

Letting Go of the Need to Control  
The Power of Staying Centered Through  
Opening Our Heart



## Introduction

What I would like to discuss are things in life that we do and do not have control over, as well as come to a conclusion on whether our habits are serving us for the better or causing setbacks in our life. I have found in my life and the lives of those around me, that there are so many struggles about control. So, I would like to explore the choices we do have and show how our choices are creating our outer world.

In my childhood the understanding was that we got what we were given and that some people were just more blessed than others, maybe even "luckier." It seemed that some people had everything come so easy to them, while others struggle every step of the way. These beliefs still very much exist today, as many people share this type of thinking or conditioning.

For a very long time this thought process had not rung as truth for me deep inside. I used to ask myself how only certain people were dealt certain cards and others were not. Whether it be disease, unhappy or unhealthy relationships, low paying jobs or circumstances that continually fall apart, I found it quite challenging to accept and digest the concept that we do not have choices that would affect the quality of our lives. I have pretty much always had strong faith. However, with that being said I still wondered how certain people would be chosen for a life of suffering or be plagued with disease and misery, while others' lives seem to be happy and effortless.

So, in my early twenties my search for the answers began. I felt this strong calling beneath my unhappiness to reach for more in life, for my two children and I, than mere survival. To actually go after (or better, open up to) what was tugging at me for some time... my truth.

I felt a yearning for meditation, although I was not sure what it was. The only thing I knew how to do was pray (more from a begging standpoint). So, rather than co-creating my life, I was hoping that one day when I was good enough, then my number would be selected too. The more I started to listen to the pulls from deep inside of my heart, the more I was directed to find the methods that would teach me to open up to a whole new way of thinking and being, that has greatly impacted every area of my life.

Now, after over fifteen years on this journey, it has become a great passion of mine to show by example and teach others ways to have an amazing quality of life with meaning...no matter what. What is life all about otherwise?

Think about this for a moment: If it is noble to suffer, then my question is; why did the most noble of our people stand in their power, strength, conviction, love and peace no matter what was going on around them?

Amazing leaders of change such as; Jesus, Ghandi, Martin Luther King, Mother Theresa demonstrated this. As well as people like; Michael Landon, Christopher Reeves, Gilda Radner, John Lennon and many others.

All of these people lived their purpose with heart, in truth, right until the end. Each one of them touched and inspired so many lives and leaving their own legacy, for all to learn from. They did not just sit and wallow or settle for mediocrity. All of them faced major challenges, but despite that, stayed inspired to live out their mission with passion.

I have come to the conclusion, as simple as it may sound, that everything can be solved from a place of truth and love. Even when the answers to the issues at hand may not seem clear, we are either in one place or another, our heart or our head. Being in our heart is our universal connection to all; it is where all the answers lay. It is when we go into our head that we lose touch with our center in truth, losing balance, so there is no space to be open to the answers.

I have found the best way to touch and inspire others, to be in their truth and power, is first lead by example rather than preaching. The trickling effect starts there and can change people's lives from a world that may feel like Hell, at times, to living in a state of peace and joy, no matter what is going on around them.

My real passion is to help bring people to the awareness that they can create an amazing life, regardless of what comes their way. More importantly, help them identify and nourish the things that make their hearts sing. Then, they will find their true purpose, which allows that sense of freedom we yearn for. From this space there would no longer be *a need to control*, struggle or trying to force things to go our way. I believe that is what life is all about.

## Review of Literature

I have studied all the different aspects of life, health and wellbeing that I believe help bring us back to balance, with the realization of how much mind-set and perceptions play a part in all areas of our lives. I have gained a strong understanding of how physical health coincides with mental, emotional, spiritual and even financial health.

The keys that I have learned from all of my studies, is that the methods and practices were all pretty much the same, no matter what area of life we are trying to bring into balance.

To further confirm my studies with the University of Metaphysics, I have attended many workshops, seminars, worked with private teachers, as well as, read many eye-opening books. This has allowed me to re-direct my energy and enhance every area of my life.

Coming originally from a health and fitness career, I started to yearn to know more about my physical being; how to take care of our physical body and how the choices we made affect our health.

Mentors that have made a huge impact on my shifts in thought are, Carolynn Myss, Dr. Bernie Siegal, Gary Null, Wayne Dyer, Edgar Cayce, Bill Moyers, Dr Tag Powell, Dr Judith Powell and Dr Bob Schwartz to name a few.

One of the first books that introduced me to new thought, believe it or not, was a book called "Diet's Don't Work" by Dr. Bob Schwartz, PhD. (1992.) He shared his journey of many years spent working in spas, teaching people about weight loss. He explored the whole weight loss mind sets, behaviors and mentalities of deprivation, self-loathing, lack of acceptance and even isolation.

Schwartz described how traditional weight loss diets treat the symptoms, rather than the cause. The analogy he used sums it up quite well: Quote; "Suppose every time someone broke their leg they were given an aspirin and told to go jogging. As soon as they started hobbling around the track, they fell down and got worse. It would be pretty obvious that what we were prescribing was not working."

Yet professionals still continue to treat the symptoms and not the cause. In this book, they did a study where they decided to try and treat the people who had trouble gaining weight, by putting them on a traditional "weight loss diet." The results in the beginning upset their patients, because after the first week they lost more weight, which was not their goal at all.

However, the following week not only did they gain the weight back which they'd originally lost, they also gained some additional pounds. So, they would go through this process a few times until they gained their desired weight.

My point here, is not about how to gain weight, it is about the effects of treating the "symptoms" rather than the cause. He states, "You cannot motivate people with negativity and failure. You have to build on success and positive results."

Finally, Schwartz went into detail about his twenty-year journey of how he studied the minds of overweight people, trying to figure out the mystery. He soon found himself in a position where he began to struggle with his own weight. When one day, he had a breakthrough, realizing he was looking at the situation from a backward perception. He was studying the ways and mind-sets of fat people, rather than studying thin people. He quotes "If we want to be rich, you don't study poor people you study rich people."

