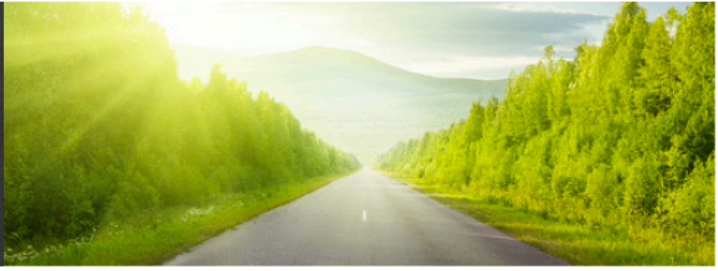


The Reconnective Journey
May 7 - June 25, 2013



Transcript – May 14, 2013: Week 2 Call

-- We started with sharing experiences with the Week 1 homework --

Okay! So, just a quick reminder of where we started, that a big part of where I'm coming from is a Movement to me, to share that we are meant to be happy and that we are meant to be healthy, and the only reason that we aren't is primarily that we tend not to allow that; we get in our own way. And we talked about Understanding, Awareness, Transformation, and Intention. I want to look at this backwards just for a moment. When people are talking about attracting things into their lives, they tend to jump right to intention, setting a good intention, and and what's your intention and so forth, and the issue is that intention doesn't help until we have the ability to transform. If you can't transform something, if we can't transform the negatives to positive, than really the intention doesn't help. We can't transform the negatives and positives if we don't have Awareness. Awareness of what? Awareness of who we really are and Awareness of what's really possible for us, of all the possibilities. Until then, we're just working blindly--the question becomes transform what? And to what?

So that awareness of who were really are and of all the possibilities that we are--we can't have that awareness until we understand that our typical, habitual daily perception is at odds with reality, and that our tendency is to defend and justify that mistaken reality because it's our egos way of protecting us. So, the first thing we have to do before we can move into this is to really start to understand who we are, hence the "what do we want" "what do we love" and so forth. And a good way of knowing if we're there yet is this understanding that intention and love are the same thing. That what we love gets to the heart of who we really are it is who we really are that's what's going to attract things, that's going to determine what happens to us. And we talked last week about what we need to begin to leave our comfort zone, so that we can stand on the threshold before actually crossing at this week, and the things that we needed in place. As we can all hear from all the sharing that people have done on the Facebook wall and on this call is that just getting ready for the journey has stirred up all kinds of stuff. So it's a very important that we continue these things. On this week's call, I'm going to kind of dole out the homework and in pieces as we cover it, and of course I'll recap it later by e-mail and in the transcript.

So the first part of the homework that is to keep doing what we been doing. Keep up with

your daily practice. Keep working on or chipping away at the what you want and what you love parts. Keep adding more whys, keep discovering more things. I'd like to suggest that you'll really know that you're there with those two pieces, the what you want what you love and why, is when you are looking at those everyday and you feel excited and a little nervous about what you've written at the same time, that I think it's probably safe to say that you're there, or at least close. Because it should be exciting, "yeah, this is it, this is exactly what I want," and when you really get to the truth of really the possibilities, you know -- it's hard to get excited about something that isn't gonna happen anyway, right? When you learn "Oh my God! This could really happen," then that's a whole different ball of wax there. So keep doing those things, and keep doing the gratitude list. I'll explain why especially in a second.

So, we're gonna cross the threshold now into the physical level. All those seven levels of vibration--we are as individuals five of those, and the physical being is the slowest of those. So the reason we want to start with the physical level is that we can see what's going on. It's easier to look at; it's not so mysterious. But I want to stress again it's in no way lowest. The world, the physical world, is a mirror. We've talked about awareness, and one of the things to do to build awareness is simply to look around and to look at what were looking at, what the hard real evidence is. But the world is a smoky mirror, and the reason it's a smoky mirror is because were the ones looking at it. So is not that the world is so smoky, but rather, we are smoky. Don Miguel Ruiz, not in "The Four Agreements" but in a later of book talks about imagining that you go to a movie, and you walk into the movie, and you see sitting in the row ahead of you, your mom. She doesn't see you; she doesn't seem to know you're there, but you're watching the movie, and you realize it's a movie about your life. And as you're watching this, you see somethings going okay, "yep, I remember that," and other things you're going "wait, that's not what happened, that's not how it happened, wait a minute! No, I don't remember that part." You watch for a while, and then you go into the next theater, and it seems to be the same movie playing, but it's your dad in the theater, and he doesn't seem to notice you either. The same events are playing, but this movie is different. The things didn't happen in the same way, they didn't mean the same things, there are different things that happened. You go into the next theater and it's your brother. In the next theater it's your sister, or your friend, or your teacher, or your neighbor, and every single movie it's the same events, but all the movies are different. This is what the smoky mirror is like. It may theoretically be the same movie, but were not all looking at the same movie. Because we're the ones looking at it. We are the smoke. So this becomes a problem.

Over the entrance to the Oracle at Delphi, in Ancient Greece, it says "First, Know Thyself." This is always struck me as an amazing thing to say over an Oracle entrance. The truly wise person would read that, turn around and go home. That self-knowledge is the entire key. And this is really what we're talking about here, discovering our hidden worlds. And our hidden worlds in two different ways -- the hidden world of the higher possibilities that we are, and the hidden worlds of the stuff that we don't want to look at or are in denial about, that we don't want to see, and coming to really know those worlds. Until we do, it's hard to deal with anything, because were not looking at reality; we're trying to deal with something

other than what is.

