



THIS

With

Walking

JOURNEY

Bryan Reeves

This Wild Waking Journey: 58 Insight On The Way to Self-Discovery

by Bryan Reeves

A Note from the Author:

Throughout my life, in most every circumstance, though particularly when I have been challenged or distraught, I have always tried to orient my thinking around this one question:

“What can I learn from this?”

Living inside of that question has made all the difference.

This book is a deeply personal collection of 58 written inspirations and insights between 2010-2014 (with well over 100 powerful insights scattered throughout). Most were published on my blog, *This Wild Waking Journey*.

May these words serve you well on your own *Wild Waking Journey*.

*With Love,
Bryan*

p.s. Remember, Life is messy. Stop trying to *not* get it all over you.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK: This book is not chronological. It is not meant to be read from start to finish. Just flip to a chapter that speaks to you, and go from there. Let your intuition guide you to the message you need to hear.

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“People always say what we are looking for is the meaning for life... I think what we’re looking for is the experience of being alive.”

~ Joseph Campbell ~

“Every passing minute is another chance to turn it all around”

~ Vanilla Sky Movie ~

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In 100 years ... all new people.

I've thought about the implications of this reality a lot over the years. In about 100 years (maybe now it's 125 or 150 as technology goes), the planet will essentially be completely rid of everyone that's alive today and crawling with a completely new set of people.

The whole myriad of people who play the characters in all the stories of your life, appearing throughout all the dramas and heartbreaks and in every wild love story or sweet friendship, absolutely none of them will still be alive 100-ish years from now.

There's something about being aware of that reality that completely shifts my perception of everybody around me and every so-called problem I might be facing. With this awareness in mind, somehow otherwise bothersome things just lose their angry charge and the love I already have for my community swells up richer and even more full than it was a moment before.

I look at my delicious, beloved friends and my brilliant family, and it occurs to me that I'm sharing the planet with a unique set of individuals that only showed up here within the last 60 or so years, and in another 60 or so years will never be here again.

I just think that's really worth taking notice of.

I implore you - RIGHT NOW - reach out and tell someone what an incredible honor it is to share this planet with them. I promise it'll be among the coolest messages they'll get today.

Because that's what we're doing: we're sharing this planet with a completely unique bunch of human beings who just happen to be breathing alongside us during this itty-bitty teensy-weensy slice of precious time ... and in 100 years more, like it or not, there'll be all new people.

p.s. I saw this quote years ago and don't know who to attribute it to.



The One R-rated Key to Living an Awesome Authentic Life (plus 9 more PG-13 keys).

1) Life Begins at F##k It!

Authenticity and Awesome happen the moment you stop trying to control the world around you ... a futile exercise, anyway. So often, we only arrive at this thrilling jumping off point after we've exhausted every manipulative strategy imaginable to make the world show up the way we want it to ... and it still hasn't. Why not just accept right now that you've never actually controlled the outside world in a meaningful way and surrender to the same force(s) that holds galaxies together and makes hearts beat and creates puppies and oceans and DMT. The most wondrous things in your life probably happened mostly by remarkable circumstance outside your control, anyway. Now, this isn't about giving yourself permission to do stupid, irresponsible things, or to be lazy. You didn't come here to hurt people or watch TV for 80 years. No, this is about following the otherwise unheeded yearnings that stir passionate and deep in your aching heart. As Abraham Esther-Hicks says, follow the "Hell Yes!" and live the juicy life you REALLY came here to live. You don't need anyone's permission. And you can't control or even know the consequences of ANYTHING you choose to do! Every path you choose ultimately leads to your death, anyway. So just say, "F##k It!" already and get on with it!

That's it, the One R-rated Key to living an awesome, authentic life. Everything else flows from there.

Why then do I need to offer 9 more? I don't. But it's fun and I love writing and there's some really juicy distinctions inside of "F##k it!" soooooo ...

2) Follow the Hell Yes! ... or let it be a Hell No!