Once he started to speak to and learn about thin people, he realized they did not have some magic answer, because this had always been their way of life. What he had observed about all of them was that being thin was natural, easy and without struggle to them.

So, what he had learned was not so much the "Do's and Don'ts, it was about tuning into a new way of thinking, feeling and behavioral habits. Schwartz (1992:21) quotes: "It's not the weight that is the real problem, it is the mentality behind it." It was then that he realized the need to teach positive affirmations and visualization, focusing on what is possible and what does work, rather, than what does not. He also realized the importance in being good to oneself, positive self-talk, celebrating our wins etc.

Although I had no idea at the time of purchase what this book was really about, it expanded my perception on how changing our minds, perceptions, attitudes and habits can change the world around us. This opened up a thirst for knowing more about how powerful our mind really is. I was then starting to understand more about where my intuition was leading me, and that dis-eases were not just dealt to us randomly, there was much more to it.

I studied some of Carolynn Myss' work, starting with "Anatomy of the Spirit." Myss (1996) spoke about how the energy works in our body either positively or negatively, as well as, how the energy flows at different frequencies. Being a practicing medical intuitive, Myss described how our thoughts, habits, and belief systems create our outer/physical world. She states that whether we may be predisposed to certain diseases or not, the context of the environment plays a bigger part in the outcome of our circumstances, rather than heredity or chance.

Myss explained in much detail about the energy channels or chakras in the body, as well as, which emotions or situations govern different parts of our body's energy, based on different areas of our life. Further, energy can be blocked from its natural flow with emotional stresses which weaken one's energy field.

Myss (1996:6) states that "Emotional and spiritual stresses or diseases are the root of all physical illness." She brings awareness to how our body is trying to communicate

with us on a regular basis, through different ailments and dis-eases (to what is not working on other levels, and has manifested itself into the physical world). It is when we allow our body to act as a guide, we can know what is going on at the cellular level. Rather than taking pain medication to treat only the symptoms, Myss gives us a guide to help us have a better idea of what our body is trying to communicate.

Myss shared numerous case studies with patients, showing how their mindset and habits dictated their outcome. Some were able to shift their perception with new daily practices, and created a whole new healthy way of life for themselves. They were even able to reverse life threatening diseases, by unblocking their energy.

However, for the ones that stuck to their old habits and limiting belief systems, the results were devastating. So again, a positive outlook as well as focusing on what is possible, plays a big part in how our body responds to life's circumstances.

Dr. Bernie Siegel author of "Peace, Love and Healing," (1990) explains how he took his medical practice to a new level, by treating the whole person rather than the ailment or disease. While performing surgeries, he would speak to the person on the subconscious level, by making sure to only express positive affirmative thoughts. Siegel expressed how much words can affect us, on all levels both positively or negatively. He was very careful about the kind of input that was received by his patients before, during and after any kind of treatments.

He would suggest to the subconscious mind while under anesthesia, that the patient's body was already healing itself, it would have minimal bleeding and recovery time etc. The amazing part, he could perform the same exact surgeries as other doctors in the same hospital, and studies confirmed that Siegel's patients would recover in a fraction of the time.

A study Siegel had done with a group of long term survivors, revealed that each person possessed at least one, if not all of these three qualities:

- 1) The ability to express anger.
- 2) Willingness to learn and make lifestyle changes.
- 3) Spirituality.

This is not to say these people are angry, just that they are able to express and then release their anger rather than stuff it inside, only to manifest and grow.

Siegel (1990:3) also demonstrated a Harvard study that had been done with previous students; those who described themselves as having loving parents and a happy childhood only had 29% diagnosed diseases by midlife. The people who did not use affectionate words toward their families suffered 95% major illness by midlife. Also

whether people had faith, or not, demonstrated very similar results as those feeling affection toward loved ones.

Furthermore, Siegel describes ways to have optimum health;

- 1) Fulfilling our soul's needs.
- 2) Saying "no" when things are not aligned with our priorities (The key is to not feel guilty about it).
- 3) The positive effects of laughter and humor.
- 4) Letting go of things we do not have control of.
- 5) Positive self-talk.

Bill Moyers, "Healing and the Mind," (1993) explains how body, mind and spirit are woven together. Through many interviews, he described how the chemicals of the body are released in response to fear, pain, and joy etc., so physically, the body-state changes as well. Like many holistic practitioners, Moyers described treating a patient from an emotional and spiritual level, rather than only what has manifested on the physical level.

Moyers (1993) gives an incredible example of how powerful the mind and our belief systems really are, when he described a female patient who suffered from multiple personality disorder. Each personality had different, specific, physical ailments that went along with it. Not just things in her mind that she was complaining about, but actual physical evidence. In one of her states of mind (or personalities,) her body physically suffered from diabetes and within a 30-minute period she could shift to the other mind state, where there were no signs of diabetes at all and her sugar levels back to normal. So, in regard to the effects of the physical body, it is very important to fuel it properly on all levels as well. Proper nutrition plays a big part in effecting our body chemistry along with mindset.

I learned a lot about nutrition and its effects from Gary Null, "Nutrition and the Mind," (1995). He shared so many interesting studies about how certain foods can severely affect our body chemistry. And sometimes, food allergies can cause dramatic personality changes.

John Gray, the author of "Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus," who mainly deals in relationships, had written a book called the "The Mars and Venus Diet and Exercise Solution" (2003). This book is full of great insight on much more than just "magic foods." Gray discussed body chemistry and how it reacts to different stressors. He describes how this trickles down and affects our relationships and why. Also, describing that when our body is depleted of certain hormones, it is much harder to respond from a balanced place, because it is more challenging to interpret things clearly.

Gray demonstrates that when our body is stressed, and nutrition is not balanced, men's dopamine levels and women's serotonin levels drop, which then causes many side

effects that are directly related to our relationships. For instance, low dopamine levels in men causes lack of focus, motivation, and willingness, causing them to be much more reactive, impatient and sometimes very mean and impulsive.

