especially when you are working on something with personal significance.

Flow emerges when an activity has just the right balance of challenge and skill. It pits the difficulty of a task against your skill at it. Whether it is artistic, painting or dancing, or work related, even with everyday ordinary jobs, flow is always possible. The task cannot be too easy – this leads to boredom. Nor can it be too challenging, causing frustration or anxiety. Flow comes when you're doing something that requires your full concentration, but isn't beyond your ability to achieve or master.

Mihalyi's work suggests flow increases when you pay attention to your experiences, and involve yourself fully in them. Transform routine jobs into activity creating flow by injecting a little creativity. Make a game of it. Do the same for leisure, by making it smart leisure – challenging and absorbing kinds of recreation. And do the same for smart work – expending effort to make a job better and more interesting. In time you will be able to achieve super flow. This is a full immersion into any activity you love – music, art, nature, or pleasure.

Work to master new skills, and seek out things that challenge you. Let flow be the reward for achieving mastery of the tasks along the way to fulfillment of your life goals.

Again, let go of your ego when failure occurs. Be willing to be humble, and learn from

- your mistakes. If you persist, you will attain mastery, and excel at what you choose to accomplish. Apply this to every goal and dream you want to make real, and you will succeed more often than you'll fail.

Soon, your life will be filled with meaning, purpose, and success.

Chapter Notes

"*A genius is sometimes defined...*" Thanks to Claudia Colbert, from her article "who is a genius?", *National Geographic*, May 2017.

"*This is the formula of Olympic athletes...*" This finding comes from Martin Seligman's book *Flourish*.

"*Researcher Josh Kaufman has collected...*" This information comes courtesy of Josh Kaufman's book *The First 20 Hours*.

"*This was the method of Jonathan Livingston Seagull...*" A reference to the bestseller of the '70s.

"*A consulting company called Fishbird...*" This list combines ingredients from three sources; an article in *Entrepreneur* magazine June 2017, *Fortune* magazine, June 2017, and material from IBD 10 Secrets to Success, July 17, 2017

"*This is similar to the lessons taught...*" From *The Osogbo*, by Oche'm Lele, Inner Tradition Books.

"*With this perspective, you can turn...*" Thanks to Mark Manson for this tool, from his book *The Subtle Art...*

"*Psychologist Mihalyi Csikazentmihalyi...*" I'm grateful to Sonja Lyubomirsky for introducing me to his work.

II. Meaning

Others

The greatest source of meaning is our relationship with others. This is how most of us find a sense of purpose. Raising a family, joining in the social life of those near and dear to us, and sharing our talents and skills with others.

As discussed earlier, generosity and kindness flow from love. When you love someone, you want to help them, to care for them, and share with them. In addition to love, caring and sharing create meaning. It is something you devote your life to. Connect and tap into something that moves you emotionally. This makes others want to be a part of it, and believe in the importance of what you're doing. Find a way to care and share, that makes a positive impact on the world.

Heart-Soul offered me the story of how caring and sharing create meaning, called Heart's-ease Wine.

There was a brewer who loved his wife and daughter with all his soul, more than life itself. A plague swept through his village, and took his wife. His daughter was so heartbroken by the death of her mother the brewer feared she would follow his wife into death's embrace.

He prayed day and night to the goddess of mercy to spare his daughter. The goddess took pity, and appeared to him in a dream. She led him to a sacred spring of pure water, long forgotten, and told him:

"Fill a bottle with this water I have blessed. Add some to your brews. If they are made with love, they will heal her heart."

The brewer found the spring, and devoted himself to making the finest drink he'd ever made. Apples were in season, and to his cider he added cinnamon, spices, and all the good things he could find. His daughter was curious, and asked what he was doing.

"It is for you, darling. A special cider to ease your heart."

She saw the care her father was taking, and was touched by the depth of his love.

"Drink deep" he said, and she did.

The cordial worked, and slowly her smile returned. Through the years, whatever fruit was in season, he made his special drinks with care and love. Word spread through the village and beyond. The brewer gladly shared his heart's-ease wine with the heartsick and sorrowful, who found laughter again. The spring never failed, nor did his work. He was loved and respected by the villagers all his days, as was his daughter after him. Here are some ideas and methods to do the same in your life.



Catching the bridal bouquet - like all rites of passage, are a way of sharing in the lives of others.

II. Meaning – Others

1.) Caring

We are social animals, and our lives revolve around those we like, love, and respect. Your family, friends, tribe – however you like to define your social circle, has always been the traditional way to find your place in the world, and give your life meaning. People devote their lives to bettering the group they belong to. Social groups beyond the family – religious, military, and political organizations among others use the family as a model, and mimic its relations.

The family is a kind of nest, a source of identity, history, and values. It can be both a comfort and a threat. It offers a sense of connection, but may also be a place of painful memories and difficult relationships.

Despite these problems, improving the lives of your family, and others in general, is the surest way to feel useful and needed. Helping the elderly, raising or working with children, caring for the sick and disabled, and caring in any way for those in need is certain to create meaning.

Family and friends are also the focus of the turning points in life. These are the rites of passage, major life changes we all share. Graduations, marriages, births, funerals, and other social rituals are the special glue holding lives together. You participate to show you care about someone's life. You are demonstrating they are important to you, and deserve recognition, mourning, or celebration. An old Swedish proverb says it well: "sorrow shared is halved; joy shared is doubled".

This behavior is natural - an instinctual desire to reach out, connect, and belong. It is a reflex to avoid being excluded, part of our fear of rejection and isolation. It also helps us conform to group ideals and standards.

But caring about others extends well beyond our immediate circle of loved ones and those whose opinions we value. Caring about others, when it is sincere, leads to actions that help others. Unconditional giving springs from innate generosity. It rises from causes we care about, and creates a rewarding, relationship-rich life. Caring improves your health, and even lengthens your lifespan.

By helping someone when they need it most, you are giving yourself a great gift. The biblical saying "it is better to give than to receive" is not just a belief, it is a deep insight into human nature. When you give something valuable to someone in need, you become a force for good in the world. You are a part of something greater than yourself, who is important – even life-saving, and this feeling is priceless. You have the power to change a life through unconditional generosity. This is natural when you really care, because you want to see them better off, happy, and healthy. It is also the right thing to do, the foundation of an ethical life.

You would be angry if you were forced to drink dirty water from a mud puddle. Now imagine dying because dirty water is the only kind you could get! Millions of children die every year from this cause. Philosopher and social justice activist Peter Singer urges us to work to end the suffering and death of innocents that can be prevented. He makes a compelling argument that not only is it better for us when we help others, we also have an obligation as decent people to do so.

Over 1000 children die every hour from starvation and preventable diseases. Billions of people suffer every day from lack of food, clean water, shelter, and simple medicines. If you can prevent something bad from happening without having to sacrifice your own health and safety, you should do so. If you don't, you are doing wrong, like letting a child be run over by a car, or drowning, living an unethical life.

Singer focuses on fighting poverty because of its terrible effects. Those in dire poverty are often hungry and can't feed their children. They are forced to live in slums, exposed to pollution, illness, and harsh weather, making them and their children sick. They are trapped, because they can't earn enough to save money, and thus escape. Every minor emergency wipes out their savings, keeping them in crisis, and often in debt. Eliminating poverty has many benefits. It slows or reverses environmental degradation, and reduces birthrates in over-populated areas, as couples don't need to replace children who have died of hunger or disease. It would prevent the deaths of over 30 million children a year, and lift over 2 billion people out of misery. Singer suggests giving 5% of your income for those who are financially comfortable, more for the rich. But anyone, regardless of income, can make a difference.

If possible, help those in need in a way that fosters independence. Giving work is better than a handout. Leila Janah has founded SamaSource, a company that connects workers in Kenya, India, and elsewhere in the Third World as freelancers for technical jobs in developed countries. Leila insists fighting global poverty means giving those helped dignity, and emphasizes the importance of work, rather than just charity.

But poverty is just one among a host of ills afflicting our world. What do you care about, that needs some help? Whether it is your time, effort, money, or other resources, caring about others and choosing to help them is at the heart of a meaningful life. There are tens of thousands of organizations and dedicated people working on making their neighborhoods better places, who desperately need you.

Make giving a part of everything you do. Work to empower others. Listen to what they need, and give help based on their needs. Let your giving initiate meaningful change. If you are a dentist, offer free teeth cleanings to needy kids. If you are a writer, help with publicity and promotional work for charities and nonprofits. Whatever your skills or connections, use them to better others. Like Blake Mycoskie, whose empathy has given thousands of poor children new shoes through his shoe company TOMS.

Caring takes many forms. Some people work to create fair trade marketing opportunities for poor farmers and craftspeople in the developing world. Others work to strengthen their communities building and staffing playgrounds, community gardens, and art centers. Anything that helps the weak, the vulnerable, the helpless, the downtrodden, is a step in the right direction. Donating a few hours a week for a local charity you like is enough to spur the change you want to see, and builds meaningful relationships with others.

As Mother Theresa said: "If I look at the mass, I will never act. If I look at the one, I will." You can save lives, reduce suffering, and help people meet their basic needs. Look at the one, and let caring become the action that changes your life. The rewards far exceed the effort. Care for others, and they will care for you.

Chapter Notes

"*Philosopher and social justice activist Peter Singer...*" This material comes from Singer's book, *The Life You Can Save*, an excellent resource for those looking to volunteer or donate.

"*If possible, help those in need in a way...*" I learned of Leila Janah's efforts from her interview with *Time* magazine, September 4, 2017.

"*Like Blake Mycoskie, whose empathy has given...*" Blake's inspiring story is found in his book *Start Something That Matters*.



Sharing your skills brings meaning to life.

Your highest duty to your true self is to find and follow your life's work – the thing (or things) that summon forth your passion, and that bring you bliss. Sharing this passion with others is the 'path of the heart' that creates a life filled with meaning.

We are born wanting to help, as children's behavior proves. Young children always strive to be useful, and to assist adults with household or other tasks. The message of your life is how you choose to help those you like, love, and care about. It is the way you want to share with others, the people you choose to aid, and the scale on which you work (local, national, or global).

Finding your life's work, your purpose, or your life's message is similar, but not necessarily the same as the self-discovery discussed in previous chapters. Ask yourself questions about your vision, your values and your ideals,. Vision questions include things like – what moves you emotionally to take action? What do you believe are the greatest unmet needs? What suffering disturbs you most? What would you change if you could? What is the direction you want your life to take?

Value questions are similar. What are you willing to die for? What is your greatest accomplishment and why? What is most important to you? What is the most exciting thing you've ever done? What do you expect of yourself and others? What was your proudest moment and why?

The life goals you have already uncovered may be things you can share with others, or not. But the core of passion is the same. Marrying your skills and talents with work that is exciting is worthy of your dedication and persistence. It is also the path that leads to transcendence.

Work becomes poetry or art when you translate your vision into physical reality. When your work is an expression of creativity, it becomes poetry or art. You measure the efforts of your hands against your inner vision of what you hope to create or achieve, working to make the two match. They never quite do, but in trying you transcend limits, and work rises to a higher level. Striving to materialize the work of your imagination elevates ordinary life into an epic experience. When what you share with others is 'work as art', inspiration and excellence follow.

This kind of transcendent work, making something you're passionate about, is done in a conscious way. Fully present in the moment, your work becomes the essence of Zen and Taoist ideals, the effortless achievement discussed in the chapter on flow, the goal of these philosophies. This is active involvement without attachment, beyond the ego, heartfelt and done for its own sake.

Take what's been abandoned, discarded, or junked, and make these into practical items that are also works of art. Ideas and places can also be reworked, and transformed. In the process, you will turn destruction and waste into beautiful, useful things. This is what the people of Laos have done, a kind of nationwide transcendental exercise. They make wonderful clever things out of the scrap metal salvaged from bombs and old war materiel littering their countryside. T. D. Allman, who lived and worked there for years, sums it up as "they have a gift for life".

This purposeful action requires your patience and resolve, testing the limits of your skill or talent. But since you enjoy doing it, it's not really work at all. Take your inner resources, the skills you own, and put them to work making life better for others. Trust your intuition, gain the new knowledge or training you need, then take action. There is always a way to accomplish what you see in your mind's eye. Find it and keep at it. The things you enjoy doing, that you enjoy as a process, the things you find the most fun. That is what you want to share.

Sharing with others ensures you'll have a vibrant support network of loving, appreciative people. It also brings purpose and fulfillment. This is especially valuable if your efforts are not successful by society's standards or if your goals are more difficult than you anticipated. Anything you do that translates a creative impulse into something physical is worth doing. Don't let others dictate what is or isn't worthwhile or valuable. That is for you to decide.

The scholar William Davies makes a critical point on the subject, worth quoting at length: "... Markets reduce everything to a question of individual calculation and selfishness. We have become obsessed with money and acquisition at the expense of our social relationships and our human fulfillment. Capitalism spreads a plague of materialism, which undermines our connectedness, leaving many of us isolated and lonely. Unless we can rediscover the art of sharing, our society will fragment altogether, making trust impossible. Unless we can recover the values associated with friendship and altruism, we will descend into a state of nihilistic ennui."

Share the work of your inner vision and what excites you. Make your social circle and work partners aware of your efforts, and enlist their support. Your employer, your lover, your family and friends, the social groups where you are a member. Let them know this is central to your well-being, a cause worthy of resources and dedication. If they care about you, they will respond.

This is ambitious, but achievable. Follow through with this process, and a major component of happiness will be yours.

Chapter Notes

"*Vision questions include things like...*" Thanks yet again for many insights on values and vision provided by Lawrence Boldt, from his book *Zen and the Art of Making a Living*.

"*Take what has been discarded...*" This paraphrases T. D. Allman's work in his enchanting article *Life After the Bombs*, *National Geographic*, August 2015.

"*The scholar William Davies...*" This quote is courtesy of Mr. Davies' book *The Happiness Industry*.



© Ridvan Yumlu - PalPics

The essence of community - spending time with those who share your values and interests.

II. Meaning

Community

The last aspect of bringing meaning into your life is adding depth and a sense of purpose to your relationship with your community, and the world around you. This includes nature, larger society, as well as the place you live. Community in its truest sense are those who share your values and interests. It is not much of a jump to extend meaningful relationships from your social circle outward to include citywide or regional groups already involved with causes you are passionate about.

There are two principal ways to form meaningful relationships with your community. One is by building a legacy that leaves the world a better place than you found it. The other is forming a connection with things greater than the self, the core of spirituality.

Both pursuits can bring peak experiences, wonder, and awe in their wake. These are the ultimate gifts of deep connections. Both ways, with needed tools, strategies, and techniques, are explored here.



A legacy doesn't have to be grand; it can be as simple as contributing to a project that benefits everyone.

Leave something behind.

To defy death and achieve immortality is an ancient dream of humanity. It is the heart of the hero's quest, the theme Joseph Campbell explored throughout his life as a scholar of mythology. It is the journey into the unknown, to grapple with and defeat death (represented by different monsters). The hero or heroine wins knowledge by facing their fears, overcoming them, and bringing back wisdom that helps the group. They gain immortality through fame for their deeds. This fight is symbolic, a fight within yourself.

It is the triumph of courage and self-discipline, choosing to help rather than harm. We repeat this quest on a lesser scale every time we do battle with the world, taking risks for loved ones. On a higher level, this happens when we fight for what is right, defending the weak and innocent. You don't always receive recognition for your efforts. And gaining fame isn't your conscious motivation. But the impulse is present to some degree in all of us.

Leaving something behind for others isn't and doesn't have to be grandiose. A legacy is often very humble. These can be personal customs and traditions that grow from a memory of love, like grandma's candy dish that made visits to her house a treat, or weekend camping trips in summer a blessing from your father.

At the community level, this is what prompts people to give endowments and bequests. A way their name and a part of their passion lives on after they are gone. Leaving a gift for the future should be, ideally, a continuation of your life goals. A work begun for yourself, extended to your social circle, and then beyond to your community. When this isn't possible or practical, there is no shortage of ways to make a difference by working with groups that share your vision and values.

You can create a legacy by collaborating with others to help fulfill common needs and desires. Recognizing, supporting, and acting to ease the unmet needs your community feels are important is a way to make a lasting impact. The root of crises are always the same. The unmet needs of many. Applying values are what you do to solve the crisis.

Though we value what nurtures life, and promotes a fair, decent, and just society, we are often surrounded by what is selfish, destructive, and thoughtless. In a positive community, good values seek to fulfill the needs of its members. A legacy that supports life, and values love, caring, pleasure, and the needs and desires of the body is an ethics and value system that will stand in the light of eternity. Protecting the fertility cycles of the earth and its creatures is at the heart of the best efforts working for change. Things like permaculture, living buildings, and rainwater harvesting. Around the planet people are embracing these ethics and these values, building a legacy to ensure their work will live on. Reach out to groups you like, join them, and build your legacy.

These are efforts such as the Slow Food Movement, that has spread through Europe. It challenges the fast food culture of unhealthy food, replacing it with delicious, conscious consumption that cares about how food is produced and prepared. There is the Green Belt movement in Kenya, started by villagers working to stop deforestation and desertification by planting trees and shrubs, often caring for them for years. A related movement in India improves the environment for rural villagers as they reduce poverty. There are the Agro-ecology and permaculture movements, spreading a fantastic mix of knowledge and techniques for sustainable agriculture. Their methods enrich the land, rather than poisoning it, as does industrial farming. This goes hand-in-hand with the hyperlocavore efforts in the US, concerned with food production locally, from farm to table. It includes common gardening, connecting landless urban gardeners with land hosts, emphasizing growing healthy food for local people.

Combining your deepest concerns and truly connecting with the needs of your community and world can take any shape, form, or size, but is always transformative. Examples are legion. The many Occupy movements, challenging elite ownership of society and public spaces. Critical Mass bike rallies, halting traffic with hundreds of bicyclists cycling together, forcing motorists to think about alternatives to car culture and the domination of autos over our roads and spaces.

There are appropriate and intermediate technology groups, who collect and distribute award-winning machine blueprints and designs. These offer cheap, sustainable, easy to build and repair technical solutions that reduce poverty and dependency in the Third World. These are machines locals can build and maintain themselves, without costly parts, such as pumps for well water, self-generated electricity, solar ovens, and so on.

There are people creating time banks, and time dollars, hybrid barter/labor exchanges that bypass currency. They are a type of money tied to labor, where work creates one currency unit. Local currencies are systems that generate abundance and prosperity, not scarcity and debt. Hours of labor are traded for goods and services locally through a network/exchange. Time dollars have an effect opposite that of cash. Money is inflationary, fails the poor, and sends resources out of the hands of users. Time banks and dollars engage and share directly with the members of your community. They help keep resources local by supporting neighborhood businesses, increase trust and stability with people in your area, and have many other benefits.

Likewise, there are cooperative ventures of many kinds that involve hundreds of millions of people worldwide. They are based on member's ownership and participation, using the principles of mutual aid to transform capitalism. These include co-op banks (credit unions), co-op grocery stores, and other types of enterprises, a boon to local economies.

Groups like Food Not Bombs, distributing free food and literature at parks and public spots where the needy gather. Or the Summerhill and Montessori school models,

- working to include mentally and physically disabled students with their peers. They create a safe, welcoming environment where children set their own pace, and pursue their own interests. This changes the goals, quality, and atmosphere for a far superior education.

The problems crying out for creative solutions are numberless. Whatever your concerns and desires, your hopes, dreams, and passions, there are countless ways to build a legacy. Poverty, hunger, homelessness, preventable illnesses, social injustice, pollution and ecological damage, illiteracy, oppression, and political injustice, violence, the list of terrible problems we face could take up more pages than are in this book. Choose one for your legacy, as your energy and resources permit, and work to make things better.

What is better? I think everyone agrees that a world with less violence, cruelty, destruction, pain and suffering is better. If you are sharing yourself, showing kindness and compassion, reducing neediness, you're making things better. If it helps others, you are building a legacy of good work. If you are passionate about what you are doing, you are creating a relationship with your community that will make your life fulfilled and rich in meaning.

Chapter Notes

"It is the heart of the hero's quest..." This is the essence of Joseph Campbell's famous work *Hero of a Thousand Faces*.

"Protecting the fertility cycles of the earth..." I am grateful to Naomi Klein for her heartbreakingly powerful book *This Changes Everything: Capitalism versus the Climate*, which provided material for this chapter.



Spirituality is a connection with things greater than the self.

