

EMPOWERMENT | COACHING | INSPIRATION | GROWTH

# TRANSFORMATION

AUGUST 2017

COACHING MAGAZINE

A person is shown from the chest up, wearing a white and blue vertically striped button-down shirt. They are pulling the shirt open with both hands, revealing a vibrant, colorful image of a galaxy or nebula underneath. A blue and white striped necktie is loosely draped around their neck. A bright blue butterfly is perched on the person's neck, between the shirt collar and the tie. The background is a soft, out-of-focus cityscape at night.

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# Inspirations

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## IF I CAN DO IT, YOU CAN TOO!

*From suicidal  
to successful & self-empowered.*

By Jessamine Gibb

My childhood broke my confidence and my spirit down. My mother was a troubled and stressed single parent who was emotionally unavailable. Teachers often were more concerned with finding out what was “wrong” with me than with catering to my educational needs. In their quest to find out the problem, they discovered I was “gifted.” I wished that “gift” away so often, as it separated me from my peers who could not understand or relate to me.

The final straw that broke my emotional back was when my mother got into a relationship with a man who really wanted to be a father figure to my brother and me. He had red hair, like me, and he was sensitive and kind and a little different, like me. He had met my mother at work and admired her for years. She told me he had been a ward of the state and had low self-esteem due to surviving childhood abuse, which made me feel very sympathetic to him. She had started this relationship as a kind of revenge when she split up for a time with a long-term partner, who was also emotionally unavailable to us. Being so young, I didn’t really understand what was happening; I was just so happy to feel like someone wanted to care for me.

When she went back to her long-term partner, as I would have known was inevitable had I not been a naïve 12 year old, we were pulled out our beds after midnight and bundled into a car. When the car pulled to a stop, I saw another car crashed into a concrete power pole. Sitting sideways in the driver’s seat was a man crying his eyes out. It was the man I had so wanted to be my father, and he had made a suicidal gesture or attempt. Sitting there, eyes wide and mouth agape, my heart and my brain broke in the same instant. I was so connected with and identified so much with this man I felt I had also been cast aside into darkness.

It had all been too much. I became depressed, dissociative and suicidal for years after this. I wrote about death in my diary and hoarded aspirin packets under my bed. Now, as someone who is trained in reacting to suicidal people, I know how dangerous this was. Not only did I have the motivation, but I had also acquired the means. Snooping in my room, my mother had found these. She screamed at me about it—obviously she cared—but she was ill equipped to take the next steps to support me.

I became pretty heavily involved with drugs and alcohol during high school and early adulthood to numb my pain. I had no confidence in myself, no internal stability, and very little support. I managed to complete university but was almost homeless several times during this period, and my mother was unwilling to provide a bed for me for any longer than a couple of weeks at a time.

But university built me back up in so many ways. I got high marks when I put effort in. I met lecturers who were quirky and smart—but also HAPPY. I learned so much about the world and how it works. I developed an insatiable thirst for knowledge on the systems in society that hold people down, and those that can also elevate them. I was able to quit doing drugs and drinking excessively and engage in the emotional work necessary to let go of my anger. When I left university I made a pact with myself—I would leave the world a better place than it was when I had entered it. I would DO SOMETHING about all the pain I had felt and seen around me.

To do this, I went into community services and worked with a lot of people who had experiences like mine and much, much worse. I coached them to rebuild their lives. I helped them prioritize the many components of their welfare and facilitated them into drug detox, into community housing, into work, into medical treatment, or whatever it was they needed. I helped them understand what made them unique and special, and that they were more than what their fami-

lies, school or society had labelled them as. I helped them master the emotional triggers that caused them to self-sabotage. I was so good at this I was promoted to management nine months after starting work at my last place of employment. I helped my company win one award and was a finalist myself for another. I am now taking my well-honed skills into my own business as a Confidence and Self-Love Coach.

My take away message for you is this:

*If I could take  
myself from being  
willing to end my  
life at 15 to being  
successful in business  
and in life, finding  
my confidence and  
my joy, anyone can!*

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

Jessamine Gibb is a Confidence and Self-Love Coach with Master Coach level training, as well as a B.A. in Sociology. Additionally, she is an Associate Member of the Career Development Association of Australia and a Member of Counselling Tasmania Incorporated. She is on a mission to help over-achievers and perfectionists with low self-esteem value themselves and get more out of their personal and professional lives. Her style is approachable and nurturing, but she also develops the rapport required to call clients to account when they are neglecting their self-care and stagnating in pursuit of their goals. Having a background in mental health case management she is equipped to work with clients who are maintaining their mental wellness while pursuing their goals.

Take her free mini course at: <http://achievecoaching.wix-site.com/selfloveconfidence>. For more information visit the website <http://achievecoaching.com.au/>.



By Terez Hartmann

# MUPPETS the Rainbow Connection and Allowing

## The rainbow connection

*"Someday we'll find it  
The rainbow connection  
The lovers, the dreamers and me..."*  
—Jim Henson as "Kermit the Frog"

I have not seen "The Muppet Movie" since I was a tiny creature, yet so many songs and ideas from this light, silly and oft' campy film managed to etch their way into my heart.

It's no surprise that rainbows have always marked significant turning points in my life; even our wedding day brought a magnificent double rainbow, yet for some reason I had not yet fully made the rainbow connection...

As my hubby and I were making our way back to Tampa from Naples, FL, we were treated to yet another one of the many rainbows that seemed to follow us throughout our three-day trip. We had just completed a several-months-long journey to co-creating the "Law of Attraction and Allowing Your Success Master Class"\* with *Transformation Coaching Magazine* publishers Natalie and Joell Rivera, and at the same time we were celebrating the 16<sup>th</sup> anniversary of "Absolutely Day," the day my real-life prince charming asked for my hand in marriage. We indeed had just experienced a magical time of just BEING together and were luxuriating in a nice, relaxed state of mind as the sound of the tires on the highway hummed beneath our feet.

When I spotted this gentle sprinkling of color on the horizon, John made mention of an idea that prompted me to a powerful new discovery: "You know how animals have wisdom and ideas to share?" he said. "I think there is

something about rainbows—that there is 'rainbow wisdom' that is especially significant for you right now."

With this, I immediately felt myself hearing the song, "Rainbow Connection," from "The Muppet Movie" in my mind, and I started singing it out loud. There were a couple of words that I wasn't quite sure about, so I looked up the lyrics. As I read and sang the lyrics, I felt a powerful presence and knowing wash over me and was soon overcome by tears. What was it about a song performed by a Muppet that rocked my spirit to the core? Perhaps there was more to this rainbow connection...

## Muppets and Allowing Success

Jim Henson was one of those brilliant creative lights in the world who loved to demonstrate the power of love, kindness, uplifting others and the idea of always keeping your dreams and visions alive in every project he touched. His genius lay in transmitting this message in the most light-hearted way possible via a diverse cast of foam, fabric, furry and feathered messengers you couldn't help but love. Though on the surface there were all kinds of "schtick," gags and classic caricatures present in his films and the long-running "Muppet Show," if you were willing to look just a little deeper, there was always a treasure trove of wisdom for allowing success lying in wait to be discovered for all who would have the eyes to see, the ears to hear and the heart to feel.

In "The Muppet Movie," the story begins with the 1979 cast of Muppets sitting in the audience preparing to screen the first-ever showing of their own movie. As film begins to roll, you are then brought into a swamp with our favorite green amphibian friend strumming a banjo and singing "Rainbow Connection." It is at this point that our hero voices his desire to engage the magic of life and to discover more about what is calling him. His song then calls a catalyst to him who presents an invitation to venture beyond his day-to-day experience. Though Kermit hesitates at first, when this messenger zeros in on his desire to "make millions of people happy" he is then compelled to go.

As he embarks on his great journey, he meets a silly, soft-hearted bear who is happy to be his "right-hand man" and accompany him,



also presenting him with a vehicle to cover more ground. They then (literally) run into “Gonzo,” the eternal optimist, Kermit’s uber-feminine, yet highly capable love interest, Miss Piggy (who even rescues him at one point), a piano-playing dog who helps our hero express himself, and band of colorful musicians (including my favorite crazy drummer, “Animal”) who are indeed highly “instrumental” in helping our hero reach his “destination.”

Throughout his odyssey, he experiences all manner of contrast (and even breaks down in the desert, where he has a pivotal “conversation” with his core self/inner guidance), yet no matter what comes his way, our hero moves forward with an attitude of openness and willingness. Even when faced with what appears to be no way out and even certain death, help always arrives at the perfect time, and the journey continues.

Once our hero and his band of merry creatures arrive at their “destination” and are in the process of bringing their movie to life with all the sets and trappings of show biz, something happens that causes a total breakdown of everything that had been constructed. Yet, in the course of this breakdown, an opening is created in the ceiling of the sound stage and in comes a magnificent rainbow that floods the space and bathes these brave travelers in color. Kermit and his friends have, at this point, come full circle to yet another rainbow and have now discovered that what lies at the end of the rainbow is...

...themselves.

It is here that they sing:

*“Life’s like a movie, write your own ending  
Keep believing, keep pretending  
We’ve all done what we’ve set out to do  
Thanks to the lovers, the dreamers and you!”*

...And in my jeep on the road to home, after revisiting this powerful and unlikely story of a hero’s journey and the “Rainbow Connection,” what do I see, but yet another rainbow.

### **The Bottom Line: Muppets, The Rainbow Connection and Allowing**

Just like Kermit, I too have allowed myself to set forth on great adventures without always knowing exactly where the path may lead or how I would get to the next stop along the way, yet by deciding to let my dream of being a catalyst for joy for millions be stronger than any fear, opportunities continue to flow, ways continue to be made, and a powerful posse of “fabulousity” continues to surround me with love and music each step of the way.

Just like me, YOU too have powerful desires calling you to move onward, upward and forward and—whether you know it or not—you also have your own posse who would gladly walk by your side to play an instrumental role in seeing YOU realize your fullest potential. And no matter how different our dreams or desires may be, when it all comes down to it, it is the illuminated version of our core SELF that we find at the end of the rainbow time and time again.

Getting to see and experience a rainbow requires a very specific set of factors, including the ideal balance of contrast, light and water; but even when the ingredients of nature come together to create the physical result of a rainbow, it is still a matter of being in just the right place, at just the right time, gazing in just the right direction, to be able to perceive and ALLOW this very special experience to transpire.

So the next time you find your beautiful self catching sight of a rainbow—while standing in just the right place, at just the right time, gazing in just the right direction—remember to give yourself credit where credit is due, for in that moment, you too have made the rainbow connection.

Here’s to the lovers, the

dreamers and YOU!

*\*For more info about The Law of Attraction & Allowing YOUR Success Master Class, visit this link: <http://www.transformation-academy.com/courses/law-of-attraction-allowing-your-success-master-class>*



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# Boring Job;



# Positive Attitude

By Anna Trishch

*“Successful people maintain a positive focus in life no matter what is going on around them.”—Jack Canfield*

“What a boring job to have!” That’s what I was thinking while standing in line at the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service, looking at an immigration officer while he was going through applications. I was anxiously awaiting my fingerprints appointment, and I said to myself: “The same applications, the same responses, the same questions, just different people—pretty monotonous. I wouldn’t be happy at all if I had that job.”

As my turn approached, the officer said a nice hello and took my documents. Then he looked up and said, “Hm, Ukraine...”

I replied, “Yes, I come from Ukraine, and I am looking forward to becoming a U.S. citizen!”

The officer looked at me, smiled and said, “Net!” (It means “no” in Russian/Ukrainian.)

I said, “Excuse me?!” I started panicking, thinking there was some problem with my paperwork.

But the next second, the officer put a stamp and signed my notice letter saying, “I know a little bit of Russian. Da, Net, Spasibo, Krasivaia.” (These words mean yes, no, thank you, beautiful.) He had been to Russia and Ukraine several times, when it was still the U.S.S.R. (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) and then later when the Soviet Union collapsed. I was amazed at the level

of knowledge this man possessed. He even knew when Ukraine gained its independence! Overall, I had a nice impression from our brief communication. There was a positive energy around the officer, and he was in a lighthearted, happy mood.

I realized his job didn’t seem boring because he was connecting with people and he enjoyed the encounters.

I thanked him for his assistance and walked off to the next station to get my fingerprints taken. As I sat on a chair waiting for my name to be called, another officer looked at me and yelled, “NEXT!!!”

I walked toward the designated cubicle, where a woman sat. I smiled and said, “Hi, how are you doing today?” She gave me a cold hello and took my documents. Not a word as she was going through the paperwork.

“Left hand, please,” she said, and quickly took the fingerprints of my left hand. Then she silently proceeded to the right hand. “All done,” were her last words to me.

As I walked away, I contemplated the drastic difference between the two officers who assisted me. The same job—but very different approaches to handling the same responsibilities. In the first case, the tedious routine looked fun. In the second case, it *was* really boring. What made the difference? **Attitude!** It’s not about the job; it is about what you make out of it. It is about you, your personality and your energy that make your job a pleasure or a monotonous routine.





## *As Without, So Within*



By Rev. Marla Sanderson

*“As Within, So Without, As Above, So Below.”—Hermes Trismegistus*

Consciousness creates. Look at your world. You created it. It will tell you all you want to know and more about your inner programming and beliefs.

It's nice to have everything in your life just the way you want it, but the real feeling of wholeness and satisfaction comes from changing your inner self. For that, you must dig deeply into what makes you tick. It's not always comfortable.

What does this kind of transformation bring?

Is it worth it?

It is if you want a higher quality of life, personal satisfaction, self-confidence, inner peace, happiness, fun, loving relationships and independence.

Some years ago, a friend gave me a Tarot reading. The cards said I had some deep emotional work to do—and it was coming up soon. Boy, was I confused! I'd done so much inner work I thought most of it was behind me.

