

The Lightning Path™

Book One



Basic Concepts

Lightning Path

Workbook One

Basic Concepts

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LP Workbooks in the Series

- LP Workbook One: The Basics - the basic spiritual concepts you need to move forward
- LP Workbook Two: HEALING Framework - some general guidance on how to organize your healing journey.
- LP Workbook Three: Connection Framework – some general guidance on how to initiate and manage reconnection
- LP Workbook Four - Archetypal Study (draft at the Intermediate level of study)

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Preface

Greetings and welcome to the Lightning Path¹ (or just LP for short). The Lightning Path is a modern Human Development Framework.² For your information, a human development framework is a scientifically grounded system of thought and practice devoted to supporting health, healing, reconnection, and the actuation of full Human Potential.

The book that you have in your hand is the first book in a series of Lightning Path workbooks designed to provide some basic theoretical and practical guidance on health, healing, connection, and how to actuate your full human potential. This first workbook introduces you to Lightning Path spirituality by introducing several critical concepts that you will need to know if you want to heal, maintain health, and achieve your full potential.

We should note at the outset that the Lightning Path incorporates an Authentic Spirituality³ into its developmental frame. The LP incorporates spirituality because humans are, at their core, spiritual beings. You cannot have an authentic human development framework without a spiritual component. If you have some indigestion when

¹https://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/index.php/The_Lightning_Path

²https://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/index.php/Human_Development_Framework

³Authentic Spirituality is spirituality rooted in, but not exclusively focused on, Connection Experiences. Authentic spirituality is free of elite influence. Authentic Spirituality encourages, supports, and facilitates Healing and Connection. An authentic spirituality can be recognized by the presence of all Seven Pillars of Authentic Spirituality

For more, see
https://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/index.php/Authentic_Spirituality

reading the word “spiritual” here, don’t worry. We understand that there are significant issues and baggage associated. We won’t get into those issues here except to say that LP spirituality is unlike traditional forms of religion and spirituality. It is built up from, and leans heavily upon, the Seven Pillars of Authenticity,⁴ outlined in *Rocket Scientists Guide to Authentic Spirituality*⁵ As such it is clear, concise, straightforward, logical, responsible, empowering, fruitful, and scientifically grounded. While the LP incorporates relevant wisdom from ancient and modern traditions, it also decolonizes human spirituality by dropping things like patriarchal authoritarianism, the fetishization of “faith,” hierarchies, exclusionary practices, and so on. This workbook introduces you to the fundamental concepts and practices so you can judge for yourself before getting too far into the system.

To facilitate clarity and precision of understanding, we introduce and develop several key concepts and ideas in this and other LP Workbooks. Key concepts are identified with highlighted font the first time you come across them in the text. Key concepts are then defined in the main text, in a footnote, and/or via a link to the SpiritWiki⁶ definition. When you come across key concepts, take an extra moment or two to learn them.

For your information, the SpiritWiki is the canonical glossary of Lightning Path concepts and spirituality.⁷ If you are not sure what an

⁴ https://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/index.php/Seven_Pillars_of_Authenticity

⁵Mike Sosteric, *Rocket Scientists’ Guide to Authentic Spirituality* (St. Albert, Alberta: Lightning Path Press, 2019).

⁶https://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/index.php/Main_Page

⁷Read all about the SpiritWiki at

LP term means, you can always check the SpiritWiki.

A Final Warning

Before turning you lose on LP materials, a quick warning. Be aware, the Lightning Path is built for speed. If you choose, you can move forward towards healing and connection quite quickly. However, it is not always advisable to move full steam ahead. Even if you are prepared for the whirlwind that can sometimes ensue, others around you might not be. Always remember, you live in a context (e.g., a home, a community, a workplace etc.) and people inhabit these places. These contexts, these places, will be impacted as you move forward. Ultimately, this is a good thing; however, fears, misconceptions, and delusions often create resistance, confusion, and even backlash and these cannot always be overcome so easily; therefore, empathy, sensitivity, and patience are required, for yourself and those around you. Manage your progress, take your time, and be empathetic. However, do keep in mind your own needs. Empathy, sensitivity, and patience are required to be sure, but too much and you may sacrifice your healing and reconnection progress. At a certain point, you may have to make a decision. Either stay stuck in the mud with the others around you, or clear your path. Always keep in mind the feelings and situations of others, but always feel free to gently (and sometimes not so gently) push toxicity out of your life so you can move forward, especially when you feel it is the right time to do so.

https://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/index.php/The_SpiritWiki:About

Workbook Goals

By the end of this introductory booklet you should:

- Know what the spiritual ego, the bodily ego, the physical unit, and connection are all about.
- Be able to describe the nature and process of connection using the **Automobile Metaphor** (a.k.a. Self-Driving/Autonomous Vehicle Metaphor), and the Water Glass Metaphor.
- Know how to initiate connection with intent and visualization.
- Understand some of the basic challenges to connection you will face.
- Understand the spiritual meaning and importance of being positive and empowered.
- Understand the importance of breathing.
- Understand the significance and importance of Connection Practices and Connection Supplements.

Key LP Concepts

- Activation
- Alignment
- Awakening
- Authentic Spirituality
- Automobile Metaphor
- Big Lie Bodily Ego
- Boundary Visualization
- Connection
- Connection Affirmation
- Connection Cocoon
- Connection Experience / Connection Event
- Connection Practices
- Connection Psychosis
- Connection Supplements
- Connection Visualization
- Consciousness Quotient
- Default Mode Networks
- Empowerment Visualization
- External Resistance
- Grounding
- Initiation
- Internal Resistance
- Law of Repulsion
- Less Than Messages
- Metaphor of the Self-Driving Vehicle
- Nadir Experience
- Normal Consciousness
- No-Violence Rule
- Physical Unit
- Pleasure Principle
- Seven Essential Needs
- Seven Pillars of Authenticity

- Spiritual Ego
- Spiritual Emergency
- SpiritWiki
- The Path
- Toxic Positivity
- Toxic Socialization
- Visualization
- Water Glass Metaphor
- Water Glass Visualization
- Water Glass Metaphor
- Zenith Experience

The Very Basics

Greetings and welcome to lesson one of this introductory Lightning Path course. In this lesson, we are going to introduce *four* key concepts that you need to know if you are going to make strong forward progress towards healing and connection. These four concepts are *physical unit*, *spiritual ego*, *bodily ego*, and *connection*.

Physical Unit

Let us start with the concept of the “physical unit.” *Your Physical Unit is your physical body.*⁸ The physical unit consists of all the physical components of the physical body like your arms, legs, eyes, ears, and internal organs. The physical unit also includes the brain and nervous system of your body.

The brain and nervous system of the physical unit are very important and very special, especially when discussing healing and connection. *The brain and nervous system of the body can be seen as a very sophisticated computer* Just like a regular computer, your body’s brain and CNS has many algorithms (i.e. instincts, reflexes, and autonomic responses) and programs that allow it to breathe, digest, operate within, and stay safe in the environment it lives in. For example, as Sigmund Freud pointed out over a century ago, your body has a program called the Pleasure Principle.⁹ This program tells your body to avoid pain and seek pleasure. If your body experiences pain of any

⁸http://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/index.php/Physical_Unit.

⁹https://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/index.php/Pleasure_Principle

sort, the emotional, psychological, and physical avoidance algorithms that are part of this program will automatically activate and your body will try to avoid the pain. Likewise, when your physical unit experiences pleasure, emotional algorithms will be activated that will cause your body to seek more pleasure.

Bodily Ego

As noted, your brain is a sophisticated computer that has many algorithms and programs. However you should know, the brain is more sophisticated than even the most advanced supercomputer. The brain and CNS of your physical unit is so sophisticated and so beyond anything available in silicon that the brain actually develops a sense of ego-identity, a sense of “I am.” We call the body’s sense of “I AM” the Bodily Ego.¹⁰ We define *the bodily ego as the sense of identity that emerges as a result of the complicated neurological operations of your brain and CNS*. We can represent the bodily ego visually with the image of the moon or a candle. Your bodily ego is a moon inside your mind, or a small candle light inside you. This little light gives you your sense of “I.”

Neurologists have located several structures in the brain that are associated with your sense of ego identity. They call the structures in the brain associated with your bodily ego the Default Mode Network.¹¹ We will talk more about the DMN later on in our study.

As a final note, your bodily ego has a neurological existence and it is

¹⁰https://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/index.php/Bodily_Ego

¹¹https://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/index.php/Default_Mode_Network

confined and limited by this existence. If your brain dies, your bodily ego dies as well.

Spiritual Ego

For reasons that will become clear as you progress through the Lightning Path materials, most people's sense of identity is rooted in their bodily ego, and most people live their lives through their bodily ego. However, the bodily ego is only part of your identity; there is another part of your identity that is much bigger and smarter than your bodily ego. We call this bigger part of your identity your Spiritual Ego.¹² Your spiritual ego is that part of your identity that does not emerge from the neurological operations of your brain and that is not tied to your physical body or material reality. Your spiritual ego is what some might call your "soul," your "Atman," or your Highest Self.¹³

In the spiritual literature of this planet, the Spiritual Ego is represented variously by a sun-disk, a lotus flower sitting on water, a crown chakra halo, an angelic being floating above you, and so on. We use the image of a sun to illustrate the spiritual ego.

Like your bodily ego, your spiritual ego also provides a sense of "I am," a sense of identity. However, unlike your bodily ego which is limited in size and scope by the neurology of your body, your spiritual ego is not limited by the material world at all. As a consequence, it is more powerful, capable, and intelligent than your bodily ego could

¹²http://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/index.php/Spiritual_Ego

¹³http://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/index.php/Highest_Self

ever be.

Metaphor of the Self-Driving Vehicle

You can wrap your head around the concepts of physical unit, bodily ego, and spiritual ego if you consider the metaphor of the self-driving vehicle. A self-driving vehicle is a vehicle with a computer and software programs that make it all go. In the case of a self-driving car, the car's computer and software are powerful enough that the car is able to monitor its own conditions (i.e., it can alert you when you need oil or gas or when something else is wrong) and even drive itself around. In modern cars, the computer and software are sophisticated enough that we might say that the car has an Artificial Intelligence (AI).

With the image of a self-driving car in mind, you can think of your physical body like a self-driving car, your bodily ego like the Artificial Intelligence that runs on the car's computer, and the spiritual ego as the driver that gets into the car. Just like the car's computer contains programs that monitor the car and make it all go, your body's brain contains programs that monitor your body and make it all go. Just like the car has an Artificial Intelligence that monitors things and keeps the car safe, your physical unit has a bodily ego that monitors things and keeps the body safe. Just like the car can use the GPS, sensors, motor, and wheels to drive itself around, your bodily ego can use its eyes, ears, instincts, arms, legs, and reflexes to get around as well. Simple.

Because your spiritual ego is much bigger and smarter than your bodily ego, you want to develop a connection to it. Developing a

connection to your spiritual ego makes you smarter, wiser, and more high functioning than if you just live your life through your bodily ego. If you do not develop your connection, you will never actuate your full potential as a human being and never be completely healthy, happy, and whole.

Connection

Now that you understand the physical unit as a physical vehicle, your bodily ego as the software that runs the vehicle, and your spiritual ego (your soul) as the driver of the vehicle, it is possible to understand what connection is all about. To understand connection, think about driving an autonomous vehicle. When using an autonomous vehicle to get around, *you* could drive the vehicle or you could let the vehicle's programs drive. If you are sleeping or reading a book and letting the car drive itself, we would say you are *disconnected* from the vehicle. If you wake up and take control of the wheel, we would then say you are *connected* to the vehicle.

This is what connection means. You are connected when your spiritual ego is awake and in control of your physical vehicle and you are disconnected¹⁴ when the bodily ego is in control. The driver of the car takes control by waking up, paying attention, and grasping the wheel. It is the same with the spiritual ego. Your spiritual ego takes control of the vehicle by waking up and taking control.

When your spiritual ego is awake, attentive, and in control, we can say that you are connected. By the same token, if the spiritual ego is not

¹⁴<https://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/index.php/Disconnection>

attentive and in control of its physical unit, if it is daydreaming, lost in some fantasy, letting the body go on “auto-pilot,” or pushed away by a frightened or damaged bodily ego, then we can say you are disconnected. While disconnected, it is the bodily ego, the vehicle software, that drives the body around.

