

HOW TO REPROGRAM YOUR MIND

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WE ARE OUR PROGRAMING…or so we think.

For children, learning new things is easy because the *note-pad* of their minds is mostly blank. When we are born, our brains are mostly developed, but our synaptic pathways are only 10% developed. There is a very strong instinctual drive in us to quickly learn all we can about our immediate environment in order to know how to survive. One of the most important things that we are learning is how to get on with those around us, especially our parents. Between the ages of 1-5, we have little to no discernment about what we are learning. If we experience something often enough, or told something often enough, this becomes our reality, and most of this programing is going straight into our subconscious as "default" programing, as though we are born this way.



Here we are learning who we are as a person, whether we are worthy of love, whether we are good or bad etc, and this may not have anything to do with who or how we really are, but more to do with how others perceive us and react to us. We have no choice but to absorb these experiences into our consciousness. By the time we are 7 years old, our brains are around 70% heavier, which is mostly due to the synaptic pathways that have been formed, and this is before we have any real sense of self that would enable us to discern what is right for us or not. The experiences, at times, may not feel right, but we innately take it for granted that the adults around us know what they are doing, plus we deeply depend on them for our very survival. For example, if, at a young age, I am abused in some way by an adult who I am deeply attached to, even if I don't like it and try to rebel, I will nonetheless still end up thinking that there must be something very wrong with me for an adult to treat me that way.

By the time we are 18, our programing, particularly our social programing, is deeply embedded and mostly below our awareness. If our home environment was highly functional/loving/supportive, we can be programed to feel worthy, to believe in ourselves without even thinking about it. We may be able to discern appropriate relationship boundaries based on our well-established self-worth and normal wellbeing-inducing self-care. We may be able to consistently work toward achieving meaningful life-goals because we are not afraid of making mistakes, because were consistently told and shown that mistakes are just opportunities to learn something more. We don't even think about it being a failure or have something to do with our worth.

Or by the time we are 18 we can be uncertain of our place in the world, frequently needing validation from others. As a result we often compromise ourselves and are often disrespected and mistreated by those we form attachments to. We may frequently feel guilt and shame one day, or anger and hopelessness the next. We may have trouble completing projects that we start and even talk ourselves out of starting them in the first place, for fear of failure. We may feel oppressed by self-judgement in the form of ongoing negative self-talk.

Or, by the time we are 18, we could be anything in between. I am describing people with the same potential, but who have just been born into different circumstances.

Therefore, by the time we are 30, for example, we are so deeply imbedded into our programing and so identified with it, that it usually takes some sort of upheaval in our lives before we are motivated to look at ourselves with the thought that we need to change, motivated by the foggy realisation that our own thinking and actions are the real problem. Therefore, as an adult, the notebook of our mind is full and hard-bound into deep, often unconscious programs/conditioning that we think is the reality of life. We have been looking through this manufactured lens without really questioning what we see for so long that we struggle to comprehend that one can have a different perspective. We think that we ***are*** our

conditioning/programing.

THE CHALLENGE OF DEPROGRAMING WHILE REPROGRAMING

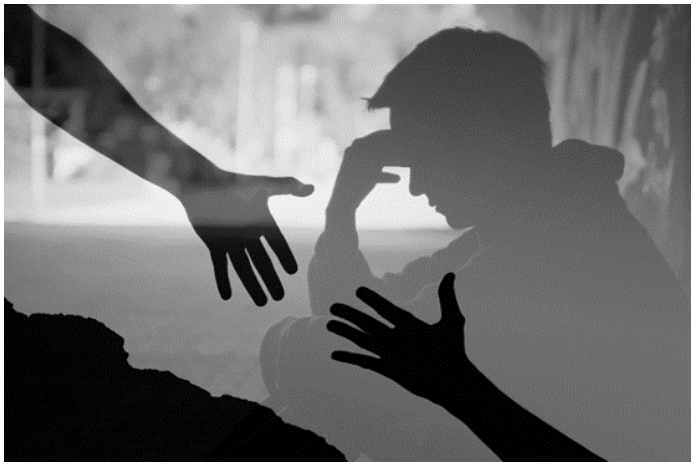
Therefore, as adults, we have the added challenge of having to "deprogram" while at the same time trying to reprogram our minds. In my experience as a therapist/counsellor and coach, it is the deprograming that tends to defeat us, because our more basic body/mind consciousness has an innate investment in hanging onto our old programing for a number of reasons.



1. On this basic default level of your mind's operating system, your mind can't tell the difference between programs that enable you to walk and talk, or programs that tell you that you should be ashamed of yourself for not getting something right, or that you should keep putting others first at your own detriment, or that you should drown yourself in alcohol every time you feel down or lonely. After all, it would be problematic if we keep forgetting how to walk and talk. Unfortunately, the mind treats all the programs like they are an essential part of your existence, even if that program has the potential to kill you. The mind on that limited level of consciousness has no sense of long-term consequence and it can't discriminate between programs that are functional or dysfunctional.
2. The programing becomes ***normalised*** into your consciousness/subconscious, due to living certain experiences/relationship dynamics on a daily basis throughout your formative years. You therefore struggle to comprehend a different reality and therefore struggle to get a different perspective.
3. You become so identified with this program that it becomes a central player in how your ego constructs your worthiness. To be seen/regarded as worthy is a deep innate need that us human beings have, closely linked to our foundational need to be loved to the point of them being interchangeable. If your programing has a lot of dysfunctional elements to it, your ego ends up trying to construct self-worth with a poorly equipped tool box. For example: I am only worthy when I am right, therefore I can't allow myself to be wrong, so if I am wrong, it must be your fault. I am only worthy/lovable if I am successful, according to the standards that I have internalised. I am only worthy/ lovable if I am loved by someone while in an intimate relationship.

SO HOW DO WE GET THE JOB DONE?

Even though the mind innately wants to hang onto old programs, it is clearly designed to take on new programs, such as learning a new sport, a new language, a new career etc. Of course, learning such things takes persistence and long-term discipline, so there is part of the plan.



The trouble we run into here is that setting ourselves on a course of persistent and long-term discipline has a tendency to expose and trigger so many of the dysfunctional programs that then set about undermining our attempts to stick to the task.

For example: When we make mistakes we get easily defeated, because we weren't mentored to push through difficulties while preserving our belief in

ourselves and our self-worth. We can be like-wise defeated when we encounter rejection. We may fall into procrastination when things get a bit hard and so on.

Therefore, just persistence and discipline is not enough. We also need to learn how to be a parent to our confused programing that causes fear, insecurity, vulnerability etc. So we need an instruction manual that includes both, like being mother and father to ourselves, like yin and yang.