To be honest, I thought I'd already “arrived.” Ever feel that way? Ever think you've “arrived” at some spiritual destination?

I had been working intensely with the methods from Ken Keyes' *Handbook To Higher Consciousness*. I even conducted workshops to help others use them and change their lives for the better.

My pride felt wounded because the voice in my head wanted to believe I was as “spiritually advanced” as I thought. It's

easy to fool ourselves, isn't it?

To my surprise, what felt like bad news turned out to be one of the best things that ever happened to me. It wasn't long before my self-satisfaction gave way, as illusions usually do.

Things happened to me that showed me what I needed to work on.

I discovered deeper levels of insecurity and self-sabotaging belief that were affecting my whole life. It was clear that with all my inner work, I had barely scratched the surface.

The internal earthquakes that followed were painful and sometimes embarrassing. It's not easy to face the emotional gunk deep inside, but it is worth it to uncover new levels of confidence, creativity and happiness.

I started to put myself in situations that made me uncomfortable. It was like a game. Triggered fears and limiting beliefs showed me more of my inner programming that wasn't working for me. I was eager to change it.

How about you? Ever notice ...

### **Painful recurring events (this again?)**

Do you have a life-long issue or problems that keep showing up? Do men/women always leave you? Maybe you get “passed over” instead of receiving the recognition or respect you deserve. Or left out when you want to be included.

### **Emotions**

We all know that emotions like fear, anger, jealousy and such feel bad. They also make you do some pretty dumb things. Severed relationships, arguments and misunderstandings are the products of emotions gone wild. The cost is devastating.



## Squabbles or difficulties with others

Patterns of behavior that seemed normal while growing up may not work well for adults in the real world. Insecurities cause defensiveness and resentment. Whether it happens at work, at home, or elsewhere, some people find it hard to get along with others.

Behind any of these patterns you'll find a belief that perpetuates the inner feelings and outer conditions that make up your life. All that I've mentioned barely touches the surface.

But a word of warning: Don't judge or torture yourself over every tiny imperfect detail in your life! There's no destination in Spirit. It is already perfect and so are you, even if you have issues. So go easy on yourself.

Have I finally "arrived"? Certainly not! But the trip is getting better all the time.

I'm happier with who I am and more confident. In many ways my life is better than it was before. I discovered talents and abilities I didn't know I had and jumped into situations that would have terrified me in the past.

These days, I just like to go easy on myself and enjoy life. If some area is out of whack, you can be sure something inside you is keeping it that way.

Meanwhile, love yourself no matter what's going on. Love yourself no matter how you feel. Most of all, love yourself even more when you feel unlovable.

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*Things happened to me  
that showed me what I  
needed to work on.*

---

*It's not them.*



Rev. Marla Sanderson is a skilled spiritual counselor, speaker, teacher, and workshop leader. She has studied and practiced the Science of Happiness and Science of Mind for over 40 years. Her website, The New Thought Global Network, showcases ideas from many New

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# When **Weird** Becomes Wonderful

By Alan Cohen

I remember the first time I could no longer tolerate what used to be acceptable. After watching a movie that showed a character being shot and throwing up, I felt nauseous. This was not long after I started on my spiritual path, meditating, doing yoga and lightening my diet. Until that time I could watch any film with violence, war or creepy monsters. I grew up in a New Jersey housing project, which effectively desensitized me to anything that would bother most people. In college I was in a party fraternity; nothing you could do could gross me out.

How I felt after that movie was at turning point. From then on, things that used to be fun or entertaining seemed heavy or pointless. My friends changed, and I quit hanging out in conversations of complaint. The kinds of entertainment that appealed to me changed. I lightened my diet. All that letting go made space for new friends and more rewarding activities. I was going through a spiritual evolution. If you are reading this article in this magazine, you know exactly what I am talking about.

Over the years that process has not stopped. It has accelerated. Now a lot of what used to seem like fun brings me down. I don't engage in joke-telling sessions. Malls seem like another planet. Television and the news are surreal. Dee and I peruse streaming movie service menus, and we are hard-pressed to find movies we value. We can sometimes ferret out something of interest, but only after extensive digging. We look at the offerings, scratch our heads and wonder, "Who would pay to watch a movie like that?"

*Part of my mind questions if I am being too  
picky or a snob.*

But I can't make believe I can do stuff that leaves me feeling awful. I have to trust that my inner being is guiding me toward what serves me, and away from what is not in my best interest. Evolution makes certain activities obnoxious for a good reason, while it makes other endeavors very tasty.

Perhaps you, too, have questioned or judged yourself for being too sensitive or not feeling at home in the mainstream. When I ask my seminar audiences, "How many of you believe or have been told that you're weird?" Almost everyone raises their hand.

**I want to offer you a radical  
way of looking at your sensi-  
tivity and dissatisfaction with the mainstream:**

*It's not you that it weird. It is the world.*

*A Course in Miracles* tells us that the world we have invented is the inverse of the way we are supposed to live. What is wrong seems right and what is right seems wrong. The world is like a photographic negative where black appears white and white appears black, and what you look at makes no sense. So accept your oddity as confirmation from Spirit that you are on the right track. As British playwright Tom Stoppard wrote,

---

*From then on, things  
that used to be fun or  
entertaining seemed  
heavy or pointless.*

---



*"It's the best possible time to be alive, when almost everything you thought you knew is wrong!"*

So now what? Do you just hide in a cave and wait for the world to change so you can fit into it? That will probably not happen anytime soon. In the meantime, here are some things you can know and do until the world catches up with sanity.

1. **Be extremely honest** about what empowers you and what debilitates you. Tell the truth about what is "It" for you and what is "Not It." Let your preferences about where you find yourself propel you to where you want to be.

2. **Trust** that you are being guided. You don't need to apologize for your perfect evolution. If you believe in your intuition, you will be nurtured, sheltered and directed. Don't overthink your promptings. Be open to clear knowing.

3. **Act** on your guidance. Say yes to what works and no to what doesn't work. Most people can benefit from setting healthier boundaries. Remember that a "no" to what is Not It is a "yes" to what is It.

4. **Don't be afraid** to let go of what you have outgrown. Many of my coaching clients report that they have old friends they don't enjoy being with anymore. These friends want to continue a pattern of gossip and negativity, and my clients feel guilty about saying no to invitations to which they have traditionally said yes. If you can upgrade the relationship with loving communication, do so. If not, follow the river around the next bend.

5. **Cultivate** new connections, activities and habits that match your evolution. When Dee and I can't find a movie, we watch a spiritual seminar video, listen to music, play with the dogs, look at the stars, walk in nature or talk about things important. I miss none of what I have left behind.

While I honor my own evolution, I also honor everyone's choices. We are all on our perfect learning curve. If that curve takes you around a new bend, let it.



Alan Cohen is the author of *The Grace Factor: Opening the Door to Infinite Love*. Become a certified professional life coach through Alan's transformational Life Coach Training beginning September 1. For more information about this program, his books and videos, free daily inspirational quotes, online courses, and weekly radio show, visit [www.AlanCohen.com](http://www.AlanCohen.com).

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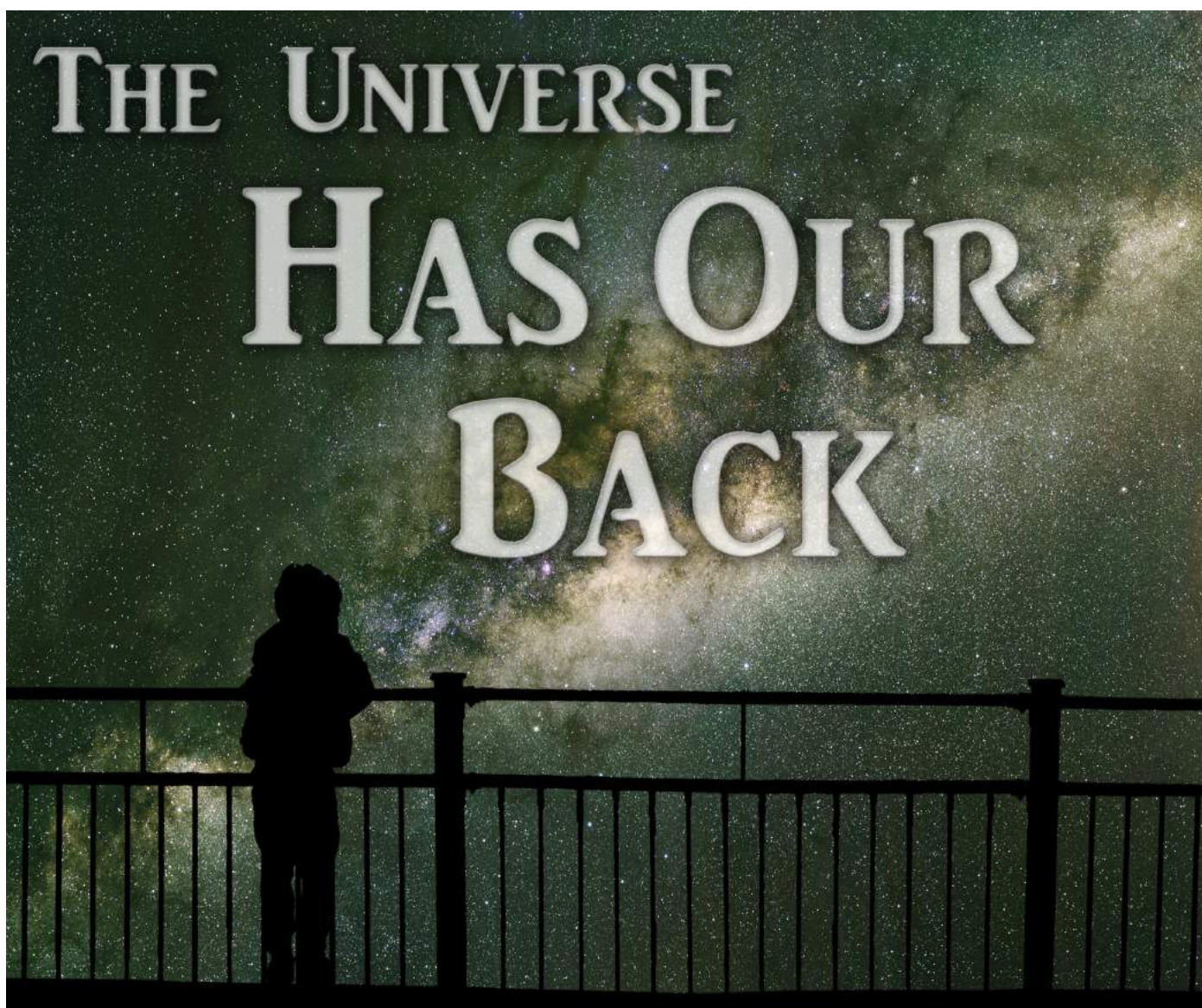
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By Kristine Ann

I was born on Mother's Day. Baby number five and the fourth girl—another girl. Following my birth came news that I don't believe anyone could be prepared for at such a time: My mom was not expected to make it through the night. She was given her last rites, and it was a sad and traumatic moment in my family's history. I was going to be fine, but was my mom? Thankfully, she did pull through following medical care and needed recovery.

*It was not easy to forget being a part of the moment when my mother's life almost ended.*

I don't remember my age when I learned about this story or first looked at myself and wondered why I was born under these circumstances. I do know that it left me with unanswered questions

and, as a result, I began to search for truth at a young age.

I was raised with church as a big part of our Sunday tradition. I often wondered why the world was so tough when God and Jesus are there for us. This pondering opened me up to learn about religion and start the quest to understand spirit and soul. At the time, I didn't know anything for sure so I read and learned what I could. I wandered with my thoughts and feelings, going where the wind blew me with plenty of ups and downs. I always felt protected, but I just never knew what I should be doing.

Years later, after I was married and blessed with the gift of my two boys, something changed. I was a mom now. I experienced deep feelings of unconditional love and started to understand how love plays such an important part in our life. I felt privileged to be a mom. I wanted to do everything right and was determined to create a great life for my family. But I forgot about



myself during this process.

When I finally realized I was neglecting my own needs, I went into self-discovery, and I found something big; I found the Universe. It allowed me to see God in a new way that was bigger than I could put my head around. I wanted to be part of this “greatness” all around us. I even decided to design a tattoo based on what the Universe meant to me at the time and put the tattoo on my lower back. It was my way to make the statement: “The Universe has my back!”

After I learned the Universe supports us, I felt a profound change. Perhaps my search was over? Then I realized I was still anticipating and looking for the “best day” in the future and missing what was happening in the current moment. I also wasn’t getting “where I wanted to go.” It was frustrating.

So, I continued to peel back more layers of life’s onion. I discovered I needed to make peace with myself and recognize that I was not on this earth to hurt anyone. All the judgments I had on myself and others had to be removed. I dug deep inside to find my authentic Self, knowing I had no idea who I would find or what this process would uncover. I searched inside of myself to understand why I fight for what I believe is right, and stand up for anyone who doesn’t have a voice. And, I looked at why it is so important to me to be strong, bold, and strive to be the best in all I did.

*I learned that to grow I had to stop trying to understand everything and trust the Universe already has it figured out. It has my back!*

It has taken me some time to honor my past and, at the same time, know that it does not define me. To make peace with the fighter inside me and appreciate all the pieces that make me who I am. I like living a life full of flavor. I know life is a work in progress, and each day connects me with another moment that is for the greater good. How grateful and thankful I am for all the experiences my life gives me each day.

I want to thank all the special souls who spend their time and talents helping others. I would not be in a place of peace today, in the now, without you. You are a gift to me and all who are

ready to hear your messages.

Most importantly, this journey has taught me I can forgive myself and others. I can say I am sorry and accept I am not perfect. I think about those I now spend time with and seek out people I enjoy to be around and who care about me. I am ok with the fact that I can’t reach everyone and not everyone will like me. I can set boundaries and know it is for the greatest good. This is my life and I am grateful I get to live it.

