

SHOW ME THE WAY

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HOW TO UNHOOK AND LIVE FREE

Pamella Moore

Kettlepot Press

**Show Me the Way
How to Unhook and Live Free**

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*For Steve and Shauna: Love you to the moon and back.
You are my sunshine.*

Also by Pamella Moore
Inward to the Kingdom: A Six-Week Journey
and
Unhook and Live Free: The Workbook



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P R E F A C E

AN ALLEGORY: HER PURPOSE

I WROTE THIS allegory around 1988. It was my first attempt at telling my story. I include it in this book, as it is my story. (I updated some of the language.) It is my belief it is the story of many of us. The cause of the pain may be different for each of us, but we are united in the experience of pain and the motivation to create healing communities around the world. We are all part of the healing of ourselves, each other, and the world, both near and far.

Once upon a time, a little truth warrior was born. She was full of light and love. There was rejoicing in the kingdom. She was destined, as an infant, to leave the majestic mountains and her Earth Mother and enter into life with the dragon family in the valley below. Long before she was born, it had been predetermined that she would go. It was the way of the people of the majestic mountains. Legacy determined that all truth warriors must descend to the valley to learn their purpose. They had to find their way back to the majestic mountains on their own. The only way for them to know they belonged was through the path of the heart. The truth warrior knew she must face herself to find her way back to true love. It was the circle.

Down in the valley below, the truth warrior chose to become part of the dragon family. The dragon family was a very sad and wounded breed. Due to the dragon family's wounds, they could not look upon the truth warrior's light and love. It caused deep shame within them. You see, in an earlier time, the dragon family had been full of light and

love. But eventually the lies handed down from their ancestors became their reality.

Soon after the truth warrior's arrival in the valley, the dragon family began instilling the ancestors' lies in this child of light and love. They would beat her with their powerful, whip-like tails. They never allowed her the tears that were rightfully hers. Worst of all was when the father dragon and his dragon friends took her down into the pit of snakes, where they would force her to devour the snakes' tails. She became convinced that she was very damaged and unworthy.

Her light grew dimmer and dimmer. Her love seemed to disappear, just as the snakes did as they entered her mouth. Her Earth Mother, living high in the majestic mountains, was pained by what she saw her child going through. She was hurt by the way the dragon family treated her beloved child. She was saddened by the dragon family's wounding of both the truth warrior and themselves.

The Earth Mother knew that this was a special child with a unique purpose that could not be altered. She must walk through the pain. She had a message for the children yet to come. Her light was to show them the way. As the Earth Mother witnessed the truth warrior's light dimming, she became afraid the truth warrior would not make it to the other side. Sometimes truth warriors lost their way and never made it to the other side. The Earth Mother knew her light could not be extinguished. She sent her helper down to the valley below to hide it. The helper put a hardened shell around the truth warrior child's tiny flicker of a flame. She knew this child would need this spark of light in her journey ahead.

There was no light that the truth warrior could feel, nor could anyone see her true self. Only the hardened shell was visible to the world and herself. She lived for many years in pain and misery with the dragon family, believing the lies of their ancestors. The lies became her truth—not of a true self, but of a dark and false self that took over her body. She was living as the dragons before her had lived. She thought she would become just like them. She could not see her purpose.

She grew into a woman, a sad, wounded woman. She knew she had to leave the land where the dragons ruled. The Earth Mother up in the mountains rejoiced to see her restlessness and waited for the truth warrior to call upon Her to show the way.

Sadly, the truth warrior had sworn to herself never to let anyone or anything get close to her. This only caused her pain. She was not going to turn to her Earth Mother in the majestic mountains, even though she felt Her presence. She told herself the Earth Mother had abandoned her from the beginning. She could not see her light, and it was so dark.

The truth warrior knew not which direction to go, so she just ran. She ran down the first path she came upon. She soon found herself in a desert wasteland of shattered dreams. The more she tried to find her way out alone, the more lost and turned around she became. She wept bitter tears as the majestic mountains slowly left even her distant view. The horrible irony was that the harder she ran into the desert, the stronger the messages of the dragon family became part of her. Where there was once light and love, now only hatred and bitterness grew. Every day “the voices” of the past would scream to her, “You are only good for a little action in the pit of snakes. You are worthless. You are damaged goods.”

The truth warrior eventually found herself jumping willfully into any snake pit she came upon. The more she ventured into the desert wasteland of shattered dreams, the greater the pain of being with herself increased. She grew very weak and tired.

One day she could take the pain no longer and cried to her Earth Mother in the majestic mountains, “I am weak, I am tired, and I am so very afraid. Show me the way!” The Earth Mother had waited so very long for her to call to Her. She was filled with joy. Now She could show her the path of her truth. She did not magically appear and take the truth warrior from the wasteland. This was her journey. She needed to learn her own power and strength. She had to know she had the power to prevent any dragon from ever pulling her into the wasteland again.

Only through the journey on the path of unspent tears could she know she had the power and strength of her own love and light. What did happen was that the protective shell covering her light broke away. Her tiny spark of light was still there. At first her light was small, and she stumbled along the path every step or so. Sometimes the truth warrior was afraid, and it was dark. But she was determined to leave this arid place forever. A little light began to shine. She soon started seeing others on the trail who had grown up in the land of the dragons. The truth warrior saw that others had fallen, just like she had. The difference was that they reached out to one another to break their fall, and she would not. She thought she could not. They would reach their hand out to the truth warrior, but she did not trust, so she wrapped her arms tightly around herself and looked away.

One day it came to her that she could not walk the path alone. She needed others or she would not make it. The next day, as she tripped over a rock, she caught hold of a companion's hand. This fall was not as hard or as painful as the others had been. It was better to have a cooperative spirit with others walking the path with her. She found herself reaching out her hand to break the falls of those coming behind her, and allowing others to help her break her fall. With this newfound sense of being part of a tribe, her light began to grow even more. She woke in the morning looking forward to that day's journey, even though she knew it was going to be hard. Her new tribe was teaching her what love meant.

“Together, with love and compassion, we walk the path. Together, we are stronger than one.”

She became stronger with each step along the way. She no longer had to live in the darkness of her past. She could march past the snake pits and not feel compelled to jump in. She was learning her truth. She had begun the journey of reclaiming herself.

The truth warrior now lives in the foothills of the majestic mountains with her tribe, in the land of all seasons. Her light and love grow

brighter with each passing day. She often journeys back to the trail of unspent tears, not to live in the past but to offer her hand to those stumbling along their way. She does not feel the need to run, as she faces all the seasons now with the same light and love. She has learned to live her purpose. She was always meant to show others the way.

I N T R O D U C T I O N



MY STORY

I am not what happens to me, I am what I choose to become.

—CARL JUNG

I WAS BORN in Montgomery, Alabama, to two alcoholic parents. I was the fifth of six children in a very poor family. The story I have been told is that I was conceived by my father abusing my mother. I had a very traumatic breech birth that lasted for hours. It was a shocking birth. It lasted so long that my mother always told me I was born the day after what my birth certificate says.

This becomes part of my story where fact and fiction are always intertwined. I was told all my life that I was of Native American heritage, but when I did a DNA test, it showed I had no Native American in me. In my life, as in the story of my heritage, it is hard to tell fact from fiction.

I have always struggled with the stories in my head and the trauma of being shocked. I learned from my family to create stories, both negative and positive, rather than deal with reality. It began at birth, with these original stories. My family members, including me, have stretched and altered the truth all my life.

My childhood was hard. As in most alcoholic homes, I never knew what was going to happen next, and I could not rely on what I saw or heard. My father was a very angry, abusive man when he was young. He physically, emotionally, and sexually abused me, which created many moments of shock and trauma. One of the ways I coped was by creating

stories in my head of being rescued by Jack and Jackie Kennedy clones. In my stories, they would come and rescue me, and she would be wearing a suit with matching hat, shoes, and purse. She would definitely have gloves on, too. I think the outfit mattered so much to me because I thought it represented stability.

My dad was the person I relied on the most and who loved me the most. I knew he loved me and would have gone to the ends of the earth to protect me from other harm. The person who loved me the most was also the person who abused me the most.

My mother was physically and emotionally abusive, but not on the scale of my father. She did not love me like my father did. I always had the impression that my mother just wished I was not there. With my mother, there was no attachment. I have always told myself that being the fifth of six children, the fourth of four girls, meant that she just did not have the energy to care very much about me.

When I was nine years old, my older brother Billie died. This was a shock to me and my family, as it happened very suddenly. This event changed my family forever. The grief and loss was never dealt with. We just stuffed it down, because my mother would become suicidal due to the depression she felt about Billie's death. I was very good at detaching and pretending. I even decided my brother had gone to live with the Jack and Jackie Kennedy clones and was not really dead. I would see him sitting on these big rocks in a river when we went to the cemetery. We would drive over the bridge, and in my mind only the two of us knew he was still living and doing great.

I created stories in my head most of the time. I told my third-grade class my mother was dying, after my brother died. A girl had pushed me down on the bus, and I did not want to be crying for that reason. The lie just came out of my mouth, and then I kept saying it. After a while, I think I started to believe it myself, until the school called my home about doing a fundraiser for my family. My teacher had me stand at the front of the class and explain that my mother was not dying. What I said

was that we did not know, and what they did not know was that she and all of us were really dying of broken hearts.

I started using drugs and alcohol at a very young age. I drank for the first time on my twelfth birthday. It was also the day of my first rape. I was shocked and traumatized. I only told my friend, who told me it was all my fault for drinking. During this time, I would sometimes turn up a bottle of vodka just for pain relief. In the sixth grade, the doctor gave me tranquilizers because I was nervous. I quickly learned that two were better than one. I started high school in the eighth grade. My first week of school, I drank on Monday, smoked pot on Tuesday, took speed on Wednesday, dropped acid on Thursday, and rested on Friday.

I drank and drugged my way through high school, barely graduating. By eighteen I had lost my first child, and by twenty-four I had lost my second child. Those were two of the greatest and most painful shocks and traumas of my life. I ended up unsure of what was real and not real about their deaths, because I had created so many stories around what happened (more on these powerful traumas later).

I was arrested and homeless and had numerous shallow relationships with men, which created a succession of shocks and traumas. I could not tell what was real from the stories I created in my head. I went from being an alcoholic in my early twenties to being an intravenous junkie in my late twenties. My life was a mess. Shortly after my thirtieth birthday, I got sober.

I worked very hard on myself, and I have been in sobriety for over half my life. When I say I worked hard, it was very hard. I had a very difficult time not using. I would lock myself in my apartment to keep myself from going out. I knew on some level I could leave, but I would not allow myself to leave, because I knew I would use. I would confine myself to my bedroom, because I knew that if I left the bedroom and went into the living room, the front door was there and I would go out.

Sometimes during my college years, I would have to run home in the middle of class because I would feel overwhelmed with the urge to use.

I felt self-hatred that was intense. I felt an incredible amount of grief. It was a very long, hard turnaround. I attended twelve-step meetings, counseling, group therapy, and many other types of treatment for a long time. Sometimes I was called “Negative Pam” in the twelve-step groups, as I openly talked about all my struggles. That was painful to hear, but I knew that staying sober was my priority, so I continued to speak the truth about my struggle.

I got both a bachelor’s and master’s degree in social work. I am a therapist who works with addicts and people who have been affected by addiction. I loved and still love what I do, and I am good at what I do because of my love and passion for this field.

When I was five years sober, I met my husband, Steve. He is a very good man, and we have been together for over twenty-five years. We structured our lives around helping ourselves and others to grow spiritually, emotionally, and mentally. Our lives were full and complete.

I helped Steve raise his son, my stepson, Alex. I poured all of my love into raising him. At the same time, I still wanted my own child, so when I was sixteen years sober, we adopted our daughter, Shauna. She brought so much joy into our lives. For a long time, I thought our lives could not get any better. I thought I had arrived.

It all changed with the shock of a phone call. Underneath all the harmonious living, there was a troubling undercurrent. Things did not feel right with my stepson and daughter. So my husband asked him. It came out that my stepson had been both physically and emotionally abusive to our daughter for years. We were devastated and did not know what to do. I had trouble making it through the days due to the pain, grief, and guilt of what was really happening in my life. I made the situation worse by imagining different horror stories of what probably happened.

Steve and I both became sleepwalkers. To get away from the pain of our home, Steve began texting and calling with a woman he thought he should and could save. The rescue was a focus and relief when our lives were falling apart around him. He became lost in the drama of the rescue. He saw himself as a white knight.

I was shocked and traumatized when my very honest husband confessed to me the amount of contact he had with this woman. I knew he was helping her, but I did not realize the extent of the time involved. He had never kept anything from me in the twenty-plus years we had been married. It was the first time he had intentionally kept anything from me.

To make matters worse, I began to make up even more stories in my head. I would assume the worse and then create drastic and dramatic stories from there.

Our lives became a hell from which we could not escape. We both told ourselves stories that had some truth in them, but they were not the truth. Even when we received new information that countered the stories in our heads, we both went with the stories instead of the new facts. We were both in a hell, and we had created it together. We were stuck on “repeat.” Traumas from our past and present were preventing us from getting to the other side. We seriously talked about divorce for the first time in our marriage. We had always been so close, but we could not stop attacking each other with our stories.

It became all about the stories in our heads. We could not stop creating stories that we then accused one another with. The problem was that the thoughts had become stories, and then the stories became beliefs.

We worked very hard at coming out of this black hole we were in. We learned that our thoughts and feelings changed very quickly, depending on what story we were listening to inside of ourselves. We confused ourselves and each other. We would be blown around based on what our minds were saying or what either of us was feeling in that moment. The next moment might be completely the opposite. How could we be sure what the truth was at any given moment? We had to put things together in a way that we could both understand.

Steve and I both began to study and be open to new practices. Although we had been meditating on a regular basis, our practice became more profound. Both sincerity and desperation drove us to meditation, reading, writing, and searching for answers. Some days

we would read, meditate, go to therapy, and think we had found some answers, and then fall apart, fight, and enter into despair. But we kept at it. We meditated together twice a day. We read everything we thought might possibly help us. We fought some more. We went to individual therapy, workshops, groups, and anything else we could think of to help. We fought some more.

Finally, with all the facades removed, we both saw that others were projections of ourselves and our fears. By removing projections, we got to know ourselves. Our lives have changed in deeper and richer ways, and in ways that we could not have imagined. We both feel more at home in our own skin and with each other than we ever have in our lives. We know that we can walk through anything. It might be heartbreaking and painful, but we can do it. We do not believe that all of our problems in life are over. Now we have a way to walk through and use our problems to meet and know ourselves on a deeper and more real level.

There were parts of ourselves we kept hidden, even from each other and ourselves: our shadow selves. They contained our insecurities, pains, dysfunctions, and hidden assets. We are now able to know each other and ourselves on a deeper, more vulnerable level. We have learned that much of the pain and anger during our crisis were created by our thoughts and feelings. (I have never figured out which comes first, and maybe it doesn't matter.) Our thoughts and feelings are what spin us out of control—and how quickly they change.

Today we see each other, ourselves, and the world through much gentler eyes. We are no longer afraid to feel our feelings. We can dance with happiness and mourn in grief with the same touch of peace. It has been very important to us to realize that it is just as freeing to feel sorrow as it is to feel joy. We used to believe the goal was to try to feel happy all the time. Today it is such a relief to just feel.

To this day, we can get lost in our old traumas and start creating stories in our heads. The difference is that we know it is happening and we have some tools to work through them. We no longer stay stuck on “repeat.” We have learned to appreciate the adage that life is a journey

and not a destination. None of us has to worry about “getting there,” because “there” is not a stopping-off place where we are completely done. Knowing this has helped us so much.

This book is meant as a guide. I can teach you some of the insights and ways Steve and I learned to help ourselves. Our experience is that it is our fixed false beliefs that harm us. By learning about how our thoughts turn to stories and stories turn into beliefs, we have more power over what our minds are telling us. Freedom is possible, and even probable. There is a way to regain yourself. Recovery is possible.

PART 1
SHOW ME HOW WE GET HOOKED

CHAPTER 1

BELIEFS

It all depends on how we look at things, and not on how things are in themselves. The least of things with a meaning is worth more in life than the greatest of things without it.

—CARL JUNG

WE ALL GET stuck. The problem with our beliefs is that we believe them. But how does this happen? It happens because of how The voice and the shadows in us create thoughts and then stories. These stories turn into beliefs.

DIFFERENT KINDS OF BELIEFS

It helps to look at the different kinds of beliefs we have: core beliefs, fixed false beliefs, fixed entrenched beliefs, and true beliefs. Here are some explanations of the differences between these four beliefs. These beliefs can range from mild to strong in their intensity. We want to leave the healthy beliefs as they stand, because they can affirm us and give us strength and hope. What we are going to focus on are the negative beliefs that can harm us.

CORE BELIEFS

A core belief is a belief developed in childhood that gives me the sense of who I am as a person. For example:

- I am a Southern belle.
- I am the bad one.
- I am the good one.
- I am not smart.
- I am smart.
- I am my mother's favorite.
- My mother hates me.
- I am unlovable.
- Everyone loves me.
- I am the funny one.
- I do not know how to have fun.
- I am pushy.
- I am passive.
- I am a victim.
- I am a survivor.
- I must be a hero.
- I am a zero.
- I am responsible for what happens to others.
- Nothing is my fault.
- I am weak.
- I am strong.
- It is my fault.
- It is not my fault.
- I do not matter.
- I do matter.
- I am responsible for other people's happiness.
- I must be prepared for problems.
- I must be happy all the time.
- I must not let my guard down.
- I am too negative.
- I am positive.
- I am judgmental.
- I push people away.
- I am too clingy.

As you can see, the list of core beliefs can go on and on. These beliefs tend to be part of our identity. They are who we believe ourselves to be. They are powerful. They were taught and then reinforced in our original family system.

One of my core beliefs has always been that I cannot trust. This belief developed and grew from growing up in a home where the truth was optional. As an adult, and even with my personal recovery, I still have threads left of this core belief due to its strength and power. I also have a core belief that I can handle whatever happens. Growing up with the same dysfunction required me to become self-reliant. I know that I may fall sometimes, but I am going to pick myself back up and I will carry on. It is a positive self-belief that grew out of a negative family system.

When a belief is positive, it helps us with our self-concept. When a belief has a negative connotation, it can destroy a person's life. This is why it is so important to look at these beliefs and unwind them.

FIXED FALSE BELIEFS

A fixed false belief is a delusion. Usually, when we think of a delusion, we think of schizophrenia or dementia or some other mental disorder.

Years ago, my best friend Chuck's mother had advanced dementia. With dementia, a person lives inside of fixed false beliefs. I want to use her as an extreme form of living with fixed false beliefs.

Chuck's mother had been a member of the Daughters of the Confederate Soldiers. She was very proud of this. She was also very proud of her books on the Civil War. At one point she decided that some other members of the Daughters of Confederate Soldiers, elderly ladies themselves, had broken into her home and stolen her books on the Civil War. She called the police from her upper-class neighborhood. She reported that these women had burglarized her home and stolen her Civil War books and escaped in a van. The police had to go and investigate.

The ladies were outraged. They called Chuck and threatened to sue him and his mother for defamation of character. They assumed she had a drinking problem and needed to be put in her place. (This is another

example of a false belief.) They believed they knew why she was doing what she was doing, which was due to a misunderstanding of what was happening. Chuck worked with his mother to get her to quit calling the police and accusing the ladies of stealing her books. It took a long time and a great deal of going over with her that she could not, under any circumstances, call the police any longer. She quieted down. He thought the problem was solved. That is, until Steve watched her for him. While Steve was there, she reported to him that these ladies had stolen her Civil War books and Chuck had helped them. So, in the end, he did not stop her fixed false belief; he only got her to stop telling him about it, and this made the story grow in her mind.