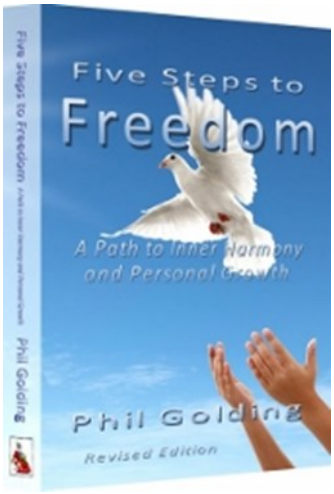
But that is not enough either. We also need to get a good perspective on ourselves, so that we can feel/see/identify our dysfunctional programs instead of just being those programs. Therefore you need the right perspective combined with the right approach. When I say "right" I mean that which is effective, that which works to create healing, clarity, harmony/balance, and empowerment.

Perspective/Awareness – Becoming the compassionate observer of ourselves. Being present with heart open. Breath. Connection. A commitment to learn Self-Awareness ongoing.

Healing/Nurturing/Clarity/Mentoring – Healing emotional wounds, dismantling dysfunctional programs, developing and implementing new functional programs. Being your own loving/mentoring parent—putting Self-Awareness into action.

System and Order/Persistence/Discipline – Consciously Maintaining an ongoing self-care process.

Fortunately history is abundant with many effective paths that have been laid down from many different cultures. Through my studies over the last 40 years of such paths, I came up with my own take on that, which I have been using for my counselling and coaching work for many years.



THE FOUNDATION OF THE REPROGRAMING PROCESS

Steps 1 and 2 of the **Five Step Process of Healing, Awareness, & Empowerment**, which my book, **"Five Steps to Freedom"** is based on, is the foundation of this process—right perspective.

Step 3. Let Go and Tune In, is the step that is devoted to doing your inner-work of healing and reprograming your mind, informed and empowered by the foundational Steps 1 and 2—actively being your own Aware parent.

Step 1. Unconditional Self-Acceptance

1. Committing yourself to Unconditional Self-Acceptance enables the safe and effective in-depth facing of yourself with the higher perspective of compassion and clarity. This approach is safe and effective because Unconditional Self-Acceptance is the opposite to self-judgement, which is the predominant cause of suffering. Self-judgement undermines our ability to heal and learn. Self-judgement says you are wrong for being human.
2. Committing to open your heart to yourself with Unconditional Self-Acceptance brings into Awareness thought-habits, conscious and unconscious, that undermine your self-worth and cause suffering.
3. Committing to facing yourself with Unconditional Self-Acceptance enables you to increasingly safely stay present with painful/traumatic emotions while compassionately knowing that those emotions are driven by conditioned/programed confusion.
4. You gain the conviction that you have a right to be human, and have a right to be learning and growing, without your human mistakes, or the negative actions or words of others, undermining your worth.
5. Gaining the power to stay present with painful emotions/vulnerabilities, from the higher perspective of



Unconditional Self-Acceptance, enables your Awareness to perceive the confused thought-structures that are causing you the emotional pain, ***therefore identifying the confusion without being identified with it***. Rather, you remain identified with being a representative of Unconditional Self-Acceptance, or at least you can keep returning to this empowered Awareness and therefore continue to strengthen your alignment with it. In this way, facing your painful emotions is increasingly experienced as an opportunity to heal and grow, rather than being confronted with emotional pain that is seen as a problem that must be avoided and therefore remains overwhelming.

6. Self-judgement, often unconscious, is ultimately what stops us from facing ourselves. Unconditional Self-Acceptance is the opposite of self-judgement. It enables you, as Awareness, to observe yourself from this empowered, compassionate, forgiving, loving perspective. Unconditional Love, enabled and awakened by Unconditional Self-Acceptance, is the power that heals the mind.

Step 2: Total Personal Responsibility **of all the you think, therefore feel, say and do.**

1. This is the path to Wisdom – Intelligent/Aware Love in Action. This Step, in unison with Step 1, awakens and facilitates your ability to compassionately and effectively take full possession of your own mind and therefore your own life. It empowers you to transcend a victim mentality to where you can see how your own mind is the principle cause of your suffering, by the way old conditioning causes you to perceive circumstances and conditions and react to life's circumstances and conditions in self-defeating ways.

2. When we were children, life around us was the cause of our suffering, because we lacked the power and awareness to be able to manage ourselves and process difficult challenges effectively. As adults, because of our limiting conditioning, we often still don't have this necessary power and awareness, but we do now have the potential to learn.

3. This greater Awareness, initiated by your commitment to self-acceptance and personal responsibility, thus greatly simplifies and empowers your healing, awakening and growing process. You are able to increasingly identify what you can and can't control and therefore let go of what you can't control and focus on what you can control. ***What you potentially have full control over is your own mind***. ***The more you learn how to master your mind, the more you are able to positively and effectively respond to the world around you. You come to realise that taking care of your own mind is the foundation of taking care of your life.***



4. It is important to understand that self-defeating conditioning is not you, it is not representing who you are as your real potential. It is like the mud that collects on your vehicle over a long trip in difficult terrain. You are learning to see this self-defeating confusion, that has collected in your mind throughout your formative years, for what it is, without judging yourself for being human. You have the right to be human. Now that you are an adult human, you also have the power to heal, learn and grow. You can finish the job of

parenting yourself.

5. Through the combined power of Steps 1 and 2, healing, learning and growing is no longer about getting it right, but rather about ***having a go*** through an open-ended learning process and never giving up. ***The notion of failure is removed*** to where all life is seen as a daily experience that provides opportunities to compassionately observe your own fears, insecurities, confusions, vulnerabilities more clearly and process them more effectively. You are awoken to the reality of Life as your ultimate teacher. This is a vital source of ongoing empowerment. Therefore, knowing that you can take full responsibility for everything you think, therefore feel, say and do, without judging yourself for "not getting it right" becomes a reality and an ongoing opportunity for healing, awakening and evolving. You are learning to become the master craftsperson of your own mind without imposing unrealistic expectations on yourself.



6. This is an important stage of enlightenment, which, according to Buddhist doctrine, is called "entering the stream" or first stage enlightenment or Sotapanna. You are no longer part of the problems of humanity. You are instead increasingly becoming an important part of the solution for humanity by becoming the solution to your own suffering.

7. Steps 1 and 2 represent ultimate Universal/ Foundational Principles that never change. They align you to your true potential. When you commit to living these principles as best you can ongoing, they will always be evolving your consciousness. For example, Unconditional Acceptance leads you into the ultimate power of Unconditional Love and from there, Oneness with yourself, each other and Life. Total Personal Responsibility leads you to the power of your real potential to master your mind in this life, as a representative of Love and Wisdom to your own humanness and also to the world, forged on an authentic path of open ended healing, awakening and growth. There are no longer problems to face, but opportunities to grow through, while humbly accepting and embracing, as your own forever aware parent, your own humanness in each moment. To ***Become the Way*** is to evolve from being part of the problem to being an essential part of the solution in your everyday life, whilst remaining grounded in your authentic process of becoming your real potential, ongoing.