*I now realize nobody needs fixing. We are all beautiful beings walking the earth, and we learn from each other when we are ready.*

As my life keeps evolving, I appreciate that the Universe has provided us with our amazing stories and so much to experience. We are all connected to its great energy. This force is everywhere, and it will take care of us. In the end, we all have the opportunity to answer the question, “Who has my back?” We do! And we just need to trust the Universe!



Kristine Ann is passionate about learning how to live life to the fullest and enjoys sharing her stories to help others. Her life experiences have given Kristine the courage to seek her authentic self, make peace a priority and trust the universe has our back. Kristine lives in beautiful Wisconsin with her husband, two boys and German Shepherd. After having a successful career with the Government Kristine decided to leave the working world and stay home to raise her boys. During that time she wrote several children’s books and hopes to share them very soon. She is currently having fun working with Children in elementary school. Feel welcome to contact Kristine Ann at [KristineAnn124@gmail.com](mailto:KristineAnn124@gmail.com)

*This article is a chapter from the book Transform Your Life! written by 60 real-life heroes and experts and available at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com), [BN.com](https://www.bn.com), [www.Transformation-Publishing.com](http://www.Transformation-Publishing.com) and all ebook formats.*

# Are You Getting Enough

## SELF LOVE?



by Sandra Musial

### Take this Quiz:

*Start thinking of all the things you love in your life for a few seconds.*

*How long before you mentioned yourself?*

It's very common to not think of listing yourself when recalling what you love. We tend to take care of others before ourselves—especially those of us with children, lucky spouses or aging parents. But practicing self-love—loving ourselves and paying attention to our needs, wants and desires—makes us more whole and authentic. It also puts us in a much better place to take care of and love others.

It's not selfish to practice self-love. It is nurturing and kind—and everyone else in your life will win as a result of you loving yourself more.

If you are not yet convinced, consider Buddha's words:

*“You yourself, as much as anyone in the universe, deserves your love and affection.”*

Or Deepak Chopra:

*“If enough of us embrace love, the world will eventually be saturated with love. The love in the world begins with the love within ourselves.”*

The most important relationship you have is the one you have with yourself. So where to start?

### Grace Under Pressure

I had the wonderful opportunity to attend a weekend seminar at Kripalu with Christine Arylo, the queen of self-love. She taught me and 13 other women powerful secrets to taking care of our selves, going for our dreams and having “fierce grace under pressure.” Her 2012 book, *Madly in Love with Me, The Daring Adventure of Becoming Your Own Best Friend*, gives the reader practical, enjoyable ways to incorporate the 10 branches of self-love into living a fulfilled complete life. Each branch is important alone, but they all work together synergistically to create an optimal balance in our life.

The following priceless information is obtained mostly from Christine Arylo's book and our Kripalu weekend together (with Christine's gracious permission), with some commentary from my own practice of self-love over the last 51 years.

### Christine Arylo's 10 Branches of Self-Love:

**1. Self-Honesty and Self-Awareness.** A first step toward self-love is taking a pause to reflect on who you are and who you are not. Being truthful about this will allow for inner growth in the areas you wish to evolve. If you can't be honest with yourself, then it is hard to have honest relationships with others.

**2. Self-Acceptance.** The act of accepting yourself for who you are without judgment can be challenging. The pressure to fit into some societal norm is coming at us from multiple vantages on a daily basis. And even though we have all had fantasies



about being someone other than our true self, most of us would not consider actually becoming anyone else. However, we can aspire to improve upon the aspects of our self that we recognize need evolving.

**3. Self-Care.** This is the process of taking care of your body, spirit and mind. It involves firstly knowing what you need and then making it a priority so you can take the steps to make it happen. It can be as simple as making sure you are getting enough sleep, eating a nourishing diet and taking time to breathe in the middle of a workday. Or more complicated, like ending a relationship that is not serving you, changing careers or attending a revitalizing conference on self-love! Keeping your “energy tank” filled up with self-care allows you to be a more loving giving person. As Christine Arylo says, “Never serve from your reserves!”

**4. Self-Compassion.** This is similar to self-acceptance, but takes it a step further. Compassion is having the empathy and kindness to embrace yourself with unconditional love—having forgiveness for your imperfections and vulnerabilities. For me, letting go of the “crazy super-woman, super-human perfectionistic expectation” is an ongoing battle, but freeing to acknowledge. Let the judgments go and focus on all that you do and all that you are.

**5. Self-Trust.** No one else knows what is right for you better than YOU. Everyone has had times in their life where they made a decision based on the pressure and influence of others, going against the inner voice that was saying “No, bad idea. This doesn’t feel right.” And then you kick yourself knowing that you should have listened to your intuition.

However, we learn from these experiences, and having that renewed awareness allows us to move forward making choices that are driven by our inner most desires, true to ourselves and authentic in nature.

**6. Self-Esteem.** Having high self-esteem is a belief in yourself that allows you to feel like you can do or be anything. This confidence allows you to proceed in life unapologetically because you know that your thoughts and actions are based in your own truth and others do not have to agree with them. To boost your self-esteem, it is important to value yourself and embrace your highest qualities such as what you offer to others, what you are really good at, and what positive affect you have on those around you.

**7. Self-Empowerment.** Being a self-empowered person means taking responsibility for your actions and choices to create the life of your dreams. Don’t blame others for your place in life. Don’t let others control your life and prevent you from going where you need and want to go. Be strong and courageous to reach for your dreams and goals. This may mean taking some risks and acting outside of your comfort zone—and perhaps others will be upset by your choices—but it is your life to live, not theirs.

**8. Self-Respect.** Making decisions that respect all the parts of you—mind, body and spirit—is critical to self-love.

Choose to have relationships with people who are kind, loving and respectful and honor who you truly are without wanting to change you. Get rid of relationships in your life that leave you feeling drained, stressed or badly about yourself. Your body and soul are sacred and those you choose to spend time with should treat you with love and honor.

**9. Self-Pleasure.** “Live. Laugh. Love.” We see this slogan everywhere, and it is a concept many of us strive to embrace. Pull into your life things, people and situations that create joy, laughter and fulfillment. Push away those that don’t. Make a point to recognize what brings you joy and feed that notion. Schedule it into your day if necessary, but make it happen every day. Fresh cut flowers in your bedroom? Hugging your dog? Taking time to read your favorite book? Listening to music that fills your soul? Spending time with a best friend? Make it happen!

**10. Self-Expression.** Be yourself—fully expressed without censorship or apology! Living authentically and expressing your true self is freeing and opens your world to maximize your participation in life. Express yourself honestly in alignment with your true self. Practicing self-love and working on the 10 branches allows us to get closer to honest self-expression.

I left Kripalu with a renewed appreciation for who I have become

and what I have accomplished. I also received a renewed interest in where I want to go in life, what relationships are not serving me, which ones excite me and make me laugh, and what dreams have been squelched but should be nourished. A few days after I returned home I decided to trade in my stuffy city house for a cottage on the water—a lifelong dream!

Why wait?



*Sandra Musial, M.D., is a pediatrician who believes that the foundation of a healthy life starts with healthy food. Growing up, she was inspired by her father, who had a keen interest in nutrition. She earned a B.S. in Nutritional Sciences and then went on to get her M.D. from the University of Massachusetts Medical School. After training as a pediatrician, Sandy worked in private practice for 13 years, where she focused on children’s health and wellness, as well as breastfeeding. She then joined Hasbro Primary Care as an Assistant Clinical Professor of Pediatrics at Brown University, teaching the pediatric residents and medical students. Working with an increasing number of undernourished obese children, she was motivated to train at the Institute for Integrative Nutrition® to earn a certificate in Health Coaching. Though she has witnessed the healing power of allopathic medicine, she has also seen its limitations, especially with regard to disease prevention through healthy nutrition. Sandy helps others find their optimal health by exploring the various facets of health and wellness, and making changes toward a healthier whole life. Sandy enjoys gardening, yoga, knitting and sweater alchemy. For more information visit [www.healthcoachconnect.com](http://www.healthcoachconnect.com)*

## CHANGE THE CHANNEL



By Rena Greenberg

Do you spend countless hours fantasizing about “pleasuring” your body with food only to have the fantasies culminate in a binge you later regret and suffer over? What if you could control the destiny of your body in a way other than relentlessly scolding, depriving or denying yourself? What if the way to alter your body and your life’s destiny was to change the channel in your mind?

Think of your body and mind as a broadcasting receptacle that can receive any station. Instead of identifying with the multi-

tude of stations that you are picking up on, begin to observe them. Listen with a fresh ear and you will begin to see yourself with new eyes.

Most likely your inner stations are not broadcasting news, country, rock or classical music. Since you are part of the human family, your stations are likely to include broadcasts of criticism, suffering, complaining, fear, judgment, regret or resentment.

Often, when barraged by a particular station, it may feel as if you are a victim of its belief system. Here is what some of your inner stations may sound like:

### ***The station of criticism:***

“You never do anything right.”

“How stupid you are for what you just said or did.”

“You’re going to pay for what you just ate.”

### ***The station of trying and hoping:***

“I hope I don’t have a really hard time today.”

“I’m going to try not to eat chips today (but make no plan that insures my success.)”

### ***The station of judgment:***

“She sure is a snob.”

“I look like an elephant in this dress.”

### ***The station of suffering and victimhood:***

“People are always taking advantage of me.”

“I’m sick and tired of the way people treat me.”

### ***The station of regret:***

“Why did I eat that?”

“I should never have let myself get to this point.”

### ***The station of resentment:***

“She has it so much easier than I do.”

“I have to work so much harder than he does.”

### ***The station of fear:***

“Something bad is going to happen.”

“I have to keep myself incessantly busy so I don’t have to feel this anxiety.”

Sometimes the pain of listening to these inner dialogues may become so great you’ll do anything to shut the inner voice off. That may be when you make a beeline for the refrigerator or the fast food drive through.

The moment when your inner voice becomes unbearable may be exactly when the thought of sinking your teeth into a sugary, fattening “treat” may seem like the best option you can think of. Why? Because in that moment you have an awareness that for even a brief period of time—it could even be seconds—your mind will shut off as you experience the pure sensual “pleasure” of sugar, salt and fat melting in your mouth. You have a memory of that being true.

Unfortunately, what you block out in that moment in time when you shut off the voice that was incessantly chewing off your ear and focus on the new full-color mental movie of eating whatever your weakness may be—chips, pizza, donuts, French fries, bread, cookies—is the way you are going to feel moments after you complete your binge.

What is predictable is that no sooner than the sugar, salt and fat combo begins to wreak havoc on your digestive system, your inner broadcaster will immediately land on the station of guilt and shame. And it goes like this:

- “Eeeks! What have I done?!”
- “I can’t believe what I just ate! After I was so “good” all week! I am pathetic!”

See the cycle? Great! Because awareness is the absolute first step in ultimate success. We can’t hurt ourselves consciously. It is only what is stored, unexamined, in the subconscious that can cause us to fall in the same potholes over and over again.



Now, let's take a look at the solution because it's right at your fingertips. The fantastic news is that not only aren't you your body, but you aren't your thoughts either. If you were your thoughts how could you be aware of them?

Since you can observe your thoughts, you aren't them. You are the Thinker of the thoughts. The reason why this hasn't always seemed apparent in the past is because you are conditioned to identify with your thoughts, not with yourself as the Thinker.

*Identifying with your thoughts is not only the cause of suffering but the cause of making bad decisions.*

When you realize that you are the Thinker, not the thoughts, it also becomes evident that there are an infinite number of channels that you can choose to turn your inner dial to. It may be helpful to actually imagine a radio dial, like the one in your car, and visualize that you are physically changing stations. Here are some stations that you may want to try out:

**Station of unconditional love and forgiveness:**

"I am beautiful exactly as I am and so is everyone else."

"I can have my heart's desire—I am worthy."

"I release the past completely."

"When I remember the past, I take with me only the positive things I have learned about myself, others and life, and let go of the rest."

"I choose to focus only on the love I have given and received."

"Everyone is doing the best they can at this particular time."

"Tomorrow will be a better day because today I am thinking new thoughts about it."

**Station of creativity:**

"What fun way can I get my needs met?"

"How can I joyfully begin to create what I desire today?"

"How can I express my life force energy in a positive way?"

**Station of wisdom:**

"All my emotions move through me like the weather."

"I don't have to act on every thought I have."

"I can enjoy the smell of food without needing to eat it."

"Before I eat anything, I can remember how it will likely make me feel."

**Station of gratitude:**

"I am blessed and I am a blessing to others."

"My inner light shines wisdom and compassion to myself and everyone around me."

"I am safe and protected."

"All my needs are being met."

"I appreciate the kindness of others."

**Station of power:**

"The power to create the life I want lies within me."

"I love, accept and respect myself exactly as I am."

"I trust that everything is happening as it's supposed to and that I am exactly who and where I am supposed to be."

"My true power lies in embodying the highest expression of myself in each moment."

When you find yourself stuck on a channel that will not likely take you down a road of lasting happiness and fulfillment, it's important to realize that the only true power you have is the ability to choose a new one. Would you scream and yell at the radio because it's playing country music when you prefer to hear classical? Though that image may seem absurd to you, it's no more fruitless than scolding yourself for thinking "bad" thoughts.

Simply reach into your inner mind and change the dial.

Move your focus to a more uplifting station—one that raises your consciousness and brings out a much more resourceful and wise part of yourself.

How can you tell when you have slipped onto a dark station? It's simple—you will feel it. Though you are not your body, your physical self offers a great feedback system—one of feeling. If you feel constricted, it's time to change the dial. When you feel expanded, turn it up!