Spirituality is the search for transcendence. It is a longing for connection with something greater than your mortal self. This search and the experiences it brings can provide a profound source of meaning. You find it through a relationship with the world around you, for it is ever present. It is a mix of things you consider sacred. A coherent worldview; your core values: your beliefs about death and the soul; a deep connection with your environment and the life inhabiting it; ties to customs, traditions, and ancient cycles. Whatever raises your awareness to the level of eternity, and gives you a connection with the sacred.

What is it that makes something holy or sacred? What makes a thing magical? Something is holy if we believe it has spiritual or divine power, giving it the ability to heal, help, or transform. This is the source of wonder – our beliefs and imagination. They allow us to turn ideas and dreams into reality, and bring mystery and magic to everyday life. Yet there is more to the sacred than simple belief. Thousands of different cultures over the millennia have arrived at similar conclusions on the practice of spirituality, and the nature of the divine.

The mystery schools of the ancient world, and mystics throughout the ages repeat the same themes of spirituality over and over. Find the divine within yourself. Awaken from the social dream to see reality as it truly is (without illusions), and thus reach enlightenment. Understand and sense our unity with the cosmos, and all things within it. And the quest to create a heaven on earth by awakening everyone, a world where relationships are based on love, not fear. Achieving such awareness requires a radical shift in perspective.

Spiritual practice leaves your ego behind, and gives you a direct emotional experience sensing the presence of the divine within the common place. Dissolving the sense of self is at the heart of a mystical or spiritual experience. The artist and poet William Blake expressed this beautifully:

"...Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand/and Eternity in an hour."

It is a communion (from the same Latin root word for community), intimacy with the greater than the self, becoming one with a landscape and with those you love. The oldest religious rituals explore and celebrate belonging to a particular time and place, the community of living and nonliving things that together make life possible. It leads you to recognize earth is your home, and living things are your extended family. Spirituality needn't involve organized religion or traditional ceremonies, unless you so choose.

The poet Robinson Jeffers captured a great truth when he said:

"Silence and Darkness/those two great staring eyes that see God/great, staring eyes..."

He reminds us that silence and darkness alone (indeed, simple solitude is sufficient) are enough to put you in touch with your spiritual nature. Artist Linder Sterling said "all reflection is a form of religion", and this captures the essence of spirituality very well. She points out with sharp insight that "art is the conversion of personal experience into a universal truth", and that "great artists create and maintain their own mythologies". The same is true for spirituality itself in your life.

Four gates or entrances leading to these experiences are found repeatedly in sacred literature of all kinds. These contemplative doorways are:

- Silence and Solitude – they lead away from everyday thoughts, allowing a retreat, available anywhere secluded, for reflecting on spiritual themes.
- Nature and Elemental Forces – an intimate experience with nature can restore your sense of awe and wonder, one that gives you a sense of unity with the cosmos, or that reveals the many nonhuman intelligences and consciousnesses that exist. They let you feel nature as a sacred presence, a doorway to the spirit.
- Beauty – it invites and encourages contemplation, allowing your imagination to take flight to a different realm. Sacred places and temples are meant to be beautiful, built to excite the imagination. Our souls are nurtured by beauty.
- Eternity and Infinity – these offer the ultimate experience of connection with things that transcend time and space. To meditate on the timeless, and the infinite opens an inner path to the sacred.

Beyond contemplation are the many techniques used by seekers since the earliest times to connect with the eternal self or higher consciousness. These include chanting, drumming, and dancing; breathing exercises, meditation, auto hypnosis, relaxation exercises like guided imagery and biofeedback; flotation tanks and sensory deprivation, fasting, even the ecstatic use of sex (as in Tantric yoga) to achieve altered states of consciousness, which we call mystical experiences.

Not least, the use of hallucinogens and other mind altering substances are among the oldest spiritual practices. The ancients believed they give the user the ability to see and speak with God or the spirits. Subjects frequently describe profound feelings of connectedness with themselves, others, and nature. Users feel blissfulness, insights, and the disintegration of the self or the ego. Hallucinogens often bring emotional release and catharsis, and provide fundamental, existential truths. They seem to make people more open, and are recounted as intense, life-changing experiences.

Psychedelic drugs have proven effective in treating some kinds of mental illness; what the ancients called sickness of the soul. Cures and relief for PTSD, depression, and anxiety have been brought by psychoactive drugs, superior to other treatments. They seem to help the amygdala (the part of the brain that deals with emotions) remodel itself. This plasticity as it is called, makes a positive change in processing emotions. Psychedelics also dissolve the boundaries between the self and the world, one of the main features of mystical experiences.

Hallucinogens are mostly derived from plants with psychoactive properties. These psychedelic plants are living beings, far older than our own species. What they think or desire we can't know, but the visions and dreams they give us may be clues. Jagadish Chandra Bose, often called the father of modern Indian science, and the only physicist Einstein considered his equal as a mathematician, spent many years establishing that plants possess a very evolved form of consciousness. It is possible these nonhuman intelligences hold the key to a different reality.

I have long been fascinated with these practices, and have used many of them in my search for spiritual understanding and fulfillment. Heart-Soul brought me a cautionary tale about them, which he calls Stairway to Heaven.

There was a woman who wished to buy a stairway to heaven. She asked many people for help, and they showed her the way to a hidden garden filled with magical plants. The plants whispered amongst themselves: "This woman isn't welcome here. Only the pure of heart may walk in this place".

She spoke to the Spirit of the garden, and said: "I want to buy a stairway to heaven, and was told you have one here."

The Spirit replied: "What price will you pay?"

The woman said: "All I have."

The Spirit agreed: "So be it."

The stairway appeared, and she climbed it, never to return. But the Spirit played a cruel trick on her, for though the stairway he sold her reaches heaven, she can't stay there, and must climb the stairs over and over, for all time.

The tale is a warning that there is no easy way to make the inner journey spirituality demands. So it is with the easy ways to ecstasy. They can't replace the work and steps on the road to spiritual discovery. Reaching bliss, illumination, enlightenment doesn't require exotic or difficult exercises though. Spiritual awakening may come through contemplation of a beautiful crystal, or mindful sensual exploration with a lover. Worship life and love, feel an intimate connection with your body and nature, grounded in physical experience, and a mystical state is close by.

Some down to earth and effective ways to foster a sense of the sacred in your daily life are given here.

- Set aside a place for what you feel is holy in your home. Dedicate part of a room as a shrine to what you love or worship, a place for comforting rituals, and where you can meditate and reflect.

- Make a regular practice of spiritual contemplation, time for an informal sacred retreat, daily or weekly.
- Connect your inner and outer worlds by giving dreams physical expression. Turn your dream images into sacred poetry, painting, and other art forms. Keep a dream journal to aid this process. Create holy objects that are special or magical for you, or that have spiritual meaning. These might include beautiful found objects like feathers, stones, or sea shells that inspire you.
- Create rituals for cleansing, communing, celebrating, and other spiritual needs. Connect your past and present with them, fostering timelessness, and making new traditions and customs of your own.
- Practice seeing the mysteries of life that surround you. Become aware of what inspires a sense of wonder, and seek out the things within yourself that are echoed in great myths and themes of human life. Bring this awe and connection with the universal into your regular life.
- Use your imagination to see and feel the holy and sacred in people and things filling your days. A powerful spiritual exercise is to imagine ordinary objects are holy and magical. In the same way, see the presence of God or the Goddess in the faces of the people you encounter and things you pass on a spiritual walk, setting out to purposely seek the divine.

This last suggestion is a lesser version of journeys performed by those on a spiritual search. There are many metaphors for this exploration, an adventure anyone can take. Think about these, and delve into the ones that awaken your interest. These include: the vision or dream quest; the pilgrimage; the labyrinth or maze; the Odyssey; initiation into mysteries; the peak experience; alchemy. Anything that unites an inner journey with one taken in the physical world has this potential.

Dr. Thomas More wisely suggests: "The sacred appears where imagination achieves depth and fullness."

Whatever you choose to experience, spirituality can deepen your ties to community and nature, and bring meaning into your life. Think through your values, and create your own philosophy of life that makes sense of your feelings and intuition. We are surrounded by beauty, mystery, the eternal and the infinite. They offer an open door to your spiritual side, if you are willing to enter.

Chapter Notes

"*The artist and poet William Blake...*" This line comes from William Blake's poem *To See the World..., Fragments from Auguries of Innocence*.

"*The poet Robinson Jeffers...*" From the moving and insightful *Collected Poetry of Robinson Jeffers*, by Stanford University Press.

"*Artist Linder Sterling said...*" A big thank you to UK artist Linder Sterling for her insights, from *Interview* magazine, March 2010.

"*Psychedelic drugs have proven effective...*" This information has several research sources, of doctors treating mental illness with psychedelics. They include studies by Roland Griffiths at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland [2016]; Robin Carhart-Harris at Imperial College London [since 2010].

"*Michael Kometev at the University of Zürich* [2015], a longitudinal project by Jordan Grafman [2016], among others. Three scientific articles provided this material, please see Stav Dimitropoulos, Graham Lawton, and Sam Wong, in the bibliography.

"*Jagadish Chandra Bose...*" Bose worked in the early 20th century, and invented the Crescograph, an incredible device which can observe plant growth and behavior at 10,000 times magnification. His work is largely unknown in the West.

"*Some down to earth and effective ways...*" I owe a great debt of gratitude to Dr. Thomas More for his brilliant and comprehensive work on spirituality, which has provided much of the material here.



The heart of creativity is self-expression.

III. Creativity

What is creativity?

Creativity is a basic urge that can take many forms. Seeing the world in new ways; making your dreams real; searching for understanding or knowledge; the love of play, fun, and humor. These are all creativity at work, bringing joy to life, and making it a thing to savor.

Bringing new ideas and creations into the world is central to who we are, the pursuit of our need for self-expression. When fully expressed, this becomes self-realization or actualization, becoming the person you were meant to be. This is the unfolding of your full potential. Becoming your true self is the final piece in the puzzle of happiness – using your creativity.

Our ability to create is a great mystery. It is something we all desire and think about, but which defies easy understanding. I asked Heart-Soul for any insights he could give, and he brought this myth, which he calls The Twins.

First Mother had many children, but they were eaten by things living in the darkness. She carried twins, and desperately wanted them to survive. She asked Protea, the Formless One, from whom all forms emerge, for help. Protea gave her a magic potion, and said:

"Drink this. It will give your unborn ones a great gift."

First Mother drank it, and felt a change. When she gave birth to a female and male, they were full of questions. The female looked at things, and asked:

"Is it good or bad? Is it safe or dangerous?"

The male looked at things, and asked:

"Can we make it better? Can we change it to help us?"

The questions kept them safe, and so Curiosity and Creativity, sister and brother, came into the world.

I heard it, and thought – of course! The origin of creativity is the search for solutions to problems. How do you get that treat? Just as curiosity comes from doubt and worry – is something a threat or a treat? It is an ancient survival mechanism we share with other animals. They are two sides of the same coin – terror and excitement. Curiosity and creativity keep us alive. Amusement and delight come from our efforts to make the world safer and better.

A different factor is also necessary for creativity. This is the need to be open to new experiences. A 2013 study in the *Journal of Creative Behavior* revealed that a willingness to try new things, to be curious and perceptive are key to boosting the creative impulse.

The more open you are, the more opportunities you have for inspiration, and the more material you gather for ideas and innovation.

Creativity follows a pattern, which artist and museum curator Jeff Hoke describes as Idea – Ideal – Idol.

The creative process starts with a new idea, a mix of past experiences and current perceptions, a reworking of images and thoughts.

This is then shaped to make the idea real, Hoke's 'Ideal', from the Latin word 'idealis', for model. You use your skills and talents to mold your materials, and express your idea in a physical way.

Last, the struggle to transform the material you're working succeeds, and your passion produces something new. This is what Hoke terms 'Idol', from the Greek 'eidos' for 'form'.

The result is a compromise between your vision and the materials at hand, a combination of inner and outer nature. You may be more comfortable trying to understand the world, as with science; expressing your relation to it through art; working to explain or transform it via myth and craft, or simply to laugh and have fun with it – humor and play. Expressing your creativity, whatever form it takes, is at the heart of a rich, fulfilled life.

Chapter Notes

"*Creativity follows a pattern*" several concepts in this section are borrowed from Jeff Hoke's *The Museum of Lost Wonder*, a treat for the eyes and mind.

Awakening your creativity begins by freeing your imagination, and helping it to expand and soar. Enrich your inner landscape, and new ideas and patterns will come from this changed perspective. Ideas then take shape, and may be given physical form. You can gain inspiration from the creative efforts of others, and experience your own breakthrough moments.

These three keys to creativity – imagination, perspective, and inspiration, are explored through the methods, tools, and techniques which follow.



The rules of dreams are true when applied to your imagination; let these rules transform your inner world.

Your unconscious or dreaming self sees reality – common waking awareness, as just one choice among many. The feral, sometimes childish and silly, sometimes profound, and often strange ideas your unconscious provides are the fuel for your creative fire.

As has been discussed previously, you create your mental reality, and your imagination shapes your inner world. You decide what your inner landscape looks like, how it feels, and what lives there. Use this power consciously. Do so, and you can create a rich inner space, filled with magic, humor, and delight. Your creativity will flourish.

A wonderfully easy way to free your imagination and boost your creativity is to use the principles of Hawaiian shamanism in your daily thinking. Shaman and author Sergei Kahili King relates that the Hawaiian 'Kahuna' or shaman (from the Hawaiian word 'huna', those who possess hidden or secret knowledge) believes everyone dreams their world into existence each day. Further, we have the power to change that dream. As he puts it: "Dreams are real, and Reality is a dream."

It is a belief shared by many cultures throughout history. The Taoist philosopher Chuang Tzu's famous quip illustrates this well: "am I a man dreaming I am a butterfly, or a butterfly dreaming I am a man?" The dreamlike nature of reality has been a matter of speculation for thousands of years.

Quantum physics has proven there is no distinction between inner and outer worlds, or between our minds and matter. Physics labs over the last few decades have made it clear our thoughts directly affect reality, and reality is shaped physically by our thoughts. It is impossible to separate the experiment from the experimenter, or the observer from the observed. They are intimately intertwined, and affect each other in ways we don't understand. On the quantum level the material universe is made up of ghostly probabilities, not physical objects. It is a vast web of relationships and possibilities directly affected by consciousness. It is a mystery we are far from comprehending.

But you need not care about this to make your creativity blossom. The rules of dreams may (or may not) apply to reality. But there is no question they are true when applied to your imagination. These rules will transform your inner world.

You can create whatever you imagine. Everything is possible within your mind, and there are no limits. Your mental world is whatever you want it to be. Use these new ways of thinking to change and expand your inner eye. These rules for your imagination can increase your creative powers.

A powerful method to awaken your imagination, and use these principles, is to summon inner helpers or guides. These helpers are mental creations, and can take any form you choose, just like the imaginary friend you may have created as a child. These guides tap directly into wisdom and knowledge you may not know you possess. One such being you have encountered in these pages is Heart-Soul, who shares myths and parables with me. C.G.Jung, the Swiss psychiatrist who was Sigmund Freud's most successful protégé, admitted in his writings that all of his insights came from this source. Jung's first book records the dialogue he had with these inner guides. He stated every idea he explored through an amazingly fertile professional career was contained in that work. The book was dictated to him by seven of these beings, a source of wisdom he relied on throughout his life.

Summoning inner guides is very simple. Use the meditation and breathing exercises described in previous chapters. Again, close your eyes, and take deep, even breaths. Slow your breathing down, and imagine a peaceful, beautiful scene. The more details you add, sights, sounds, smells, the more real the scene becomes. Do this until you are calm and relaxed. Practice this, and it will soon be easy for you to reach a relaxed state of mind just by recalling how it feels, seeing the scene whenever you choose to.

When you are relaxed, your imagination can create anything you like. Hawaiian shamans recommend you build a secret or magic garden where you can meet your inner helpers. The kahunas populated their inner gardens with sacred or power animals who give advice, performed magical tasks, and act as guides.

Ask your inner self to bring guides or beings to assist you. These may be power or totem animals like the shamans use, beings taking animal shapes. Other traditions suggest using honored ancestors. Modern users (like Jung) summoned famous people from history whose advice he respected. Whether you choose talking dolphins as guides, or have conversations with Aristotle and Einstein as advisors, inner helpers bring creativity and new approaches to old problems. They will do whatever you request of them. It is a simple way to spark a dialogue with your unconscious, and open exciting avenues for inner exploration.

Just as you can create guides, you can also build things. Using your imagination to do inner building was much used by scholars during the Italian Renaissance. The scholars followed the advice they discovered in classical texts from ancient Greece and Rome. They created memory palaces, talking libraries in their minds where each object served as a mnemonic device. Facts are stored as things that instantly call forth a memory. These may be statues that speak, paintings that tell stories, imaginary creatures or funny scenes – whatever you need to make something easy to recall. You can mentally build whatever pleases you, as plain or as wildly decorated as you like.



Create your own 'Secret Garden' inside your mind...

Card counters use the same technique to memorize sequences of whole decks of cards. They create stories about each card, making them easy to memorize. For example, the suit of hearts could be people in love. The Queen is a powerful woman, so the queen of hearts would be a powerful woman in love. The suit of clubs might be a nightclub or a party. The two of clubs would be two people at a party. If the queen of hearts precedes the two of clubs in a deck, you'd remember them as a powerful woman in love sees two people at a party, and so on. This way of attaching stories or images to a thing so it is easy to recall can be used in any way you like. It is great for building a mental place where everything represents a memory, easily stored and available for instant recall.

The principles of shamanism can shape a lively and useful inner landscape. Remember that within your mind anything is possible. There are no limits. Everything in your imagination is alive, aware, and responsive. The more you focus on something, the stronger and more real it will become.

With an open inner eye, the next step is to increase the flow of creativity by changing your perspective.

Chapter Notes

"Shaman and author Sergei Kahili King..." Many ideas in this chapter and the next come from King's superb book *The Urban Shaman*.

"Jung's first book records the dialogue..." This work is *Septem Sermones ad Mortuos* (Seven Sermons to the Dead), from whom these insights came.

"Using your imagination to do inner building..." Two excellent books on the subject are Francis Yates' *The Art of Memory*, and Jonathan Spence's *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci*.

One of the key aspects of creativity is the ability to see old familiar things in new ways. It is akin to the mental freedom you felt as a child, living fully in your body in the present, with no expectations or beliefs to limit you. Zen philosophy calls this Beginner's Mind, a doorway to inspiration and imagination. It is a state of mind where anything and everything is possible. It allows you to remake different elements in radically different forms, sometimes shocking, funny, or even frightening. Recombining commonplace objects to create something new is a classic example of artistic work. As artist Linder Sterling describes her own art: "the trick is to find the gesture that returns newness to the familiar". It's a matter of changing your perspective, seeing things with new eyes. Pablo Picasso was asked how he created his art, and he replied he had to unlearn formal techniques, and see the world from an infant's point of view.

You can do this by fully experiencing your senses, and focus every bit of your awareness on a sensation. Entered fully, this can transform your perception of the world. Take any sensual experience, and let a taste, sight, smell or sound engulf you, so that it excludes other thoughts. Immerse yourself in the sensation until it feels like something new and strange. Like becoming entranced by a campfire, or dreaming as you float in a hot tub, let a sensation change your state of mind.

This applies to the creativity used in scientific discovery. Seeing strangeness, mystery and wonder in a thing leads to insights as you attempt to understand it. Breakthroughs come when you ask fruitful questions, ones that when answered reveal the fundamental nature of a process or thing. This arises through a new perspective. True creativity refuses to accept unsatisfying answers or boring formulas that don't help enlighten a subject. This is what brings advances in science and technology, and the way paradigm shifts happen.

Changing your perspective requires you to put away your worldview for a while, and look at reality as if you were someone (or something) else. Shamans hold the belief that if you shift or change your dream of reality, reality itself changes accordingly. This shift in perspective is the essential activity in shapeshifting, a universal theme in mythology and folklore. Shapeshifters take on the mind (and some believe, the physical shape) of animals or other beings.

At its heart, shapeshifting is transforming yourself on a deep level, to 'become the other'. It is an effort made to merge and experience true unity with another being.

The Hawaiian kahunas described four stages of shapeshifting, a way to take the form or pattern of animals or other things. Use these yourself to try a new perspective. The first step is copying, making yourself as like a thing as you can. Next, imitate it, repeating its actions and behaviors. Third, use role-play to act out as if you were that creature. Finally, become that being, joining with it in mind and spirit.