In the movie, Matrix, Neo was instructed to follow the White Rabbit. Following that little sexy White Rabbit tattoo got him out of his dank pit of existential despair where he wasn't going to learn anything and into the exhilarating world beyond where he would run into his magnificent destiny. Your White Rabbit is all the little Hell Yes!'s that show up in the face of choice. If you just get still and tune in to your mind AND body, you'll feel an

expansion in one direction or another; or it might just feel like relief ... but not that lazy, escapism kind of relief. Genuine relief. That Hell Yes! - though it may be subtle - will guide you towards your highest good in any moment, and thus the highest good of others, too. And if some choice is NOT a Hell Yes! at the moment, then let it be a Hell No! Which doesn't mean that choice will never be right for you; it just means it's not right for you right now. In other words, suffering isn't just A choice, it is YOUR choice. ... Also, you can always follow my momma's advice: when in doubt, do nothing.

p.s. Ladies, let your "maybe/not sure" in bed = NO!

3) Fully Embrace Your Sexuality

Sexuality is the reason you're here. It's also possibly the most powerful energy coursing through your body. Shame around your sexuality is kryptonite to your inner superhero. Life only happens because sex happens. In fact, Life is making love to itself, non-stop ... I don't just mean the baboons, homosapiens, and remarkably sensual leopard slugs that are constantly combining to create new versions of themselves. Look even closer: every new moment that comes into existence is borne of whatever realities were interacting in the moment just before. Life is fucking constantly. And when Life suppresses that energy - as only we humans seem inclined to do - it stagnates and begins to die.

Embracing your sexuality doesn't mean always indulging it. Byron Katie said, "*just because a man has an erection doesn't mean he has to do anything with it.*" Embracing your sexuality simply means dropping the shame you almost certainly feel around it, whether single or in a relationship. I've been ashamed most of my life for having robust sexual energy ... and I'm a fairly normal heterosexual male! But I've suffered in countless ways to hide my natural attractions, simply because we live in a culture pathologically shy about its penises and vaginas. We've come a long way over the centuries, but we have a long way yet to go. We'll know the real sexual revolution has happened when we are no longer afraid to acknowledge the wild sexual rhythms running feral and whimsical through our fascinating human bodies. We also won't feel like we have to indulge it just because we feel it.

Stop squashing and squandering your sexuality. Embrace it. Wield it respectfully.* Let it supercharge your life!

*If your sexual attractions are genuinely inappropriate, just don't indulge them and proactively seek help. But know that shame doesn't serve you. It won't make your attractions go away and will probably only empower them. Get help BEFORE you do something that hurts others.

4) Be Endlessly Curious

Want to know the punchline to the great Cosmic joke? ... There is no punchline. And that's the punchline (psychedelic mushrooms taught me this, and I believe them).

Question everything. Even - and especially - your own thoughts. Nobody on this planet knows what's really going on. Not the Christians or the Jews or the Muslims or the Politicians or the Scientists or the Gurus, not the Poets nor the Artists. Not even Sting. The joy is in the journey because there is no destination, not even for knowledge. Scientists build bigger and bigger atom smashers thinking that'll lead to conclusive answers. But they always only lead to more questions. Look, we're wandering through a vast and unfathomably empty space on the seat of a giant wet rock, coming from nowhere on our way to nowhere. The smartest of us is guessing at best. Just keep asking questions. Peel back the endless layers. Why? Because the deeper you go, the more beauty you can see everywhere, and the more rich and rewarding life gets. And you'll laugh more.

Because when you get the no-punchline punchline to the cosmic joke, that shit is hilarious!

5) Give Up Being Anti-Anything

Being against anything requires stressful energy, and it never really works, anyway. Just look at our obsession for waging ineffective wars against stuff that never disappears: Terrorism / Drugs / Poverty / Crime / Prostitution. You didn't come to this planet to make things go away. You came here to express the life flowing through you and create beauty in the world, to help humanity awaken to its true nature ... whatever that may be. So just be FOR stuff. It will make you much more interesting to be around, and probably nicer, too. Want to take on poverty? ... be FOR prosperity for all. Crime? ... be FOR strong education and economic opportunity for everyone. Prostitution? ... well, first go get laid and relax, then just get back to creating your art.