*You choose your thoughts and your thoughts create your feelings. Your feelings, in turn, propel you towards certain behaviors.*

When you take right action your feel good and your thoughts tend to affirm that. When you take actions that are contrary to your desired life goals, your sense of constriction and emotional pain increases. What a wonderful feedback loop your body/mind is.

The only way to break a negative cycle is to change the input. Hypnosis and self-hypnosis are wonderful tools to help you to update your thinking to match your life goals. Can you be hypnotized? Absolutely!

You, too, can change your thought station to set yourself up to achieve every blessing that your heart desires!



Rena Greenberg, a Hay House author, can be reached at [EasyWillpower.com](http://EasyWillpower.com). Her weight loss and gastric bypass hypnosis success has been featured in 150-plus news stories including USA Today, Woman's World, The Doctor's, CNN, Good Morning America and Nightline. PBS stations nationally aired Rena's show, "Easy Willpower," in August 2015. Her wellness program is sponsored in 75 hospitals and 100-plus corporations. She conducts hypnotherapy sessions with people all over the world on Skype and in Sarasota, FL.

**Love Life. Live Happy.  
Live Healthy.**  
with Rena Greenberg



# How to Start Making Better Choices



By Carleen Moscati

Did you know that you are in charge of your own destiny, as well as what you think and decide? From this perspective, life is essentially what you make it.

As humans, we are granted this highly consequential gift called free will. But, as significant as this gift is, we seldom acknowledge it. Instead, we sit by and allow life to happen to us, survey it in agony and hit repeat, which is, of course, insanity.

## How Do We Stop the Cycle?

The free will cure to this insanity is change. If you do not like something, change it. If you do not like the way that you have been living your life or the outcomes that have been showing up for you, then commit to doing something different.

The conversion factor required for transition from free will incognizance to positive life change is CHOICE! Your choice is what transmutes your gift of free will into the ability to change your circumstances for the better. In any given moment, your choice is the deciding factor of what you experience in this life. It would then follow that the ability to make better choices is a viable approach that can lead to living the lifestyle that you truly desire.

## What Does It Take to Make Better Choices?

*At the very core of making better choices is awareness.*

You must become universally aware. This means to become consciously aware, in tune or connected with the macrocosm that is both in and around you. You also must be able to proactively witness and identify source, cause and effect in all things.

If you are thinking that it is impossible to all of a sudden become aware of everything, you are right. Likewise, you may also be wondering, "Why must I be aware of everything just to be able to make the right choices?" It's because at the root of all good intention is Universal Awareness. This is the foundation. This is where it all begins. When you begin with the fundamentals, you build a strong and lasting foundation for everything else that follows. If you desire to be better and to do better long-term, begin with the basics. Building upwards and outwards with assurance ensures greater ease of navigation and higher probability of success.



Achieving true Universal Awareness is a graduated process, and it involves achieving three different levels of perception. They can be understood as:

1. Latent Awareness
2. Awakening
3. Conscious Awareness.

The ultimate goal is full conscious awareness, whereby not only do you begin to make better choices for yourself, but also to make choices that have maximum benefit for the greater good.

### Why is it so Hard to Make Better Choices?

As we mentioned before, achieving awareness, which is at the heart of good choice making, is a process. In this day and age of on-demand everything and instant gratification, this is seemingly asking the impossible. The loud noise of competitive distraction all around us right now.

*Awareness requires disciplined focus, a desire to learn and grow, connectivity, passion and perseverance.*

This is a delicate dynamic to balance and maintain. Most importantly, this is something that you have to want. From the purest part of you, you have to truly desire to make the right choices. When you truly recognize and connect with this desire, right choice will feel welcome and begin to present itself with much less obscurity.

### How to Start Making Better Choices

#### 1. Decide and Commit.

The power of rightful choice becomes yours when you decide that this is the path you wish to take, here and now. It comes also with the full understanding that it is not the easier path; rather, it is the more fulfilling journey. The reward is not realized without full commitment to yourself to follow through. It is also a commitment to faith in the actual process—a process of continued growth, connection and realization of truth. The starting point to making better choices for your life is the decision and commitment to do so.

#### 2. Take a Self-Assessment.

The next step after you have decided and committed to making better choices is to take a complete self-assessment to truly know yourself and who you ultimately want to become [come into being fully]. To do this ask, “Who you want to be?”

Take the time to understand all of your desires and values, to know and be comfortable with where you are going and what you want to achieve. In doing so, you are beginning the practice of ready recognition of that which will ultimately serve you best. The ability to minimize and eliminate meaningless options more readily draws your attention to the most valid path. This self-assessment will aid you greatly in streamlining your thought process when it comes to making the best possible choices for your life.

#### 3. Get in Alignment.

When you have taken full stock and have sufficient knowledge of self, another helpful action in making better life choices is to get into proper alignment. This means using conscious effort to balance all aspects of your body, mind and spirit to move in synchronous motion toward your goals. If these aspects are not in alignment, the inner conflict that ensues will contribute to decision making that is not in sync with your core desires. To achieve this goal, remove all forms of blockage including: limiting beliefs, baggage, negative people and bad habits. Next, boost positive energy flow into your reality by matching up your values with your actions.

By putting these three steps into routine practice, better choice becomes an inherent quality of your being. And once you have a firm understanding of how to make better choices, you may also soon begin to desire to take your awareness a step further. Start off small by becoming fully aware of nature. Through new eyes

and new understanding take notice of the moon, the stars, the sun, the ocean and the trees in all of their vastness. Try to fathom nature’s intricate network of connectivity. Witness your own closeness to it all and in the moment become grateful.

Free will and change are always readily available to us and are granted through choice. Evolved awareness helps us to make the best choices for our overall happiness. The ability to make better choices is all up to you.



Carleen Moscati is the founder of Legacy Lifetime. She is a Certified Life Purpose and Holistic Life Coach/Fulfilled Living Expert. Carleen also is the author of the book Brazenly Become Your Greatest Self: How to Build Your Legacy to Live Healthy, Wealthy, Balanced & Fulfilled. Her mission is to help success seekers to clarify their purpose, navigate major life obstacles and achieve the conscious lifestyle that they desire. For more information, visit [legacylifetime.com/blog/](http://legacylifetime.com/blog/).

# Make Flax Seed Part of Your Daily Grind



by Sue Musial Bigelow

Flaxseed: make it the next addition to your grocery list! That little golden or brown shell of a seed is holding a powerhouse of nutrition. It's a health food that has been recognized for thousands of years and dates back to ancient Greece and Hippocrates, who understood that food is medicine.

Flaxseed is also known as linseed, and studies have shown that it helps fight heart disease, diabetes, strokes and certain types of cancers. Flaxseed can also help improve digestion and your complexion, lower cholesterol, balance hormones, reduce sugar cravings and enhance weight loss, among many other benefits! Let's crack open the shell and look what's inside.

### Nutritional Composition

One Tablespoon of freshly ground flax contains:

37.38 Calories

7% Water

1.3 g Protein

2 g Carbs (0.1 g Sugar, 1.9 g Fiber)

3 g Fat

0.26 g Saturated

0.53 g Monounsaturated

2.01 g Polyunsaturated

Omega-3 1.6 g

Omega-6 0.41 g

Flaxseed is also a good source of vitamins B1 and B6, manganese, magnesium, and phosphorus, selenium, as well as iron, potassium, copper and zinc.

### The Major League Players

Flaxseed is a home run hitter in any diet. Here are the three major league players going to bat for you in flaxseed and

what makes them outstanding in the field of nutrition:

**Omega-3 essential fatty acid:** Flaxseed is one of the richest plant-based sources of heart-healthy omega-3 fatty acid, alpha-linolenic acid (ALA), one of 3 types. Since we don't produce these fats ourselves, it is necessary to consume them through our diet. Omega-3 fats are a vital part of cell membranes throughout the body and affect the function of the cell receptors in these membranes. They are in the forefront for making hormones that regulate blood clotting, contraction and relaxation of artery walls, and inflammation. These fats also adhere to receptors in cells that control genetic function. The human body likes to burn ALA for energy.

**Lignans:** This is a class of plant compounds called phytoestrogens that have both antioxidant and plant estrogen qualities. The major lignan found in flaxseed is known as secoisolariciresinol diglucoside. It is metabolized into enterolactone and enterodiol within our bodies, which can affect many of our tissues, including those in the reproductive and cardiovascular systems. Flaxseed is the richest vegetable source of lignans and has up to 800 times more than any other plant foods. Flaxseed also has been shown to help the body detoxify and reduce the risk of colon cancer.

**Fiber:** Flaxseed contains both soluble and insoluble fiber. This strong fiber content, including mucilaginous fiber, helps to slow gastric emptying and can improve intestinal absorption of nutrients. Flaxseed fiber also helps to stabilize the movement of food through the gastrointestinal system. The soluble fiber binds to bile acids such as oxidized cholesterol and toxic hormone metabolites and helps to pull them out of the body.



## Prevention and Healing

**Breast cancer:** Studies have shown flaxseed to prevent breast cancer and slow the growth of breast tumors. Women who eat flaxseed may see a rise in the levels of endostatin in their breasts. Endostatin is a protein produced by your body to help starve tumors of their blood supply. Flaxseed also has been shown to minimize menopausal syndrome symptoms by reducing hot flashes and their intensity.

**Prostate enlargement and cancer:** Prostate gland enlargement is a common condition as men get older, affecting half of the male population by their 50s and 80 percent by their 80s. Also called benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH), prostate gland enlargement can cause annoying urinary symptoms. Research has shown that flaxseed can be used to treat BPH. Consuming 3 tablespoons a day can give the same relief as some commonly prescribed drugs.

Another study shows that men consuming flaxseed had a slower prostate tumor growth rate. Flaxseed may affect how the tumor cells clump together and grip onto other cells. The lignans in the flaxseed help with choking off the tumor's blood supply and therefore keeping it from spreading.

**Heart disease:** Our Omega-6 to Omega-3 ratio should be at a level of 2:1 to promote a cardio protective effect. Sources of plant-derived omega-3 fatty acids such as flaxseed, aid in the dietary quest to keep that ratio low. Therefore, increased consumption of food sources that provide omega-3 fatty acids are beneficial and help lower your risk of cardiovascular disease. Omega-3 fats also lower blood pressure and heart rate, and improve blood vessel function.

Several studies have been done looking at the affects of flaxseed in the daily diet. One study compared the affects of dietary flaxseed with cholesterol-lowering statin therapy in people with a high total cholesterol level (more than 240 mg/dL). Total cholesterol, LDL levels and triglycerides all showed improvement with the flaxseed-eating group that was comparable to those taking statin drugs. Other studies have shown that dietary flaxseed can slow the progression of atherosclerotic plaques. However, the suppression of atherosclerosis by flaxseed is the result of its lignan content and not the result of ALA content.

**Strokes:** By reducing the formation of atherosclerotic plaques you also reduce the risk of plaque breaking off to form a clot, thus, blocking a vessel that could cause a stroke. Consuming omega-3 fatty acid from flaxseed helps lower blood pressure and the inflammatory process, which decreases the risk of vessel damage and potential rupture.

**Beautiful complexion:** The omega-3, ALA, fats in flaxseed improves the skin and hair by supplying the body with essential fatty acids and B vitamins that can help reduce dryness. It also can improve symptoms of acne, eczema and rosacea. A 2010 study discovered that the addition of flaxseed oil to your diet can reduce skin sensitivity and improves skin barrier function and condition. Flaxseed also has been helpful in eye health by reducing symptoms with dry eye syndrome.

**Weight loss:** Flaxseed is a great dietary addition when trying to lose weight. The fiber will help the body to feel fuller faster. It also slows digestion, which prevents glucose from spik-

## Recipes

### Savory Morning Oatmeal

1/3 cup old fashion organic oats  
1/3 cup almond or cashew milk  
1/3 cup water  
1 swirl of liquid aminos  
1 tbsp whole flaxseeds, freshly ground  
1 tbsp hemp seed hearts  
1 tbsp chia seeds  
Small amount of almond slivers, pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds, walnut pieces  
1/8 tsp turmeric  
2-4 grinds of black pepper  
1 brazil nut  
1 small piece of dulse seaweed

In a microwave safe bowl add the oatmeal, nut milk, water and one swirl around the bowl with the liquid aminos. Microwave for 1.5 minutes at high power, then 3 minutes at a reduced power level. This keeps it from overflowing in the bowl. While this is cooking, grind your flaxseeds. Add the remaining ingredients to the ground flax and add it to oatmeal when it is finished cooking and mix. Add more nut milk to desired consistency and more or less aminos to taste.

This oatmeal is packed with protein, fiber and omega-3 fatty acids, vitamins and minerals. The turmeric and pepper add a small bit of anti-inflammatory seasoning; the Brazil nut is for daily selenium and the seaweed for iodine. You can add a handful of baby greens if you want to get some greens in here or make the following smoothie to accompany your breakfast or a mid morning snack.

### Simple Green Smoothie

¾ cup nut milk (use vanilla if you like it sweeter)  
½ pineapple juice  
1 ripe banana, peeled  
1 tbsp flaxseed  
4 cups fresh spinach  
1 cup mango (fresh or frozen)

Place all ingredients in a high-speed mixer and blend for 30 seconds to a minute.

ing the blood sugar. Excess sugar is stored as fat, so balancing the blood sugar helps you lose weight. High blood sugar triggers the release of insulin, which signals the body to cease breaking down stored fat, reducing the excess burn-off.

### Tips on Buying and Using Flaxseed

Buy flaxseed whole because the whole food is always better than any of its extracted components. However, when eaten whole flaxseed's hard protective shell keeps it from being digested, and most seeds will pass through the body without health benefits. Therefore, it's time to add this little seed to your daily grind. Small electric coffee grinders work well, and so do small high-speed blenders with a grinding blade. Once ground, use the seeds immediately or shortly after. If there is a delay in the consumption, refrigerate the ground product to preserve its nutrients, but use within 24 hours for best bioavailability.