Similar methods for shifting your perspective to share the patterns of others have been developed many times, but the one by José Silva is easy and direct. Put yourself in a relaxed state, then see yourself dissolve into a liquid or a mist. When your essence is fluid, merge it with whatever substance or thing you find interesting. Choose something you feel affection for, or that fascinates you. Spend time observing it closely, and study it from every angle. Ponder its textures, weight, color, lifespan and lifecycle, and how it interacts with others and its surroundings.

Sink into it, and let your essence see the environment through its eyes. Enter this exercise as completely as you can, then ask questions. How does an ocean wave or a mountain experience life? How does a cloud see and feel the sky? Live in that thing for a while, and let the new way of sensing reality change your perceptions. Become other people, animals, and objects, and let them alter your senses. The freedom of flight as a raven, the rootedness of an oak, whatever you merge with, this practice opens the doors of your imagination.

By choosing things you like and love, your natural sympathy for them makes the merger easier and deeper. Spending time looking at the world from a wholly different vantage point renews your world, and makes it unique and unusual. Explore your senses in this altered state, and feel a new self. Feel how a stone experiences the passage of time, or how a plant absorbs and feels water. The more vivid and realistic you make this exercise, the more it will fan your creative fire. Make the vision as strong and clear as possible, feel empathy with what you've become, and let it reshape your mind.

A related exercise is to imagine you are having a conversation with reality, or nature. Some quantum physicists believe this is possible. Authors Whitley Streiber and Jeff Kripal go further, believing "we are all embedded in a much larger, fiercely alive and richly conscious reality..." They are certain reality is fully aware, and may be playing with us, or even laughing at us! They present some interesting facts to support their theory. If true, this explains a lot about life. Why it constantly changes, produces meaningful coincidences, and why it is so strange. Whether or not reality is alive, it is true your beliefs change the way you see it.

The shamanic practice of using nature as an oracle is a benign way of entering this kind of conversation. Ask a question of nature that is important and emotional, like asking advice from a wise older relative. With an attitude of calm, positive expectation, look for patterns to appear that may contain answers to your questions.

Focus your awareness on natural things, remaining open for nature's response. It may come in the shape of a cloud, a face or shape in leaves or pebbles on the ground, the behavior of a flock of birds, or any other pattern suggesting an answer to your question. Heighten this exercise by merging yourself or becoming one with the object or creature giving you the oracular answer. This allows you to talk to it, and question nature more fully.

This change of perspective, getting out of yourself, and into that of another, shakes up your view of reality. Whether human, animal, living or nonliving thing, it allows new ideas and combinations to enter your awareness.

These methods – creating castles and gardens in your mind, creating and asking the assistance of inner helpers, becoming one with chosen objects, and talking to nature and reality, are ways of engaging your imagination. They are a kind of waking dream, one you can direct as you please. Let your primal self play a little. Linking these exercises with specific creative tasks are good ways to bring in unusual thoughts.

If you feel stuck, inject some spontaneity and variety into your daily life. This may free up your mind. Break out of your routines. Do something random or different, and change your pace and activities. Try new things and get away from familiar ones, and you will lift yourself out of mental ruts.

If these techniques and using your imagination are difficult, you needn't go it alone. A tried-and-true method of artists, discussed next, is to borrow from the Masters – looking at the work of others for inspiration.

Chapter Notes

"At its heart, shapeshifting is transforming yourself..." This lovely expression comes from *Shapeshifting*, by John Perkins.

"The Hawaiian kahunas described four steps..." Thanks again to Kahili King for his brilliant *Urban Shaman*.

"Similar methods for shifting your perspective..." There are many good books on the subject, but a favorite of mine for its thoroughness and simplicity is *The Silva Mind Control Method*, by José Silva.

"Authors Whitley Streiber and Jeff Kripal..." A disturbing and interesting book, *The Super-Natural: A New Vision of the Unexplained*, explores the theme of conscious reality in depth.



You can train yourself to achieve 'breakthrough' moments of inspiration.

Inspiration is when you experience a creative breakthrough, an exhilarating insight that solves a problem or visualizes a solution. Recent research shows you can train yourself to increase the frequency and power of these moments of inspiration.

These breakthrough moments occur when we shift from a focused, fully conscious problem-solving way of thinking, to an aimless, undirected kind of thought. Begin by setting a goal, clearly seeing the problem, and analyzing all of its elements. Then allow your right brain to solve it by relaxing and letting go of it completely. Researcher Michael Harris calls this 'wandering mind', when waking awareness turns to daydreaming. It is the state in which connective leaps and fresh ideas occur.

There are two methods that produce creative discoveries, one through relaxation, the other by means of mild exercise. The relaxation method follows a process similar to meditation. Get rid of distractions, dim the lights and ensure quiet, and don't fall asleep. This is an exercise for midday, when you are fully awake. Focus on your problem, until it is very clear, then release it. Relax, and drift off for 10 or 15 minutes. This increases the likelihood a breakthrough will happen. Use the same method before bedtime, making sure a pen and paper are close by to record ideas. With practice, the daydreaming and hypnagogic [near-sleep] states will begin to produce solutions for you.

As an alternative, mild exercise may yield discoveries and masterworks. Walking, jogging, riding a bicycle, and so on are the sort of activities perfect for allowing inspiration to happen. Define the problem, or set a goal, carry a notebook, and keep your hands busy playing with something – a stone, coin, or keys. The latter seems to lead to a more associative state of mind. Steve Jobs noted "creativity is just connecting things", that is, associative thinking, connecting experiences and images in new ways.

Scientists at the Stanford Graduate School of Education found that walking increases people's creative output by 60% or more. Walking increases the blood flow and stimulates the brain, and causes positive changes in your body chemistry. This research supports the findings of Mason Currey, who studied 200 of the most acclaimed inventors and thinkers through the ages. He found one common habit – they all spent time in contemplative walking. Charles Dickens walked three hours a day, mulling over new ideas, and Beethoven strolled every day after lunch. Tchaikovsky declared without his three hour daily walk he would go insane!

Either method can spark a breakthrough, with minimal effort. So focus on the problem, let it go, and then daydream or sleep on it overnight. Alternatively, concentrate and visualize a goal, followed by mental relaxation during mild exercise.

Of course, the oldest, most reliable way of bringing your creativity life is to seek out sources of inspiration from others and nature. This is a near infinite well of ideas. There is no need to reinvent the wheel. Why struggle to create something new, when fascinating, unusual approaches to help your creative work already exist?

However you like to express your creativity, through writing, painting, carving, dance, theater, craft projects, use of machines and computers, and so on, look at things people have created that are similar to your project or interest. The creations of others doing work in related fields close to your own will get your creativity flowing.

This can take many forms. If you like fantasy art, for example, flip through some comic art magazines such as *Heavy Metal* (or the French original, *Hurlant...*), Or the *Spectrum* series of fantasy art competition books. Visit the artist websites they link to, and the thousands (possibly millions) of art and image archives, collections and galleries that exist. These are sources of brilliant ideas and new techniques to sharpen your own work.

If you love crafts, spend time in street and craft fairs, visit Maker Movement websites and gatherings, and the many craft-related communities and resources available online and through organizations in your area. The same applies to every creative effort. With some searching and patience, you will find the creations and discoveries of others who have labored in your chosen field, that can provide insights and inspiration.

Another great source of inspiration used over the eons is nature's creativity. Nature has been a fount of creative ideas for countless artists, poets and inventors for thousands of years. Today people like the Bioengineers study nature's elegant solutions to engineering problems, a human version of biomimicry (imitating the talents of other life forms). If your idea or creativity has a natural counterpart, or something similar to your own work exists in the natural world, study it for good ideas and new ways of approaching your own efforts.

We are surrounded by human and natural artifacts that can inspire you, and give you a creative boost. Seek them out, and let them help expand your vision.

The next step is including others in your creative ventures, intensifying the pleasure you gain from your imaginative impulse, and enriching your life.

Chapter Notes

"These breakthrough moments occur when..." Thanks to Olive Fox Cabane and Judah Pollock for their new work *The Net and the Butterfly* which provided info on breakthrough moments presented here.

"Researcher Michael Harris calls this wandering mind..." Michael Harris has done complementary research in his work *Solitude*, described in *Discover* magazine, June 2017.

"This research supports the findings..." This comes from Mason Currey's insightful work *Daily Rituals: How Artists Work*, a fascinating look at how creators create.



We are at our most creative when thinking of ways to amuse ourselves and others.

III. Creativity

Others

We are at our most creative when thinking of ways to amuse ourselves and others. Play and fun bring out creativity like nothing else. Successful friendships, intense romance, and lively, exciting relationships depend on people using their imagination to brighten shared experiences.

The pleasure we get from play, fun, and being creative with others keeps life fresh and interesting. The joy this brings is priceless. Some insights into these complex, ephemeral qualities follow, to help make sense of them. Here are ways to capture the magical emotions of play and fun, and so bring them into your life.



The roots of play are very ancient, found throughout the animal kingdom.

The essence of play is carefree exploration of the world around us. Play is gleeful bliss, as well as the way we learn to successfully socialize. Play is how we gain "emotional intelligence", learning to be socially competent through imagining the inner life of others. Through play we imagine what is possible. We test our ideas against the limits of reality, and so adapt to the world. Play also helps us learn to establish boundaries in our relations with others. It is essential to all of us, as lack of play is a known health risk for mind and body. With play we open our lives to laughter, letting go and experiencing true physical and emotional freedom.

Play's roots are very ancient, present in animals long before speech and self-awareness arose. Play behavior is found in mammals, fish and reptiles, birds, octopuses and crustaceans. Even spiders and wasps play. This isn't so surprising when you consider the vital purposes play serves in the wild. Play is our introduction to cooperative social activity, and is how we learn to trust others while forming lasting bonds. It is a safe, enjoyable way for the young to grasp lessons and practice adult skills such as parenting, hunting, and mating. Play is also a training for the unexpected, since it is unpredictable and prepares offspring for surprising situations. You have to be mentally and physically flexible, as exercise is a typical part of both human and animal play. Since play only happens when everyone is willing, it is what biologists call "pro-social". This is activity that promotes helping others, a social glue that teaches the standards expected when interacting with your peers.

Play happens purely by choice of the players, so cooperation, fairness, and trust must be present before play begins. For humans and animals alike, play is first about learning right from wrong. You learn what is acceptable and what isn't, how to forgive and bond. It requires trust, a way to gauge the feelings of others, and a memory of past play and future expectations from playmates.

The basic rules of play are simple. You have to be honest, follow the rules, and admit when you are wrong. When fairness is violated, or cheating occurs, play stops – and doesn't resume until communication and trust are reestablished. Unfairness breeds distrust, in turn creating social instability, whereas fairness fosters concern for others and social harmony. Play happens when players are relaxed and stress-free. The more inventive and creative the play, the more interesting and enjoyable it is for participants.

Almost any activity can be turned into play. Mark Twain's amusing observation applies here – play is whatever you are not obliged to do, while work is what you must do. Play, then, is a state of mind. Play is a sharing of desires, imagination, and is the foundation for friendship. The company of others is one of our greatest sources of pleasure, and play is what we most enjoy sharing with them.



The most enjoyable kind of play is when it is shared with others.

Whatever form it takes, play is a crucial part of the good life and healthy intimacy. From infancy through old age, we never stop playing. The common elements of play are unchanging. A group of those who share a delight in a common interest or desire; a creative effort or goal all agree on, and a willingness to let fellow players lead, contribute, or change the direction of play so everyone belongs and enjoys what's happening.

Children's play illustrates this beautifully. An empty cardboard box and a few sticks are enough for kids to build elaborate fantasy worlds; castles filled with battling armies, or explorers in a secret cavern. A lively imagination and willingness to indulge the fantasies of others are the only requirements.

It may be lovers exploring each other's sexual fantasies with games and role-play, sensual activities like whole body massage, or body painting your naked partner. It may be a group of friends spending days or even weeks preparing for a Renaissance festival or historical reenactment, or joining together in life-like fantasy multi-player online games.

These share the qualities of play. It is timeless – you lose your sense of time in good play. It is open to change and improvement, allowing players to introduce new thoughts, strategies, and ideas. It focuses on pleasure – what is fun and feels good, and is done for its own sake, something chosen by those involved.

The historian of play Scott Eberle, describes the process of play. Play begins with anticipation, looking forward to what's to come. Then comes a surprise, when play takes new and interesting turns, followed by pleasure in the play. Understanding follows as we learn from the activity. This leads to a gain in strength, and gain poise and a sense of accomplishment as play is mastered. Play is its own reward, with toys, friends, or both bringing rapture, and spurring us to keep the play going.

There are many types of play, elegantly described by Dr. Stuart Brown, a physician who has made a specialty of the subject. There is social play like peekaboo, dancing, music, singing, and parties. There is the mutual play of friendship, sharing a secret world of private club born of intimacy. There is the rough-and-tumble play of tag, chase, wrestling, sports, and good versus bad guys. Storytelling play involves fantasy, roles and plots, contrasted with the ritual play a formal celebrations of birthdays, wedding receptions, and holiday gatherings. Creative transformative play is the most complex, expressing creativity which becomes the arts, humanities, literature, drama, and sculpture.

In slightly different form this type of play creates the technology of the future, as planes, engines, and other devices often start as toys. This is the kind of play that reimagines what is possible, and so transforms the world.

The benefits of games and play include positive emotions, and stronger, healthier relationships. These translate directly into a longer, higher quality life. Dr. Barbara Fredrickson's work at the University of North Carolina established that people with a higher proportion of positive emotions (such as curiosity, fun, hope, laughter, wonder, gratitude, and love) than negative ones have better health, are more resilient to setbacks and losses, and live *10 years longer* on average than those who don't. She has proven happier people lead longer, better lives, and this comes from social connections – especially play.

Play can be transformed into a powerful solution for obstacles and problems by turning them into games, at the same time sharing and boosting creative interactions with others. Jane McGonigal has a PhD in the psychology of games from UC Berkeley, and spent more than 15 years studying the effects of games on the brain. She suffered a terrible concussion that left her almost paralyzed with pain, and dysfunctional for over a year. This experience, combined with her years of research, led her to create a game she named Super Better. It is now played by over 500,000 people online. Super Better helped her overcome her feelings of helplessness, and aided her recovery. The essence of Dr. McGonigal's work is the benefit of what she calls "playing with purpose".

All kinds of games – sports, puzzles, board and card games, and digital/video games, aid your natural strengths. They help you develop skills and abilities, while improving your connections with others. They increase your resilience by making you more comfortable with failure. In games, you can't avoid losing on occasion, and persistence and learning from your mistakes are the biggest contributors to building your resilience. But better than regular games are ones you make up yourself, because they are more creative, and can be personalized to meet your unique challenges.

Many people are ambivalent about devoting themselves to games because of the negative behavior seen with obsessive or unbalanced gameplayers. The difference between games that help you and games that harm is their purpose. When games are used as an escape, to block out or avoid dealing with problems, they can be unhealthy, as less time is spent working on necessary changes for a superior life. In contrast, when they challenge you to learn and improve yourself, and help you in some way, they are a force for good.

Games played for a purpose help you learn to control your thoughts and feelings by focusing your attention on something enjoyable. You also gain support from others, increasing empathy and social bonding, just by asking others for help, and inviting them to join you in play. Dr. McGonigal's recipe for successful play is to choose a game you like (or create your own), and find the benefit it brings. What skill, talent, or positive change do you get from it?

Once you are clear about the benefit your chosen kind of play gives you, connect it to a purpose by finding a real-life situation it can help solve. Approach problems, obstacles,

- and areas of weakness as a challenge, rather than a threat. This is what psychologists call a 'challenge mindset' that gears you for success, and sets the stage for improvement. Any challenge can be turned into an adventure or quest with a little imagination.

Design your own game by picking a goal that gets you closer to what you want to achieve. Something important that helps you progress with a problem, or makes positive changes. Quitting smoking, losing weight, healing from an injury or serious illness, or training for sports events. These are examples of the thousands of objectives and aims you can make into a purposeful game that changes your life for the better.

Decide what you need to do to complete the game. How do players win? Once you have set the goal, and have the win or endgame figured out, pick the action that makes up the play. It is best if it's something that teaches a skill, practices one, or improves players in some way, moving you closer to your goal. The more challenging it is, the more it will inspire your efforts. It should grab your attention, and create flow as an added benefit. Take any activity that sparks your creativity, one that you find interesting, or that you consider fun. Something that excites and energizes you, and adapt it as the play part of your game.

Next, ask for help. Ask others – loved ones, coworkers, or people suffering from the same problem, to join you playing the game. Make them your allies by letting them know what you're fighting, and why. Describe how your game helps you overcome it. Give them some fun, easy things they can do to help you get there. Create rewards, a way they can win in the game in return for their aid. Get your allies to help you fight your challenges. Let them know your strengths and weaknesses, and who the bad guys are, and treat your allies as heroes.

Lastly, tell a heroic story about the game that gives it a reality of its own. An epic quality adds to the fun and creativity, and makes play more important. Create a heroic persona as your game character, to add humor. It helps you think about your strengths, and about who you want to become. Give scenarios and details. Make up personalities and character traits for villains. Create roles for heroes/allies, and make game wins into achievements worthy of celebration. The game can be open ended (endless), or have a finish line or end goal. As long as you are achieving something real, and it is exciting and enjoyable for players, the game will be fun and purposeful for everyone.

Play is 'limbic magic', a quick way to build bonds, and limbic resonance – good emotional feedback between people. It is a simple recipe. Be wholly present, alert, responsive, alive in the moment, and open to the world. Real emotions are powerful, and easily help form groups whenever they are shared, whatever the emotion or purpose may be.

Learning is another rich source of creativity we enjoy doing with others, best accomplished as play. Acquiring new skills and outlets for your creativity brings -

- happiness as you form new relationships with your classmates and teachers. Turning learning into a game, as many online courses teaching computer coding do, is an effective way to commit new information to memory.

As this brief look shows, play is at the heart of flexibility, helping us change, adapt, keeping us learning and growing. The true secret of success is to increase the emotions you feel when you play, so they fill your life. Recapture playfulness by remembering how play feels physically. Move in a playful way. Lose a little of your dignity, and skip, roll, and somersault. Play with children and pets, and see how they do it. This will rekindle memories, and get you back in touch with your playful nature.

Ask yourself questions about play. When and how did play disappear from your life (if it has)? Why isn't play a part of your life now (if it is not)? What did you do for fun as a kid? Do you play with friends, family, coworkers (and why, or why not)? The answers to these questions will allow play to reenter your life.

Reach out to others, and tap into a common desire for play. Share your playful thoughts and emotions. The key to enjoyable play is sharing your imagination with others, and encouraging them to share theirs with you.

Chapter Notes

"*The essence of play is carefree exploration...*" This insight, with many others in this chapter, is the work of Dr. Stuart Brown, and his delightful book *Play*.

"*Play's roots are very ancient...*" For many interesting stories of animals at play, including Komodo dragons, geckos, cichlid fish, and others, see Marta Zaraska's article *The Play's the Thing*, in *Discover*, June 2017.

"*Play happens purely by choice of the players...*" I am indebted to Marc Beckoff and Jessica Pierce and their book *Wild Justice*, for a deeper understanding of human and animal play, as described here.

"*These share the qualities of play...*" This section has also benefited from Dr. Brown's work.

"*Play can be transformed into a powerful solution...*" Thanks to Dr. McGonigal for her research, which enriched this chapter. *Super Better* is available online at www.superbetter.com.



The essence of fun is arousal.

The living, beating heart of fun is arousal. It may be high arousal, like a roller coaster ride, or low arousal, like getting a good massage. Either way, arousal – especially when shared with others, is among the most prized of experiences.