One of the typical things that comes up when people talk about the law of attraction is something like, "I don't understand why the law attraction is working for me." So let's start right there--why isn't the law of attraction working for me. And the problem is that the law of attraction is working beautifully for you, and for me, and for everyone else. If we are really truly honest with ourselves and look around carefully, we realize that we are surrounded by things that we've attracted to ourselves. We more or less live like we want to do, where we want to; we're surrounded by things in our homes that we want to be surrounded by, we are living the consequences of choices that we made on all kinds of things. The wonderful thing about a gratitude list, is a gratitude list makes us stop and look at that. I used to think of gratitude is something you did at the end; everything was done and then you were grateful, and maybe one day when I got all this done I could be grateful, and I've come to understand that gratitude is the beginning of the process, that appreciating what I have means I stop and I notice what I have and I recognize what I've accomplished. And that's empowering! These things are here because I put them there. I have attracted these things into my life. And there are many, many things that are just wonderful that I don't really think about because I tend to focus on the other are the things that aren't going so well.

So the gratitude list is more than just feeling good; it's more than just appreciation. A gratitude list is an exercise in reality. It's an inventory. Let's get real about I've already done, about what's already here, about who I really am as an attractor. Additionally, if we can't do this, not only will we not be looking at reality, but if are not grateful for the things we have now, why would we be grateful for something that comes later? We would` continually be in this state of dissatisfaction.

The other thing I like to think of in terms of gratitude is Abundance. When people talk about attraction, they talk about--I hear this a lot--how you have to be very specific, look for very specific number, look for very specific time period, look for a very specific result. Now to some degree I agree with this. I agree with in terms of once we have a really clear vision, we need a good plan--and plans need specifics. But this isn't Abundance. Abundance isn't X number of dollars or some specific thing like this. Abundance is this never ending flow. When I go outside and look at the stars, I'm not looking to see 100 or 1,000 or 8,029; I'm looking to see endless stars. When I go into the forest, I'm looking for a certain number of trees; I'm looking for endless trees with endless leaves and endless birds and I expectant that this goes on forever.

When we look at young children, one of the reasons we say, "Oh, children are just so innocent and free," is because children understand that they live in total abundance. You just ask mom or dad, right? And everything ust happens. It's how they understand the world to be. That's really what we want from Abundance. It's not that we want a certain bank account. Very few people--very, very few people--want money. What we really want are all the things that money will do for us, whatever they may be--for some people that's

security, for some people that's freedom, but what we want to know is that we can do the things that we want to do. We want to do the things we want; we want to be able to have things that we love. That really is abundance, to know that that stream is endless.

So, that's the first part--to look at this really as getting out of this dream, the smoky mirror to understand that we do not see the world the way it actually is, that we do not see ourselves the way they truly are, and that we need to make that jump, starting with gratitude--what do I already have? Next we talk about will and intention. Will is about what do we want. We can't exercise our will if we don't really have the answer to the question. So that's why this is important. We don't need to make it frustrating; rather, it's "let's get clear about this," because we can't make something that we want happen when we don't know what it is. This doesn't mean that we must know later today; it just means, "Okay, I'm working on this" and to be aware that what we want is probably different than what we think, which is why we're having trouble with it. Intention, as I mentioned, is synonymous with Love. It's what we actually love that will happen, what we really seek at the level of intention. We were just talking earlier about self sabotage--that's what happens in self sabotage, is that your heart and your mind are in two different places, and you're going in different directions. One excellent cure for that is to be clear about those things, so that who we really are, what we truly are inside, is harmonious with what is were trying to accomplish.

Then finally to the idea of manifesting spiritual energy into physical vibration. I really want to strongly encourage people again to think of this interplay of levels as coherence, not escaping a level, and not crystallizing, but to understand that all these levels are at work continually, and that one flows to the other continually. One of the surprising things that happen in The Reconnection is that even though we are working at high frequencies, those high frequencies have an effect all the way through. But the same thing is true in the other direction--as above so below. There's one coherent unit of energy. So when we're looking at the level of the physical world and of the physical health, we're noticing things around us--it's not as as opposed to looking at spiritual things: it's as spiritual as it gets. And we can look at it right there. It's not difficult to read--it's right in front of us. When we can take this physical work seriously, we can look at what happens in our physical world that we can very readily see, and we can do what most people don't, which is to really look at it and become aware and to use that as a mirror, even a smoky mirror, of what's going on with us and what we can do to make it better.

These are the things that keep us stuck. One of the first things that keeps us stuck is a misreading of what's going on. A man named Fred Hirschberg came up with this wonderful model of three ineffective roles in the world, and they are the Prosecutor, the Victim, and the Rescuer. We can see this at home, in relationships, at work, classrooms--everywhere there's people, these roles are played out. The prosecutor--this would be the demanding boss, the strict teacher, the harsh parent, anybody domineering, this "I need to take control and make things work, or things are gonna go well." The problem with that is that it doesn't work. It might seem to work briefly while people are right there, but people really instead of learning to do what you're telling them, really only learn to avoid you and to

circumvent you. Those people tend to cast themselves in the role of Victim. Now the role of Victim truly rocks, because when you're a Victim, you have no responsibilities--everything that happens to you is somebody else's fault. If the prosecutor didn't do "X," everything would be grand, and there is absolutely nothing for you to do. Perfect. Except that all the control is in somebody else's hands. Much of society has learned to become professional victims. We get really skillful at this. And the more that we blame other people, the more that we have no responsibility, and as soon as we have no ability to respond, then there is nothing that we need to do to change the situation. But there's also no way to make it better.