Flaxseed can be purchased whole as golden or brown seeds. They both have about equivalent nutritional breakdown so it becomes a matter of personal preference and availability. They store well in a cool dark place but don't need refrigeration. Flax meal, sometimes called milled or ground, is void of most of the beneficial oils. It does work well as an egg replacement and for increasing dietary fiber in meals or baked goods. Flaxseed oils are often void of the lignans unless stated on the package that it contains them.

Find ways to incorporate flaxseed into your daily routine. It works well mixed into oatmeal, smoothies and yogurt. Add flax-

seed to pancakes and waffles. Disguise it in sauces, gravies and soups. Sprinkle it over vegetables or fruit. Use your imagination, but start grinding!



*Susan Musial Bigelow is vice president of Health Coach Connect and a Licensed Respiratory Care Practitioner with a passion for organic gardening. She believes good health starts in the kitchen. Sue earned her Bachelor's of Animal Science from the University of Massachusetts and worked for many years in the veterinary and pet industries with a focus on animal nutrition, where she noticed that animals' skin and ear infections often could be cured with dietary changes. Throughout her journey, Sue continued to educate herself regarding health, wellness and nutrition, spirituality and lifestyle improvements, realizing all issues have a root cause. Going through her own personal and career transformation, Sue earned a degree in Respiratory Therapy and later received her Masters of Science in Administration from Saint Michael's College. After witnessing too many patients dying of preventable chronic disease, she was motivated to pursue a certificate as an Integrative Nutrition Health Coach. Her passion embraces animals, horseback riding, kayaking, cooking, and walks in the wilderness. Visit Health Coach Connect at [www.healthcoachconnect.com](http://www.healthcoachconnect.com).*

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# FIRST, DO NO STRESS

By Gregg Sanderson

"Why are you losing your hair?"  
"What do you worry about?"

"Because I worry."  
"Losing my hair."

That, dear friends, is a metaphor. Of course we all don't worry about losing our hair, but how many other things in life cause stress to make us sick?

I have a friend who stresses over his cholesterol numbers and takes a weekly count. Another friend requires a special diet, and carries her own food with her. I love to take her to lunch. Talk about a cheap date!

But I digress.

As some authorities will tell us, stress is a major cause of poor health. Also, a big cause of stress is poor health. Many therapies and doctors attack the poor health without doing anything about the stress. "Watch your diet, take a pill, and if we have to we'll cut you open...And leave a message with my service in the morning."

I have a different diagnosis. I suggest we get rid of the stress first, then see what's left. In the world of **Stimulus >NEED > Response**, We define stress as feeling anything that isn't love—anger, fear, hurt, frustration, embarrassment, worry, guilt—you get the idea.

As we grew up, our childhood influences, whatever they were, had two things in common. We had to be right, and we had to please "others." I never got a reward for being wrong, and others never got graded on, "Works and plays well with Gregg." That's the RACE Trap, and our other instructive acronym. It stands for **R**ighteousness and **A**pproval **C**omplicate **E**verything.

Here's another digression for newcomers to the world of Stimulus >NEED > Response. BS stands for Belief System, which filters your perceptions in the creative process. The RACE Trap is the BS that gets in the way of your happiness and causes stress. All that yucky stuff is the result of your BS caught in the RACE Trap.

(That's it for background. If you want more, buy my book, *Spirit With A Smile*. In fact, if even you don't want more, buy my book anyhow. It's the right thing to do, and I'll be pleased.)

If your BS is in the RACE Trap, you need a metaphorical pooper scooper in the form of a Belief System that lets you learn and express rather than defend and kowtow. The first step to getting free is to recognize when you're in the trap. All that takes is to recognize what you're feeling.

If you're uncomfortable because somebody saw you, you're in the

approval section. You're there when you feel embarrassment, humiliation, stage fright or worry, too. You're there even if you hesitate to wear that loud shirt you like so much, or if you get frustrated because somebody won't do what you want them to.

Anger is a sure clue that you're caught in the righteousness cage, and resentment is another clue when you blame somebody who has "done you wrong." As a matter of fact, if the concept of "wrong" comes to mind, you're caught in your need to be right.

Beneath it all is the judgment that something is not OK, and the fear that it might be you.

Wow, talk about a belief system that lives up to its abbreviation! Look, you're already OK, and as an expression of the Divine, you can't be otherwise. The problem is you can still believe you aren't OK, and that's where stress comes in.

"But there are some things that really are not OK and just plain wrong. What about them?"

That's a fair question. That may be so, but you don't have to embrace them...All you have to do is **feel** OK about them, practice acceptance and, from that non-stressful position, do whatever you want to do.

How do you get to that position? There are many ways. We'll discuss some of them in next month's column. Stay tuned.



*Gregg Sanderson is author of Spirit With A Smile, The World According To BOB. He is a licensed practitioner in the Centers for Spiritual Living, and a Certified Trainer for Infinite Possibilities. His earlier books were, What Ever Happened To Happily Ever After? and Split Happens—Easing The Pain Of Divorce. His latest project is the New Thought Global Network, where subscribers can enjoy the best in New Thought presentations from anywhere at any time. You can see it at [www.newthoughtglobal.org](http://www.newthoughtglobal.org).*

**SPIRIT** with a smile  
with Gregg Sanderson





By Dr. Marty Finkelstein

Stress is the body's response to any physical or emotional stimulus, and it may be either harmful or beneficial depending on the type, intensity, and how the person perceives the stress.

Hans Selye, M.D., identified three stages of stress:

- 1) the alarm stage
- 2) the resistance stage
- 3) the exhaustion stage

When the alarm stage is in motion, the sympathetic nervous system is stimulated. The body then reacts to acute stress by releasing hormones produced by the adrenal glands, which mobilize the body to meet and overcome the stress. If the body-mind response is unable to alleviate this stress response, the body will fall into the resistance phase as it tries to adapt to the situation. This is best described as an endless battle; if proper health is not balanced the body continues to weaken, as the nervous system and the hormonal system are depleted attempting to cope as best as possible. The exhaustion phase occurs when the body's energy levels are depleting, similar to driving a car when the fuel tank is almost empty. The body continues to push into deeper levels of exhaustion, where illness and disease become the norm.

Most of us are not aware of how our daily stresses affect our health, other than just using the catch phrase, "I'm stressed out." But stress is real, and its impact on the body can be measured. In the initial alarm phase, for example, blood sugars will rise and blood pressure will increase if we do not have healthy strategies to maintain balance and create healing in our lives. Consider how much more relaxed you feel after a chiropractic treatment or massage; what you may not realize afterward is that it just lowered your blood sugar levels and your blood pressure and balanced the adrenal glands, as well as restored the integrity to the neuro-muscular system of your body.

Years ago, I had a patient come to see me who had been through traumatic heart surgery six months earlier. Though he complained of his knees and back hurting, I decided to take his blood pressure. It was 180/110, which is dangerously high. After I adjusted his nervous system, I took his blood pressure again and it read 145/95. After that visit he began coming to the office not just for his back pain, but for blood pressure alignment. For more than 30 years, I have been teaching people strategies for well-being, to prevent disease, and to age with grace. All we have is this one body; if we wear it out, where are we going to live?

But don't just take my word for it. Try these simple ways to reduce stress and see and feel the results for yourself:

- Stretch everyday
- Walk in nature
- Practice slow deep breathing
- Engage in prayer and/or meditation
- Listen to relaxing music or music that shifts your energy into a higher frequency
- Schedule and show up for a massage, chiropractic treatment, or other body-mind work to restore neurological balance
- Eat a healthy meal
- Remind yourself of the blessings in your life
- Undertake a creative project
- Share your love with a friend or family member

*Dr. Marty Finkelstein has been a holistic chiropractor since 1980. He has written several books, including A Life of Wellness, If Relationships were like Sports, Men Would at Least Know the Score, and Divorce: An Uncommon Love Story. He also leads healing relationship workshops called, "Have the Relationships You Desire" and is motivational speaker and a song writer. For more information, visit [www.mydecaturchiropractor.com](http://www.mydecaturchiropractor.com) or email [drmart3@yahoo.com](mailto:drmart3@yahoo.com).*

*As we learn to become healthier, it is evident that stress in life does not disappear—but we get better at turning lemons into lemonade.*



# Intentions & Affirmations

## Part 1

### How to “Pump Up” Effectiveness

by Kumari

There is fascinating research that our DNA can be influenced and reprogrammed by the frequency of words. Interestingly, our genetic code follows the same structure as human language. This research claims to directly or indirectly explain phenomena such as clairvoyance, intuition, spontaneous and remote healing, the effectiveness of affirmations and much more.

“Esoteric and spiritual teachers have known for ages that **our body is programmable by language, words and thought**. This has now been scientifically proven and explained. Of course the *frequency has to be correct*. And this is why not everybody is equally successful or can do it with the same strength.” (by Grazyna Fosar and Franz Bludorf at [www.soul-sofdistortion.nl](http://www.soul-sofdistortion.nl))

When teaching any of my energy healing or intuitive development seminars, I emphasize the importance of working with the mind in the form of language and intentions to support making and sustaining a more lasting shift.

However, I didn’t always have great results myself when I started this practice. For years, I read every prosperity and affirmation book available. I would try things for a while but felt awkward, and they often didn’t seem to work. Over the years, I have learned some refinements that have made all the difference. Today, I have great success using intentions and so do my clients. So I want to share the following tips to pump up your own intentions:

#### 1. State things in the positive.

Many years ago most of my resolutions were centered on what I *wasn’t* going to do any more or *didn’t* want in my life; in other words—negative. We all know how well that works.

Even with animals it is much more helpful when we focus on what it is we do want. I often use the example of telling a dog to stop chasing cars. What is the dominant theme and im-

age here? *Chasing* cars. The “stop” gets lost. We often send the opposite message and wonder why things aren’t working. If you state that you want the dog to sit calmly on the curb, then you are sending the action and image you do want and are much more likely to get the desired results.

#### 2. State things in the present.

Often I hear people say “I want to be...” It is much more powerful to create from the present moment. “I am” or “I have” or “I intend that I am” work in the NOW moment—not in some future time that never arrives.

#### 3. Add pictures and images.

This is where the fun begins. Many people do vision boards where they cut out pictures of the things they want in their life, and refer to it daily to help bring those things into the physical realm. When you add a picture of what it is you desire to create, it really pumps up the manifesting process.

Animals often are helped when we add pictures to what we are trying to communicate. This happens naturally when dealing with an object or action because our language has mutually agreed meanings. However, if I am dealing with an abstract topic, like the time I am returning, I will consciously add pictures to it (e.g. three sunsets or three dinners to signify three days).

The same is true when we are trying to manifest a situation we have never experienced before...like being a millionaire. This is where adding detailed pictures of what it would *mean to us* to be wealthy: where would we live, what type of housing, our daily routine, etc. will really enhance manifesting. We all have different ideas of what would make us happy so it helps to be as clear as possible.

#### 4. Add the feeling of the desired outcome.

Thoughts are electric and emotions are magnetic. Just using the thought process is only half the manifesting process. You must keep the thought long enough for you to step into the



idea or concept fully, with all your senses. The *feeling* of freedom and joy that will come from having that new house or more money is what really becomes the magnet for the new experience.

Call in the frequency or vibration or resonance of the intention—if you intend to be happy, take a few moments to *totally feel it in your body*. If you can't get there directly, use a memory of being happy just long enough until you can remember the feeling, and bring the feeling forward into the present. Eventually you will carve out a new neural pathway in your brain that allows you to connect with the “happy” feeling more easily.

### 5. Take aligned action.

Once you have stated your intentions clearly and positively with great enthusiasm, you then need to take aligned action and move forward in the direction of your dreams.

*“Go confidently in the direction of your dreams! Live the life you’ve imagined.”*

*—Henry David Thoreau*

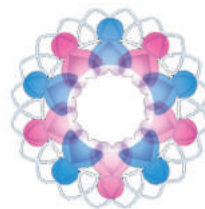
Years ago, when I was just starting out and had very few Reiki clients, though I knew it was my path, the reality of having a practice that supported me financially was quite dim. This is the place most people quit their dreams. So I decided I must spend time every day staying in the Reiki energy in some form in order to take aligned action. Whether I was giving myself Reiki, or taking care of a loved one in need of healing, or putting up flyers, or getting a booth at a health fair, I would dedicate time each and every day to being proactive and doing what I now would call, “Build it and they will come.”

Ask yourself: What steps can you take right now, today, to get a new client, create a workshop, offer your services to someone in exchange for referrals, take time for self-care and reflection to restore and reenergize yourself and move confidently toward your dreams?

*Stay tuned. Next month we will look at how to deal with competing intentions.*



Kumari is an internationally acclaimed intuitive coach, master healer, best-selling author, spiritual evolutionary, and animal mystic. Her deepest joy is empowering others to unwrap their innate intuitive, manifesting, and healing gifts. Kumari hosted “Co-Creation Activations” radio show on World Puja Network and the Internet TV program “How to Heal Anything Live.” She is coauthor of the best-selling book *Empowering Transformations for Women* and just released her new eBook *Animal Communication Magic & Miracles: 13 Keys to Deepen Your Bond with Your Pets, Improve Health & Change Behavior Immediately*. Kumari is a catalyst for spiritual evolution. Through energy alchemy and unveiling the human/animal spiritual interconnectedness, she has helped thousands around the globe experience bliss, our true divinity and Oneness. For more information visit [www.kumarihealing.com](http://www.kumarihealing.com).



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*Kumari is an internationally recognized intuitive coach and master healer, best-selling author and animal mystic.*





By Natalie Rivera

So, what do you want? If you're like most people, this is surprisingly difficult to answer. Most people are so inundated with messages from their parents, peers, and society of what they "should" want that their true desires are drowned out. Plus, even if they've held dreams and desires in the past, their life experiences have led them to believe that what they want is not possible, and so they stop allowing themselves to want it. They tell themselves "I can't have that" and it hurts to want something they cannot have, and so they stop thinking about it. They give it up. The settle.