Gray (2003:19) also conducted a study on children with ADD/ADHD, which is predominantly found with males. When tested, each and every one had low dopamine levels. A similar study was done in male prisons (again prisons are predominately male). When the inmates were tested, they found the same results of low dopamine levels.

Similarly, women who have low Serotonin levels experience more depression and low self-esteem, they end up feeling overwhelmed and taken for granted. We can conclude that these kinds of side effects can greatly affect our relationships and quality of life.

I would also like to include the information I learned about the laws of attraction and Quantum Physics. Lynn Grabhorn, "Excuse Me Your Life is Waiting" (2000), shared the concept that what we focus on grows. She clarifies why most of our dreams have not been materialized. Grabhorn provides simple steps and true-life examples to learn how we can turn around all areas of our lives and bring to our consciousness the habits that are creating the world around us, good and bad.

She further expressed, how important the feelings we are putting toward certain things have a great effect on us as well, stating that *feeling* is the key to manifesting what we really desire.

Grabhorn (2000:2) uses the example of a 15-year-old little league player, very small for his age. He would always hit the ball right out of the park. She was so amazed and flabbergasted by his constant wins. She felt compelled to find out his secret. When she approached the child, he really didn't know how to answer how he could do this. He quickly followed with "each time I get up to the bat, I just feel what it is going to be like to connect, and I do."

Grabhorn explains that she did not know it at the time, but he had just described the fundamental principal of the manifestation of the laws of attraction and how like-attracts-like. It has nothing to do with where we came from or even our personalities. Anything that we focus on, good or bad grows, expands and manifests more of the same, especially when there are intense feelings accompanied with it. If we are spending a lot of our energy and emotion on what is not working in our life, we will keep drawing more of what doesn't work toward us.

Reba Ann Karp (1986) has written a book about the life and work of Edgar Cayce, discussing the teachings, psychic abilities and over 14,000 remedies for self-healing as well as balancing the body, mind and spirit.

Karp (1986:2) expressed how Cayce could absorb an entire book by sleeping on top of it. His psychic abilities began to develop after a baseball injury to his spine. Cayce returned with a heightened ability to channel healing remedies, which started by first healing himself. Karp (1986:3) described the event in Cayce's life, brought on by sudden

paralysis to his throat muscles, which eventually resulted in him losing his voice as well as his job. He tried various kinds of medical treatment but could not reach a diagnosis. He then consulted a hypnotist. While under treatment, Edgar obtained insight which allowed him to not only see the cause of the problem, but also the remedy. He realized that this sudden paralysis was brought on by nervous stress. He then asked the hypnotist to suggest to his subconscious, while being under hypnosis, that his circulation in his vocal area was increasing. To both of their amazement, within a few minutes Cayce could speak again.

Within his forty-year journey, beginning at that point in his life, Cayce's findings discovered that the main causes of malfunction to our body is stress, and what focusing on emotions like fear, worry, anxiety, anger and guilt can do to our body. He points out the negative effects that show up on many levels. He determined that these emotions, when focused on for any length of time, cause nothing but fatigue and have major influences on our muscles and organs.

Edgar states that stress makes the body and its energy blocked and weak, while introducing toxins into the lymph systems as well. Edgar Cayce's readings gave a clear message that the cause of disease and source of health extend beyond the physical being to mental and spiritual aspects of the self. There is a need for harmony between the three aspects of oneself to create and preserve good health.

Napoleon Hill, "Think and Grow Rich" (2005) spoke about being in the state of mind known as "burning desire." Hill explains how wishing alone, does not bring to us what we desire. When we are in the state of mind, as though we have already received the desired outcome, we are more likely to achieve our goals. The way to do that is by basking in the feelings of joy, and the presence of what it would feel like to have our desired situation, being as specific as possible. Also, imagine what you would do and what it would feel like, once you have achieved your goals. If it is more money you desire, for example, focus on what it would be used for, and how it would improve your life; then picture what it would feel like to have those things.

Another key, is to determine what exactly you intend to give in return (exchange of energy), along with establishing an approximate date, the next step, followed by creating a plan. A lot of the time we may know what we want and why, but the how is not real clear. Taking one step at a time toward your desired outcome, the next step will always present itself. Focus on the "What" and the "Why" with emotion, and have faith that the "How" will present itself. Write a clear and concise statement about what you desire and read it out loud, twice daily. Hill expressed that the main keys are; read, see, feel and believe yourself already in possession of the item or situation. Quote: "If you cannot picture yourself in possession of money before you actually have it, you have to convince yourself you will have it, to become money conscious."

The same idea would apply to any area of your life, whether it is a wonderful relationship, successful career, better health etc. Hill (2005:53) further states "All impulses of thought have a tendency to clothe themselves in their physical equivalent."

In other words, the mind makes no distinction between constructive or destructive thoughts. Therefore, it is important to be aware, that a thought created by fear will translate into a reality just as readily as thoughts driven by courage and faith. He calls this, the laws of autosuggestion.

Hill (2005:55) quotes "Life's battles don't always go to the stronger or faster man, but sooner or later the one who wins is the one who thinks he can!"

"The Millionaire Mind" By T. Harv Eker (2006) described how each person has a money blueprint, and that belief systems (usually at the subconscious level) are set at a certain dial, where, as long as our core beliefs stay the same, it won't matter what we do, we will always find ourselves going back to the same position. He states "If you want to know what is going on in your inner world (blue print), look at what is going on in your outer world. He describes that, therefore people who are poor all of their lives and win the lottery, usually end up being poor again, and self-made millionaires who have lost everything, have been able to rebuild themselves, and in many cases even surpass where they were previously. This is due to what is going on within our true inner belief system.

Eker shares that many people are pre-conditioned to put negative condemnations on money, power and success, and, as long as that plays in the subconscious, the outer world will continue to reflect only that. Eker does different exercises to uncover what is going on at the soul level. He also teaches how to get into your higher consciousness with techniques to change the blueprint we have had for so long. Eker expresses that this blueprint is not just about how much money we have, this limited mindset can affect every area of life. Quote; "how we do anything is how we do everything."