A Sophisticated, Sensitive and Connected Sense of “I”

The metaphor of the autonomous vehicle is a great way to wrap your head around the basic ideas of spiritual ego, bodily ego, physical unit, and connection; however, you can only get so far with this metaphor. This is because there are important differences between an autonomous car, your physical unit, and connection.

One important difference between a car and your body is that the bodily ego or AI of your physical unit is far more sophisticated than the programs of an autonomous vehicle. Even though we might call the computer programs of an autonomous vehicle an “artificial intelligence,” it’s really not. The programs that make a car go may be adaptive and sophisticated, but they are just programs. By contrast, the bodily ego of your physical unit is smarter, more sophisticated, and more capable than the AI of a car. The advanced nature of the body’s AI, the bodily ego, derives from the sophisticated hardware¹⁵ and software of the brain, both of which have been refined over millions of years of evolution.

Another important difference between a car and your body is that

¹⁵The hardware of the brain is the neurons and neurotransmitters of the brain and central nervous system.

the AI of a car does not develop a sense of “I” or a sense of identity, while the AI of your body, your bodily ego, does. No matter how sophisticated your car may be, no matter how much we may want to call it “intelligent,” it has neither intelligence nor a sense of identity, and it never will, at least until the development of quantum computing. Your car is just programs. However, your body is different. The brain and CNS of your physical unit is so sophisticated and the programming so refined that your body does develop a sense of self. Unlike the programs of a car, the bodily ego can feel and think and decide and act in much the same way your spiritual ego feels, thinks, acts, and decides. As we will come to understand, this sense of self, this feeling of independent existence that the bodily ego develops, is beneficial because it helps the physical unit survive; however, it can also be a liability because when the bodily ego is damaged, it can hold the physical unit back from making a healthy connection. This is an important point so allow us to repeat: when the bodily ego is damaged, it can hold the physical unit back from making a healthy connection

A third way the bodily ego of your physical unit is different than the AI of an autonomous vehicle is that the bodily ego is designed to be highly sensitive and responsive to experience, both internal and external. The bodily ego is designed to be sensitized to the internal conditions of the body, like blood pressure, temperature, and feelings. The bodily ego is also designed to be sensitive to the external conditions in the environment in which it lives. The sensitivity of the bodily ego to the internal and external environment is important for survival and growth reasons because it gives the bodily ego the ability to respond and adapt in a sophisticated and intelligent manner. Without this sensitivity, the human physical unit would never have been able to

evolve to the advanced state it is in today.

Finally, a **fourth way** the bodily ego of your physical unit is different than the AI of an autonomous vehicle is when we consider the nature of connection. In a car, the driver connects and takes control by grabbing the wheel. The same sort of thing happens when the spiritual ego *connects* with its body, except that in the case of the spiritual ego and bodily ego, there is an actual, physiological and psychological merge that occurs. When a driver takes control, that driver is not actually merging with the vehicle AI. The driver is just grabbing the wheel and taking control. However, when the spiritual ego connects to the bodily ego, Consciousness begins to fill the vessel and an actual neurological, psychological, and emotional union occurs. This union observably activates brain neurology and measurably enhances brain activity.

This *activation* of brain neurology is felt by the bodily ego as a notable shift and enhancement of consciousness. When you connect, the way you think, feel, and perceive changes. Suddenly, you no longer feel in a “normal” space. Suddenly you are something much more. How much more depends on how powerful the experience is. In some cases, you can feel smarter and more insightful. In other cases, you can experience mild euphoria and oneness with nature and creation. In other cases, you can experience searing cosmic bliss¹⁶ and full enlightenment. It really all depends on the nature of your experience.

On the LP, we understand this phenomenon of connection as a

¹⁶If you are interested, the Brahmananda Valli from the Taaittiriya Upanishad, included in the additional readings section of this unit, is an ancient Vedic attempt to describe the intense bliss that one can experience during a powerful connection event.

movement away from Normal Consciousness¹⁷ and into a state of enhanced awareness and function. We call the significant change of consciousness caused by the temporary union of the spiritual ego with the bodily ego a Connection Experience.¹⁸ When the bodily ego and spiritual ego connect, we have a phenomenologically and neurologically verifiable connection experience.

Scientists study connection experience all the time, but they call it by various and different names, like mystical experience, peak experience, pure consciousness events, and so on.

Water Glass Metaphor

As you can see, the automobile metaphor helps us understand the nature of connection, but when you consider the sophisticated and sensitive bodily ego and the fact that when you connect an actual union occurs, the metaphor breaks down. In order to deepen your understanding of connection, therefore, we also use the Water Glass Metaphor.¹⁹ To understand the water glass metaphor, think of your physical unit²⁰ like a water glass and your spiritual ego, your higher Consciousness, as water in a pitcher that you use to fill the glass. When connection occurs, the water of your higher Consciousness

¹⁷https://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/Normal_Consciousness

¹⁸A Connection Experience, a.k.a. Connection Event is felt as a movement away from Normal Consciousness into a state of enhanced awareness and function. It is a discrete, short-term psychological, emotional, and physical experience of connection that is sufficiently above one's average daily experience as to be perceived by the individual as a qualitatively different state of awareness, consciousness, and being.

¹⁹See https://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/Water_Glass_Metaphor.

²⁰Note, from this point forward, when we say your physical unit we always mean your physical body plus the bodily ego that is part of the physical body.

begins to fill the glass of your physical unit. How much water you get into the glass during any particular connection experience determines the nature of your experience (something we'll talk about a lot more as we progress through these teachings). Note that we use the concept of Consciousness Quotient (CQ)²¹ to indicate the amount of Consciousness you get into the body when you have a connection experience. The higher the CQ of your physical unit, the more of your higher Consciousness you have in your body. The higher your CQ, the more dramatic and beyond "normal" your connection experience will be.

Conclusion

And that is all there is to it. At this point you understand the very basics. You know what the bodily ego is, what the spiritual ego is, and what connection is. You know the bodily ego is like the artificial intelligence in an autonomous vehicle, just far more sophisticated, intelligent, and adaptable. You also know the spiritual ego is the soul that, when connected, drives the vehicle. You know the spiritual ego is like the bodily ego, but it is brighter, more powerful, and far more intelligent than the bodily ego could ever be. Finally, you know that like the person that drives a physical vehicle, your spiritual ego enters your body, your physical, unit, and connects. Unlike the person that drives a vehicle however, your spiritual ego actually merges with your bodily ego. When this merge happens, you enter into a state of enhanced Consciousness and awareness. The union and enhancement makes the relationship between the spiritual ego and the bodily ego more complex than between the driver of a car and the car's AI.

²¹https://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/Consciousness_Quotient

We will talk a lot more about spiritual ego, bodily ego, and, most importantly, how you initiate and handle connection as we progress through the LP teachings. For now, simply understand that the spiritual ego is that powerful part of your being that is your true self. Also understand, the spiritual ego is independent of material existence. Consequently, it is immortal and impossible to damage. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of your physical body or your bodily ego, both of which are, as scientists are beginning to understand, very easy to damage.

Additional Reading

- Everybody Has a Connection Experience²² – An article that shows just how common connection experience really is.

Study Questions

1. In your own words, describe the nature of, and relationship between, the spiritual ego, bodily ego, and physical unit.
2. What is the goal of connection? What role does the Water Glass Metaphor play in illustrating the process of connection. What happens when you make a connection?
3. What do you think of the concepts of spiritual ego, bodily ego, and connection? Can you relate these concepts to other concepts you may have learned as part of your past psychological or spiritual training? For example, I was raised Catholic and in that system, spiritual ego refers to the Holy Spirit and the physical unit refers to the Temple of the Holy Spirit. Are there similar concepts in your

²²Mike Sosteric, “Everybody Has a Connection Experience: Prevalence, Confusions, Interference, and Redefinition,” *Spirituality Studies* 4, no. 2 (2018), <https://www.spirituality-studies.org/dp-volume4-issue2-fall2018/files/assets/common/downloads/files/4-2-sosteric.pdf>.

spiritual traditions? If so, write these down.

Initiating Connection

Theory and Practice

In the first lesson, we learned some basic spiritual concepts, like spiritual ego, bodily ego, the physical unit, and connection. As we saw, when we connect, our body fills with higher consciousness and our bodily ego and spiritual ego begin to merge and unite. Understanding the significance of this connection and union is a good start. Actually achieving this connection and union, even temporarily, is the only worthwhile goal of human development. The question now is, where do we go from here?

Right now, there are two directions we need to go in. One direction is in the **intellectual direction** of learning more about the process of connection. This intellectual process includes learning how to initiate connection and also how to handle it when it occurs. This intellectual process can be a bit complicated, especially when you consider the confusion and misdirection that can sometimes surround the topic of human spirituality. However, as challenging as it may be at times, if you stay focused and attentive, you will quickly sort it all out.

The other direction you have to go in is the **practical direction** of actually making a connection and working to merge your two egos. You have to do this because, as already noted, *connection and expansion of Consciousness into the body is the ultimate goal of human development*. If you want to be healthy, happy, and whole, if you want to realize your full potential, you need to unite your spiritual and bodily ego, develop your connection, and “actualize” your true

inner self.

And let us be clear about this; whoever you are, whatever your starting orientation is, whether you are an atheist, agnostic, theist, or whatever, you must do both. If you just pursue connection without intellectual understanding, you may become ungrounded and lose touch with reality. On the other hand, if you just read books without practising connection, your development will be sterile and inauthentic. Both accurate intellectual knowledge and authentic connection experience go hand-in-hand in healing from your trauma and actualizing your full potential. If you do not give time to both, you will make no real progress at all.

Initiating Connection

So how do you do both? You are doing the intellectual side of it now by engaging with this course and with additional LP materials moving forward. As for actually initiating²³ the process of connection, that is easy.²⁴ Initiating connection is as simple as picking up a pitcher and

²³ Initiation is an important term and it is not that hard to understand. Initiation is simply an abbreviated way to describe the commencement of Consciousness' descent into the physical unit. When you initiate the descent of Consciousness, you instantiate/expand a connection. When you do that, water begins to fill the glass. See <https://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/index.php/Initiation>

²⁴ Because of the nature of the process, and because we can be quite confused about everything when we start all this up, the process of waking up which follows initiation can be represented like a climb out of darkness, removal of a blindfold, or even steps up a ladder. This aspect of the initiation process is represented visually by the Triumph of Spirit archetype card, *Initiation*. For a description of the initiation archetype, see the SpiritWiki entry at <https://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/index.php/Initiation>

An allegorical treatment of the initiation/awakening process is provided in *The Allegory of the Blindfold*. <https://www.lightningpath.org/allegories/allegory-of-the-blindfold/>

pouring water into a glass. Despite what others may have told you, you do not need to do anything special, conduct any particular rituals, or go through any difficult testing. Neither do you have to be “chosen” nor does your blood have to be royal blue. You already have everything you need to get started. All you have to do to initiate connection is *make a decision and do it*. To initiate the process of connection, simply decide that you want to do it and then will it to happen. In other words, pick up the pitcher and pour!

The easiest way to understand how all this works is to do a little experiment. Close your eyes for a moment, ball your hands into fists, and hold them out in front of you. With your eyes still closed, open your hands. Now, close them. Open them. Close them.

What happened when you did this? Did your hands open and close? Of course they did. And how did you make it happen? You willed it. You intended it. You wanted your hands to open, you exerted your will, and like magic, your will became manifest. It is easy. When your body and mind are healthy, you do not even have to think about it. If you want your hands to open, you just do it. It is as perfectly simple as that.

It is exactly the same thing with connection. If you want to initiate connection, simply decide and do it. The only wrinkle here is that since you cannot really see the process of connection like you see your hands opening, it can be difficult to will the process. To help focus your will and intent, we recommend using a Connection Affirmation²⁵

²⁵ A *connection affirmation* is a phrase designed to help you wilfully begin building a connection between your spiritual ego and bodily ego. Any phrase that helps focus you wilfully on the initiation, process, or outcome of connection may be considered a connection affirmation. The more precise, wilful, and focused, the better the mantra.

and a Connection Visualization.²⁶ For the affirmation, say something simple like, “I wish to wake up. I wish to move forward. I wish to activate. I wish to connect.” While you are doing that, visualize light streaming into your head from above, flowing into your brain, and then out into your whole body through the neural fibres of your system. As the light flows in and through your system, visualize your brain and central nervous system lighting up with the sparkling energy of increased neural activity. As you visualize, remember to say your connection affirmation. “I wish to wake up. I wish to move forward. I wish to activate. I wish to connect.”