Like many beliefs, this fixed false belief did have a kernel of truth in it. These ladies had borrowed some of her Civil War books and had not returned them. She had taken a real event, the borrowing of the books, and turned it into a major crime by her beliefs. It might be comfortable with this story to think that a “poor old demented woman” had fixed false beliefs, but we all can take a kernel of truth and turn it into a major crime.

Remember, the problem with our beliefs is that we believe them. When we have a fixed false belief, we do not know it is fixed or false. We think it is the truth.

I know I have believed that an event happened a certain way, only to be slapped later with the reality that it was not at all the way I thought. And the more distressed I am, the more fixed my false beliefs become.

Steve and I were worried about his son, my stepson, Alex. I saw a black Ford Ranger truck from the window of our waiting room. Alex drove a black Ford Ranger truck. I looked out the window as I was bringing a client back to my office, and I could see Alex was crying in the truck, *hard*. It became impossible for me to conduct the session with my client, as my mind was whirling about what could be the problem with Alex. Was he in trouble? Had something happened? Had he been arrested? Was it about the pressures we were experiencing with him? What could it be?

I apologized to my client, as I knew I was being ineffective with her, and I rescheduled our appointment. This is something I had never done

before this occasion and have not done since. It was a big deal. I looked at my monitor and saw that he was in the waiting room with a letter in his hand. I knew the letter must be for Steve, and it must be about a dire situation. So I wrote Steve a note to let him know. I slipped it under the door of his office so he could read it, face side up, of course, because he needed to know immediately. Again, something I had never done before or since. I was in tremendous turmoil. At this point, not only was I in turmoil, but I caused conflict for my client, Steve, and his client. I braced myself.

I walked into the waiting room to confront whatever this big problem was. I immediately saw my next client. My client who drives a black Ford Ranger. My young male client who had gotten to his appointment early. My client who had sat in his black Ford Ranger truck. My client who laughed on the phone with his girlfriend while he waited. This whole big problem was completely made up in my head. It was a fixed false belief that Alex was outside the office, crying or in trouble. Completely made up in my head.

Luckily, this was a brief fixed false belief, but it had roots in some bigger fixed false beliefs that I had, that it was my job to anticipate problems before anyone asked for or said they needed my help. That was why I could not finish with my client, and I preemptively interrupted Steve's appointment. It took a great deal of work to lay this one bare. A related fixed false belief is that it is my job to fix other people's problems. Even if it had been Alex coming to the office with a problem, it was not mine to fix. I was brought up to believe that if I could anticipate and fix problems for my parents, my life would be better and safer. It is these deeper fixed false beliefs from childhood that end up hurting us in adulthood.

I work with addiction, and I hear the same things over and over: "I had to drink, because I could not handle momma dying." "My boyfriend is leaving me." "My child is sick." "The stress of school is too much." "The stress of working is too much." "Being married is too much." "Not being married is too much." These and many other reasons and sufferings we experience in life are what people believe make them use. Very often,

people with a drinking problem truly believe they cannot handle life without a drink. These are all fixed false beliefs.

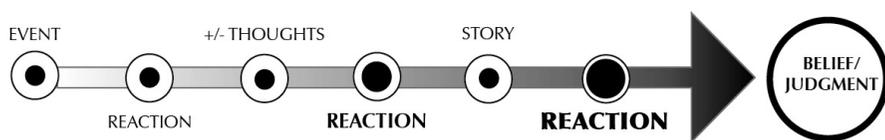
What I learned in my own early sobriety was that if I wanted to drink to handle a problem, I needed to do whatever it took to protect myself from this belief. I learned that just because I wanted to drink, it did not mean I had to drink. Many days and nights I would not leave my bedroom, because I knew if I walked into the living room, I would walk out the front door. If I walked out the front door, I knew I was going to drink. So I stayed. I am not sure how I knew I had to protect myself from my fixed false belief that I had to drink to handle life's problems, but I did. I am thankful that I knew not to let the belief control what I did, no matter how foolish I looked to myself and sounded to others.

The way a fixed false belief develops is like this: Something happens—an accident, an unkind word from someone, we get sick, we fall down, we make a mistake, they make a mistake, there is an event—and we have an emotional reaction. The reaction is both physical and emotional in nature. Our mind does not process factually what happens; instead, it records the event as a threat or a pleasure. After our response, we have either a positive or a negative thought: “That worked.” “That did not work.” “That hurt.” “That helped.” “That did not help.” “That was good.” “That was bad.” These thoughts create a deeper reaction, more intense feelings, due to the feeding of the thought and the first reaction. Then we make up a story about the event and reinforce our subsequent reactions and thoughts.

It is human nature to try to make sense of our world. We want a solution, so we create a story to go with the event. This story creates a stronger reaction, and it becomes more fixed and entrenched. This cycle creates a belief about me, a judgment about you, or both. We then repeat the story to ourselves or others and reinforce the belief/judgment every time.

Most of our beliefs have roots in childhood. I was teased in elementary and high school. I believed that no one liked me in school, that my

SHOW ME THE WAY



parents did not find me acceptable, and that I was flawed on a deep level that made others reject me. As an adult, I have stayed in overdrive looking out for possible rejection. The fixed false belief is that if I stay hyperalert, I will never get blindsided by rejection again.

Many of my and your beliefs end up not being true. I carried my sense of rejection from school into my adult world and it kept me stuck. I was afraid to reach out, and I created a great deal of unnecessary loneliness for myself.

Interestingly, my beliefs about school ended up being wrong on so many levels. I believed people disliked me because of my unworthiness in high school. I saw myself as selfish, fat, and isolated. As I have reconnected with old classmates, they have described me as pretty, sweet, and kind of a cool girl, the opposite of what my mind had told me.

The biggest struggle I have is letting go of feeling like a victim, so I can honestly unhook from my fixed false beliefs. (The definition of “unhook” is to detach from or let go of a fixed thought, emotion, or belief.) It is hard to let go. I use my beliefs to protect me. I tell myself not to trust. My biggest personal struggle is giving up victimhood. A part of me loves living in the victim spot. When I try to unhook from a belief I have created, it usually has many hooks that justify my victimhood. My victimhood is what creates most of my pain.

Buddhism teaches not to throw more arrows at yourself. What that means is, something bad happens once, but we continue to hurt ourselves over and over again by the thoughts we use to keep the pain going of the event. Only by being willing to take personal responsibility for ourselves and our lives can we grow. When we do take responsibility, we can grow by leaps and bounds.

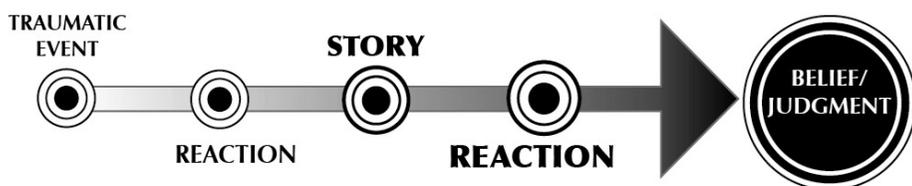
When we can unhook from a fixed thought, emotion, or belief, most painful situations have less charge and energy. We find peace and our true selves once we find this freedom. By owning the pain and paying attention to when we are reinjuring ourselves with our beliefs, we find relief.

An example of this for me is when someone says something that hurts my feelings. I feel the immediate pain of the words. Later, I review it and feel the pain again. I might make up a story about that person or myself and hurt myself even more. The next day, I remind myself of the pain again and then feel more pain. The incident with the person is the only real pain. The stories and thoughts create additional pain that I could have made other choices about. I could distract myself from the negative thoughts (by thinking of something different, positive). I could challenge my thoughts and recognize the harm I caused myself. I could work to not give in to my negative thoughts. I could focus on quieting my mind. There are alternatives to allowing my fixed false beliefs to control my thoughts.

For example, I see Lucy and I wave. She does not wave back. I feel a moment of shame. I go through my thoughts and remember that this happened one time before. I feel more shame. I start telling myself, “Lucy thinks she is better than everyone else, and I do not even like her, because she is so stuck on herself.” With this story firmly held, I am now angry and judge Lucy. “Lucy thinks she is better than everyone else.” I have a judgment. At the same time, I start to judge myself. “What is wrong with me? I am so needy. Why do I have to be acknowledged? Lucy probably did not see me, and I am so shallow, I am making a big deal about it. I am needy.” Now I have a belief about me. I suffer from my belief about Lucy and me. Lucy is happily living her life. I am struggling with self-worth, anger, and low self-esteem. Because Lucy did not wave, this long hidden rejection from childhood showed up, and I project all of that onto Lucy and her not waving.

TRAUMATIC BELIEFS

When we have a traumatic experience, this cycle happens much quicker and at a deeper level. With trauma, a significant event happens—an automobile accident, a robbery, sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, a big heartbreak. This big event creates an unyielding reaction. It makes the fixed false belief supercharged. We create a more dramatic story to go along with the event, the trauma, and the reactions we are having. It becomes necessary to create stories to make sense of our world and protect ourselves. This dramatic story creates even stronger reactions, and we end up with a more solid belief/judgment. This cycle can continue for hours, days, or even years, traumatizing us more and more each time.



Every time I re-experience the story internally, I have a stronger reaction. With each stronger reaction, I am cementing the belief and the judgment I have.

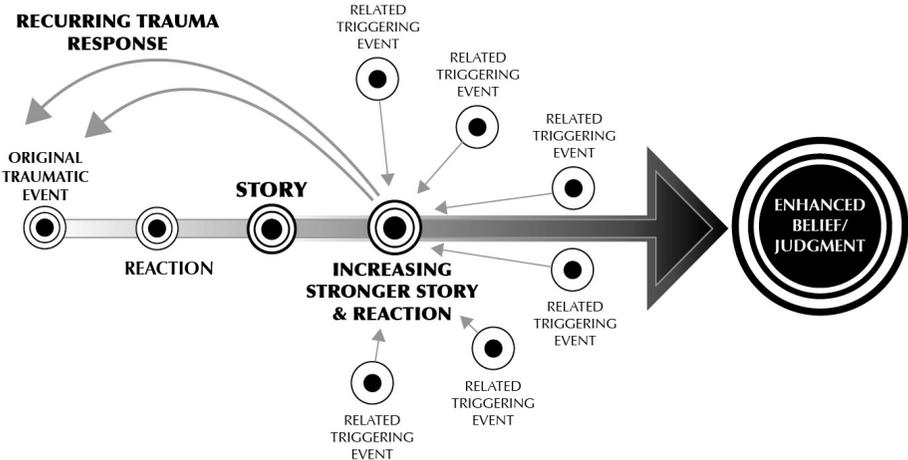
A traumatic belief works like this: I am in an automobile accident on the freeway. I am injured, with a broken leg and broken ribs. This creates big fear along with physical pain within me. I will start telling myself that driving on the freeway is dangerous, because cars drive too fast. This increases my fear, which reinforces my story of the dangerous freeway. My firmly held belief becomes “freeways are too dangerous to drive on.” I stop driving on the freeway as a way to avoid the fear, which in turn reinforces my belief. It becomes a fixed belief: to drive on the freeway is too dangerous. Now, I cannot go anywhere on the freeway. My life is changed by my belief. I will need to find a way to unhook from

each thread of the belief I have created. And the threads are many with each traumatic experience. There is the trauma itself, and then there are the stories I build that create even more trauma.

RECURRING TRAUMA RESPONSE

When we have recurring trauma, the beliefs and judgments are the strongest. A recurring trauma is one that happens more than once. This would include ongoing abuse of any kind, repetitive physical trauma from sports or other activities, old recurring traumas from childhood that have not been resolved, and any great trauma that happened in both childhood and adulthood.

When I was a child, my father physically abused me by hitting me when he was angry. When I married my first husband, he did the same; he slapped me when he was angry. My reaction to this recurring trauma was so great I started to believe *all* men were abusive. My judgment was unmovable that men were all angry and abusive.



Hidden in there was also a belief that there was something in me that deserved to be hit; I was such an argumentative person that I deserved

abuse. For many years, when I first married Steve, I would prepare for the hit that never came. At times I would have a traumatic experience of being hit even though I was not. It took years of not being hit and working on my trauma from abuse to stop expecting it.

There are many threads from repetitive abuse and the beliefs that are attached to this trauma. It becomes a deeply entrenched belief that takes a great deal of work to let go of. It becomes part of our identity.

When we are hurt deeply, we identify with the experience as if it is who we are. I am a trauma survivor. I am a rape victim. I am a victim of domestic abuse. I am a product of an alcoholic home. I am a religious abuse survivor. There are so many ways we become our trauma, instead of the trauma having happened to us.

These beliefs are the hardest to address due to their strength and intensity. We see this frequently with domestic abuse victims and persons who have lived with chronic infidelity or addiction. Because of the repetition of these beliefs, they are hooked firmly to their fixed false beliefs.

Steve and I work with parents of addicts. We see them fiercely live in their recurring fixed false beliefs. At the beginning of their adult children's addiction, they believed they could save them. Their children would tell them, "If you do this one time, then I will be better." By golly, for a day or two it would look like their efforts worked, whether it was time, money, or some other rescue. Then, after a day or two, the children would use again, and the pattern repeated. By the time they come to see me, they have been in this pattern for years. Each rescue reinforces the belief that if they do "it" right, their child will be saved from certain death.

Parents always hear the stories of someone else's child who died. Because of these stories, parents feel they are truly fighting a life-and-death struggle. It adds urgency to the rescue that is difficult to see through. They are not codependent; they are heroic knights going to battle every day. Every day they end up with the reinforcement that they have kept this child alive by their efforts. And they wake up and fight the battle again, like good, noble knights, going off to save their beloved

adult child from the dragon of addiction. They are blind to the reality that all their efforts are not working.

Steve and I have a general policy that a parent (or spouse) of an addict should do whatever he or she needs to do to sleep better at night. Never with the idea that it is going to change the outcome of someone else's behavior. That is where the recurring belief comes from. It starts with the belief that if I do this, it will change what you are going to do. It takes years to learn that there is only one person we are capable of changing, and that is ourselves.

EFFECTIVE BELIEFS

A true or effective belief is a belief that helps me. With the example above, it is easy to see that love is not going to heal another person who is not capable at that moment of receiving love. Hopefully, these parents will be able to see that love helped them through the hard times. This is an effective belief. I cannot change another, but my love for others can help me through difficult times.

Another way of experiencing an effective belief is to believe that we can accomplish a dream, which helps propel us to do just that. We cannot change or achieve any dream, hope, or desire without the belief that we can. It is paramount for us to hold on to these effective beliefs.

Steve's mother died of cancer when he was a young man. There was not a hope that she would not die, but she had the effective belief that she could live to see both of her sons grown. And she did. She died the day after Steve's younger brother turned eighteen. She could not have made her dream materialize without the genuine belief that she could. It gave her the strength and power to live long past what would have seemed likely. It was a gift to them all to have her there, and it was all due to her effective belief that she could.

These are the beliefs we want to hang on to. They help us in our day-to-day lives to accomplish difficult tasks.

I am grateful that I had the effective belief that I could stay in my apartment until the fixed false belief that I had to drink had passed.

This effective belief overrode the belief that I could not stand what I was feeling at the time. My effective belief morphed into “I can handle whatever happens,” which I developed from childhood. This effective belief has helped me more in my life than maybe any other. This is how powerful effective beliefs are. They guide us through the troubled waters, inspire us, comfort us, and empower us.

We will be looking at how beliefs are formed and how to heal from beliefs throughout this book. Beliefs are what we have the most of and understand the least. Either we look at and heal from our beliefs, or our beliefs control us.

BELIEFS

Here is a list of some common beliefs that harm us:

- He/she should love me.
- He/she should be there for me.
- He/she should be better to me.
- He/she should be kinder/nicer/more forgiving.
- He/she is a liar.
- He/she tricked me.
- He/she blindsided me.
- He/she should fix me.
- He/she is not there for me.
- He/she disrespected me.
- He/she sabotaged me.
- It is his/her fault I am unhappy/unsuccessful/unfulfilled.
- He/she should be more.
- He/she shamed me.
- He/she crossed my boundaries.
- He/she judges me.
- He/she pushes me away.
- He/she left/will leave me.
- He/she should care more.

- He/she should not _____.
- I am not enough.
- I am a failure.
- I am ashamed of me.
- I am guilty/bad.
- I will always be left.
- I am responsible for other people's bad/good behavior.
- I am a doormat.
- I have to be strong.
- I never push people away.
- My thoughts control me.
- There is something wrong with me.
- I am judgmental.
- I feel responsible for things that are not even true.
- I am weak.
- I must be a hero.
- I am a zero.
- It is my fault he/she hurts me.
- I do not matter.
- I must do it all myself.
- I am responsible for his/her happiness.
- I must be ready for problems.
- I must be happy all the time.
- I bring people down.
- I am too negative.
- I am stuck.

To go deeper: Allow yourself to wonder about what your most powerful fixed false beliefs and effective beliefs are. Write them down. Put your effective beliefs on a postcard to remind yourself every day what you are capable of.

CHAPTER 2

ABUSE AND TRAUMA

*As a child I felt myself to be alone, and I am still, because
I know things and must at hint at things which others
apparently know nothing of, and for the most part do not want
to know.*

—CARL JUNG

BIG TRAUMA

MUCH HAS BEEN studied and written about abuse and trauma. I have been a counselor for over thirty years. I have heard so many stories of abuse and trauma that it is sometimes difficult for me to listen. I have also experienced both in my life. There are people who are inclined to hurt others for the sense of power and control it gives them, or because of their own trauma and abuse. Some abuses and traumas are committed out of ignorance, and some are committed with the intention to hurt. They both wound, even though they come from two different places.

I have heard from many sources that result equals intention. I believe this is very harmful for people who have experienced trauma. I do not believe that a person has a part in his or her own abuse or trauma. What does happen, though, is that the person with the least control in a situation tends to feel the most responsible. This is important, so I will repeat it. The person with the least control in a situation feels the most responsible. That is why so many children feel responsible for the abuse

that their parents or other adults commit. Persons harmed by others did not cause their injuries because they invited them spiritually, mentally, or emotionally. People do tend to want to take responsibility for being wounded because it gives them the illusion that they can control their pain or others' actions. Bad things really do happen to good people. Acceptance is the better answer.

What does not have to happen is to believe that you are a victim because of the abuse or trauma. Staying away from seeing ourselves as victims keeps us from continuing the trauma.

MY BIG TWELVE-YEAR-OLD TRAUMA

On my twelfth birthday, I was raped. I went to my friend's house. She had an older brother in his twenties. I had a huge crush on him. He bought us alcohol, and I felt so grown up drinking it. I remember feeling sick, throwing up, and then blacking out. The next thing I knew, he was on top of me, raping me. I vaguely remember coming to, throwing up more, and passing back out. I felt responsible, because I had drunk alcohol, had a crush on him, and did not know what happened. I felt so dirty and knew I had to keep it my secret. It felt like it was all my fault. I shook and shook. It was my traumatic secret. (Have you noticed that keeping secrets and not talking to others is what gets us into so much trouble with ourselves? We only have our "voice" to help figure things out. Our "voice" is going to tell us what a terrible human being we are.)

