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*Creating Futures Changing Lives*

# Learning the steps to the dance called life



There is more to life than increasing its speed ~ Gandhi

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## Steps to Self Love

This may seem a strange topic in a world full of self entitlement but often those who need more are those who have a bigger hole to fill. Our notion of self love is full of misconceptions a woman taking care of self may be called vain or worst yet selfish and a man egotistical. But where is the line between healthy self love and self indulgence and more importantly should one be drawn?

We are taught nice people give they sacrifice they accommodate, not so nice people put themselves before others and take without consideration. Which is hogwash 'nice' is a word that has been used to control people since the beginning of time parents used it to guilt their children into compliance "nice children don't do that" partners used it to manipulate their spouses "we want them to think we are nice neighbors" Mothers used it against their daughters "nice girls don't do that dear" so throw it out the window being nice no longer serves your highest good.

You don't want to be nice you want to be healthy in mind body and spirit and this requires some self loving. So how are a few little things you can do to make sure your cup is overflowing.

### **1. Healthy Boundaries make sure you have them**

It is simple this is what behavior I will accept this is what behavior I will not accept. This behavior respects you and me that behavior does not and therefore has no place here.

### **2. Tied into the above is the ability to say no**

You have to respect your self enough to be willing to say "today I cannot, not because I do not care for you not because I do not love you but because today I need to be my own best friend and take care of me." Do you know what is really selfish not learning to love yourself? Because when you are stressed when you are physically depleted when you are spiritually bankrupt all those around you suffer. You get grumpy with your children, you get angry at your co-workers; you get impatient with your spouse and worst still you start to beat yourself up for not being perfect for not being able to hold it altogether for not being a super hero. Today is a good day to say 'no' today is a good day from a walk in the park, today is a good day for coffee with friends, today is a good day for a long bath or that last piece of chocolate cake. Today is a good day because today you took the first step towards a loving relationship with self congratulations.

### **3. Take time.**

Time to be alone with your thoughts to process, time to be alone with your Higher Power whoever or whatever you perceive this to be, time without noise without chaos without doing time to simply be.

### **4. Step into the lightness**

Grow some fairy wings learn to laugh at yourself and the seriousness of your world. Remember the simple things which brought you joy and made you laugh embrace them once more.

### **5. Give it up the critical child within tell it to go home now**

Allow yourself to make mistakes and learn and grow from them that is what being human is all about. The moment has passed it cannot be recaptured let it go and make the most of the next one. Learn to forgive yourself and move on. Love is giving yourself a break now and then. Tossing the critical inner voice out the window and going "You know what it didn't work out quite as I had planned but that's okay I learned something today". Love is letting go of judgment and stepping into acceptance "In this moment I am where I am meant to be and I am who I am meant to be".

Think about the love you give a child when they are hurt you sooth them...when they are disappointed discouraged you encourage them....when they are angry you listen to them. It is no different with our own inner child.

### **6. Get to know yourself again**

Take yourself on a first date ask all the questions what is your favorite color, what makes you laugh, what do you want to be when you grow up, what are your regrets, what are your dreams, find out who you are and then accept that this is who I am right now this is where I am right now and that's okay.

### **7. Let go of expectations**

Those held by others and your own throw out any rulers you may be using to measure yourself by and know success is measured in happiness not possessions or money. If you are living an authentic fulfilling life then you have achieved your purpose in life.



## **8. The white cup/mug**

Some times we are like an empty cup. We struggle to have a sense of self and say out loud things like “why does my life feel empty” or why can’t I make friends”. Our soul or our inner world is a cup we fill up with love. Some people have so much it overflows you will know them by the joy you feel in their presence.

Some people have so little love their cup is almost dry you will know them by the gray cloud of gloom that follows where-ever they go. What happens when the cup is empty?

Often we look to others to fill it and end up in dysfunctional relationship always wanting something from the other person or conversely blaming them for the way we feel.

The white cup exercise is about learning to fill your own cup so it overflows with joy and happiness.

a) Purchase a white coffee mug and a black permanent marker

b) Every day think of something you can do for yourself. For example take a long bath or go to the movies or start a class or join a group or simply walk on the beach or go for coffee with a friend or meditate

c) Every time you do something draw a line on the mug making your way up to the top.

You are basically watching your cup fill up and very soon it will be overflowing.

DON'T STOP when you reach the top rather use the mug as a reminder to nurture your self physically emotionally and spiritually.

## **9. Take care of your health**

There is a tendency to under estimate the effect of environmental factors on our spiritual and emotional well being. All the self help books in the world are not going to help you if you are sleep deprived, emotionally exhausted or juggling twenty things at once. Are you taking care of your body remember Creator doesn't have an exchange policy what you have is going to have to last you a life time.

## **10. Be enough right now**

Accept who you are and where you are and be enough. I will let you in on a secret if you tell a child they are enough as they are, that you believe in them and love them unconditionally, say it is okay to have imperfections because that is what creates character, it is okay make mistakes because that is how you grow, they will step into their greatness and light up the world. The people who changed the world were those who didn't measure themselves by someone else's ruler and dared to be different. I will leave you with the words written on a t-shirt I found and wear proudly.

'You all laugh because I am different...I laugh because you are all the same'



## Steps to surviving your family

Most people can survive natural disasters medical conditions life events but for some of us we would rather cling to the Titanic and go down than spend Sunday lunch having our buttons pushed by our Mother. We would rather run with the bulls than confront our siblings over behaviors that annoy us. Our families are not perfect but neither are we yet we can step towards healthier relationships with those with love which honor all concerned.

### 1. Healthy boundaries

Why is it we have so much trouble when it comes to putting healthy boundaries in place and why is there always an element of guilt attached? It is because the moment the not so charitable thoughts enter our head "My God if I have to listen to one more word I will run screaming from the house" guilt creeps and sits on our shoulder. "Oh you horrible person" it will whisper and visions of the pearly gates being closed in your face appear. Healthy boundaries say this is how I expect to be treated and this is the behavior I will and will not put up with. Not everyone is going to like it you are not always going to be the good guy but then not everyone likes the pope either. In healthy relationships people are able to put in place boundaries and not feel guilty about it.