Conclusion

And that is all there is to it. You do not make a complicated issue out of opening and closing your fists or pouring yourself a glass of water, so do not make a complicated issue out of initiating the process of connection. As long as you are willing to move forward towards connection, just repeat your awakening affirmation and visualization as many times throughout your day as you can remember. If you do that, we guarantee, connection will begin and consciousness will slowly start to flow.

Additional Reading

- Allegory of the Blindfold²⁷ - an allegory that describes the

http://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/index.php/Connection_Affirmation

²⁶A *connection visualization* is a visualization designed to help you wilfully beginning building a connection between your spiritual ego and bodily ego.
http://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/index.php/Connection_Visualization

²⁷https://www.academia.edu/35424685/Allegory_of_the_Blindfold

process, challenge, and outcomes of connection/awakening

Study Questions

1. What are the “two directions” you need to move in if you are going to move forward and understand human development. In your own words, why do you think these are important.
2. What is connection? How do you initiate connection? Give an example of a connection affirmation and connection visualization.

Dealing with the Challenges

In the last lesson, we looked at how to initiate connection. As we saw, initiating connection is quite easy. Simply visualize and intend. Unfortunately, although this process is easy to initiate, accomplishing connection and union are not without challenge. You will have to address these issues and challenges if you want to have more than just one-off connection experiences,

Consistency and Persistence

One of the first challenges you will face while you engage this process is the challenge of being consistent. If you want this process to work, you have to be disciplined about it. If you want to make progress, you have to repeat your affirmation and conduct your visualization many times throughout your day. The more persistent and consistent you are with your visualization and intent, the faster your progress will be.

It is like weightlifting. If you go to the gym once a month and lift a few weights, you will not make any progress. However, if you go to the gym every day, even if only for thirty minutes, you will make consistent forward progress. You can also consider the automobile metaphor again. Intent is like the gas pedal that moves the car. If you do not keep your foot pressed down on the gas, the car stops moving forward. It is the same with connection. Without persistent and consistent will, the process stops and connection does not occur.

Maintaining consistent will and intent can be a challenge, especially while distracted by our screen intense modern world. Even without all

the technology we have these days, there are lots of things that can distract and you can easily lose focus and intent. This is probably why, in the past, nuns, monks, priests, and others interested in practising human spirituality hid themselves away in temples, monasteries, and ashrams. Hidden away from the world like that, it is easier to maintain consistent intent.

If you do find yourself distracted, if you are having a hard time maintaining intent, there are a few things you can do to remind yourself to stay on track. One thing you can do is put your affirmation on sticky notes placed strategically throughout your home and work spaces. Whenever you see the note, repeat your affirmation and visualization. If you are mobile and cannot stick notes where you can see them, an app that provides you with recurring reminders will work just as well. Finally, you can pick something that happens often in your life, like sitting down for a meal, and associate your affirmation with that. Getting in the habit of saying a little affirmation of awakening every time you sit down for a meal will help solidify your daily connection practice.

Healing

If you can maintain persistent and consistent will and intent, then another challenge that we all face is the need to fix the glass. The truth is, our water glasses, our physical units, have been damaged by what we call Toxic Socialization.²⁸ Toxic socialization is a socialization process characterized by violence, neglect, and chaos, among other

²⁸Mike Sosteric and Gina Ratkovic, "Toxic Socialization," 2016, https://www.academia.edu/25275338/Toxic_Socialization.

things. Toxic socialization damages our body and mind to the point where we struggle to initiate, handle and maintain strong connection. If you pour water into a glass that has been damaged, the water will drain out of the cracks and holes as fast as you can pour it in. It is the same with connection. If you pour Consciousness into a physical unit that has been damaged, it will pour out of the cracks and holes as fast as you can pour it in.

This is worth repeating. If there is damage to your physical body and mind, you have to heal the damage, otherwise you will struggle to achieve strong and persistent connection. It is not an insurmountable problem. It just means extra work.

We talk a lot more about the damage done by toxic socialization as well as the whys and wherefores of healing as we progress through these courses. We also have an article entitled “[Toxic Socialization](#).” which goes into considerable detail about the nature of toxic socialization and the extremely negative impact of it on the body and mind. A link is provided in the “Additional Reading” section below, if you are interested and want to find out more. For now, just keep in mind that if you want to make a strong and persistent connection, you might need to take a step back and heal.

Internal Resistance – Intellectual and Emotional Challenges

In addition to maintaining consistent intent and the possibility that you might have to heal, a third challenge that you might face as you try and connect is *intellectual and emotional challenge* to your deeply

entrenched opinions, values, and worldviews. On the LP we call intellectual and emotional challenges you face on your path back to health and full connection Internal Resistance.²⁹ There is no other way to say this but that authentic connection experiences can transform your thinking and rock your world. In some cases, the transformation and challenge can be dramatic and ongoing, like being struck by lightning over and over and over again.³⁰ In other cases, connection experiences can be gentle and flowing. Gentle or not, the experiences can significantly challenge your perspectives and ways of knowing and being in the world. As you connect and wake up, as you gradually open your eyes to the realities of this world, you are going to see things about the world, yourself, and others around you that will surprise you, scare you, cause you guilt and shame, give you headaches, heartache, and in some cases serious indigestion. We wish we could say otherwise, but it is not all singing bowls and butterflies.

For example, if you are an atheist, your cherished materialism may be challenged. If you are a deist, your notions of God might come up for review. If you think the universe is all about karma and “lessons,” you may find these ideas fundamentally challenged. And it is not just your concepts and ideas that come up for review. The way you treat people, the work you do, and even the life you are living may come up for consideration. Or, it may not. It is possible that your ideas, concepts, and practices are already in Alignment³¹ with the spiritual truth of

²⁹https://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/index.php/Internal_Resistance

³⁰ Describing connection by using the metaphor of a lightning strike is a common way of describing the event. See the SpiritWiki at https://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/Lightning_Strike

³¹ Alignment is the extent to which one's Bodily Ego is in concordance with the will and perspective of one's Spiritual Ego, family, community, and society. When we are aligned, we think, behave, and create a world that is in concordance with

things. Realistically however, that is unlikely. Probably, you will experience at last some emotion and intellectual challenge. Even something simple like facing the harsh realities of your childhood and family life can be difficult. For some, the situation may be so bad that they would rather commit suicide, either slowly by consuming toxins, or more rapidly by other means, than face the truths of their existence. We kid you not; there are some tough pills to swallow on the road to Shambhala.³²

If you do find yourself coming up against intellectual or emotional blocks and resistance, understand, there is no pressure here. Take the time you need to process and understand. In the final analysis, you can do and believe whatever you want. Just keep an open mind and an open heart.³³ Try things on for size. If you find the new ways of

our Spiritual Ego/Highest Self. Don't worry too much about this concept right now, we explore it in a lot more detail in *Lightning Path Workbook Three*.
<https://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/index.php/Alignment>

³²Shambhala is a Buddhist term for a society characterized by healthy and connected citizens. See <https://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/index.php/Shambhala>

³³ Keeping an open mind and heart can be a challenge especially if you were abused as a child. Many children have been beaten and abused simply for making a mistake, failing to follow a rule, or simply saying the wrong thing. The abuse can be physical, psychological, and emotional. If we associate being wrong with punishment, we may come to harbour deep, unconscious anxiety and fear about doing or thinking the wrong thing. If we do harbour deep fears and anxieties about being wrong, we may forcefully resist new ideas out of fear of violence and abuse.

If this is you, if you find yourself forcefully resisting new ideas because of emotional attachment to old ones or anxiety about shifting your thinking, the best advice we have for you is this: relax. Calm down. We are not forcing you to believe or think anything you do not want to. While we certainly believe everything that we say, you do not have to believe anything if you do not want to. Nobody is forcing you to do anything and nobody is going to condemn you for being wrong or making a mistake. You can stay exactly where you are for as long as you like, and that is fine. Nobody, except maybe your own Highest Self, is forcing you to move forward, so take a deep breath, relax, and think about things. That is all. Regardless of whether you choose to remain on this path or not, *it*

thinking and behaving that rise from ongoing connection experience make you healthier and happier, go with those. If not, you can always go back to the way you were before.

External Resistance

The internal resistance that comes from the cognitive and emotional challenges that can sometimes attend connection experience can be a challenge. Unfortunately, this internal resistance is not the only form of resistance you may encounter. You may also experience considerable External Resistance³⁴ from family, friends, coworkers, managers at work, and other people you interact with. The reason for this external resistance is simple. As you engage in your spiritual practice, things will change in you. You will become more aware. You will begin to “connect the dots.” You will see and realize truths about your self, others, and your reality that you never did before. In other words, you will go through a process of awakening.³⁵ What’s more, as you “awaken,” you will also activate. As you activate, you will feel a strong push to try and change things. Changes to your perception and the actions you take to change the world can easily put you at odds with the “normal” world that exists around you.

For example, when you wake up you might see that your home life or

never hurts to expand your mind by considering new concepts and ideas. A little extra knowledge and self-awareness is always a good thing! If you decide it is not for you, then it is not for you. That is all there is to it.

³⁴https://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/index.php/External_Resistance

³⁵ As defined in the SpiritWiki, awakening is a connection outcome. When you connect, consciousness pours into the physical unit. When consciousness pours into the vessel, awareness and understanding expands. The expansion of awareness and understanding is awakening.
<https://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/index.php/Awakening>.

your work life is oppressive and violent. You may quickly decide you no longer wish to accept this. Consequently, you might push back and try to change things. Pushing back against a toxic home or work life will lead to resistance from those who are afraid, complicit, or who benefit from your oppression, like your controlling spouse, your violent parents, your co-dependent siblings, or your profiteering boss. This resistance will manifest itself in various, sometimes surprising ways. They will get mad and shame you. They will try to manipulate you emotionally. They may even engage in forms of emotional or psychological assault.

If you are not expecting it, this resistance can knock you over and stop your progress. In order to avoid this, it is important that you prepare yourself. Learn to anticipate and recognize external resistances³⁶ for what they are, i.e. resistances to the change and transformation that comes from authentic connection. If resistance does come up, if you decide you no longer want to put up with emotional and psychological violence for example, change the situation if you can. If nothing you do changes things, do everything you can to avoid the people who assault, shame, and manipulate you. Exposing yourself to the violence of resistance, no matter how minor you think it may be, will slow you down, damage you, and might even halt your progress.

Note, you can assess the level of violence in your life using two assessment tools provided on the LP site, the “How Toxic is my World” Survey, and the “How Violent am I” survey. Use these tools to fine tune your environment and help reduce and eliminate violence. Visit <https://www.lightningpath.org/self->

³⁶ External resistances are resistances directed at you from external sources like families, friends, coworkers, and even the media and Hollywood
https://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/index.php/External_Resistance

assessments/ for these and more self-assessments.

We shall talk more about awakening, activation, and some other things that go along with connection in a future materials and courses, specifically *Lightning Path Workbook Three*. We also talk about how to establish boundaries to help protect yourself a little bit later. For now, be aware that connection leads, among other things, to awakening and activation. This awakening and activation can lead to internal and external resistance. Dealing with the push back can be challenging, so you need to be on your guard.

Boredom and Doubt

In addition to all the challenges identified so far, another challenge to maintaining forward movement is boredom and doubt. This will be a particular problem in the early stages when changes can be subtle, when you might not have had a strong connection experience, or when you still do not have the knowledge to recognize them when you have them. Unless you want to boost the process using a Connection Supplement³⁷ (see page 85 on connection supplements and connection practices), achieving a strong connection experience can take some time, especially if you have some healing to do, especially if there are blockages you have to deal with, and especially if you live in a chaotic or violent environment that is not conducive to connection practice. If a connection experience does not happen right away even when you are saying your affirmation regularly, boredom and doubt can set in.