Steps 3, informed and empowered by Steps 1 and 2

Step 3. Let Go and Tune In

1. Using Steps 1 and 2 to engage with ongoing in-depth inner-work. You learn to ***let go*** of judging yourself and others, recognising that judging (different from genuine discernment) blocks the process of healing, learning and growing, due to closing your Heart/Awareness down and rendering yourself a powerless victim, even if you may seek power over others. You learn to make ***compassionately tuning into yourself*** a default mode of being, where you increasingly become your own forever loving and wise parent, who is present and attentive to your human confusions and vulnerabilities that need healing, to boundaries that need setting in place to appropriately manage your life, and championing potentials that you are awakening to in the course of healing and growing.



2. **By working Step 3: Let Go and Tune In, into your life, you are learning to observe, stay present with and tune into your painful emotions from a higher enlightened parental perspective.** Your painful emotions are the result of confused thought-patterns forged from your past experiences, particularly in your formative years. Painful emotions aren't the problem, they are the messenger to the mental confusion that perpetuates the emotion.

3. **It is important, therefore, to understand that Emotions are not your source of confusion**. Embedded conditioning, resulting in confused thought-patterns, generate your painful emotions. Painful emotions are therefore the messenger pointing to the confusion that is the cause of your suffering. When you ignore your emotions, push them away, regard them as stupid, blame them on others, you remain ignorant to the causes of your suffering. Therefore, when you can effectively focus your Awareness on your painful emotions with the necessary degree of compassionate detachment, your mental confusion is increasingly revealed to your Awareness.

4. These thought-patterns and emotions, when suppressed over time, can end up manifesting in the body, so body work is also sometimes needed to free up this energy, such as yoga. With your Heart/ Awareness open to yourself, you are able to increasingly identify confusions and vulnerabilities via the resultant painful emotions.



5. Tuning in in this way also enables you to listen to your Heart / Higher Guidance / Intuition via higher feelings such as love, joy, peace, compassion, motivation etc. Therefore, tuning into emotion/ feeling is the most important focus in Step 3, and is an essential foundation of Mindfulness.

6. You also learn that every aspect of your Life becomes a mirror to see yourself in. The mirror of Life reveals your confused and wounded-self more clearly, through your vulnerable/painful emotional reactions. You also learn to identify your higher consciousness/higher guidance through your higher feelings – what feels right. Your ongoing compassionate tuning in to yourself enables you to increasingly heal and awaken yourself with the power of your own self-Love and evolving clarity. Emotional triggers become your opportunity to love, heal and empower yourself more. You learn about how your mind was conditioned/created and what it takes to re-create it, in-line with your growing potential.

7. Always be aware the path of learning, healing and growing is never straight. Facing your vulnerabilities is often uncomfortable and even frightening at first. Also know that with persistence, ongoing learning, and reaching out for guidance from those who are living this path, you will get to a point of being confident in your own process. The foundation of your power is having faith in your potential, knowing that there is always a way, and never ever giving up.

8. As a part of working with Step 3. Let Go and Tune In, you inevitably gather together a tool kit that enables you to process your vulnerable/painful thoughts and emotions ongoing, such as journaling in various forms, reading, listening to audio and audio visual material, meditation in various forms, various forms of group work and one-to-one counselling and coaching, as well as appropriate body-focused work. Once again, a never-give-up persistence is the key.

9. It is vital to understand that Step 3: Let Go and Tune In, is teaching you, as Awareness, how to compassionately be present with your vulnerable human-self, that can be triggered into your now Conscious-Awareness from any age/level of vulnerability/consciousness from unprocessed memories. You are literally going back in time within your mind to be there for your younger self in a way that

you needed then but did not receive then.

10. Understand that what a small child needs most from a parent is to be seen, felt, acknowledged, validated, to feel safe and accepted. This is how we come to know that we are worthy simply because we exist. When a parent judges a child, they are projecting their own psychological woundedness/ inadequacies onto the child. A child can't help being a child. A child needs appropriate mentoring, but always within the embrace of Unconditional Love/Acceptance.

11. Of course, we all grow up in a human world, with human parents. We are human now. What your relationship with yourself offers you is a path of ongoing learning that never goes away. Your humanness is always with you. Your relationship with yourself, therefore, is the ultimate opportunity to learn and experience what Love and Wisdom really is. You have a direct feedback loop of your own emotions and feeling that tell you how you are progressing. It does not matter if we don't get it right, because there is always another chance to have a go and learn something more.

12. What your "inner-child" (your vulnerabilities and confusions) needs most from you now is Unconditional Acceptance/Love. Your "inner-child" can then be constructively mentored/guided within the loving environment that you, as Conscious-Awareness, are becoming for your vulnerable and confused human-self. You are becoming your own forever loving sanctuary and guardian. As Awareness, this is your ongoing commitment to your own vulnerable/wounded human-self. This is hard to do, because we have learned to treat ourselves the way we were treated in the past. Unconditional Self-Acceptance and Total Personal Responsibility can now show us how to become the enlightened parent to ourselves.



13. When you look into your mind, it seems that you are looking into your past, via your memories. In reality, there is actually no time in the mind. All your memories are within your Conscious-Awareness NOW. What we are really observing and experiencing are differing levels of consciousness that have become "frozen" in time and are not evolving, because they have formed into thought-structures, beliefs, identities that were often unconsciously created by ourselves at any age and now remain within our mind-structure and operating system. Therefore, at any given moment, your conditioning/ beliefs/emotions/behaviours can be at the consciousness level of a 5 year old self, and 10 year old self, and 15 year old self and so on, all operating your mind and therefore your life in the now. This is what is meant by the question "who's driving your buss?" This is what you are learning to observe and identify by staying tuned into your emotional self with your heart/Awareness open.

14. Also vital is knowing that the power of Awareness is knowing that NOW is the only time that exists. ***Awareness IS ALWAYS NOW*** and all that is in your mind is available to your Awareness now. All your memories and conditioning, good and bad, are within the power of your Conscious-Awareness NOW. There is no time in the mind. Only the body ages. The mind records everything, which is within your consciousness now. That is why we suffer with PTSD. We don't yet have the tools in our ego/Awareness to deal with that frozen/wounded/frightened/confused/vulnerable part of our mind's consciousness.

15. Our human fight-or-flight mind thinks a triggered past traumatic memory/flashback is actually physically happening again NOW and reacts as though it is, but in reality, a lower level of consciousness/vibration has been activated and has flooded into our everyday level of consciousness that we are trying to function in. Suddenly you are a frightened, traumatised 5 year old, or so it

seems, seeing/experiencing the past overlaid onto the present, deeply distorting the reality of now.