### 2. Opening up the family closet

The baggage you do not unpack from your family of origin is the same baggage your children will carry around with them for the rest of their lives. When we honor someone we do not keep them in the shadows of deception this prevents them from growing, learning and becoming the people they were born to be. Some things to consider

a) You cannot change a behavior unless you are aware of it and you cannot become aware of it if everyone in the family is stepping around it.

b) Nothing hurts a child worst than growing up and discovering family secrets because then they begin to question whether anything was real.

We cannot own the choices of others but we can be accountable for our own.

Sometimes standing in the truth will leave you standing alone that is why it is often hard to do but secrets and lies they are the regrets we speak to when the last breathe comes.

### 3. Acceptance

Sometimes you have come to a place of peace with things the "I love you" you have waited for all your life it may never come because Mother/Father might not be capable of showing their emotions. The bond you were hoping to have with your siblings might be a little bit of a Brady Bunch fantasy, so you have to ask yourself can I accept this person for who they are and even more importantly can this relationship we have be enough? It is a balance between having healthy boundaries speaking your truth and being able to accept people as they are warts and all, this does not mean allowing yourself to be treated with anything else but respect and dignity but having a little bit of give in terms of expectations.

#### 4. Be wary of expectations

This is tied into acceptance sometimes we have unrealistic expectations about how our families should be. You can spot an expectation because it is usually accompanied by anticipation and often followed by disappointment. It leaves you with a 'what now' taste in your mouth. Sometimes expectations are the result of how we want the world and people to be our little girl/boy inner child fantasy. Sometimes we have played out the scenario in our heads already know the outcome and start planning our acceptance speech. Sometimes our ego prevents us from seeing any other possibility but that which we believe we deserve. It is easy to get hung up on expectations or to get defensive, angry and disappointed when they are not met. The best advice is let go of outcomes.

- a) Speak your mind because very few people can read it this avoids need expectations.
- b) Be flexible and open to change this avoids situation expectations.
- c) Be happy with who you are never look to another to fill your cup that is your responsibility this avoids people expectations.

Expect to have expectations

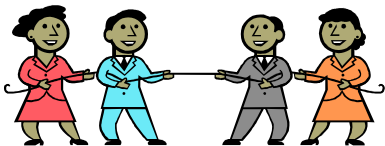
What is your definition of family? What is it you expect from yours? And what will you do when your expectations are not met? Are your expectations unrealistic?

#### 5. Understanding your family history

Survival begins with knowing all there is to know it begins with understanding the people your parents are not just as parents but as men and women the same with your siblings and relatives. If you went to the end of the book and read the last chapter you would have a very limited idea of what the story was. The same applies with your parents they have a history long before you were born. Knowledge of this history helps you understand what behaviors and beliefs were handed down from one generation to another. Patterns are easier to dismantle if you have the original blueprint.

#### 6. Pick your battles

It is not necessary to point out Uncle Johns drinking problem in the middle of thanks giving in fact it would be probably unwise. But it is necessary to point out to Uncle John in a moment when you know he is sober and able to listen how his behavior impacts upon you. It is not necessary to vow never to ring your sister because she has not rung you in eight months. It is necessary to ring your sister and tell her how much you miss her in your life and how important it is to you that you both keep in contact. It is not necessary to tell your Mother you think she is weak and should leave her abusive husband. It is necessary to state how helpless it makes you feel when you witness such abuse.



### **7. Take a long look at your self**

Do you have a clear understanding of the role you played in the family drama and are you able to step out of that role and stand in your truth? There are always two sides to every story and you are going to have to have the humility to hear someone else's. This is the hard bit sometimes without realizing it we are part of the problem and sometimes we have to be able to 'hear' the other person and try and understand how they feel and why. The issue is never the issue this may seem like a riddle but rarely is what sits on the surface a reflection of what lies underneath. Make sure you take responsibility for your words and actions.

### **8. Be the change you want to see**

Which follows on from owning your own words and actions if you want to be treated with loving kindness then treat others with loving kindness, if you want to be heard make sure you remember to listen, if you want to feel respected treat others with respect, if you want others to honor your boundaries than don't cross theirs and so forth. It is very easy to get wrapped up in arrogance and feelings of being wronged it is difficult sometimes though to understand the relationship between our words/actions and the reactions of others to them.

### **9. Step out of the sandpit**

All of us at some time or other get dragged into the sandpit with the other children. And once you are in there it is very hard not become protective or defensive of your own opinions. It is also tough to sort out who is playing what game and the rules. You will get grown ups always needing to have the last word because somehow this makes you right or gives you superhero powers. You will get grown ups who will throw temper tantrums when they don't get their own way and those who will play along because they want everyone to like them.

And every now and then you will get an aware soul who will realize how petty and small these things are in the big scheme of the world. An awake soul who will smile let go of his/her critical/angry/small self and walk towards solutions rather than slinging mud.

And sometimes you simply have to get out of the sandpit take your bat and ball and go home because it is not always necessary to be right or have the last word. Recognize families are not always those we grew up with: Sometimes family is the outstretched hand and the welcoming smile of a friend, sometimes it is found in a hug and a "it will be okay" and sometimes it is the people who gather around you in tough times and laugh with you in happy ones. Remember to nurture all of your relationships things do not grow on their own every garden needs to be tended.





## Life steps towards healing

Everyone walks this road differently no one can stand up and say 'this is what will work for you'. The old saying 'time is the best healer still stands' true but I will list 10 steps which may help you take the first step towards healing.

### 1. Be gentle with yourself

Strangely enough a lot of people have no idea how to do this. Be your own best friend it will do you no good to beat yourself up for not being smart enough or for being too trusting or for not doing something sooner. The past is gone and becoming a victim of your own thought processes will only make the cut deeper. Wrap your self up in a comfort blanket of no matter what I will be okay or this too shall pass. Comfort yourself as you would your best friend, its tough but you will get through it, that hurt but you will only grow stronger, those little thoughts will prevent the seeds of doubt and fear taking root.

### 2. Don't run from reality

I wish I had a magic wand but I don't the only way through 'stuff' is through it, there are no short cuts or happy pills. Drowning yourself in work will not make it disappear, cutting yourself off from people will not make it go away, and avoiding your emotions won't work, why because you have to do the work but before you do the work you have to stand naked in the truth. There use to be a saying 'pretend you have a box and every time you have a problem put it in and shut the lid on it'. Problem there is only so much 'stuff' you can shove in a box before it explodes and it will explode and then it will be even harder to walk through your 'stuff'.