The third ineffective role is the Rescuer, and the Rescuer will charge right in to make things right. This one of a problem with their educational systems currently: "That's okay; if you can't do this, just don't worry about it. If you're not good enough, don't worry--I'll just do it for you." That's not that that education, that's not rescuing, that's not nice--it's patronizing. But whatever the situation, "Hey, that's okay--I'll handle this for you, not to worry," whatever the situation, work, outside work--at first, this seems great. This person really cares me, they took all this off my shoulders. But what happens if things don't turn out well? Now the victim turns into the Prosecutor, and is angry at the Rescuer for not rescuing good enough. How come my degree isn't get me what I want? How come this project didn't turn out? How come this didn't turn out the way you said it would? You didn't do a good enough job rescuing. And now the Victim is in the role of the Prosecutor. As long as these three roles are played, nothing gets accomplished. It is entirely about blaming other people, and it also has nothing to do with reality.

In the first week we looked at Robert Frost's poem. We talked about how in many ways it is a poem about justification: we like to defender our choices, we like to pretend something other than what they are, and we like to stick by that. And we do that here. So my favorite question to bring us out of that is a very simple question: "How's that working out for you?" If we're looking for something that's practical, that gets results, it's working out or it's not, and by definition, these rules are not working out.

So a couple pieces of reality. One is, you cannot control other people. To the extent that we want to try, you're wasting your time. We simply cannot control other people--never could, never will. And I mean in any context. No teacher is truly in control of children. No parent is truly in control of kids. It just doesn't happen. And second, we need to acknowledge when things aren't working. Again, we want to get away from endlessly defending what it is that is not working.

So what do we do about this? Well one thing we do is acknowledge that we need help. I think Albert Einstein put it best when he said, "We cannot solve the significant problems that we face with the same level of thinking we used when we created the problem. And when we try to insist and defend and do everything ourselves, and continue doing what isn't working, we are in fact trying to solve a problem with the same thinking that created it. It's our own thinking that got us into this mess, and our own thinking is not going to get us out

of it. And it has nothing to do with accomplishment.

So, for example, Deng Ming Dao has a wonderful example in his "365 Tao" book about eagles flying over the ocean. He points out that eaglets, young eagles, do not get into trouble flying over the ocean. It's adult eagles to get into trouble flying over the ocean. Why? Young eagles aren't strong enough to fly out very far. They can get far enough to get into trouble. It's the older ones the accomplished ones, the strong ones that are in danger of going too far and getting into trouble. The more we become accomplished, the more we progress, the more we're on new ground, and the more we're going to need a guide who has been there, because we've never have.

Again, we have to face reality. One of the things we'll hear frequently is, "You know, I just don't feel comfortable asking for help--I have a hard time asking for help," and if we look at that honestly, we realize on the face of it, that's ridiculous. It's not hard to ask for help--pick up the phone, dial a number, "Hey, can you help me?" Asking over. The problem is different than what we're telling ourselves--the problem is we don't *want* to ask for help.

So we need to recognize that we need this. Last week we talked about how typically 0% or 90% of something will get done because either we need help and we never get to it, or we need help and we do as much as we can. One of the places we need to look for help is that spiritual center. This is why that daily practice is so important and setting the groundwork for that. This will become the kernel of truth that's good for us, and it will grow, not in a week, but it will grow over time if we do this every day. It's a place to turn for help, and it's a place to turn for help that's solid and true, unlike the smoky mirror.

So the first thing we need to do to build our vibration the physical plane is to truly look at it. To truly look at it for real. We're going to take kind of a personal inventory, a personal examination. The process of this is--think of it this way. I'm sure we could all very quickly put together a list of friends, family, associates, who we can see that they create most of their own problems if not all. Right? They always have these problems, and they create themselves. We can see that they create their own problems themselves. Fortunately, you and I never do that, right? We're completely immune. Yeah, of course we do it ourselves--we can see another people; we have trouble seeing it in ourselves.

This is a very important thing to recognize. So one of the homework pieces that were going to do is an exercise to do exactly this. I think rather than going to the 3rd thing I want to talk about today, I'll explain this part of the homework first, and then go on to the third part, and do all questions at the end. So other than continuing working on last week's homework, here's the next part of the homework for this week. This will need to be written down--you want to get yourself a nice big pad of paper, and you draw six columns on however many pages you use. In the first column, just go down and list all the outside problems--by outside problems I mean people, situations. Where do you have resentments? What are problems in your way? Where are problems that have other people's names on them, or other situation's names on them? Maybe that's the economy. Maybe that's

someone at work. Maybe that's something that happened three years ago that's not even a big deal, but it's still bugging you, and taking a look at that. And simply write them down. Be honest. Don't be "well, I really shouldn't feel this way," or you feel guilty--if it's bugging you, write it down. This will be useful to the extent that you can be honest with yourself. Take some time. Write them all down. Get a list. So that's the first column. Who or what do you have issues with, are blaming, have resentments toward?

In the second column, just briefly write what's the problem--what exactly is the issue here, what's going on, objectively. In the third column, in a topic area, what does this effect for you? So for example, the first time I did this, top of my list was a work supervisor, and the issue was this person was on my back, keeping me from from from promotions--that was the issue. What does this affect? It affects my income, or self-esteem, or ability to work. Whatever this affects for you. Fear. Whatever this brings up. So that's the first three columns.