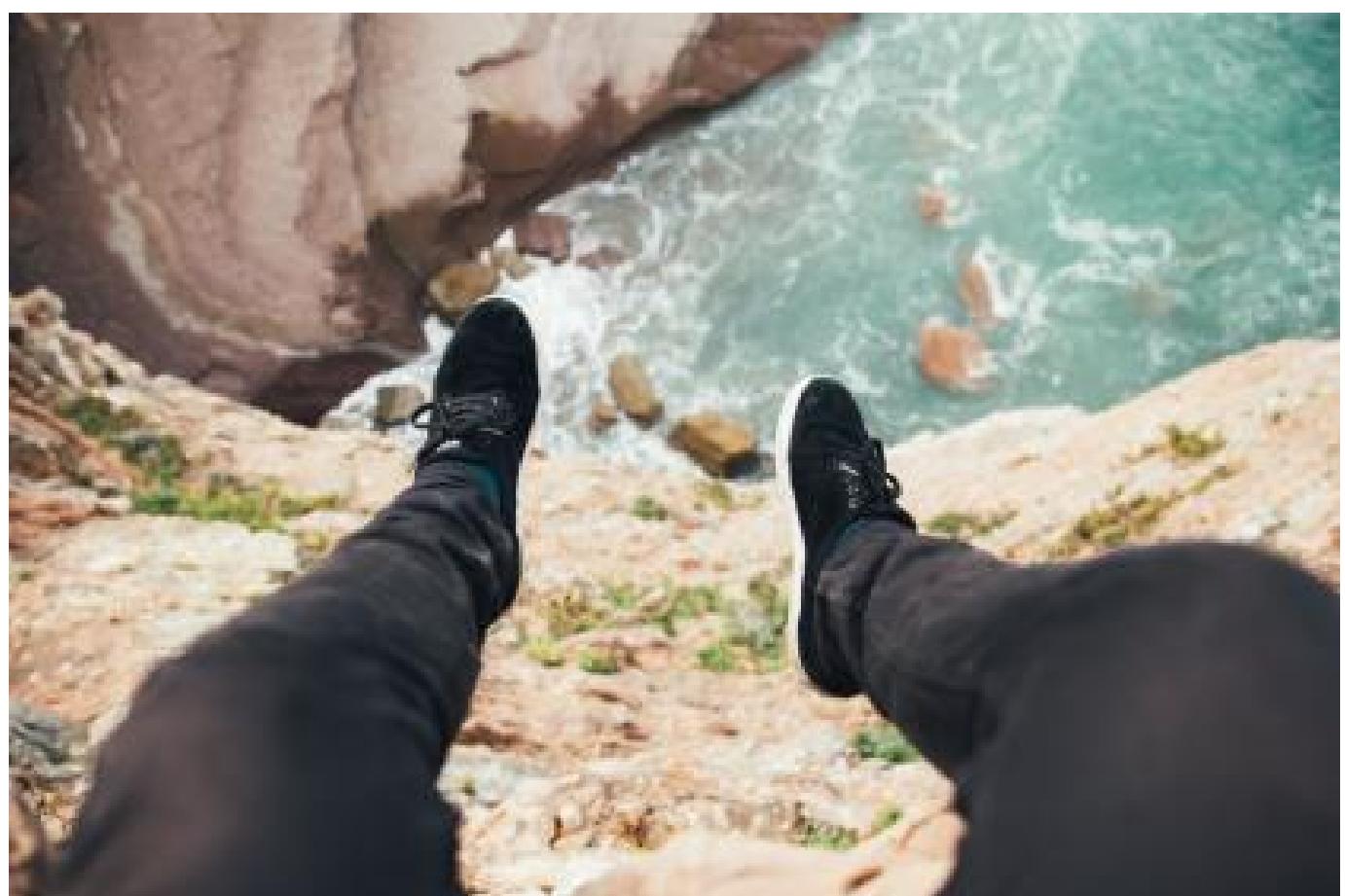
So how can something that by its very nature is sexy, dangerous, and exciting, be so dull to talk about and study? Maybe it is because what's a thrill in life loses something when we examine it, like a body on the slab. But that study is vitally important, for it can explain why and how we have fun. By understanding it, we can make it better, safer, and more enjoyable.

The wide variety of experiences we seek out to amuse ourselves makes fun a subject that is complicated and difficult to comprehend. From stamp collecting to skydiving, from gardening to orgies, fun comes in a near endless number of forms. We chase fun and hunt excitement whenever possible, pursuing some ideal mental or physical condition. It may be an attempt to avoid emptiness, or the lack of sensations.

We seem to have a need (sometimes a desperate one) for activity and feelings. We prefer positive sensations, but even negative ones are preferable to their complete absence. On some deep level, it could be a fear of death, or a deathlike state, when all sensations cease. In any case, we love to be aroused, and would spend our lives in heightened states of awareness, if we could.

This pursuit of pleasure and sensation follows one of two paths, one seeking excitement, the other comfort. There are two ranges of feelings, one positive, the other negative, that share the same chemical patterns in our brains and nervous systems. When positive, we call it fun, and it ranges from excitement to relaxation (high and low arousal). When the sensations are negative, the range is from fear to boredom (the same – high to low arousal). When we feel bored, we try to increase our arousal, looking for thrills. When we feel anxious or afraid, we try to relax and find tranquility. We are always seeking that perfect state, that satisfies our desires at any given time.

Since humans have been so successful at building environments we like, we are rarely in fear for our lives. Consequently, we are often in search of excitement - to avoid boredom, or seek relaxation – to avoid anxiety. Which we seek out depends on our mood. Everything we think of as fun fits somewhere along this spectrum of feelings. What you consider pleasurable depends on your attitude at a particular moment. This is called framing. Fun framing means you feel an activity is enjoyable, as opposed to thinking it is boring, difficult, or unpleasant.



Excitement comes from the possibility of harm or death - the source of our love of danger.

The search for excitement is very common. Playing and watching sports; dancing; attending shows; going to parties and nightclubs; driving fast; trying new foods; traveling to new places; and watching strange or exciting movies. People need excitement, some more than others. They range from cautious, nervous types to manic adrenaline junkies. There are three main sources of arousal we like: risk, sex, and competition. Often these are combined to intensify their effect, as with the classic trio of sex, drugs, and rock 'n roll.

Though it seems strange, excitement and anxiety are not opposites. Harvard psychologist Allison Wood Brooks has spent her career studying arousal. She found that our bodies experience both anxiety and excitement in the same way – an identical state! The only difference between the two is a mental one. This explains our love of danger and frightening situations, as they create the same sensations. Horror films, murder mysteries, bungee jumping, roller coaster rides, and other thrill-seeking attempt to bring forth this response. Fear can turn into pleasure simply by our attitude.

For danger to be a thrill rather than frightening, you must feel protected from its worst effects. Psychology researcher Michael Apter has examined the ties between danger and excitement in depth, and has proven that excitement is 'bought' with fear. As Apter puts it: "excitement is danger's reward". The more intense the emotion and the greater the danger, the more excitement we feel. We feel only fear, however, if there is no margin of safety between us and injury or death. It is the difference between seeing a lion on safari through your car window, versus being chased by that lion on the open savannah.

Apter describes this mental barrier as a protective frame of mind. It is a belief in our ability to meet a challenge and survive the danger. This frame or belief may (or may not) be realistic, but it is essential for enjoying any risk. His work explores the mental frames, each one in relation to our distance from the dangerous edge, where harm is real. To enjoy actual danger as a thrill, you must feel confident you'll avoid trauma, what Apter calls a confidence frame. Next over is the safety zone frame, that applies to sex and most sports, where there is no real danger and risk is limited. Furthest from the edge is the detachment frame, where you are a spectator, without risk. With the detachment frame, the danger is to someone else, or is imaginary, as with fantasy, games, or events in the past.

Whether real or imaginary, from the spectator watching the football game, to antisocial risk-taking like crime, vandalism, and violence (hurting yourself or others), excitement comes from the possibility of death or disaster. We are excited by the risk of something going terribly wrong. This is made more intense if there is an audience. Most risk-taking includes an element of showing off or bravado, especially when it is males competing for female attention.

At the other extreme of experience is risk avoidance and stress reduction. The desire to feel safe and comfortable, yet relaxed (and not bored) in a peaceful setting is a power -

-ful one. We seek out good sensations – pleasant tastes, smells, and feelings. These are things we find soothing and calming, but that also please our senses without alarming them.

Warmth and gentle touch, as in massage and sunbathing, natural sounds like waves on a beach, waterfalls and fountains, tastes and smells that are sweet, spicy, or enticing. These are the things we seek on holidays and vacations. They are offered by resorts and spas, and are simulated by shopping malls and stores, hoping to make us feel at ease and at home. They bring us relaxation, and offer different kinds of comfort, from camping in the woods to sitting by the pool, fun that brings peace and stress-free enjoyment.

A good example of this powerful urge to feel both excitement and relaxation is the use of drugs to alter our mood and perception. Highs are a kind of temporary paradise, the most pleasant state we can experience. We share a desire for this artificial sort of bliss with many other animals.

Mammals, birds, reptiles, and even insects know certain plants get them drunk or high, seek them out, and use them. Horses, cows, sheep, antelope, and other grazing animals love 'loco-weed' and different kinds of 'crazy grasses' that intoxicate them, well documented cases of animal drug addiction. Felines from cats to tigers love catnip and valerian. Bighorn sheep and caribou seek out and eat psychoactive lichens and mushrooms. Dozens of bird species eat berries that cause drunkenness, and they plague opium and marijuana plantations, eating the seeds to get high. Insects, too – moths, bees, butterflies, ants, slugs and snails are known to enjoy the sensations caused by such substances. Furthermore, there are hundreds of kinds of animals who enjoy eating fermented fruit for an alcohol buzz, something they share with humans.

Anthropologist Nathaniel Dominy points out we are "pre-adapted for consuming alcohol". We share a gene with apes, a 10 million-year-old genetic adaptation, that makes it 40 times easier for us to digest ethanol. As biologist Steve Banner humorously puts it "... We came out of the trees for a beer." There is evidence of people drinking palm wine in Africa 17,000 years ago, and of making rice wine in China 9000 years ago. Our love affair with alcohol is a very old one. Many scientists believe agriculture itself may have been developed as a search for dependable sources of alcohol and mind altering drugs. After all, the earliest known religious practices were the ritual use of hallucinogens.

Whether mild, like chocolate, coffee, tea, and sugar; variable – like alcohol, marijuana, and nicotine, (the latter being both a stimulant and a depressant), or intense, such as LSD, methamphetamine, and morphine, the desire for altered states of consciousness is ancient and universal. As discussed in the chapter on spirituality, ecstatic dancing, children spinning around until dizzy, or drugs – we seek that 'rush' that stimulates the pleasure centers of the brain. We are always searching for both thrills and comforts, excitement and relaxation, depending on how we feel, and the feelings of those around us. This is the complex variety of experiences we consider 'fun'.

Beyond arousal and the excitement/anxiety spectrum of emotions, are the ways your personality affects what you think is fun. This is a kind of social role aspect of things we like. Dr. Stuart Brown calls this 'play personalities'. He identifies eight types or approaches to play: the Joker, who likes to make others laugh. The Kinesthete - athletes, dancers, and those who relate to the world through movement and their bodies. The Explorer who enjoys mentally or physically going to new places. The Competitor who loves to win. The Collector, the Director, the Artist/Creator, and the Storyteller – categories that are self-explanatory as to how people enjoy themselves. We possess all of these play personalities to a degree, as most overlap, but we tend to prefer one type of fun more than others. This gives a good overview of what most people find amusing and enjoyable.

There are, of course, a few universal elements everyone loves and finds interesting and attractive. Our taste buds love salty, sugary, and fatty foods, especially with chewy and crunchy textures. We prefer beautiful people and objects, with beauty usually defined as something that's elegant and symmetrical, such as symmetrical faces, and bodies that match ideal proportions. We love bright lights and colors. We enjoy complex music and rhythmic sounds. These are all things we associate with fun and delight.

It is no surprise these elements are found in many popular activities. Most of these features are present in successful rave concerts, and other fun events. Loud, throbbing electronic music dominates dance parties. Raves often have wild light shows and strange visual effects. These include psychedelic paraphernalia and weird party favors, like edible multicolored candy bead necklaces, florescent glow sticks, plush neon-colored clothing, and oversize toys. These things are enjoyable to touch and 'trip on', catering to an ecstasy high (ecstasy is a club drug – MDMA, related to methamphetamine that enhances empathy and makes sensations more intense). Ecstasy is commonly available at these events, taken by many attending them, and it makes the experience more pleasurable.

Flashing lights, clever, funny, and bizarre objects to look at, like giant helium-filled balloons shaped into animals and cartoon characters tossed around by the crowd heighten the fun. A successful rave depends on people with a passion for dancing, and a love of surreal electronic music played throughout the night. Secrecy adds spice, as raves are often held in remote locations or abandoned buildings. Generally, no one knows where they'll be held until the night of the event, to defeat efforts by authorities to shut down illicit (unlicensed) gatherings. The elements for making a fun rave concert apply to rock concerts in general, and earlier variations are found in traditional fun venues like carnivals, circuses, dance halls, operas, and the like.

The same key ingredients are found in popular parties. Professional event organizers and restauranteurs who make a living creating events people will pay to attend have summed up the things needed to make a great party. The list of items matches these ingredients/elements we universally love closely.



The basic elements of a good party are universal; low lights, good food and drink; beautiful women, and music you can dance to.

To become a 'party god' (or goddess), throwing a bash that will become the stuff of legend among your social circle, follow this formula. First, work hard to get as many attractive women to attend as you can. Beautiful women heighten excitement and add sexual tension with their presence, making the party or event more memorable and desirable for men *and* women. One way to do this is ask several good-looking female friends and acquaintances what sort of treats and goodies might entice women to show up. Spread the word these gifts will be given to female guests. Be creative, and do what is necessary to attract some lovely women to your party.

Second, have an unusual, strange, or amusing main event guests can participate in. Things that are slightly dangerous, risqué, or a bit taboo give an added thrill factor. Perhaps a bonfire where guests burn effigies of unpopular politicians or celebrities? Maybe ritual skinny-dipping in a pool while wearing masks? Possibly a séance with a noted psychic? If it is funny, weird, or memorable, as long as it excites and arouses your guests imaginations, it is good.

The other ingredients are more common sense, when considered from the perspective of fun as anything exciting or pleasurable. Give gifts that spark conversations and laughs, like copies of your favorite books and music CDs. Or give novelty items that encourage guests to do (harmless) things to each other, such as children's party favors or soft squishy sex toys. Make finger food snacks, especially ones with cheese in them, as these are salty, fatty, and chewy – a taste and texture triple-winner of sensory pleasure. Pre-make simple tasty drinks like chilled fruit juice and champagne punch, or cocktails premixed in pitchers and bowls, so you and your guests are not distracted from the party by having to mix drinks. Use lots of candles, and keep the lighting low. Soft, flickering light is more flattering to people's looks, and creates a hint of mystery. If possible, have a stereo system or MP3 set up where guests can play DJ, and have a good selection of upbeat music they can select.

Many of these elements are found in communal gatherings, the fun shared with friends and strangers at fairs and festivals. This has been an attraction through the ages; the meeting of clans, tribes, and other groups to share, trade, and celebrate together, a tradition as old as culture itself.

Modern-day happenings like the Burning Man festival, named after a huge wooden sculpture set alight as a bonfire at the closing ceremonies. This gathering features hundreds of fantastic art pieces and performances, that attract tens of thousands of participants/spectators. Attendees dress up as fantasy creatures like elves and angels, or go naked, adding to the surreal atmosphere. They liven up a stretch of barren desert a few hours outside of Reno, Nevada each year. Or the many pagan gatherings honoring the solstices and equinoxes, held throughout the US and Europe. There are countless other holiday parties, parades, and seasonal get-togethers worldwide, such as fantasy, sci-fi, and fan or devotee-based conventions every year in major cities. These are show places for creativity, collaboration on common interests, and a place to let your creative

side go a little wild. The eternal popularity of such get-togethers is a testament to their fascination and magnetism for this part of our nature.

Find groups exploring and creating waking dreams you find interesting, that you share, and join in and participate. From garden shows to historical recreations, do-it-yourself craft fairs to kinky sex parties, there are groups catering to every fantasy and desire, devoted to creative efforts. If no one in your area is involved in what you like to do, form your own group. Others are sure to join, if you make the effort to let people know about it.

A creative approach to fun and play should be about enjoying the process of making the magic happen. Now that you understand the nature of fun, create your own! Enjoy the present moment, look for the unique and unfamiliar, and revel in the unusual. Let your inhibitions loose. You have nothing to lose, besides boredom and apathy.

Chapter Notes

"Harvard psychologist Allison Wood Brooks..." Her research came to my attention thanks to Dr. McGonigal's *Super Better*.

"For danger to be a thrill rather than frightening..." The material on arousal, anxiety, excitement, and framing are derived from Michael Apter's fascinating book *Danger: Our Quest for Excitement*.

"Highs are a kind of temporary paradise..." The research on animal use of intoxicants comes from Dr. Giorgio Samorini and his amazing work on this subject.

"Anthropologist Nathaniel Dominy points out..." Insights on human alcohol use come courtesy of Andrew Curry, and his article on the history of alcohol for *National Geographic* magazine.

"Beyond arousal and the excitement/anxiety spectrum..." Dr. Brown's book *Play* is the source for these play personalities.

"To become a party God (or goddess)..." This recipe is the collective insider knowledge of experts interviewed in *Esquire*, December/January, 2017.

Life is a vast, interconnected dance of change, and creativity is the music that moves the dancers. Heart-Soul brought me this comment on our creative relationship with nature and the world, his version of the legend of the Wild Hunt.

The Horned One, spirit father of animals, who lives in the wild places, roams forest and field with his companions in the darkest hours of the night. They are on a Wild Hunt that sweeps all before them. They hunt the Goddess and her beautiful friends. She teases him, and runs away. But before the dawn she lets herself be caught, and takes him as her lover.

It is dangerous to catch a glimpse of them, or hear their horns in the distance. It may fill you with such longing to join them in the chase you lose your mind or your spirit. But if the Horned One accepts you into his company you will become one with the night, fearing nothing. You will share the thrill of the hunt, and the feast and pleasure at hunt's end forever.

The message of the Wild Hunt is to lose yourself in the creative quest, to chase and engage with it. The Hunt is the endless play with and pursuit of your wild side, and the wild things around you.

Bringing creativity into your relationship with your community focuses on a desire for change, of both your inner and outer worlds. At its purest, it is a turning away from the profane, and towards an embrace of what is sacred – the living world. Recognize pleasure, love, and life itself as sacred again. In doing so, you will transform your relations with your community and nature, and your creativity will reach new heights, and a life of its own.



Visions of paradise differ, but most involve beautiful scenery and a life of ease.

The ultimate expression of creativity is to remake your world as you want it to be. Dream your vision of paradise, a place that fulfills your deepest passions and desires. Imagine a life that's worth living, and work to create it around you.

This is the ideal of self-actualization or self-realization. The unfolding of your inner self, to fully become the person you were born to be. A person who saves the world, or sets it afire. A hero or heroine who makes life better for everyone. You can become the heroine, if you choose change. Reclaim your inner life, and do the same to transform your community, and the planet.

How do you create this paradise? It is simple, but not easy.

Begin by pondering, and picturing your ideal community. What is in it that makes it wonderful for you? What is your vision of heaven on earth? Let this imaginary heaven absorb your fantasies and desires. Let your creativity loose. Look to other times and places for inspiration, where people have tried to build perfect worlds. Take the best and brightest ideas, and make them your own

This is not a 'utopia' (a word derived from ancient Greek, meaning "a good place"). Instead, create your paradise by making practical, useful, and necessary improvements, so local conditions begin to match your vision. Be playful, fun, using your imagination to change your surroundings in inventive, innovative ways.

Engage with your neighbors and your town, and find those who share your ideals. Start with the things you most desire. The things your community needs, but does not have. Work to bring these things to life. Seek out allies, and help from any and all sources. Reach out to people and organizations working for the same goals. Build a team dedicated to filling an absence with a presence – the positive changes you want to see. Take the ideas discussed in the chapter on Play, and reimagine this as a quest or adventure. Make it a game that's a challenge you seek to overcome, and turn allies and new friends into players (and heroes).

Do the same with problems and concerns. Your paradise is made by changing what is ugly into something beautiful. Change what is negative into something positive. Change what is harmful in your neighborhood into something helpful. Dostoyevsky wrote: "beauty will save the world", and he captured a great truth. A few people in every community creating beauty, changing things that hurt the spirit into sources of healing and joy, will remake our world into a nirvana.

So much misery and unhappiness in the world comes from fanatics trying to force everyone to live out their dreams. It is usually the tired, boring old dreams of people dead for 1000 years. Dare to dream a new vision of your own. Let others have their dreams, too! Take the changes you have made in your life, the ideas you have embraced (or questioned and discarded), in your quest for freedom and happiness, and apply them to your surroundings. Whatever you do, do it with love, and passion.