His formula for the process of manifestation is:

- 1) Thoughts lead to feelings.
- 2) Feelings lead to actions.
- 3) Actions lead to results.

In order to change our blueprint, we would need to re-program our thoughts and let it trickle down into our feelings and actions. Lastly, Eker (2006:31) states; "If your motivation for acquiring money or success comes from non-supportive roots such as fear, anger, or the need to prove yourself, your money will not bring you happiness."

"No Acting Please" by Eric Morris & Joan Hotchkiss (2002:19) shared about the value of tapping into your inner knowing and truth, to freely use your natural, instinctual talents, rather than a special technique, to create a character. This, and a few other acting books I have studied, spoke more about stripping our layers and getting in touch with our authentic self, very much like our spiritual journey. Then, from there, we are able to channel the energy and knowing, needed in the present moment, rather than using some formulated technique. Very much like our spiritual journey, it is all about the concept of "being" as opposed to "acting"(or orchestrating).

The last book I would like to add is called "Journey from Abandonment to Healing." by Susan Anderson (2000). The reason why I add this book, is Anderson describes different behaviors, habits, and defense mechanisms that come into play in response to a life emotionally out of balance. When fear is the driving force, it can really consume and affect every area of our lives, and is also what leads to the need to escape and to addiction.

Anderson (2002:23) states that in her experience she has found a conceptual truth. She borrows the term Akera (to pierce open), to best describe how pain and intensity serve as a catalyst for profound personal growth. She says you are in the presence of powerful forces at play to strive and regain balance. Behaviors that have been developed from childhood, that come more from a fear based, childish state of mind (reactive) which is where those wounds were first created, helps to bring awareness to these behaviors and their imbalance. When coming from an adult standpoint, this can give great insight into how we can heal those parts of our soul.

## Methods

Beginning with the journey to myself, I began by reading and soaking in as much as I possibly could. I attended many classes, workshops and seminars where each step opened another door toward my growth. I felt a calling to learn and eventually teach Yoga and meditation, which, at first, I found to be very difficult. It seemed I could never shut off my mind. But, after a while, I found myself able to connect easier following something physical, such as Hatha Yoga, a workout, or taking a walk.

I soon realized that the best way for me to continue to learn and grow was to teach whatever I was learning, to everyone who was open to it. This helped ingrain it in me. I seemed to be able to inspire them with my stories. I shared how each thing has a process; just like the way I had struggled with meditation at first, and I would empathize with clients while helping them through each step.

One of the ways I like to describe meditation is, to NOT try and do anything, to stop struggling, allow yourself to just let go, and focus on breathing instead. I started to share all the secrets that helped me further my journey. One thing I discovered, is that many people are under the impression that they must be good at these practices, before they can try them. For instance, many believe that they have to be flexible in order to take Yoga, which is actually the opposite. We take yoga to get flexible and more mindful.

I have really become passionate about helping others have a better understanding of how they can reap some of the benefits I have received and witnessed with my students. It's amazing how the universe works. I seem to only attract clients and students that are struggling in the same ways I was and just the right fit. I could implement what I was learning because it seemed to be just what they had been yearning for as well. Both the clients and I would learn a great deal from our sessions, because new insights and inspirations always show themselves. I do not believe in accidents, because when we lean in, let go of the need to control and just get out of the way, the people and situations we need to bring us to the next level, always appear.

Before too long, I turned my personal training business into a holistic coaching practice (treating the whole person rather than just the physical body). This was an easy and natural transition, because as I started to shift so did my clients. I implemented positive affirmations, guided meditation, Reiki & Yoga. We went deeper into more of what the underlying motivations and feelings were, as well as facing fears and breaking through barriers. I also found that I could connect and inspire others through sharing my life experiences and some of the pain I have been able to work through, and see past, because if I could do it, they could do it as well.

My most profound shifts occurred after years of self-affirming thoughts, meditation, yoga, Reiki and teaching. I decided to face my fears head on, one by one. Some did not happen very easily, but I was not willing to give up. I came to realize that to really be able to live my life fully and feel a complete sense of freedom, I had to face the fear of looking stupid or foolish... not worry about what other people thought of me. That was

probably the biggest one of all. One of the ways I did this, was through acting in Community Theater. I also started writing songs and having the courage to sing them on stage. Naturally, I felt the next method for me to embody was daring to be silly. I found it very important to educate myself and others with a whole new way of thinking, yet I knew it had to remain enjoyable.

One thing that I discovered, which really spoke to me while going through some really dark processes, was learning the importance of understanding, as well as, connecting with and nourishing my inner child. By doing so, I become connected to all that is, from a place of true love and compassion. Making that connection allowed me to receive an abundance of spiritual fuel. As I was getting in touch with the things that filled me and made my heart sing, I really began to get to know myself all over again, or maybe for the first time. At that point I already knew what I did not like, as well as what drained me. Now I was about discovering and implementing what did fill me and lift my energy. It was about getting to know myself at the deepest levels, what feeds me and makes me feel alive, that truly freed me.

The biggest part, was the realization that I had to make a choice; in the past I would have felt guilty for allowing myself these luxuries. I was able to finally see the importance of shifting that perception, giving myself permission to feel fully alive, free and in my power, by nourishing the things that make my heart sing. Along with allowing myself these luxuries, I realized that they needed to be upgraded to top priorities and necessities, rather than something I should feel guilty about.

The last thing I would like to mention, is to celebrate all your wins! No matter how big or small they seem. Allowing yourself to bask in that energy of achievement and excitement, attracts more of the same, creating a life that is so much more enjoyable.

## Findings

After many years on this journey of growth, my greatest lessons boiled down to be very simple.