I would shake when I would think of this night and the horror of how it went so terribly wrong, always believing I should have handled it better. I felt the most responsible. I never saw my friend again. I did see her brother, and I would feel shame, fear, and responsibility every time I saw him. I would shake. I have learned over the years that shaking is the body's way of attempting to "shake the trauma away." Today when my body shakes, I let it. I know this is part of the body and mind healing themselves.

Over the years, every time I thought of the night I was raped, I would feel more and more shame about myself. I did drink the alcohol. I was attracted to him. It must have been my fault for those two reasons. It was not until after I was grown, sober, and around twelve-year-old girls that the full impact of what had happened start to hit me. I was a child. A young child. It was rape. By this time, though, the repetitive thoughts and shame had taken a toll on me. I saw myself as unworthy. The trauma of the rape was hard enough, but what I did to myself was even more painful. I abused myself over and over with my thoughts. I became a victim of my own thoughts. It wasn't until my life fell apart that I really started looking at the beliefs I had developed about myself as a girl. I believed there was something wrong with me and that I could make others do things to hurt me. (That result did equal intention.) I believed they would not hurt me if I "acted right." It took really unhooking from this strong and powerful belief to know that I am not responsible for anyone else's behavior.

THOUGHTS ARE LIKE A BUS

This is what repetitive and habitual thinking about shame and trauma does to us. It puts us in hell. The hell we put ourselves in is what we can change.

Here is an analogy. I am hit by a bus once, and then I am on the lookout for the bus. I tighten up when I see a bus and drive as far away as I can. But what happens to me when I am hit by the bus every day for two years? The bus hits me at different times of the day and in different places, but every day I am hit. I am traumatized now, becoming more and more afraid to drive and go out. The bus is gone, but it still lives in my thoughts, and therefore my beliefs. I start generalizing the danger of the bus, which makes me see the whole world as a dangerous place.

We become both the bus and the driver when we attach to the thoughts our mind throws at us about our abuse or trauma. Our thoughts

reenact and sometimes exaggerate our abuses and traumas and retraumatize us every day. Because of this, our thoughts become the bus. Here are some questions to consider to help us unhook from our thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and judgments: Does this story define who I am, or is this a moment in my life? Does having this story really mean anything about who I am? Have I made myself suffer enough? Do I need to make myself suffer more?

SMALL-*t* TRAUMA

Many of the issues we beat ourselves up about are what are called small- or little-*t* traumas. These small-*t* traumas are hearing the angry words of a loved one, being bullied, being ridiculed, seeing a wreck, having a bad fall, experiencing an unexpected death—anger and fear experiences that you or I do not understand. These experiences stay with us. Many times, we judge ourselves for feeling as strongly as we do about these experiences. This judgment reinforces the belief that is born from the small-*t* trauma. You work on the thoughts and can let them go, but the emotional experience lags behind. These small traumas can stick with us for the rest of our lives.

A small-*t* trauma is more than embarrassing yourself. Embarrassment is painful, but it is over in a moment. A small-*t* trauma lingers.

One of my small-*t* traumas happened when I was in high school. In the sex education class, I raised my hand and said I loved oral sex. I wanted my friends to be impressed with my worldliness. Unfortunately, I thought oral sex was another term for French kissing. Days later, when I found out what oral sex actually meant, I felt small-*t* trauma. I could feel the heat and redness in my face. I thought I might die from shame. It was beyond embarrassing for me. I didn't die, and it was soon forgotten by everyone but me. I lived with this small-*t* trauma for many years. I developed beliefs about myself that I was an embarrassment. To this day, I still feel the trauma response when I say something with confidence and discover I am wrong.

SHOW ME THE WAY

To go deeper: Pay close attention to your thoughts for one day. Let yourself hear how many times your mind tries to retraumatize you with big and little traumas. Practice unhooking from these thoughts and feelings by using the following questions: Does this story define who I am, or is this a moment in my life? Does having this story really mean anything about who I am? Have I made myself suffer enough? Do I need to make myself suffer more?

CHAPTER 3

SHAME

Mistakes are, after all, the foundations of truth, and if a man does not know what a thing is, it is at least an increase in knowledge if he knows what it is not.

—CARL JUNG

HELP, NOT HURT

SHAME USUALLY HURTS rather than helps. Shame tells me I not only made a mistake, but I am a mistake. This is one of the many problems with shame. We also feel not only the current shame, but the shame that is stored in our body from previous mistakes and old messages. Shame reinforces old messages you and I have in both the story behind the belief about our current situation and our “back in time” story. It helps to take the self-shame out of the situation when we can realize this is learned behavior. Almost all of our self-beliefs are from childhood, and we need the connection for healing.

Usually, when I am in a shame spiral, I will make my mistakes bigger and more devastating than the actual mistake was. Not that there was not a mistake, but maybe not a life-destroying mistake.

NOT A VICTIM

The mind wants you to believe you are a victim of the world. When you believe you are a victim, it reinforces your self-beliefs. These self-beliefs become cemented into your identity.

I have been pregnant twice. My son was born when I was eighteen years old. His father was forty and a Vietnam vet with PTSD. He did not want to have another child, as he had a son from his first marriage. We were not married. He had a propensity for violence. I thought my love would heal him. When I was six months pregnant, he threw me around while yelling, "I am going to kill that little bastard." I knew something felt different that night. The next morning, he left angry. I did not feel right.

Later that morning, the labor pains started. I called my parents, who were living in another city, but they were having an argument. I felt very alone and did not know what to do, so I did nothing. By the time my son's father came home late that afternoon, I was having severe labor pains. We rushed to the hospital, but it was too late. My son ended up drowning in my blood in the birth canal. I was devastated. My son's father was arrested for feticide the next week. He told me that if I would help him out and say he never touched me, we could be together forever and happy.

So on the day of his arraignment, that is exactly what I did. I went to court and said that I made up what happened the night before, and the case was dismissed. He laughed at me on the steps of the courthouse for ever thinking we would be together, and I never saw him again. The shame and guilt I felt were enormous. I had no compassion for myself. I saw myself as defective beyond hope. I wanted to die. I used a steady supply of drugs and alcohol until my next pregnancy. This time, I was determined to have a healthy baby. I was not going to let this one die.

I ate healthy, I quit smoking, I quit drinking—I took very good care of my body.

I found out I had an incompetent cervix, something I was born with. That helped me understand my first child's death. My body was already in a weakened state.

I was desperate for my second child to live. Once again, I went into labor at six or seven months pregnant. I was given a C-section, and she was born alive. I was so happy, and so afraid she would die. She was very tiny. As I lay in my hospital bed, I (not a religious person at all) prayed to God that I would give anything for my daughter to live. I instantly felt fear. My mind told me that God did not love me. So I said another prayer that I would give my soul to the devil if my daughter would live. My mind had trapped me. There was no way out of this situation without emotional pain. My very thought was that God was going to kill my child, since I had committed such a horrible sin.

Within minutes, they called me to tell me my daughter was not going to make it. I was rolled into the intensive care unit in time for her to turn her head and look at me. She then breathed her last breath. I was burdened with shame and guilt. I believed that I had killed my daughter with my desperate thoughts. I was unable to forgive myself. It was my secret. I began drinking daily to hide from the shame, pain, and guilt. Every day I tortured myself with my guilty secret. As days turned into weeks and months, my mind started whispering to me that I had murdered my daughter. I was unable to look at myself in the mirror. I could not draw a sober breath because of my self-hatred.

My drug and alcohol use escalated until I became homeless. I was incapable of working. It took daily substance use to get through a day with the shame and guilt. I can remember looking in a mirror and seeing death look back at me. I completely lost myself because of shame and guilt. I remained in this trap until I found recovery. At that time, I had to begin to work on forgiveness and compassion for the desperate mother I was. It took a long time. It took many, many unhooks.

SHOW ME THE WAY

Today I see that I allowed my negative belief to have full control of my life, and it almost destroyed me. My mind used shame to try to keep me from making another mistake. I do not want anyone to live in hell like I did. By believing my thoughts that I could control my daughter's, my son's, or my own fate, I made myself live in a personal hell. I would rather believe that I was a terminally flawed human being than to realize that sometimes life has suffering in it. There is not a divine reason; sometimes bad things happen to us all.

GROUNDLESSNESS

We tend to believe fixed false beliefs rather than accept that sometimes bad things happen. If we are being punished by God, or did something wrong, then we do not have to accept that there is uncertainty in life. Growing up means walking on the groundlessness that is life. This is why it is so important to unhook from our self-beliefs, especially those that contain shame. Shame grows in the darkness of our secrets.

The reason we stay in shame is that we believe we are flawed. The more flawed we feel, the more shame we feel. It becomes a vicious cycle that we have to find our way out of.

I want to caution you to be on the lookout for shame. It is sneaky, and you do not even know you are in the middle of it until it has consumed you. The following exercise is designed to help you recognize what shame feels like in your body.

To go deeper: Think of a recurring issue. What sensations does it bring up in your body? How is this familiar (especially from childhood)? Pay special attention to the chest and face (“shame-faced”). Write about this in your journal. You will start to see your patterns of shame in your life.

CHAPTER 4

THE VOICE

The first half of life is devoted to developing a healthy ego, the second half is going inward and letting it go.

—CARL JUNG

BY ANY OTHER NAME

THE VOICE is called a variety of names, including the devil or Satan (Christianity), Shaitan (Islam), Mara (Buddhism), Asura (Hinduism), the mind, the salesman, monkey mind, the voice in my head, and on and on. I have noticed that almost every religion has an external representation of “the voice.” It is as if it is almost too painful to acknowledge what resides in us, that our mind is the cause of most of our problems. We cannot believe that all of this heartache, negativity, frustration, and pain lives within us. It seems like some other entity must have made these dreadful thoughts appear in our heads.

WHAT IS “THE VOICE?”

The main function of the voice is safety. The voice wants to keep us safe and distinct. To keep us safe, it must keep us separated from each other as well as ourselves. It does not care if it uses criticism of ourselves or others; it just cares that we are separated.

“The voice,” as it is used in this book, is the part of our mind that works to separate us from ourselves and the world. It is the part that tells us either we or someone else is better or worse, as a means of separation. It is the part of us that creates the illusion that we must stay in pain or that we need judgment (of self or others). The voice has us grasping or rejecting people, ideas, and beliefs. It has us believing that a certain behavior or action will save us or ruin us.

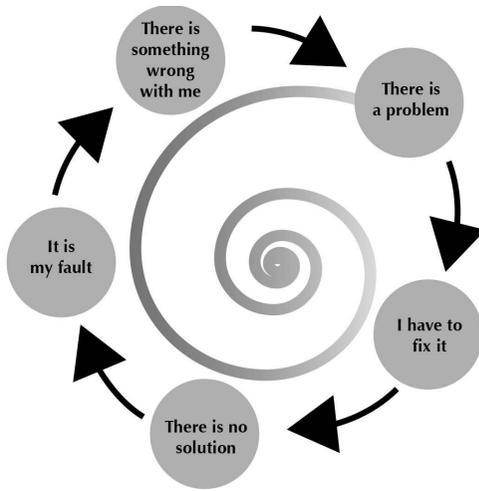
The voice tells us there is a problem and only it can fix the problem. The voice tells us we are all powerful and only we can repair a problem, a person, or ourselves.

The voice is a part of our mind that at times can seem to be all of who we are. We often believe the voice is our authentic self, while it keeps us apart from who we truly are. Others can see we are not being authentic, but we believe we are.

It does not matter if the voice uses the notion that we are superior or inferior, as long as it keeps us separate from ourselves and each other. The voice wants control of our lives. It will say anything to keep us listening and believing. The voice knows everything we know and is willing to use it to control us and achieve its goal of safety.

HOW THE VOICE KEEPS US HOOKED

I hear my daughter trying to figure out how to handle an issue with a friend. The voice says, “You should solve this for her. She is going to feel bad and have a terrible time.” I offer to help by asking her if she wants my advice, and then proceed to give it to her. She rolls her eyes. The voice tells me, “I told you. Now it is confirmed. You are a terrible mother, and her life is going to be ruined.” I feel worse about myself. The voice then berates me for making it all about me, and then I feel even worse about myself. The voice whispers advice to give her: “Maybe you should tell her that if only she changes the way she says what she said...” and the cycle continues.



WHAT THE VOICE IS NOT DOING

Many people believe the voice wants to destroy us. I used to think this, but what I have learned from doing my work is that the voice is always on the lookout for danger. It wants to protect us. This is important to know, because the more we try to fight it, the harder it will fight back. The gentler we can be with “the voice,” the easier it will let go of us. The voice wants to be heard. The fight is what traps us. When we can understand the voice and then question it, and listen for the answer, it can let go.

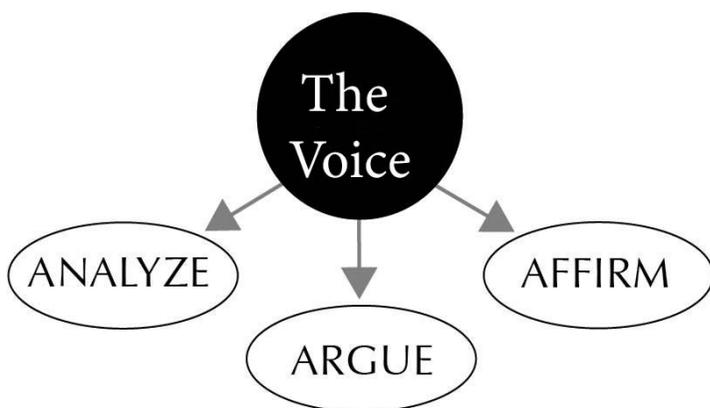
The voice, because it is always looking for any kind of danger, will tell us that we are wrong or evil or flawed. It will tell us other people are trying to hurt us. It will also tell us that we should and could do some pretty foolish things. The voice says we are right and the other person is wrong. The other person rarely appreciates this. The voice says we must win, and the other person, therefore, must be wrong and lose. The voice makes us and our relationships miserable while telling us it is right. The voice always believes it is fair. It must keep us safe.

The voice loves to be in yesterday or tomorrow. The voice loves to review past slights. It dissects them into tiny pieces and reviews each little piece. When The voice has me in its grip, I am very lost. I know other people whose “voice” mostly stays in the future. The past or future

does not matter; the more The voice has you out of the present moment, the more lost you become.

ANALYZE, ARGUE, AFFIRM

Steve likes to say, “Watch out for the three As of ‘the voice’: analyze, argue, and affirm.” Whenever I am looking for any of these three As, I am out of the truth and into “the voice.” When I am analyzing a situation, the voice has firm control of the “story.” When I am arguing with you or myself, the voice is controlling my thoughts, and when I am looking for external or internal affirmation of my story, it is the voice. The three As give me a way to notice when I am lost in the voice.



When I rely only on the voice for my information, I become lost. The voice then uses this information to shame me. “What is wrong with you?” it says. This is a trap that is hard to get out of when it has a hold on you. The voice will use almost any information to affirm your greatest fears.

I have appreciated getting to pick up Shauna from school since kindergarten. One day a week, Steve gets the joy of picking her up. Shauna texted me on one of the Steve days and said her dad was not there. I felt panic rise up in me. I remembered being forgotten at school when I was young. It was terrifying to not know if I was going to be picked up.

The voice pointed out to me, “She must be feeling this same panic.” My analysis was that I must save her from this impending doom.

The voice continued its analysis of the situation and decided that Steve had wrecked his car. How was I going to explain to her that her father was killed in an automobile accident and we were soon to be grief stricken, penniless, and homeless? Then the voice argued, “No, you would have heard if he had been in an accident. He just did not care to pick her up on time.” The voice affirmed this fixed false belief: “Steve does not care for her.” It also argued that neither she nor I should have to put up with such behavior, and I needed to get a divorce from this uncaring man. The voice really started to jump into action and decided I should cancel my appointments because Steve was not going to pick up Shauna, and she would be afraid and alone, and God knows what else might happen to her. (And believe me, the voice was coming up with many crime scenes that could take place any moment. I had to hurry and get there.)

Then she texted me and said, “My dad is here.” A total of two minutes had passed. Death, destruction, and potential divorce had all happened in less than a two-minute span. The voice then went on its next tirade. “How could you be so stupid? You should have trusted he would be there. You are the worst wife ever.” Then I got it. This is how tricky the voice is.

This is how easy it is to get lost in the tales the voice weaves. You can understand why people are entranced with what the voice has to say. It is usually an exciting and dramatic story. At the same time, I could see that the voice was trying to protect me from perceived danger. It believed it was protecting me from hurt.

THE VOICE AND TRAUMA

When people have trauma in their past, they have a “voice” that is on high alert. The more trauma there is, the louder and more protective the voice is. The voice is hypervigilant because of the trauma. The voice

feels like it did not protect the person from danger in the past, and if it had only been more alert, these bad things would not have happened. Part of this is due to the vagus nerve. This is the longest cranial nerve in the body. It effects the gut, the cardiovascular system, the respiratory system, the immune system, and the endocrine system. The vagus nerve touches the liver, lungs, spleen, kidneys, and gut.

When a person has been traumatized, the vagus nerve becomes deregulated. All body systems become affected. Due to these effects, our voice responds with alerts of danger. It is easy to see in people who have a huge startle response. They “jump out of their skin” when startled. The reaction of the vagus nerve triggers self-protection from the voice, which takes control.

When we are traumatized, we are more likely to come under the control of the voice. We get captured in a trance. Our thinking becomes hyperfocused. There is confusion and a foggy-headedness that is very real. Sometimes this is called sleepwalking.

You can hear the trance in almost every argument: it says, “You are doing me wrong. I am the victim, and you are the villain,” while the other person is saying, “No, I am the victim, and you are the villain.” When a person wakes up from a trance caused by the voice, usually a disaster has been created, and it takes the person years to figure out what happened. This is why it is so critical to learn to hear our voice and befriend it. Either we befriend the voice, or it controls us. There is no other choice.

As I mentioned earlier, Steve’s mother died when he was young. She became sick when he was ten years old, and she was sick off and on until she died, when he was twenty years old. Her sickness and death created a deep and profound trauma in him. It affected the way he sees the world.

One of the effects of her death was that if I was angry and became distant, Steve felt a deep abandonment. His voice would tell him, “She is going to blindside you and leave you, just like your mother did. You cannot trust she will be here.” He would get a pain in his chest that would feel unbearable at times. His voice would then say, “You cannot handle

this kind of pain.” At that point, he would get angry and start defending. This, in turn, would trigger my voice and its self-protection against angry men (my father). I would then become angry and defensive.

Our traumas would interact on autopilot, sometimes for hours or even days at a time. By the end of these arguments, we would not even know what we were arguing about. We would only know that we each felt like a victim and the other one had caused great pain. It has taken many years of work for both of us to be able to sit still with the trance of the voice and be with it. Years ago, one of us would have to get angry or leave the house. The trauma of being left over and over again left a deep wound that created a hypervigilance about being left or shocked by bad news.

The voice is so tricky that it will convince us we are not in its trance, when really it has complete power. Steve and I have a morning ritual of reviewing messages from the day before as a way of cleansing our beliefs. Recently, Steve looked at me and said, “I can hear your ‘voice.’ You have started reinforcing the negative of your original thought with ‘it isn’t that bad.’” Of course, at first The voice defended its position, but then I sat with it and saw it. I saw myself as a victim—again. It happens very quickly.

Having a partner or even a group we trust and can review our stories with can help keep us in the solution and out of the voice. Steve and I teach the group members in our practice to listen for each other’s voice as a way of providing feedback. It is hard but rewarding work for them and us. I always admire the ability to give and receive such vulnerable feedback. To be willing to give this kind of feedback takes tremendous courage, but at the same time, it is so rewarding for us all.