Side effect of giving up being against anything: less war.

6) Don't Push The River

Have you ever tried to pull a caterpillar out of its cocoon, hoping to catch an early glimpse of the butterfly? Or ripped open the closed bud of a spring flower, desperate to experience its full bloom glory? Probably not. I'll bet, however, that you've eaten raw cookie dough before baking the cookie. But if you always did that, you'd never experience the sweet succulent warmth of crispy melting chocolate-flavored heaven swarming your taste-buds and rocking your entire being with orgasmic waves of sensual bliss. If cookie dough were truly better than the actual cookie, there would never have been cookies. Just cookie dough.

This insidious belief - that what you want to happen simply must happen for the world to be at peace, function efficiently, spin, be round, be fun, be easy, be safe, love you, protect you, entertain you, etc - it's a lie. Life has a far bigger imagination than you do. It's never needed you pushing it around before! Yet it's amazing how often we force our will on life around us, ripping open cocoons and flower buds, pushing rivers, insisting some particular thing happen as if we know what's best for the Universe.

You might force something into fruition, at least technically. But that forceful approach typically leaves a wake of resentment and disconnection, sometimes subtle, sometimes obvious, between you and the world around you that probably wasn't been part of your original vision. Anyway, the contentment you're really hungering for is what Benedictine Monk, David Steindl-Rast, described as "that kind of happiness that doesn't depend on what happens."

Our impatience is wrecking our only home, Planet Earth. And we routinely damage our relationships when people don't do what we want them to do. We're so busy trying to rip open the bud to hurry and enjoy the flower's fragrance and wild beauty that we completely miss the beauty and wondrous miracle of the life-holding bud itself. So don't push the river. Just flow with it.

7) Ignore All Haters, Doubters, and Bullies

They're not living your life. You are. They're as clueless as anyone, anyway. They're just hating and doubting to mask their own fear. In fact, have compassion for them. They're mortified. Bullying only makes the fearful feel powerful. Anyone genuinely unafraid of you won't feel the need to tear you down. Haters, doubters and bullies are miserable. Happy, authentic people are too busy creating awesome lives to have time for criticizing yours.

8) Be Willing To Fail

Wise music artist Ash Ruiz once reminded me, "the point of life isn't to get the dream job or the perfect spouse or the nice house. The point is to wake up." Everything in the world around and outside you is a detail that will shift and change throughout your life. People, careers, money, rewards, validation, circumstances, victories, defeats - all will happen, have their moment with you, and then go. My friend Catherina said, the only true failure is not being willing to fail. There is really no such thing as failure. You can't do it wrong. You can only decide not to do it. Throughout your life, if you will stay with the question "What can I learn from this?", then you'll learn from absolutely everything, even the worst of so-called mistakes. My first book, *Tell The Truth, Let The Peace Fall Where It May*, was borne of a significant relationship in which I fucked things up massively.

Failure is an illusion. You are walking success.

9) Stop Lying About What You Can Afford

Humanity lives in a scarcity paradigm, always thinking there isn't enough. This keeps us perpetually worried, over-protective, unsatisfied, and living small. In the face of things we want to experience, we'll often say, "No, I don't have enough money / time / courage / smarts / etc. to do that." But that's bullshit. That's just another way of saying, I'm more committed to my belief in scarcity than I am to having that experience. Tony Robbins says, "we get what we must have."

From now on, start asking yourself this empowering question: "*Can I afford NOT to?*" Getting clear about the real costs of NOT doing something truly interesting to you just might be the leverage needed to get your worried ass off your scarcity couch.