In the fourth column, ask yourself, "How am I to blame in any way for this situation?" Now let me just explain. It may very well be that this other person is 99% at fault, but what tiny part did you play here. What did you do that made it worse, or different than it needed to be? What did you contribute to this negatively? And the very next column is: What's good about this? What did you contribute that's good? Even if you feel, "I made a total mess of this, I am so at fault, I just feel horrible," well, that's not entirely the case. There's something in there that's good--write it down. "Well, at least I took a stand," or "At least I addressed it," or "You know, I tried to do this; it didn't work out well, but this is what I was trying to do." Okay? What's the good in that, from your end.

Then the last column--this is gonna be a little bit tricky at first, but just sit with it for minute. People don't do negative things for no reason. Even if somebody robs a bank, right? It seemed like a good idea at the time. They didn't do it because they thought it was the wrong thing to do. Now that's a little bit of sick thinking, and that's what we want to do address here. If people aren't doing the things that we feel they should, then we think they're not right, that they're "sick." Now if somebody was acting strangely because this person was ill, you wouldn't you wouldn't condemn them. You'd be more patient with them, right? We don't sick treat sick people that way. We treat sick people kindly, with understanding. And the reality is that hurt people hurt people. When people are hurting, they hurt people. So here we step back and say, "How are they sick? What is going on with this person?" Could be big, could be small, but how can we understand them as sick people? What are the things that they are dealing with?

Now you notice that in these six columns, I haven't addressed anything, I haven't said to do anything, there isn't anything you need to do differently or feel differently. Just get it down. Before we can do anything, we have to understand the world the way it is. You'll find that this is already a very powerful, powerful exercise with these six columns: first, who or what are you blaming or resentful that; second, what exactly is going on with this; third column, what is this affect in you--your income, your health, whatever it affects for you; the fourth

columns, in what way, even if it's small, are you to blame; and the fifth column, in what way, even if it's small, are you doing something good here; and then the sixth column, in what way can we see them as sick people just trying to the best they can there. OK?

If you do this thoroughly, you will see the world in very, very, very different ways. One thing I recommend, just as people said earlier in this call, you know, when you say this, it sounds different? Sit down with somebody you can trust with this, and share it with them, the whole thing. It will sound different when you share it than it did when you wrote it. This will go a long way towards helping us to see the world the way it is so that we can move forward from here into new steps.

That's as far as a good ago would that part of this. Let's pause here for quick questions before I do this last part.

"Tim, do you want us to do as many situations as we can think of?"

As many as you can think of.

"I'm personally thinking this seems like this is a lot of work. I'm up for it."

Well -- you know what? It is. So...take that under advisement.

OK, the last thing I want to say about the physical -- you know, we talked about faster vibrations affecting lower vibrations, but this is a continuum. So the same thing happens in the other direction.

There's a wonderful passage in Herman Hesse's *The Glass Bead Game*, where one of the main characters is so stressed over the difficulties of constructing a complicated game for the annual festival that he goes to see his old mentor, the Music Master. He goes expecting help with the complex mathematics and cultural intertwinings in a game at this highest level, but when he arrives, the Master asks nothing about the game at all. Instead, he asks his former pupil about his diet. He asks how much sleep he's getting. He asks about his meditation practice. In short, all things about personal care and sustainable health, mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual. Despite what our egos tell us when we're brain-deep in whatever imagined mess we're sorting through at the time, the way out is simple—return to fundamentals.

As a musician, I know that while talented amateurs practice complicated, flashy musical excerpts for much of their time, professionals spend the same time playing long, slow, even scales and arpeggios. Fundamentals. I remember hearing about an NBA coach who insisted his players practice lay-ups. The players protested they could do that shot in their sleep. "Good!" he responded. "I want to see 400 of them. Go!" Fundamentals. And how do we reach peaceful, deep, spiritual levels of heightened awareness and spirituality? Breathe. Just breathe.

PHYSICAL HEALTH

We're all interconnected, One with Everything. We are mind, body, spirit. And we can easily get swept up in the wonder of esoteric musings to ignore an important component of all this spirituality and consciousness—our bodies and physical health.

So at the risk of sounding condescending, I not only offer, but also insist, on the following.

*Starting your day

Don't just come to finally. Don't just get jolted back to the world by an alarm. Let your day start with purpose and meaning. Have a more or less standard time to rise. Have a routine that includes a spiritually meaningful beginning to your day. Have breakfast, even if that's only an orange or a bagel and coffee—but take time to sit for a few minutes and enjoy the meal, even if just ten minutes. No matter what happened yesterday, no matter what today is bringing, focus your day. The impact on ALL levels of your health will be profound—including attitude and productivity.

WebMD offers quite a few useful breakfast tips, stressing its role in improved concentration, better physical performance and coordination. Not only is a healthy breakfast “more nutritionally complete,” but also it offers help lowering cholesterol and controlling weight. “A healthy breakfast meal should contain a variety of foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low- or non-fat dairy, and lean protein.” Or for those on the run, fruit and yogurt, or whole-grain cereal with low-fat milk, or even a hard-boiled egg and a banana. When I find my mind wandering, or that I'm wasting time instead of being productive, I invariably realize “Oops! Skipped breakfast.” I'm working on getting better at this—and it's why I listed it first!