### 3. Acceptance

Is part of acknowledging the reality, if you do not acknowledge the existence of an issue then you cannot begin the healing process. And here is a little side note sometimes we create illusions which become our reality. For years as an abused child I created scenarios which explained away my parents and families dysfunctional behavior, these became my reality because as a child we all want to believe we are loved. I kept looking at the past through the eyes of the child I was, when I started to look as an objective outsider the reality changed and I had to accept my parents made some choices which hurt me greatly. Up until this moment although I thought I was going through the healing process I was still really in denial putting band aids on sores which continued to fester. Sometimes we also have to accept we will never know until the last breath why something happened or the reasons for someone's behavior.

#### **4. Let the love in**

People care about you, honor them by allowing them to help you and be there for you. Its okay to show vulnerability it is what defines us as human's beings the ability to feel. If you have to cry then cry accept the hug or the arm around the shoulder or the hand with a tissue in it. Love heals its true nothing heals wound quicker than a little TLC tender loving care. Let people in we are not meant to be martyrs who suffer in silence strength is having the courage to show your weaknesses. Ever read the poem 'footprints in the sand' when there was only one set of footprints on the beach it wasn't because you were deserted it was because you were being carried. To allow people to help is a gift you give it gives them a means to show their love and you should not deny them the right to do this.

#### **5. Take time to be alone**

So here is the contradiction not only do you have to let people in you also have to make time to be alone with your thoughts. It is very easy as stated earlier to get wrapped up in the 'doing' as a way of avoiding the 'feeling'. In my aloneness when it is just Creator and me we can be honest with each other. I can talk freely and get angry if I need to but I can also get closer to another kind of healing love the kind which comes from within. 'Only in silence can a person hear their own voice' we tend to hear the voices of parents, partners, friends all coming at us in the chaos of the world and sometimes we mistake their voices for our own. This is why we need a moments silence to clear our heads and to hear our hearts. Let the love in but let the voice of your soul be heard as well.

#### **6. Go towards the lightness**

We all need laughter and joy in our lives and in our darkest hour we need it even more. Some people beat themselves up for feeling happy when social etiquette demands they feel sad. If you smile at a funeral you are being disrespectful but what brings a person more to life than a happy memory of good times spent together? Its okay to feel happiness in the midst of sadness, it is okay to laugh when you feel like crying, it is more than okay it is necessary. You need to bring moments of joy into your life this is not betraying the experience or event it is not making light of what happened it is simply easing the load and lifting the darkness.

#### **7. Let go of expectations**

For example forgiveness may be a virtue of Saints but us mere mortals don't always reach the heavenly planes as fast. I know the common thing is to proclaim when you forgive you can move on and yes it is true but you know what you are not the worst person in the world if you cannot reach that place yet. The same can be said for loss of any kind you have to let go of what you think the process and the outcome should look like. People walk through life challenges differently because they have different personalities and have had different life experiences. The healing process will take as long as it takes and rushing it to fit some imaginary timeline is unrealistic and dangerous. Why because sometimes we trick ourselves into believing we have done the work when in fact we haven't.

## **8. Seek the help you need**

Some wounds are deeper than others and sometimes we need a little bit of help with the healing process. I have said it before and I will say it again throw pride and shame out the window they do no serve your highest good. Creator has given you all the resources you need to walk through your struggles use them that is what they are there for. Pride is not useful, humility is useful. Why hold out trying to prove how strong you are when you could seek help and reach a place of peace right now? It is not logical in any sense to not utilize the skills of those who have made it their life purpose to help people heal.

## **9. More acceptance**

This comes with a little bit of all of the above. Sometimes you have to accept some people and things are never going to change no matter what you do. It is letting go of expectations and acknowledging realities. For example as much as I had this fantasy of my father admitting his love for me I know the reality is even if he was alive today and standing before me chances are good he would not say the things I wanted to hear. So I have to be gentle with myself and wrap myself in the love from those who do care and support me and in the love of my Creator. I have to remind myself of the things which brought joy into my life and I have to remember to step into the lightness.

## **10. Become a healer yourself**

When your children partner friend comes to you distressed take a moment to just be with them without distraction.

Time: Giving our time to somebody shows we care we value them want to be with them think they are worth being with and this can make somebody start believing in themselves and there own capabilities

When you see someone whose belief in themselves is slipping away take a moment to tell them one thing you think is wonderful about them.

Love: To feel loved again is to feel part of something to belong.

Empathy: Knowing they are not alone they are heard can give somebody the courage to make changes feeling can bring somebody back from the brink of despair.

When someone close to you experiences a loss be the shoulder they can lean on be the hand that they can reach for be the arms they can seek comfort in.

Touch: a simple touch on the arm in support can give someone the strength to climb mountains

When a stranger says hello take a moment to say hello back it may make all the difference to their day

Listen not just listen but hear the words: Ten minutes of listening can give somebody the release they need so they can let go of anger.



## Steps to take you through conflict

Fights arguments conflict are all part of life unfortunately not all of us have the loving kindness persona of a Dalia Lama. Some of us have a tendency to get stuck in our opinions or our pride and sometimes we just get frustrated and don't know what to do. So here are some life steps to help.

The [conflict resolution network](#) lists 12 steps in the process:

### **1. Do I want to resolve the conflict?**

The answer may seem clear but often there are other issues involved. For example someone who wants to avoid intimacy may want to keep the argument going. Someone who wants to be angry as a way of getting rid of their own frustrations may not want to end the fight either. If you hesitate with this question start looking for deeper issues not connected with the original conflict.

### **2. Can I see the whole picture not just my own point of view?**

This may be one of the hardest steps because who wants to put themselves in a position where they may be found to be wrong. This is where pride and ego join forces to keep you from seeing the other person's viewpoint. Throw them out the window they do not serve anyone's highest good. Think about it isn't a peaceful life the goal here not being right and as I always say "person who buries head in sand will eventually get butt kicked!"

### **3. What are the needs and anxieties of everyone involved?**

Don't be an arse and assume, ask just another life motto for you. You cannot know what the other person is thinking without asking them. The biggest mistake we make is to assume we know when we actually don't. Little hint write down your feelings without speaking them first this stops people getting all defensive, because often what happens is we also assume everything is about us which is often not the case.