16. Separating your Awareness from the confusion and pain that are these lower vibrational level of consciousness within you is the challenge, so that you can observe/feel them rather than just be them. Unconditional Acceptance and Total responsibility is the key that awakens your Awareness. Of course, this separation, or transcendence is mostly gradual, but any degree of transcendence gives you something more to offer your humanness.
17. To begin with, we are simply becoming more aware—more aware of how we are causing our own suffering, which can also cause you to want to judge yourself for that. Continually returning to Unconditional Self-Acceptance helps you to keep your compassionate heart open to yourself so you can forgive yourself for being human and instead learn from your mistakes. This is what Love/Wisdom does. If you don't give up, inevitably you will increasingly be Aware of better ways of thinking and grow in your ability to process your pain and confusion.
18. Once sufficiently awakened into being Conscious-Awareness, you can start parenting our vulnerable human-mind consciousness from any point in time…NOW. Furthermore, you can go to that painful memory as many times as you like, while learning more about how to lovingly parent yourself in that memory. In the process, you are creating new, more loving memories for your human-self to live in. You are raising the vibration of these "wounded pockets of consciousness" to be more compatible with your potential, enabling you to function better in the now.



19. ***To empower your ability to stay in the NOW and be present with your emotional reactions, being aware of your breath is very important.*** Breath is central to meditation / mindfulness / yoga. It is learning how to harness your energy flow in the moment. ***Every breath is NOW, so focusing on your breath helps to ground you into the present moment.*** It also helps if you deepen your breath and slow it down, which matches the state of being open and relaxed, which is also matching the natural state of Conscious-Awareness, and is the opposite of the state of stress/anxiety/fight-or-flight etc, where your body tightens and your breath is shallow. Set your intention to make a deeper, slower breath your default breath and link it to being mindfully tuned into your human-self ongoing. This takes practice and lots of reminders, but when this become more of a habit, it is a powerful way to stay present and Aware of your emotional reactions and more able to work consciously with them. Your emotional reaction then begins to also trigger your new habit of pausing and breathing.
20. You are learning to identify what is actually happening now from the fears and perceptions of triggered lower levels of consciousness that are stuck in the past that are flooding into your consciousness now. You are then increasingly in the position to parent these lower levels of consciousness rather than be swallowed up by them.

DEEP MIND HEALING PROCESS

Below is an example of how to actively process your vulnerabilities and emotional pain, which I have taken from my book, "Five Steps to Freedom". Here, writing your process down and working it through in a journal greatly empowers your process. It may be useful to have a journal just for this exercise, to give you plenty of room to keep adding to it over time. Write down the paragraph number and heading when you do each part of the exercise to make it easier to find again in order to review and/or expand it. It is important to understand that this exercise is a guide. Your process may unfold differently to these steps

as you work with the flow of your process, but this guide will help you identify if you have missed anything. It will help you keep on track and keep going deeper.

Note that in this exercise, the commentary to the instructions are in *italics*, to help you identify the actual instructions more easily. This differentiation will be particularly useful when doing this exercise multiple times.

Explore Your Life Story – was what you thought was "normal" actually dysfunctional?

1. Your ongoing life-circumstances are always providing you with challenging experiences to work with, but you can also pro-actively work through your memories to uncover deep levels of confusion that are hard to identify, therefore get ahead of the game. With the growing Awareness gained from repeatedly doing this exercise, your ability to consciously identify self-limiting beliefs and habits will increase.



2. If you were born into a dysfunctional family environment that wasn't necessarily dramatically traumatic, but instead consisted of relationships that were disconnected, where you may have often been neglected, a lack of meaningful childhood memories, positive or negative, maybe the result. Problematic conditioning in these circumstances is more about the everyday routine experiences. Even when there is significant trauma, the normalised daily routine is still an important factor. You may have grown up thinking these family dynamics were normal, leaving you confused about why life isn't working the way it should. On closer examination, and with a growing, more functional perspective, the picture starts to look less and less normal where self-worth, healthy relationships and peace and happiness are concerned.

3. This deeply normalised conditioning puts much of what is causing you difficultly in your life below your everyday awareness. It becomes part of your unconscious programing, making it difficult to identity and process. However, even if this problematic conditioning is buried in your unconscious mind, you will still feel it in the form of vulnerable emotions, stress, anxiety etc. Learning how to follow the trail of emotions is a key to accessing the mind.

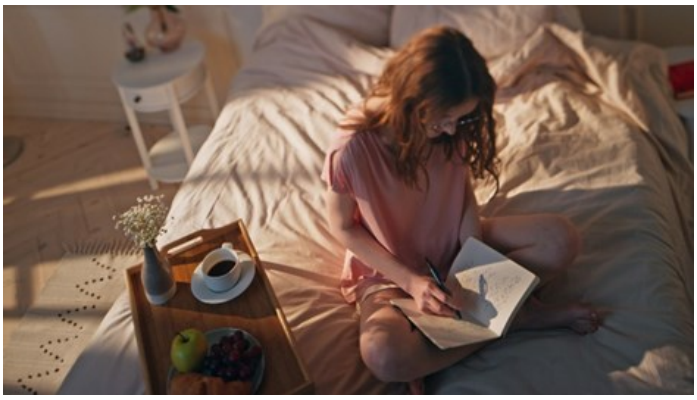
4. Rather than waiting for the circumstances of your everyday life to provide you with mirrors into your mind that aren't revealing much about these deeper layers, pro-actively exploring your childhood/ adolescent journey in your journal is usually very revealing.

5. Start with any memory and put that to paper, paying particular attention to how you felt then, and the levels of age vulnerability that you were experiencing then. Start by focusing on that particular memory and let it start to unpack itself as you continue to explore it. As you go, this exploration begins to stimulate other memories that were below your awareness and a growing picture inevitably continues emerges.

6. The life-story approach can also be applied to any childhood or adult circumstances, revealing the "normalised" social dynamics that turn out to be the cause of many self-defeating belief systems that we carry into life.

7. Of course, the more extreme/traumatic memories can and need to also be explored, but be aware that

you may initially need help with the overwhelming nature of these memories. Understand through, your Conscious-Awareness (empowered by Steps 1 & 2) has the power to work though anything your humanness has experienced, and I don't say that lightly. As a therapist, who has long specialised in trauma, I know that there is always a way through. The potential of your Awareness is limitless.



Comprehensive Step 3 Exercise

1. Getting Focused: Spend some time writing about the issue that you want to focus on. Start by describing the situation so as to get in touch with it. Make it as detailed as you are comfortable with. Leave a few pages spare so you can add to it as you go and as memories surface. Don't restrict yourself by trying to be too tidy, precise or appropriate. Just get it out on the page in any way it comes, even if it's coming straight from your inner-child's raw emotions. It doesn't have to be rational or orderly. Random dot points will do the job. It is the raw material of your mind that you are putting on the table to process.