If you do experience boredom and doubt, our advice to you is, keep an

³⁷https://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/index.php/Connection_Supplement

open mind and stick with it for at least a few months. In general, it takes four or five weeks to break an old habit and begin rewiring your brain. It also takes persistence of focus for your intent to lead to changes in your life. Recite your connection affirmation and perform your connection visualization as many times throughout the day as you can and be patient. If you stick with it, things will begin to change and you will have connection experiences.

Overinflated Expectations

The time delay between intent and manifestation, the time it takes for things to begin to shift, can lead to another challenge which is *overinflated expectations*, particular the belief in instant spiritual fixes. Many people have unreasonable expectations about what happens when you engage in connection practice (a.k.a. spiritual practice). Many people think that a quick affirmation, a little deep breathing, a few rubs on a singing bowl, and a little magic dust, is all you need to make instant, dramatic transformation. While this is true to an extent,³⁸ it can take more time than you think. You may have fear and trauma to deal with. You may be filled with doubt that undermines the process. You may have misconceptions and fears that prevent you from handling the connection. You may even have emotional blockages that cause resistance and prevent you from engaging with new ideas. As already noted, you may experience external resistance. Dealing with all these things can take time. Therefore, be reasonable with your expectations. If you expect constant dramatic lightning strikes and miraculous healing events and these do not materialize, doubt and

³⁸ For more on the “magic dust” that can help you with your connection efforts, see http://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/index.php/Connection_Supplement.

disappointment may grow and you may eventually give up. Don't do that. Sometimes it takes time. Be patient and be consistent and eventually shifts will occur.

Of course, all this is not to say that powerful connection and rapid, even instantaneous healing and transformation cannot occur. They can. People have written books about how rapid this transformation can be, and we include some suggested readings at the end of this lesson. However, even when dramatic transformations occur, always remember that no matter how powerful these are, they are just single events. Your goal is not a single experience of two. Your goal is persistent and consistent connection. If you want to complete the process of connection, do not get stuck on the idea of rapid spiritual fixes. If you want to fill the vessel with Consciousness, there is a lot of work for you to do.

Grounding the Transformations

Speaking of powerful and dramatic transformations, these powerful transformations events can lead to a final challenge which is the challenge of grounding all the new knowledge and insight you may receive. **Grounding** involves understanding new ideas and new perceptions, some of which, although wonderful, can be quite shocking. Grounding also involves translating this new knowledge and these new perspectives into permanent changes in your behaviour and your understanding of reality.

Grounding is an important part of connection practice because without it you can end up dazed, confused, and running around in circles.

Grounding can also be a challenge. The realizations and enlightenments that come along this path, and the changes and transformations that can occur, can be big, and there can be lots of them. Once things really get going, the whole thing can be a lot to handle, especially if you are dealing with mental and emotional damage. More importantly, it all takes time to work through. You cannot just rub a crystal bowl and instantly heal childhood sexual abuse. You cannot have an awesome visionary experience and expect to instantly wrap your brain around the vastness of it. As the process accelerates, you will need to take time to ground. Otherwise, your foundation will be weak.

How much work there is in front of you is hard to say, because it depends. It depends on how open you are. It depends on how much time you put into it. It depends on how much damage there is. It depends upon what resistances you face. It depends upon any support that you are able to muster. It depends on what sorts of information sources you attend to and how much indoctrination you have to work through. It can even depend on the amount of sleep that you get and the type of food that you eat. If you eat a lot of junk food and do not get enough sleep, you will have trouble processing, grounding, and integrating the shifts that occur.

The truth is, there are many factors that can influence how efficiently you move forward, so it is hard to predict how efficiently you will ground; however, predicting is not the point. The point is, manage your expectations so you can avoid disappointment and distraction. Be patient. Do not expect instant shifts into glorious ascended existence, because there is work and it can take time. When they do happen,

embrace the shifts joyfully, but be prepared to buckle down and work because there are challenges and struggles ahead.

Remember this, you need to be on sound footing to move safely forward, so take the time you need to integrate and ground. Slow and steady is best. As long as you are reciting your awakening affirmation and doing your visualization, as long as you are taking definitive steps forward however small and tentative, you will make progress. If things appear slow, be patient, stick with your intent to awaken, take deep breaths along the way, and shifts and transformations will surely happen. Before you know it, you will look back in wonder at the distance you have travelled.

Before closing up this lesson, there are two more things to say.

Number one, as we have said, will and intent is what “starts your engines.” It is also important to know, *will and intent will also shut them down*. If things get a little crazy, if fears threaten to overwhelm you or if you find yourself moving too quickly to ground, simply signal your desire to slow down by issuing a statement of intent. Say something like, "I wish to slow down because I need time to process" or "I wish to slow down because I need to find support," and things will slow down for you. As they do, feel free to take as much or as little time as you like. You have the right and the ability to set the pace. It is far better to take the time you need to process and integrate whatever is coming up than to race to the finish. If you move too fast, your progress may be unstable and the process may overwhelm. You might even get bumped off The Path³⁹ for years, decades, or even

³⁹https://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/index.php/The_Path

permanently. You want to avoid that, so keep your intent persistent and consistent, but take the time you need to process, integrate, rest, heal, or whatever. Just remember, if you do take a break, start up again. It is OK to take time off; it is not OK to go on permanent vacation, at least not just yet anyway.

The **second thing we want to say** before moving on is that this process of healing and connection is not a process that happens just in your consciousness and only to you. Connection may start as an internal process, but it quickly extends beyond the boundaries of you. Just like willing your hands to open and then using those hands to cook supper changes the world around you, so also does willing connection change the world. When you do it, you set in motion processes and contribute to changes that impact the world around you.

What do you do to handle the impact of your awakening on others? There are a couple of things to keep in mind. **First**, *take the reality of your impact seriously and be compassionate and empathetic to the concerns of others*, because they may have legitimate ones. For example, your awakening and connection may be viewed as a threat. Others around you, particularly those with whom you have strong attachments, may feel “left behind” by your progress, particularly if they are stuck in their own toxicity. If your relationships are relatively healthy and you are not being harmed by them, take the time and make the effort to understand their anxieties and concerns. If it is safe, share with them what you are learning so they can move forward as well.

However, and this is the **second thing** to keep in mind, sometimes, the anxiety and fears of others may turn to aggressive, even violent,

resistance. Take this resistance seriously, pay attention to it , and take necessary steps to protect yourself; but keep in mind, the backlash and resistance you may face is not “evil,” it is just fear, anxiety, and confusion. Don’t be judgmental, but also, don’t put up with abuse. Just because somebody is “family” does not mean they have a right to lash out, assault, and abuse. If you stay in enmeshed toxicity, you are going to take damage. If you take damage, healing and connection will be delayed. If you want to protect yourself, your children, and your forward movement, termination of toxic and abusive relationships may be the only thing to do.

If it helps, think of this like trying to save a drowning person. Sometimes it is possible to save a drowning person, but sometimes it is not. Sometimes, if you get too close, their thrashing drags you down, in which case you both drown. By all means, show compassion and support. By all means, “stay behind” to help the ones you love. However, if staying behind means damage, disability, and death to you or your children, *get help or get out*. You do not serve a higher purpose and you are not aligned with Consciousness if you let yourself get dragged down by the desperate thrashing of the people that surround you. If you really want to help, if you really want to fulfill your purpose, get yourself to safe ground. When you are awakened, activated, strong, and connected, then you can you turn around and throw a life preserver to the ones drowning in the dank waters of their own toxic stew.

Conclusion

That is really all there is to say about initiation and connection, for

now. To summarize, intent is important. Intent steers the vehicle; intent drives awakening. If you want to move forward, you have to intend. Focus your intent with affirmations and visualizations, but be prepared for some challenges along the way. Everything from internal and external resistance to boredom and distraction to emotional and psychological challenge can impede your forward progress. To get through all that, pay close attention and get help if you need it. Do not sacrifice your own progress for others who are stuck. If you want to help them, get to solid ground; only then turn around and provide assistance.

Additional Reading

- Quantum Change⁴⁰ – A book that describes the positive outcomes that occur with connection experience.
- Allegory of the Room - an allegory about the challenges you face as you initiate, awaken, and connect
- Toxic Socialization – an article that goes into detail about the this very important Lightning Path concept.

Study questions

1. How do you initiate connection? How do you halt or slow down connection? What spiritual technique can you use to “focus your intent” and facilitate initiation? Can you think of any other focus statements that might help?
2. What are the obstacles/challenges that were identified in this unit that you might face when you initiate your connection process? What are some things you can do to overcome each of

⁴⁰William R Miller and Janet C’de Baca, *Quantum Change: When Epiphanies and Sudden Insights Transform Ordinary Lives* (New York: The Guildford Press, 2001), <https://amzn.to/2D1gYZo>.

the obstacles and challenges? Have you experienced some of these obstacles? Answer the question and write down your thoughts and insights.

3. Why do people resist your connection? Do you recognize resistance in your family or at your workplace? If so, share your insights and experience and reflect upon and discuss strategies for overcoming resistance.

Visualization Magic

So far in this course we have talked about connection, how to initiate it, and how to deal with some challenges that might arise. In this unit, we want to continue learning basic LP concepts and techniques by extending our discussion of intent and will and looking at the very important spiritual technique, visualization.

Visualization, which we talked a little bit about in our discussion of initiation, is critical to spiritual connection. If the physical body is a vehicle for spirit (which it is), and if your spiritual ego gets into the body in order to drive around physical creation (which it does), then *visualization is the wheel that you use to steer the vehicle*. When it comes to getting into and driving the physical unit, visualization is what gets you where you want to go.

The idea behind visualization is very simple and identical to the idea of prayer and "attraction." If you want something, put an image of it in your head and keep that image there. Doing so will begin to draw the energies necessary to manifest your intent. It is a question of *as above in consciousness, so below in matter*, as we like to say. Energy follows intent and since visualization is a focused and easy-to-maintain form of intent, visualization is the wheel that steers the vehicle. If you want to engage the process of connection, if you want to influence the direction of your life, then intent and visualization are key.

Clear and Precise Images

Visualization is very important. The question here is, how do you do

it. The answer to that is simple; A visualization is an image, so, create a *clear and precise image* in your mind. To give the image the most power, make it as clear, concrete, and precise as possible. This is not as hard as you might think. It is really just a question of practice. The more you practice visualization, the more clear and precise your images will be.

How do you practice visualization? You practice it by doing it. Close your eyes and visualize a picture, an object, or an outcome in your reality. If you have trouble doing that, start simple. Hold a simple object like an apple in your hand; look at it for a few seconds noticing its shape, colour, and texture; then, close your eyes and recreate that image in your mind. If there is nothing there to begin with, just keep practising. Do this a few times a day for a few weeks and your power to visualize will grow.

Persistence

Note that clear, concrete and precise images in your mind are important, but they are not the only requirement for successful visualization. Another requirement, as we have seen, is *persistence*. If you want your visualizations to work, you have to hold them in your mind for extended periods, especially when the thing you want to manifest is complex, or if there is resistance involved. As far as keeping a persistent visualization in mind, that is simply a question of discipline. If you want to be successful, you have to find some way to remind yourself each day what it is you want to manifest, and you have to repeatedly and clearly visualize the outcome. You can use sticky notes, objects (e.g. pictures, strings), or even apps to remind

yourself to visualize. You can also set aside a certain amount of time each day for the visualizations. Really, you can do whatever you want. There are no hard and fast rules here so find what works and do it.

Lack of Training

This all seems sensible and straightforward and it is; but two things can get in your way of clear and persistent vision. First, depending on the training you got as a child, you may or may not have developed the ability to visualize. If you have trouble visualizing, remember that visualization is a skill, not a talent or a gift, and this skill needs to be developed. Typically, it is developed with right-brain sorts of activities like music, art, dance, game play, certain types of math, creative writing, and so on. If you have a hard time with visualization, know it is never too late to start. If you want to develop your ability to visualize, pick up a musical instrument, dance, do yoga, do judo, draw, play games, colour in a book, and so on. Any right-brain activities you do will help develop your ability to visualize.

And please, take this advice seriously. We are not recommending these things to fill up space. Visualization is an important connection technique not only at this beginner level, but also for advanced levels as well. It is important you develop your ability to visualize, and it is important you learn to do it well.