### **4. How can we make this fair?**

This is tricky because we all have different concepts of what fair is. I know my partner has a different ruler she measures fair with than me so it does require a lot of negotiation. Be prepared to give a little to gain a lot.

### **5. What are the possibilities?**

This is all about the law of averages; the more solutions you throw up the greater the chance one will fit both of you. Don't forget a little bit of compromise goes a long way it doesn't have to be set in concrete either maybe this week we do it this way and next week we do it that way. Be creative with your thought processes the goal is win win here.

## **6. Can we work it out together?**

I would like to think in my relationship my partner and I are on equal footing. Treating someone as if you know better than they do or that they are not intelligent or able to rationalize is a sure fire way to not get what you want.

## **7. What am I feeling?**

With this comes another question: "who is in the room with us?" When I fight with my partner often if it is an emotional topic my family pops into the room. By this I mean my wounded child steps forward and stop seeing my partner and begin to see my Mother. Listen to your words carefully for example if the words 'you are just like my Mother come up' warning bells should be going off. Check to see if what you are accusing your partner of is not the same resentments or issues you have with other people even past partners. The conflict resolution network recommends asking yourself these questions

Am I too emotional?

Could I - get more facts?

Should I take time out to calm down?

Should I tell them how I feel?

## **8. What do I want to change?**

If it is the person standing in front you rethink your strategy. You are not going to change anyone else you can only be accountable for your own words and actions. By now you should have a clear idea of what the issue is if not go back and repeat the steps. This is not a I am going to pick you to pieces moment as they say attack the problem not the person.

## **9. What opportunities can this bring us?**

I am not sure about anyone else but as I get older I just want a little peace in my life and I want to be able to enjoy the company of my partner without all the drama. So resolving a conflict in a way which makes everyone happy goes a long way towards this. It also helps heal old wounds and allows you to grow up a little into an authentic adult one who takes control of their life. If you think about it there are a lot of positives like less time being wasted yelling and more time being spent cuddling.

## **10. What is it like to be in their shoes?**

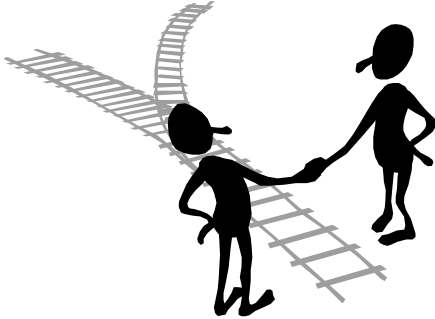
One of the greatest needs we have as humans is the need to be heard. One way you can help your partner feel heard is reflective listening this is not a difficult thing to master. It is simple she says "this is what I am feeling and why" then you say "this is what I heard when you spoke is this true?" and she will either go yes or no. If she says no then ask her to repeat herself and repeat the process. Once people know they are understood and have their feelings validated by being listened too then they are more able to hear yours.

### **11. Do we need a neutral third person?**

Again when you start to notice more than one person in the room maybe you need to someone to help you through the process. Often our greatest weakness is our strength a wise person will seek the resources they need to create the life they want.

### **12. Can we both win?**

I want my partner to be happy I want for her what I want for myself and because of this I am going to work towards solutions which respect both of our needs. Winning isn't always about being right sometimes it is about being compassionate and understanding.





## Steps towards creating the life you want

### 1. Acceptance of present circumstances and reality

You cannot change what you do not acknowledge the pink elephant in the living room that everyone seems to want to ignore is going to squish you sooner or later. Standing in your truth is not about judgment or shame or guilt it is about creating an authentic life of depth verses a shallow life based on illusions and deception of self. Sometimes you have to admit you do not shave your legs in winter, have a tendency to pout when you do not get your own way and always do the opposite of what your Mother tells you to do.

### 2. Accept responsibility for words and actions.

It wasn't me I didn't do it may fly for a five year old not so much for a forty year old. If you did own it, learn from it grow and move on.

### 3. Commitment to understanding

Ask the big questions who am I? I am someone who likes fried chicken wings, sloppy movies and cute babies. Where did I come from? My God did I say that out loud I sound just like my Mother! What are my dreams, hopes, fears what is stopping me getting where I want to be?

### 4. Letting go of guilt, shame, pride and ego

Pride is the anchor that keeps you in your ego cut it loose. Guilt is the stick you carry with you to beat yourself up every now and then because you forgot about step number two. Shame on the other hand if the embarrassment of discovering you are human after all.

### 5. Building a foundation

Anything built on a shaky foundation isn't going to last long. Pick four cornerstones for your base something like love, integrity or honesty, compassion maybe patience. Do an extreme make over of your belief system a spiritual renovation throwing out anything that no longer serves your highest good.

### 6. Finding the tools you need

Remember grasshopper what a carpenter builds with a hammer a teacher builds with words. It is not a good idea to borrow your neighbors' tools now is a time to invest in some new ones of your own. If you go dipping into Oprah's toolbox chances are you will be building Oprah's dream not yours. Try some different ones if they do not work try some more eventually you will find one that will do what you want it too!

### 7. Emotional and Physical healing nurturing the body mind

The only way through it is just that to walk through it. You can bury your head in the sand all you like but that will simply mean someone will come along and kick you in the butt. But there is no need to be afraid of this journey because you now have the tools you need to heal to nurture no need for a quick fix.



### **8. Inner peace and stillness nurturing the spirit**

This comes when you accept who you are, where you are and what you have yet to do. It is that moment when the moment you are in need be nothing more than what it is.

### **9. Awareness walking awake**

Notice now you are wide awake noticing all life has to offer, the endless possibilities, the joy and blessings. No more sleep walking through this journey for you!

### **10. Walking through life with grace, dignity and gratitude**

I will not say the final step because we all tend to take two steps forwards and one step back on occasions. Grace is the inner beauty that shines as a guiding light for those coming behind to follow, dignity is living an authentic life standing in your truth and gratitude is acknowledging the blessings bestowed upon us the abundance in all its forms.