Creativity that brings change often questions an established order, the way things are, that we want to alter. Challenging your culture raises your imagination to a higher level. Play with the public myths and the psychic reality we believe are normal and acceptable. This is the mind space you share with others where you live, that may need some shaking up, or readjustment.

The questions you have asked yourself and others about values and visions in the chapters on Meaning apply here as well. They lead to a creative dialogue that calls forth the divine spark within you that is capable of transforming reality.

One way to help clarify your vision is to use dreams and mythic archetypes that match your desires, providing models for what you want to achieve. Myths are stories that use the language of symbols. Mythic archetypes are larger-than-life characters who tell stories everyone can relate to. Myths show us the common patterns in life we share, and how others overcame obstacles through the ages. We may not have lived or experienced these roles and dramas, but we understand them. They are timeless examples of responses to the crises we face as humans. They have eternal power because they show you new ways of interacting with the world. They offer unique perspectives, different approaches, and creative solutions to age-old problems.

Find the archetype and mythic themes that fit you and your life. You will discover a deeper (and often mysterious) part of yourself that, if encouraged, will lead you to a path with heart. This path is the way of life filled with creative fire, magical and transformative. There are countless archetypes of a greater self to choose from, found in myths exploring the numberless paths open to you.

My favorite archetype is the Magician, a symbol of the power of the imagination at work. He turns dreams into reality, and uses play to shape life. Or the High Priestess, healing souls with sacred power and compassion. Many love the archetype of the Fool, finding wisdom in folly, and love through laughter. Others prefer the Warrior, the power of the will made real and physical. She fights for what she loves, winning the battle with self-discipline and concentration for the forces of light.

As with art and spirituality, look at your world in mythic terms, and you will transform your experience. It helps you see the transcendent possibilities within an ordinary life. Choose the archetype that best describes the way you would like to relate to the world.

Find the myths that speak to your heart of ways you can influence events. Finding the ones that resonate bring a wonderful feeling of rightness, a revelation of a new way forward. They help make your future clear before you, and give you a new way of changing what is around you.

Archetypes and myths surround us. Every billboard, TV show, radio broadcast, movie, and every ad push their own mythical vision. Ignore commercial dreams, and find ancient, truer ones. For example, the tarot cards have 78 archetypes, the 56 Minor Arcana (from which the modern deck of playing cards are descended) and the 22 Major Arcana, such as Death, the Wheel of Fortune, Strength, the Lovers, and so on. Each card has its own symbols and secrets to share. So does every form of fortune-telling; they don't see the future, but instead open your eyes to the unconscious patterns playing themselves out in your life. C.G. Jung loved the myths and archetypes of alchemy, showing him the art of transforming psychological dross into spiritual gold. Norse, Celtic, Greco-Roman, Hindu, Native American, African mythologies and thousands of others offer an immense storehouse of images and models for you. Like the Taoist quest to balance yin and yang (female and male aspects of the life force) within, finding harmony with the cosmos. Let these models guide you to fresh perspectives and actions.

You can also explore eternal dreams that seek to transcend our limitations for inspiration. Consider the superpowers of characters found in stories of all times and places, powers that allow their owner to change the world. Abilities like omniscience – total knowledge of past, present and future. Telepathy – reading minds. Immortality. Telekinesis – moving or transporting objects with your mind. The effortless achievement of difficult tasks, the Zen and Taoist goal and ideal. There are many others, most of them thought of as powers reserved for gods or superheroes. These aspirations point to a better way of life, and imagine a different kind of world.

Let these dreams lead you in new directions, using them as a spur for change. What matters is the vitality and depth of imagination the stories bring to your mind, the true gift of creativity. Powerful efforts have sprung from this kind of reimagining.

For example, in 1962, ex-RAF squad leader Peter Caddy, his wife Eileen, and a psychic friend, Dorothy McLean were living in a trailer park on a cold, barren beach near Inverness, in northern Scotland. Eileen and Dorothy heard the voices of 'devas', – nature spirits, and Peter followed their instructions with passion. These beings urged them to plant a garden in the dunes. Knowing nothing of gardening, completely broke (living on 8 pounds sterling a week), they turned their belief into a powerful creative force.

They listened to the Shining Ones (the Hindu meaning of devas) as they explained what should be done. Everything they needed manifested itself right on time. They spread a few inches of compost over the sand, in a place where winds often exceed 60 mph on the coast of the frigid North Sea. The spot they chose was further north -



RoderickT June 2009

The original 'caravan' (trailer) at Findhorn.

- than Moscow! These novice gardeners grew 60 pound broccolis, 40 pound cabbages, and a host of flowers, vegetables, and fruits that leave botanists speechless with shock.

This legendary garden and community, named Findhorn, follows a simple principle. You are and become what you think; what you think becomes reality. The fame of this place spread, attracting artists, artisans, and people of all backgrounds, exploring their spirituality at this miracle in a wasteland. Members and visitors have found enormous personal growth here, and the community continues to this day.

With similar drive and vision, the street artist Banksy from the UK (who carefully guards his anonymity) paints graffiti murals in high-traffic public areas that challenge mainstream beliefs. One typical Banksy painting is of two male English policeman kissing passionately, sprayed several stories high on the side of a downtown London office building. It is an art piece designed for mischief, the opposite of the image authorities want to project. His art questions ingrained attitudes and prejudices. You needn't be political or controversial. Express yourself by painting over ugly things with ones that please you. Let this approach drive your creativity in different ways, replacing the unsightly with the beautiful.

In the same way, Amy Christian, founder and director of Wise Fool New Mexico, uses huge stilt puppets and circus arts to make an impact on her community. Her Circus Luminous has become a Thanksgiving Day tradition in Santa Fe, and her Social Circus Network teaches thousands of children a year to be acrobats, stilt walkers, and clowns.

Christian lived in the Bay Area, and became involved with the Wise Fool Puppet Intervention. This is street theater designed to engage spectators. Puppets asking questions in funny, touching ways that open conversations on difficult issues. Her seminars make a brave space for self-discovery, so children and women can confront their fears, develop skills, and learn to rely on each other. Wise Fool puts on parades, a circus camp, and outdoor performance art, to "create a container for these epiphany moments". She helps children embrace their unique selves, with laughter and joy. Amy is committed to community activism that builds bridges, as it changes lives.

These kind of efforts are as numerous and varied as there are creative people working to change their communities, literally millions of examples to choose from. These are the kind of playful, amusing, sometimes strange, but always passionate ways of altering local conditions. This will help you fully become your true self, as it changes the place you live.

There is no magic wand you can wave to make it happen. Just look for the things that are missing, the most pressing needs in your area, and fill them. Choose the things closest to your heart, the most bothersome and hurtful things near your home, and work to change them. Don't hate evil. Instead, find a way to transform or neutralize it, knowing that love creates a better way.



Wise Fool New Mexico troupe practicing on stilts.

Accept responsibility for how things are where you live. Work for change, and you will harness your discontent to turn your wishes into physical forms. You can make your world a paradise, a piece of heaven on earth. And those who notice you doing it, who share your vision, will join in to help you.

Ben Franklin noted: "energy and persistence conquer all things."

Words to live by.

Chapter Notes

"Your paradise is made by changing what is ugly..." Many thanks yet again to Lawrence Boldt for the insights in this passage. His interpretation of Jungian themes inspired me, and I highly recommend his *Zen and the Art of Making a Living*.

"Find the archetype and mythic themes..." The phrase a 'path with heart' is from the work of Carlos Castaneda, and his book *The Teachings of Don Juan*. The discussion on archetypes is based on the work of C.G.Jung.

"For example, in 1962 ex-RAF squad leader..." This material was kindly provided by Paul Hawken's book *The Magic of Findhorn*.

"In the same way, Amy Christian..." Ms. Christian's story came to my attention through an article by Ashley M Biggers in *New Mexico* magazine, November 2017.



Our world is dying, and we are the ones killing it.

Afterword

This book began with a promise. Happiness is available to everyone, once their basic needs are met. Here is the tragedy. For the majority of people on our planet, their basic needs are *not* met, or are met only with great pain, suffering, and struggle.

This is both a challenge and an opportunity for those of us whose basic needs are met. The problem – a world filled with terrible crises and unmet needs, has a solution – YOU!

Whether we like it or not, we are at a turning point in human history. Within the next 10 years, we will either choose to make our planet a paradise, or if we continue to do business as usual, our beautiful blue-green home will become a living hell. If humanity is to continue to exist, we must change society, shifting away from an obsession with growth and materialism, towards better, fairer social connections.

The earth is wearing out, and will soon be exhausted, incapable of supporting even a fraction of the billions who inhabit it. It is not one problem; it is hundreds of problems, all because of our relationship with the planet. Our impact has been so significant many scientists believe we've entered a new geological epoch – the Anthropocene (the Human Era). The rise in sea levels and ocean acidification. Erosion of the ozone layer. Pollution of the air, soil, and water. Melting glaciers and ice sheets. Mass extinction of species. On and on. The industrial processes responsible have laid waste to everything corporations control (and they own most of our world).

The largest, most thorough study of our planet's carrying capacity, called the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, was carried out by 1360 scientists in 95 countries, and was published March 30, 2005. Its message was stark, and terrifying. The ecological systems (think of them as planetary life support systems) on which we depend for survival are on the verge of a series of heart attacks which will cause them to collapse and die.

Overfishing and fertilizer runoff have killed off 90% of the fish in the oceans. Deforestation and desertification have decimated vast swathes of land. Soil erosion and groundwater depletion are endemic. Massive dumping of trash, plastic, and other wastes choke soil and water. Toxic pollutants by the billions of tons are produced and discarded, poisoning everything they touch. The combination of all of this has made large portions of earth into a wasteland. Add in the problems of climate change, and life is being devastated.

As Roman Catholic Pope Francis I posted on Twitter (a social media site), criticizing capitalism and industry: "the earth, our home, is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth".

The crises global warming brings are extreme shocks to already weakened ecosystems, and much worse is just around the corner. Rising temperatures bring a host of evils. Crop failures and famines from droughts and floods. Violent hurricanes, tornadoes, and storms. Disastrous increases in the number and severity of pests and diseases. Coastlines and cities submerged as sea levels rise. Ecosystem collapses from massive die-offs and species extinctions, as plants and animals try – and fail, to escape land and water made uninhabitable by humans, with nowhere to go. The best estimate of scientists is that between 30 to 50% of all species will be extinct within 30 years. Let one awful fact stand-in for many: the Himalayan glaciers responsible for bringing the monsoons, and the source of many rivers providing Asia, and half the world's population, with water will be gone within 15 years.

Nature has been pushed far beyond its limits. When nature becomes an enemy, and turns hostile to humans, it becomes a source of conflict and upheavals as the land won't support the people living on it.

As a result, more and more places are ungovernable. Scarce resources create wars, civil disturbances, and waves of refugees fleeing the lack of clean water, cropland, forest and fish. The more the earth is degraded, the greater the disruption to human society, and plant and animal populations. Poverty and need drive people to desperate acts. As this pattern repeats itself endlessly, environmental scarcity drives cultural and racial clashes and war.

The environment is not "out there" somewhere, distant from us. It is what is around us, where we live. For most people (now over 50% worldwide), that environment is a city or urban area. And the majority of urban dwellers live in slums. The poor are denied a place in civic life and urban society. They are social outcasts suffering economic inequality, caught in a dead-end cycle of increasing urbanization with no growth or employment. The reality of daily life for squatters is far uglier than the word 'slum' conjures. The poor are crowded into lean-to's made of cardboard, cast-off wood scraps, and trash tacked together. Rivers of stinking sewage, crawling with insects, flow amidst mounds of rotting garbage. Alleys are crowded with sick and dying children and animals, poisoned by dirty air and water. The earth is choking to death on industrial pollution and human waste.

This is what life is like for billions of people, trapped in disgusting foulness by poverty. We treat the earth the way we treat each other – badly! The terrible truth is too many people don't care about themselves or others. The statistics clearly show this horrible fact. Tens of thousands of annual homicides and gun deaths are epidemic, but are far outpaced by suicides and drug overdose deaths. Society is sick unto death with drug addiction, depression, mental illness, and violence. Rapes, child abuse, spousal abuse, and other kinds of violence are rampant. And this is just in the US. Things are much worse in failed states and countries falling apart in the Third World.

The current economic order that runs the world, call it corporate capitalism, has devastated the natural world. Modern corporations use nature as a giant supply depot and a dump, and treat people and living things like so much garbage. We know it, no one denies it, and few do anything about it except to contribute and make it worse. Industrial civilization is not, and can never be sustainable. In Naomi Klein's words, we suffer under "a savagely unjust economic system and a destabilized climate system". Capitalism is waging a war against life on earth for profit. The result of this grossly unfair social arrangement is a destructive nightmare. We live on a dying world, and corporations are the ones killing it. We cannot live without the earth! What we do to it, we do to ourselves, literally.

How did we get in this awful situation? A few unfortunate – and all too human character traits got us here. We can't help but struggle between two choices; helping yourself, or helping others (selfish versus altruistic behavior). Because of our innate intense desire to belong to a group, and the fact that groups are our main source of identity, values, and meaning, we feed into an 'us versus them' mindset. Too many people are gripped by tribalism, in versus out groups. Group dynamics are at the root of conflict and violence. Individuals on a one-to-one basis usually choose cooperation and altruism. Groups, on the other hand, tend to choose selfishness and competition. They also demand members further group interests, and encourage bad behavior.

Worse, humans feel alone in nature because we are cut off by our senses from the conversations between living things around us. The senses we use to experience, interact, and communicate with each other and the world (our reliance on sight and sound), are not the ones used by most lifeforms. 99% of other species use pheromones and biological chemical scents to communicate with each other. These smells cross species, so different creatures understand what others are doing, and act accordingly. We are deaf and mute to these signals. Though our senses allow us to respond quickly and effectively to our environment, to the point where we are able to dominate the planet, we cannot hear or speak to other kinds of life. This creates a terrible loneliness, and feelings of isolation from the rest of our family on the tree of life. Ecosystems are complex interactions between thousands or millions of beings. The loss of even one affects everyone. We behave as if these relationships don't exist, or are there only for our benefit. We need to change this attitude if we hope to survive the devastation we have wreaked on earth, see, and sky.

We know what we want (and need). A world of true social and ecological justice. Where the wrongs of centuries are righted, and we put an end to all the theft, terror, and hate. Where regeneration and renewal are the principles we live by, and oppression and domination are rejected. Noam Chomsky's elegant phrase beautifully sums up what needs to be done "... We must organize our societies and lives to care for the Commons". Our common possessions – healthy land and seas, clean air and water, both for ourselves, and our brothers and sisters in the great family of living things.

Everything is connected, and your body is part of the environment. Pollution in nature enters your body, and all of our bodies. This interdependence is the source of life's strength and resilience, but is also its greatest weakness from human insults. The awesome power of connectivity – joining together with others to find solutions to common problems, is the way forward. The qualities that nourish life and living systems – openness, diversity, resilience, ignite ideas and creativity. Find the heart and courage to resist what damages our communities and the places we live. By helping each other, sharing experiences and resources, we can limit the harm, and heal and restore what has been wrecked.

One way forward is to "solve for pattern". Wendell Berry's concise idea sums up the work we need to do. Find single solutions that address multiple problems at once. Look for systemic failures, as with deforestation and the host of problems caused by industrial agriculture. One solution – planting trees, or setting up permaculture farms, solves many issues and crises at one stroke. Rather than try to save the world, remake it.

The industrial practices that create patterns of destruction are uncaring of the natural world. The rights of communities are ignored and bulldozed, in favor of the rights of companies. We must hold these businesses – and the governments they own, accountable for their misdeeds. To paraphrase Utah Phillips, these are not faceless entities. They are owned and operated by people, with names and addresses, living in neighborhoods near you. There are many, many tools available to demand change and fairness from them. They can be named and shamed where it hurts. Corporate lackeys and government bureaucrats can be forced to follow our values and visions, if they know they will be shunned as pariahs, or worse, if they do not.

Modern industrial systems are not strong. They are only made to appear that way. They are fragile, and vulnerable to disruption at every point of operation. From production to consumption, they quickly grind to a halt when the smallest part malfunctions. Every time the lights go out for a few hours in cities, or traffic backs up a few miles, chaos erupts. People are enraged by the unfairness of daily life, and rip the system apart at the slightest provocation. The violence and savagery towards dissenters applied by those in power is meant to mask their weakness. They fear change, and hope to cow us into obedience.

Simple changes are enough to create the world we – the 99%, want.

Shift to buying locally made goods, and patronize locally owned and operated service providers. Hire and spend locally, keeping resources in your community, and out of the hands of giant, exploitative companies. Encourage a low-consumption lifestyle, one focused on gardens, libraries, gatherings, parties, and sharing.

The world we want requires us to force governments and corporations to slash military spending, and increase spending on social goods. Paying a living wage, hiring



Create the world you see in your mind's eye...

more caregivers, teachers, and doctors so everyone has a decent life. To stop the use of coal, oil, gas, and nuclear energy, and move to clean, sustainable energies. Solar, wind, tidal, and hydrogen are fuels that enrich society, and help heal the planet instead of impoverishing and destroying it.

We must move away from systems and processes that are parasitic to ones that are symbiotic. Behavior that is interdependent, reciprocal, cooperative, and synergistic. We must change all of our relationships – with ourselves, others, living things, and the natural world. We must stop being exploitative, and work to be mutually beneficial. In short, to quote Medea Benjamin, cofounder of Code Pink, we need "... A system based on people, not profits."

It can be done, if we are unified and determined. As Margaret Mead observed: "never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." Dee Hock, founder and former president of Visa International, had a wonderful insight into the way self-organizing systems work. He calls them 'chaordic' organizations and entities, and we need to copy them. Hock found that chaordic systems (order within apparent chaos) such as the Internet, our immune systems, and the way neurons in the brain grow and function, can accomplish incredibly difficult and complicated tasks without any central organizing structures or hierarchy.

Self-organizing systems operate smoothly by having clear goals and purposes all members understand. Membership is determined by rules of conduct. Follow them and you are in, don't, and you are treated as an obstacle or intruder. The systems work because every member is a leader and organizer, and uses their freedom of action in unique ways to accomplish the group's goals. It encourages creativity, initiative, and cooperation – a recipe for success. We must act on our values and visions. By having a clear, well-defined sense of purpose shared by all, and uniting this to behavior needed to make our purpose and principles real, we will create a force powerful enough to defeat all opposition. Based on the same self-organizing methods used by living things, this is the answer to curing our desperate need for a sense of belonging and community. It will also halt the deeply flawed, deadly mechanisms killing our planet.

Our values are simple – we hold life to be sacred, and are determined to follow the Golden Rule in our interactions with others. The way we treat the earth and each other must be the same – with fairness, ensuring a decent life for all. Our goals and methods are also crystal-clear. To use love, kindness, generosity, and compassion to transform the world, and to stop and disrupt violence, coercion, and cruelty wherever we find it. We must stop all who would harm the Commons.

It is already happening. The passion of millions of individuals for social and environmental justice have created what activist and journalist Paul Hawken calls "the

- largest social movement in history". He has documented this global phenomenon, people restoring beauty and grace to abandoned places. He devotes himself to fostering this worldwide community of activists and organizers, through his group – Wiser Earth.org. He is an inspiration to everyone who seeks a better, fairer future, and his website is a tremendous resource for anyone seeking positive change.

Together, we can create true social and ecological justice, and end the things injuring and degrading life. Work on what matters to you, and the people and places you love. Acting as one, we can end slavery, suffering, and injustice. We can build a society of abundance, prosperity, and happiness for all.

Choose heaven, not hell. Join the fight on the side of the angels, to care for the Commons. Nature will win, and industrial civilization will be stopped (by the very forces of chaos it has unleashed). It is just a matter of how much of our beautiful home is left a lifeless mess in the process. Help change happen today!

Thank you for joining me on this journey. I hope this book showed you ways to make your life happier, healthier, and more fulfilling. With luck, it gave you a new sense of purpose and meaning, to help create a paradise for all.

Chapter Notes

"*Our impact has been so significant many scientists believe...*" Thanks to Richard Monastersky and his article on the Anthropocene in *Nature*.

"*The earth is wearing out, and will soon be exhausted...*" My thanks to Paul Hawken and his book *Blessed Unrest*, which have contributed to this chapter in a major way.