Most importantly, don't forget to be centered in your slow, open breath while accepting your right to be human in order to be compassionately present with yourself. You are caring for and honouring your inner-child/human self by providing the space in your heart for your human vulnerabilities to be heard.

Also, stop and spend time feeling into and even meditate on anything that arises that you need to connect to and explore more deeply, before getting back to your journal.

2. Connect to Feelings/Emotions: Pay attention to what you are feeling about the situation, the people involved and about yourself. Sometimes our mind is suppressing the emotion and it gets stuck in the body. Observe how these emotions feel in your body. Often we feel emotions in our body before we even know it is emotional energy causing that particular sensation. Do your best to name and describe your emotions/feelings in your journal. Don't try to be politically correct. Let your human emotions speak freely, without you judging them.



Again, leave a few pages for additional entries. If it's a past deep trauma, for example, emotions usually surface in layers, such as fear, then shame/guilt/confusion then anger etc. Sometimes the anger comes first, trying to protect the vulnerabilities underneath. So know that there are always layers of vulnerability underneath anger and pride. Don't think you have to tackle all your emotions at once. You can process one layer at a time, which helps clear space for the next.

Make good use of the "Emotions and Their Definitions" tables at the back of the book. It is often hard to identify one emotion from another at first, so reading through the tables will help.

2a. Working with Blocks: If you experience any blocks that prevent you from freely accessing and expressing your thoughts and emotions in your journal, turn your attention to the block and explore that instead. By blocks I mean thoughts or fears that tell you that you shouldn't feel and say those things. For example; you may have been forced to keep silent about family abuse and about your real feelings for



fear of being rejected and punished, or because you were manipulated into feeling responsible/guilty for the emotions, thoughts and actions of others at the expense of your own wellbeing. Write about whatever is blocking you. What does it say? How does it make you feel? Who silenced you? Spend some time writing about your relationships with the people involved and how you were not able to freely express yourself and be heard without fear, judgement, or guilt. If your privacy around journaling was violated in the past, spend time working with those memories. Go to yourself in those memories and be the understanding, loving parent/guardian that you needed then. Acknowledge the pain/shame/anger that you felt. Let your past-self know that you are in charge now and you love/accept yourself unconditionally. Make a pact with yourself to not let anyone take this sacred connection with yourself away from you. Remember, your unconditional acceptance of yourself is your greatest power. You have a right to be human and have a right to your own process of learning and growing.

It may help to have your journal online, protected by a password and on a cloud server where you can access it anywhere. Give the file a disguised name if you need to and hide it in a folder with another disguised name. The important thing here is to not let violations of your privacy in the past, or even in the present, put you in chains. Keep working with this issue to find a way to break free and claim your power to do what it takes to heal your mind and change your circumstances if you need to.

2b. Getting Unstuck: Reread "Opening the Door to Love and Healing" in Step 1 on page 30, to remind yourself that you are not wrong just because you are human. Reviewing Step 2 may also be useful.

If you don't feel anything in particular, that's okay too. Don't think that you have to have some big emotional release. If you feel that there is something there, then stay open to it. It will work its way through in whatever way it is meant to. Remember, you are not trying to force or fix your vulnerable human-self, you are learning to *be with* yourself with acceptance and patience. The more you give yourself permission to focus on the issue and explore it in this way, the more your mind will open up to you.

Return to part 2: 'Connect to Feeling' when you feel you have more to work with.



3. Connecting with My Past Self: Pay attention to how vulnerable and confused you were at the time of this difficultly, particularly if they are childhood memories, but also at any age.

As children, we are naturally powerless and dependent. We have little ability to take real charge of our lives. Feeling abandoned in any way is usually very frightening for us. It is easy to forget how vulnerable and helpless we were as a child. Often, when we look back at our childhood, we do so from an unrealistic adult perspective. Let go of being the rational adult and remember what it was like to be that powerless, confused and dependent child, or adolescent. Even in

adulthood, we often feel very vulnerable and powerless. We can only deal with a situation with what we knew at the time. It is important that we don't judge ourselves for past inadequacies, confusion or mistakes. Now we have an opportunity to open up the past in order to learn what we can about it. We can see it as an opportunity to provide ourselves with the acceptance/Love that we needed then. Learning how to accept ourselves, so that we can compassionately care for ourselves, is the most important thing. This is how to heal the past and turn it to our advantage. Remember, your mind is timeless. Every moment of your human experience, that is stuck in pain and confusion is still waiting for your Love, even though your mind does not know at first that the Love will be coming from you, engaging with it from a higher dimension.

Allow your emotions to express themselves just as they were back then. If it is a memory of yourself when you were eight-years-old, then write as that eight-year-old. This will help you get in touch with how it was for you then. As always, leave space for further entries.

4. Embracing My Inner-Child/Vulnerable Self: Always stay centered in your slow, open, mindful breath. If you need help to activate a greater depth of a memory, describe in your journal the broader scene in the particular memory you are working with, such as going and coming home from school, what your school or street looked like, what your house looked like from the outside and then inside etc. What was the situation/circumstance that your past self was in? Where are you likely to find yourself in the critical moment of vulnerability and pain in that memory? Observe your inner-child/human-self there.

Finding old photos of yourself and your family when you were a child is also a very effective way to open up memory doors.



While always staying centered in your mindful breath, imagine, as the aware adult that you are now, compassionately and lovingly (as best you can) enter that memory and be there for your past self as the friend/carer/loving guardian that you needed then.

Reviewing and working with Exercise 4 can be helpful here. Remember that your imagination and your memory system are closely linked. If you are imagining that you are there with your past self, in a very real way, <u>you are there</u> and your feelings will come to validate that. Remember that, as Conscious-Awareness, you have full power over your memories. If you are confronted by someone who abused you in this memory and this is getting in the way of your connection with your past self, then go to part 6. "Taking Charge", in this exercise to process this experience first.

Spend time, as best you can, patiently connecting with yourself in this memory, knowing that this connection will improve the more you engage your mind in this way. Go to your child-self and gently introduce yourself as your child's new forever guardian/parent/friend. Gently and patiently speak to yourself in your imagination and in your journal and even out loud, which can have surprising power. Acknowledge to your inner-child/vulnerable self what he/she is experiencing and feeling. Take it slow. Take time to be with the feelings and emotions. Validate the painful emotions you feel from your past self: "No wonder you feel that way. I can feel your pain. I am here for you now."

Being seen, heard and validated is so important for a child and our humanness at any age. It builds the

foundations for self-worth. It is like we don't exist in some way before that. You don't need to do any great processing here. Being with yourself – letting the tears flow if they come and acknowledging your past pain/trauma, is very healing in itself.