- 1) First and foremost, the necessity of letting go of the "need to control" and surrendering our will. This alone ignites more power inside than force ever possibly could.
- 2) Words and beliefs are so powerful, including what we say, what we tell ourselves, what we say to others, and what we wish for. The outer world is always a reflection of what is going on inside, on some level.
- 3) Surround yourself with the things that you love and that fill your heart: People, circumstances, activities etc. **VERY IMPORTANT:** This is not selfish, it is necessary.
- 4) To truly be in your power, authenticity and truth, everything must come from a place of love, compassion and openness. This does not imply that we should lay down and be a door mat or allow ourselves to get run over. It means to keep your heart open and stay grounded in where the answers lay.
- 5) If at first you don't believe, fake it until you make it.
- 6) What you focus on, you bring upon.
- 7) How we do anything is how we do everything.
- 8) Our truth will always find a way to reveal itself.

One of my teachers said, "the best way to begin to become something you feel you have not yet attained, is to be in that energy as much as possible, by teaching it. Sounds crazy, but that is what a lot of the great teachers do. They surround themselves with those people and situations that they aspire to be like. Next thing, they realize, it starts to unfold and materialize in their world as well.

So, let's go a little deeper into what I mean by "the need to control" and the differences between manifesting and controlling (or forcing). The distinction is very subtle, so it can be very confusing. I feel this is worth explaining and defining because, so many people struggle with this area trying to find balance. What I have most recently come to realize is how simple it really is. The key is staying balanced in our heart energy, no matter what comes your way. Like I said, it is such a simple concept, it can be easily overlooked and discounted. Sometimes this is not such an easy task because, it requires putting down the story and the ego, as well as being willing to surrender to the *oneness* that we all come from. I believe that Universal love is truly where ALL of our answers lay. This is how we connect with our peace, power, truth, passion, inspiration compassion and flow.

One of the reasons why it becomes so difficult to distinguish between letting go of the need to control and giving up, is that as we are learning about self-love, positive affirmations and focusing on what we want to bring into our existence, it can become confusing when we are told we have choices and can manifest and co-create our life. We

are only able to do that and have the positive results we want through love, gratitude and the connection to all that is. When centered in our heart energy and truly connected to our Higher Source (truth), we get guided.

However, the ego challenges us and when it does, we move out of our centered state of being (heart space) and go more into our head space. The Latin word for ego is "I." So, with that being said we have already begun separating, therefore things change dramatically from this state of mind.

An acronym that is so fitting regarding EGO, is Edging God Out. That really summed it up for me, God, meaning love, connection and truth to name a few. The only thing we can draw from in that state of mind is our past experiences, limitations and the stories our mind have created around them, mostly based in self-protection and fear. The mind was designed to protect itself and keep us wanting to play safe. So anytime we are in situations that will make us grow, the mind is there to try and stop us, because it is unknown territory. That is why it is so pertinent that we resume back to our heart energy, where new possibilities can occur.

If there are challenges or difficulties we are dealing with, it is important to understand that we cannot solve anything from the energy in which it was created. When we are hurting and go into our heads for the answers (remembering the head is there only to protect you, based in fear), the only answers will be ways to stay separate, especially if they stir up feelings of past pain and disappointment.

When our mind (ego) is left in charge, rather than coming from a place where we can let new things happen, we move to a place where we try and make or force what we think should happen.

Just to be clear, being an individual is not what I mean when defining the word ego as "I." It is very important to be in our own uniqueness. However, we can still be unique in a place of connection and oneness. As a matter of fact, it's the only way to truly be authentic. We gain nothing but resistance when we choose to be overpowering, controlling or inflexible. The need to control is in all of us, and it is where disagreements and struggles stem from. Even very nice, quiet and timid people can fall into this space as well, it just looks a little different. It could show up as rigidity within oneself/perfectionism/addiction or focusing so much on wanting to fix and take on everyone else's problems, they do not go inside long enough to connect to their own truth.

Although wanting to help people is wonderful, we cannot protect others from their learning process or they will not have their own opportunities to grow. If we think we know what is right for others, there is a bit of arrogance and deference in that and from there we are not accepting that there is a bigger picture that we may not be able to see.

One of the best ways to give love is to be supportive and accepting, about where a person is in their process. The "need to control" is more from a place of force or attempting to plow through situations with our will, rather than being in acceptance, inner truth and

inspiration. So even though we may feel our heart is in the right place we will usually end up feeling unsatisfied, as well as, possibly upset others.

I once read, that if you wanted to build the tallest building, there are two ways you could go about it. The first would be to knock down the other buildings around you which would spend a lot of un-necessary time and energy, not to mention upset the other building owners, as well as, create a lot of turmoil around you. The other would be to put all your energy and faith into building something amazing. Focus on what you desire to have, rather than comparing or worrying about what you don't have. The distinction is that if we stay in our heart-energy (connection), we won't have to think or search for the right things to say or do because the right things will reveal themselves. The key is to trust that things unfold in their own time, not ours.

It is about letting go of our will. It sounds hard to just let go of the desired outcome, but I am not saying to let go of your dreams. If we focus and put our best foot forward, coming from the heart and keep faith, what else can we do? Forcing only causes frustration, resistance and exhaustion. Another more important detail, is that sometimes we may know what we want, but not necessarily what it looks like. If we close our minds and limit ourselves to what things should be or look like, we will miss out on the things that present themselves to us, which potentially turn out much better than we could have ever imagined. Tapping into our heart energy is where our inspiration comes from, and where our passion, truth, strength, faith, and dreams lay. When we do not allow ourselves to open in this way, we stand in resistance of letting new possibilities in, out of fear of the unknown. Change is the one thing that most people are afraid of because it is territory not yet uncovered.

This is where faith and connection really keep us grounded and help us find our way. Imagine if life was like a river and we were dropped in at birth. I have found, that the only times life gets difficult is when I try and swim against the flow of the current and it turns out to be nothing but struggling. No matter how we try and force our way, the current is much more powerful. We have a choice of whether we want to exhaust and deplete ourselves every step of the way or connect to the source-flow within us and ride the coast by letting the river take us. This way we get to enjoy the journey and its scenery along the way.