"*The largest, most thorough study of our planet's...*" Many thanks to Naomi Klein for her insights into climate change, and many facts used in these passages.

"*The best estimate of scientists is that between 30 to 50% of all species...*" This horrifying statistic comes from Elizabeth Kolbert's book *The Sixth Extinction*, from the study by Chris D. Thomas in *Nature*, 2004.

"*Nature has been pushed far beyond its limits...*" Thanks to journalist Robert D. Kaplan for his insights, from *The Coming Anarchy*.

"*For most people [now over 50% worldwide]...*" A great read on the subject is *Planet of Slums*, by academic Mike Davies.

"*The current economic order that runs the world...*" This is a quote from Naomi Klein's *This Changes Everything...*

"*Industrial civilization is not, and can never be...*" I owe a debt of gratitude to Derrick Jensen and his many books on social and environmental justice, especially his work *Endgame*, volumes one and two.

"*One way forward is to "solve for pattern"...*" This quote from Wendell Berry is found in Paul Hawken's *Blessed Unrest*.

"*Worse, humans feel alone in nature...*" Thanks to E. O. Wilson for a deeper understanding of biology, from his work on meaning, which has improved this chapter.

"*Noam Chomsky's elegant phrase beautifully sums up...*" I am grateful to Noam Chomsky and Laray Polk for their excellent book *Nuclear War and Environmental Catastrophe*, which provided this quote.

"*In short, to quote Medea Benjamin...*" This quote comes from an interview with congressperson Barbara Lee, from *In These Times*, December 2017.

"Self organizing systems operate smoothly..." Thanks to Dee Hock for his brilliant work on chaordic systems.

"The passion of millions of individuals for social..." This is the essence of Paul Hawken's book, *Blessed Unrest*.

Acknowledgments

Words are such a poor, inadequate repayment for the kindness and generosity so many people have shown me. But they are all I have! So they will have to do...

First and foremost, this book would not exist without all the support I have received from Nell Farr, my aunt. She gave me aid and comfort during some very dark periods. Her help transformed what might've been a tragic waste into a useful, productive time. Her incredible generosity has made my life as comfortable, and successful as it is today.

I also owe a great deal of gratitude to the many people who have agreed to assist me in promoting this book. The fondest dream of every author is to reach a wide and receptive audience, and these people have made that possible.

I want to thank Dalyn Miller and his team, whose podcasting expertise allowed me to reach a wide number of excited, dedicated readers, for which I'm extremely grateful.

I have to express my deep appreciation and thankfulness that Leslie Garson agreed to become my publicist. Her contacts, advice, and understanding of the media have made a tremendous difference in the book's reception.

The book promotion sites I've used deserve a round of applause, including Awesome Gang, BookBub, BooksButterfly, BookSends, ebooklister, among others.

The technical support I've received has also been crucial, and much appreciated. The patient and ultra-competent folks at WordPress Live and Blue Host (helping with the websites); Jeff Arnold at 4Spot/Kickstart; and the Infusionsoft email experts; the ever-helpful, friendly workers at GoFundMe, and the many creative technical people I've hired for jobs through Fiverr. I also want to thank the people who worked on the actual book production - Jeweldesign for the covers; Emily Em for the author photo, and Guangzhou YBJ Toys Ltd for the great printing job.

Last but not least are the many old friends and supporters whose patience, encouragement, friendship, love and gifts have helped to make the book a reality.

To Javier 'Chill' Castillo, Hector and Blanca Varela, Jan and Allen Riding, Peggy and Brian Barrad, Mark Noel, Caleb and Heather Lanier, Arturo Fuentes, Michael Dagnan, Ignacio Sobers, Susan Poe, Daniel 'Ozzy' Valentin, Lois Rowe, Johan Auer, Derrick and Arlee Jimmerson, Madeline Kiser, Jimmy Santiago Baca, John Zerzan, and the understanding, cheerful staff at Gentle Ben's - thanks for everything !

Bibliography

- Allman, T. D., Life After the Bombs, *National Geographic* magazine, August 2015.
- Als, Hilton, The Troubles, *New Yorker* magazine, February 26, 2018.
- Apter, Michael J., *Danger: Our Quest for Excitement*, OneWorld Publications, Oxford, 2007.
- Aschworden, Christie, How to Stop Shouting: Six Strategies for conversing with someone who has irrational ideas, *Discover*, July/August, 2015.
- Bach, Richard, *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*, 1973.
- Baldwin, James, As Much Truth As One Can Bear, (essay), NY Times, 1962.
- Bekoff, Marc & Pierce, Jessica, *Wild Justice: The Moral Lives of Animals*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 2009.
- Berry, Wendell, *Hidden Wound*, North Point Press, San Francisco, 1989.
- Biggers, Ashley M, Movers and Shakers: Wise Fool, *New Mexico*, November 2017.
- Blake, William, *Songs of Innocence and Experience*, Oxford Paperbacks, 1977.
- Boldt, Lawrence G., *Zen and the Art of Making Living: A Practical Guide to Creative Career Design*, Penguin Books, New York, 2010
- Brockman, John, Ed., *What is Your Dangerous Idea?*, Simon & Schuster, NY, 2006.
- Brown, Stuart, MD, *Play: How it Shapes the Brain, Opens the Mind, and Invigorates the Soul*, Penguin Group, New York 2009.
- Cabane, Olive Fox, and Pollock, Judah, *The Net and The Butterfly: The Art and Practice of Breakthrough Thinking*, Penguin, 2017.
- Cacioppo, John, and Patrick, William, *Loneliness: Human Nature and the Need for Social Connection*.
- Campbell, Joseph, *Hero of a Thousand Faces*, 1949.
Myths to Live By, Bantam Books, 1973.
- Castaneda, Carlos, *The Teachings of Don Juan*, Univ. of California Press, 1968.
- Chomsky, Noam, and Polk, Laray, *Nuclear War and Environmental Catastrophe*, Seven Stories Press, 2013.
- Crowley, Chris and Lodge, Henry, M D, *Younger Next Year: Live Strong, Fit, and Healthy Until Your 80 and Beyond*, Workman Publishing, 2005.
- Csikszentmihalyi, Mihalyi, *Flow: the Psychology of Optimal Experience*, Harper Collins, 2009.
- Currey, Mason, *Daily Rituals: How Artists Work*, Knopf, 2013.
- Curry, Andrew, A 9000 Year Love Affair, *National Geographic*, February 2017.
- Damasio, Antonio, *The Strange Order of Things; Life, feeling, and the making of cultures*, Random House, 2018.
- Davies, Mike, *Planet of Slums*, Verso, London, 2006.
- Davies, William, *The Happiness Industry: How the Government and Big Business Sold Us Well Being*.
- Dimitropoulos, Stav, *Mind Over Matter*, *Discover*, September 2017.
- Duhigg, Charles, *The Power of Habit: Why We Do What We Do in Life and Business*, Random House, New York, 2014.
- Dweck, Carol, *Mindset*, Random House, NY, 2006.
- Eisler, Rianne, *Sacred Pleasure: Sex, Myth, and the Politics of the Body*, Harper Collins, 1995.
- Erasmus, *In Praise of Folly*, Dover Books, (orig. in Latin, 1511).
- Erikson, Kai T, *A New Species of Trouble; The Human Experience of Modern Disasters*, W W Norton and Company., New York, 1994.

- Ficino, Marsilio, *The Book of Life*, tr. Charles Boer, Spring Publications, 1980.
- Frankl, Viktor, *Man's Search for Meaning*, Beacon Press, Boston, 1992.
- Fromm, Erich, *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*, Henry Holt & Co., NY, 1973.
- Goleman, Daniel, and Davidson, Richard, *The Science of Meditation: How to Change your brain, mind, and body*, Penguin, 2017.
- Gibran, Kahlil, *The Prophet*, 1923.
- Gladwell, Malcolm, *Outliers: The Story of Success*, Little Brown & Co., NY, 2008.
- Haidt, Jonathan, *The Happiness Hypothesis*, Basic Books, 2006.
- Harari, Yuval Noah, *Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow*, Penguin Random House, New York, 2015.
- Hari, Johann, *Lost Connections: Uncovering the Real Causes of Depression, and the Unexpected Solutions*, Bloomsbury, 2017.
- Harris, Michael, Solitude from *Discover*, June, 2017.
- Haven, Kendall F., *Super Simple Storytelling*, Libraries Unltd., 2000.
- Hawken, Paul, *Blessed Unrest: How the Largest Social Movement in History is Restoring Grace, Justice and Beauty to the World*, Penguin Books, New York, 2007
- The Magic of Findhorn*, Harper and Rowe, New York, 1975
- Henderson, Hazel, *Building a Win - Win World*, Berrett-Koehler Publications, 1997.
- Hock, Dee, *Birth of the Chaordic Age*, Berrett-Koehler Publications, 1999.
- One from Many: Visa and the Rise of Chaordic Organizations*, Berrett-Koehler Publications, San Francisco, 2005.
- Hoke, Jeff, *The Museum of Lost Wonder*, Weiser Books, 2006.
- Holden, Robert, *Happiness Now! Timeless Wisdom for Feeling Good Fast*, Hay House, 2011.
- Ilardi, Dr. Stephen, *The Depression Cure: The 6- Step Program to Beat Depression Without Drugs*, De Capo Press, 2009.
- Janah, Leila, *Give Work! Reversing Poverty One Job at a Time*, Penguin, 2017.
- Jeffers, Robinson, *Collected Poetry of Robinson Jeffers*, ed. Tim Hunt, Stanford U. Press, 1988.
- Jensen, Derrick, *A Language Older Than Words*, Chelsea Green Publications, 2004.
- Endgame: Vol. I The Problem of Civilization; Vol. II Resistance*, Seven Stories Press, 2006.
- Joy, Brugh, MD, *Joy's Way: The Transformational Journey*.
- Jung, C.G., *The Portable Jung*, Penguin, 1988.
- Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, Vintage Books, 1961.
- Septem Sermones Ad Mortuos*, (Seven Sermons to the Dead), 1916.
- Kaplan, Robert D., *The Coming Anarchy: Shattering the Dreams of the Post Cold War*, Vintage Books [Random House], New York, 2000.
- Kaufman, Josh, *The First 20 Hours: How to Learn Anything Fast!*, Penguin, 2013.
- Kelly, Kevin, *New Rules for the New Economy: 10 Radical Strategies for a Connected World*, Viking Penguin, New York, 1998.
- Kennedy, Robert F., Jr, & John Cronin, *The Riverkeepers*, Simon & Schuster, NY, 1999.
- King, Sergei Kahili, PhD, *The Urban Shaman*, Simon and Schuster, 1990.
- Klein, Naomi, *This Changes Everything: Capitalism and the Climate*, Simon and Schuster, 2014.
- Knowing The Land is Resistance, interview by Oxalis, *Black Seed*, Winter, 2015.
- Learning from the Land*, and *Towards an Anarchist Ecology ('zines)*.
- Kolbert, Elizabeth, *The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History*, Henry Holt & Co., NY, 2014.
- LaDuke, Winona, *All Our Relations : Native Struggles for Land and Life*, South End Press, Cambridge, MA, 1999.

- Lawton, Graham, People: A Trip Advisor, *New Scientist*, Aug. 19-25, 2017.
- Effortless Thinking, *New Scientist*, Dec. 16, 2017.
- Layard, Richard, *Happiness: Lessons from a New Science*, Penguin Press, New York, 2005.
- Lele, O che'ni, *Osogbo: Speaking to the Spirits of Misfortune*, Simon & Schuster, NY, 2014.
- Levi, Primo,
- Levine, Amir, MD, & Heller, Rachel SF, MA, *Attached: The New Science of Adult Attachment and How It Can Help You Find - and Keep - Love*, Jeremy P. Tarcher/Penguin, New York, 2010.
- Lewis, Thomas, MD, Amini, Fari, MD, & Lannon, Richard, MD, *A General Theory of Love*, Vintage Books, New York, 2000.
- Lyubomirsky, Sonja, *The How of Happiness: A Scientific Approach to Getting the Life You Want*, Penguin, 2008.
- Manson, Mark, *The Subtle Art of Not Giving a Fuck: A Counterintuitive Approach to living a good life*, Harper Collins, New York, 2016.
- Mar, Alex, *Witches of America*, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2015.
- Matsumoto, David, w/ Frank, Mark G., & Hyiswung Hwang (eds), *Nonverbal Communications: science and applications*, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA, 2013.
- Matthews, Andrew, *Being Happy! A Handbook to Greater Confidence and Security*, Price Stern Sloan, CA, 1990.
- McGonigal, Jane, *Super Better: A Revolutionary Approach to Getting Stronger, Happier, Braver, and More Resilient, Powered by the Science of Games*, Penguin Press, New York, 2015.
- McKibben, Bill, *Deep Economy: The Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future*, Times Books, Henry Holt and Company, New York, 2007.
- Monastersky, Richard, *The Human Age*, *Nature*, 12 March, 2015.
- More, Thomas, *Care of the Soul: A Guide for Cultivating Depth and Sacredness in Everyday Life*, Harper Perennial [Harper Collins] New York, 1992.
- Mycoskie, Blake, *Start Something That Matters*, Spiegel and Grace, 2011.
- Neruda, Pablo, *The Poetry of Pablo Neruda*, tr. Rene de Costa, Harvard U. Press, 2009.
- O'Donohue, John, *Anam Cara: A Book of Celtic Wisdom*, Harper Collins, 1997.
- Perkins, John, *Shapeshifting*, Simon & Schuster, NY, 1997.
- Rollins, Henry, *Solipsist*, Pgw, 1998.
- Rubin, Gretchen, *The Happiness Project: Or, Why I Spent a Year Trying to Sing in the Mornings, Clean My Closets, Fight Right, Read Aristotle, and Generally Have More Fun*, Harper Collins, 2009.
- Ruiz, Don Miguel, MD, *The Fifth Agreement: A Practical Guide to Self-Mastery* (w/ Don Jose Ruiz), Amber-Allen, San Rafael, CA, 2010.
- The Four Agreements*, Amber-Allen Press, 2010.
- The Mastery of Love: A Toltec Wisdom Book*, Amber-Allen Publishing, San Rafael, CA, 1999.
- Samorini, Giorgio, *Animals and Psychedelics: The Natural World and Instinct to Alter Consciousness*, tr. by Tami Calliope; Park St. Press (Inner Traditions), Rochester, Vermont, 2002.
- Seligman, Martin, *Flourish: A Visionary New Understanding of Happiness and Well Being*, Simon & Schuster, NY, 2012.
- Silva, Jose, *The Silva Mind Control Method*, Simon & Schuster, NY, 1991.
- Singer, Peter, *The Life You Can Save: How to Do Your Part to End World Poverty*, Random House, New York, 2010.

- Spence, Jonathan D., *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci*, Quercus, 2008.
- Sterling, Linder, Interview magazine, March, 2010.
- Streiber, Whitley, & Kripal, Jeffrey J., *The Super-Natural: A New Vision of the Unexplained*, Tarcher/Penguin, New York, 2016.
- Todorov, Prof. Alexander, *Face Value: the irresistible influence of first impressions*, Princeton University Press, 2017.
- Tzu, Lao, *Tao Te Ching*, tr. by John C.H.Wu, Shambhala Press, 2006
- Weiner, Eric, *The Geography of Bliss: One Grump's Search for the Happiest Place in the World*, Grand Central Publishing, 2008.
- Wilson, Edward O., *The Meaning of Human Existence*, Liveright Publishing Company, New York, 2014
- Wilson, T.D., *Strangers to Ourselves: Discovering the Adaptive Unconscious*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 2003.
- Wong, Sam, Reopen Your Mind, *New Scientist*, Nov. 25-Dec. 1, 2017.
- Yanagi, Soetsu, *The Unknown Craftsman: A Japanese Insight Into Beauty*, Kodansha Intl., 1989.
- Yates, Frances A., *The Art of Memory*, Random House, 2011.

Photo/Illustration Credits

Desolation - Photo on Best Running, Visual Hunt
Intimacy - 4. Adobe Stock
Taj Mahal - 8. Reji, Visual Hunt, bestrunningshoes.com
Intuition - 12. Mara ~earth light~, Visual Hunt, bestrunningshoes.com
Forgiveness - 16. markzfilter, allthefreeimages.com
Escape - 20. Adobe Stock
Tamed - 22. Melissa Lamoreaux, FreeRangeStock.com
Barbed Wire and Camera - 25. Pexels
Self-image - 28. Marinela Prolan, FreeImages.com
Kindness - 34 Stocksnap.io
Relaxation - 37 Adobe Stock
Exercise - 39. Pixabay
Friends - 42. Stocksnap.io
Respect - 49. Pexels
Listen - 52. Antiporda Productions, Visual Hunt, bestrunningshoes.com
Body language - 54. dragonalpha001, allthefreestock.com
Kissing - 59. Pexels
Give - 62. Ed Gregory, StockPic
Daffodils - 66 Dana Tentris, Skitterphoto.com
Connect - 70. Jack Moreh, FreeRangeStock.com
Belong - 76. Splitshire
The potter - 82. Adobe Stock
Self actualization - 88. Visual Hunt
Mortality - 91. Peter Heeling, Skitterphoto.com
Focus - 94. The Naked Ape, Visual Hunt, bestrunningshoes.com
Excel - 100. Michael Dawes, Best Running, Visual Hunt
Grief - 103. Adobe Stock
Caring - 108. Adobe Stock
Sharing - 112. ekohernowo, allthefreestock.com
Community - 116. Beautiful Faces of Berlin, Visual Hunt, bestrunningshoes.com
Legacy - 118. Best Running, Visual Hunt
Spirituality - 122. Bennett Edward, StockPic
Creativity - 128. Qsimple, Memories For The Future Photography, Visual Hunt, bestrunningshoes.com
Imagination - 132. Adobe Stock
Secret Garden - 135. Little Visuals/Tumblr
Inspiration - 140. Adobe Stock
Fireworks - 144. Stocksnap.io
Play - 146. ChrisK4u, Visual Hunt, bestrunningshoes.com
At the beach - 148. Ed Gregory, StockPic
Rock climbing - 154. Jack Moreh, FreeRangeStock.com
Danger - 156. Stocksnap.io

Photo/Illustration Credits (cont.)

Party – 160. Stocksnap.io

Findhorn – 168. rodtuk, Visual Hunt, bestrunningshoes.com

Wise Fool – 170. bestrunningshoes.com, Visual Hunt

Death of the world – 172. Adobe Stock

Mind's Eye - 177. Jack Moreh, FreeRangeStock.com

Index

A.

A General Theory of Love, 11, 46
A New Species of Trouble, 74
Aaron, Arthur, 9
abandoned, 114
abandonment, 72
abundance, 179
accept (others as they are), 63
accomplishment, 101
achievement, 101
Act of Contrition, 17
addictions, 60
adrenaline junkies, 157
advertisers, 1, 5, 26, 30–31
aerobic exercise, 40
affection [create bonds of], 10, 13
 and freedom of choice, 51
Africa, 71, 78
aggression, 55
aging [reverse], 38
agriculture, 158
agro-ecology, 120
alchemy, 126, 167
alcohol, 158, 162
aligned (with the earth), 73
Allman, T. D., 114–115
Als, Hilton, 51
altered states of consciousness, 158
 and mystical experiences, 124
altruism, 114
America, South, 78
Amir, MD, 11
amygdala, 124
Anam Cara, 33
ancestor, 71
angels, 179
animal (s), 43, 74, 147
 and psychedelics, 158
 totem or power, 134
animal drug addiction, 158

Anthropocene Era, 173, 180
antisocial, 157
ants, 5
 anxiety, 72, 124
 and excitement, 157
 disorders, 60
apathetic, 40
apes, 158
appropriate, intermediate technology, 120
approval (as means of control), 23
Apter, Michael, 157, 162
Arcana, Major and Minor, 167
archetypes, 166–167, 171
Aristotle, 3, 134
armies, 26
arousal, 157
 (heart of fun), 155
Art of Memory, The, 136
Artist/creator, 159
Aschworden, Christine, 51
As Much Truth As One Can Bear, 33
Asia, 1, 78, 174
athletes, 159
attachment styles (anxious, avoidant), 57, 58
attention, 35, 64
attunement, 73
authorities, 28
autistic children, 43
autopilot, 31, 36
aware (of lover's body), 60
awareness, 133
 of the land, 72
 of self, 36
awe, 77

B.