## Forgotten Dreams

*The good news is that dreams can never die—  
deep down you know what you want.*

It tugs at you from within, but you may be so used to ignoring it that you no longer notice. Below are 2 questions to help you uncover dreams that may have been buried beneath the surface.

1. **What do you REALLY want?** Answer this without allowing other people's opinions or beliefs limit you. Answer this without thinking about limitations—imagine for a moment that money is not an issue and that whatever that is currently blocking you is magically taken care of.

2. **What are things you wanted, desired or dreamed about that at some point you decided you could NOT have and so stopped wanting them?** This could have been in childhood or adulthood. You may not have allowed yourself to think about these desires in a long time. For each one, ask yourself if this is something that you STILL want. If not, cross it out and let it go. Circle any desires that you feel a strong emotional reaction to when you think about them.

## What You Do NOT Want?

*For many people it's easier to identify what  
they do NOT want than what they DO want.*

When asked what they want, many people respond "not this!" So, to start, simply make a list of the things you know for sure you do NOT want in your life. These can be things that USED to be in your life that you never want to experience again. They can be things CURRENTLY in your life that you would like to stop. They can be things you are simply certain you never want in your FUTURE.

Once you know what you do NOT want, it will help you identify what you DO want. Ask yourself, "What is the opposite of what I don't want?" or "If I know I do NOT want \_\_\_\_\_, then it means that I do want \_\_\_\_\_."



## Getting Specific and Going Deep

Now that you know what you don't want, and therefore what you want, and you've unearthed some forgotten dreams, it's time to go deep and identify the specifics of what you want in multiple areas of your life.

Take out a piece of paper and divide it into 3 columns. In the left column, write down areas of life that are important to you, such as: home, relationship, family, career, leisure, money, health, etc. In the center column, write what you DO NOT want. Then, in the last column, write what you DO want.

### "Yes, I want more of this!"

Once you begin asking yourself about what you want, you'll find yourself noticing more and more things that make you think, "yes, I want this!" It's okay if you're still not sure what you want. Allow your desire to grow over time. Throughout your day, simply notice whether you like or dislike certain things, people, situations or experiences.

Say, "Yes, I want more of this!" to the things you like.

Say, "No, thank you." to the things you do not like. Saying "thank you" acknowledges that you appreciate the ability to identify what you don't want because it helps you know more clearly what you DO want.

### Digging Deeper into "Why"

Now we're going to ask you to dig deeper into the answers you provided in the "why" column. This is important because only if you have a **big enough reason** will you be committed to creating lasting change. And, the only way your reason to change your life will be big enough is if you understand your core reasons. Below is an example that will help illustrate the point.

A student in one of our classes once told us, "I can't wait to go home and start using these efficiency techniques to make my work more effective and productive" And so we asked, "Well, why do you want to be more productive?" The student said that it would help her to get a promotion at work. We asked her why she would want a promotion and she said "So I can get a raise." So we asked again, "Why do you want a raise" and she said "Because I need the money to buy a larger home". So we asked "Why?" and she says because I want my mother and sister to move in with me". "Why?" "Because it has been our dream to own a big house together and live together as a family."

To which we responded, "Good, NOW you have identified what you really want. It's a large house with your family living with you. You don't really want to be more efficient. What you want is the experience of having your family living with you."

## Look at the reasons you wrote for "why" and ask yourself the following questions:

- Why does this matter to you?
- Why?
- How would it make you feel?
- What would happen if I didn't have, do, or be this?
- Why does that matter?
- Why?
- Keep probing and asking yourself until you get to the core of the issue.

In some cases you will find that your deeper motive is a specific desire, like in the example above. However, often the core motivation beneath your desire is actually an emotional state that you wish to experience. In fact, everything we want is because we believe it will make us *feel* the way we desire: good, or at least *better*.

### Get Other People Out Of Your Head

Lastly, consider if any of the things you "want" are truly only because you think you "should" want them. It's easy to unknowingly adopt other people's dreams. Get other people's voices and beliefs out of your head... then take a final look at your desires and confirm that this is TRULY what you want.



Natalie Rivera is a firestarter, speaker and entrepreneur. She is passionate about empowering others to GET REAL and live authentically. After a decade of living a life that wasn't hers and developing Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, Natalie let go of everything and completely transformed. Through her journey to healing she re-discovered her true self and greater purpose—to inspire others to transform their lives. Natalie "retired" from the rat race at 24, put herself through school as a freelance designer, created a non-profit teen center, and later created Transformation Services, Inc., which offers motivational speaking, curriculum development, life coaching, event management, and publishing. She is also the Publisher of Transformation Magazine. Visit [www.ignitelife.me](http://www.ignitelife.me).

Transformation  
with Natalie Rivera





# CHECKOUT TIME

## Best Practices for Evaluating e-Commerce Shopping Carts

By Lisa Cedrone

When you are ready to get down to business and start building your e-commerce website, one of the biggest and most important considerations is which online shopping cart solution to use. No doubt, today's Internet buyers expect to interact with a seamless shopping interface that quickly and efficiently manages the entire customer experience—from viewing products and/or services to cart consolidation to payment—so you need to *be sure* to put in research time on the frontend to determine the correct application for your product and/or service and your tech skillset.

"If you want to operate an attractive, modern, online storefront on which people can shop day or night, you really are better off using full-featured shopping cart software instead of trying to glue all the e-commerce parts together on your own," advised Fahmida Y. Rashid in the "The Best eCommerce Software," a *PCmag.com* article published in May 2015.<sup>1</sup> "Running a cart streamlines the relationship between buyers and sellers by handling multiple payment methods, collecting tax and calculating shipping costs. A straightforward shopping experience means buyers get the product faster, too, and a happy customer is just good business."

### But Where to Begin?

There are many different considerations when selecting the right e-commerce shopping cart for your business, and a good first step according to experts is to narrow down the playing field by making a list of "must-have" features. Eliminate those carts that don't fit the bill and develop a short list of prospects. Then dig deeper into a comparative analysis that includes:

#### Transaction Fees/Cost

While most carts offer tiered pricing based on transactions or bandwidth, you also need to consider all the transaction fees that are associated with each cart to get a total picture of

costs. For example, both the shopping cart application (such as Shopify or YoKart) and the payment gateway (such as PayPal) may charge a transaction fee, which can add a significant hike to the final cost of a product sold online.

#### Important Features

Some carts are more appropriate for physical products, while others are better designed for booking services or digital products/downloads. Moreover, if you are migrating from an existing e-commerce platform, you need a cart that has tools to manage that process.<sup>1</sup> Other features to evaluate can include Search Engine Optimization (SEO) capability, analytics, SSL Certificate (Secure Sockets Layer, a global standard security technology that enables encrypted communication between a web browser and a web server), email marketing and/or social media integration, the product database, the ability to duplicate an item and modify it for similar products, customer support programs (email, chat, forums and/or phone), drag-and-drop editing, returns and refund processing, the ability to offer discounts, a blog, multiple templates, etc. It can be overwhelming but, luckily, there are many comparative reviews online at sites including Merchant Maverick, *PCmag.com* and *Inc.* (see box), and they can help you to determine a list of relevant features for your business needs.<sup>1,2</sup>

#### Frontend and Backend Ease of Use

If setting up your store is a hair-pulling experience, chances are you will not be successful. Whichever e-commerce cart platform you chose, you must be comfortable with and capable of uploading product information and photos and customizing the interface through templates or other options offered with the system. Luckily, many of the most popular hosted shopping carts offer free trials so you can determine if your tech skills will be sufficient to get the ball rolling. On the other end of the spectrum, robust self-hosted carts (meaning a cart runs on your



own server, such as Magento) are not designed for beginners or small companies, so make sure you have the proper programming skills and/or support if you plan to go this route. In between are self-hosted carts like WooCommerce, a WordPress Plug-in, which might be more appropriate for a small startup business with programming resources.

On the frontend, you also want to ensure that customers can easily navigate your store and have a positive experience while searching through your products. Review template mock-ups/demos on provider's websites and visit stores created with different carts to determine which ones are user friendly and provide the look and options that will best showcase your products and/or services and meld with your core customers' average level of tech savvy.

## Finding the Right Cart: The BhakTee Life

For this series of articles, I have been using a case study for The BhakTee Life ([www.bhaktee.com](http://www.bhaktee.com)), a spiritual tee shirt company I have helped to launch. For this brand, we need a shopping cart that works well for basic (not high-fashion) apparel. The BhakTee Life is a purveyor of high-quality tee shirts with two lines, one that features spiritual sayings and artwork and another with humorous spiritual designs.

### The initial list of "must-haves" for this e-commerce site include:

- Product database that will allow for search categories (men's, women's, spiritual line, humor line, etc.)
- Blog
- Secure payment capability
- SEO capability
- Phone support
- Ease of use on backend for building product database and setting up/posting to blog; users are not coders and one has very limited computer skills
- Sophisticated look and "feel" that are on par with big companies selling online

- Hosted cart to ensure security; it was determined a Wordpress-compatible, self-hosted cart might be too difficult to install and maintain and Wordpress has had many hacking issues in recent years, which might pose data security issues.
- Affordable fees: tee shirts are a cost-competitive category, but the production cost of this line is high because a drop-shipping model with digital printing on demand is used.
- Social media integration (The BhakTee Life will be promoting on facebook and email and using the platform to announce new tee shirt designs). Like many startups, the company has minimal marketing resources for Google AdWords and other paid services, so we need affordable ways to get the word out.

After researching online and reading reviews and "Top 10" lists of different shopping cart platforms, three were selected for an in-depth comparison: **Shopify**, **Squarespace** and **Etsy**. Shopify made the list because over the past two to three years it consistently has ranked at the top of reviews as either No. 1 or 2, and the cart is effective for small businesses. Squarespace was selected because I personally have experience with the platform and find it easy to use for creating sophisticated and attractive sites. Esty also was evaluated because it offers integration into a full marketplace of sellers who offer handcrafted items and the ability to leverage the power of the marketplace to market and sell. Also, The BhakTee Life's products would qualify for an Etsy store, according to research. Below is a chart comparison of "must-have" features.

### SHOPIFY:

#### Pros

- More than 100 templates.
- Outstanding online security.
- Many tools and features; consistently noted that users can create a beautiful and professional looking web store quickly.
- Large [App Store](#) with more than 1,500 different

### Inc. Magazine's Top 5 Shopping Cart Platforms for 2017

1. Shopify
2. BigCommerce
3. Magento
4. YoKart
5. Big Cartel

Check out the full article by Bill Carmody at Inc. magazine online at <https://www.inc.com/bill-carmody/top-5-ecommerce-platforms-for-2017.html>.

Must-Have Features for The BhakTee Life	Shopify Basic	Squarespace Commerce	Etsy
Product Database	X	X	
Blog	X	X	
Phone Support	X	X	
Professional Aesthetics	X	X	
Hosted Service	X	X	X
Built-in SEO Capabilities	X	X	
Security/Encryption	X	X	X
Social Media Integration	X	X	
Price	\$29 per month	\$26 per month	.20 cents per listing (4 months)
Low Service Fees	2.9 % + .30 cents processing fee and no bandwidth fees	2.9 % + .30 cents processing fee and no bandwidth fees	3.5% transaction fee and 3% + .25 cents processing fee

Apps (free and paid). The tools include accounting, customer service, inventory management, marketing, reporting, shipping, social media, fulfillment, etc.<sup>7</sup>

- Can sell both physical and digital products.
- No setup fees and no contracts. Upgrade to another plan as needed. No bandwidth fees.
- 24/7 Phone and email support.
- No transaction fees using Shopify payments (processing fee is 2.9% plus .30 cents per transaction).
- Two staff accounts offered but can upgrade later if needed.
- Shopify Lite for \$9 per month can allow buttons on Squarespace and to sell via social media.
- For SEO, Shopify creates 100 percent crawlable, clean code. The platform allows custom title tags, and meta descriptions (even on collections), in addition to other essentials like Google Search Console, sitemaps and the prevention of duplicate content.<sup>6</sup>
- Free Chimpified App to integrate to Mailchimp.
- Google Merchant integration through plugin.

#### Cons

- Need to upgrade to Shopify Plus to sell across social media. However, this upgrade allows you to sell on other channels, too (Amazon, eBay).
- Company has no experience with platform.
- Shopify, like other hosted platforms, is consistently more expensive month-to-month than a self-hosted store. However, self-hosted stores, such as WordPress with WooCommerce, tend to have expensive development needs.<sup>6</sup>
- Shopify has a slightly steeper learning curve than other hosted shopping carts.<sup>6</sup>
- The initial setup process can be challenging.
- Shopify also uses its own coding language called “Liquid,” which makes it necessary to use this language to modify templates.

## SQUARESPACE

#### Pros

- I have built websites on Squarespace and I am proficient with the platform.
- Feature-rich, fully integrated e-commerce/business solution with professional, ecommerce-oriented design templates.<sup>8</sup>
- Easy drag-and-drop page building tools.
- Good control over product variants such as size, color, etc., so customers can pick and choose different variations of products.
- Inventory management is centralized with a “Content Manager” interface, so you can easily manage your inventory across the entire store by stock level, price or title.
- Includes coupon creation and promotions.
- Calculates different shipping options, such as flat rate and FedEx.
- Email confirmations for customers.
- Full, seamless integration with Stripe and PayPal for payments.
- Easy integration with MailChimp; customers can automatically sign up for a newsletter.