*Eat lunch

This is one of the problems with American culture. We typically cram down a quick bite in 30 minutes, fearing the boss breathing down our necks as we watch the clock. Or we shove something down our throats while running errands. Not an approach. This is inherently unhealthy in multiple ways—the foods we choose, the mental and emotional state in which we ingest these, and the complete lack of spiritual awareness in which we do this.

It's self-important. Our immediate concerns are more important than anything else in the universe—including your own long term well-being. And of course, that's just silly. Consider this PART of your busy, productive day—an ESSENTIAL part. Even if limited, give that time real peace and relaxation—no matter HOW busy you are. You will approach the afternoon with FAR more energy, enthusiasm—and productivity.

*Set a time for dinner

Eat dinner at more or less the same time each day. Include time to prepare the meal (or to help prepare the meal) without being unduly rushed. Yes, perhaps the kids have to be somewhere, or you just got out of a meeting or errands, but find a way to do it. No matter what.

Here's why—it's an interrupter. While my head might be spinning faster and faster with "What am I going to do about this???", dinner preparation ends that process: "I don't know what you're going to do, but right now, you're going to go make dinner." Force yourself to stop and go make dinner. You will find everything changes—in particular, far from abandoning your legitimate concerns, you will stop making them *worse*. It's time for dinner. Relax. Share with your household (if you have one). Be nourished, in more than physical ways. Take time to let it settle in.

Then you may go on to your evening, whatever your plans.

*Go to bed

At a reasonable and more or less constant time, go to bed. Your days will have a regular rhythm that is in itself healing and comfortable. And you can't start your days smoothly if you're recovering from the late night before.

Before you go to sleep, take time to round out the day with something spiritually meaningful to you. Meditation, reading, prayer, a walk in nature—whatever you are happy to do everyday, without fail. Thus, no matter what happened during the day, each day ends by bringing you back into a balanced focus.

*Exercise

Whether everyday, or at least three/four times a week, engage in regular, enjoyable, vigorous exercise, at least 30 minutes, with an hour even better. [If you're trying to lose weight, double that—this is a maintenance program; you'll need more to burn extra calories.]

The body is made to move. The lymphatic system, responsible for removing waste products from your cells, is twice the size of the circulatory system, but it has no pump—it relies on the action of the muscles and breathing to work. Sitting quietly continually simply isn't good for you. Movement helps mood as well—move a muscle, change a thought. If you're having a bad day—go for a walk, or a bike ride, or a swim, or a run, or a workout. You'll feel better.

Exercise has numerous benefits. The heart is a muscle, and needs exercise too to remain healthy. Keeping your metabolism running smoothly helps healthy weight maintenance. And a good hour of exercise starts endorphins going. Regular exercise will regulate blood pressure, prevent serious disease (especially diabetes), and increase energy, stamina, and well-

being. It also improves your sex life: desire, performance, and pleasure (the heart's not the only organ getting more blood).

You aren't too busy to exercise—you're too busy NOT to exercise. And if you're especially busy—up your exercise. You'll feel better, and get more done.

*What you eat

Different people have different diets, for different reasons, and that's fine—as long as it's nutritious, delicious, and not excessive. In particular—rich in fruits and vegetables (barring special circumstances). Whether raw or in special preparations, find what you like and make these a major part of your diet. Learn to appreciate the sweet, rich tastes of these foods once you've stopped dulling the palette with heavy foods (and salt). Everything else—in balance, in appropriate quantities.

IF that's a problem...it's not a food problem. Do you see?

When I was a child whining “Mom! I'm hungry! Can I have a cookie?” she would tell me to eat an apple, and if I complained I wasn't hungry for an apple, she replied then I wasn't really hungry.

What these signs. If food isn't the issue, what is? Separate it out so it can be resolved appropriately.

The same goes for sudden loss of appetite. Recognize the early warning sign, and address it early. If, for example, it's the onset of a minor illness, rest up early, rather than waiting to get full-blown sick. Learning just early signs has kept me very healthy for years now. I get “border-line sick” for a few days, instead of knocked on my ass with a wicked cold for two/three weeks.

*Alcohol

A little is fine (unless you have a problem with alcohol, and need to stay away from that first drink). A glass of wine. A beer with dinner. Even two. But if you're relying on alcohol nearly every day, or drinking to excess from time to time, you are covering up things that need healing, and in these cases, alcohol is only making things worse in the process.

Address your real problems. Take a close look at the chapter on addiction. Trust me, I realize how difficult this is to see, let alone admit. But the truth is, we need very little alcohol, and we can get even that easily from natural sugars and starches. We all have things to face—don't cover them. It doesn't help.

*Cigarettes

This is a tough addiction. But a very harmful one. Stop rationalizing, and quit.

Remember that first cigarette? Typically, someone offers one, and after taking a drag, your eyes water, you cough uncontrollably, you turn green—your entire body is telling you this is a very, very bad idea. And then you take another drag. This is not a logical process. Totally peer pressure rationalized. It's not cool—it's conformity. You don't need it to relax—it's actually making you tense. Not to mention high blood pressure, either now or in the future.

Replace it with deep breathing. You get the same relaxing effect, without the ill-effects. Have a plan to deal with the cravings. As your lungs clear, you'll feel better. Much better.

*Drugs

If you're still telling yourself pot is an herb, and therefore good for you, grow up. Belladonna is an herb. Don't eat it—it's deadly poisonous.

You cannot balance your energy healthily while distorting it, whatever the drug. Medical drugs are to temporarily change the body chemistry while it's in a state of imbalance—not to alter a healthy body.