No one can truly connect to your human self like you can, because your human self is literally inside yourself as Conscious-Awareness. You are the open door that channels Universal Love into your own human mind. You, as Conscious-Awareness, are in this Love all the time. No one else can reach us in this way, no matter how much they love us. This is your sacred relationship with yourself and Life/ Love itself, which you are representing to your human self.

This is not about self-pity, which is about wanting the world to save us and thinking we are a powerless victim. Your child or vulnerable self was powerless then, but now you are activating the power of your Conscious-Awareness and taking control of your life now. This is about becoming your own sanctuary. This is about linking into your natural connection to Universal Love, your greatest power/potential and giving this Love to your vulnerable self.

Reach out to your past self and gently take yourself by the hand. Connect to yourself with Love and understanding in a way that you needed then, depending on the age of your past self. Work up to holding yourself and being a loving sanctuary to yourself.

Remember, don't have expectations of what this connection with your vulnerable self "should" be like and then be disappointed because it isn't that. Work with what is in the moment and let your connection with your self evolve authentically over time. With patience and persistence, the quality of your relationship with your self will grow as your awareness gradually expands and your healing, step-by-step, unfolds. Accept and work with what comes to you in the moment. Know that you are never unworthy within the embrace of Universal Love. You have simply been a human-being trying to get by the best you could. There is nothing more you could have done then. The focus point of healing and growing is always now.

In your journal, spend some time as the loving parent/guardian/friend writing letters to your inner-child/ vulnerable-self. You can write back to yourself as your past self/child. You can also write to yourself as your wise higher guiding self. Get used to being tuned into yourself ongoing, on all levels. Wherever you go, you can be holding hands and communicating with your vulnerable self.



5. Creating Your Own Inner-Sanctum: While in your Mindful breath, use your imagination to spend time exploring how you would have cared for yourself in the memories that you have chosen to process.

Remember that your mind/memories are within your consciousness now. You have total power over them, even though your mind might still be getting used to that reality.

While staying centered in your deep, slow, mindful breath, be in this memory with your past self as a loving, caring and wise parent, guide and mentor as best you can, which will of course continue to evolve as you heal and grow. This memory belongs to you. You are now in charge of this mind-space. If you are connecting to your child-self, spend time interacting with your child, exploring what your child would most like to experience with you, such as being held, being played with, fun activities, hobbies, pets and generally being looked after in a loving and kind way. Take your

time and pay attention to how this feels. Let your feelings guide you. Your inner-child will communicate to you through your feelings/emotions and spontaneous visions, telling you if you are connecting, or if your child is afraid in some way. Get used to hanging out together, interacting and communicating.

Sometimes we feel that our own inner-child does not trust us. We come up against our own fear/defenses against opening up to love, even from ourselves. Don't be discouraged by this. It is a good sign that you are getting close to your vulnerabilities.

In your journal, get in touch with the reasons why your child is afraid to let you in and acknowledge that to your child. "I know you are afraid to get close because people used to hurt you when you let them in. We are in a different world now. I truly love you and I am here to really care for you. No more hurt now, only love."

Being there for yourself in this way may be an ideal that you feel you haven't yet reached, but keep gently stepping up to it in your process and everyday life. Don't judge your humanness. Focus on learning and growing. Your mind will always be there for you to connect to with Love, even if you are not that balanced or confident yet. Every little bit makes a difference.



Keep exploring in your journal how you want to be there for your child. During your daily activities, stay tuned into your inner-child and keep confirming your commitment to be your inner-child's forever parent. Keep doing all you can to care for yourself and be kind to yourself on a daily basis. Let your loving consciousness slowly soak into your vulnerable wounded/defensive mind. If you persist, your mind will inevitably start letting go to you and your feelings and spontaneous imaginings will confirm this.

It is normal to lack confidence as the new parent at first, because we may have lacked the experience of being lovingly parented. We don't feel adequate, which can limit our imagination. Also, trying to love our self can trigger more painful memories of how we were abused and neglected, so it can take time to process each stage as new layers of memory surface. There is no hurry. Keep being there for yourself no matter what. Keep working toward letting go of there being some standard you have to meet. It's about having a go at lovingly being with your self and you can keep exploring what it is like to be your own loving parent as many times in this memory as you like.

Another way to connect to your inner-child is to find yourself a teddy bear or doll (to be your inner-child) along with some bedtime stories and settle down in your bed and read to your inner-child. Pay attention to how that feels and explore those feelings in your journal at any time. Work towards staying compassionately open to those feelings, loving or painful and work towards holding your inner-child in your arms and your heart. You can also literally take yourself and your inner-child to the park and play on the swings, dance and sing to music and just do fun things that you wanted to do as a child. Let your inner-child draw and paint, accepting and appreciating whatever comes through, light or dark. Explore the meaning and feeling of these activities in your journal, validating the feelings of your inner-child/ human-self.

Use your journal to explore what you want to say to yourself and the type of relationship and environment you would like to create for yourself in that memory. Pay attention to what feels nurturing, warm and loving and keep building on that and reinforcing it. At the same time, do your best to be there

for any pain or fear that is triggered. Your inner-child/vulnerable self is no longer alone.

You are literally building new memories that represent your loving relationship with yourself. Remember, your mind is timeless. You can keep recreating/rewriting your memories and in the process create a whole new internal experience of love and care. Soon, when these old, painful memories are triggered by some event in your present life, the new loving memories will also be triggered, there for you to reinforce. These new memories, along with the clarity you gain about loving yourself and being in command of your worth, will inevitably take over and wash away the pain of the old memories. This is not denying or trying to run away from your original memories. However, you don't have to leave your mind trapped in these old painful memories either. Instead, they will just become experiences that teach you about the causes of suffering. Your mind belongs to you. Here you have the power to literally birth and bring up your own mind within your own Conscious-Awareness.

6. Taking Charge: This is your mind. This is your memory. You are the one in charge now. Sometimes though, there are those who you were once, or still are, afraid of in this memory. This old fear may be making it difficult for you to freely take care of yourself in this memory. As you are facing this person/people within your memory, remember to breathe deeply and slowly. Remember that you are watching a "mind-movie".



It is helpful to talk about the memory or memories with a trusted friend/mentor/counsellor, with all that you are learning here in mind. The more you talk about it, while practicing self-acceptance and self-care, the more your mind will get used to facing it.

With your open, mindful breath, allow the feelings of fear to flow through you. It is normal to feel this fear. Your mind is still getting used to knowing that this is just a memory. Acknowledge that and compassionately be with your vulnerable self and remind yourself that you have the power now and get used to telling yourself that. Give yourself time to get used to facing this memory, knowing that it can't hurt you now. Be patient with this desensitising process, but know that you have the power and trust that this power will prevail if you persist.