I understand we do not have control over what other people do or say, nor can we predict what will come our way next. The only thing we can do is decide/choose how we are going to react, because this determines the quality of our lives. When our inner world is in a place of love and acceptance, our outer world reflects that, peaceful and fulfilling, even when life throws us a curve ball.

Let's apply this to relationships, where is the line between self-love and selfish? Self-love is about compassion, forgiveness and self-respect, along with knowing how to fulfill your heart's desires. When we come from our heart, adding clear boundaries, everyone's needs can be addressed because we stay connected.

Selfish is about putting our needs or agenda before, or in place of others. We do this, many times, as a reaction to something that may have hurt us. We may feel the need to protect ourselves. There is a way that we can still be protected, yet still in a place of love and openness, when we stay connected to our truth. Love is not weakness, it is where our inner power is centered. Nobody can take our power away from us unless we hand it over.

I look at it this way; if I want loving, healthy, fulfilling relationships and I decide that is a top goal and priority in my life, I would have to be open to that kind of connection for that to occur. I would need to trust in times of difficulty, that my heart will supply the answers I need. If I go into my head and react from my ego, I have chosen to go in the opposite direction of my desired goal, because that would only cause separation and 'either/or' thinking.

We always have choices. Not all relationships are right for us, but our heart will let us know what feels right and what does not. All we have to do is listen. I know firsthand how hard it can be to listen to my inner knowing when it is something I do not want to hear. I have made excuses for why this or that is happening. I've tried so many times to force the square peg into the round hole only to be left hurt, disappointed and frustrated. When I look back, the signs were always there, my intuition was speaking, I just chose not to listen.

I'd like to talk more about the power of belief by sharing a story about two friends which, for the sake of the story, we will call John and Ted. They have known each other since high school and always like sharing in friendly competition. John belongs to a health club and works out every day (almost to the point of fanatical). Ted is in average shape, exercises every so often and is a much smaller build than John in height, muscle size and strength. One day, John decided to join a weight lifting competition they were holding at his gym and invited Ted to join as well. Although Ted did not belong to the gym, he visited with John. While signing up for the event, Ted introduced himself to everyone as the man that would be going home with the first-place prize. He said it very light heartedly, yet confident.

The competition consisted of four exercises where they had to lift the amount of their own body weight, to be fair for everyone. There were even a couple of women who competed. Clearly, one still had to be in good shape to compete, lifting their body weight. There were about fifteen people competing; many bigger and stronger than both Ted and John, but in the end Ted went home with first prize.

Why? ...Because he truly believed he could do it deep inside. He set a goal and he didn't stop to put his focus on anything other than that. He did not let anyone else's size, abilities or strength, intimidate him. In fact, Ted didn't put any energy there, at all.

John, on the other hand, is physically stronger, bigger and more conditioned than his friend. However, he lacks the confidence and belief. He spends much of his time comparing himself to others and never satisfied with where he is. He puts a lot of energy

focusing on what's wrong with the picture rather than what is right (or what is possible). This says a lot about our beliefs. What are we telling ourselves? ...How has this shown up in your life?...

Like I stated earlier "What we focus on grows." That is why I also said, "If at first you don't believe, fake it until you make it." I know Ted personally. He has fears and has not only failed (like we all do) but has made many mistakes along the way as well. But the habits that he lives by are to;

- Keep going.
- To act, in spite of fear.
- Not pose failure as an option.
- Celebrate all wins.
- Learn what doesn't work, but focus on what does.
- Stay open to what feels right and what does not.
- Let opportunities present themselves even if it is not what you expected.

Another story I would like to share regarding beliefs, is about my brother Jarod. We were brought up in a modest household, family of six; money always seemed to be a struggle, growing up. We were raised with a religion that felt more guilt and fear based than faith-inspiring. Jarod became rebellious toward anything that even appeared to resemble religion or faith. I think he considered it weakness. When he was eighteen years old my parents sent him to college along with his twin brother Jason. My older brother and I were not able to attend college right out of high school. This does not bother me to say. The reason why I bring it up is because I took on a belief system where it was not possible for me to go to college and that became my reality at the time.

Jarod, on the other hand always said he was going to college. He surrounded himself with people that aspired for the things he did and never wavered, therefore, he and my parents found a way. The first year he lived on campus, which was quite costly. He was inspired to buy a house near campus, rather than pay to live on site where he could invest for himself. He figured he could rent out the rooms, to other college mates (just like it was a dorm), and use the income to pay the mortgage. This was a win-win situation for everyone in his mind. However, the only problem was, Jarod did not have any money or collateral. The things he *did* have, was an idea and the unwavering belief in it. When my brother does things, it is with such conviction.

He proposed a plan to my parents, where everyone could come out better for it. Jarod convinced my parents, that if my dad used his business as collateral, they would not only forego the tuition to live on campus, but he would also be able to pay the mortgage with the rent he received. Jarod was able to buy his first investment at the age of eighteen. With the money collected in rent, he was able to pay the entire mortgage and have a \$500.00 positive income every month.

The power of belief is pretty amazing. Many people say he is just lucky, even I couldn't understand it for the longest time. I thought you had to believe in God to be so connected, and he would never attribute it to that. However, he does have a great heart, amazing belief, faith and conviction in what *is* possible. He does tap into his higher power and intuition all the time. He just doesn't put a name to it. To me that is the definition of "being," at its truest form. It is not so much the theory we need to focus on, as much as just allowing ourselves to be present and open to the opportunities that are available to us every day.

I would also like to discuss two major breakthroughs in my life, due to facing my fears and celebrating my wins. One thing I've come to know is that fears do not dissipate forever, even after we face things we have never done before. As a matter of fact, as soon as we learn and feel like we conquer one lesson, we get challenged with another. I used to get really upset with myself, because I would get to a point where I felt so strong and in the right place, then the next time I would turn around, I was struggling again. I realized ebb and flow are part of growth and I was resisting it. I used to think that once we conquered certain fears, feeling like we are on top of the world, the fears would go away. It didn't occur to me that life would always continue to push us a little further (kind of like a "spiritual workout"). I was able to finally see that I wasn't being set back, like I thought I was, I was just learning to reach the next level.