Bach, Richard, 102
Baldwin, James, 32–33
balloons (of cartoon characters), 159
Baltic (proverb), 26

Index

- Baltimore, Maryland, 127
banks, 27
Banksy, 169
Banner, Steve, 158
basic needs, 64
Bay Area, 169
beach, 158
beautiful, 43
beauty products, 30
become the other, 137
bees, 5
Beethoven, 141
Beginner's Mind, 136
behavior (selfish versus altruistic), 175
 unhealthy, 48
Bekoff, Marc, 152
belief(s), 26, 32, 50
 and control, 26, 27
 harmful, 32
 systems, 26
belong(ing), 67
 need to, 9, 67
 source of values, meaning, 175
Benjamin, Medea, 178, 180
Berry, Wendell, 71, 176, 180
Bhutan, Bhutanese, 5, 77
biblical saying, 109
big brother, 50, 51
Biggers, Ashley M, 171
bighorn sheep, 158
biking, 40, 40
billboard, 167
Bioengineers, 142
biofeedback, 124
biology, 43
biomimicry, 142
biophilia, 5
birds, 147,
 (berries, and drunkenness), 158
Black Seed, 74
Blake, William, 123, 127
Blessed Unrest, 180–181
Bloomsbury, 61
boar, 79
body, 26, 33
 language, 53, 55
 messages of, 33
 rhythms, 26
Boldt, Laurence, 33, 115, 171
bond, 71
 est. while listening, 45
 with the land, 67
 with nature, 71
bonfire, 161
bored, 40
Bose, Jagadish Chandra, 125, 127
boundaries, 48
brain, 9, 11
 and chemicals, arousal, 155
 disorders, 60
 and nervous systems, 155
 pleasure centers of, 158
Brandeis, Louis, 32
breakthrough moments, 141
breathing exercises, 47, 89, 134
Brigham Young University, 45
bright lights and colors, 159
British Columbia, 71
Brockman, John, 7
Brooks, Allison Wood, 157, 162
Brown, Dr. Stuart, 11, 149, 152, 162
Browne, Jackson, 50–51
brutality, violence, abuse, disasters,, 72
Buddhist, 5
building trust, rapport, 55
bungee jumping, 157
bureaucracies, 50
Burning Man Festival, 161
Bushido, 90
butterfly, 133
 Monarch, 73
buzz, 158

Index

C.

Cabane, Olive Fox, 143

Caddy, Eileen, 167

Peter, 167

California, Northern, 101

Campbell, Joseph, 97, 119, 121

camping, 158

cancer, 40, 43

candy beads, 159

capitalism, 114

alternatives to, 120

and industry, 173

waging war on life, 175

card counters, 136

Care for the Commons, 175

Care of the Soul, 33, 41, 80

caregivers, 178

Carhart-Harris, Robin, 127

caribou, 158

caring, 27

and sharing (create meaning), 107

carnivals, 159

Castaneda, Carlos, 171

Catholic Church, 17

catnip, 158

cats, 158

celebration (of life of senses), 72

Celtic mythology, 167

challenge mindset, 104, 151

champagne punch/cocktails, 161

change, 174

chanting, (and spirituality), 124

chaordic organizations, 178

systems, 181

chaplain, 92

character, 104

charity, 109

chemical scents, 175

children, 109, 158

spinning, 158

China, 158

Chinese Taoists, 104

chocolate, 158

Chomsky, Noam, 175, 180

choose to excel, 101

choose your place, 67

Christian, Amy, 169, 171

Chuang Tzu, 133

Cicero, 3, 6

cichlid fish, 152

circulation, 40

Circus Luminous, 169

circuses, 159

classical texts, 134

cleansing, celebrating, 126

climate, 175

climate change, 173, 180

clocks (means of control), 26

closed off (body language), 53

closeness (differing needs for), 58

clubs, 157

co-ops, 120

coal, oil, gas, nuclear (shift away from), 178

cocaine, 9

Code Pink, 178

coercion, 28, 33

coffee, 158

Colbert, Claudia, 105

Collected Poetry of Robinson Jeffers, 127

Collector, 159

comfort and convenience, 98

Coming Anarchy, The, 180

commodification of nature, 27

common gardens, 111

common interests, 43

commons, 178

communication, 61

(mostly nonverbal), 53

learning, persistent, honest, 97

community, 67, 117, 163

become intimate with, 67

bonds holding together, 72

decay of, 5

Index

- defined, 72, 77, 117
- healthy, 71
- ideal, 165
- and intimacy , 67, 72
- and landscape, 71
- love of, 77
- and spirituality, 123
- ties, 10
- utopian, 10, 165
 - without, lose humanity, 71
- compassion, 23
- competence (in 20 hours), 101
- Competitor [play personality], 44, 159
- complex music, 159
- concern, 64
- Confession, rite of, 17
- conflict, 48
- connect(ions), 43, 60, 65, 68, 117
 - emotional, with others, 6, 17, 43
 - fostering, and fulfilling life, 45
 - inner and outer worlds, 126
 - instinctual desire to, 109
 - and intimacy, 60, 65
 - and listening, 65
 - and love, 43
 - with place, 73
 - with a greater than the self, 123
- conscious participant (in life of land), 72
- conscious, mind, 28
 - reality, 138
- consciousness, 133
 - alt. states of, 124
 - higher, 123
- consistent, 58
- contemplation, 123, 124
- contentment, 1
- Contrition, act of, 17
- controlling behavior (reject), 51
- controls, (external, internal), 23, 33
- conventions (fantasy, sci-fi)
- conversation (opening one), 14
- cool, 158
- cooperation, 5
 - fairness, and trust (and play), 147
 - social activity, 147
- cooperatives, 120
- core convictions, 83
- core self, 85
- corporate capitalism, 175
- corporations, 3, 173
- courage, 119
- cows, 158
- craft fairs, 162
- create flow, 101
- creativity, 78
 - definition of, 129, 130
 - and culture, 166
 - expression of, 113
 - methods to boost, 133-143
 - myth of, 129
 - pattern, 130
 - search for solutions, 129
 - source of, 1
- credit unions, 120
- crescograph, 127
- crime, 157
- criminalization of pleasure, 10
- Critical Mass bike rallies, 120
- crop failures, 174
- cruelty (social support of), 23
- crustaceans, 147
- Csikszentmihalyi, Mihalyi, 104, 105
- cuddle chemical, 43
- cue-routine-reward, 96
- culture, 80
 - challenging your, 166
 - and choosing a place, 71
 - and creative intelligence, 80
 - solutions for living, 77
- cures for depression/improve mood, 58
- curiosity, 129
- Currey, Mason, 141, 143
- Curry, Andrew, 162

Index

- customs, 123
cytokines (C6 and C 10), 38, 40
- D.
Daily Rituals, 143
Damasio, Antonio, 45
dance halls, 159
dance parties, 159
dancers, 159
dancing, 124, 157
 and spirituality, 124
 ecstatic, 158
danger, and excitement, 157
Danger: Our Quest for Excitement, 162
Darden, R., 51
Dark One, 85
Darwin, Charles, 5
Davidson, Richard, 51
Davies, William, 114–115
Davies, Mike, 180
daydreaming, 89, 141
death, 104, 167
 death haiku, 90, 92
 defeating, facing it, 1
 fear of, 90
 and the soul, 123
debt, 26
decaying (without exercise), 38
Deep Economy, 7
deforestation, 173
Dimitropolis, Steven, 127
depressant, 158
depression, 40, 47, 60
 help for, 47
 high rates of, 60
 treatment without drugs, 58
Depression Cure, The, 61
desertification, 120, 173
desires, 63
desolation, 1
- despair, 83
destruction (patterns of), 176
devas, 167
Dickens, Charles, 141
die-offs, 174
diet, 40
Director, 159
disapproval (as means of control), 24
Discover magazine, 143
discoveries, 141, 152
dislike, 56
disobedience, 24
dissatisfaction, (source of), 3
divine spark, 166
DJ, 161
doctors, 178
dolphins, 43, 134
domination, 23–24, 50
Dominy, Nathaniel, 158, 162
donating, 111
dopamine, 9
Dostoyevsky, 165
dreams(s), 56, 63
 images, 126
 journal, 126
 dreaming self, 133
 rules of, 133
 waking, 139
driving fast, 157
drug addiction, 158
 and animals, 158
 rush, 158
drumming (and spirituality), 124
Duckworth, Angela, 101
Duhigg, Charles, 41, 98
dumping, 173
Dunbar number, 43
Dunbar, Robin, 43
Dutch, 77
Dweck, Dr. Carol, 95, 98

Index

E.

earth, (myth of), 63
spirits, 167
ebb and flow of life, 33
Eberle, Scott, 149
ecological systems (dying), 173
economic system (unjust), 175
Economist, The, 45
ecosystems, 175
collapse of), 174
ecstasy/MDMA, 159
ecstatic dancing, 158
education (alternatives to), 121
effigies (burning), 161
effort and skill, 101
effortless achievement, 104
ego, 104
disintegration of , 124
letting go of, 104, 123
eidos, (Greek), 130
Einstein, Albert, 5, 125, 134
Eisler, Dr. Rianne, 33, 35, 41, 65
elderly people, 92
electronic music, 159
elephants, 43
Emerald Idol, 13
emotions (and emotional), 44, 45
closeness and connections, 1, 5, 38
comfort, 64
communion (listening), 53
feelings, 85
healing, 13, 16–17
intelligence, 147
as language, 44, 46
of others, 43
poison, 18
structure (of your life), 5
empathy, 35, 45
Endgame, volumes one and two, 180
endorphins, 43

endowments, bequests, 119
endurance, 40
engagement, 40
engines, 149
English policeman, 169
enlightenment, 123, 125
environment (connection with), 65
Epicurus, 3
epitaph, 92
equinoxes, 161
Erasmus, 78, 80
Erickson, Kai, 72, 74
Esquire magazine, 162
eternal and infinite, 83
place within, 33
self, 124
eternity, 123
ethical life, 109
EU, Europe, 120, 161
European descent, 71
excel, 105
excitement (dangers reward), 157
excitement to relaxation, 155
anxiety spectrum, 159
versus comfort, 155
exercise, 40
and mental health, 38
mild, as memory jog, 141
routine, and habit, 96
expectations (rising, and happiness), 3
expertise, 101
Explorers, 159
external controls, 23, 33
extinction, mass, 174

F.

Face Value, 46
faces, (reading), 43, 46
facing your mortality, 90

Index

- failure, as spur to change, 104
fair trade marketing, 111
fairs (and festivals), 162
fame, 1, 3
family (ies), 5, 83
 dynamics, 51
 and friends, 43
 as nest, 109
 source of meaning, 83
 what you imagine it to be, 48
family of living things, 67
family, friends, tribe, 109
famines, droughts, floods, 174
fantasies, 36, 63
fantasy online games, 149
fantasy/sci-fi/devotee conventions, 161
fashion, 26
fasting (and spirituality), 124
fat, 40
fear, 31, 32
 biggest, 57
 fear-to-boredom, 155
 with a mask, 48
feeling self, (and spirit), 23
fermented foods, 58
 fruit, 158
Ferriss, Tim, 98, 99
fertility cycle (of earth), 119
Feudal period, 90
financial markets, 27
find (lover of your dreams), 55
Findhorn, 169
finger-food snacks, 161
First 20 Hours, The, 105
First Mother, 129
fish oil, 58
fish, communities of, 74
Fishbird, 102, 105
Fisher, Helen, 9, 11
Fisk, Susan, 44, 46
fitness, 38, 40
flora, plants (local, invasive), 73
flotation tanks, 124
Flourish, 7, 105
flourishing, 5
flow (defined), 104
folklore, 137
Follow Your Bliss, 97
Food Not Bombs, 120
foods, 38, 40
Fool, the (archetype), 166
foolishness, 78
force, threat of, 47
forest, 27, 71
 fire, 67
forgive(ness), 17
 self and others, 40
forgiven, 73
Formless One, 129
formula for paradise, 78
Fortune, 105
fortune-telling, 167
fountain of youth (true), 38
fountains, 158
Four Agreements, The, 18
Four Hour Workweek, The, 99
four stages of shape shifting, 138
framing, psychological principle, 28, 155, 157
Frankl, Viktor, 83
Franklin, Ben, 171
Fredrickson, Dr. Barbara, 150
freedom (of thought), 21
friend or foe, powerful or not, 44
friends, 43
 friendship (essence of), 45
 and meaning, 43
Freud, Sigmund, 134
fruits, 40, 169
fulfill your dreams, 97
fulfilling life, 45

Index

fulfillment, 5
and belonging, 78, 80
path to, 64
recipe for, 102, 104
full attention creates intimacy, 53
fun, 129
elements of, 159
fun/emotions, 159
funerals, 83

G.

game (challenging one), 165
design your own Games, 150
garden shows, 162
gardening, 155, 176
gas, 178
GDH (Gross Domestic Happiness), 5
General Theory of Love, A, 11, 46
generosity, 43, 107, 109
genius (defined), 101
genocide, 72, 83
Geography of Bliss, The, 80
Gibran, Kahlil, 98–99
gift(s), 64, 161
for life, 114
giving (initiate meaningful change), 110
global warming, 174
goddess, 163
golden rule, 178
Goleman, Daniel, 51
good life, 45
good night's sleep, 58
good, (society's definition of)
and play, life, 3, 13
government, 26
and corporations, 176
graduations, 109
Grafman, Jordan, 127
gray area (economy), 27
greater-than-the-self, 123

Greco-Roman mythology, 167
Greece, 134
Greeks, 10
government, 26
and corporations, 176
graduations, 109
Grafman, Jordan, 127
gray area (economy), 27
greater-than-the-self, 123
Greco-Roman mythology, 167
Greece, 134
Greeks, 10
Green Belt Movement, 120
Griffith, Roland, 127
group dynamics, 175
grudges, 17
guards, 26
guided imagery, 10, 89
guides (inner), 134
guilt, 17
gun deaths, 174
guns, 26
gut instinct, 10

H.

Habit, The Power of, 96
habit(s), 30, 36, 38
how they form, 96
haiku, 92
hallucinogens, 124–125
happiness, 40
available to all, 173
basic needs met, 78, 173
and exercise, 38, 40
concept and history, 3, 5
formula for, 1
and intimacy, 5
recipes for, 30–32
source of, 1
Happiness Industry, The, 115

Index

- Happiness Now!*, 7
Harari, Dr. Noah, 7, 33
Hari, Johann, 61
harmony, 73
Harris, Michael, 141, 143
Harvard University, 53, 157, 162
Harvard University medical school, 3
Haven, Kendall, 86
Hawaiian, 133, 134, 136, 138, 139
 kahunas, 138–139
 Hawaiian shamans, 133–134
 and Kala, 73
hawk, 79
Hawken, Paul, 171, 178, 180–181
Healing Together, 61
healing, emotional health, 13
healthy love, 63
healthy relationships, 48
Heart-Soul, 63, 67, 79, 107, 125, 129, 134,
 163
 the Emerald Idol, 13
 the First I, 85
 Heart's Ease Wine, 107
Initiation, the, 79
Marriage of Earth & Sun, 63
Stairway to Heaven, 125
The Twins, 129
Wild Hunt, 163
heart attacks, 40, 43
heaven and hell, 28, 173
heaven on earth, 123, 171
Heavy Metal, 142
hedonism, 35
heights of the soul, 78
Heller, Rachel, 57, 61
Hero of a 1000 Faces, 121
hero-heroine (become one), 165
heroes quest, 119, 121
Hidden Wounds, 74
hierarchies, 50
High Priestess (archetype), 166
higher consciousness, 124
highs, 158
Himalayan glaciers, 174
Hindu mythology, 167
historical reenactments, 162
Hock, Dee, 178, 181
Hoke, Jeff, 130
Holden, Robert, 5, 7
holidays and vacations, 158
Holt-Hunsted, Julian, 45
holy days, 73
holy, sacred, magical, 123
home, 71, 80
 where the heart is, 77
homelessness, 72
homicides, 174
Homo Deus, 7, 33
honored ancestors, 134
Horned One, 163
horror films, 157
horses, 158
hospital, 92
Hubbert, Felicia, 5
Human Era, the, 173
human fulfillment, 114
humanitarian groups, 92
Humor and creativity, 129
Huna - hidden power, 133
Hurlant, 142
hurricanes, pests, diseases, 174
hydrogen, 178
hyper locavore, 120

I.

- IBD*, 99, 105
Iceland, 77
idea - ideal - idol, 130
idea structures, 26
Idea/idealis, 130
ideal shape, (bodies), 5

Index

- ideas, 21, 26
identity, 40
Idol/eidos
Ilardi, Dr. Stephen, 58, 61
illicit gatherings, 159
illiteracy, 121
illness, 40, 43
illumination, 125
imaginary friend, 134
imagination, 36, 92, 131
 freeing your, 133
 and play), 149
immortality, 119, 167
immune system, 40, 178
Imperial College, London, 127
In Praise of Folly, 80
In These Times, 180
India, 110
industrial agriculture, 176
industries, 27
inequality, 60
inferiority/superiority, 50
infinity (and spirituality, eternity), 123
Initiation, The, 79, 126
injustice (and inequality), 24
inner, and outer worlds, 133
 conversation, 89
 critic, (also, judge), 17–18
 eye, 133, 136
 helpers/guides, 134
 journey, 10, 126
 landscape, 14, 85, 131, 133, 136
 life (of others), 147
 resources, 114
 self, 1, 89, 165
 space, 133
 vision, 113–114
 voice, 1, 35
 work, 85
 world (transform), 133
Inner Tradition Books, 105
innovation, 102
insects, 5, 158
inspiration, 9–10, 113
 and creativity, 131
instant bond, 53
instant intimacy, 56
instinct, 28
Institutions (fair, equitable ones), 77
institutions (unhealthy ones), 80
integrity, foundation of, 60
 principles of, 18
intelligence (driver of social networks), 5
interdependent relationships, 178
internal, coercion, 28, 33
 controls, 23
 judge, 17
Internet, 178
interpersonal skills, 55
Interview magazine, 127
intimacy, 50, 64, 74
 bonds of, 60
 degrees of, 43
 different needs for, 57, 61
 establishing it, 53
 and good life, 45
 and happiness, 5
 and love, 43, 64
 instant, 56, 57
 with land, 65, 71
 with others and self , 1, 5
intoxication, 158
intuition, 5, 10, 28, 51, 85
 and healing, 10
 and philosophy of life, 126
 and trust, 114
intuitive side, 12
Inverness, Scotland, 167
Investors Business Daily, 96
isolation, 43
Italian Renaissance, 134

Index

J.

- Janah, Leila, 110–111
Japanese, 90
Jeffers, Robinson, 123, 127
Jensen, Derrick, 33, 180
Jobs, Steve, 141
Johns Hopkins University, 127
Joker, 159
jokes, (conversation starters), 56
Jonathan Livingston Seagull, 102, 105
Journal of Creative Behavior, 130
journey, to find purpose, 85
 into the unknown, 119
 within, 14
joy (source of), 1
Jung, C. G., 134, 136, 167, 171
justice, social and environmental, 80

K.

- kahuna/shaman, 133, 134
kaizen, 95
Kalb, Claudia
Kaplan, Robert D, 180
Kaufman, Josh, 101, 105
Kelly, Kevin, 84
Kennedy, Robert F, Jr., 74
Kenya, 110, 120
kindness, 43, 107
Kinesthete, 159
King, Sergei Kahili, 133, 136, 139
Klein, Naomi, 121, 175, 180
Knowing the Land is Resistance, 74
Kolbert, Elizabeth, 180
Kometev, Michael, 127
Komodo dragons, 152
Kripal, Jeff, 138–139

L.