Lack of Vision

Besides lack of creative training as a child, the second thing that can get in the way of visualization is simply lack of a good vision. This is

particularly true when it comes to the early stages of healing and connection. Without direct experience of these aspects of human development, the concepts can be too abstract. What is worse, there is a lot of misunderstanding, confusion, inflated ego, and even malfeasance when it comes to human development and spiritual connection, and all that can make it hard to understand. The problem is, if we do not understand what it is we are visualizing, if we only have abstract ideas, or if our ideas are confused and erroneous, we cannot come up with an accurate or effective visualization. What does “spiritual connection” look like, after all? It can be a real conundrum, especially for those just starting out.

Thankfully, we we already have a strong visualization for you. The Water Glass Metaphor⁴¹ mentioned earlier makes a perfect visualization. To do the Water Glass Visualization, simply visualize your body as an empty glass of water and visualize consciousness as water filling up the glass from bottom to top. When it is full, if you want, visualize the water flowing over the edge of the glass and spilling out into the world around you. Do this visualization as many times a day as you can remember and before you know it, Consciousness will be expanding into your body and your whole world will change.

You can modify the water glass visualization in different ways to suit your own predilections and personality. You can make it more spiritual by visualizing light streaming into your body through your head (i.e. crown chakra) and dispersing in scintillating diamond-like patterns throughout the various neural pathways of your body. You can also

⁴¹https://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/index.php/Water_Glass_Metaphor

speed up the process by increasing the quantity of light streaming into the body. Visualize a stronger, more powerful connection by visualizing a more powerful, intense, flow of light.

The water glass visualization is clear, concise, and powerful. It will help you connect, awaken, activate and transform very rapidly. Even better, you can use it right now without knowing all the details of what will happen up front. Just be careful and remember earlier advice. You have control of the process. If things get too scary and confusing, reverse the process. Stop intending, and stop visualizing. Better yet, visualize the dimming of energy in your body. Take some time off to process, integrate and ground. Remember, this is not a race and there is no reward for finishing ahead of others. Slow and steady is the safest way to go.

As a final warning, avoid straying too far from the meditation and visualization guidance provided here, at least at the start. In particular, do not use meditations, affirmations, or mantras you find elsewhere unless you fully understand them. Anybody can cobble together an affirmation and visualization, but not everybody knows exactly what it is they are doing, and not everybody has good intent. Even slight misconceptions, subtly shifted visuals, or bad translations can lead to unintended and even disastrous consequences. Remember, *you are playing with the fire of Consciousness here*. Be cautious; be careful; discern.

A Few Final Comments

Before moving on, there are a few final things to say about this

process of visualization and intent. **First of all**, be aware that visualization and intent as practised on the LP is different from the venal “attraction” popularized by *The Secret*. Visualization as practised on the LP is not a passive process—it is an active and wilful one. When you visualize and intend, you do not sit back and ask politely for “the universe” to give you some things. Instead, you adopt a position as powerful co-creator and make wilful assertions with firm expectations that what you desire will come to pass.

Second of all, it is important to understand, you cannot just rely on visualization and intent. You have to **take action**. If you are an artist and you have an image in your mind for a painting, you have to buy paints and practice your painting. It is the same with anything. It is the same with intent and visualization. Intent and visualization just get the energies flowing. After that, you have to do what you need to do to move the process forward.

Third, it is important to recognize, visualization and intent, at least as practised here, are **not profane** processes, they are deeply and essentially spiritual. To use intent and visualization to simply attract power and prosperity is to profane a powerful creative technique. You can do it. There is nothing particularly wrong with using visualization and affirmation to help create a better life for you and yours, unless you do that without regard for others, and at the expense of collective and planetary well being. Attract financial prosperity all you like, but remember, the goal is healing and connection. Be sure to put the spiritual side of things at the forefront of your daily regime.

Fourth, keep in mind visualization is a **positive process**, never a

negative one. Not thinking about something, not visualizing it, pretending something does not exist, ignoring it, sticking your head in the sand and being oblivious, does not work. Just because you refuse to think about something does not mean it will not exist. Nobody runs around thinking they are going to get killed by a drunk driver, but it happens nonetheless. Similarly, just because you refuse to think about war in the Middle East, or war in America, does not mean war will not happen in those places. You have to remember, there are many people painting on the canvas of this Earth. If all the hawks in the US are busy visualizing and intending war in the Middle East and you engage in wishful non-thinking, pretending that “out of sight” means out of manifestation, then all the hawks will get their way.

Remember, creation is an **active** process. Creation always requires an image and intent. If you erase imagery and intent, you erase your influence on reality. If you are not drawing energy toward a reality that you want, the intent of those who are will trump your non-attention. To be clear, if you do not apply the force of intention, those who do will always get their way.

Finally, keep in mind this very important fact: visualization is not just about creating and attracting things. Positive visualization works hand in hand with repulsion and even destruction. Creation and destruction are both sides of the same creative coin. If you do not like something, if you do not like somebody, you have the spiritual power and ability to draw a boundary and exclude or even destroy. If you do not want war in the Middle East, think about the soldiers realizing their destructive role and finding new jobs. If you do not want some violent and abusive bully in your circle of friends, draw a visual boundary

around yourself and push the bully **away**, gently and with compassion. If you do not like violence, put a big X in your mind along with the words "NO MORE VIOLENCE." The process is simple. There is no excuse not to do it, especially when we are all under threat. Use intent and visualization to attract what you want but also use intent and visualization to repulse what you do not (like war, famine, and greed). You will be surprised at just how good this Law of Repulsion⁴² works, especially as more and more people put aside their ideologically programmed aversion to it⁴³ and get with the program. Remember, it is not about morality; it is about keeping yourself and your family protected, and saving the planet.

Conclusion

To summarize this lesson, to initiate connection and move forward, recite a connection affirmation and do a connection visualization. Always remember, the best progress is made if you are persistent and consistent. If you have trouble visualizing, engage in activities that will develop your right-brain. To make the best progress, keep your focus on the spiritual side of things. Finally, always remember,

⁴² The *Law of Repulsion* is a law of intent/visualization that states removal of unpleasant realities requires active and engaged repulsion. For more, see http://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/index.php/Law_of_Repulsion.

⁴³ By this we mean, you are taught not to repulse. From a very early age the priests and the pundits and the spiritual “teachers” discourage you from pushing things away. You are taught to accept whatever life sends your way because it is part of your “lesson plan,” part of the “checker board,” or part of God’s plan. There is a “light side” and a “dark side,” and that is just the way God wants it to be. You have to accept the bad with the good. Shit happens. Just put up, toughen up, shut up, and accept. It is all horseshit though. You do not have to accept anything “life” sends your way and in fact, you should not. This is just an encouragement to being boundary-less and open to exploitation. Stop accepting the bullshit. Reject it, revile it, and push it away with all your visualization might.

visualization can be used to manifest, but visualization can also be used to exclude or destroy. This is not a bad thing. If you are a potter and you create a clay pot you do not like, you mush it up and try again. It is the same with everything. The only way we will create a better world is if we clear the obstacles in our way. If we don't, we'll be perpetually spinning our wheels.

Additional Reading

- [5 visualization techniques to add to your meditation practice.](#)⁴⁴
- [3 effective visualization techniques to change your life.](#)⁴⁵

Study questions

1. Assess your ability to visualize. Can you see pictures in your mind's eye when you close your eyes? If not, what are some things you need to do right now to increase your ability to visualize? If you are a part of a group, share with the group and discuss.
2. Visualization is important. In fact, it is a key to the process. However, to visualize you need a good vision. What basic connection visualizations and connection affirmations might you recommend to newbies on the spiritual path and why? Is it safe to recommend just any old visualization/affirmation? Why?
3. Explore your own past spiritual training. How is LP

⁴⁴Crystal Raypole, "Visualization Meditation: 5 Exercises to Try," Healthline, 2016, <https://www.healthline.com/health/visualization-meditation>.

⁴⁵Jennice Vilhauer, "3 Effective Visualization Techniques to Change Your Life," Psychology Today, 2018, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/living-forward/201806/3-effective-visualization-techniques-change-your-life>.

intent/visualization different from other intent/visualization
found in other schools of thought, like *The Secret*? Do you find
passive and venal prayer/intent in your traditions? What other
differences do you notice?

Boundaries and Protection

In the last couple of lessons, we have talked about the nature of connection, how to initiate connection through visualization and intent, and some of the challenges and obstacles you may face as you begin your journey home. One particular challenge we want to focus on in this lesson is the external resistance you might experience from people around you.

As we have seen, *external resistance* can be violent, aggressive, and hurtful. You can try to help people move forward with you, but if you cannot, if their resistance remains violent and hurtful, it is best to get away from them if you can. This might sound counter intuitive, even harsh to some, especially since we have all been trained to just put up with stuff because it “makes you stronger,” but that is not true. If you want to move forward, you need to protect yourself from the ongoing damage of violence and assault. If you are constantly under some form of psychological, emotional, or physical assault, damage accrues. This damage, coupled with the lack of a protected space where you can calm down, rest, and reflect, will not only make it hard to heal and connect, it will damage you further. Therefore, number one, protect yourself. It is not a moral issue. It is not a sign of weakness. It is just what you have to do if you want to heal your body and mind and build a stronger connection.

So how do you protect yourself? It should be obvious at this point. You have to create space for your physical, psychological, emotional, and even spiritual safety. To create this space, you have to assert your boundaries. Boundaries are simple. Boundaries are the invisible and

sometimes not so invisible walls that your bodily ego builds to protect itself from the toxic world that surrounds you.⁴⁶ Boundaries cause you to put up your hand and say “stop” when an assault is occurring. Boundaries allow you to avoid toxic environments and toxic people. To be perfectly clear, boundaries protect you from mental, emotional, and physical damage and give you the space you need to you heal and connect. Whatever you do, if you want to move forward, you need to establish strict boundaries.

Challenges to Putting up Boundaries

Asserting and establishing boundaries is simple in theory. In practice, it can be quite a challenge, for at least three reasons.

For one, putting up boundaries can be difficult because some people, particularly those who benefit from your lack of boundaries,⁴⁷ will resist and even lash out at your attempt to create a safe space. Sadly, we live in a world where we are taught not to respect each other’s boundaries. We live in a world where our parents and siblings regularly violate our spaces. We live in a world where many people don’t like it when we say “leave me alone.” We say, “This is my

⁴⁶ Parents and teachers are supposed to teach you to build boundaries, but they too have been abused and therefore normalize the abuse and repeat the cycles.

⁴⁷ Who benefits from your lack of boundaries? People who want to sell you things. People who want to exploit you. People who want to manipulate you. People who want to abuse you, and so on. If I walk into an automobile show room with a strong boundary, the sales person will not be able to reach in and manipulate me. However, if I walk in with no boundaries, the sale person can get in my face, manipulate my thoughts and emotions, and otherwise violate me to sell me a car. It is the same with family, coworkers, etc. Somebody with no boundaries is easy to manipulate, control, assault. Those that prefer when you are easy to manipulate, assault, and control will benefit from your lack of boundaries, and will resist you when you try to put them up. If you try to put up a boundary and somebody resists, or worse, plows through, get that person out of your life.

boundary,” but they will aggressively push through it. We say, “do not hurt me,” but they will do it anyway. Obviously, it can be hard to assert boundaries when people constantly push their way through.

Another reason it can be hard to assert boundaries is that you may have been taught by parents, teachers, friends, co-workers, bosses, and others who benefit from your lack of boundaries that putting up boundaries is wrong. Consequently, you may feel reluctant or even guilty when you try to assert a boundary. To make matters worse, people can use this against you, playing the victim in order to invoke guilt and shame. Obviously, if you do not believe you have the right to assert boundaries and if you feel guilt and shame when you do you will have a hard time creating necessary safe spaces.

Finally, a third reason it can be hard to assert boundaries is because sometimes you just do not know how to do it, who to let in, or who to keep out. Because nobody has ever taught you about boundaries, the whole idea of boundaries can be a confusing non-starter. Couple this confusion with the emotional manipulation and assault that can occur once you try to create boundaries and boundaries, though absolutely necessary if you want to make progress, can be very challenging to accomplish.