10) Always Remember You Are Descended from the Stars

You are literally conscious stardust. The elemental particles in your body were forged countless millennia ago in the fiery cauldrons of the early universe. Your body is literally the stuff of exploding stars carried on comets pounded into earth, and now, finally, come alive. There's nothing wrong with you. Sure, tune your body instrument. Improve your skills and knowledge. It's fun to see what these bodies can really do when we push their limits. But don't think for a second that you, the end-product of billions of years of evolutionary dance, are somehow a corrupted file.

You're already perfect. So quit worrying and get back to creating the wondrous art of your unique lifetime.



There's so much that's right with the world.

Today an unfortunate tragedy happened in Boston, an event the product of insane thinking. Every day similar tragedies happen all over the world, heart-breaking events that occur because someone believed a crazy, despairing thought and acted on it, thus sucking so many into terrible suffering.

I was in the gym when I saw footage of the explosions. As every TV in the gym began to issue forth terrible, chaotic scenes of violence and despair, the heavy clanking of muscle-ripped men and curvy women in short shorts lifting and dropping heavy things ceased and everyone around me gazed spell-bound up at the screens like stunned prey waiting to be swallowed up whole by the mesmerizing light.

I acknowledged what happened, said a prayer and let my heart be touched, and then looked away and got back to my workout.

There's just so much working beautifully in the world.

So many things are going completely, undeniably right, right now. Were we to pay attention to what's actually working in our individual and collective favor, instead of always seeking out what's going wrong, we would see that every corner of the planet, every continent, every community, most everyone everywhere could report an incessant and completely overwhelming news

stream of goodness, love, laughter, beauty and possibility all conspiring to bless them and the world around them with the remarkable experience of simply being alive, for at least a short time.

I'd like to see this report someday:

“It’s a bonafide miracle, John. The folks in this suburban community are somehow NOT simply flying off the face of the earth. We just don’t know how this thing called gravity happens, but in spite of the earth spinning so rapidly no one here is suddenly shooting off into space. This appears to be happening all over the world in fact, day after day, although there are occasional sightings from top-secret Area 51 where anonymous witnesses report this so-called gravity force breaking down. But otherwise, it’s an extraordinary thing to witness ... every ... single ... day. I’m Rachel for Channel 5 news. Stay grounded, Seattle!”

You think that’s an exaggeration? Why is it an exaggeration to be seriously impressed by some miracle force we don’t even understand that magically keeps our feet on the ground so we can even live out these wild, unpredictable lives?

Do you get that we’re all standing on a giant, wet rock floating in the middle of probably not even God really knows where?? Why not, for one moment, let this be a simple starting point for noticing just how much is working wildly in our favor every day, every moment, since the beginning of time and as far into the future as we can see!!

Yes, let’s be deeply touched by this world’s heart-wrenching tragedies. Let us be stirred to firm and compassionate action in seeking solutions and justice. Let us also ask and fully live the deeper, more empowering questions about our lives and the societies we create that tragedies like this can powerfully initiate us into.

But let us not ever forget the absurdly overwhelming evidence that life is working in our favor everywhere, everyday, in absolutely countless ways. I’m not even talking about all the good acts that people are doing the world over - the kindnesses, the beautiful and benevolent creativity, the infinite services done for each other, the smiles freely given and more - that surely by far outweigh the bad ones. You must know the good grossly outweighs the bad,

for otherwise few of us could genuinely sleep safely at night ... and the vast majority of humanity does.

Focusing on what's working can make a real difference in our daily lives. It would almost surely even lessen the frequency of preventable tragedies like the Boston Marathon explosions. It would definitely lessen the explosions still blasting through our TV sets and throughout our own heads long after the original ones have faded silent into history.

I pray for solace for the families now experiencing the wrenching agony of loss due to this tragedy.

Here are some websites that report what's working on our planet:

The Global Awesomeness Report: <https://www.facebook.com/GlobalAwesomenessReport>

Ode Magazine: News for Intelligent Optimists - <http://odewire.com/>

The Optimist World News: <http://optimistworld.com/News.aspx>



Have you had your “Showering At Denny's” moment yet?