THE VOICE AND SOLUTIONS

There is another way the voice tries to protect us, and that is by convincing us we are the solution to a problem. Mine or yours. The voice convinces me that I am the only one who can resolve this problem because

of the super amazing skills that the voice tells me no one else possesses. The voice convinces me I should rescue this person or fix this problem that can only be managed if the voice has absolute control. Once the voice convinces me I am in the driver's seat, disaster is right around the corner. Since I cannot resolve your problem, I have to try harder and harder, and the next thing I know, I have driven into an emotional brick wall. It happens frequently.

We had a client, a bank president who had hired a young woman as a secretary. As most people do who work together, they bonded over the years. Then came her divorce. She was having trouble making ends meet, so he decided to give her enough money to rent an apartment and get a clean start. He felt good about his decision. He saved her from financial doom. She was very thankful. Then she began having physical problems from the stress of the divorce. He decided to let her start leaving early so she could rest. This time it really felt like the problem was solved.

She started texting him to thank him, and he felt like he was as close to a hero as he had ever been. She started confiding in him *all* the problems she was having, and he spent his time trying to help her figure them out. She went to work less and less. To compensate, he started doing some of her work for her, just on a temporary basis, he thought. This went on for months and months. Pretty soon, other employees noticed and started feeling slighted that they were not receiving this special treatment. Gossip started that no man would do this unless he was having an affair. Only he wasn't. His voice had convinced him that if he just solved one more problem, he would be the good guy, and everyone would notice. Sadly, he ended up alienating everyone around and almost lost his job before he awoke from his trance.

THE VOICES FEED OFF EACH OTHER

There are times when people's voices start feeding off each other. My voice says, "There is a problem and I am in control," your voice says, "I see the problem too, and it is worse than you thought." It lets my voice

know that either we have to lock horns, as we see two different solutions to the problem, or we feed off each other to see the problem as worse and worse.

This is called “groupthink,” and it is a very powerful and sometimes dangerous phenomenon. Many a disaster has happened with the power of groupthink.

Some of the ugliest times in our society have happened because of the voice and groupthink. Our country and race relations have many examples of collective consciousness of the voice. When you see a picture of a hanging, you see the power of groupthink. These were not bad people, but people whose voices told them to be wary of a person of color. When you got all of these voices together, tragedy occurred. Together, all their voices decided that it was not murder to hang a person, but they were saving their society from danger. Alone, these people would never have committed such atrocities, but together they became possible.



SHOW ME THE WAY

Postcard depicting the lynching of Lige Daniels, Center, Texas, USA, August 3, 1920. The back reads, "This was made in the court yard in Center, Texas."

This picture is hard to see, but it shows the power of groupthink and what can happen when one person's voice affects another's and then another's. The picture is of a lynching of a black man in the 1920s. As a group, white men and women would get together and lynch black men who were accused of looking at white women. This would happen through the power of groupthink and "the voice." And it happened frequently. We will never know the exact number. The Equal Justice Initiative found that nearly four thousand black men, women, and children were lynched in twelve southern states between 1877 and 1950. Professional photographers would be there to take pictures of the activities surrounding the lynching.

In the moment, there would be no shame. When it became okay for one person, then the next believed it was okay, and on and on. The next day (or, in some cases, years later), people would feel shame and horror at what they had participated in. It is not what they would have done on their own. The voice latched onto the power of the group. In the moment the picture was taken, the group fixed false belief said that it was not only okay, but good to take another person's life.

This is the danger of much voice groupthink. This is how the Holocaust, the Khmer Rouge, the Trail of Tears, and other atrocities have happened. Much voice groupthink says that it is okay to take another human's life. It is beyond powerful.

Groupthink has brought about amazing opportunities at the same time. When I was young, most parents believed "spare the rod and spoil the child." Parents would freely and openly use a belt, switch, or paddle. With my generation, this changed. It was like we decided as a group that physically injuring children was a bad idea. It changed very rapidly. It was like a generation looked up simultaneously and knew this was a bad idea. There was an awareness that this hurt rather than helped. Today,

people still beat children, but not in the numbers and with the abandon of the generations before the boomers. Using a belt on a child is no longer a socially acceptable method of child rearing. Our groupthink helped us realize as a society that we could do better. Today there are methods of disciplining children that work well without hurting and leaving marks.

THE VOICE IS WHERE FIXED FALSE BELIEFS COME FROM

What happens with The voice is very important, because it is where our fixed false beliefs come from. It is important to learn to listen. With practice, we can hear our voices and have the space to not react. The voice is not going to stop talking to us, but with practice we do not have to go along with everything it tells us.

In the next chapter, we will look at how the voice interacts with the shadow, or hidden, parts of ourselves. By looking at these interactions, we can develop a clearer understanding of ourselves. With this understanding, we can start to develop greater choice in our lives.

To go deeper: Listen to what your mind is telling you when you feel like you are the victim. This is your voice. Does your voice attack you or the other or both? Does your voice make the story a little bigger and better every time? Now take ten minutes and meditate. While you are meditating, count to twenty forward and then backward. Notice whether this helps you detach from the story your voice is telling you. I know in those moments of counting, the voice is not me.

CHAPTER 5

THE VOICE AND SHADOW

Everything that irritates us about others can lead us to an understanding of ourselves.

—CARL JUNG

THE HIDDEN PART OF OURSELVES

THE SHADOW IS the part of ourselves that we hide. In fact, we even hide from ourselves. We hide our memories of thoughts, words, or actions that we feel shame about. These are the qualities we have that we do not want anyone to know. These are our doubts and fears. Also lurking in there are our hidden attributes, those qualities and talents that we have yet to discover. We often project all of this onto other people.

Our shadow is what the voice uses to create a trance. Our shadow takes us places we would never normally go. Our shadow is a personal boundary crosser. If the voice knows when we cross our personal boundary, it will use this to badger and shame us, or it might project it onto another (by saying another person is bad for crossing boundaries while we are doing something similar). Our shadow is trying to get unmet needs and insecurities met without us or anyone else seeing that the needs are there. We cross our own boundaries during these times. We have an affair, steal from a store or a friend, lie, and cheat. We do all of these things while believing we are above such behavior.

We have seen this happen with many famous televangelists. They did not know they had a shadow. We all do. We all have a part of ourselves

that we do not want anyone else to see, including ourselves. That is how we and they end up violating personal boundaries. The voice, in an attempt to save us, will shame us for being a bad human being after our fall. It believes this will keep us from harming ourselves again. It doesn't; it makes us more secretive. We then repeat our mistake trying to escape from the negative experience, and it becomes a cycle that repeats itself.

I had a client who was a very moral woman. Years ago, she kissed her old high school boyfriend in a moment of fun at a high school reunion. Since that time, she was afraid her husband was being unfaithful; she kept finding evidence of his flirtations and infidelities. However, these offenses only lived in her mind. Her voice used her shame against her to torture her. Once she was able to forgive herself and her moment of indiscretion, her suspicions about her husband disappeared.

This is the nature of projection. Projection is the voice casting its shadow onto another person. There is an old saying: If I have one finger pointed at you, the other three are coming back in my direction. I should always ask, when someone else's action triggers me, is this projection? It is not always, but very often it is. I can then start using my projections to help me see my shadow self. We not only use this in a negative way, but also with our hidden talents.

I was constantly encouraging my husband to write. In reality, it was not he but I who was supposed to be doing the writing. As soon as I started writing, it stopped feeling so important to me that he writes. My desire to get him to write kept me from writing. In fact, the first book I wrote started with the idea that I would just start his book for him. Today, it makes me laugh, as I have learned that I love to write. He is one of the greatest supporters of my writing today.

THE SHADOW'S SHAME

Even though we talked about shame in another chapter, I want to make sure I help you make the connection between the shadow and shame. The shadow carries our shame. Because our shadow carries our shame,

it will hide. Shame is a tricky thing. It can make us hang our head, but it can also make us angry and mean. That is what makes shame so dangerous. We never know what it will come out looking like. Shame can be very toxic when we want to conceal it from others. To hide, it might try to be invisible, or it might get big and falsely accuse someone of something. People hurt other people when they are filled with shame. Our stories have roots in the past, and we have to help shine a light on what we are hiding from ourselves. It is easier to look at what is wrong with another than to really see our own shadow.

Luckily, when we look at each other, we project the hidden parts of ourselves. By allowing ourselves to complain about each other, we can end up seeing ourselves more clearly, as long as we can also own that we are usually projecting onto others. We see that it is not others, but ourselves we need to see. If we can remember the first time we had this experience, it will help us own our projections: it is not about us and who we are. It is not about what has been done to us, but about ourselves and our past and our shame that is causing the pain.

I know that in my life, shame has made me hang my head and get mean and angry. Growing up, I felt immense shame about being poor. We mostly wore each other's clothes and other people's hand-me-downs. I would be teased about wearing the skirt my sister had worn a few days before. Worse, I was much bigger than my sister. (I am five-foot-four, but all the other women in my family are five feet or less. Clothes were bought for their height, not mine.) The teasing made me feel dirty and "shamefaced."

I remember in particular a green miniskirt with orange stripes that both my sister and I loved. First, it looked great on her because it was a perfect fit. I was at least ten pounds heavier and four inches taller, so it was not that perfect on me. I still loved the skirt. I would feel shame when I put it on, as I did not look the same in it as my sister. Then the teasing would begin. This left a scar on me, one I did not want anyone else to see. I developed a mask. A mask that showed I was better. I looked better, dressed better, and was more sophisticated than you. But underneath,

I felt shame that I was not enough—not pretty enough, thin enough, coordinated enough—and mostly that I could not dress as well as you.

As a young adult, I would buy clothes and then hide them. I had a yearning for more and more new clothing, but would feel deep shame with each new article of clothing I bought, so I hid them. As I have worked on the shame of being poor, I have felt less of a need for new clothing, and I do not have to hide what I buy. Or at least I didn't until recently, when going through a new cycle of shame about money.

I purchased a dress online. A few days later, Steve talked to me about not buying anything until we looked at our money. The dress came in the mail, so I hid it, just as I did when I was young. The shame was back full force. It took me days to tell him not only that had I bought a dress, but that I hid it in shame. It is empowering to remember once again that shining a light on shame is the remedy that heals.

APPROVAL, CONTROL, SECURITY

Letting go of approval, control, or security is how we let go of the hold The voice has on the shadow side of ourselves. When we go deep enough to see how we grasp for approval, control, and security, we are ready to start seeing our shadows and projections. Unhooking from the shadow is the linchpin of letting go of shame. When we can feel the hurt of what we tell ourselves, that is when we know we are on the road to recovery. We have to be willing to welcome our shame to let go of the toxic part of the shadow. When we can embrace our shadow, we start to find freedom. When we can see the benefits and protections our shadows have given us, we are free, but we hang on to these three because we believe they will help us.

An example of hanging on to approval, control, and security is the belief that if I am loved by you, it will bring me security. I am willing to control your perceptions of me by controlling what information I give you to distort what you see. I might try to control your behavior as well. All this so you will approve of me and I will feel secure by this approval.

I have, at times in my life, exaggerated my accomplishments in an effort to gain approval. I struggled in school, and had a wound of feeling

“less than” because of that. So I would exaggerate what I did. Usually in a small way. I would say I had a more expensive home than I did, or that I was more experienced than I was, or something like that. Even though this approval was false, it felt like it would make me feel better at the time. It usually did in the moment. Then I would be afraid of being found out. I would have to control your access to my home or other information. I did not want you to see me for who I was. I controlled your information. This would bring up even more insecurity, so I would grasp at security by looking for reassurance that you cared for me, and then the cycle would begin again. I had to learn to let go of my grasp on all three to begin to live a more authentic life.

Approval, control, and security come from the deepest part of our shadow self. There is a belief that if we can get and maintain these three, we can be at peace. Occasionally, we believe we have finally obtained one or all of them, and then we have to work to maintain the illusion.

Are we grasping for compliments, guarantees, or praise to be in charge by controlling others? Knowing we are in the trance of the shadow helps us get out of the grip and into the light. It is then time to welcome the fear, sadness, and anger underneath. We welcome the experience of this grasping so we can learn to let it go.

It helps to be able to identify the payoffs for our beliefs about approval, control, and security. There is always a gain, even if the gain has a price, usually a high price. I have listed some payoffs of beliefs to help you with identifying your own. Below is a partial list to help you get started. We will look at approval, control, and security more in part 2 of this book.

EXAMPLES OF APPROVAL, CONTROL, AND SECURITY

Approval

- If I stay small, I will be loved.
- If I do not challenge anyone, I will be loved.
- If I do it for you, I will be loved.

- If I am responsible for it, you will still love me, and I can still love you.
- If I take the blame, you will love me.
- If I never show you my insecurities, I will be loved.

Control

- If I do not try, I will not fail.
- It is not my job.
- It is my job.
- If I criticize myself before you do, it will not hurt.
- If I handle it all myself, I can control the outcome.
- If I am responsible, I will not hurt as much.
- If it is my fault, I am not vulnerable.
- If it is my fault, I can control what happens next.
- If I take the blame, I can stay safe.
- If I do not take action, I do not have to be responsible.
- If I stay stuck, I do not have to take action.

Security

- No one will criticize me if I do nothing.
- If I stay armored up, I will be safe.
- If I do not ask for help, I do not have to bear the pain of being told no.
- If I am responsible, I will be safer.
- If it is my fault, I am safe with you.
- I am afraid to take action, so I will stay stuck.
- I am afraid to be vulnerable, so I will be angry instead.

SHADOW AND PROJECTIONS

Projection is the way we defend ourselves against our own unconscious impulses, feelings, thoughts, and qualities (both negative and positive).

SHOW ME THE WAY

We project these unacknowledged parts of ourselves onto others. Our shadow and projections can hurt and even destroy us and others. The voice takes parts of us we do not want others to see and use them to shame us, as we shame others.

The voice knows that I am afraid of public speaking (the fear and the not wanting anyone to know are from the shadow part). First I will say, “Yes, I will be glad to speak at your conference of a thousand.” Then the voice starts bashing me: “You know you are not good at public speaking; you are going to blow it and embarrass yourself in front of all of those people. Who do you think you are?” The voice knows that as a young girl, I was afraid of speaking in front of one person. I would turn beet-red if anyone even said hello to me.

Now I am trapped. The shame will both keep me from speaking in public and reinforce that it is going to be a disaster. By the time of the talk, I am frozen with fear, and it is a disaster. This is mostly from hiding in the shadows and listening to “the voice.” After the failure of the speaking engagement, the voice will start projecting outward, and I will say, “The mic did not work; the room was too cold, they set me up for failure.” It was not me, my shadow, it was them. The voice does not know that there is no such thing as perfection and that my best is good enough. I have let the voice know that mediocre is acceptable.

SHINE A LIGHT

Part of our work is to shine a light on our shadow parts. The less hidden my shadow is, the more I can embrace it. This weakens the ability of the voice to use my shadow against me. Once I can embrace my shadow, it becomes my ally: a helper. Let’s take the example of public speaking. If I am aware my shadow is afraid of public speaking and I shine a light on it, I can then use this fear energy for empowerment. We forget that fear is an energy source. Embracing the energy force of fear brings me to a new level that can be used for my betterment. So when the voice starts telling me that I am a terrible public speaker, first I agree public speaking is not one of my talents. Then I locate the feeling of this experience

in my body. Let's say it is jitteriness in my chest. I welcome the jitteriness and make it bigger. I do not run away from it or try to hide it. I could let my imagination give it a shape, maybe a scary shape like a monster. It is a memory.

I welcome the scary monster, because I know it is only history that it carries. In the third grade, I was laughed at when I gave a report. As I said earlier, I would turn beet-red just by being spoken to. Giving a report was a disaster for me (the origins of this shadow). As I let myself feel this scary shadow monster, it slowly becomes my third-grade self. I might ask this part of me, "What do you need from me?" And it answers, "I need to feel secure and that you have my back." What I can realize is that my third-grade self sulked off in shame and doubt after giving her report. I abandoned me. I can reassure that part of me that I am not going to run away, no matter how this talk goes. I can be an ally to me. As this hidden shadow part of me realizes that I can be trusted and won't run away, I begin to feel the energy that was hidden from me. My shadow becomes my ally. I am stronger than I was before. I have more power to give my talk.

The more I embrace the rejected parts of myself, the stronger I become. The more I own those parts of myself I so carefully kept hidden from both, you and me, the stronger I become.

What happens when we refuse to see our shadow and its projections? Usually, we fall. Our voice sees these parts and uses them. We look at one another and judge one another, so no one (including ourselves) can know what we are hiding. Many times, our shadow is the opposite of what we show the world.

I can remember that in my active addiction, I tried to present an image of a very put-together woman. I would go to work and be there for my friends, and I looked okay. But underneath, I was drinking beginning in the morning, believing no one could tell. My doctor, concerned for my health due to some liver issues, advised me to attend Alcoholics Anonymous. My response was, "I will not go anywhere with those kind

of people. I am better than that!” Only I was one of those people. I was just too filled with shame to let anyone know, especially me.

During this time, I read up on Alcoholics Anonymous just in case I needed it one day. It took me a long time to accept that I was no different than the wino on the street, except for socioeconomics. I remember going to a preacher I found in the phone book to get sober (remember, this was over thirty years ago). I wanted him to lay hands on me, but instead he talked to me about the hard work I was going to have to do. He was willing to be supportive, but I would not do what I was going to have to do to obtain sobriety at that time.

Three years later, I was the homeless person I thought I was so much better than. I went back to his church dirty, smelly, and hungover. Because he was a person who was better at embracing his shadow side, he embraced me and told me he was glad I was there and had wondered about me. My life would not have involved as much heartache as it did if I had been as accepting of my shadow as he was. I could admit I was an alcoholic, but I was not willing to do the work involved with getting sober and looking at my own shadows. It was too painful to look fully into the mirror and see me.

As I was working with a client recently, he began to tell me that he believed his wife did not love him anymore and that he was afraid she might leave him. He believed he was afraid of his wife leaving, but as he began to look in his mirror, what he came to see was that he had been unhappy for a long time. They had married quite young and had three kids right away. Since that time, she quit taking care of herself and became focused solely on the children. He began to feel more alone and withdrawn. They stopped communicating on a personal level. He was married to a person he did not know any longer. He fantasized about being swept off his feet by a new woman, but this was not acceptable to him, so he wondered instead if she was having an affair.

By looking at his shadow and projections, he gave himself the gift of choice. He could have chosen to leave. But instead, he made the choice

of working with his wife. He started by telling her about his unhappiness. They were able to begin marriage therapy and start a new relationship.

When I want to get more in touch with a shadow side of myself, I do the following exercise. I adapted this exercise from *Feeding Your Demons* by Tsultrim Allione.

First, I get quiet and sit with myself. I visualize the image of my shadow. My shame shadow is an oily, black, drippy, huge being. The oil is sticky and will ruin whatever it touches. I sit with this shadow, and first I ask, "What is it you want?" It usually answers with something that scares me, like "To destroy you." Then I ask, "What do you need?" And it will respond with something like, "To feel safe." Then, with all of my being, I try to create a sense of safety (or whatever it asks for) with as much love as I can. This is the wounded part of me that needs love more than any other part of who I am. So I give love, sometimes even mentally bringing my shadow into my lap and just holding it in my mind.