Boundary Visualization

So what do you do? How do you overcome these challenges and create the boundaries you need? There are lots of online resources to help you with boundaries, so we don’t want to spend too much time with that here. Instead, we want to focus your attention on three things.

Number one, keep everybody and anybody that hurts you in any way as far away from you as possible. It does not matter how minor you think the hurt might be or who is doing the harm. As we will see in a later course, even a minor wound can kill you if it goes septic. This is especially true if the cut comes from somebody you care about, or who you happen to trust, like a parent, spouse, or a close friend. If somebody, if anybody, hurts you, ask them to stop. If they refuse, assert a boundary and keep them away.

Number two, we want to say that the best place to start with boundaries is within your home. *Above all things, make your home a safe place.* If you can, establish a No-Violence Rule.⁴⁸ A no-violence rule means no physical, psychological, or emotional violence at all, not even a *tone* in your voice. Establishing a safe, non-violent environment is very important. Your bodily ego, your mind, is *very sensitive* and can be easily damaged by even the slightest negativity. Be strict about this. Nobody, not the people who visit the house, not even the people who live in the house, should get away with violence. Do not allow toxicity to violate the sanctity and sacred nature of your home space. This might sound a little extreme to some, but it is not. We need safe places to heal, rejuvenate, grow, and connect. If any place on Earth should be absolutely safe, it must be your home.

Of course, in some cases, it may not be possible to establish a safe home space. Parents, siblings, partners, and others may simply choose not to respect your request. In those cases when you are alone and outnumbered, find or build a Connection Cocoon.⁴⁹ A connection

⁴⁸https://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/index.php/No-Violence_Rule

⁴⁹https://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/index.php/Connection_Cocoon

cocoon is a small, private space where you can read, relax, visualize, process, think, and heal without worrying about somebody bursting through your boundaries. You want this space to be not isolated necessarily, but private—a place where you can disconnect from the violence and chaos that surrounds. It could be your bedroom, a study, even a spot outside the home. Find or build this and then go to your cocoon to study, reflect, unwind, de-stress, process, and ground. It might seem a bit strange to have to isolate yourself at first, but that will pass. Once you begin to see how helpful it is, you might even come to prefer isolation, at least until things in the “real” world settle down.

The third thing we want to say before moving on is this. Do a Boundary Visualization. *A boundary visualization is a visualization you do to help protect yourself from manipulation, negativity, and assault.* A boundary visualization is simply a visualization where you imagine a boundary around your body and the things you want to protect. The easiest and most effective boundary visualization you can do is to simply close your eyes and visualize a ball of light around your body, your children, your pets, your home, and anything else you want to protect. Visualize this sphere as an impenetrable ball of light. Visualize little arrows of darkness hitting the sphere and bouncing right off. For best effect, do this visualization as many times a day as you can. Each time you do the visualization, make the light grow stronger. Build this ball up until it is an extremely bright fire that allows nothing negative to penetrate through. If you do this visualization consistently, you will find negative influences slowly disappear from your life. When this happens, do not be surprised, do not feel guilty, and do not invite them back in. If you want to make

solid progress, it is best to keep negatives at a bay.

As a final note, do not just do a boundary visualization; also take action. You want to back up your visualization with the creation of actual physical, psychological, and emotional boundaries. Keep reminding people to give you space. “Break up” with negative and needy people, because they need professional help. Don’t invite toxicity into your space. Always be careful that those you bring into your space have your best interests at heart and do not ever accept painful assault, especially from your inner circle. Remember, you cannot move forward towards stronger connection unless you feel completely safe and relaxed. You cannot feel safe and relaxed until you have established strong boundaries.

Conclusion

In this lesson, we have examined boundaries. As we have learned, boundaries are critical. You cannot heal and connect until you establish some strong boundaries. To do that, start with a visualization. Pay attention to any resistance and assault that might occur. Watch out for misplaced feelings of guilt and shame. If people don’t stop assaulting you, cut them out of your life. If you feel guilt and shame, remind yourself you need a safe space to heal and connect. Don’t ever let anyone make you feel bad for creating a safe space.

Additional Readings

- 10 Ways to Build and Preserve Better Boundaries⁵⁰ – some

⁵⁰Jane McGregor, “How to Be Assertive and Set Healthy Boundaries,” Welldoing, 2017, <https://welldoing.org/article/how-be-assertive-set-healthy-boundaries>.

suggestions on how to build stronger boundaries

- [The No BS Guide to Protecting your Emotional Space](#)⁵¹ – additional guidance on setting strong boundaries

Study questions

1. Why are boundaries and safe spaces important? Do you currently have safe spaces in your life? What do the people in your life do when you try to assert healthy boundaries? Share your experiences.
2. In this lesson, we learned a basic boundary visualization. Can you think of ways to enhance that visualization and make it personal to yourself? Share with others in your group.
3. Are there any family members, friends, or coworkers that engage in assault and that violate your boundaries? What are you going to do to assert boundaries and protect yourself from further assault? Share your thoughts with the group.

⁵¹Jennifer Chesak, “The No BS Guide to Setting Healthy Boundaries in Real Life,” Healthline, December 10, 2018, <https://www.healthline.com/health/mental-health/set-boundaries>.

The Importance of Staying Positive

In the last lesson, we looked at the importance of boundaries. There we offered a simple but effective boundary visualization. In this lesson, we want to talk about the importance of staying positive. Understand this: if you want to make progress towards healing and connection, you have to stay as positive as possible.

When you first hear “stay positive,” you might think that we mean stay happy, smiling, and content in an “everything is a life lesson,” “what does not kill you makes you stronger” sort of way. This is the kind of positive where you make lemonade from all the lemons that life is constantly throwing at you. This is the positive that most spiritual teachers and even some psychologists and therapists will tell you is the positive you need to be. Be grateful. Don’t get attached. Don’t be a party pooper. Smile while bad things happen because it’s all a life lesson anyway. Forgive, forget, and let go.

Don’t get us wrong. It is important to forgive and move on. It is important to be grateful for things. It is important to have a positive outlook. But that’s not what we mean by staying positive. When we say “stay positive,” we do not mean stay shiny and happy—not at all. In fact, there are a lot of things in this world to be angry and outraged about. Given the sorry state of this world, in some cases, being angry and outraged is the only authentic response. How can one be happy and positive when there is so much violence, exploitation, rape, suffering, and abuse that goes on all around? The only way to be that kind of positive is if you stick your head in the sand. If you got your

head in the sand, you are not waking up and connecting, you are lost in self-delusion and toxic positivity.

So what do we mean by being positive? By being positive we mean being empowered. You can think about this in electrical terms. Electricity is positive power. Electricity is positive force. Electricity gives you the power to do things. When you plug things into an electrical outlet, you plug them into power.

It is the same thing here.

When we say “if you want to move forward be positive,” we do not mean be passive, exposed, and inappropriately blissful; we mean, “be in your power” in the electrical sense. Being positive means being “plugged in” and “charged up.” Being positive means having energy flow through your body. More to the point, being positive means having the power to control and change your reality. If you want to heal and connect, if you want to awaken, activate, and ascend, you must stay positive in the electrical sense.

This is important. As we will see in more detail in a later lesson, walking an authentic path towards stronger connection will require you to make changes. You will have to put up boundaries. You might have to change how you treat yourself and how you treat others. You may even have to find another job. You are going to have to make fundamental shifts in how you act and react in the world. If you are serious about moving forward, it is definitely not business as usual.

This is where being positive and in your power comes in. If you are going to make changes you are going to need to be in your power,

otherwise you are not going to have the energy or will to do what you need to do in order to move yourself and this planet forward. It is as simple and straightforward as that.

Violence, Lies, and Less Than Messages

Unfortunately, staying positive and empowered can be a challenge. Many of us do not feel positive and empowered, much less competent of significant change. In fact, many of us have been made to feel incompetent, disempowered, and even "foolish." Why do we feel this way?

We feel this way because, **number one**, growing up on this toxic planet, we have endured a lot of violence, neglect, and chaos. We have endured psychological, emotional, and even physical assault. We have endured inconsistency and chaos. We have endured chronic gas lighting. We have endured ongoing attempts to control how we think. All the toxic experiences we have endured at the hands of parents, teachers, friends, priests, and so on have diminished and weakened us to the point where we are shadows of our original Self. We feel disempowered because we have been disempowered.

We feel this way because, **number two**, we believe the big lie⁵² which is the lie that we are violent apes or spiritual rejects on a path of cosmic tutelage.⁵³ After a decade or two of hearing this lie, we

⁵²https://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/index.php/Big_Lie

⁵³ This notion that we are spiritual fools descending into some kind of karmic, cosmic, schoolhouse is represented clearly in the masonic tarot by their *Fool* card. As any esoteric commentator will tell you, this card represents the neophyte soul descending into incarnation to learn his or her lessons in God's grand cosmic schoolhouse, this Earth.

internalize these Less Than Messages.⁵⁴ As a consequence, our self-esteem and sense of power are reduced and we become impotent and negative as a result. We'll talk more about the big lie in *Lightning Path Workbook Four* where we discuss spiritual narratives, archetypes, and creation templates.

If you do find yourself in a negative space, what do you do to become positive again? One thing you should not do is substitute wands, singing bowls, and crystals for actual energetic empowerment. These things can be useful as props, but without actual empowered confidence behind them, they are useless. Instead, do what we have been training you to do so far—visualize and intend.

To begin the process of empowerment, visualize. Specifically, do an Empowerment Visualization.⁵⁵ Take a deep breath and *visualize a bright light in the core of your body, in your stomach, just where your navel is*. Visualize that light slowly getting bigger and brighter until finally it encompasses your body and the world all around you. As you do this visualization, think to yourself how your light and power goes out in the world and changes it for the betterment of all. Do not be afraid of this power and do not undermine your own authority to change things. Always remember, you have the absolute right to use your power and light to create a better world.

Keep in mind, like all visualizations, *this visualization works best if you do it often*. Whenever you feel weak and impotent, small and insignificant, visualize the light from your stomach growing bigger

⁵⁴ Less Than Messages are messages designed to undermine self-esteem and self-efficacy. See https://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/index.php/Less_Than_Messages.

⁵⁵https://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/index.php/Empowerment_Visualization

and brighter inside. Think about how your light and power goes out to change the world. Keep at it and things will change. If you do struggle in the beginning, be patient with yourself. It takes time to work these things through.

As you do your empowerment visualization, pay close attention to the way people treat you. Remember, your physical unit is a sensitive vehicle for Consciousness. If you want that vehicle to function properly, you must protect it from damage. Recall the importance of boundaries. Keep in mind this empowerment visualization is also a boundary visualization. That is because boundaries are an important part of empowerment. If you expose yourself to damage and toxicity, you undermine not only your health and well-being, but your power to create as well.

Finally, we would just like to say, do not underestimate the challenge of becoming and staying empowered. True, you are stronger than you may think; true, you have the power within; but people can throw a lot of resistance at you. Not only that, but you can be deluded about what passes for power. Being shiny and happy all the time is not being positive and empowered. Pushing people around or requiring their submission is not being positive and empowered. Dominating and exploiting others is not being positive and empowered. Being positive and empowered means uplifting, not suppressing. Being positive and empowered means helping, not harming. Being positive and empowered means protecting yourself and the ones you love and changing the world for the betterment of all, and not just for the “chosen” few. If you want to move forward, it is best you do not get confused about the nature, purpose, and import of power.

Conclusion

And with that, this lesson comes to a close. To summarize, if you want to move forward you have to be positive. This does not mean being smiley and happy all the time. It means being empowered to take control, take action, and change. It can be a challenge. In order to become powerful, you have to stop violence and abuse and you have to heal and reconnect. You can start the process by doing an empowerment visualization. As you do that, make sure you take action in the world. Build boundaries, protect yourself and the ones you love, and take steps to make positive change. Embrace your power, but do not be naive. Be prepared for any challenge, but do not kid yourself. Surrounding yourself with spiritual products does not make you powerful. Harming and exploiting others is not a sign of power. True power is and has always been about protecting yourself and the ones you love and improving the world around you. The faster you get that through your head, the better off you and this whole world will be.