It seems like every single wildly successful transformational/motivational/spiritual speaker/author I've ever encountered has a story to tell about the awful time in their lives when they were homeless, sleeping in an alley/bus-stop/car/empty field, washing their clothes in a Denny's bathroom or their hair with the 7-Eleven soda machine (discreetly). They were either cracked out, drunk, disorderly, abused and rejected, or sober but fat, sick and utterly despondent.

They describe this moment as a time when their lives were so broken there genuinely appeared no further to fall. The next stop on their journey into the dark abyss was surely death ... in fact, in their stories, something always does

seem to die in their car, on the doorsteps of the homes they were just evicted from, or in that Denny's bathroom at 4am: their former selves who embraced extremely low standards - or no standards - for their lives. That low-standard self has to die in the fire of transformation so a new self can be born, one with the fierce determination to say "No more! My life is bullsh*t! I now insist on entirely new standards for myself!"

Flash forward 10 years and they're living in the home of their wildest dreams, married to their Princess/Prince of Arabia, acting as principle advisor to the Supreme Galactic Council and serving as general champion for humanity across the land. It's a beautiful story, one I'm sure is often mostly true.

Fortunately, you don't have to be homeless to experience authentic transformation. You don't have to lose your family and sleep in the bus station to get that the life you've been living isn't working and begin creating real change. You might have to experience being destitute in spirit, however, in the sense that you've finally and completely lost all hope that your current life strategies will ever work to make you authentically happy.

A few years ago I was in a really chaotic long-term relationship that I just could not extricate myself from. I was like that monkey with his hand gripped tightly around the candy-bait inside a coconut trap. All I had to do was let go the candy and pull out my hand, but I wanted that sweet candy so bad I just gripped on more tightly as I desperately tried yanking my hand out to escape, all while the hunter kept whacking me mercilessly on the head with his club.

So I polled all my wisest friends, desperate for insight, and asked them, "how do you know when it's really time to end a relationship?"

The essential averaged-out answer was this: "When you just can't fucking take it anymore!"

I was hoping for something a little more technical, like "when your partner lies to you" or "when you don't really respect each other anymore" ... although I knew neither would do since she and I had crossed those thresholds years prior.

Nope, the answer I got over and over was “when you just can’t fucking take it anymore!” ... which means it was all up to me!!

If something in your life genuinely isn't working for you, and hasn't been for a long time, and you tolerate it, then you clearly haven't had your genuine Showering-At-Denny's (SAD) moment yet. Every minute you let it persist, you're deciding you can take more, hurt more, fall farther, suffer deeper.

Me, a few months back I moved into a home I wasn't happy living in. Rather than taking steps to get out of there quickly, I painted my scratched-up bedroom closet doors a color I call “putrefying salmon” so I could at least be more comfortable in my discontent. When I reflect back on this, I laugh at myself. I should have made the space MORE uncomfortable so motivate me to get outta there! Instead, as I've clearly done across all aspects of my life, I tried to make my low-standards comfortable.

I know nothing outside me is responsible for my happiness. But that doesn't mean I need to learn how to wash my hair in the 7-11 soda fountain with a big smile. If I ever get to that place, it'll be entirely by choice.

So, while staring at my putrefying salmon-colored doors in a room I felt small and stagnant in, in a home that betrayed my low-standards for living, a home I was even embarrassed to bring a date back to, I had my SAD moment. I was finally, completely over tolerating low-standards. I know because in that moment I decided to move and confirmed the date.

Tony Robbins reminded me recently at the seminar I attended with Mastin and the gang: “If you want to raise the quality of your life, raise your standards.”

Tony Robbins says his SAD moment did NOT come when he slept in a car, which he did, but a few years later when he held an eviction notice in his sober but big, fat, junk-food grubbing hands in a tiny Venice, CA, apartment.

You'll know when you finally hit your ultimate SAD moment because your whole body will come alive and say "No More!!" ... probably with much more colorful language and absolutely with a conviction that ensures life will never again look the same for you.