Eventually, this scary being will morph into the person I was when it came into being to protect me. Often, for me, it is a little girl. As this happens, I consciously bring this part of me back home to me. I know that we are stronger together than apart. I ask her, "What are you bringing me? How will I know it is there?" She lets me know she has been my source of strength, power, and understanding at different times. She lets me know that I will know it when I feel a tingle in my chest. As I visualize the ally, I begin to hold her, and she holds me.

I believe that every time I do this, I bring a piece of me home to myself. And every time I bring a piece of me back to myself, I am freer, stronger, and more filled with love and compassion for both myself and others.

To go deeper: Here is the exercise to practice. This is done after meditation. Sit quietly and meditate on the thought of your shadow. Visualize the image of your shadow in front of you. Ask your shadow, "What is it you want? What is it you really want? What do you need?" Focus on safety, and with love, give this part of yourself exactly what it needs.

SHOW ME THE WAY

As you do this exercise, your shadow should slowly start morphing gently into an ally.

Keep focusing loving-kindness on your shadow until it completely changes into your ally and you can feel it.

You can ask your ally at this time, “What is it you are bringing me? How will I know you are with me?” Reflect on the love you and your new ally have for each other.

CHAPTER 6



PERSONAS

Until you make the unconscious conscious, it will direct your life and you will call it fate.

—CARL JUNG

SHADOW AND OUR PERSONA

SINCE THE SHADOW is the most ancient part of ourselves, we develop personas. Persona is Latin for theatrical mask. These personas are the masks we want others to see instead of shadows. So if I am afraid of my sexuality, I might put on the mask of “good girl.” One of my personas or masks is “responsible rabbit.” I discovered my responsible rabbit a long time ago, when my stepson was young. I would run around and “do” for him, trying to make sure I was responsible for everything that he needed or happened to him (or anyone else). If there was a school project, I would practically do it myself. I felt so responsible for getting it done. Then I would be exhausted and angry that Steve had not helped. I turned into “gotta do it all myself” Pam. I would feel like a victim. I would call my “supportive” friends, and they would agree with me. I was a victim, a *big* victim. They would tell me things like, “And you are the stepmother!” My response would be, “I know, but somebody has to do it” (big sigh). Pretty soon, this would make me angry, and I would turn into “vengeful” Pam. I would repeat this drama over and over again.

Through training and a great deal of personal work, I started seeing that I was creating my drama. The only problem that was happening was the story in my head. In reality, both Steve and Alex's mother were also helping Alex with his work. I was so focused on my drama, I could not see what anyone was doing except poor pitiful me. I had dug myself a hole in the trap of personas. Only I could get myself out. It was based on the shame that I did not feel good enough. I had no clue how to parent. I felt less than everyone around me. I could not let anyone see this vulnerability, so I wore my masks instead, day after day. Learning and owning this shame freed me, my stepson, and Steve. I was able to step back and allow my stepson's creativity to blossom, of which he had plenty. I quit seeing Steve and Alex's mother as no good and lazy, and felt closer to Steve. I was able to bring peace to myself.

THE KARPMAN DRAMA TRIANGLE

The set of personas I describe above dance or move around on what is referred to as the Karpman Drama Triangle. The Karpman Triangle was developed by Dr. Stephen Karpman in 1968. It has three general roles: the victim, the rescuer, and the persecutor. We rotate around this triangle by ourselves or with others in an attempt to cover the shame we feel. It is only through taking personal responsibility for our experience that we are able to disengage from the triangle. With personal responsibility, we become freer and less controlled.



It helps to visualize what the Karpman Triangle looks like so we can recognize ourselves in it. We all have many personas. It helps to give them names. That helps us recognize them. The funnier the name, the easier it is to remember. Then we can identify how we move around the triangle. Here is a list of some persona names to give you an idea: the cheerleader, negative Nelly, scapegoat, mascot, friendly Freda, class clown, the ruler, the righteous one, the preacher, and Dudley Do-Right.

I have noticed that the victim spot is one that we all seem to covet when we are in a persona. I have also observed over time that people tend to believe that the rescuer is a prized position that we should strive for. This is far from true. If I am a rescuer, I have to seduce another to be my victim or persecutor. It is interesting, but the persecutor spot is hard to recognize, as we tend to believe we are just “telling it like it is.” When I am anywhere on the Karpman Triangle, I am sleepwalking. When I am a sleepwalker, I am disconnected from myself. Therefore, I am disconnected from those I love and want to be in relationship with.

THE DANGER OF THE PERSONA

Personas are masks we use to get what we want and avoid what we don't want. They start in childhood at a very young age. As young as one and two years old, children will note that when they smile or act in a certain way, they get rewarded, so they continue the behavior.

A friend had a child named Mary. Mary would smile and laugh and get rewarded with praise and attention. The attention felt good. Mary wanted more of that experience of feeling good, and used her smile and laugh to get this experience till the end of her life. If this was only about being happy, it would have been a good thing, but it was a cover for heartache she did not want anyone to see. Mary's father started sexually abusing her when she was three years old. No one had any idea, because she was such a happy little girl. Everyone believed Mary was the perfect

happy child. That is, until her suicide at thirteen. Only then did those around her start to realize she was covering a deep and dark secret. Her happy Mary persona kept people at bay. No one could help Mary, because no one knew, not even her mother.

This is the danger of personas. They keep other people and ourselves from touching our inner souls. We have to remove our masks, especially with those we are closest too.

PERSONAS ARE NOT GOOD OR BAD

We all have personas that are necessary at times. A teacher needs her competent mask that she can put on for her class. Otherwise, she loses some of her ability to teach the class. The difference is knowing we are putting on a teacher mask, policeman mask, mom mask, or banker mask to perform a role we have in society. We want to wear our masks, not have our masks wear us.

There are also masks we wear in times of struggle that are not professional masks or “getting positive reward” masks. These are called negative personas. It could be a sullen, angry mask that we wear instead of admitting we are afraid. The scapegoat mask is a common one for addicted individuals. Scapegoats keep the attention of a wounded family on them so the rest of the family can stay together. In adolescent substance abuse, it is common to see a teenager who has been in trouble ever since Mom and Dad started talking about divorce. What keeps Mom and Dad together is their joint effort to try to save their drug-addicted child. These kids are willing to literally die to save their parents, and, sadly, quite often do.

Personas are a huge stumbling block for all of us. We all have to remember that we are going to end up in the Karpman Triangle. It is human nature. We all slip into masks. The question is, are we going to allow ourselves to be aware that we are in the triangle? Are we going to hide from ourselves that we are wearing a mask?

If I am wearing a mask, then I require you to wear one also. A white knight has to see women as damsels in distress. A headmistress has to see others as needing to be controlled. Even if people are not behaving according to the requirement, we will still see them that way.



To go deeper: Take some time and notice when you put on your masks. Notice when you do not want someone to see your sorrow, anger, or fear. Let yourself really be aware of the experience. Could you name this mask that you slip into? What do you need others to do or be so you can slip into this mask?



PART 2

SHOW ME HOW WE UNHOOK

CHAPTER 7

RELEASING FEELINGS

No tree, it is said, can grow to heaven unless its roots reach down to hell.

—CARL JUNG

THE GOOD NEWS is that we can and do recover. There are ways to help ourselves get in touch with our authentic or true selves. When I am living in my true self, life's troubles and triumphs still affect me, but they do not own me any longer. Following are some ways Steve and I got back in touch with who we truly are.

WHY RELEASE FEELINGS?

As a child, I was taught to swallow my feelings. I was told I was too sensitive. I was told my feelings were too much and that there was something wrong with feeling my feelings deeply. I believed there was something deeply flawed in me, because I felt my experience on a deep level. This was one of many twisted, threaded fixed false beliefs that I had to work through in my healing process.

A way to look at how this happens can be seen every day as we check out at the grocery store. The store intentionally has a candy display at a child's level. Of course the child wants some. She asks for some candy and is told "No!" The child is disappointed and starts to cry. The mother feels embarrassed as other patrons look on with disapproval. She tells

the child in an angry, embarrassed tone, “Stop crying now.” The child feels fear and swallows her sadness. You can watch her do it. She still feels sad and angry about not having candy, but will successfully swallow the feeling down into her body. By the time we reach adulthood, the swallow is so automatic, neither we nor anyone else notices the experience any longer. We become experts at not feeling.

With Steve’s and my healing, we had to train ourselves to feel our emotions again. We learned to first notice what we felt. There was so much relief in just doing this. We started with the “Welcoming Prayer” from Richard Rohr’s book “Yes, And...” It was the first time we felt relief since our lives fell apart. We did not work on the stories in our heads yet; we believed them all. We worked on not running from the pain first. Just being with it. Being with feelings is how we “feel our feelings.” This is described fully below.

WELCOMING FEELINGS

To welcome your feelings, first pay attention to your body. Notice where you feel any physical sensations. The main areas to pay attention to are the head, the torso, the gut, and the back. You want to be able to describe the sensations.

I have noticed that I feel what I call shame in my face. This is where the word “shamefaced” comes from. It is a hot, heavy feeling. I feel most sensations in my chest. Usually, for me, it is in circles in different areas of the chest. There are no right or wrong answers. It is different for everyone.

It brought me so much relief to be able to identify what I felt and where. Then I could start welcoming that sensation.

There are some general palpable areas where we feel feelings in our bodies. We feel sadness in our face and down into our chest. This is where the word “brokenhearted” comes from. We feel our deepest sadness and grief in our chest. We feel happiness in the same places as sadness, but instead of a heavy, down feeling, it is a light, up feeling. Our

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heart breaks with happiness, too, but we describe it as “bursting with joy.” Same place, and a breaking apart, but we experience the two very differently.

Fear starts in our solar plexus and goes down to our knees. It is where the sayings “I have butterflies in my stomach” and “My knees are knocking” come from. Our sexual feelings are in the middle of where we feel fear, but instead of a downward jittery experience, the feeling moves up from our genitals to our stomach and into the center of the chest. Again, we talk about “butterflies in the stomach.” But it is a very different experience. It is also why sometimes we misread our body. It says to run, but we misread it as “I want him, he makes me feel butterflies.” Anger is felt in the head and down the back. It is hot and full of energy. We experience a clenched jaw, heat, and tightness. This is where the saying “that person is a pain in the neck” comes from. We literally feel a pain in our neck when we are angry.



Shame is considered a secondary feeling, as it is not with us from birth. Shame is a combination of sadness and fear. The difference

between shame and guilt is that guilt has the fear experience but with a high degree of anger. Jealousy is a combination of fear and anger, with more fear than anger. Irritation, annoyance, and frustration are anger, but with blame attached. These feelings keep us stuck, because they are not the core experiences.

When I welcomed the physical sensation and stopped trying to push it away, it began to change and dissipate. I started to know I was going to heal. I had been studying Pema Chödrön's book *When Things Fall Apart*, which addresses this. She states that we have to pay attention to our bodies to heal. I knew I had to stop running from my feelings. Richard Rohr states the same thing from a Christian perspective in his "Welcoming Prayer."

In the Bible, Jesus showed us how to stay with a wide range of emotions.

Here is Jesus expressing sadness: "Jesus wept" (John 11:35, NIV).

Here is Jesus expressing happiness: "I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete" (John 15:11, NIV).

Here is Jesus expressing anger: "But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. 'Get behind me, Satan!' he said. 'You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns'" (Mark 8:33, NIV).

Finally, here is Jesus expressing fear: "Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. 'Abba, Father,' he said, 'everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will'" (Mark 14:35–36, NIV).

In Buddhism you are taught, pain is inevitable, suffering is optional.

Christians and Buddhists agree that we have to feel our feelings, and even welcome them, to be able to heal. It is important for our healing to learn, as we progress, that our feelings are just physical sensations with stories attached. The less we hold on to the story, the less the story holds on to us.

Steve and I started working on our thoughts, our voices, and projections. We were able to start questioning our stories. Although we left the feelings work behind, we got more relief. Our healing continued.

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For me, I felt as if I constantly had to question the stories (I had many), and it was a tremendous amount of daily work. About this time, I stumbled upon (literally, as it just came up on my Amazon feed, and without thinking, I bought it) *The Sedona Method* by Hale Dwoskin. *The Sedona Method* taught me about welcoming and then releasing my feelings. I had heard in twelve-step groups over the last thirty years about “let go and let God,” but no one explained what that really meant. I always felt like a fraud, because I would say, “I let go and let God,” but really I would still be hanging on. I had remained clueless about how to let go, but knew that was what I was supposed to be doing.

FEEL YOUR FEELINGS, BUT DON'T LIVE THERE

I am not sure why, but I have always had a harder time than Steve with letting go of feelings. I am an expert at feeling them, but then I hang on. When it comes to me, I think of the old Southern saying “she can beat a dead horse.” And I have heard that about myself from more than one source. I have always admired how Steve can be full of sadness one minute, but will be in a calm state the next. He is better at letting go than I am. I have always had a tendency to hang on for hours, days, weeks, and sometimes years. I needed a process for letting go. I appreciate learning many. I describe below some of the ways I have learned to let go. I have learned from more than one teacher.

LETTING GO THE EVERYDAY WAY

For a minor irritation, it is just a decision to *let it go*. Sometimes just acknowledging something is all we need to do to *let it go*.

This is what I was taught in AA. Just let it go. Someone cuts me off in traffic and I feel angry. I can take a deep breath and tell myself to let it go. It is no more complicated than that. It works well for day-to-day annoyances. I knew I needed more than just this first way, because when

it was more than a minor irritation, I would try and try, and my issue or feeling would just stick to me.

WELCOME IT (BY RICHARD ROHR)

This is sometimes referred to as the “Welcoming Prayer.” It was written by Richard Rohr and is quite beautiful. This is as he wrote it.

First, identify a hurt or an offense in your life. Remember the feelings you first experienced with this hurt and feel them the way you first felt them. Notice how this shows up in your body. Paying attention to your body’s sensations keeps you from jumping into the mind and its dualistic games of good-guy/bad-guy, win/lose, either/or. After you can identify the hurt and feel it in your body, welcome it. Stop fighting it. Stop splitting and blaming. Welcome the grief. Welcome the anger. It’s hard to do, but for some reason, when we name it, feel it, and welcome it, transformation can begin.

Don’t lose presence to the moment. Any kind of analysis will lead you back into attachment to your ego self. The reason a bird sitting on a hot wire is not electrocuted is quite simply because it does not touch the ground to give the electricity a pathway. Hold the creative tension, but don’t ground it by thinking about it, critiquing it, or analyzing it. When you’re able to welcome your own pain, you will in some way feel the pain of the whole world.

I have found this Welcoming Prayer very beneficial, even life changing. Steve and I did it daily for quite a while. It brought peace to us both.

MAKE IT BIGGER

(Adapted from work by Gay and Katie Hendricks)

When Steve and I first decided to marry, we studied the work of Gay and Katie Hendricks. We even developed our wedding vows based on their

work. When I first read about making your feelings bigger, I thought it was the craziest thing I had ever read. We tried it anyway, and it brought relief to us both.

In “making it bigger,” you consciously focus on the experience and try to intensify it. You let yourself be completely taken over by the emotions. The story is again to be avoided, and you focus on the feelings that come up. (I usually try to make sure I get quiet and let the feelings wash over me.) You breathe with the experience and focus on your body. Then you spotlight the feeling that you noticed the most. By giving this feeling all of your attention, you can make it bigger. Stay with it as long as you need. Rarely has it taken longer than five minutes for me. Keep breathing slowly and deeply. Try to notice every little detail about the feeling. As you make it bigger and focus on the feeling rather than the story, it starts to change. The important idea to remember about feelings is that they are like a wave. They roll in and then roll out. If they are not moving and changing, it is usually because you are stuck in thought and story.

BACK-AND-FORTH RELEASING

(Adapted from work by Hale Dwoskin)

This releasing has brought me tremendous relief. It is one of my favorites when I am stuck in a story I do not want to let go of. It is a dichotomy of opposites.

Beliefs are both jointly connected and mutually exclusive of each other. In other words, you cannot have good without bad, right without wrong, deep without shallow. You usually try to believe life is one way or the other.

With this method, you let yourself feel both sides of opposing feelings and thoughts. Be sure to take time with both sides. Ask yourself, “Can I make this issue as big and powerful as I tell myself it is?” Let yourself feel the bigness and power of your belief. Then ask yourself, “Can I allow this issue to be as ordinary and uneventful as it is?” Allow

yourself to feel the ordinariness of the experience. Go back and forth with this while really letting yourself feel both sides. (For me, it is usually ten times or so of going back and forth.) This going back and forth can take the energy out of the issue. I try to notice every little detail about both of the feelings.

After you have a sense of relief, ask yourself, “Could I let this go? Will I let this go? When?” If the answer is no, I could not and will not let this go, that is okay. It is about opening a crack to possibilities, and just by doing the exercise, you open yourself up to possibility. Sometimes for the “when” question, my answer might be “not for a long time.” Just by giving myself that answer, I create an opening in myself that was not there before.

ENERGY RELEASE

(Developed by Pam and Steve Moore)

This release is more nuanced than the others, so you might not try it until you have experience with the other letting-go processes. This release is based on the energy of the issue and how we hold onto the energy with our bodies. We have to become willing to completely let go of the persona energies we cling to. Hanging on to the belief that we are a victim, villain, or rescuer tends to keep us stuck. It takes a great deal of courage to let go of these positions. There is security and safety in being in the Karpman Triangle.

The way we do an energy release is to welcome all aspects of the issue, the resistance (the persona or position we are in), wanting to change what we are struggling with, our judgments about it, our feelings about it, wanting to figure it out, and any other related thoughts and feelings. We let all of this come together and then welcome our attachment or aversion to the issue (victimization).

With this release, we start to see that it is the attachment to the energy (the dance around the Karpman Triangle) that is keeping us

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stuck. We can see that what we are experiencing is just energy. It is not who we are. It is identifying with the issue that is keeping us stuck. We ask ourselves, “Have I made myself suffer enough, or do I need to suffer more? Have I made them suffer enough, or do I need them to suffer more? If they or I have not suffered enough, is there a time when we have suffered enough? Is there a time when I will know the suffering is enough?” The release is in giving up the energy of the suffering.

BRING IT ON

(Adapted from work by Barry Michels and Phil Stulz)

This release is from a book titled *The Tools*. Lean forward on the edge of your chair and scream to yourself, “*I am an animal!*” Visualize yourself as an animal that makes you feel strong. Tell yourself, “Bring on the pain! I love pain! Pain sets me free!”

Then imagine jumping through a cloud of pain to the other side. Let yourself feel the pain with the power of an animal. By embracing the pain and running straight into it, we free ourselves from aversion to pain. Trying not to feel pain creates more pain.

If you can, allow yourself to forgive yourself or the person you’re judging. This can take around five minutes.

FULL RELEASE

(Developed by Pam and Steve Moore)

Full release is a technique where you sit and allow yourself to feel the issue. You welcome it as fully as you can. Imagine it as a river of emotion that is coming from your chest. You see it leaving your body and pouring away from you. I sometimes can feel what feels like a shield in my chest. This is especially true if I am feeling hurt and vulnerable.

With full release, I visualize a metal shield in my chest. I then visualize it melting into molten metal and leaving not just my body, but my presence. It becomes a river of melted metal and flows away from me. I allow myself to visualize a ray of sunshine entering my body. The ray of sunshine represents gratitude for me. I have replaced the negative experience with a sense of gratitude.