- labyrinth, 126
land (close to), 71
landscape, connection with, 73
Laos, 114
larger social movement in history, 179
lavender, 97
Lawton, Graham, 127
learning (source of creativity), 151
Learning From the Land, 74
legacy, 117
Lele, Oche'm, 105
Levi, Primo, 83
Levine, Dr. Amir, 57, 58, 61
Levitin, Daniel, 101
libraries, 176
lies (polite, detecting), 55
Life After the Bombs, 115
life, affirming, 77
 force, 167
 goals, 83, 85, 89, 95, 102
 life's message, 113
 life's work, 113
 of mind, 78
Life You Can Save, The, 111
light of spirit, 73
light shows, 159
limbic resonance, 151
limbic regulation, 45, 46
limbic system, 9, 31, 44
lion, 157
listener, 64
listening, 53
 and caring, 45
 and relationships, 55, 58
 power of, 58
living buildings, 119
loco-weed, crazy grasses, 158
Lodge, Dr. Harry, 38, 40, 41, 45
London, 169

Index

loneliness, 40, 43
from nature, 175
help for, 58
and depression (overcoming), 47
losing weight, 151
loss, 72, 102, 104
Lost Connections, 61
love, 43, 50, 63, 64
and accepting yourself, 13, 21
and controls, 21, 24
creating, 35, 36
emotions, 9
erotic, 9
greatest, 57
and intimacy, 60, 78
not dangerous or difficult, 43
promised by ads, 30
and respect, 47
sharing, 36
and spectrum of behaviors, 9
lover, becoming a great one, 60, 64
Lovers, the (archetype)
low consumption lifestyle, 176
LSD, 158
lust, 9
Lyubomirsky, Sonja, 3, 7, 105

M.

magic formula, [for happy communities]
Magic of Findhorn, The, 171
magical, 77
magical emotions, 145
Magician, the [archetype], 166
Maker Movement, 142
mammals, 5, 147, 158
manipulation, 47
Manson, Mark, 105
Mar, Alex, 74
marijuana, 158
marketers, (ing), 5, 31

Marriage of Sun and Earth, 63
massage, 64, 158
mastery (achieve), 101
 pain in gaining, 102
 formula for, 101, 102
Mastery of Love, The, 45, 51
materialism, 3, 114, 173
Matsumoto, David, 33, 45, 61, 80
Matthews, Andrew, 31, 33
maze, 126
McGonigal, Dr. Jane, 150, 152, 162
McGowan, Rose, 167
McKibben, Bill, 7
McLean, Dorothy, 167
Mead, Margaret, 178
meaning, 83, 105, 107
 and community, 117
 finding, 83
 and inner guides, 134
 origin of, 85
 search for, 105
 source of, 83
 and spirituality, 126
meaningful coincidences, 138
media, 3
 corporate owned, materialism, 64
meditate and reflect, 125
meditation, 47, 124, 134
memory, 57
Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci, The, 134, 136
mental controls, 24
mental illness, 174
 treatment for, 58, 124
mentally disabled (students), 121
methamphetamine, 158
micro-expressions, 55
military spending, 176
Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 173
Milton, John, 28
mindfulness, 47–48
minorities, 23

Index

- mint, 97
mistakes, (how we learn), 6
mnemonic device, 134
modern lifestyle, 40
Monarch butterfly, 73
Monastersky, Richard, 180
money (value system of), 24, 27
 tied to labor, inflationary, 120
monkeys, 43
monsoon rains, 73
 failure of, 174
Montessori schools, 120
moods (attuned to), 45
More, Dr. Thomas, 33, 41, 48, 51, 77, 80, 126, 127
morphine, 158
mortality (facing it)
Mother, First, 129
 Teresa, 111
moths, 158
movies, 157, 167
MP3, 161
murder mysteries, 157
muscle cells, (slow and fast twitch), 40
 and bones, 40
Museum of Lost Wonder, The, 130
mushrooms, 158
mutual benefit and pleasure, 64
Mycoskie, Blake, 86, 110–111
mysteries of life, 126
mystery, 77
mystery schools, 123
mystical experiences, 57
mythic archetypes, 166
 themes, 171
mythology(ies), 119, 137, 167
myths, 48
 and archetypes, 166
 offering solutions, 166
 that speak to your heart, 167
- N.
Naruda, Pablo, 65
National Geographic, 105, 115, 162
Native American mythology, 167
native ground, 71
natural rhythms, 74
nature, 180
 as source of inspiration, 142
 as supply depot and dump), 175
 respect for, closeness to, 78
 as oracle, 138
 vital work of, 27
 and spirituality, 123, 124
near-death experience, 90
negative emotions, 48
neocortex, 9
Net and the Butterfly, The, 143
Netherlands, 77
neuroscience, 45
New Mexico magazine, 171
New Rules, 84
New Scientist, 46
New Yorker, 51
nicotine, 158
nightclubs, 157
NIH, 38
non-ado, 104
non-materialistic, 78
nonhuman intelligences, 125
Nonverbal Communication, 33, 45, 53, 80
nonverbal messages, 55, 61
Norse mythology, 167
North Carolina, University of, 150
North Sea, 167
nuclear energy, 178
Nuclear War and Environmental Catastrophe, 180
nursing homes, 92

Index

O.

O'Donohue, John, 3, 32

obedience training, 23

obesity, 30

octopuses, 147

Occupy movements, 120

ocean acidification, 173

Oche'm Lele, 105

odyssey, 126

oil, 178

Okanagan, 71, 72

Olympian athletes, 101, 105

omega-3 fatty acids, 58

omniscience, 167

open conversation with intuitive side, 85

open posture (and body language), 53

opening conversation (how to), 56

openness (and trust, intimacy), 56

operas, 159

opium, marijuana plantations, 158

oppression, 121

tools of, 24

organized religion, 123

orgies, 155

Osogbo, the, 102, 105

others, 44

outcasts, 23

overfishing, 173

Oxford, 43

oxytocin, 43

ozone layers, 173

P.

pagan gatherings, 161

pain, 104

sadness, 71

palm wine, 158

Panksepp, J., 45

parades, 161

paradise, 165, 171, 173

Paradise Lost, 28

parasitic systems, 178

versus symbiotic, 178

parties, 157, 161, 176

Party God (or goddess), 161

recipe for, 162

passions, 56, 83

path of the heart, 113

peak experience, 53, 126

Peale, Norman Vincent, 28

peer pressure, 24

Pennsylvania, University of, 101

perception, (of reality), 3

perfect, 43

Perkins, John, 139

PERMA, 6

permaculture, 119–120, 176

persistence, 31

personal mythology, 48

perspective, 131, 139

pheromones, 175

Phillips, Suzanne, 61

Utah, 176

philosophy of life (create one), 126

physics labs, 133

Picasso, Pablo, 137

Pierce, Jessica, 152

pilgrimage, 126

planes, 149

Planet of Slums, 180

plant and animal populations, 74, 174

evolved consciousness, 125

native and invasive, 73

psychoactive, 125

play, 40, 129, 152, 162

behavior, 147

benefits of, 150

carefree exploration, 147

essence of, 147

fun, 145

Index

- and games, 150, 151
and the good life, 149
and learning, 147, 151, 152
as limbic magic, 151
personalities, 159, 162
and reverse aging, 6
roots, 147
rules of, 147
and toys, 149
types of, 149
Play's the Thing, The, 152
playfulness (recapture), 152
playgrounds, 111
playing with purpose, 150
pleasure, 60, 64
 and play, 145
 centers of brain, 155
 giving/receiving, 36
 increase, sexual, 60
 love of, 63
 sacred act, 65
 as communion, 63
 and sensation, 155
police, 26
politics, 26
Pollock, Judah, 143
pollution, 173
Polk, Laray, 180
Pope Francis I, 173
popular parties (ingredients of), 159
positive emotions, 150
Positive Psychology Movement, 6
poverty, 3, 110, 121
poverty-stricken, 78
Power of Habit, The, 41
power, 24, 26, 36
 relations, 50
 an illusion), 50
 imbalances, 60
 power/totem animals, 134
powerful - or - not, 44
practice (10,000 hours of), 101
preventable diseases, 110
primal self, 10
primates, 9
Princeton University, 46
principles for success (I B D), 97
prisons, 24, 26
pro - social behavior, 147
process of play, 149
Prophet, The, 99
Protea, 129
protective frame of mind, 157
psychedelic drugs, 127
 paraphernalia, 159
 as treatment for mental illness, 124
psychoactive plants, 125, 158
psychiatrists, 31
psychic, 161
psychic reality, 166
psychotherapy, 30
public myths, 166
pull-ups, 40
punishment (self-imposed), 17, 21
purpose, (playing with), 150
push-ups, 40
- Q.
- Qatar, 78
quantum level, 133
 physicists, 138
 physics, 133
quest for meaning, 97
quitting smoking, 151
- R.
- radio broadcast, 167
RAF, 167
rainwater harvesting, 119
rave concerts, 159

Index

- reading faces, 43
reality, 133
 on quantum level, 133
 conscious, 138
 creation of, 133
 perception of, 3
reason, 10
recovery (painful and difficult), 72
reflectance, reflectant, 44
reflection, 124
regular exercise, 58
rejection, 55, 109
relations (build with wild creatures), 74
relationship(s), styles, 57
 abusive, 48
 create with others, 43
 in your life, 64
 like-minded people, 74
 recipe (for great ones), 1
 social, 5
 successful, pets as models, 58
unhealthy, 23
with land, 72-74
with others, 5, 9
 with yourself, 13
relativism, 83
religious practices (and hallucinogens), 158
Renaissance, 78
Renaissance Festival, 149
Reno, Nevada, 161
reproduction, 9
reptiles (and brain structures)
resilience, 6, 72
respect, 43
rhythms of life and nature, 73
rice wine, 158
rich, 43
right hemisphere, 95
Rilke, Rainer Maria, 13
rising sea levels, 174
risk avoidance, 157
 stress reduction, 157
 risk, sex and competition, 157
 risk-taking, 157
rites of passage, 83, 109
rituals, 125, 126
River Keepers, The, 74
roles, 23
roller coasters, 157
Roman Catholic, 173
 Pope Francis I, 173
Romans, 10
Rome, 134
routines (breakout of), 139
rowing, 40
Royal Air Force, 167
Ruiz, Don Miguel, 45, 48, 51
Rutgers, University, 9, 11
S.
sacred, 123
 art forms, 126
 and daily life, 125, 126
 definition of, 123
 literature, 124
Sacred Pleasure, 41, 65
safari, 157
salmon, 79
salt, 40, 40
salty, sugary, fatty foods, 159
Sama Source, 110
Samorini, Dr. Giorgio, 162
samurai, 90
San Juan Capistrano, 73
Santa Fe New Mexico, 169
Santeria Tradition, 102
science, 26
Science of Meditation, The, 51
scientific discovery/breakthroughs, 137

Index

- sculptor, (of your life), 36
séance, 161
seasons, change of, 73
secret garden, 134
secure attachment style, 57, 58
sedentary, 40
self (be kind to), 40
 actualization/realization, 129, 165
 control, 95, 96, 98
 discovery, 113
 discipline, 95, 101, 119
 esteem, 30, 83, 104
 examination, 32, 85
 expression, 129
 image, 13, 28, 30-32, 40,
 importance, 47
 knowledge, 30-33
 organizing systems, 178, 181
 preservation, 71
 sense of, 123
 true, 1, 21, 32
 worth, 30
sensitive, 60
Seligman, Martin, 6-7, 105
sense of sacred (ways to foster), 125
senses (human versus other species), 175
sensory deprivation, 124
sensual experience (and perspective), 137
seppuku, 90
Septem Sermones ad Mortuos, 136
servitude, 26
Seven Sermons to the Dead, 136
sex, 9, 40, 60, 157
 drive, 9
 fantasies, 60
 parties, 162
 and play, 149
 toys, 161
 source of life, pleasure, love, 60
sex, drugs, and rock 'n roll, 157
shadow self, 32, 47
shaman, -ism, 136
 principles of, 136
Shape Shifting, 137, 139
shared worldview, 43
sharing, 114, 176
sheep (bighorn), 158
shining ones, 167
shopping malls and stores, 158
shows, 157
shrine, 125
sickness of soul, 124
signaling, 53
signals of emotional state, 53
silence and darkness, 123
Silva, Jose, 138
Silva Mind Control Method, The, 139
simplicity, 77
simplify (daily routine), 95
 life, 97
Singer, Peter, 110-111
sit ups, 40
Sixth Extinction, The, 180
skepticism, 28
skinny-dipping, 161
skydiving, 155
slavery, suffering, injustice, 179
Slow Food Movement, 120
slugs and snails, 158
slums, 174
Smolin, Lee, 5, 7
snuggling, 64
So, Timothy, 5
social, animals, 109
 circle, 43, 117, 119
 connections, 67, 173
conventions (time wasters), 97
 and ecological justice, 80, 175, 178
factors (in diseases), 60
game, 23-24, 26

Index

- justice & injustice, 80, 121
media, 98
rituals, 109
rules, 50
sickness, 71
social goods spending, 176
society, 23
Social Circus Network, 169
soil erosion, 173
solar power, wind, tidal, hydrogen, 178
solve for pattern, 176, 180
solitude, 143
solstices, 161
sorrow, (shared)
soul friend, 33
Sparta, 27
speak with God/spirits, 124
species extinction, 173–174
Spectrum series, 142
Spence, Jonathan, 136
spiders and wasps, 147
spirit(s), 11, 124
 of earth, air, and water, 79
 of misfortune, 102
spiritual awakening, 125
 contemplation, 126
 exercise, exploration, 126
spirituality, 83, 117, 123, 158
 and art, 166
 practice of, 123
sports, 157
springtime, (for body), 38
squatters, 174
Stairway to Heaven, 125
stamp collecting, 155
Stanford Graduate School of Education, 141
Stanford University, 98, 101, 127
Start Something That Matters, 111
starvation, 110
State Univ. of New York-Stony Brook, 9
status, high and low, 44
stereotypes, 44, 50
Sterling, Linder, 124, 127, 137
stimulant, 158
story (ies) , 85
 imagine life as a, 86
 make sense of our lives, 85
Storyteller, 159
Strange Order of Things, The, 45
Strangers to Ourselves, 33
Streiber, Whitley, 138–139
strength, (tarot archetype), 167
stress reduction, 31
strokes, 40
subconscious, 10
Subtle Art of Not Giving a Fuck, The, 105
success, 6
 and meaning, 90
 principles of, 96-97
 recipe for/secrets of, 102
sugar, 40, 158
suicide, overdoses, drug addiction, 174
Summerhill, 120
sunbathing, 158
sunlight, 58
Super Better, 150, 152, 162
super flow, 104
Super Simple Storytelling, 86
Super-Natural: A New Vision, The, 139
superiority, 23, 50
superpowers, 167
support groups, 43
survival (belonging to group), 43
sustainable agriculture, 120
swallows, migration of, 73
Swedish proverb, 109
swimming, 40
Swiss psychiatrist, 134
Switzerland, 77
symbiotic systems, 178

Index

T.

Taj Mahal, 8

taming, methods of, 21

Taoists, 104

ideals of, 113

philosophers, 133

Tarot, 167

Tchaikovsky, 141

tea, 158

teachers, 178

Teachings of Don Juan, The, 171

techniques to connect with spirituality, 124

technology (as substitute for meaning), 83

and meaning and values, 83

and play, 161

TED talk, 98

telekinesis, 167

telepathy, 167

temporary paradise, 158, 162

Ten Secrets to Success, 99

Tender is the Night, 51

Terman, Lewis, 101

terminally ill people, 92

Thai prison, 92

police, 1

Thomas, Chris D., 180

Third World (reducing poverty in), 120

This Changes Everything, 121, 180

thought, (birth of), 85

thoughtfulness, 50

thrillseeking, 157

Tibet, 5

Tibetan monks, 57

tidal energy, 178

tigers, 158

Time magazine, 111

time, banks and dollars, 120

-lessness, 126

management, 98, 99

Todorov, Prof. Alexander, 46

toleration, 78

TOMS, 110

tornadoes, 174

Towards An Anarchist Ecology, 74

toys, 149

traditional ceremonies, 123

traditions, 119, 123

trailblazers, 101

tranquility, 155

transcendence, 123

transforming reality, 166

transparency, (and trust), 56

traps, (mental), 21

trauma, 24, 60, 72, 73

Trespasso exercise, 57

tribalism, 175

true nature, 85, 89

true self, 89, 169

highest duty to, 113

trust, 43, 60

empathy, 64

and intimacy, 56

worthiness, 44, 56, 58

Truth Game, the, 56, 57

TV shows, 167

Twain, Mark, 147

Twins, The, 129

Twin Sisters, the, 35

Twitter, 173

types of play, 149

tyranny of time, 26

U.

UK, 5, 169

unconscious, 10, 95, 133

and reality, 133

conversation with, 134

unexamined life, 6

unhappiness, 83

unhealthy behavior, 48

Index

unhealthy institutions and models, 80
University of California at Berkeley, 150
University of Cambridge, 5
University of North Carolina, 150
University of Pennsylvania, 101
University of Zürich, 127
urban area, 71, 174
Urban Shaman, The, 136
US, 78, 161
 military, 6
us versus them, 175
utopia, 165
utopian communities, 79

V.

valleys of experience, the, 78
value and vision questions, 90
value(s), 11, 83, 113
 and questions of, 83
 and vision, 83
 systems, 27
vandalism, 157
vegetables, 40, 169
Vikings, 78
violence, 121, 157
virtuous cycle
Visa international, 178
vision/dream quest, 126
visualization, 92
volunteer, 92
 work, 43, 111
vulnerability, (and trust), 56

W.

waking dreams, 162
walking, (aid to creativity), 141
Wandering Mind, 141, 143
Wang, Sam, 127

War on Drugs, 10
warmth, (and gentle touch)
Warrior, the, (archetype), 166
wars, Refugees, migrations, 174
water, (dirty), 110
waterfall, 158
wealth, 1
weight training, 38, 40
 and loss, 38
Weiner, Eric, 80
well-being, 3
Wendell Berry, 71–72, 74, 176, 180
Western culture, 10
whale migrations, 73
What is Your Dangerous Idea? ?, 7
Wheel of Fortune, the, [archetype], 167
Who is a Genius? ?, 105
Wild Hunt, 163
Wild Justice, 152
wildlife, 73
 sanctuary, 73
 things, 27, 72
wilderness, 79
willpower (tips to increase), 95, 98
Wilson, E.O., 5, 7, 28, 33, 180
Wilson, T.D., 28
wintertime, (for your body), 38
Wise Fool New Mexico, 169
Wise Fool Puppet Intervention, 169
Wiser Earth.org, 179
Witches of America, 74
withdrawal, 38
women, 161
wonder, 77, 126
work (as poetry, art), 113
world random and cruel), 72
World War II, 83
world-class achievement (formula for), 101
worldview, 123

Index

Y.

- Yale University, 72
- Yates, Francis, 136
- yin-yang, 167
- yoga, 40
 - Tantric, 124
- Younger Next Year*, 41, 45

Z.

- Zaraska, Marta, 152
- Zen, 167
- Zen and the Art of Making a Living*, 115, 171
- Zen philosophy, 137
 - ideals, 113



The author of *Rotting in the Bangkok Hilton*, (Skyhorse Publishing), and *The Nature of Religion*, (Pan Publishing), was born and raised in Mountain View, California - the heart of Silicon Valley. He and his family moved to Southern California in his early teens, and he's lived in hot climates ever since.

After college, he became a gemologist, and worked in the jewelry industry, travelling widely in Europe and Asia (where he lived for a decade).

While living in Northern Thailand, a friend murdered a woman in his house. Fearing the Thai police, he helped cover it up. Caught, he couldn't pay the bribe the police, judge and prosecutor demanded. He spent the next 16 years in prison, convicted of a crime he didn't commit. *Lasting Happiness* is a product of that experience; a realization of how little we really need to be happy.

Due to the fact he can keep a secret, rarely talks about himself, and doesn't brag, he earned many friends in prison - including some of the world's top drug lords and smugglers (knowledge he is careful to ignore and "forget").

He lives in Tucson, Arizona, where he fights a (losing) battle against getting fat from all the great Mexican restaurants.

LASTING HAPPINESS

Lasting Happiness is a practical, step-by-step guide to help you create a life rich in love, meaning, and creativity. Use the wisdom that almost cost the author his life to make yours a paradise . Here are the tools and techniques you need - hard-earned knowledge from some of the most brilliant scientists, doctors and thinkers who've ever lived.

Discover the secrets of...

- the REAL fountain of youth;
- create instant intimacy with anyone;
- use the science of love to find and keep the lover of your dreams;
- escape your personal hell, and overcome depression, loneliness, anger and fear;
- become an expert at anything fast;
- boost your creativity a thousand-fold;
- become a 'party god' (or goddess), giving legendary parties your friends will talk about for years,

...and hundreds of other exciting ways to transform your life for the better. You are just a few seconds (and pages) away from making this a reality. It is YOUR choice. Why wait ? Start NOW !

T. M. HOY



author photo
by Emily Em



Pan Media
Take a walk on the wild side
P.O.Box 41132, Tucson, AZ 85717
www.panmedia.co

ISBN 9781732791909



9 781732 791909