The good news is you get to decide what your "Showering At Denny's" moment looks like, when you just can't fucking take it anymore. It doesn't have to involve Denny's at all. Or a 7-Eleven soda fountain. Or an eviction notice. Or any external lose-everything-drama at all. Unless you want it to.

Are you ready to define your SAD moment for something that's not working in your life? Have you truly had enough? Tell us about it in the comments below. Shout it out!! Raise the quality of your life, by raising your standards!



The world never ends where we think it does.

Recently, my sister lived a few months in an adorable cabin on a beautiful mountain village street in southern California. While she was there, she never ventured further up her street, beyond her cabin and away from the main road. She would later tell me she simply assumed the street ended just beyond the bend a few hundred feet from her cabin.

In February, I rented that same cabin for 30 days. On my second day I walked up that street, rounded the bend, and kept walking. I found not just more cute mountain village homes enshrouded in beautiful woods and friendly neighborhood dogs who licked my face clean (or dirty), I also found an actual national park campground, endless mountain forest to hike and explore, magnificent pine-tree spires stretching up tall towards the heavens, and a giant rock-outcropping not even half a mile from the cabin that gave me quiet, delicious views of the exploding sunset sky over the valley.

She came to visit me and I took her on a little walk, past that short bend that had previously been an impenetrable barrier in her imagination, and literally deeper into a mountainous land of breathtaking beauty and wonder and mystery and new possibility. I delighted in her fascination at the discovery that had been available to her for months, just beyond that ignored and unexplored bend at the "end" of her street.

I'm not suggesting we should go off exploring in every direction. I do think it useful to remember that the world never ends where we think it does.

“There are some things one can only achieve by a deliberate leap in the opposite direction.” ~ Franz Kafka



You get what you must have.

“People get what they *must* have.” Tony Robbins said that on Saturday during one of the most powerful weekends I’ve experienced in years, his *Unleash The Power Within* seminar. Tony Robbins is the masculine embodiment of grounded human potential both understood and expressed (I’ll explain that another time).

This is the point:

Want to raise the quality of your life? Raise your standards.

I got so damn present to how I’ve been selling myself wildly short for so long now.

My current living situation is a great example. I moved into a 5-roommate home a few months ago that I was never thrilled to live in. Rather than acknowledging the place was not going to work for me and looking for a place that would, I made minor adjustments to my room so I could at least *tolerate* waking up there every morning.

Do you get what I just wrote? I made living in my current home “*tolerable*” rather than working to create a living situation that thrilled me. Clearly it’s a reflection of my belief that “I don’t have to have a living situation any better than this.” Which incidentally stands on the shaky shoulders of another belief that I’m running out of money and can’t take the risk of a larger rent I might not be able to afford in 6 months.

BULLSHIT! ... if I can’t pay rent in 6 months it’s only because having the money to do so has not been a **MUST** for me. Well, it is now a **MUST** for me. I’m not talking about luxury living. I’m just talking about a place that I feel good in.

I just wrote a blog that “there’s nothing you have to do.” In this case, it means I don’t *have to* ever stay somewhere I’m not happy, not for any reason. Life may temporarily place me somewhere I didn’t anticipate being, but if I choose to simply living “tolerable” it’s only because I’m choosing not to transform my caterpillar ass into butterfly wings that could soar my way up to "fantastic!"

Low standards may have saved me money, but they’ve cost me a fortune in joyful expression!

My low standards have kept me:

- ... in living situations I didn’t fully enjoy
- ... in work situations that didn’t thrill me or return the value I was pouring in
- ... in clothes I didn’t feel juicy and delicious in
- ... on diets that depleted my body and drained my vitality
- ... in relationships that didn’t and clearly were never going to *fully meet me*

No more.

I MUST have a home that I feel good living in. Sure I could stay in the name of that classic “spiritual lesson” of learning to love what is, that nothing outside me is responsible for my happiness.

But I’m finding more and more that with an authentically open heart I can fully embrace what IS in this exact moment and STILL focus my energy towards creating the life I REEEEEALLY want to be living ... TODAY.