If you're in need of drugs, or turning to them for recreation, something is wrong. Fix the something that is wrong, rather than running from it (or pretending it isn't there).

*Caffeine/sugar

According to the Mayo Clinic, 2-4 cups of brewed coffee a day will do a healthy adult no harm. At the same time, caffeine works by squeezing your arteries like a garden hose, and it's not the healthiest, most relaxing way to accomplish alertness. I'm not preaching—I do my two cups a day, supplemented by a fair amount of decaf (which still contains some caffeine. Still, mayoclinic.com notes even moderate amounts can contribute to insomnia, nervousness, restlessness, irritability, stomach upset, fast heartbeat, and muscle tremors. I found that cutting back improved my sleep tremendously, and that caffeine after noon was a no-no. On the other hand, one of my friends drinks coffee with double shots of espresso all day long without ill effect. Know thyself.

Sugar is a drug. Craving, bingeing, withdrawal, sensitization—all part of the sugar experience. If you'd like to feel better, cut back on refined sugar. Use honey (as long as it comes from local source so you're sure you're getting actual honey) where you need sweeteners, as honey is a food (discounted the highly refined commercial kinds). Eat fruit—if you're not tasting the delicious sweetness of the fruit, you are definitely eating too much sugar. Use fruit to sweeten dishes. Separate cravings, and replace them with healthy eating.

BEYOND PHYSICAL HEALTH

We often think of “health” as merely the absence of illness and limited to physical health. But far more than that contributes to our true health—not simply a “well-rounded” approach to life, but rather embracing the quality of our lives as symptoms of our real health. Consider these crucial points, all too often overlooked.

*Friends

Life is not about working and struggling. Anything else is a distortion. More than one study has concluded we could enjoy all we have now by working three hours a day—something we can demonstrate both through observing “primitive” cultures and by separating productive activity from merely trading activity in our own economy. That means changing some basic assumptions.

Here’s a good barometer—do you have regular time for your friends? If not, make it. No one sits up on a death bed and wishes for more time at the office. Spend time with your special people, and lots of it. This is what life is about. We are social creatures, and we’re living naturally when we’re laughing and loving and caring and listening and, well...living. If this is not part of your life design—it’s time for a redesign!

*Down time

We all have busy days. But if every day is busy busy busy, we’re out of balance. Frankly, many of us (including me) have hidden behind work without recognizing that’s what we were doing. And if we’re hiding, just what are we dodging? Time to recognize this red flag and step back to address it. Something other than scheduling is going on.

We all need regular rejuvenation. A few weeks vacation each year isn’t going to do it. Neither is a day off work once in a while. This important element of living is...important. If you’re living to work, you’re not living. Work on that!

*A Healthy Environment

What surroundings are right for you, work and home? Are they supportive of who you are and what you’re about? Are they comfortable? Do they energize you? Do others find your space attractive and relaxing? What lifestyle enriches your spirit? What would it take to incorporate this into your life not in the someday future, but now? Don’t live for the future—the time is Now!

These questions have no “right” answers. But they DO have important answers. I know people who are driven and thrive on the busy vibe of a booming city environment. I *can* do that, but day after day, it makes me jittery, and I long to escape, to get away. Those people would find my environment dull, insanely boring, without inspiration. Other people would find that, like me, my country setting is beautiful, relaxing, inspiring, invoking my best qualities, sparking insights, engaging my full energy, and leaving me charged and alive at the

end of the day.

Additionally, how does your environment impact the people you work with, or interact with throughout the day? How about the people you live with (if you live with people), your family, your friends, your love? Does it resonate with them as well? If partnerships in all areas of your life are in balance, this should be in sync. And if not—take a look at the contrasts, as they are flagging areas that need attention.

*Getting Organized

Yes, I hear you—all these tips sound good, but how can you possibly fit them all in?

First, don't see the situation as disparate details.

Make a “dream list” of all the things you want/need to fit into your life. Forget about practicality just now—get it all down. Ask your “Inner Rebel” for things you've long shoved aside...you'll be surprised what you've forgotten is important to you!

When you're done, look for things that can be combined. Could part of your busy day be done while enjoying the sunset from your back porch? Could you and some friends have coffee/breakfast in the morning before work? Could that conference call happen while you're on a stroll along a stream?

Be careful you don't just pack more work into your day—I'm not suggesting you increase your multitasking. However, you might well be able to do some of that “I can't--I have to work” time and fit in things that lift your spirit and energy.

Second, what's most important?

People are more important than things. But which people matters. Family, significant others, friends—when these people need you, be there. The rest will wait. But miscellaneous email, calls, requests, “emergencies” that aren't, urgent pressures on your time for unimportant things (and you get to define which is which)—ignore or postpone them. You'll be amazed how much of what you “have” to do you really don't. At all.

You'll also find that your business contacts will (generally) understand you putting important relationships first. If you've scheduled time with the most important person/persons in your life, schedule business/work around them, not the other way around, people will appreciate the balance and the priorities. More often than not, you'll hear, “Wow, I should do that. Great idea.”

*Progress, not Perfection

OK, now, how to set up your life so it's in perfect balance? Don't.

Seriously, don't. You'll drive yourself nuts. And it's never gonna happen.

So why did I just tell you all that other stuff? Because that's what you're going to work toward. Think of it this way—if someone decides to follow Jesus, does that mean that person suddenly becomes like Jesus? Or Buddha or Krishna or any other impossibly noble being? Or do they keep working closer to it? Yeah. That's the stuff. Work closer to it.