It all goes back to staying connected and in the flow, being willing to accept that fear does not disappear never to return again. We are called to act in spite of fear and do what's uncomfortable or may stretch us. Most important of all and not to be taken lightly, is to celebrate every win along the way, no matter how small or insignificant it may seem at the time, or in the scheme of things. Doing this is so powerful for lifting confidence, energy and beliefs. It keeps us in the flow of Love and gratitude energy, which allows us to move closer and closer to our desired goals.

About four years ago, I had a huge desire to be heard, coupled with a hidden passion to sing and be on stage. The only problem was the fear, that went along with it, felt paralyzing to me. I did get to a point where I mustered up enough courage to try out for a very small part in a local play. This was really big for me, but I did it! Not only that, it made me feel ALIVE inside!

Now, I am one of those people that once I have an inspiration inside of me I don't tend to do things small. So, a few months later my daughter had gotten a role in a show which I also expressed interest in. However, the part I wanted was a lead role in a musical with two solos and a total of eleven songs. Now, I was not a "singer," what I mean by that, is my voice was not trained or conditioned to handle that much at that time. Even if it had been, the fear inside me was bigger than any I had felt before.

Thankfully, along with the fear was a great amount of inspiration and passion inside that pushed me to reach for it anyway. One of the biggest motivators, was the fact that my daughter would be in the show with me and really wanted me to do it with her. I wanted to be strong for her as well. Who knew when that opportunity would arise again.

Also, something kept telling me that if I did this, it would be the next step towards big strides in my life. I knew if I could face this fear head on, I would be ready to reach people on a whole new level. I wanted to be able to teach and inspire people on a larger scale and knew this would help me to get over my fear. So, I decided to do everything I could to prepare for the best audition I could give, but I did not attach myself to the outcome.

I worked with a voice teacher for about a month before auditions. The problem was, the fear was so bad that I couldn't even let my voice out in front of her in a private studio. I even had to close my eyes to sing in front of my best friend of 20 years, and she was at the other side of the house. I still did not give up, I practiced every day, I learned all the words as well as knowing all the character's lines. I did hypnosis, affirmations, visualization and stayed as positive as I could.

After a few weeks with my voice teacher I got a little more comfortable. I joined the church choir and really enjoyed how full it made me feel inside. Finally, my teacher said we (her and I) do not have voices for theater and we cannot hit those kinds of notes. Inside that did not ring as truth for me. I felt she had been discouraged with where she was in her own life and set those limitations for me as well. This actually ignited even more passion inside of me than before.

I continued on my own until try outs. I sang for my friend and she said, "you sound great when you don't hold back, but when you hold back you suck." Those words still play in my head. Needless to say, I did end up getting the part by some divine miracle. I know they saw my potential and passion, but my voice was still not strong enough to handle what was expected of me and the fear was still bigger than ever.

I had a positive attitude and a lot of desire, thank goodness, because I was being called to step up to the plate and deliver. Nobody wanted to know I was scared or inexperienced for the role. There seemed to be a lot of animosity from the cast about why I was given this part. The pressure just added to the fear and all of these things would play in my head, ("if I hold back I suck", she shouldn't have this part, nobody likes me, etc.,") these only fed the fear which paralyzed me even more.

As hard as it was, I continually worked at replacing these thoughts and mustered up a smile for every rehearsal, despite what I was working through inside. But each night I would stiffen up and hold back while trying to sing my solo parts, which sounded horrible. I still did not give up. I stayed in my power, positive, in my truth and lead from my heart.

After many weeks, I won the hearts and support of the entire cast and crew when I finally broke down and shared my struggles, fears and disappointments for the way I was being treated by them. In sobbing tears, I asked them to stop judging and help me... and you know what? They did! You see there is so much more power in vulnerability than there will ever be by staying in the EGO space of opposition and separation. In the end, after facing humiliation and ridicule every night, I was finally able to let go, because

I hung in there! I really believed I was supposed to do that play. I knew intuitively it would change my life and bring me to the next level, and it did. At the end of the show the cast chipped in and had a gift made for me to show how inspired they were by my courage. I will never forget that experience.

The last thing I would like to touch upon, is what I mean by "our truth will always find a way to reveal itself." I stated earlier that what is going on inside us, will manifest itself on the outside world as well. For example; our body is always speaking to us in some way or another. If we are at ease on all levels, our body will be as well. However, when we are at dis-ease in some area of life, our body will communicate, getting our attention that, some area in our life is off balance. Another way our truth speaks to us, is by our outside experiences. They appear like a mirror, there to reflect what is going on at a deeper level.

Many people will try escape from their own minds and experiences through some kind of addiction, hoping to numb and escape the discomfort and pain. This may prolong seeing our truth and imbalances, but it does not make it go away. As time goes by it gets harder and harder to escape, because things will continue to get worse and worse. Whenever we try to and escape, there is one thing people forget... they bring themselves with them. We can try and lie and put on a facade for the world, but we cannot fool ourselves without consequence.

I would like to share a story I witnessed, demonstrating what I mean. My best friend's husband started acting very strange in the summer of 2000. It seemed like everything set him off. They had their issues like all couples do, but he was completely out of character. It didn't take much to set him off, especially when he would drink. He would act very animated (childish) and mean, he was like a walking time bomb. Gary was always such a happy, silly guy before this period in his life. He was the guy that everyone loved, always making people laugh, from what I could see. Gary was always a drinker, but it never looked like a problem from the outside. Even if they did have their struggles, he never carried on in front of people before. However, this one summer he was like a tea pot coming to a boil, to everyone in his path. Nobody really understood why, not even his wife. He was so completely explosive and out of balance, that he didn't care where or in front of whom he displayed his grievances. The littlest things set him off, and once he got started, nothing would get him to calm down. This behavior went on for about two months.