I’m moving May 1st.

Where in your life have low standards cost you the full rich expression of your joy?



A Happy You is Good For the Planet!

The best gift you can give anyone is your own happiness. Surely by now you've discovered how exhausting it can be trying to make someone else happy. The best gift life ever gave me was a girlfriend I just didn't know how to please. I bent myself this way and that, tried desperately to be who I didn't want to be. My result? Two unhappy people. If I had been responsible enough to be genuinely happy first, there would have been at least one person happy in our relationship.

A happy you is simply good for the planet.

The ripple effects of your own authentic happiness leaking out into the universe are infinitely greater than the sticky ego satisfaction your husband, child, boss, father, girlfriend, etc. gets as you make yourself suffer even a little bit for their sake.

I'm not saying we shouldn't look constantly to see how we can delight those around us. Quite the opposite ...

We can literally delight the 'hell' out of the world around us!!

But we'll never delight anyone from the space of our own unhappiness, suffering, dissatisfaction, and inauthenticity, least of all ourselves.

You can sacrifice your own joy for the sake of another. Just be aware what it really costs you, not to mention what it costs everyone around you including the person you're sacrificing for; you're depriving everyone of experiencing you in your deliciously joyous state.

A happy you is just good for the entire planet. It's truly the greatest gift you can ever give.

“The greatest gift that you could ever give to another is your own happiness, for when you are in a state of joy, happiness, or appreciation, you are fully connected to the Stream of pure, positive Source Energy that is truly who you are. And when you are in that state of connection, anything or anyone that you are holding as your object of attention benefits from your attention.” ~ Abraham Esther-Hicks



There's nothing you 'have to' do ... ever!

We need to watch our language!!!

I'm not talking about cursing. I'm pretty sure God wants us to curse.

I'm talking about the language most of us use everyday that subtly makes ME a victim to MY OWN choices.

How many times a day do you say (or think) "*I have to do this,*" or "*I need to do that*"?

In fact, consider how much of your entire life might be wrapped up in a story about what you "*have to do*"?

But there's nothing you have to do.

You're so free that if someone demands you eat your peas or they'll pull the trigger, you can dump your peas on the floor and see what really happens.

People – and my own brain – love to fight me on this one. We love to think, "Sure, I can uuuuuusually choose where I spend my Friday night ... IF I have enough money and a reasonable girlfriend." Otherwise, we say, we don't really have that many choices: life regularly backs us into corners and we've got to do whatever we think we've got to do to somehow just make it through!!

But that's non-vegetarian baloney – pork lips, butts, knuckles and all. (No offense to pigs. They're awesome and I encourage you to never eat them, even though on very rare occasion I still do.)

The reality is we've never done anything in our lives we didn't on some level actually want to do. Ok, sure, there are violent examples of coercion and manipulation that push this notion beyond its realm of legitimacy, but very few of us ever encounter such an extreme. Even then, there may be a fine line.

We are so completely free we can even choose death.

In any case, I'm not talking about moments of super extreme duress. I'm talking about our everyday lives.

Ever say any of the following?

"I have to pay the bills."

"I have to feed my children."

"I have to go to work today."

"I have to fix my car."

"I have to go to my partner's thing."

"I have to eat."

"I have to breathe."

Now change "have" to "WANT":

"I WANT to pay the bills."

"I WANT to feed my children."

"I WANT to go to work today."

"I WANT to fix my car."

"I WANT to go to my partner's thing."

"I WANT to eat."

"I WANT to breathe."

Doesn't that feel different?

Maybe sometimes what we choose to do is uncomfortable. Maybe even excruciating. We can probably even easily imagine plenty of other things we'd RATHER be doing.

But then why aren't we ACTUALLY doing them?

When the "want" isn't obvious, there are usually much deeper reasons why we're doing something we otherwise resent "*having to do*". We might argue for victimhood in this moment for some trade-off in the next: "I have to do this so I can have that." That may be true on the surface. After all, there's a cost in time and energy to be paid for everything ... even breathing costs something.