Here's the hard part, but here's the secret—learn to live joyously incomplete. Love where you are, but appreciate all that you have, all that you are enjoying in this moment.

Come to think of it...shouldn't this be the easy part? Right. Time to heal. See?

I love how Abraham (a group, not a single entity) explain this—imagine you signed up for a river rafting trip. Now, imagine arriving and telling the guide, “OK, we're practical, business-like, result-oriented people. We've got a lot to do. So, how about you just put the rafts in the water, say, 200 feet upstream from the finish, and we'll just bottom line this trip!”

Silly, yes? That's not it at all—you want a ride on the river!

Anticipate the outcome, sure, but enjoy the river journey, moment to moment, in all its richness. Be so busy gratefully enjoying what you have in each moment that you've no time to worry about what may or may not be coming. And make progress down the river. That's it. That's the secret. Progress not Perfection.

So choose your big dreams, your most important elements, remembering that your day needs balance—not all working for “someday,” but living healthy and alive today. The rest can happen a bit at a time.

I love too what Alex Bailey says about setting out on a big dream. Suppose you wanted to travel across the country, and finally, you packed the car and were ready. You'd be excited just pulling out of your driveway! Journey like that. Appreciate where you are, and be excited about where you're going. That makes today's small step worthwhile and energizing.

And small steps matter. Ever have a friend for years and one day you two find you're flirting and in love? Small steps. A page a day is a book at the end of the year. My first album, distributed nationally, was recorded in my home studio 15 minutes a day, squeezed in between my two jobs. I live today in a beautiful, lush spruce forest I planted when I had nothing...one 10¢ tree at a time. Or that seemingly small retirement account contribution that one day is a half a million dollars—how'd that happen? Small steps. They matter.

So seriously—your dreams are here today, if you decide to make them so, and start the journey. And why wouldn't you? Make the most of where you are now—because where you are now has a lot going for you—mainly, you and your dreams.

Enjoy them today!

*Become comfortable with uncertainty

Though many of us claim we love adventure, most of us like things to stay the same. Even when we are closing in on our dreams, we hold them off, often quite observably, not mystically at all, but without realizing it. Thus, we continually wonder why things aren't happening for us—when we are the problem.

First thing—get comfortable with uncertainty. When we know exactly where we are and how things are going to be—things can't improve. By defending ourselves against what we think we don't want, we also defend ourselves from what we're wanting.

Again—here's a sign we need healing. Why? It's entirely about fear. And those hypothetical fears—which in fact rarely or even never happen—prevent us from growing into what we want, what we are, what we deserve, what we're alive to do.

At each moment, all is possibilities. Only because of uncertainty can that be the case. It's wonderful! Learn to appreciate just how marvelous this is, how rich with promise, how utterly perfect. It's exactly as things should be—uncertain.

*Breathe

Every mystical teaching, every martial art, every meditation practice, every relaxation technique, stresses breathing. Breathing is stressed in Abraham's "art of allowing" as a means of releasing resistance. Breathing is singled out in Eckhart Tolle's "The New Earth":

Someone recently showed me the annual prospectus of a large spiritual organization. When I looked through it, I was impressed by the wide choice of interesting seminars and workshops. It reminded me of a smorgasbord, one of those Scandinavian buffets where you can take your pick from a huge variety of enticing dishes. The person asked me whether I could recommend one or two courses. "I don't know," I said. "They all look so interesting. But I do know this," I added. "Be aware of your breathing as often as you are able, whenever you remember. Do that for one year, and it will be more powerfully transformative than attending all of these courses. And it's free."

Is it really true? Is it really that simple? Tolle adds this:

Being aware of your breathing takes attention away from thinking and creates space . . . Notice the sensation of the breath . . . One conscious breath (two or three would be even better), taken many times a day, is an excellent way of bringing space into your life. Even if you meditated on your breathing for two hours or more, which some people do, one breath is all you ever need to be aware of, indeed ever can be aware of. The rest is memory or anticipation, which is to say, thought. Breathing isn't really something that you do but something that you witness as it happens. Breathing happens by itself. The intelligence within the body is doing it. All

you have to do is watch it happening. There is no strain or effort involved.

I can offer one practical example from experience.

From high school through college and into my early 20s, my focus was almost entirely on becoming a professional musician, particularly a symphony musician. I studied with professional teachers. Even in college, I drove to New York every two weeks to study with a teacher from the New York Philharmonic. I practiced hours daily. I played with every ensemble I could—starting while I was still in high school with the Syracuse University Orchestra, the Syracuse Symphony Youth Orchestra, a wind quintet, and a solo performance at the Everson Museum of Art—not to mention my various bands and pick-up gigs (especially musicals). Point is—I was into this big-time. Not a mere hobby or pastime.

Over and over, as I struggled to perfect my command of this art, evening out all those scales, the spaces between notes, the smooth arc of the phrases, subtle techniques to blend and bring out the nuances in music, I kept hearing the same thing—pay attention to your breathing.

It was very frustrating. Why wouldn't they just tell me how to *really* do these things? Come on—I *was* paying attention to my breathing! And I was working really hard! But that's all I could get out of them—breathe! They were even quite adamant about it—one lesson in New York, as I set out to play my meticulously prepared piece for my teacher, he stopped me after two notes: "Breathe first!" Ok. I started again. Big breath. Two notes. "OK, let's get the interval exact." I tried. "Yes, that's it. Start again." I did. "BREATHE!" You get the idea. In a later lesson, I got out my reed, tooted a note or two, and he interjected, "Breathe first." I explained I wasn't playing, that I was just checking out the reed. "Why do it wrong, ever?" he asked.