So now you are walking towards the life you want great isn't it! So maybe you won't walk as fast as the next guy that's okay, remember Elvis sang "Wise men say only fools rush in." or something like that. Life is not a fast food Mac Burger it is a banquet to be savored. Maybe you will have to retrace your steps that's okay too sometimes this is the only way to find what you have lost or misplaced. It matters little what matters more is you remember a journey begins with a single step.







## Steps towards a happier life

### 1. Grow some fairy wings

People with fairy wings are the ones who walk past a puddle in their best suit yet when the voice of the inner child calls out "Go on take your shoes off and splash you know you want too!" they do not ignore it. These are the people so confident in who they are the opinions of others do not influence their decisions, they will roll up their pants have a little splash feel the joy of being alive then put their shoes on and go about their adult day.

### 2. Be your own best friend

So many people struggle with life challenges because they do not know how to be their own best friend. We are all good at being there for others with encouraging words of support and love but rarely are we capable of extending these things to ourselves. In fact we are often our own worst enemy, with a self critic and a massive data base in our heads of all the things we have been told we can't do or won't be able to do or should never attempt. When you start to criticize yourself for your mistakes become a best friend and learn to be a little bit gentler on yourself. When you begin to flounder or have doubts become your own best friend and speak to your spirit with encouraging words which inspire and motivate rather than pull apart and destroy. Ask yourself this "what would I want my best friend to say or do right at this moment?" then do that. It is not rocket science, it does not require any New Age twenty page how to guide, you simply treat yourself as you would treat your best friend with compassion, kindness and love. So what are you waiting for become your own best friend today!

### 3. Honor your feelings

What happens when you honor your feelings is something akin to what happens when the dam breaks. There is a huge rush of emotion followed by a period where the river of life seeks to balance itself again. Then comes the breathe the one you let out that says "It's okay I don't need to be doing this anymore." Emotions are your body's way of telling you that you are not paying attention and something needs to be addressed. Sometimes they are also your body's way of releasing tension or stress holding on to or keeping them inside may result in them manifesting as physical symptoms. This is not New Age mumbo jumbo it is pure fact your body will tell you when you are not listening to it.

- a) Get real, own it, acknowledge it's existence
- b) Feel it don't walk around it the only way is through it
- c) Deal with it, let it go, resolve it, forgive and accept

#### **4. Let go of regrets**

What are regrets other than could have's, should have's, might have's or if only's. Like the writing on the back of a public washroom door they are meaningless thoughts that serve no purpose.

And who can be sure that a different choice would have ended up matching the expectations that accompanied it? Maybe the end result would have left a residue of disappointment.

Better to walk forward with empty pockets and a full heart. Better to accept all the pages of your story so far as being necessary for your character development.

Regrets no, no regrets for they are the weight in a fools pocket keeping him where he is.

#### **5. Have a spring clean**

Look through the things of past and ask "Do I really need this?" There will be things we have outgrown, things held onto purely for sentimental purposes and those items we never really wanted in the first place. Self growth is all about continually cleaning up the clutter in your life. We should be asking ourselves the same questions in terms of our beliefs the things we hold to be true. We need to have a spiritual garage sale throwing out that which no longer serves our highest good and replacing worn out ideas. The lighter the load you carry the easier it is to get to where you are going.

#### **6. Step towards the lightness**

When we are stressed we lash out at those closest to us mainly because we are frustrated and don't know what to do. Soon we stop looking for solutions and start looking for people and things to blame. The best gift you can give everyone at such times is to go into the lightness. Most problems aren't going to be solved overnight and the world will not fall apart if you take a few hours to unwind and rebalance. It is common knowledge things look bigger when you are tired, emotionally drained and physically exhausted. No one can dispute this so why create more problems by not taking adequate care of yourself? Don't allow yourself to become a hard shell of bitterness and frustration step into the lightness. Life is always going to challenge us with 'stuff' and we have to learn to walk through it without letting go of the laughter, the smiles and the joy. So take a moment each day during these tough times to bring a little joy into your life in some form. Travel gently, smile broadly and laugh often.

## **7. Have a few some days**

Some days don't you just want to lay on the grass and meditate so your troubles melt away

Some days don't you just want to hide away from the world so no one can find you?

Some Days don't you just want to curl up with a good book and forget about the dishes in the sink?

Some Days don't you just want to slip into something comfy and simply take the day off?

Some days don't you just want to grab a friend and hide out somewhere just chilling on the sun?

Everybody has a day sometimes when they simply need to take a time out. Some days the dishes can wait Some days you just need a little alone time Some days you need to laugh a little splash in the puddles a bit Some days should not be full of guilt because its okay to honor your body mind and soul Some days are days to rejuvenate and recharge don't let them go

## **8. Have a little faith**

Faith is when you keep walking towards your destination even when you cannot see what's around the next corner

Faith is waking up leaving yesterdays worries behind and letting go of tomorrows trials. It is treating each day as a new beginning full of endless possibilities.

Faith is placing one foot in front of the other even when the load seems unbearable and trusting that you have the greatness within to get to where you want to be.

Faith is never losing touch with the dreams of your childhood

Faith is letting go of the things of youth and embracing each stage of the journey as unique and bountiful.

Faith is letting go and allowing your child to grow and learn by making mistakes and learning from them

Faith is when you are caught in the eye of the storm but you can see clearly that this too shall pass

Faith is knowing you are part of something bigger than yourself

No matter what your beliefs no matter what your religion Hold in your heart you are indeed a walking miracle

## **9. Feel the love**

Love starts with self and extends outwards to include others

Love is a look that connects two souls in perfect knowing without the need for words

Love is the feeling of being cared for and knowing that no matter what everything will be alright

Love is a journey of finding the pieces that fit and that will eventually enable you to build a world together

Love is when the mask falls off and you are accepted for who you are warts and all

Love is not never having to say your sorry rather love is having the courage to say hey I got it wrong I am sorry

Love is the passion and excitement of sharing your world with someone special

## **10. Become a butterfly**

Remember a butterfly requires a period of stillness to allow it's wings to grow

To be a Butterfly is to acknowledge and honor each stage of the journey

Butterflies know when to hold on and when to let of things they have outgrown in their lives.

To be a Butterfly you must find the courage to leave the safety and familiarity of the cocoon.

To be a butterfly is to bring happiness and color into the lives of others by acknowledging your own inner beauty.