At the end of the summer the family went on the vacation they had planned with two other families. This had been booked since the year before. Gary was no different on the trip then he had been acting, he was miserable and let everyone know it. It seemed to them that he was looking to do anything to ruin their trip as well. By the third day, they had all had enough. He had been complaining about a head ache since the day before and they felt like he was just trying to sabotage the plans once again, besides, this was coming from a man who never had headaches.

Finally, they decided to go to the beach without him. His wife said, "if you have a head ache I'll drop you off at the hospital." She is not by any means a callus person; she had just reached her breaking point. Anyway, she really did drop him off at the hospital and then went back to join their friends and family on the beach. Within a short time later, she received a telephone call from the hospital, explaining that Gary had a brain aneurism and required emergency brain surgery. The shock and devastation were unbearable, but miraculously Gary survived the surgery without any long-term damage. Everyone was amazed at how lucky he was, to be given a second chance. However, Gary seemed more miserable than before. Going from someone who held everything in, to someone you could not shut off. His wife and children did not know how to handle him at all. The couple had been together for seventeen years, and he was completely different than ever before.

After many months of recovery, life for Gary and his family was just getting worse. I offered to do some healing work with him. We started to uncover what he had been feeling and getting deeper into the core of his pain, which had been buried for so long.

In our sessions Gary cried uncontrollably, as he shared things he had never shared with anyone before (not even his wife.) There were things that had happened in his early childhood, that were so devastating for anyone to handle, and he never told a soul.

For almost forty years, he suppressed and attempted to bury his deep-rooted pain with things like alcohol. Only after a while, even the alcohol couldn't make the unresolved pain go away. Gary came very close to losing his life. Although alcohol became a big part of the problem, it was more because it was used as a band aid, for what was really going on a deeper level. Very much the way many medications are prescribed to treat the symptoms and not the cause of the issue, only to temporarily numb the pain. Addictions are always an attempt to cover up deeper issues.

Six years later Gary has learned a whole new way of life. He truly has been given a second chance. He has done extensive inner child healing work and has found love for himself again. He and his wife have never been closer and happier than they have been in the last couple of years. He even lost his job and had to start all over again, at a much lower salary and position and was able to see his way through it.

Thankfully, Gary is at ease now and has gained the faith to learn that he can smile through anything, as long as he has peace in his heart. This was an extreme example of our spirit screaming inside, most symptoms begin much for subtly to start with.

I have done so much inner work with people, that I have come to the understanding, that there are no accidents. There are so many ways life tries to get our attention, particularly when our heart is not at ease. Our body is a miracle, designed to communicate everything that is happening on a deeper level. Through this realization, I have been able to successfully guide people to uncover the original source of their pain and imbalances. From there we work on healing the deeper issues and learning a new way of loving ourselves and others.

## Discussion

I am so passionate about this work. I see how it can affect today's society because learning to accept what we do and do not have control over, could change the world. If everyone could realize that we are all created from the same source, each here to uncover our own truth, maybe there would be more compassion.

The questions lay on whether we want to be right or happy, because our truth is not "right," in the meaning of right vs wrong, it is right for us, that is all we have to know. We do not need to make anyone else wrong for that to be so. If we want that to be accepted and honored for who we are, then we all need to do the same. Others' choices do not take away our truth. So, if we stay connected in heart energy, we stay aligned in our power and can keep things in balance. Using force, acting hateful or judgmental, do not solve anything. Nobody involved can have peace inside when there are these kinds of struggles. The only place to find peace is through letting go of that need to control, and coming to a place of compassion and acceptance. We do not need to impose our ways or beliefs on others, even if they seem to work for us. Nor do we have the right to judge where someone else is.

It is taking the focus off of what is "wrong" with everyone around us, or how we can fix them and take the time to check in with our source (higher self, truth). Listen, to what our heart needs, and make sure those things become a priority. It could be anything such as singing, dancing, walking in nature, playing with children, planting flowers, reading, spending time with your partner, or just laughing with friends.

This will help heal past wounds, so we can offer forgiveness more easily, to come from a place of compassion and understanding. When we feel good inside, the whole world is a better place to be. For that to happen we need to really learn to love and celebrate ourselves daily in gratitude. In doing so, the inner world will start shifting and our outer world will respond accordingly. There is no doubt in my mind, the trickle effects this would have on the world, if everyone did this for just one day. To me it is so simple because everyone's needs would be met.

So, what are we waiting for to feel joy in our hearts, loved and accepted?

For that some day when we will be saved or chosen?

We all have the choice right now to feel free. Somehow, we have mixed up our priorities and life has become unsatisfying. It is implied by many that what I am suggesting is *selfish* or a *luxury*, rather than essential for our wellbeing. Yet, those are the same people who are imposing their beliefs on others.

Life is a gift, not something that has been done to us. We are the only one with the power to affect the quality of how we decide to live it. If something doesn't feel good inside, don't continue. Examine what is going on inside, make sure you centered in your

heart energy, *not in fear*, then make the necessary adjustments. When something fills your soul, that's when you know it is right for you.

The more I learn, the less theory I want to discuss, and just bring it back to simplicity.

Don't wait for someday to allow yourself to live freely, because someday may never come. If you feel free, at peace and alive you will come to understand that the only way to achieve this, is to open your heart and let it happen. Imposing our ways on others, will never work. Be the example you want to see in the world.

I wrote a song about embracing diversity in others. Imagine how boring the world would be, if we all did everything exactly the same.

## **Summary and Conclusions**

It seems the more I learn, the simpler things can really be. We already have everything we need right inside of us, at any moment. The only time we have struggle, is when we separate from what our heart (inner voice, higher power) is trying to tell us, and attempt to come up with a better way (like swimming up the river against the current). It isn't easy and just simply does not feel good.

When things don't feel good life becomes a chore. Life is meant to be a gift, so precious, it is only given one moment at a time. Our choices can make a difference on the rest of the world. The power of love is the strongest power there is. We may not be privileged enough to always get to see our effects on others, so just have faith in doing the next right thing. You can change someone's life by a simple act of kindness.

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