RELEASE

I have learned that if we address all parts of who we are, we do find deep healing. It is only through deep healing that we find the freedom we are looking for. As with most things, the more we practice, the easier and more competent we get at welcoming and letting go. Being aware of feeling my feelings and then releasing them helps me know I can stand in my brokenheartedness. By being with my brokenheartedness, I learn that I can stand in my truth. By learning to stand in my truth, I learn how to grow up and know that I do not have to run away from myself any longer.

LIFE ON THE RUN

When Steve and I were deep in despair about our lives crashing around us, we began with the Welcoming Prayer. At the time, I told myself I could not stand the pain. I would physically run sometimes. (And believe me, I am not a runner.) I would run to avoid the pain, or I would eat, or zone out in front of electronics. I would do anything to avoid what I was feeling. Steve and I were inching toward recovery, but I thought it was too much for me to bear, especially since I am a story person. As I have said, I can believe most stories I tell myself, even if it is the opposite of what I was saying a few minutes before.

The Welcoming Prayer, the first of the releases, opened me up to stand with my brokenheartedness. I stood with the pain and realized it would not kill me. I could stand it. After practicing the Welcoming

Prayer, I started on the other forms of releasing. I realized that with these tools, I had an opportunity not only to survive, but to start thriving again. Steve was working on his brokenheartedness at the same time. We learned that some of the releasing had to be done on an individual level. We worked together and separately. We both became stronger and more resilient. This, in turn, made our relationship stronger. We were able to discover that we did not need each other as much as we thought. We discovered that we wanted each other.

APPROVAL, CONTROL, AND SECURITY

As part of the release of feelings, we found that it was important to release wants as well. We have three main wants: the want for approval, the want for control, and the want for security. Releasing these is what teaches us to walk in the groundlessness of life. It is important during the welcoming and letting-go process that you also welcome and let go of your wants for approval, control, and security, which are associated with our stories. For me, there seems to be an experience of deep fear running underneath them. There tends to be one or another that we want (crave) more than the others. Approval, control, and security are always present. It is the grasping of and association with current stories that we are letting go of. This in turn lets us let go of our need for approval, control, and security.

To go deeper: Think of something in your life that you resist. Start with a small resistance. There are certain sensations that we resist, like loud noises, certain smells, bright lights, or certain inflections in people's voices. Bring to mind one of the items that you resist. Welcome the feeling of resistance into your awareness. Could you embrace it? Hold on to this experience for two minutes. Then, could you let it go? Would you let it go? When? Try to do this with other items you resist, going to greater triggers each time. Journal about your experience.

CHAPTER 8

UNHOOKING FROM MY BELIEFS

Your visions will become clear only when you can look into your own heart. Who looks outside, dreams: who looks inside, awakes.

—CARL JUNG

BYRON KATIE AND PEMA CHÖDRÖN

ONE OF THE ways I learned how to do unhooks was from studying Byron Katie. She has an almost spiritual way of looking at turnarounds, as she calls them. One of Byron Katie's questions, "Is it true?" has helped my recovery in profound ways. A simple question with a multitude of layers.

I adapted my way of doing unhooks from Byron Katie, Pema Chödrön, and cognitive behavioral therapy. Pema Chödrön uses a Buddhist term, "shenpa," to explain that we get hooked by something that is said or done and then react. I will address cognitive behavioral therapy in the next chapter.

IS IT TRUE?

One of the fastest ways to question our shadow is to ask ourselves, "Is this true? (yes or no)." We ask this first, because we try to shame ourselves with "This is not true!" or "This is true positively and without a doubt."

The next place we go to is “What is wrong with you? Why are you doing this?” This keeps the voice in charge. It seems that if you try to argue with the voice, you are the one who is going to lose. The voice will just trap you as it tries to protect you. It is very easy to start shaming yourself and reinforcing your shadow self. So question yourself to open space within you: “Is my story true?”

I ask again, with more force if I need to. “Am I absolutely sure this is true?” This is because often The voice will jump in the first time we ask and say, “It is absolutely true!” If The voice says yes, it is true, ask the question again, but with certainty added on. “Am I absolutely sure it is true?” Asking is a way of opening the door to possibilities other than the perception of the voice, which allows us to see our own shadow. We want to be gentle with ourselves. It is easy to get lost in the wrong perception.

We all need an opening to see the possibilities. So many of our perceptions and beliefs can be changed.

I know that many times in my life I thought I was correct about an injustice caused by someone else, but when a little time passed I realized I had taken some statement wrong or thought there was ill intention when there was none. (But it does take work and does not happen by asking myself only once. This practice takes practice.)

A friend will say something, and I take offense. I will tell myself she is putting me down or discounting me, when in reality she just has a different perspective than I do. If I can see my past or present from a different perspective, I have the possibility to change my future (and my perception of the past). If I see the past and present with clearer eyes, I am not feeding my resentments and self-doubts. In turn, I will be kinder to you and myself.

So much of our struggle in life is with our thoughts more than the actions that happen. These two questions are the beginning of changing that perception.

I notice a story loses its hook when I ask myself these two simple questions.

WOULD EVERYONE AGREE WITH ME THAT THIS IS TRUE?

We need to always be asking ourselves, “Would everyone agree with me that this is true?” This is done not as a trick question, but more of an acknowledgment that there are very few things we believe that everyone would agree with. When we are stuck in the voice, it seems like the whole world agrees with us without even asking. I can see a look on Steve’s face, and tell myself he is angry because I did not put the dishes in the dishwasher. By simply asking myself, “Would everyone agree that Steve looks angry?” I can answer, “No. Besides, he does not really care how quickly the dishes are loaded in the dishwasher. He has his own thoughts.”

I can remember thinking that a friend was angry with me. I told Steve a long story about how I could see her rejecting my hand in friendship, and she was only nice because he and her husband were friends. She was just tolerating me. Steve laughed and asked, “Would everyone agree with you? I don’t.” I, of course, was not only sure, but positive.

We met for a couples lunch later that day, and she asked me if we could get together, just the two of us, and have lunch. At that moment, I realized that I had created the whole story of her dislike completely in my head. It was a complete projection of my own fears. Richard Rohr often says that if something is true, it is true for everyone all the time. It helps me to remember that although my mind will tell me something is absolutely true, if I wait an hour, it will be convinced the exact opposite is true. In those cases, my belief does not pass the truth test.

THE MYSTERY OF KUDZU

Southern kudzu has been around all my life. I have been told it grows over a foot a day, and it certainly has always seemed that way to me. What you learn is that kudzu will eventually take over the whole South. As you drive down the interstates and byways, all you see is kudzu. It grows and overtakes the trees and everything in sight. Kudzu has always been an area of concern for me and my Southern peers. What can we do about kudzu? No matter what you do you, cannot kill it.

Kudzu was brought to the United States from Japan to control erosion. It's an overachiever, to say the least. Kudzu not only stopped eroding soils, it also started invading areas that did not need intervention. It's taken over the South! As long as I can remember, we have been watching and waiting for the kudzu to take over, never doubting that it would happen, just not sure when. It is part of the belief system we have.

The only problem is that I found out it is not true. Kudzu only grows in sunshine. So it grows by the side of the road, but then it cannot grow where the trees get thicker. Kudzu was planted on the interstates and roads to control erosion. And there it remains, along with the belief system of those of us who live in the South. That is the thing about a belief: it does not matter if it is true or not; what matters is that you never even question it. And that is what we have to do. We need to teach ourselves to question beliefs—beliefs that we have had all of our lives and ones we developed just today.

By inquiring into the original belief, we start to learn that what we believe, especially our stories about the past, may not be true, and to loosen the hold of the belief. We can learn to unhook ourselves. Without unhooking, we believe “the voice.” Think of it this way: How often have you heard a story about how someone did something to someone else, and you are horrified by what happened? Then the video that someone recorded comes, showing that it never happened the way you were told. In the end, what you tell yourself happened is not what happened at all. What you believe is never the whole truth, only a tiny speck of the truth. It might have a grain of truth, but it is not *the* truth. Remember, the truth is the truth when we can all know it all the time.

Learning to unhook and question my thoughts and beliefs helped me out of a deep dark system I was struggling with. I am eternally grateful. Without it, I would have had only a portion of my personal recovery, and this opened me up to a new freedom.

We unhook by questioning ourselves about whether there could be another way of looking at the issue. We can start to unhook from

judgments and beliefs by questioning the way we look at what we believe is happening in our lives.

My kudzu belief was “kudzu overtakes the land.” After I heard myself with this belief, I could start unhooking my thoughts. My belief about kudzu could be turned around and unhooked for me by looking at the opposite of this belief that is also true, so my belief about myself might be “*I overtake myself with my thoughts.*”

A second way of questioning a belief is to unhook by allowing yourself to be responsible. In my example about the kudzu, the unhook could be “*I overtake kudzu. I judged kudzu and what it does without gathering information. I only used my thoughts.*” Another example is “*I miss the beauty of kudzu by judging it as a weed that must be controlled.*”

A third way to unhook from a belief/judgment is to remind yourself of the exact opposite of what you are believing. An example is “*Kudzu is helpful in that it ends up being a good source of nutrition for animals, as well as people, as it can be cooked like other vegetables.*” One more example is “*Kudzu vines are used to make baskets and other crafts.*”

An alternate way to unhook could be “*Kudzu does not overtake the land.*” I learned that kudzu has been planted since the 1930s, and it has not overtaken the land. Another example would be “*Kudzu can only grow in direct sunlight, so once it hits a group of trees, it stops growing.*”

So what I and many Southern people believed was not true. (Most Southern people still believe the story of kudzu to this day.) It takes questioning our stories to change our beliefs. If I had not questioned my story about kudzu (and many others), I would still believe that it was on the verge of devouring all the land, despite the fact that I have heard this since the 1950s.

WHAT IS AN UNHOOK?

The definition of an unhook is a detachment or letting go of a fixed thought, emotion, or belief. When I unhook from a fixed thought,

emotion, or belief, most painful situations have less charge and energy. I find peace and my true self once I find this freedom.

INTELLECTUALLY CHALLENGED

One of the hardest beliefs to let go of was that I was intellectually challenged. I am dyslexic. When I was young, I had a tough time in school. There was no testing or even awareness that dyslexia was an issue. What I did know was that I would think I had a math or spelling problem correct, and it would be wrong. I would get a terrible grade on my test or paper. When I was in the sixth grade, my parents let me know they were going to have me tested for intellectual challenges, or, as it was known at the time, to see if I was “mentally retarded.” I believed I was. I believed with all my being that I was incapable. My parents never spoke to me about the results of the testing. My grades got even worse. At one point in high school, I was making straight Fs. I graduated high school by going to an alternative school. College was not even an option for someone like me, so I never considered it.

When I got sober, I was referred to vocational rehabilitation. I met with Helen, my counselor. She tried to keep my expectations low of what my career choices would be, after hearing about my grades during my primary education. She had me tested, and then things changed. She told me I was going to college. I was shocked. In college, I excelled. At this point, there were computers and spellchecks, which changed my life.

After being in college a couple of years, I asked my father, “What did that testing in the sixth grade say?” He said it came back saying that I had a very high IQ but very low self-esteem. All those years I had created a life based on the fixed false belief that I was incapable of learning and that I had a very low IQ. My life changed so much by correcting my fixed false belief. This belief had many, many threads attached, so it did not evolve overnight, but it began with Helen believing in me before I

believed in myself. I went from being a victim of my fixed false belief of being intellectually challenged to challenging myself to write books. I want you to know that we are not destined to live in our fixed false beliefs for the rest of our lives. I freed myself, and you can too.

Remember, the deeper the issue, the more threads are attached to it. This means that you will feel some, but not complete, relief with each thread you unhook from. There are many threads. Many threads need many unhooks.

As I did my work, I noticed that each unhooked thread brought me more relief and more peace with that issue. I see people get discouraged because they successfully challenge a fixed false belief one time and they are not fixed. Then they quit. It takes patience, persistence, and practice.

Working through my belief about my intelligence took a long time, but with each thread I loosened, the hold my fixed false belief had on me was released. When I am in a vulnerable moment, it might come up again, not with as much power, but this is a journey we are always on. At first, I remember that it felt unnatural to try to unhook from a belief I had.

Steve struggled with his, too. We both still do sometimes. It takes practice to hear ourselves and our beliefs. It takes persistence to keep at it when a belief comes back in a slightly different variation. It takes patience, because there is no such thing as a quick fix. No matter how I choose to heal, it is a slow and long journey. I believe it helps to accept that it is a journey without a destination. We don't really get there. With acceptance, though, I can enjoy the ride much more.

To go deeper: Practice writing unhooks. You can even practice as you go through your day. For each distressing thought you have, try unhooking it around in your head. Try it on funny thoughts, any thoughts. Take your thought and ask yourself, "Could there be another truth here? Is this the only way to look at this issue?" It is a good practice.

CHAPTER 9

ABC MODEL FOR FIXED FALSE BELIEFS

Every human life contains a potential. If that potential is not fulfilled, then that life was wasted.

—CARL JUNG

THE ABC MODEL AND FIXED FALSE BELIEFS

THE ABC MODEL is used in cognitive behavioral therapy to address fixed false beliefs. You write down one fixed false belief at a time. This is a very effective tool.

THE ABC MODEL OF CBT

Here is how it works.

A: Activating event. An activating event is sometimes described as a trigger. The trigger is the event that created the turmoil of your fixed false belief. You write down the event or situation that triggered your thoughts and feelings.

B: False belief. A false belief (e.g., the thoughts that occur to you when the activating event happens) is quickly developed from the activating event. Write down the thoughts that went through your head when the activating event occurred (and after it).

C: Consequences. Consequences are how you feel and behave when you have those beliefs and can be divided into two parts: your actions and your emotions. Write down how you acted when this happened and what you felt when it happened.

There are also D and E parts that create a new way of addressing your thoughts.

D: Disputing the belief. To dispute a belief is to reflect on whether the belief is justified. Is this belief based on erroneous assumptions or thinking errors? It is important to clarify whether the situation and the evidence justify your beliefs, and then decide how you want to act. Dispute any parts that do not appear to be true or may be questioned.

E: Effective belief. If you can see that your beliefs are not justified, then you might think of some balancing statements. You can remind yourself when the activating event occurs to keep what is happening in perspective. The important thing about effective beliefs is that they seek to be balanced and accurate, which makes them more effective. With an effective belief, it is important to not ignore evidence. You want to be able to reflect on the belief in a balanced way, and then decide how that will influence your choice of actions. One technique that you can use to help you reach a balanced view is to ask yourself what a neutral person or a trusted, reliable friend might say or think in the same circumstances.

ABC MODEL EXAMPLE

Here is an example of how the model might be used to describe a particular situation:

A: Activating Event

I speak to Steve and he does not answer me.

B: Belief

I tell myself, “He thinks I am not important enough. He is trying to ignore me.”

C: Consequence

I feel angry and decide I will not speak to him either. Then I feel lonely and cut off from Steve.

D: Dispute

“He thinks I am not important enough” and “He is trying to ignore me” are examples of what is sometimes called “mind reading,” that is, making assumptions about what other people are thinking. My belief *may* be justified and accurate, but it may not.

E: Effective Belief

“It is possible that he did not hear me” or “I may be jumping to conclusions here because I was already anxious and on edge.”

EXPLORING YOUR OPTIONS

CBT encourages you to think about what your options are for dealing with fixed false thoughts by using effective thoughts to address your thought process *and* by thinking about practical actions that you might take to improve or cope with a problematic situation you find yourself in.

MAKING PRACTICAL DECISIONS

Once you have introduced sensible effective belief into your thinking process, the idea is that you then make considered practical decisions about how you will act or respond in the situation.

In the situation given above using the ABC model, this could help you to react in a more constructive way. For example, rather than responding defensively to Steve's not responding when I speak to him.

I might try to explain to Steve that I am telling myself that he is angry with me and ask him if he is angry.

If, for some reason, that is not possible or practical, then I might ask if we can speak later in the day—and make sure we do talk later in the day.

To go deeper: Do an ABC on one of your beliefs.

CHAPTER 10



FORGIVENESS

Knowing your darkness is the best method for dealing with the darkness of others.

—CARL JUNG

“None of us is perfect. All of us make mistakes. And close relationships are a place where we’re bound to make them. In fact, until we have seen someone’s darkness, we don’t really know them. And until we’ve forgiven them their darkness, we don’t really know what love is. Our relationships are temples of healing when we allow them to be. The ultimate truth of any relationship is that two innocent children of God are seeking to love and be loved. Someone else’s mistakes are simply where they hit walls which at that moment they could not see beyond—and it’s the same for us. A Course in Miracles says that we should interpret all that is not love as a call for love. If I judge you for your errors, I simply fortify them in your mind and my mind. If I forgive your mistakes, I give both of us the chance to feel the healing power of love. Who among us is not scarred from the battles of love? Who among us is not pained by the struggles of love? Who among us is not longing for the comfort of love? As much as we all desire to love and to be loved, in this wounded world it can be very hard at times. But the only failure in love is to give up on love. A broken heart need not be a bitter heart. And while love can pause, it can never really end.”

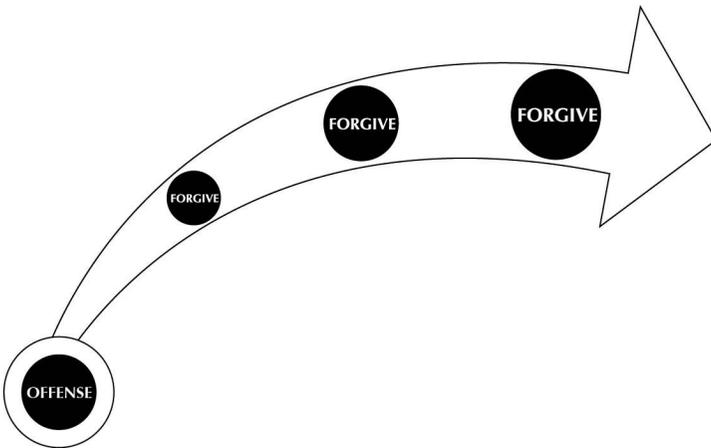
From “Tears to Triumph: The Spiritual Journey from Suffering to Enlightenment” by Marianne Williamson

WHAT FORGIVENESS IS NOT

As I HAVE worked with people over the years and struggled with my own life hurts, I have found that we have many misconceptions about forgiveness. Let me start with what forgiveness is not. Forgiveness is not easy. Forgiveness is not denying what happened. Forgiveness is not for the weak. Forgiveness does not mean forgetting. Forgiveness is not quick. Forgiveness is not done one time, and then it is over. Forgiveness is not about subverting justice. Forgiveness is not about being able to live with your injurer.

WHAT FORGIVENESS IS

Forgiveness is a process that sometimes must be done over and over, and then once again. Forgiveness is about owning the story of injury. Forgiveness is about the truth. Forgiveness is about courage and strength. Forgiveness is about *you*, not the person who injured you. Forgiveness is a lifelong process. We are always learning to forgive on deeper and deeper levels.



Forgiveness is a vital daily practice. I do a version of forgiveness daily for recent and past hurts. Whenever a hurt comes to my mind and I allow myself to feel the feelings and listen to the beliefs behind it, I work on forgiveness. I recommend Desmond Tutu's book *The Book of Forgiving*. He wrote this book with his daughter Mpho Tutu. In it, he identifies the four steps of forgiving.

The first step is to tell your story. It is important to acknowledge that we have and feel a hurt. Without questioning our story, we will stay stuck in it.

The second step is to name the hurt. I utilize the acknowledgment and release of the feelings. The more we can release, the easier it is to forgive. I believe we have to welcome the feelings into our body and be present with them. Usually, a few minutes of being present is all we need to release.