It is important to acknowledge and validate your past vulnerable self and what your past self is feeling and experiencing in that memory. "I know you had no control over your life at this time. You were so overwhelmed, so small, fragile and powerless. I can see and feel how you were terrorised and shamed and how you felt so helpless and hopeless. I am here with you now. You are not alone. I have magic powers now. This is my world now. I am now in charge. We can stand together. Now, in this world, nothing can defeat us." In your imagination, you can have all the power that you want. You can even be a super hero.

Explore in your journal and your imagination what you want to say to that person/people. Take your time with this also. You may have a lot to say. Let your feelings flow with this – anger, shame, sadness, grief. Honour yourself by allowing yourself to feel and acknowledge your feelings/emotions. You are not being a victim here. You are giving your valid emotions/humanity the right to exist and a chance to heal within your own loving Conscious-Awareness. Spend as much time as you need to get used to speaking your truth to this person/people in your imagination and in your journal and with your friend/mentor/ counsellor.

Explore what you would like to do to/with this person/people. Explore as many different scenarios as

you like. Remember, you are protecting your inner-child/vulnerable human self. You are standing up for yourself in this way perhaps for the first time. Be okay with expressing anger with words and actions as you explore ways of dealing with the situation in the memory.

Anger is understandable and it is important to allow yourself to express it and release it as part of gaining/regaining your ability to stand up for yourself. If you find yourself being violent to this person in your imagination, that does not make you a bad person. It is a normal reaction to protect yourself. It is important to feel that you can protect yourself.



You are not hurting anyone by working it through in your imagination and your journal. It is also important to know that anger is part of a process that leads to knowing when we are being violated and then moving into Conscious-Awareness in order to constructively respond in an empowered/assertive way. So be mindful of how you manage your anger in your everyday life. It is a challenging energy to master, so don't be too hard on yourself if you get a bit irritable as your anger is surfacing and being released. Be mindful not to project your awakening anger onto your loved ones. Anger becomes destructive and disempowering only if we get stuck on it by thinking we are still a victim now. As you work through this memory, you are learning to redirect this power energy into the courage and determination to grow and evolve and to be in charge of your life. It is an important part of your potential.

Keep exploring different ways of taking over and rewriting the memory, where you are doing what it takes to protect your inner-child. Know that you are a representative of Universal Love. You are supported by infinite power. You are on a sacred mission to protect, rescue and give a new life to your inner-child, within your heart of Love and Compassion. You are your own super hero.

You can call in the police and put your abusers in jail. You can freeze them with your magic powers or just tell them to sit down and be quiet, while you go about taking charge. You can remove the abusers from the scene altogether. Change the environment to one that feels warm, safe and nurturing. Be your own parent/friend/guardian now. Explore how you can be with your inner-child and take over caring for your inner-child. Make it safe, loving, nurturing, gentle, positive, encouraging, playful and joyful.

You may need to come back to this memory a number of times as you get used to having the power. Remember that ultimately the goal is to care for your child/vulnerable self and take charge of your life with Love and empowerment.



If the people who caused you fear in this memory are still in your life in some way, it is only natural that it would be easier to confront them in your mind than in real life. When you use this process to heal and take command of your memories, you will be gaining the healing/awareness/maturity/empowerment to know how to deal with them constructively and assertively in the now when you feel ready. This means dealing with the situation in a way that does not compromise or harm you. They don't own you anymore. They don't own your love or your worth. You don't have to explain yourself and justify yourself to them. You are not responsible for their feelings, other than not being abusive yourself. You are learning to put your love and care for yourself first and set boundaries based on what is right for you. You

have a right to say no.

A lot will depend on what state of consciousness these people are in now. They may have had their own realisations, helping them be more aware and open to process with you now. However, they may still be lost in their defenses and pride and still want to justify their past and present actions. There maybe someone who still tries to maintain coercive/intimidating control over you. Controlling you isn't about love, it's about the controlling person making you responsible for their fears and insecurities, instead of being their own parent. You may need help with effectively changing your present circumstances. Return to Step 2 for more guidance and clarity. Most importantly, you have a right to be free and happy.



Memories/imagination can take on a life of their own during this process and unfold in ways that reflect your new growing awareness and empowerment, confirming that a new reality is emerging. Abusers can even apologise in spontaneous imaginings. Their own woundedness may even be revealed to you to help you understand how they became so damaged. You can experience loving guides helping you, or your own Higher-Self being your guide. Through these processes, we come to experience how interconnected we all are and how Life takes advantage of these opportunities to connect to us and help us. Life is always on your side. It just needs you to also be on your side for you to come to know and be aligned to this power, because Life/Universal Consciousness can then work through you.

When you feel strong enough and in charge of this memory enough, return to sections 4 and 5 of this exercise.

7. If You Have Harmed Others: As I pointed out on page 92, our destructive childhood conditioning and subsequent confusion can lead us to cause harm to others. This is also a part of being human and very few of us avoid harming others in some way. Facing our mistakes is an essential part of healing our minds and setting ourselves free from suffering.

It is important that you use this Step 3 process to help you compassionately understand how your powerless, vulnerable child/human-self became so confused that you thought you needed to cause others harm.

I still think about a boy that I bullied in junior high school. We had finished playing handball. He picked the ball up to kindly hand it to me, wanting to be part of the game. Instead of taking the ball and thanking him and inviting him to join us next time, which is what I wished I did, I pushed him down against a railing, as though he had no right to touch that ball. I never saw him again. Maybe that was the last straw for him and he went to another school. Perhaps my unkindness contributed to ongoing trauma, sadness and suffering in his life. I know that he was the subject of bullying from others at the time. Something in



me at that moment wanted to have power over him to somehow fit in with my group, even though I was sometimes bullied myself. I can still get emotional when I think of him and wish I could have changed that moment for him. I can't remember his name and have no way of finding him now. One day I do hope I meet him so I can make amends. In my memory rewriting, I have gone out of my way to befriend him and protect him and show him that he is worthy. Now this memory motivates me to be a better person.

In the process of rewriting your memories to care for/protect your inner-child, you can also be a loving mentor, showing your wounded child/adolescent-self or inexperienced adult-self, better ways of responding to the difficult situations that you faced. You can acknowledge those you harmed and explore how you can act kindly towards them as you reimagine your memories. You can become the hero, rather than the one who harms. You can explore this in as many ways as you want as your awareness grows, which will help you have more awareness of how to respond in better ways now. You can seek help from an experienced mentor who respects your confidentiality, to help you understand how to protect and care for yourself and others in your memory rewriting process and also now in your everyday life without doing harm to yourself and others.

Review Step 1 and 2 and the passage: "What if you have caused other harm" on page 92 in Chapter 3 would be helpful.