- Sales orders can be easily exported in CSV format.
- Full social media integration with the online store. This allows you to easily share store news and product updates.<sup>8</sup>
- Some CSS and HTML can be used to modify templates; no proprietary language.
- SEO and marketing functions are impressive. You can edit page titles, meta descriptions, etc.
- Access to a comprehensive commerce analytics tool to monitor the online store. You can view total sales across the entire store, or filter data by specific products to see how each product is performing. This gives valuable data on which products are doing better, and so you can adjust your marketing strategy accordingly.<sup>8</sup>
- ShipStation and Xero Accounting Integration.
- There is a simple, straightforward pricing structure with two e-commerce tiers. The higher the plan, the more ecommerce features are made available, with fewer limitations.

#### Cons

- Squarespace only integrates with Stripe, PayPal and Apple Pay.
- Not as many features/apps as Shopify.
- Themes are beautiful, but might not be totally functional for all products.
- A relative newcomer to the ecommerce space, although the content management system component of the platform is well established and very functional.
- Not as well suited for large stores (may limit growth potential). Squarespace’s feature list is for merchants looking to sell only couple products within the United States, who do not need a solution that is totally scalable.<sup>9</sup>
- Custom domains not purchased through Squarespace are difficult to connect.
- Limited number of templates compared to Shopify, and not many of those available are geared to ecommerce.
- Telephoning 24/7 support can sometimes take a while to speak to someone, but the support personnel are very good. They do not outsource support to India.<sup>9</sup>
- Not good for selling outside of the United States.
- No Google Merchant Integration without a third-party solution such as Feedonomics.com.

## ETSY

#### Pros

- A fast and easy way to start selling through an established community. In less than 30 minutes, you can have products listed and selling on the platform.
- Millions of unique visitors come to the site every month. “These are people that generally want to buy and if your store is live, they might just want to buy from you.”<sup>11</sup>
- Etsy is a collaborative community, and there is a lot of shared information online to help your store succeed.
- The algorithms on Etsy are designed to help drive business to new stores.
- Product listings on Etsy are .20 cents each and they are active for four months, or until the product sells out.
- You can sell wholesale on Etsy. If you have a wholesale store, there are tools available to help manage the business. There are 20,000 vetted retailers participating.



- Etsy can be integrated with QuickBooks. (Monthly fees apply.)
- The Etsy platform offers feedback and reviews, like Amazon.com.

## Cons

- The Etsy marketplace is saturated, which can make it very difficult to establish a brand.
- An Etsy store must be linked to a website, and it detracts from the seamless integration and professionalism of Shopify and Squarespace. It looks more “amateur.”
- Piracy is an issue on Etsy. Images and descriptions are often “stolen” from sites and reused by others.<sup>11</sup>
- Etsy offers limited branding opportunities. “Etsy typically allows a store to have their own banner and their listing images. Outside of that, pretty much everything is standardized by the platform and that can create a look some sellers may not necessarily like.”<sup>11</sup>
- No SEO capabilities. Also, the Etsy search engine conflicts with Google, which creates a difficult SEO environment.
- Price wars are common. New stores often try to steal business from established stores by offering lower prices and taking a lower margin. It can be very difficult to remain competitive on the Etsy platform.
- Although the .20 cents per listing is appealing, Etsy’s 3.5% percent transaction can put a big dent in profits.
- No ability to create a seamless, professional website with an integrated shopping cart.
- Etsy can shut down a store at any time if it believes there has been a violation of its policies.
- No live chat support. Phone support must be “requested.” It is not available 24/7 on demand.

## The Bottom Line

Etsy was eliminated as a final solution for The BhakTee life. It does not meet all of the company’s “must-have” features, and there are many issues with the platform, such as price wars, that detract from the benefits of selling within this established marketplace. While both Shopify and Squarespace meet all the “must-have” criteria, in the end we selected Shopify. The deciding factors for Shopify were its ability to eventually integrate products through amazon.com and it’s seamless integration with drop ship platforms for tee shirts. At the time of the evaluation, Squarespace only offered the ability to link an affiliate seller ID to sell other products already listed on Amazon.

Good luck if you are ready to undertake your own evaluation. It’s not an easy process, and it is unique to each business. However, if you spend the time doing your homework on the front-end, you will save a lot of headaches down the road. Remember that once you are deep into setting up a platform that doesn’t meet your needs effectively it’s not easy to find the motivation—or the time—to start over.

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# Tips for the Empath



By Alison Olkowski

Ever since I can remember I've been classified as "sensitive." I have a sensitive heart and a sensitive mind. I am a feeler. As a small child, I would suddenly be invaded by some foreign emotion. Although internally I knew I was fine, I would experience feelings that were anxious, guilty, manic, joyous, spiteful, sad, angry and everything in between. I felt like I was on an ocean wave of the emotions of those sharing my physical space. Of course, many children have sensory overload and sensitivity to outside energy, but mine was very extreme, especially approaching puberty.

Luckily, it didn't take me long in my young life to recognize exactly what was happening. I was fully absorbing the emotions of those around me and mistaking them for my own.

When the feelings came, everything about them was foreign. The taste in my mouth changed, the scents and sounds I noticed shifted and my cells started jumping and pulsing. Then, like a bloodhound, I would scan the room finding the tether and where it led to. I was like a mediator. I didn't like people to feel bad, and I began chasing all the bad feelings down to destroy them.

What I didn't realize was that I wasn't helping anybody. Bad things and feelings kept happening, and many times my meddling and ego backfired in a very bad way. I was taking away people's experiences of their own emotions and interrupting impor-

tant lessons for them. Even when my mom believed me and took me to a spiritual healer whom also shared our belief, I still felt the burden was too much and there was no relief.

I decided to seal myself off for a very long time, and this was quite disastrous being an extrovert and true lover of people.

Then through much meditation and self-care, I found that I can work to control my empathy, protect myself AND help others!

When working with Reiki healing and life coaching, I have to exercise psychic restraint. I always imagine myself protected by my own energy field and remind myself after each meeting that the issues of others belong to them and them only. Remember that everything

is about perspective, and no feelings are bad. Feelings are a part of being human. When negative emotions arise it's time for self-reflection and recognition and only YOU can do that for yourself.

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*What I didn't realize  
was that I wasn't  
helping anybody.*

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*Alison Olkowski is an intuitive Reiki Healer, Life Purpose Coach and Embodiment Enthusiast. She is focused on inspiring others to stand proud in their own unique power and manage their life in a more awakened and empowered state. Alison is a strong believer in self-awareness, mind/body connection, recognition and release of negative emotions and the power and beauty that flows through each and every being. She offers distance and in-person sessions focused on reconstructing mental and emotional archetypes to reflect a more positive and productive life. Email her at [alisun.wunderland13@gmail.com](mailto:alisun.wunderland13@gmail.com).*



# The SQUIRREL and the STONE

By Ann Darwicki

*If you want to conquer fear, don't sit home and think about it. Go out and get busy.—Dale Carnegie*

When I was preparing to write my column this month, one topic seemed to jump out and stick with me: **Who** are you? The question continued to show up all week in different places. A video my sister-in-law posted, a conversation with my husband and a workshop I attended—all inviting and nudging me to reflect deeply. **Who** are you?

Not having an immediate answer, I sat with the question and waited for insight.

I took a trip to a local lavender farm for inspiration, hoping to become clear. Nothing. While at the farm, my husband and I came upon some stones with words on them.

*He instructed me to close my eyes and pick one, and I pick **trust**. Interesting.*

I have been grappling with fear a lot lately; I am recognizing its presence in so many of my daily thoughts and subsequent actions. It comes across as logical concerns, as needing to worry about being prudent with my decisions—but at the heart of it all is fear. It shows up as nagging my mother about a health concern, wanting my daughter to stay safe in her room instead of moving out on her own and experiencing all that college has to offer, a reluctance to try new things such as a water slide, rock climbing or riding a zip line.

I am noticing that fear plays a more prominent role in my life as I get older, shaping the choices I make. I wonder if this is a normal progression as we begin to age, as we contemplate the reality that we may have more days behind instead of in front of us? While I am not sure of the answer to that question, I am sure that fear is holding me back in the guise of keeping me safe so that I am not fully embracing and living life. The fear that I feel when called to try something different is causing me to feel stifled and bored as I deny new experiences in my life.



That night, after returning from the lavender farm, I have a dream. I am at the ocean. I see a squirrel leap from a distant tree, fly through the air and land in the water. It almost makes it to the shore when a wave carries it back into the ocean. The squirrel becomes battered by the waves and disappears. I search for the squirrel to rescue it, and then I see someone emerge from the ocean and gently place the squirrel on the shore.

I immediately sense the deeper meaning and hear the words: **Who** are you? Are you a helpless victim, afraid of the waves in your life, or are you the squirrel who leaps from the tree full of faith and trust? What belief will you embrace and embody—fear or trust?

My answer and insight are delivered by a series of coincidences. Then I continue to gain clarity as I understand the true paradox of my conflicting beliefs—that I am a victim of life's seemingly random events and that I am a divine being always guided, always protected. We all hold both potentials simultaneously, but only once can be expressed at any given time.

**Who are you—a victim or divine being?**



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WHOLE BEING  
with Ann Darwicki





## and Ready to Thrive

By Alison J. Kay

"Wow Ms. Kay, that's totally cool! I wanna do that too!"

"Ok Jeremy, hold on, let me make sure everyone saw it first, and then everyone can watch again. Ok," I redirected my focus back to the group of middle school boys and girls standing outside next to the row of bushes and trees in the corner of the schoolyard, where I had taken them.

"So who didn't see that, or wants to see it again?"

"Me!"

"Me too!"

"I wasn't able to see it when you walked by the bushes, but I saw the tree move! Will you do that thing with the tree again?"

A few of the boys pushed up from behind the front row of students so they could see better.

"Yeah, I wanna see the tree one again. That was cool!"

"But didn't you see the bushes too? That was even better. It was like she was a fan. The leaves were perfectly still until she got close to them, then they kinda softly waved as she walked by, and then they stopped after she'd walked by. It was like magic! You gotta see it! Seriously," Carlos announced to the group.

The group was an after school club that my friend and

fellow Language Arts teacher, Mr. R, had agreed to facilitate with me. In our "Stress Reduction Club" I taught them yoga, meditation, Chi Gong, and some basics about how to work with the subtle energies, while Mr. R assisted. I have formal training as an energy medicine practitioner, blending five different modalities, as a: meditation teacher, yoga instructor, Chi Gong teacher, personal trainer, and Holistic Life Coach, PhD. Our "Stress Reduction Club" took place before I moved to Asia for a decade to study subtle energies. At that time, the combination of energy medicine, yoga, meditation, and holistic life coaching was my part-time business outside of teaching. So, Mr. R. wanted to deepen his understanding of these practices by assisting in the club.

We did a bit of each of these practices with the students, most of whom were boys, surprisingly. I remember that some of this was due to Mr. R's and my reputation as the "cool" teachers, and his efforts to recruit some of our more active boys, the ones who had difficulty settling down to read and write.

So, I led the kids through meditation each time the club met (twice a week), and they were able to settle down rather easily. This was no surprise to me: After 21 years of teaching meditation to more kids than adults, I have found that kids—especially teens—re-



ally take to meditation. They seem to like to “go in” and have time with their minds. I wonder, too, if they intuitively sense the health benefits cultivated by the practice, before I even point out what is known by Buddhism and considered by the Dalai Lama and leading teachers and practitioners like myself, and now many Western scientists, as a “Science of the Mind.” They seem to get it.

And the more intellectual and older high school students actually react the same way, although they seem to be able to wrap their brains around the science of it with some sense of... you know what?... As I write this, now having taught Western adults meditation for six years and kids for 15 years, I know that kids—no matter what age or level of intellect—really don’t require scientific explanations or validation to accept meditation. They just take right to it naturally once they go through the standard learning curve, which applies to kids and adults alike.

Back to that day 15 years ago in the schoolyard. I was showing “The Stress Reduction” club members the Chi in all animate life, after we’d just meditated and done a bit of Chi Gong and yoga. I wanted them to see more tangibly the Chi, Prana, or Universal Life Force Energy that they were learning to access more of, once they’d experienced clearing out the mental chatter, and getting a sense of flowing energy within them through the yoga and Chi Gong. I also taught them a bit about how their limiting beliefs closed down and restricted the flow of certain energy centers in the human body, which are called chakras (which means “wheels” in Sanskrit). By tying these practices together in this unique way, I was now showing them how they could go beyond their own mind/self/“fields” and access the greater field of universal Chi.

When I was first asked in media interviews about this ability to sense the interconnectedness and interact with the subtle energies, I explained that, yes, it had been cultivated by me, and that I later lived in Asia for 10 years, moving there with the precise intention of learning how to work with subtle energies better so that I could improve my energy medicine practice with clients and the quality of my life overall. Yet, in reflection during one of these earlier media interviews, it helped me to see that this is naturally who I am. It seems like I’ve always done this since a little girl, going out daily and playing in the woods with my older brother, and then picking up meditation practice at 22.

The science of consciousness, and specifically morphic fields, as they’re now referred to in science, I explore in my book *What if There’s Nothing Wrong?*, written in my last of 10 years in Asia. Yet underlying and beyond the scientific explanation is the experiential understanding that this first group of teens experienced. I

turned them onto this idea of us existing in a world that is alive, and all is interconnected, and they weren’t the same after. When reading this it’s just words; when experiencing it, you can’t remain the same because of this knowing that results from experiencing these sensations. If the mind requires explanation, it’s now there; but the belief and trust and life choices come from the experience.

This awareness seems to bring so much relief to both kids and adults. If we can, in fact, Observe ourselves thinking when in meditation, and then redirect our focus back to our breath, then we can ask, “Who is doing this Observing and disciplining of the mind?” And once we recognize that we are not just this self-contained, self-absorbed thought factory, we can then move beyond the everyday mind and connect with the brilliant, beautiful, supportive energies that are all around us, at all times.