The third step of forgiveness is to choose to grant the forgiveness. We can do this through recognizing that we are all humans. We are all flawed and hurt. We have all betrayed and wounded one another. It helps to acknowledge that you too have hurt yourself and others. We have a shared humanity. This step is simply affirming to ourselves that we forgive _____. I usually include myself in this step, because we tend to hurt those who hurt us.

The fourth step of forgiveness is to renew or release the relationship. There are some relationships where, even though I have forgiven someone, I cannot be around that person. Forgiveness does not mean I have to set myself up to be harmed again. Often, if there is remorse and the relationship is important to you, the choice is to renew. Renewing a relationship means starting a different relationship than we had before. We have to remember that we cannot un-break what has been broken. But there is the possibility of developing a stronger bond by walking through the brokenness together. What we are doing with this step is releasing our victimhood. This process is only for the brave and courageous. It takes incredible strength of character to move forward after being broken.

Growing up, my dad was a very angry man. He had been hurt a great deal in his life, and he had no skills for handling his own pain. He took it out on his family. Not because he was a bad man, but because he was a broken man. My dad had a tendency to use physical violence as a means of control. It caused a great deal of pain in our family, and in me.

When I got sober, I felt very angry at my father. I was very judgmental about him and who he was. It got to the point where I would feel physically ill when I was around him. I cut ties with my father for many years. During this time, I worked hard on myself and my relationship with my father. For five years, I had no contact with him while I healed myself. Slowly, over time, I started to feel forgiveness for my dad. I saw him not as the monster I had created, but as a man who had been deeply wounded himself. His violence had come out of fear. I forgave him on deeper and deeper levels.

My dad told me years after our reconciliation that he knew my love for him was real, as I saw him for who he truly was and chose to love and forgive him as he was. Ten years after our reconciliation, he asked for my forgiveness. It was interesting to notice that I felt a sense of loss. My last piece of victimhood was taken from me. A part of me felt the loss of being the “better person.” Even though I had forgiven him, I still had a piece of being a victim that I did not let go of till that moment. I learned that there is always more work to be done. Life is a journey without a destination.

SELF-FORGIVENESS

Self-forgiveness is one of the greatest gifts you can give yourself, so allow forgiveness for you, from you, to flow in. It should lighten whatever is left.

We all make mistakes and hurt those we love. If we face this shame, then we can free both them and ourselves. When we hurt someone, the guilt and shame can be overwhelming at times. Sometimes it even makes us act out in more harmful ways, and we begin a cycle of shame, anger,

and guilt. It is only through self-forgiveness that we can break this cycle. So please do not forget that you deserve forgiveness too.

And remember, forgiveness is not a onetime event. It is a process to be completed over and over again. It is work. Do not give up before miracles start happening. Always pay attention to the direction of the arrow.

That is what matters: Has my pain changed even slightly? Doing the work is how we learn to trust the process. It is working, even though there are many threads to every problem. What we are doing is cutting away each thread, one at a time.

To go deeper: Go for a walk in nature. Go to a park or your favorite trail. As you walk, look for a stone that catches your eye. Pick a stone you can carry in your hand. Be thoughtful about this process. Keep the stone in your hand for eight hours without putting it down for any reason. Pay attention to your experience at the moment. At the end of the eight hours, notice what your experience was. Is your hand sore? Does it feel like the rock is still in your hand? Was it easy to carry? Was it hard to carry? Did it change during the day? This is what carrying unforgiveness is like. It is you who is suffering. Now take your rock and turn it into a piece of art. Be creative and free with the choice you make. This is what forgiveness is like. You take something that has made you suffer, and you transform it. It has a new life and a new purpose.

CHAPTER 11

GRATITUDE

There are as many nights as days, and the one is just as long as the other in the year's course. Even a happy life cannot be without a measure of darkness, and the word "happy" would lose its meaning if it were not balanced by sadness.

—CARL JUNG

GRATITUDE FILLS US BACK UP

GRATITUDE IS WHAT fills us back up after emptying our soul. The reasoning behind this is that the void left from letting go needs to be filled with something. In doing my work, before I added forgiveness and gratitude, I would get relief, but it felt incomplete and with a little bit of anxiety. I realized this was a huge mistake. Gratitude is an important part of the healing process. If I did not replace what I removed with something positive, I was leaving myself open for my painful belief/judgment to return.

If we can find what we are grateful for in our original story, we reframe our experience. The choice is to look at the “silver lining.” Try to come up with at least five things you can be grateful for with any hurts you have. It takes you to a place of freedom.

An example of finding gratitude in hurts is from my rape at twelve. I felt weak, but it was only through spending years feeling so powerless that could I find out how very strong I am. I know I can help other

women. Because of my experience, I am a less judgmental person. I am a more compassionate person because of the rape. I am grateful I could find compassion for my rapist, who, it ended up, was a very lost and frightened soul.

Gratitude is a precious gift we give ourselves. Gratitude opens you up to more relationships. People are drawn to a grateful person. It improves physical health. It improves psychological health. There is a mind-body connection. Gratitude helps people become more empathetic. At the same time, it helps people lower aggression. It helps people sleep better. Gratitude improves your self-esteem. It increases your mental strength. These are just a few benefits of gratitude.

GRATITUDE JOURNALING

I encourage you to keep a gratitude journal. This simple exercise has some of the greatest therapy you will ever experience. It helps you go from seeing the world in a negative way to seeing the small blessings in everyday life. Look everywhere for what you can write in your journal. Try to list ten things every day, and see if it switches the way you look at life.

It teaches you to quit looking at what people were doing wrong and how life was mistreating you.

GRATITUDE RESEARCH

Two psychologists, Dr. Robert A. Emmons of the University of California and Dr. Michael E. McCullough of the University of Miami, have done much of their research on gratitude. In one study, they asked all participants to write a few sentences each week, focusing on particular topics.

One group wrote about things they were grateful for that had occurred during the week, the second group wrote about daily irritations or things that had displeased them, and the third group wrote about events that had affected them (with no emphasis on their being

positive or negative). After ten weeks, those who wrote about gratitude were more optimistic and felt better about their lives. They also exercised more and had fewer visits to physicians than those who focused on sources of aggravation. It makes sense that if you focus on the negative, you are going to feel more negative. If you focus on the positive, you are going to feel better. With all the studies going on about the brain today, we are finding that we can change ourselves in ways we never imagined.

GRATITUDE KEEPS US CONNECTED

Gratitude connects us with ourselves and the world. It brings more joy, peace, and freedom into our lives. It takes retraining our minds to develop gratitude. We have to become conscious about listening to both our thoughts and our words. Dr. John Gottman completed some research showing that a four-to-one ratio is the break point for happiness, so four appreciations to every one criticism.

In keeping our gratitude journals over the years, Steve and I have found that the more we focus on the gratitude in our lives, the happier we are and the more we see what there is to be grateful for. It makes sense—if we focus on what is wrong, we are going to feel down and burdened. If we focus on what is right, our view of the world is happier and more positive.

I was taught from the time I was young to look for possible problems and review all hurts, to prevent them from happening again. In my family, we “beat a dead horse.” In other words, we were taught to never let go of our own or other people’s mistakes. Gratitude journaling helped me free myself from this family pain legacy and start to focus more on what is right. I have learned that there is positivity even in the most painful situations. It is important to help ourselves live in a world of gratitude. Gratitude is not about denial. The more I acknowledge a situation, the more I can unhook from the false beliefs, thoughts, and feelings about the situation. I forgive those I need to forgive, and then I start looking for the silver lining.

GRATITUDE HELPS US FEEL MORE POSITIVE

As we allow ourselves to start experiencing gratitude, we see the world in a more positive way. This practice has helped both Steve and me lighten up our space in the world. We work on gratitude every single day.

When we are in a place of gratitude, we are connected to our higher self, God in us. It is only from this place that we can be truly connected to the world, ourselves, and one another. Sometimes this is called our true self. When we are in this place, we can love ourselves and others unconditionally. We can truly want higher good for one another. When we are in gratitude, we can give up control and seeking approval from others. There is no longer a need for external validation of who and what we are. We can know that no matter what happens, we are loved and cared for. It is not that we no longer feel pain and discomfort, but it comes with knowing that all will be well in ourselves and the world. Gratitude is a shortcut to finding our true selves. Through this finding of ourselves, we find freedom.

I have learned a way to connect and listen that has really helped me over the years. First, I take some time to meditate and work on clearing myself with a journal next to me. As soon as I end my meditation, I write down everything that comes to my mind. Lots of it is The voice trying to get its way, but interspersed in there are messages from my higher self to let go, stop trying to control this situation, stop trying to figure it out, have I suffered enough yet? Whatever it may be.

Reading back through, I ask myself, “Is this statement honest, unselfish, and loving? Is there an ethical value to this statement? Does this statement help or hinder?” If I find that it is honest, unselfish, loving, has ethical value, and helps, I know this is a message from my higher self. It is a concrete way to practice my spiritual life. The more often I stop, try gratitude, and consciously listen to my higher self, the more centered my life becomes. Then I write these nuggets in my gratitude journal. I encourage you to try it.

When Steve and I were at one of the lowest points in our lives, journaling and expressing gratitude brought us out of despair. It was our

lifeline. Even during the deepest turmoil, it always brought us hope. Without hope, we cannot grow emotionally, spiritually, or mentally. Hope is our connection to God and ourselves. It is what helps us to see that change is possible.

To go deeper: Complete a twenty-one-day daily gratitude journal and see what happens. Be sure to journal your thoughts, attitudes, and feelings at both the beginning and the end of the experiment. It makes us grateful to see our own progress.

CHAPTER 12

MEDITATION, MUSIC, ENERGY, AND CREATIVE EXPRESSION

The creation of something new is not accomplished by the intellect but by the instinct acting from inner necessity. The creative mind plays with the objects it loves.

—CARL JUNG

MEDITATION, MUSIC, ENERGY, and creative expression are highly recommended for healing. All four of these help the process of unhooking and living free.

MEDITATION

I have a birth defect and have struggled with back pain all my life. When Steve and I were first married, I had terrible back pain. At the time, I could barely walk up the stairs. I was very afraid of what my future held—being a recovering addict, pain medication was not an option I wanted to choose. I struggled. We started learning about feeling your feelings through the breath. I thought about it strictly in terms of emotional pain.

We would practice deep breathing every night. Steve was a champion at it and took to it very naturally. I, on the other hand, struggled. I would feel very antsy and anxious. I worked really hard just to get a couple of deep breaths in. The miracle is that doing deep breathing poorly still brought me relief, not just emotionally, but also physically. One day I

woke up and looked at Steve and realized it had been six months since I cried to him about the terrible pain I felt. Today, at sixty, I hurt less than I did in my thirties. It was the beginning of our doing meditation, only we were calling it focusing on our breath.

There are many books and Internet instructions on meditation, but here is a little explanation to start with. Meditation is not going completely blank in your mind. Meditation is a practice of paying attention. We all can meditate, it just takes practice.

The first thing to pay attention to is posture. If you are in a chair, sit up straight; do not lean back in the chair. If you are on the floor, you can sit cross-legged or, if that is too uncomfortable, sit on a cushion with your legs straddling the cushion. Your hands can be folded on your lap or on your thighs. Your eyes are neither wide open nor closed, but half-closed, looking downward. Your shoulders should be level but relaxed.

The next thing to pay attention to is the breath. Breathe as deeply as you can comfortably, but do not make it difficult for yourself. Your mind will wander. I prefer to count to twenty when my mind wanders, but some people just say “thinking” to themselves. Start with five minutes a day. You are more likely to continue if you start gently with yourself.

For the purposes of healing, I want to encourage you to use meditation to help you learn to unhook from your thoughts. During meditation, when you catch yourself thinking, you either say “thinking” (unhook) or count to ten. Then you count backward to one. If you can teach yourself to do this, even for one second, that is the beginning of mind training. The next week you might get to two seconds. It is important to look for your successes in seconds. If you can get to two seconds’ worth of unhooking from your thoughts, then when you are in your day-to-day life, those two seconds might keep you from saying or doing something you will regret. This is how we retrain the mind.

MUSIC HEALS OUR SOUL

In my own recovery process, meditation is so important, but so is music. I listened to music a great deal when I was young and had moments when music saved me. When my daughter died, I believe the Paschal Canon, Ode 7, saved my life. I felt suicidal until I played it. I played it every morning when I first woke up. With the music, I would find my will to live for that day. Playing this song over and over literally raised me up and brought me back to life. More recently, it was David Dunn and his song “Today Is Beautiful.” I have always been drawn more to classical music, and it is what I usually turn to for healing. Steve, on the other hand, turns to heavy rock-and-roll. One of his favorites that heals his soul is “Off the Ground” by The Record Company.

It is important that the music you listen to feels healing to you. You want music that fits who you are as a person. Today, I try to begin and end my day with music that touches my soul. Music can transform you. Research has shown that music can reduce heart rate, blood pressure, and cortisol levels. Prosocial music increases positive thinking, and sing-alongs can build communities.

Steve and Shauna sing in a church choir and take music lessons together. The bonding that has formed from their sharing music together is a beautiful thing to watch. It connects them in a deeply spiritual way that is hard to explain but easy to see. That is the power of music (and love).

CREATIVE ARTS

Creative arts are another foundation of healing. Dance and movement free our soul and enrich our emotional, physical, and social integration. They free us from our self-built physical and mental prisons. We dance our anger or depression as a form of expressing our emotions. It helps to purge us of backed-up emotions and wakes up the creative space in us.

During our low points, Steve and I danced and danced. Sometimes we danced our anger with each other rather than verbalizing it. The best part of dancing anger is that we would often end up rolling in laughter. The anger would move to happiness through dance.

It is the same with visual arts, like painting, coloring, creative writing, or drawing. It does not matter if you are a great artist, what is important is that you put your soul into your work.

I have used painting as a source of healing for years. It does not matter that I am a mediocre artist, what matters is that my heart is in my work. I paint with love, and love paints me back.

These are just a few ways of reconnecting with yourself. Try one or two or all of them. It is a wonderful way of connecting with yourself and others.

OUR CENTERS

What I appreciate about all of these methods is they are a way to get back in touch with the natural energy in our bodies.

We have several control centers in our bodies. The first two have a great deal to do with why it is so hard for addicts to get sober.

We have the intellect center. This is where our beliefs and thoughts are. This is where we commit to get off drugs, eat better, and take better care of ourselves. We make rational decisions and process information from our environment.

Often our intellect center is overridden by the emotion center or feeling center. This is the part where we start to understand relapse. This center works much faster than the intellect. I saw it happen to Steve and me last week.

We are committed to healthy eating. We know this is an effective belief, that we need to eat well. We got a coupon in the mail for a burger joint, and our emotional centers overrode our intellect centers, as we felt happy and wanted the burgers. We ate at the burger joint and quickly regretted having the heavy food. We did not get consistent within

ourselves. We did not give our intellect time to process the information. This is what also happens with relapse. A person knows intellectually he or she should not drink, but the emotion center responds faster, with either “I can’t stand what I am feeling” or a version of “No one will know and it won’t hurt me.” For full recovery, both centers have to be in agreement. This takes time, and therefore we see a high rate of relapse.

We have a body center also. It keeps our body functioning without having to give it much thought. The body center is literally our body and its functions. The better we treat our body center, the better it treats us. When we eat or drink things that are toxic to our body, it responds in kind, with hangovers, weight gain, heart disease, diabetes, and so forth.

The fourth center is the energy center. This is our spiritual self, and it needs to be balanced. The Chinese call it “chi.” Creativity is one way of balancing this center. Creativity, whether it is through dance, music, or the arts, balances us. I do other energy work also that has been helpful to me, such as Reiki. Steve and I perform Reiki on each other almost every night. The letting-go process is a way to rebalance our energy. When we are out of balance with our energy, emotional healing is more difficult. Steve and I find both Reiki and letting go daily have helped us feel more balanced and closer to our spiritual selves.

To go deeper: Try different kinds of music to find your style for healing. Write your story and make yourself the hero/heroine. Paint, draw, or use clay to sculpt. Take five minutes a day to meditate.

CHAPTER 13

THE METHOD

*Your perception will only become clear when you can look into
your soul.*

—CARL JUNG

A BIG PART of my healing has come from doing what I call The Method. I developed it from a hodgepodge of different ideas from many people, including Richard Rohr, Byron Katie, Desmond Tutu, Hale Dwoskin, Gay and Katie Hendricks, Jett Psaris, Pema Chödrön, and Thich Nhat Hanh. Steve and I have completed a worksheet on thoughts and beliefs that hurt us every morning for years. I appreciate both his help in seeing my blind spots and his willingness to do his own work.

The Method can be done by using a single guide that is designed to provoke self-inquiry and unhooking from thoughts, beliefs, judgments, and feelings. This, in turn, creates room for forgiveness and gratitude in your life.

Some of this has been addressed already in this book. I am repeating some principles to show you the way I brought them all together into a worksheet that works for Steve and me. It has helped my clients in their own healing process. My hope is that the format will help you too.

The guide works in the following way:

1. Form a statement about yourself or another person (what are you working on?). Tell both the old and new story you are working on.

SHOW ME THE WAY

2. Feel the feelings, and unhook from the experience that comes up in association with the statement and the stories. Unhook from specific thoughts, feelings, and beliefs about the story.
3. Welcome the feelings, judgments, resistances, stories, feelings, thoughts, and beliefs and let them go.
4. Give forgiveness to yourself and others.
5. Look for the gratitude you have for this experience, which changes your beliefs/judgments and the way you experience the story.



The Method is designed to help you make friends with The voice and shine a light on your shadow self. The voice likes to point at others and blame them for how you feel, think, and judge. It uses your shadow (the unknown part of you) to convince you that you are a victim. Once you feel like a victim, The voice wins. This, remember, is called projection.

The shadow contains the discarded parts of you that you have hidden from yourself. The more you are aware of these parts of yourself, the more you can also be in contact with your true self, the part of you that knows true peace and joy, and stand in uncomfortable and difficult emotions without disconnecting from yourself.

With The Method, you can be present in your life no matter what is happening at the moment. Pain is going to occur in life. Suffering is optional. Joy is also going to happen in life. You can embrace all of life.

I recommend daily meditation in addition to The Method. As I said in an earlier chapter, I try to meditate both in the morning and in the evening. Even if you start with just five minutes twice a day, I encourage you to start. By training your mind to not grasp at thoughts, meditation will help you to not grasp onto your thoughts throughout the day.

The ten areas of unhooks in *The Method* are designed to provoke self-inquiry, and for this to be most effective, you need to settle into an environment with few distractions and time constraints. This is a meditative practice, not a test with right and wrong answers. It is an unhooking of your thoughts and feelings.

Everything discussed in this book comes together in *The Method*. *The Method* gives you a straightforward way of using the tools in this book.

HOW TO COMPLETE THE METHOD

Take a few moments and pay attention to what you are feeling right now, at this moment.

Belief/judgment. Think of an experience you had that pains you and that you have judgments about. Go to where it really hurts: Who did that to me, who brought me to that, who showed me that? To develop a judgment of another is to be as judgmental, childish, and petty as you were in that situation. Don't try to be wiser or more spiritual or kinder than you were originally. This is a time to have a tantrum, to look within yourself, to look back at that specific situation and be honest and uncensored about why you were hurt and how you felt when the situation occurred. Doing *The Method* from this perspective gives you an opening to see yourself as others do. As the old saying goes, "If I have my finger pointed at you, there are three pointed back at me." This is a way to use your projections to help you.