Transformation is Butterflies lesson gaining clarity and awareness to the changes needed Butterflies welcome new people and experiences into their lives

To be a Butterfly is to awaken to your true self the divine miracle of creation that you are.

So now you have discovered your wings spread them and dance in the sunlight the world and all its beauty awaits you.





## Steps towards self

To create an authentic life you have to have a authentic picture of who you are and what you like do not like want do not want. If you have a foundation of illusions then you will only create a mirage that disappears every time you reach for it.

### 1. Ask what do I see?

A question tied into how I perceive myself. When I look into the mirror I see someone old someone with wrinkles someone tired someone who cannot achieve. When I look at my Mother I see disapproval disappointment I don't see love. When I look at my sisters I see achievements distance disapproval I don't see pride. When I look at my work colleagues I see distance I see mocking I see laughter directed at me. When I look at the world I see pain I see anger I see danger I see ugly. Make your own list start with looking in the mirror then when you have gone down through all the other items go back to the first one. Are you seeing yourself through the eyes of those around you and is that determining how you see your world?

### 2. Ask how do I feel?

When I am with my family I feel left out not important enough. When I am with my work colleagues I feel inferior I feel like they are waiting for me to screw up. When I am with strangers I feel like they are looking at me judging me. When I am doing something I feel like it won't turn out so I might as well not try. Make your own list then compare with the answers to the question what do I see and who am I is there a pattern beginning to develop?

Who I am naked standing in my truth is a person who sees the worst in others and in all situations. Who I am is a person who feels abandoned betrayed and lost. Who I am is a person who feels inadequate inferior incapable of anything. Who I am is a person who feels life is out to get me and nothing good will ever happen to me. Try it without thought without trying to be intellectual knowledgeable or trying to say the 'Right thing'. Simply start with the sentence I am a person who feels or I am a person who sees. Let the words come uncensored doesn't matter if it makes no sense start with that simple phrase I am and see what comes

### 3. Ask where did I come from?

Every child asks this question at some stage "Where did I come from?" and we hand over a biological explanation enough to satisfy curiosity but have you ever asked yourself that question as an adult? Where did my "I" come from? Babies are not born angry sad frustrated or disappointed at the world they are not born feeling like a failure they are born in unconditional love grace and greatness.

So where did my "I" come from? Did it come from my life experiences did it come from my family my friends my peers did it come from books movies the media where did this mysterious "I" come from? By now you have a long 'I am' list look at it and in colored pen next to each line try and trace the origin of each sentence.

I am a person who feels inadequate change it to when I am blank I feel inadequate for example when I am around my Father I feel inadequate then add because he is always telling me I am stupid.

So where did my thinking I was inadequate come from maybe being told by my father I was stupid. Try this exercise close your eyes bring to mind one of your key words think of a situation where this word was involved. For example I felt inadequate when I did not get the job. Then ask yourself where did that judgment come from? Allow yourself to feel the shame and ask when I have I felt this before where did the feeling come from? There may be a dozen reasons why you did not get the job and none of them would have anything to do with who you are as a person your core truth. But there is a judgment there an emotion a reaction to a situation and it is coming from somewhere.

So close your eyes ask yourself where did this come from. Often we become our experiences our beliefs our assumptions. People who are abused in some way often define themselves by their experiences and come up with "I am dirty" or "I am Unlovable" or "I am a victim". Not true that may be how you felt but that is not your core truth. Have you seen people lean over babies and go you have your Mothers blue eyes or your fathers brown hair? If I were to lean over you and go you have your Father's anger or you are high strung like your Mother it would feel like an attack but that is exactly what you have to do to get to your core truth. Ask yourself where did "I" come from?

#### **4. I am therefore I need be nothing more**

How many times do you hear the phrase "life is not as simple as that" or "it is easy enough to have all these theories about self but they don't fly in the real world". Life is simple it is. Life flows from one moment to the next how we fit into those moments may however be where the complexity comes into it. Humans have an enormous capacity to take something simple and turn into something complicated. We do it in arguments we do it with our life our experiences we cannot seem to accept that some things simply are and need not be anything more. Instead of being clear and to the point with our spouse we will be bring up topics which have no relevance to what we truly want or desire.

Eventually our truth will come out usually in therapy and then we wonder why we did not simply speak our truth at the beginning? What would happen if you stripped yourself back to the basics back to the truth as it is for you in the moment? Your job sucks you hate it that is a simple truth but why then complicate it with I will be here for the rest of my life no point fighting it or I am too old to find work else where or I cannot afford to lose this job. Notice that we have come back to the "I" and your definition of who you are. I hate my job is simple....in this moment I hate my job. There is no need to add to it no need to complicate it you know what your truth is the next question in the next moment should be what do I do now? A child will give simple direct answers when asked about how they feel "I am hungry I am angry I am sad I did not get that toy" An Adult on the other hand may go I am hungry its all that stupid restaurants fault now I guess I will have to just have a sandwich or I am angry that stupid restaurant got our booking wrong now my whole night is ruined or I really wanted that dirt bike but I don't want to put up with my wife's nagging. Bottom line in the moment you were angry hungry and sad that is your truth and when you own it you can go "So what do I do next"

We have explored who we are the raw version stripped back to the bare bones. This person is unconditional love grace and greatness. When you say "I am" there is no

need for anything more. You can let go of that moment and move onto the next. But if you go I am because you are they are it should have you are trapped in the moment unable to move forward. Next time you are surrounded by thoughts words and drowning in assumptions expectations and beliefs. Strip back to the core truth of the moment and say "I am".

## 5. Let it go

Breathe in let it go. It is a simple fact that when you hold onto something and are unwilling to let go a number of things occur. Firstly it may prevent you from moving forward you could end up stuck where you are. Secondly you might end up dragging what ever you are holding onto with you wherever you go creating an extra burden which will drain your energy. Either way it doesn't seem to be a very productive thing to do.

Maybe you cannot let it go maybe you have too much invested in what ever you are holding onto maybe you have used this thing to define who you are and letting it go scares you. When we do not have the faith to let go we do not have the tools to move forward. Imagine resenting your parent holding onto the anger wondering why you didn't get the perfect parent every one else had. Now there may be a number of scenarios here. Firstly you may hold on so tight that you never shift from the past you remain that little hurt girl all your life. Secondly you may have let go enough that you drag that baggage wherever you go always blaming your parents for not being enough then looking for ways to validate how their actions have created your life. Thirdly you may decide you should get someone else to help you....you may say here hold this for a while and take your anger out on a partner.