Damn. A habit of breathing right...reminded me of *Zen in the Art of Archery*, of paying attention to the small things so that they would reflect in the larger things. I did it—took time, but I treated this as a sacred part of playing. And I kept working and struggling. And breathing, damn it. Sigh.

Then one day, it happened. Everything just clicked. All those years. I was just playing, and I became entirely connected to breath. It was everything. All technique flowed from it. If I was struggling with a difficult passage, I deepened my connection to breathing, and it became easy. Just. like. that. Just as my professional teachers had told me. It was in the breathing. Today, on stage, something gets going too fast to play—I breath, and play it, like I've never been able to before—perfectly. And it's not "me." It's breathing. It really, really, is.

We know that breathing helps us focus and calm down. So why do we wait until we're scattered and worked up? What if we breathed perfectly all the time? What immeasurable benefit would that bring to daily life? I don't mean also meditative breathing—when

running, breathe appropriately. When having passionate sex, breathe appropriately. When laughing hysterically, breathe appropriately. But whatever is happening in the Now, breathe. Just notice your breath. Notice how it feels. Let it be. Let it balance. Let it heal.

*Allowing instead of doing

Like many people, I was raised to work hard to get ahead. And I did. Work hard, and get ahead.

But get ahead of what? I had to look around and realize I just wasn't enjoying my life. That led to a series of changes and rethinking and redoing that brought me step by step to the work I do today. But I still insist on doing more than I do allowing. I still insist there just isn't time—when I know there is. I worry about things that just haven't happened...but hey, they *might* happen—then what? I don't know...they've never happened. This worry gets in the way of accomplishing things, even when focused on doing. But it also gets in the way of joyfully living who I am.

There's an old joke that claims successful people are just people too dumb to know their ideas would never work. We all overthink things, instead of letting them flow from our spirit and being, instead of joyfully following our path, instead of letting them happen in the wondrous unfolding of our meant-to-be fulfilling lives.

What would you do if you knew you couldn't fail? If the answer is anything other than exactly what you're doing now, there's room for healing, for fear is interfering with allowing. Step by step, let it go, getting lighter every day.

*Letting Go

I, probably like you, am a product of my culture, and that culture values hard work and earning what comes to us. Not a bad value, really—but a limiting one.

Remember Winnie the Pooh? Pooh and Rabbit are discussing poetry, and are very much at odds about how to go about composing a poem. Pooh likes to just let the words come to him, while Rabbit “prefers to go out and fetch them.” We are a culture that likes to go out and fetch. We are, to paraphrase a Zen story, sitting thirsty on the banks of the river.

But this is firmly ingrained. I understand intellectually the importance of letting go, and have experienced it from time to time, yet I still insist that I will need to go and fetch things. I'll bet you do that too.

So what do we do?

Ever get that feeling that we're just so close? Standing right next to who we really are and really can be, just about to realize it, if we would just open our eyes and see, open our hearts

and let it be, open our minds and stop stopping it, albeit unintentionally?

Stop. Breathe. Trust. Let go. Let it happen. Grow where you're planted. The next chapter of life will be before you in its correct form and timing. Let go.

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So, what do we do with this list? That's a lot.

What I would like you to do is simply consider all that stuff, and decide what two or three of them you want to improve from that list, just to improve the situation, OK? Progress not perfection. To do that whole list would be insane. But what 2, 3, 4 things on that list would improve your physical life, and as you improve your physical life, you improve your overall vibration.

The bottom line today is to look at our physical world not as something that's happening to us, but as something that's in partnership with us. And by looking at that physical world, we can understand the parts of ourselves that we can't see from behind our eyeballs with our head.

So! Questions? Thoughts? Reflections?

"I think it really makes sense. It's hitting home. Those are things that we all know, and it kind of sucks to hear it all at once. There's a lot! Like, I know for me that physical exercise is something I need to find a way to get back in my life. I just need to do it! So yeah--thank you. You kind of hit it home with a hammer. But we do need to take care of our physical beings, because it's all we've got."

Yeah. And that will have a resonance throughout. Looking at it a different way--we tend to live in our minds, if you look at the threefold manifestation of our souls on the chart I gave you last week, Will is the highest part of the mind level. Intuition is in the Buddic plane, higher than that. Intuition, though, when it's not in balance, can easily be confused with projected fears, down on the emotional plane. What it needs is Awareness, up on the Atma plane, but we can't have Awareness if we're unaware of what's happening to us in the physical plane. Again, we want to think in terms of coherence. So, not like escaping a given plane, but making all of these frequencies work together better, in greater harmony, in greater resonance.

So--to recap the homework:

*Keep doing what you were doing this week

*The big project is those six columns I described earlier

*And from the physical list, pick 2 or 3 things from that list. It would be insane to do the

whole list, but "Here are the two or three that I'm going to work on," and share that with the rest of us.

So this week, really focus on the physical plane, the things we can taste, see, hear, smell, touch and so forth.

And to get the focus off other people and onto what's going on with us. Again--don't do anything about it, don't beat yourself up over it, don't do any of those things--just simply get it down, so we have an appreciation of what's going on. OK?

Any Questions?

All right! Go team!