If you want to do it on yourself, you can do it either as a judgment or a belief. This way of unhooking with *The Method* has some pitfalls, which you should be mindful of. This is not meant as a way to shame yourself. This is meant to help you hold your thoughts and feelings with a lighter touch. If you find that you are shaming yourself, go back and try it again as a judgment of another person.

Allow your feelings to express themselves as they arise, without any fear of consequences or threat of punishment.

HOW TO WRITE A BELIEF

What is your most stressful thought? What is your mind's favorite thing to beat you up with, and why? Allow yourself time to meditate on your answer.

To help with discovering and understanding self-beliefs, write on a separate piece of paper about the following unhooks:

When was the last time you had that belief/judgment?

What were you afraid of not getting or of losing?

What could be worth getting, to do a full-on assault to yourself?

Who needs you to be _____?

What's not okay with _____?

Where's the problem with/when _____?

Who would agree with you/who taught you that in the first place?

For the final statement on your belief/judgment and feeling sheet for The Method, go to where it really hurts and then ask yourself the following: Who did that to me, who brought me to that? Who taught me _____? And this means _____? (Sometimes without this question, I will stay stuck.)

Unhooking Step 1: What is the story behind this belief/judgment?

This step is where you briefly tell the story about your belief/judgment. What happened from your perspective? What is the story behind the belief/judgment? Give as much detail as possible. Do not edit or sort, just write.

Unhooking Step 2: Are you sure it is true? (yes or no). Would everyone agree with your belief? (yes or no).

These two steps are not meant to be shaming, but are about opening yourself to the possibility that there might be more than one way to see your belief/judgment. There is a way to ask your mind, is there another way of seeing this belief/judgment? It is the first crack into what The voice is telling you.

Unhooking Step 3: Take a moment to feel. What is the feeling associated with this thought? Describe it in physical and emotional detail.

This step is about tuning in to and being present with yourself in this very moment. What do you feel at this moment? This is a time that you are going to start being with your feelings around the belief/judgment. This is the time for courage. Let yourself be aware of what you are feeling *now*. Close your eyes and invite yourself into your body, into the stressful situation. Let your “voice” drop into the specific situation, then notice any physical sensations. Notice as much detail as possible of both the physical and emotional aspects of what you are experiencing. Welcome the feeling. To welcome the feeling, feel the pain of the offense the way you first felt it or feel it at this moment. Feel the hurt in your body. Feel the pain, grief, and anger, but do not create the usual win-lose scenario. Identify yourself with the suffering side of life, how much it hurts to hurt. Hold this in your heart space, your body space, instead of processing it mentally or creating a story line. Welcome and allow the feelings that are associated with the belief/judgment.

Unhooking Step 4: Think back in time. Is there an even older story that goes with this belief/judgment or feeling?

After you have allowed yourself to feel the feelings, it is time to tell the story of your past.

Based on the story and the feelings, is there an older story that goes with this belief/judgment? The earliest memory you can find that matches this story/belief/judgment/feeling is what you want to open up to. It is helpful to focus on the message and feelings, not the details of the story. Even when you start out vague, you can attach to an early story or belief that opens up to even deeper healing.

Unhooking Step 5: What does holding on at this time mean for you? What would you lose (approval, control, or security)? You want to go back to the body and pay attention to your experience in the present moment. Pay attention to your feelings and answer, what do you get out

of staying in resistance? Write it down. There are three payoffs to pay close attention to. They are the need for approval, control, and security. Are you trying to hold on to one of these needs/wants?

Unhooking Step 6: What feelings come up for you? Welcome them.

Pay attention again to your feelings and welcome them. Have they changed from doing this process thus far? There is no right or wrong answer. Welcome your feelings again. Take your time and pay attention to your body sensations. Identify the feeling state.

Unhooking Step 7: Unhook from the thoughts.

Disconnect from the belief/judgment: How is the opposite of your statement just as true? Come up with specific examples of how the opposite is just as true.

This step is where you cognitively unhook your thoughts. This is important to be able to help with letting go. When you are stuck in your belief about being a victim of yourself, others, or the world, you have to unhook. You can be figurative or literal in your unhooks. So really think outside the box. You want to see if there are other ways of looking at this issue that might be just as true. Recognize what The voice tells you. What might be just as true? Do you do the same thing that you are judging another about? Do you do the same thing to yourself? Do you do or think the same thing about that person?

Unhooking Step 8: Allow yourself to welcome any residual feelings. Allow yourself to feel all the feelings associated with this story of your belief/judgment. What are the feelings that are left over?

What does holding on at this time mean for you?

Could you let go of your story and the feelings about your belief/judgment? Will you let go of the story and the feelings about this experience? If not now, would you be willing to in the future?

We go back to our body and pay attention to any residual feelings associated with our belief/judgment. We take notice of them. Could you let your story go? Again ask yourself, do I have any resistance? Write

it down. There are three payoffs to pay close attention to, the need for approval, control, and security. Am I trying to hold on to one of these needs/wants? How does my belief/judgment affect my need/want for approval, control, or security? Then work on the letting-go process. If I can let it go, am I willing to? And when? Does this affect my need/want for approval, control, or security? Can I let go of this need/want? Am I willing to let go of this need/want? When?

HOW TO LET GO

Refer to chapter 7 on release for ways to let go.

Unhooking Step 9: Could you allow any forgiveness that needs to be extended? If not now, could you in the future? When?

Who do you need to forgive? (Look back over your sheet for people you mentioned, including yourself.) Can you forgive them now? If not now, could you reconsider in the future?

STEPS ON FORGIVING

To complete the forgiveness process, you might have to go through the steps more than once.

You told your story of pain by doing the previous steps of The Method. You have to acknowledge that a harm was committed or was perceived as being committed (welcoming and unhooking from the emotions). You can then grant forgiveness. This does not mean it will never hurt again or you will not have to do more work on the issue. It means you are consciously letting go of the issue at this time. The last step is to either renew the relationship or release the person. You do not have to hold on to a person because you forgive him or her.

Another way of doing forgiveness is through prayer. The following is a Buddhist prayer of forgiveness that is a very beautiful way of forgiving:

If I have harmed anyone in any way, either knowingly or unknowingly through my own confusions, I ask for their forgiveness.

If anyone has harmed me in any way, either knowingly or unknowingly through their own confusions, I forgive them.

And if there is a situation I am not yet ready to forgive, I forgive myself for that.

For all the ways that I harm myself; negate, belittle myself; or judge or be unkind to myself, through my own confusions, I forgive myself.

Unhooking Step 10: End with gratitude. Allow yourself the opportunity to be grateful for your original belief and what you have learned in this exercise.

This step is to recognize five ways you can be grateful for this belief/judgment. This is a way to end the exercise with gratitude. It is about changing the way we perceive what we walk through in life.

Silently state to yourself specific things you are grateful for, particularly around this belief/judgment. Is there something of value you have learned about yourself or another person? How have you changed your perspective? What can you see that you could not see before? How have you changed for the better? Write down at least five ways you have gratitude for this situation.

After you come up with at least five examples, stop thinking and start focusing on the physical sensation. You should feel it coming directly from your heart.

Connect with the energy of gratitude that is within you. The energy of gratitude is always there for you. The voice does not want you to know that energy is there. As this energy emanates, your chest will soften and open. In this state, you will be filled with the power of love.

What is your most stressful thought? What is your mind's favorite thing to beat you up with? Who are you most upset with, and why? Allow yourself time to meditate on your answers. Now, write down the issue you are going to work on.

1. What is the story behind this belief/judgment? (Don't edit or sort, just write.)
2. Are you sure it is true? (yes or no). Would everyone else agree with you?
3. Take a moment to feel. What is the feeling associated with this thought? Describe it in physical and emotional detail. Welcome this feeling.
4. Think back in time. Is there an even older story that goes with this stressful thought?



5. What does holding on at this time mean for you? What would you lose (approval, control, or security)?
6. Notice what comes up in your body and where. Can you identify it? Welcome the sensation.
7. Unhook from the thoughts by identifying the opposite of the belief/judgment. How is the opposite of your statement just as true for you? Come up with specific examples of how the opposite is just as true.
8. Allow yourself to welcome any residual feelings. Allow yourself to feel all the feelings associated with this story of your belief/judgment. What are the feelings that are left over?

What does holding on at this time mean for you? Could you let go of your story and the feelings about your belief/judgment? Will you let go of the story and the feelings about this experience? If not now, when would you be willing to in the future?

SHOW ME THE WAY

9. Who do you need to allow forgiveness for? Will you forgive that person? If not now, when could you in the future?
10. End with gratitude. Allow yourself the opportunity to be grateful for your original belief and what you have learned in this exercise.

You can go to our website at www.mooreinstitute.net and get these instructions and a worksheet for The Method for free.

CHAPTER 14

CATCH AND RELEASE

The pendulum of the mind oscillates between sense and nonsense, not between right and wrong.

—CARL JUNG

WHAT IS CATCH AND RELEASE?

HEALING FROM OUR beliefs is big work. This is a method to memorize and use in your day-to-day life. With a few rounds of catch and release, you can usually see that you are stuck in some fixed false beliefs that The voice has created. Sometimes it is harder to shake The voice than other times. You can use it, and no one even has an idea that you are going through the process. When you get triggered during the day, you can use the catch and release method in your head. In other words, you can catch it on the spot and release right away.

Here it is.

CATCH AND RELEASE

What is the stressful thought? How are you beating yourself up? Who am you most upset with and why? (Your story.)

SHOW ME THE WAY

Are you sure this is true?

Can you know everyone would agree with you on this?

What does holding on mean for you at this time? Are you seeking approval, control, or security?

Ask yourself to welcome any feelings associated with this story of your belief/judgment. Could you let this story go about your belief/judgment? Will you let go of the story/judgment and the feelings about this experience? If not now, would you be willing to look into letting go in the future?

Could you allow any forgiveness that needs to be extended? If not now, could you in the future?

What are three reasons to be grateful for this experience? Can you allow yourself to be grateful for your original belief? Allow yourself to feel the flow of gratitude.

Repeat as necessary.

It is simple and easy to do. Catch and release is a quick and easy method to carry with you in your day-to-day life. I really like that I can do it in front of a person in a few minutes and help to soothe myself. It is easy to memorize. If you need to go deeper, you can do that when you get home. You can send yourself little notes to remind yourself that this issue needs further attention.

To go deeper: Try catch and release. See if it helps with letting go throughout your day.

CHAPTER 15

FINAL THOUGHTS

There is no coming to consciousness without pain. People will do anything, no matter how absurd, in order to avoid facing their own soul. One does not become enlightened by imagining figures of light, but by making the darkness conscious.

—CARL JUNG

I HOPE YOU find this book helpful. When I first began my process, I thought I would never be able to feel joy and connection again. Through doing this work and sticking to it, my life is deeper and richer than I ever imagined possible. I know for me this was a true “kitchen” test. It sounds corny, but my life is better and going in directions I could never have imagined. The Method keeps me focused on my recovery and on a life that is not perfect, but so very real. I have realized through this process that only by falling could I have found my authentic self. Only through adversity could my life become more.

I was contented and had stopped growing; I resisted my own growth. I would tell myself that I went through enough when I was young, I should not have to do any more. Now I can fully embrace that my recovery and finding myself is a lifelong journey. There will be more bumps and falls, but now I have a way back home to myself. I will always be grateful for all

that has happened in my life. It was only through falling that I learned to stand. It was only through adversity that I found myself, Steve found his self, and we found each other again.

Pam



RESOURCES

APPENDIX A

JOE WHO USED THE METHOD

Synchronicity is an ever present reality for those who have eyes to see.

—CARL JUNG

Joe was forty-four years old. He had been in recovery from alcoholism since he going to treatment thirteen years before. He was married, had two children, and by all outward appearances was successful. He said he mostly worked the twelve steps to address his issues. He felt important and needed at his AA meetings, as he was one of the first to step up to help others.

Joe was suffering. He and his wife had been having difficulty in their relationship due to problems with their oldest son, who was fifteen. The struggles between Joe and his wife had escalated to the point where they talked of divorce. It was at this point he asked for help. Joe had become distraught and anxious. He thought he was having a mental breakdown.

Joe said, “I think something is wrong with me. I have tried everything, and I don’t get better. I cannot handle what is happening. No matter what I do, it is never good enough.” Joe was angry with his wife. “I try to keep my wife happy, but it never works. I think she enjoys being so unhappy.” Joe stated, “My wife says she is afraid of my anger, but I think it is just because her father was an angry guy. Not me.”

In working with Joe, he started to talk about the shame he felt for not being able to keep his family happy. He believed it was his responsibility. He admitted that when he was growing up, his mother was constantly depressed and suicidal. He worked hard at trying to keep his mother alive. Every day when he came home from school, he would spend the afternoon trying to cheer up his mother, but to no avail. No matter how

hard he tried, he could not give his mother the will to live. He felt like a failure starting at a very young age.

When he met his wife, he fell in love with her laughter first. She was the happiest person he had ever met, and he was sure it was because of the energy they had together. It was like he finally figured out how to keep a woman happy and secure. Joe believed his wife needed to accept that she was angry with her father, who was an alcoholic, and then she would not be mad at Joe for his anger, as he is a good guy who spends his time helping others, with no expectation that they do anything in return. Then she would be happy again.

Joe needed to unhook from several false beliefs he was operating under. The first was that he was responsible for other people's happiness or they were responsible for his. He needed to work on his own hook of self-defeat: "No matter what I do, it is never good enough." He also needed to work on his belief that he was not capable of handling the hard time he was having. He had a judgment that his wife was unfairly projecting her anger at her father on him. He also had a judgment that his wife was angry and he was not. (Notice the difference between a judgment and a belief for Joe. Can you see the belief and judgment sheets Joe should fill out from The Method?)

Joe's payoffs on his beliefs were:

Judgment: I try to keep my wife happy, but it never works. I think she enjoys being so unhappy.

Belief: If I am responsible for your happiness, you will love me.

Judgment: No matter what I do, it is never good enough.

Payoff: If I focus on you, I do not have to look at myself.

Belief: No matter what I do, it is never good enough.

Payoff: If I do not try, I will not fail.

Judgment: My wife says she is afraid of my anger, but I think it is just because her father was an angry guy. Not me.

Belief: I cannot handle this pain.

Payoff: If I shut down or stay angry, I will not have look at my own vulnerabilities.

Joe made progress in his life as he used The Method more and more. He realized that seeing himself as a victim made him angry and stuck. He realized that the pressure he put on himself and his family was more about the stories he had in his head than what was happening in his life.

Joe realized in our work that he had learned the slogan “Let go and let God.” He could use it in a sentence, but no one had taught him how to welcome his feelings, stories, and beliefs and let go. Joe had learned to try to resist his feelings, which was why he believed he could not handle what was happening.

Once he started allowing himself to feel his feelings and then release them, his anger and resistance to his wife eased up. They were able to start problem-solving about their son. Even though Joe’s wife did not work on herself, their relationship improved because of Joe’s newfound ability to unhook from his thoughts, feelings, stories, beliefs, and judgments.

As Joe continued to work on The Method, he became more in touch with old stuck grief over his mother’s eventual suicide. Joe felt responsible for her death. He was heartbroken when she died, but his grandparents had told him to “buck up for Dad.” Joe worked on and unhooked from the repressed emotions and responsibility he felt for his mother and her life. Joe learned that his anger with his wife and her unhappiness was more about the fear of losing someone else he loved. He believed he could not bear her unhappiness, but what he ended up learning was that it was more about his inability to save his mother and eventually losing her.

Joe worked on and unhooked from the repressed emotions and responsibility he felt for his mother and her life and his wife’s unhappiness. He realized he needed to forgive them, but also himself. He saw how stuck he had stayed until he took the action steps toward forgiveness.

Joe found relief in The Method by forgiving himself for real and perceived shortcomings. Joe also saw that he could forgive his mother, father, grandparents, wife, and son. Joe told me that without the forgiveness piece, he would have stayed stuck and not found the freedom he did.

Joe worked on unhooking from his stories, thoughts, and feelings, and then forgiving. He realized his life became easier to handle. Problems that used to baffle him found easier resolutions, but he still needed to be able to fill back up. He needed gratitude. Joe spent time paying attention to seeing the gratitude in what had happened in his family, but he also started expressing gratitude to his wife and son. He realized that the more he allowed himself to feel and see what he had to be grateful for, the less he felt hooked in to the dramas his “voice” created in his mind. He said, “I have a negative, fearful thought, but I just don’t get as hooked in to it as I used to. I am free for the first time in my life.” This is how The Method changes lives.

Joe used the catch-and-release method throughout the day. Not only did his home life improve with his wife and son, but he used it at his workplace and at meetings. He slowly started seeing that his “helping” at AA sometimes was unnecessary and more about his “voice” than helping. He still helped others, but without being attached to the outcome, and was able to unhook from the outcome and walk away. Because of this, he laughed more and had more time and energy to spend with his family.

Joe started meditating daily. His wife even joined him. He found himself able to refrain instead of reacting throughout the day. He played music that he and his mother enjoyed together when he was a child, and got more in touch with old happy memories that he had pushed aside. He started dancing with his wife on Saturday nights, and this brought them closer together. He wrote his life story, which helped him to both own what had happened with his mother and honor her struggle with depression. This, in turn, helped him become a local speaker on depression and suicide.

APPENDIX B

GRAPHIC-DESIGN ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Feelings chart by Jamie Findley

Drawing of mask by Shauna Moore

All other graphics by Sandra Slate

APPENDIX C
FURTHER READING

These books inspired me and helped me develop The Method. All these books were used in the writing of this book.

Allione, Tsultrim	<i>Feeding Your Demons</i>
Chödrön, Pema	<i>Comfortable with Uncertainty</i> <i>Living Beautifully</i> <i>The Places That Scare You</i>
Dwoskin, Hale	<i>The Sedona Method</i>
Hanh, Thich Nhat	<i>Fear</i> <i>How to Love</i> <i>Taming the Tiger Within</i>
Katie, Byron	<i>Loving What Is</i> <i>A Thousand Names for Joy</i>
Hendricks, Gay and Katie	<i>Centering and the Art of Intimacy</i>
Michels, Barry and Phil Stutz	<i>The Tools</i>
Psaris, Jett and Marlena Lyons	<i>Undefended Love</i>

Rohr, Richard

Breathing Underwater
Falling Upward
Yes, and...

Tolle, Eckhart

New Earth: Awakening to Your
Life's Purpose

Tutu, Desmond

The Book of Forgiving

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Pamella Moore owns a private therapy practice with her husband, Steve Moore. They are also cofounders of the Addiction Research Foundation. They are currently conducting social-media research on addiction at www.addictionresearchfoundation.org. Please visit the website and take the survey. Pam is especially interested in women's issues in recovery, while Steve is working on developing the Multi



Modal Model for Recovery. Throughout the years, they have collaborated on many projects to help addicts and their families. In 2017, they started the Addiction Recovery Intensive, a five-day-a-week program to help those with addictive disorders, which utilizes the Multi Modal Model for Recovery. It is a joint effort between the Addiction Research Foundation and the Moore Institute. To find out more about this program, go to www.mooreinstitute.net.

Pam developed *The Method* as she worked through her own crises. In addition to developing *The Method* and writing this book, she has written *Unhook and Live Free*. She also authored a meditative journal titled *Inward to the Kingdom: A Six-Week Journey*.

Pam and Steve have a daughter, Shauna Moore, who lights up their world.