Let it go....nothing in this life is permanent nothing lasts forever it is true you cant take it with you when you go. So why would you drag it up to the train station knowing they aren't going to let you board with it? In the final moment you will discover its true what they say you can't take it with you when you go and when you let go you depart the physical world into the next world with only the core truth of your existence. You do not take anger with you resentment with you and when you go no one left behind is going to pick up what you were holding onto except perhaps your children.

Let it go.....move onto the next moment. We have talked about how we complicate our lives we have talked about how we use our experiences to define who we are and now we are letting go of our attachment to all those things we are going back to the "I am" letting go being in the moment free from the strings of the past free from the pull of the future.

Letting go is easy.....it is the step before letting go we find the hardest. The one where we have to trust we have to believe in ourselves we have to let go of any crutches we may have had to help us. Maybe you cannot let go right now that's okay maybe you have to take some baby steps and practice loosening your grip.

But if you can let go take a breathe trust and let go and remember letting go is not the same as giving up in fact letting go is giving in and surrendering to life.



## Things which may be stopping you taking the next step

### 1. Pride

Ego is one of the first things to go along with pride when you are given your notice to vacate this planet. You do not want your tombstone to read 'She accomplished nothing but left with her pride intact.' You want to vacate knowing you are leaving nothing behind. Pride stops you showing people who you are at the very core of your being and therefore your relationships will not develop true depth.

Here is the question to ask yourself "Do you want to create an authentic life of depth, passion and abundance?" Then why on earth would you not accept every helping hand offered and access every resource available to you? The answer is often one word 'Pride'. Pride is what you fall back onto when courage is scarce and faith fleeting. A really courageous person risks being vulnerable risks making a mistake because this person knows often our greatest weakness is our strength.

### 2. Regrets

I have noticed we only tend to have regrets when life isn't going well when the sun is shining the lotto balls are dropping in our favor and laughter fills the air we conclude all the right choices were made. When our expectations in regards to how our life should look like aren't met then we have regrets. Maybe I want to hang onto the regrets because at least they give me the illusion if different choices had been made my life would have been different. They give me a 'might have' and if I hang on to the might have I never have to face its opposite 'might never be'. I know it is not the most logical way of thinking but when you are running from your life you will cling to anything in an attempt to avoid taking responsibility. Regrets I know are going to pop up every now and then. I wish I had done this said this. Well fact is you didn't and you cannot go back and change it. I have this theory if you need to say it say it now, if you need to do it do it now because now is all we have. If we really understood the concept of our mortality really got the fact this moment may be the last one we are given then suddenly the priority list would turn into a bucket list. I do not want my headstone to read: I regret I spent my life regretting what I didn't do....having never actually done anything.

### 3. Expectations

We are defined by the truth we hold within us not by what others think of us. It matters little what others see in us it matters more what we see in ourselves. Whether we live up to the expectations others have for us is not as important as whether we live an authentic abundant life the life Creator planned for us. What you can achieve or cannot achieve rests solely in your hands what your life will or will not look like will be determined by your words and actions. Expectations are nothing more than a mirror into the person they are a reflection of doubts insecurities and fears. You are not pretty enough I do not feel pretty enough you are not smart enough I feel inadequate no one will love you I am incapable of love you must succeed I didn't have the courage to try. You were born not carrying expectation but bathed in the unconditional love of the divine your only job to step into the greatness you hold within.



#### 4. Emotional baggage

We think we have it all worked out but where ever we are there it is. What happens is our unresolved issues manifest in new ways in our current relationships thereby creating an illusion that we have indeed left our emotional baggage behind. It is like sticking a sweater in a bucket of dye it may come out a different color but it's still the same sweater. So what do you do?

Unpack your bags see what exactly is in there. What fears etc have you brought with you?

What is yours to own what isn't? This is a very important question because often we end up carrying the emotional baggage of our parents doesn't mean we still don't have to deal with it just means it is easier to deal with when we know the source.

Another important question that needs an honest answer is

"What am I giving to my children my partner to carry?" What baggage are you yourself handing over and saying "Here now it's your turn." Lighten your load....you don't need all that stuff weighing you down....you are a walking miracle about to step into your greatness.

#### 5. Attachment

How attached to 'stuff' are you, do you go into a screaming frenzy when you accidentally wipe computer files and can't get them back? When you have to let go off your favorite dish, shirt, necklace, fishing rod or pair of sneakers because of cracks, breakage, spills or old age are you an inconsolable mess for weeks? Let's face it we all become attached to things houses, cars, symbols of familiarity comfort cushions in stressful times and loss in any form is a stark reminder nothing lasts forever. Holding onto things won't stop you becoming old won't stop stuff happening to you won't do anything other than fill up your life and leave little room for anything to enter. But above all remember these words:

It is spirit that allows us to fly  
It is soul that allows us to see  
It is heart that allows us to feel  
but it is letting go that sets us free





## Tools to stop you falling over

### 1. Communication

We are actually very arrogant as a human race, we walk around making all kinds of assumptions never doubting for a moment we could be totally wrong. The bottom line is if you don't ask you risk looking like an arse. It is the unknown which creates fear and doubts no matter what the situation. Open and honest communication allows each person to feel they are heard and valued. It is like "wow she/he really does care what I think or feel." It also prevents misunderstandings and gives you the opportunity to work towards solutions. So respect the person no matter what your relationship don't assume ask! I think we should also start to market the human body as the latest breakthrough in the world of communication.

The marketing campaign might sound something like this:

Comes equipped with two hands. List of uses:

- lightening someone else's load
- a touch on the shoulder conveys I know its tough but I am here for you or well done I am proud of you
- great also for hugs

The head is fully equipped with the latest ears, nose, mouth and two eyes list of uses:

- Listening
- smelling
- talking, kissing, eating, laughing
- seeing

We will also throw in a couple of legs list of uses:

- excellent for hiking, kicking, walking

Rush in and get one today it use it to embrace your friends, kiss your partner and listen to your children. Use the 6 senses included at no extra expense to you for creating, feeling and tasting the beauty of the life you have been given.