8. Exploring Relationships: Take each person involved in the memory and write down your feelings about each one. For each person, take your time exploring how you felt about them and what these people meant to you. What role did the person in question play in your life and your conditioning? What did you need from this person, or still do? What didn't you receive from this person? How did this person hurt you? Did you feel abandoned or controlled/manipulated? Are there people in your memory who were kind and loving toward you? How did this feel? Were you able to receive their love at the time, or were you too afraid to open up, because of your woundedness?

If the situation, positive or negative, is more recent, does this person remind you of someone from your past? What are the similarities? What are the differences? Remember to let your emotions and thoughts speak freely. How was your self-worth affected through these relationships? How did they shape the way you learned to love or not love yourself? How has it affected how you give and receive love?

9. Gathering Insights: During this time of your life, what important human needs were left unresolved/unfulfilled? Explore this in your journal.

For example, our human-self never stops needing love and connection until we have this. Our human-self never stops needing to feel seen and heard until we are. Having these needs met during our childhood is essential for our development and self-worth/esteem/confidence. We learn how to respect, honour and care for ourselves physically, mentally/emotionally and spiritually through our relationships with significant others during our formative years. We are learning how to be Conscious-Awareness for ourselves by how they care for us. If we don't get these needs met, we can end up still unconsciously searching for this fulfilment from others in disempowering, self-defeating ways, in the form of controlling and fear-based attachments/dependencies. We unconsciously learn to neglect and abandon ourselves because that is what we experienced from those who were meant to care for us.

Are you still searching for someone else to meet these needs in ways that are disempowering or may cause conflict? Reflect on the relationship between these past situations and what is going on in your life

now. Have old patterns been repeating themselves? Have you been attracting people into your life who are similar to your past experiences? Are you expecting from your partner what your parents didn't give you, instead of accepting responsibility for your own wellbeing? Can you recall/observe yourself engaging in self-defeating behaviours because of your past conditioning? Explore this in your journal. Remember to accept your right to be human. You are not wrong for being human.

An essential part of healing and growing is becoming aware of how we keep defeating ourselves. This can be uncomfortable to face, but there was nothing else you could do at the time due to your conditioning and understandable lack of awareness, even if it was yesterday. See these challenging insights as an opportunity to learn more about self-loving, constructive and harmonious ways of caring for yourself and then put that into practice as best you can and keep learning as you go. You are your forever parent now. Expecting others to take responsibility for your inner-child is like expecting them to be your parent. That includes your intimate partner/wife/husband. As adults, this now creates confusion and conflict and disempowers us. Understand that your foundation of Love, healing and self-worth is now built and maintained by your loving relationship with yourself.



You have a right to be learning by trial and error. That is how we all learn. Welcome to your place in the human journey. The secret is to stop judging yourself (self-acceptance/compassion), so your mistakes are turned into learning opportunities that benefit you. When this new awareness becomes strong enough, you can do something different now and then learn more from that experience. In the process, you will be creating a better future for yourself.



10. Taking Ownership and Creating a Better Future: Open your awareness to how you may have been giving your power away throughout your adulthood by falling into victim thinking. It is very important to be very honest with yourself without judging yourself. Accept full responsibility for your humanness. In other words, let go of any thought that other people should be taking responsibility for your mind/emotional security now as an adult.

This is essential for putting yourself in the empowered position of being able to learn and grow through your difficulties, to be able to be there for your own vulnerable humanness. Don't be concerned if you don't understand at first how to achieve this. It will come to you as you continue to work with this exercise, read and work through this book and seek counselling from your mentor. Reaching out for help is also being self-responsible. The important thing is being willing to take full ownership/care of your mind while forgiving yourself for your humanness.

Explore in your journal any changes that you can make in how you care for yourself that will enable you to break out of negative patterns that still limit you. Write down and explore any insights that come to you. Remember, your awareness and life-skills will continue to evolve as you keep learning and growing.

This is Step 4 work, where you are learning to create the life that you want.

In addition to this, make a list of people you admire for their good qualities – people who feel good to be around because they validate you, support you, who are honest and straight with you, who are kind, compassionate and reliable. Make a point of observing them, getting to know them and asking them about their life-learning experiences and insights. Also pay attention to the friendships/relationships that you have currently. Do they reflect your highest good? Are their qualities matching who you want to be or are they holding you back?

This is different to someone reaching out to you for help in the process of wanting to help themselves. This is an opportunity for you to give back what you have gained and reinforce it in yourself in the process. In contrast, I am talking about people who are unwilling to be personally responsible. Consider that you don't have to hang onto relationships/friendships that don't reflect the future you want to create for yourself.



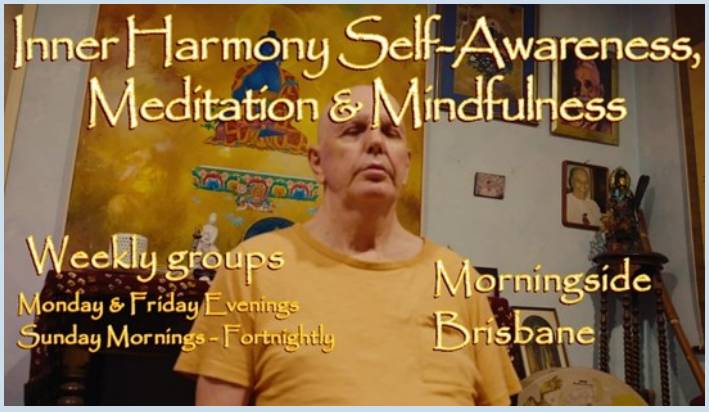
11. Creating Your New World: Together with your inner-child, continue to create a new loving/caring imaginary world of your own that you can link to other memories that you come to process. This new world can be anything you like and you can fill it with a loving community. Exploring within your memories and imagination in this way will help you connect to who you are, to your own unique personality, your own preferences and values. You can continue to evolve your inner-sanctum and reinforce it as time goes on.

Observe how well your everyday life reflects your inner-sanctum. What can you do to make better choices for yourself that honours who you want to be. In your journal and imagination, continue to explore how best to protect and care for yourself. Set positive intentions and goals and keep track of your experiences of making them happen and learn as you go, about yourself and how to care for yourself. Step 4: Live in the Now, will help guide you here.

You can also find and create actual sanctuaries for yourself in your everyday world where you can nurture yourself such as a favourite place in nature or creating your own sacred space at home or finding a nurturing self-help group to be a part of etc. Also, make being tuned into your vulnerable human-self throughout your day, by learning Mindfulness, become your normal way of being. Ultimately, you are becoming your own sanctuary, your own positive environment. Wherever you go, hold your inner-child/vulnerable humanness by the hand. Be your own forever parent and your own best friend. Every vulnerability that you feel is an opportunity to be with your past self, who is needing your love and care now.







Ongoing

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