Study questions

1. What, in LP terms, does it mean to “stay positive?” How is it different from “standard” spiritual/therapeutic advice? Why is it important?
2. Take a look at your own life. Do you see yourself as being positive in the LP sense? If not, what are some of the challenges you face and things you can do to create more positive/empowered spaces?
3. What are three things we suggest you do to get started on a path back to positivity and empowerment? Why do you think they are important? Have you had any difficulty trying to apply this

advice?

The Importance of Breathing

In the last few units, we have talked about being positive, creating boundaries, initiating connection, and dealing with some of the challenges you might face as you work to heal and reconnect. As we have suggested, the process can be difficult and challenging, especially when you awaken and begin to see the true reality of this world, and especially when you bump up against resistance from others.

Unfortunately, discombobulation and resistance are not the only challenges you will face. All the preparatory study and practice, all the visualization and intent that you do will move you inevitably towards having a Connection Experience.⁵⁶ If you stay persistent and consistent with your intent and visualization, if you reduce violence in your life, if you embrace your power to change, connection will eventually happen. When it does, it is usually a positive thing. However, it can happen that you can be taken off guard and even thrown off balance by a powerful connection experience, especially in the beginning when you are just finding your footing. If that does happen, if you get knocked off balance, then the question becomes, how do you deal with that?

The answer to this question is complicated. The problem is, depending on the quality, intensity, duration, and content of your connection experience, many things can happen. You can have *mild* “nature experiences” that create feelings of well-being and goodwill. You can have *moderate* “peak experiences” that give you added insight and understanding about your self or creation. You can have *intense*

⁵⁶https://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/Connection_Experience

enlightenment experiences, *transcendent* creation experiences, or even blissful, **cosmic** consciousness types of experience. Little experiences aren't usually a challenge, but moderate. Obviously, the more powerful the experience is, the more of a challenge it is to handle.

And note, it is not just powerful positive experiences, what we call Zenith Experiences,⁵⁷ that can be a challenge. It sometimes happens that you can have what we call Nadir Experiences.⁵⁸ Nadir experiences are negative connection experiences characterized by confusion, anxiety, guilt, shame, fear, paranoia, anger, rage, aggression, and even disassociation and fracturing of the bodily ego.⁵⁹ In the rare worst cases, a nadir experience can cause Spiritual Emergency and even temporary Connection Psychosis.⁶⁰

What causes a nadir experience? *A nadir experience is typically caused when a damaged or poorly prepared bodily ego tries to cope with the expanded awareness and expansion of understanding that may attend a connection event.* Like zenith experiences, nadir experiences can range from mild to cosmic. For example, a moderately felt connect experience can lead you to suddenly realize that you have treated your spouse, your children, and other people badly. This realization can cause painful guilt and shame that can be quite painful,

⁵⁷ see https://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/index.php/Zenith_Experience.

⁵⁸ See http://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/index.php/Nadir_Experience.

⁵⁹ An excellent typology of Nadir Experiences is provided by Jared R. Lindahl et al., "The Varieties of Contemplative Experience: A Mixed-Methods Study of Meditation-Related Challenges in Western Buddhists.," *PLoS ONE* 12, no. 5 (May 24, 2017): 1–38.

⁶⁰ https://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/index.php/Connection_Psychosis

even debilitating if you are not fully prepared for it. Or, you can have a more intense nadir experience when suddenly realize the world is filled with unnecessary poverty, greed, ideology, confusion, corruption, war, despair, pedophiles, pain, and abuse. If you think life is all good and that everything happens for a cosmic or evolutionary reason, realizing the true nature of this world can knock you out of your socks. And note, it is not just negative realizations that can cause nadir experiences. Even positive realizations can cause negative feels. This is especially true if you have trust issues, struggle with self-esteem, are filled with wrong thought, or are otherwise damaged by toxic socialization. In cases where there is serious psychological and emotional damage, even positive connection experiences can flood the mind, overwhelm the bodily ego, and completely incapacitate you. It is no understatement to say it can be quite the ride.

To be clear, both zenith and nadir experiences can be challenging. When it comes to a zenith experience, the challenge is grounding and integrating these experiences. When it comes to nadir experiences, it is often about confusion, anxiety, guilt, fear, paranoia and other “dark night of the soul” stuff.

To summarize, if not properly prepared or supported, both zenith and nadir experiences can cause major emotional, psychological, and spiritual setbacks.⁶¹ How often this can happen is unknown at this time⁶²

How do you handle powerful zenith and nadir experiences? It is hard

⁶¹Brant Cortright, “An Integral Approach to Spiritual Emergency,” *Guidance & Counseling* 15, no. 3 (2000): 12.

⁶²Research is needed in this area.

to give general advice because it depends on the type of experience you have, in particular the content and intensity of the experience. What we can say here is that no matter how challenging the experience is, deep, mindful, focused, breathing will help.

Deep Mindful, Focused Breathing

Deep, mindful, focused breathing is simple to do. If you are sitting, sit up, straighten your spine, raise your chin so your head is straight, and close your eyes. If you are lying down, straighten your body so your spine is in line. Then, focus your attention on your breath. While focusing on your breath, slowly take a deep breath in. When your lungs are completely full, breathe out, once again focusing on the airflow. Breathe in, breathe out. Breathe in, breathe out. Combine this deep breathing with a calming affirmation, something like “I am loved, I am safe, everything will be OK.” Simple. Any time you are feeling anxious, afraid, or otherwise out of control, take a few moments and take a few deep, mindful breaths. It will help you calm down and ground.

If you like, you can *add a visualization to make it work better*. As you breathe, visualize a leaf gently falling from a tree. Or, visualize your body in fluid, liquid form. Feel your body rise and fall as you breathe up and down, up and down—like gentle waves washing against a beach. The deeper the breath, the bigger the wave. Breathe in, breathe out, rise and fall like gentle waves on a calm ocean. If you can, try putting gentle music on to help with your mindful breathing. Get in the habit of this. Every time you feel anxious or fearful, confused or disoriented, take a few moments to breathe, and maybe listen to some

calming music. You will find these practices help calm and ground.

Once the experience is over, it is time to reflect. If the breathing and grounding worked and you are able to think about and assess the experience, great. If the experience was really traumatic or mind-blowing and you still have trouble even after you have calmed down, don't be ashamed to seek professional guidance and assistance from knowledgeable practitioners. Often the difference between ongoing struggle and quick integration is a few words from a wise guide or a properly trained Connection Coach.⁶³

Conclusion

And that's all we have to say about breathing. In this lesson, we have pointed out that intent, visualization, and the actions you take to improve your life situation will eventually lead to connection experience. We have suggested that there are two types of connection experience, zenith experiences and nadir experiences. Although nadir experiences are more problematic, both zenith and nadir experiences can cause emotional, psychological, and cognitive indigestion. If you do experience fear, anxiety, confusion, and disorientation, mindful and focused breathing can help get you calm and grounded. If you think you need help, don't struggle in darkness, seek professional guidance. A few wise and knowledgeable words from a wise guide or a properly trained connection coach is often all you need to keep yourself moving forward on the straight and narrow path towards stronger and more persistent connection.

⁶³https://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/index.php/Connection_Coach

Additional Reading

- Mindful Breathing⁶⁴ – a short how-to on mindful breathing from the *Greater Good Science Center* at Berkeley
- The varieties of contemplative experience⁶⁵ – a scholarly research article documenting various types of Nadir Experiences

Study Questions

1. Why is breathing important? From a spiritual perspective, what is deep breathing designed to alleviate? What sorts of conditions trigger the need for breathing?
2. Have you had spiritual experiences (i.e. connection experiences) where breathing has (or could have) helped you ground? Write down your thoughts and reflect. If you are a part of a group, share with the group and discuss.
3. What is the difference between a zenith experience and a nadir experience? Have you had either of these? How did you handle it “in the moment,” and subsequently? Share your experiences.
4. Describe the proper breathing technique. Are there any visualizations and affirmations you can think of, besides the one provided in the text, that can facilitate the relaxation process?

⁶⁴https://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/mindful_breathing

⁶⁵Lindahl et al., “The Varieties of Contemplative Experience: A Mixed-Methods Study of Meditation-Related Challenges in Western Buddhists.”

How to Stay on Course

In the last lesson, we talked a bit about the importance of deep, mindful breathing. There we learned that breathing is an important stress, anxiety, and panic management tool. It may have been a bit of a surprise to consider connection as a potentially difficult and challenging process, but it can be. Keep in mind that deep, mindful breathing is a critical tool that can help keep you focused, grounded, calm, and on track.

In this lesson, we want to take a few moments to talk about what happens if, despite all your good intentions to the contrary you struggle, are delayed, and even bumped off The Path.⁶⁶ Unfortunately, it is a definite possibility. One minute you can be making good progress towards healing and connection, and the next you can be distracted, turned away, or halted dead in your tracks. It happens all the time. It can happen to anybody. It can easily happen to you.

If it does happen, what do you do? That depends entirely on why you are getting bumped off the path. It might be as simple as needing a break. Or, you may need to adjust your priorities. Maybe you are spending too much time running around, in groups, or at work. Maybe you are dealing with difficult issues and you need to give more time over to practice, reflection, and healing. You might even have to reach out for guidance and assistance to keep moving forward. In some cases, bad spiritual information might be slowing you down. Finally, you might need to deal with violence and chaos in your life. There are lots of different reasons why you might be slowed down or bumped

⁶⁶https://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/index.php/The_Path

off the path.

As for needing to take a break, unlike “law of attraction” style spirituality where the primary goal is to secure material wealth, an authentic path of human development is healing and reconnection. In general, it is about growing your awareness of the toxicities in your life and taking action to change these so you can heal and establish a stronger connection. Let us be clear here, growing your awareness and making changes can be a lot of work, especially if your awareness leads to uncomfortable realizations and difficult actions. Just imagine if your growing awareness leads to the realization that there is a pedophile in your family. If you are serious about healing and connection, you cannot just ignore that, and sorting it out is going to be a major challenge. Or, maybe growing awareness leads you to realize you have been a terrible parent, or an awful employer. Both those realizations are going to be major challenges and they are going to require major changes, if you want to move forward. Depending on your situation, it can all be quite exhausting. Consequently, you might find yourself withdrawing from spiritual practice as a result, and that’s OK. We all have different life circumstances. We all have unique issues and struggles to deal with. We all follow a slightly different course and we all move at our own individual pace. This is not a race and there is no one-size-fits-all solution. If you need to take a break, take it. Just remember, when you have rested, start-up with your visualizations and affirmations again.

Of course, needing a break is not the only reason your progress might stall. In addition to taking a rest, another thing that might undermine your ability to move forward are your priorities. Authentic spiritual

practice is hard, especially as you progress from beginner to intermediate and advanced levels of practice. While you might be able to get by with a little bit of practice and reflection here and there in the beginning, the farther you travel along The Path, the more challenging it gets. The bottom line is, if you want to make steady forward progress towards healing and connection, you will eventually need to spend about an hour or so a day on studying, meditating, visualizing, and affirming your intent. If you are too busy doing other things, you won't make any progress. Therefore, you will need to adjust your priorities. That is all there is to it. If you do not devote the time, you will not make the progress forward.

Keep in mind here that this process is a process that happens in your mind first. It is a process that changes the way you think and feel about things. For this reason, when things get challenging, you may have to give over even more time to meditation and reflection. All you really have to do is give yourself some time and space to think. How you do that is up to you, but we recommend making it as pleasant as possible. Lying down, having a hot tub, or going for a walk in nature while doing a visualization and affirmation, and just thinking about things for a while. Later on, you might want to be more creative, perhaps writing poetry, learning to paint, expressing yourself in prose or music, and so on. It really just depends. Find what you like to do and then do that. The more you make your connection practice a pleasant experience, the more likely it is you will spend the time you need.

In addition to taking a break, adjusting priorities, and giving more time over self-reflection and meditation, you might also have to learn to

deal with bad spiritual information. Unfortunately, when it comes to human development and human spirituality, there is a lot of nonsense out there. If you pay attention to that nonsense, you can easily get twisted up, turned around, and even bumped off The Path. If you find you are spinning your wheels or getting bumped off course, take a critical look at what you are reading, watching, and listening to. In other words, learn to discern. You will save yourself a lot of wasted effort if you can learn to pick high-quality, grounded, and accessible information sources while dismissing all other nonsense.