### 2. Balance

So how does one find balance in a changing world?

Firstly by recognizing balance is not the same thing as time management you can have a perfectly planned day and still feel like the world is collapsing around you. Balance has very little to do with time and more to do with peace of mind. Balance comes with the ability to simply be without expectation without the need to be doing without the need to be somewhere else. At your most balanced 'stuff' is something to walk through rather than something to react to and life steps become a natural progression rather than an act of aggression where anything that stands in your way is gruffly pushed aside.

When you step into a bumper car at the fair it feels like no matter which way you turn someone or something hits you when you least expect it. The problem with the bumper cars is you never get time to find your balance or find some space to figure out the best way to go. Here are a few ideas about what you can do when you start to feel this way:

1. Let go of any resentment, anger, guilt or shame that has built up.
2. Let go of any expectations in regards to outcomes and other people's behavior
3. Take a moment or a day to breath put aside issues for awhile focus on things which bring you back into balance.
4. Ask for help. Sometimes we cling to things so tightly so intent on fixing them for ourselves we don't allow anyone to help carry the load so we can gain our balance.

### **3. Be proactive rather than reactive**

So what can you do to be proactive rather than reactive? Take a breathe a pause a step back never say speak your first thoughts and asking an outside opinion before sending emails letters or confronting anyone is again a very good idea. Often when we are in the middle of the storm in is difficult to see the whole picture separating yourself from the situation if only briefly will give you greater clarity.

Learn basic conflict resolution or communication skills as simple as this sounds knowing what to do takes the stress out of the situation it gives you confidence and this makes it easier to stay in a place of grace. Have a clear plan of action should you feel yourself reacting to what is being said or to the person in general maybe this involves removing yourself or saying you know what I can't talk about this right now I will ring you and set up a time to deal with this.

Most of all be aware some people are going to be very persistent when it comes to trying to suck you back into their games. But eventually once you stop engaging in inappropriate and unhealthy ways of interacting the person in question they will either participate on this new level or go find someone else to play with. Life is much more peaceful when you learn to stop being reactive and start being proactive

### **4. Choices**

Regrets are choices not made I didn't chose to go to my daughters concert, I didn't chose to spend more time with my family, I didn't chose to go to a movie with my friends and so on. Little things which go by unnoticed until there are no more moments to fill then they become regrets. Do you know why hindsight is such a wonderful thing, because it allows us the time to see how we could have done it differently. The key word here being time, time to think, time to weigh up, time to understand the consequences of the choice what if you had stopped and given the little choices even a fraction of the time you gave to the big ones. What if every choice was of equal importance what then? I imagine your partner, friends and family would feel valued, listened too and respected and I imagine this would create a depth to your life a foundation of love and joy. The little choices build up you create your life by every choice you make not just the big ones. Choices come and go and you may live in the illusion they didn't matter in the big scheme of things that is until they do matter. When the marriage fails, when your children grow up before you know it, when your someone dies, when you get to the end and begin to contemplate your life and what you could have done differently or would have done differently. If the most important choice you will ever make is to chose to make every decision no matter how small as important as the one gone and the one to come.



## Steps to bring you closer to your greatness



### 1. Meditate

When there is too much chaos and outside noise it is hard to concentrate on what others are saying. I imagine it would be hard to hear even Creator's voice in such circumstances.



### 2. Listen for the Angels

Angels are not there to do the work for you they are there to show you the work that needs to be done.



### 3. Be a friend to someone

The greatest gift you will ever give someone is the knowledge they are not alone. We are the mirror into which each living soul looks for validation we all need to know we matter that we are loved and we are part of a bigger picture.



### 4. Let your inner child free

Adult eyes have a tendency to make the world small, yet are always looking for the big things, child eyes make the world big and yet are fascinated by the small things. I think I want my child eyes back.



### 5. Keep hope in your heart

It may not always be easy to see but there is a place of hope and faith within all of us



### 6. Have a solid foundation to build on

Build your life like the spiders web with each thread put carefully in place to support the one to follow. You will notice if a single thread breaks in the spiders web he does not fall.



### **7. Do random acts of kindness**

Greatness is not determined by the size of the act but the beauty of it. In the words of Mother Teresa it is possible to change the world by doing small things with great love.



### **8. Always remember the Universe is full of abundance**

Life is full of windows of opportunity which open and close. But why wait for an opportunity when the universe is already providing you with endless possibilities?



### **10. Always remember you were born to greatness**

A journey begins with a single step it is a step into the greatness you were born to manifest. No matter where your feet land remember that seed of greatness is planted so deep within you nothing will shake it lose.



### **11. Take time to smell the roses**

Life should not be a fast food meal eaten on the run but a banquet with each mouthful savored.



### **12. Respect your Elders**

There is but a moment between youth and old age remember this the next time you meet an elder.



### **13. Become Master of your own destiny**

Creator gave you all the tools you will ever need when you were born and then handed the job of creation over to you.



### **14. Remain humble**

Reaching the top of the mountain does not mean you can now look down on others. It simply means you have further to fall.

### 15. Let go and let God

The hand of Creator will not pull you nor push you nor will it create for you. Like a hand of a loving parent it will be there to lift you when you fall, to comfort you when you hurt or to hold you while you catch your breathe. Creator has no secrets does not claim to be the way or have the key. Creator a loving parent gave you the tools to find your own way, you do not need a key for the door to his/her kingdom/universe is never locked and there is not secrets you were born with everything you need to know within.





## The last word

You were born a divine child of the Universe that has never changed no matter what the years have brought your way

You have held the world in all its abundance in your hands from the moment you were born but somewhere along the way you may have let go of your dreams.

Your footsteps are just as important as anyone else's never step away from your greatness

You were not alone when you came into this world and you will never be alone the light of the Divine shines upon you always

The world may seem very big right now but your place in it was reserved even before you were born

A hand reached out to bring you into this world if it is offered again never be too proud to take it

You were born to stand proud and tall

No matter what the seasons bring if you stand in your greatness you will not fall

You are a unique one of a kind miracle

You will never feel comfortable in someone else's shoes

It is time to start the dance of life and step into your greatness

Within you is the light of hope and strength



You were born to shine



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