In my view, it is just a choice to stay shut down, only half alive, and barely awake. There is so much more aliveness, awakesness and energy

abounding that if we spend one minute in depression—a.k.a. to me as “Self-suppression”—then it’s one minute too many! Ooh, there it is, a thought about tomorrow; it’s just simply “thinking,” as the mind does. Come off of the thought and back to the breath, to the here and now. And in this redirection you will cultivate presence and be present. All the better to be able to create your best lives ever!

When we’re connected to Source energy and when we work with consciousness instead of staying closed down to it and stuck in our minds—, “figuring stuff out” and “making stuff happen” everything is not so difficult. Why choose that, when you can have ease and celebration? Duh.



Alison J. Kay, PhD is a Holistic Life Coach, an India trained YA Yoga & Meditation teacher, an ACE Certified Personal Trainer, and an energy medicine healer/shifter of 18 years nicknamed “the lightning bolt” due to the power of her energy. The unique blend of credentials, use of multiple modalities, and the experience she acquired during the 10 years she spent in Asia studying subtle energy practices, make her incredibly powerful. She is a former Talk Radio host of, “Create Your Best Life Ever! What Else is Possible?” which was in the top ten on the mind-body-spirit 7th Wave Channel of voiceamerica.com. Dr. Kay is the author of *What If There’s Nothing Wrong?* Visit [www.AlisonJKay.com](http://www.AlisonJKay.com)

*This article is a chapter from the book Transform Your Life! written by 60 real-life heroes and experts and available at Amazon.com, BN.com, [www.Transformation-Publishing.com](http://www.Transformation-Publishing.com) and all ebook formats.*

## THE DOORWAY



## TO THE MEANING OF LIFE

by Owen K Waters

Wandering through life looking for its meaning can be a heart-rending task. You begin life looking to your parents for meaning, then to your teachers and friends until, one day, you're grown-up, educated and still clueless.

You stand there, thinking that there *has* to be a reason why you're here on this earth because you are constantly haunted from within by a sense of knowing that a reason really does exist. If only you could remember what it was.

*At some point in your life, you look up from the hypnotizing clamor of daily existence and seek meaning in that which is above the physical realm of existence. In that moment.*

When your attention is focused on whatever higher consciousness may bring, you are receptive to new ideas and new information.

My life has been spent in pursuit of the awareness that there is a whole universe of discovery within each person's higher awareness, just waiting to be explored. Earlier in life, when I was an employee, I'd often sit at my desk and drift away mentally into more interesting planes of awareness.

Later, as a business owner, I was able to find quality time for some really deep reflection. I used to rise bright and early for a fascinating morning of study and meditation and then roll into the office, ready to begin work, at the crack of noon!

Today, when people ask me about how to find the meaning in their lives, the first thing I do is point out the doorway to their own personal world of inner knowledge. The doorway is within your heart and it leads from the world of physical tumult into spiritual realms of inner peace and revelation.

You have only to detach from the stress and turmoil of daily living to enter your own heart consciousness, feel the love there that patiently awaits you, and move through the doorway into a higher awareness.

It is in that state of higher awareness that you discover the unique meaning of your life. It is there that you find the peace of mind that always eluded you. It is there that the light of inner wisdom joins with the love that flows freely throughout the universe.

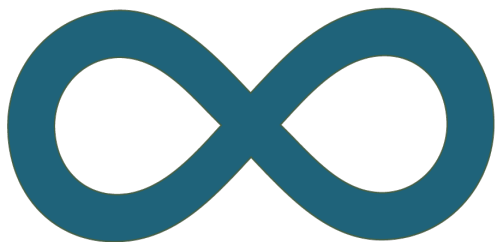
This union of love and light brings forth the enlightenment for which all sentient beings strive, and it all begins with unconditional love. Acceptance of yourself and everyone as you are, followed by gratitude for life itself and the experience that this life brings, opens up the doorway of the heart and leads onwards into the realms of self-discovery.



Owen K Waters is a cofounder of the Spiritual Dynamics Academy, where a free spiritual growth newsletter awaits you at: [www.SpiritualDynamics.net](http://www.SpiritualDynamics.net). He is an international spiritual teacher who has helped hundreds of thousands of spiritual seekers to understand better the nature of their spiritual potential. Owen's life has been focused upon gaining spiritual insights through extensive research and the development of his inner vision. For the past 12 years, he has written a spiritual metaphysics newsletter which empowers people to discover their own new vistas of inspiration, love and creativity. Spiritual seekers enjoy his writings for their insight and clarity.

# KARMA

The Original Recycling Program



By Christy Perry

I have a favorite old Webster's Dictionary from 1979, which I still love to use to compare definitions to what I find online. Within its faded pages, the definition of karma reads: **1. the force generated by a person's actions held in Hinduism and Buddhism to perpetuate transmigration and its ethical consequences to determine his destiny in his next existence.** While this definition is rooted in several ancient belief systems, you do not have to be a Buddhist or a Hindu to understand karma in a modern context and put it into action to create positive outcomes in your life.

*We experience variations of the karma concept every day, in every culture, whether we consider ourselves to be spiritual, religious, agnostic or even atheist.*

Think for a moment about the phrase, "What goes around comes around." Or how about, "You reap what you sow." And most of Western culture has been taught The Golden Rule, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." These are all very powerful lessons, and they all mean the same thing, just said in different ways that resonate with individual personalities, preferences, cultures and beliefs. For example, even today's scientists understand karma through studies of cause and effect.

As explained by Roy Eugene Davis, a very wise sage and direct disciple of Paramahansa Yogananda—the Indian yogi and guru who brought the teachings of Kriya Yoga to the West in 1920—karma is "an influence that can produce effects. Causative influences may be subconscious conditions or inclinations, habits, mental attitudes, states of consciousness, desires, beliefs, intentions, expectations, behaviors and actions."

This brings me to the second definition of karma in Webster's dictionary, **2. Vibration.** (This is one of my favorite concepts!) Thoughts, emotions and mental energy are all vibration, and any resonance or frequency attracts to itself more of the same. Quantum physicists began to explore the relationship between energy and the structure of matter at the turn of the 19th century. As noted in a great article on the website [Collective Evolution](http://www.collective-evolution.com/2014/09/27/this-is-the-world-of-quantum-physics-nothing-is-solid-and-everything-is-energy/): "We are really beings of energy and vibration radiating our own unique energy signature—this is fact and is what quantum physics has shown us time and time again." (<http://www.collective-evolution.com/2014/09/27/this-is-the-world-of-quantum-physics-nothing-is-solid-and-everything-is-energy/>)

Perhaps Nikola Tesla (1856-1943), a genius physicist, electrical engineer and inventor, sums it up best: "If you want to know the secrets of the universe, think in terms of energy, frequency and vibration." And, if you want some heavier reading on the concept, delve into the works of Albert Einstein and Max Planck, as well as Nobel Prize winners such as Niels Bohr.

## Karma in Action

At an everyday level, here's a story to help illustrate how karma/vibration works. One afternoon I was driving into work, and I received a call from a coworker warning me that there was a very disgruntled customer waiting in the store. (Not the way I wanted to begin my workday!) I immediately felt myself get defensive, tense, worried, angry and ready to walk into an unpleasant situation. Thinking about it actually started making me feel physically ill. I didn't even know what this woman was upset about, and I was already filming a horror story in my head.

Then it hit me! It was a beautiful day, the sun was shining, and I worked in a lovely environment that allowed me to wear flip-flops and shorts to work if I chose to do so. Why was I letting this unknown person ruin my day before it even started?

So, instead of reacting with defensive, angry thoughts, I realized I should imagine meeting this person, having a great conversation and creating a happy ending for both of us. For the next few minutes, I visualized a pleasant encounter and a positive outcome. When I walked into work, I smiled at her, introduced myself, commented on the glorious day we were having, and then asked how I could be of service to her. I felt the atmosphere shift, and she tentatively smiled back at me. Within minutes we were joking around and the problem was resolved with very little effort and no negativity. Now some people would argue that it was just good customer service. Sure, you could say that, but isn't this the same as doing unto others as you would have them do unto you? Cause and effect? Karma in action?

In my thought process while driving to work, I changed my vibration from anger and defensiveness to reception and kindness. In other words, I projected out what I wished to receive back. That is karma—and it is the original recycling program.



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## The SACRED BOND



## Between Women

By Jo Mooy

They can be the most important relationships over a lifetime. They provide emotional support, stimulate intellectual discussions and create intimate bonds tighter than any other relationship. Most importantly, they cherish and nourish the soul. If you're female and lucky enough to have one or two, you should be admired and respected because they have withstood the trials of life and time. "They" are women's friendships, some of the most uplifting and precious experiences ever.

Two of these magical friendships you've heard about. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, devotedly wed and the mother of seven, said of her activist partner, Susan B. Anthony: "So closely interwoven have been our lives, our purposes and experiences, that when separated we have a feeling of incompleteness."

Oprah Winfrey defines her day with a ritual nightly phone call to BFF Gayle King. Their 30-year friendship has withstood marriage, divorce, kids, dogs, haircuts, weight gains and losses, and careers, together and apart.

Women go through three stages in life: She is Maiden, Mother and Crone (or Wise Woman.) During these stages, she makes deep friendships along that glide path. Often the friendships begin in childhood and continue through high school, college and the workplace. Each stage of the Maiden, Mother, and Crone brings into our sphere different types of women friends. Some are teammates, some are colleagues, but all have a degree of intimacy and familiarity along with a deep reliance on the other. The drama or wildness of friends in the Maiden stage is lessened as friendships mature, evolving into marriage and motherhood.

These friendships are consuming. Together, the women survive marriages, births, deaths and divorces. Over the course of the lifelong relationships, these women shared a million diets and bra sizes. They can ignore the slight of a spouse, but if it comes from one of these special friendships, they are inconsolable. Yet, they have kept safe each other's secrets. Why? Because the most important quality that pervades these long-term friendships is trust. When women friends have earned that, nothing, not even time and distance, husbands or boyfriends, will break the sacred bonds created.

By the time women reach the Wise Woman state they've been through the battles and won many wars. Whether it's a bus or a limo or a car, they ride together. They no longer have time for gossip or whining or criticizing. They turn to those lifelong friendships with renewed hearts knowing the other Crones have walked the long

road and learned from that journey. There's comfort too in those relationships along with ease and laughter in the telling of the tales.

As Wise Women, they've now become the caregivers and counselors. These women lift each other up in support and exuberance. They offer sage wisdom and guidance to the Mothers and Maidens. They stand as wise reminders to the younger ones, that there are older women they can lean on and who will mentor them. For the Crones are the ones who built the foundations for the Maidens and Mothers to stand upon and thrive. Because of their sacrifices, the new friendships being forged by Maidens and Mothers owe them their due.

Treasure and build your friendships with women just as they did. Hold each other's secrets. Laugh at the follies. Ignore the diets, even when pants are too tight. Continue the fight for equality and justice. But keep those special women in your life. With them there is a covenant and these friendships will nurture hold you fast for a lifetime.



*Jo Mooy has studied with many spiritual traditions over the past 40 years. The wide diversity of this training allows her to develop spiritual seminars and retreats that explore inspirational concepts, give purpose and guidance to students, and present esoteric teachings in an understandable manner. Along with Patricia Cockerill, she has guided the Women's Meditation Circle since January 2006 where it has been honored for five years in a row as the "Favorite Meditation" group in Sarasota, FL, by Natural Awakenings Magazine. Teaching and using Sound as a retreat healing practice, Jo was certified as a Sound Healer through Jonathan Goldman's Sound Healing Association. She writes and publishes a monthly internationally distributed e-newsletter called Spiritual Connections and is a staff writer for Spirit of Maat magazine in Sedona. For more information go to [www.starsoundings.com](http://www.starsoundings.com) or email [jomooy@gmail.com](mailto:jomooy@gmail.com).*

# Enlightened Advice

Dear Ms. Spiritual Matters,

Today when I interviewed for a job, the personnel director told me she would give me a personality test. I was not prepared for this. She said the test was standard procedure for hiring at this company and would tell if I worked better in groups or alone, was introverted or extroverted, and was understanding of people or judged others. The test took an hour to take.

Afterward, I met with potential coworkers to answer more questions. Following this, the personnel director took me aside and gave me the results of my test. I was not happy. I do not feel the test results represented who I am. I walked out without waiting to talk to the department head.

I know who I am. Someone else has no business judging that with a paper and pencil test. When I got home, I told my wife I did not want to work at any company that thought a test could tell them if I would be a good fit for the job. What is your view on this?

George

Dear George,

Can a test capture who you are? Yes. How you chose to answer questions can determine many of the ways you would behave when you work with a group of people or alone. Companies can spare themselves the hassle of hiring a person who does not fit in with a group by testing ahead of time. It works both ways. A person whose answers showed incompatibility for a job likely would not be happy working at the place either.

A rule of thumb: A person is who he/she says he/she is and who others say he/she is. This means that a person can have an opinion about who he/she is and this view can differ from who others say he/she is. We all want others to think we are the good people we intend to be. But, hey, everyone looks at people through different lenses.

A good way to explore the question, "Who am I?" is to make lists under the following headings. Each statement gives you insight into the person you are.

- Who you love tells who you are.
- What you value tells who you are.
- What you spend your time doing tells who you are.
- What you are thankful for tells who you are.
- The things you do for others when no one else knows you are doing them tells who you are.

I hope a job that fits with your personality is soon yours.

Sincerely,

Ms. Spiritual Matters



*Susan Schoenbeck holds Baccalaureate and Master's degrees in nursing from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She is an experienced educator and teaches nursing students at Walla Walla University -- Portland, Oregon campus. She is an oblate of a Benedictine Monastery where she learned centering and contemplative meditation practices. She is author of the book, Zen and the Art of Nursing, Good Grief: Daily Meditations, and Near-Death Experiences: Visits to the Other Side.*

Enlightened Advice  
with Susan Schoenbeck