Of course, a big question here is, how do you discern spiritual BS from authentic healing and connection guidance? As you will see as you progress along this path, that can be a major challenge, but the LP can help. For example, our *Rocket Scientists' Guide to Authentic Spirituality* provides a framework, the Seven Pillars of Authenticity,⁶⁷ for critically engaging with spiritual and religion. We also spend a lot of time clearing up confusion and disinformation as we progress through the LP Workbook series, and in particular in *Lightning Path Workbook Four* where we discuss spiritual narratives, archetypes, and creation myths. The point here is, if you want to avoid getting stalled and bumped off The Path, you need to spend time critically engaging with the religious, spiritual, and archetypal narratives of this planet. If you don't, you will never get past the basic levels of knowledge and practice.

Finally, in addition to needing a rest, adjusting your priorities, and learning to properly discern, sometimes it can happen that violence and chaos in your life can bump you off The Path. Violence includes

⁶⁷https://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/index.php/Seven_Pillars_of_Authenticity

physical violence, but also emotional, psychological, spiritual, and even the financial violence of exploiting others for profit. Chaos is what happens in a highly agitated environment where everything is always abuzz and nobody can just sit down and relax.

The problem with violence is that violence of any form, physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual, interferes with the healing and connection process and damages, even destroys, the mind and body. This is true whether you are the victim of the violence or the perpetrator. Violence at either end of the stick destroys. How much damage is discussed in the paper Toxic Socialization⁶⁸ so if you are interested, check that here. Here we will just reiterate that all violence is bad and if you want to progress past the basics you'll need to end violence. You can start by adopting a no-violence rule⁶⁹ in your home and, if possible, workplace.

The problem with chaos is that it just makes it hard to sit down and relax, much less engage in meditative, affirmation, visualization, and other connection practices. Sitting, relaxing, doing nothing but thinking, meditating, relaxing, intending, is an important part of your healing and connection process. If you don't have space for that because you're all jumping about you will have a hard time making healing and connection progress.

So what do you do to deal with violence and chaos in our environments? Boundary visualizations⁷⁰ (discussed earlier) and no-

⁶⁸Sosteric and Ratkovic, "Toxic Socialization."

⁶⁹https://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/index.php/No-Violence_Rule

⁷⁰https://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/index.php/Boundary_Visualization

violence rules can help you deal with violence and chaos, but you also have to take action. Clearing out all forms of violence, even "minor" forms, will make it much easier to stay focused and on track. Working to calm your environments down will help give you the time and space you need to reflect.

If you find yourself unable to establish and maintain safe spaces with no violence, you may need to seek professional assistance. Alternatively, you may simply choose to exit toxic relationships, even family relationships. The subreddit [r/narcissisticparents](https://www.reddit.com/r/narcissisticparents/)⁷¹ is full of examples of people in family relationships that are so toxic and violent they have no other choice but to completely terminate contact.

Conclusion

And that is all we have to say about staying on course, for now. In this lesson, we have examined four things that can stall your progress and bump you off The Path. If you do find yourself losing interest in your practice and returning to “normal” life, pay attention to these four things. Number one, your stress and exhaustion levels. Number two, your priorities. Number three, your information sources. Number four, the presence of violence and chaos in your life. If you find problems in any of these areas, take corrective action. Otherwise, you may end up stuck in one place.

Additional Reading

- *Rocket Scientists’ Guide to Authentic Spirituality* – A short

⁷¹<https://www.reddit.com/r/narcissisticparents/>

treatise on how to select information sources that can best support your healing and connection work.

Study Questions

1. Do you experience violence and chaos in your life? If so, think about the various ways this harms you and makes healing and connection practice difficult. What do you think you can do to break the patterns of violence and chaos so you can continue forward movement? Write down your thoughts and reflect.
2. Examine the priorities in your life? Where do you put your most energy and effort? Where do you put the least? Write down your top five priorities. Is human/spiritual development on this list? If not, what can you do to shift priorities around so you can give your personal development the time it really needs?
3. Take a moment to think about all the various authors, bloggers, vloggers, and so on you go to for information and inspiration. Have you ever thought critically about these information sources? Do you think some of these sources might be interfering with your progress? If so, in what way? Write down your answers and reflect.

Accelerating your Progress With Connection Practices

Everything that we have talked about so far has been about getting you moving on a path toward healing and connection. We have looked at the nature of the process, how to initiate connection, how to deal with challenges, and so on. If you follow the guidance here, and especially if you correctly discern your information choices, you will make progress. You will find your ideas shifting, your environments slowly changing, and your thoughts and actions slowly aligning. This gentle progress will be fine for a while, but eventually you may find yourself looking for ways to accelerate the process. At this point, you may begin looking in more detail at various Connection Practices⁷² that can help you accelerate your healing and reconnection process.

We spend considerable time discussing connection practices in *Lightning Path Workbook Three: Connection*. There we break connection practices down into Connection Preparation,⁷³ Connection Procedures,⁷⁴ and Connection Processing.⁷⁵ When you are ready to jump into a more detailed study of connection practices and how they can facilitate your healing and connection process, go read that workbook, or consult the relevant SpiritWiki entries. Here, we will just introduce you to the concept of Connection Supplements⁷⁶ and how connection supplements can accelerate your healing and spiritual

⁷²https://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/index.php/Connection_Practice

⁷³https://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/index.php/Connection_Preparation

⁷⁴https://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/index.php/Connection_Procedure

⁷⁵https://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/index.php/Connection_Processing

⁷⁶https://spiritwiki.lightningpath.org/index.php/Connection_Supplement

progress.

For your information, connection supplements are dietary supplements and pharmaceuticals that help facilitate healing and connection. Connection supplements include but are not limited to things like DMT, MDMA, Psilocybin Mushrooms, LSD, and even Cannabis. Connection supplements accelerate the healing and connection process by activating the brain and forcing a wider connection to higher Consciousness. The use of connection supplements to accelerate healing and connection is nothing new. Indeed, humans have a long history of using connection supplements to facilitate connection and healing.⁷⁷ Even Jesus is thought to have used connection supplements to help with connection.⁷⁸ This is not surprising. These substances are quite powerful. When used properly, they can turbo-charge your healing and connection practice.

Unfortunately, a lot of people have the wrong ideas about these substances. Thanks to elite resistance and deception, people believe that connection supplements are “drugs” that are bad for you in some way. As a consequence of racism, prejudice, and elite deception, humans have been denied access to these powerful practices and natural substances that, if widely used, could accelerate healing and connection and profoundly alter the course of human history.⁷⁹

⁷⁷Kristina Hunter, *Consciousness Medicine: Indigenous Wisdom, Entheogens, and Expanded States of Consciousness for Healing and Growth* (California: North Atlantic Books, 2019).

⁷⁸Chris Bennett, *Liber 420: Cannabis, Magickal Herbs and the Occult* (Walterville, OR: Trine Day, 2018); Staff Writer, “Ancient Israelites ‘Burned Cannabis in Worship,’” *BBC News*, 2020, sec. Middle East, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-52847175>.

⁷⁹In the early seventies, elites in the U.S. began a “war on drugs” that cast connection supplements in a negative light, and made possession of these

Of course, our negative view is changing. Researchers are more and more demonstrating the powerful effect of connection supplements to heal and transform, and the general public is slowly coming on board. Connection supplements, in particular, are rapidly entering into mainstream consciousness and becoming widely available as viable tools for healing and connection practice.

If, at a certain point, you do feel drawn to accelerate the healing and connection process by using connection supplements, a few words of general advice.

Number one, respect the practices and supplements. These are powerful substances that can instantly transform your thinking and your life, but they can also shock you, bowl you over, and, temporarily cause discomfort, anxiety, fear, depression, rage, delusion, social impairment, and other things. In rare cases, psychosis requiring medical care may be the result.⁸⁰ These negative outcomes are rare, however, and usually temporary; but they do happen, so be aware.

substances, especially by the underprivileged, a crime with heavy penalties. Why?

Either because they have tried them and have had bad trips and are now afraid, or because, for various reasons, they don't want humans to discover these sacred and holy gifts. One reason elites might want to lie about their nature and power is that connection supplements are so effective at healing that if they suddenly became widely accepted, they would undermine the multi-billion dollar pharmaceutical industry in an instant. Another of the reasons elites don't want the people to find out about these things is because, as I point out in the article "Mystical Experience and Global Revolution," these experiences lead to resistance and revolution. For more on the revolutionary potential of mystical experience, see Mike Sosteric, "Mystical Experience and Global Revolution," *Athens Journal of Social Sciences* 5, no. 3 (2018): 235–55, <https://doi.org/10.30958/ajss.5-3-1>.

⁸⁰Christina Grof and Stanislav Grof, "Spiritual Emergency: The Understanding and Treatment of Transpersonal Crises," *International Journal of Transpersonal Studies* 26 (2017): 30–43, <https://doi.org/10.24972/ijts.2017.36.2.30>.

Number two, keep in mind that if you do struggle with your use of connection supplements, be aware that these struggles are not coming from the supplement or practice itself, but from aspects in your own life and mind that need to be examined and changed. That's what connection supplements and practices do. They enhance the function of your brain.⁸¹ They temporarily "wake you up" and make you more aware of things (both internal and external) that you were previously unaware of, that you had suppressed, repressed, or simply forgotten. Use this awareness to meditate, reflect, and make the changes you need to make.

How do connection supplements do this? It is exactly like waking up in your room in the morning. When you are asleep, you are hardly aware of anything in your room or anything going on around you. However, when you wake up in the morning, suddenly you can see the room and all that's in it. If the room is clean and sparkly with sun shining in, your awakening will be pleasant. If the room is a mess, if your dog has pooped and there is clothing and junk strewn everywhere, not so much.

It is the same with connection supplements and practices. If the room you are waking up in is only a little messy, then forcing yourself to wake up with connection supplements will be mostly pleasant. However, if the room is a mess, it is going to be a challenge. Exactly how big a challenge you face, and what exactly that challenge will be, will depend entirely on the condition of the room. If it is just a small mess, it should be easy to wake up. However, if it is a disaster area, if there is a pedophile in the room, if your parents have abused you, if

⁸¹Mike Sosteric, "The Science of Ascension: A Neurologically Grounded Theory of Mystical/Spiritual Experience" (Draft), <https://www.academia.edu/28919294>.

you have experienced serious psychological or physical injury, or if you have been bashing around the house while sleepwalking, it is going to be harder.

Our advice to you is, don't turn away from connection supplements just because they might challenge you. That challenge is what will accelerate your healing and reconnection process. Instead, be aware that this is all about being aware. If you suddenly become aware of some things that make you uncomfortable, don't run away from that awareness. Doing so will only cause you more anxiety and grief and it will ultimately put you back to sleep. Instead, face whatever it is that comes up head-on. Look at it, think about it, process it. Most of the time, this will be all you need to move forward.

If you do struggle, if you are confused, if negative emotions like fear and anger last more than a day, don't struggle in isolation, take time, take a break, do some research, and (if you are really struggling) get help from a competent professional, particularly one knowledgeable about human spirituality and connection supplements. Remember this good advice: whether you avail yourself of connection supplements and practices, or whether you just go with visualization and affirmation, often the difference between ongoing struggle and actually moving forward is a few sensible words from a knowledgeable healing or connection practitioner.

Conclusion

And with that, we come to the end of this short introductory LP course. The purpose of this course has been to give you some basic

concepts and techniques that you need to get moving on an authentic path of healing and reconnection. Hopefully, you feel a little more grounded and knowledgeable at this point, perhaps even a little bit enlightened. If so, great. Put this advice into practice and you will certainly begin to make forward progress.

Additional Reading

- [Cannabis burned during worship by ancient Israelites – study](#)⁸²
- Consciousness Medicine – Francoise Bourzat
- [What is Holotropic Breathwork](#)⁸³ – A basic overview of holotropic breathwork

Study Questions

1. What are Connection Supplements? Have you ever experimented with connection supplements? Share some of your experiences and insights from these experiences.
2. According to the LP, how do connection supplements and connection practices work? What should you do if you experience an uncomfortable awakening experience?

⁸²See <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-52847175>

⁸³<https://www.healthline.com/health/holotropic-breathwork>

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<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/living-forward/201806/3-effective-visualization-techniques-change-your-life>.