The point is not to argue the economics of trade-offs.

The point is for us to take back our lives. To remember that we are responsible for our own happiness in every moment.

I literally woke up one morning a few years ago in the midst of a challenging relationship suddenly aware that I was always doing exactly what I wanted to ... and it changed my life. I could no longer blame anyone else – not my *unreasonable* girlfriend or the noise outside my window – for my unhappiness. If I wasn't thrilled with a circumstance, I was at choice to change it in a million different possible ways, including simply the perspective from which I looked at it. Some choices might look scary and improbable, even downright crazy, but recognizing that I am always at choice has been incredibly empowering in my life.

You simply aren't obligated to do or be anything at all.

You actually DO NOT have to feed your children or fix your car or pay tuition or taxes or child support or stay with your partner or go to their office party ... you do not even have to breathe.

... but if you're doing it, somewhere inside you must really want to!!

Can you imagine what this might mean for your life??



Reading is like thinking with someone else's thoughts.

I read Eckhart Tolle's A New Earth a few years ago. I was so moved by reading this book which seemed to describe everything one ever needed to know about being alive, clear, AND happy, that I quickly decided I never needed to read another book again.

Time went by and Tolle's insights that so delighted me began to recede into my thought shadows, you know, like that warm cozy corner of the room that slowly loses its blanket of sunlight as the afternoon wears on. I was in a really difficult relationship at the time and life was kicking my ass. Like

trying to hold on to a ray of sunlight, I couldn't hold onto the comforting insights A New Earth revealed for me.

Then I found Byron Katie's book, Loving What Is. Some people think she's crazy. I totally agree ... crazy in the best way.

I decided to dive into Katie's book because I realized that reading books are a form of meditation. It's a time when you literally think with someone else's thoughts. The words others put down in a book get reincarnated inside your own brain. If they resonate and don't bring up flags of resistance, they begin to forge their own pathways in your brain. If you invite such thoughts in enough, eventually they'll become yours.

The trick is to keep the process going by continuing to invite in those thoughts that inspire you to live the life you want to live.

So, other than the two I mentioned already, here's a short list of essential books in my life that I bet you'd want bouncing around your own neural pathways:

- * Man's Search for Meaning by Viktor Frankl ~ holocaust survivor who's insights will completely change the way you think about suffering
- * Women Who Run With The Wolves by Clarissa Pinkola Estés ~ a must-read masterpiece for women AND men
- * Running From Safety by Richard Bach ~ dangerous to read if you haven't jumped off your cliff yet
- * The Perfect Stranger by Mark Twain ~ a visionary short fiction story about a curious angel named Satan, and the wonder of existence
- * Letters to a Young Poet by Rainer Maria Rilke ~ every sentence pure inspiring poetry
- * Siddhartha by Herman Hesse ~ an inspiring classic tale about a Buddha's awakening. Bewildering what one can learn from a river.
- * Ishmael by Daniel Quinn ~ the enlightening story of an ESP-capable Gorilla who teaches a man about himself. it changed my world view.

“Reading is thinking with someone else's head instead of ones own.”
Arthur Schopenhauer, *The Art of Literature*



Don't believe in your frenetic life.

I just returned from a 30 day solo retreat in the mountains. My time there was deliciously tranquil. I removed batteries from ticking clocks. Refused internet service. Kept my phone in a drawer. I woke up twice to deep snowfall slathered across the entire landscape, fresh, romping coyote tracks circling my cabin. I went hiking alone through rugged mountain lion territory – my neighbors have taken nighttime “trail cam” pictures of them (don't tell my mother).

I wrote and I napped and I read and I cooked and I meditated and I visioned and I went to bed whenever and sat on my cute little sun-splashed porch every morning in silence and invited the sun's heat to massage my skin while the forest danced all around me: squirrels chirping, chattering, and shaking thick snowy evergreen branches as they scurried and leapt about; clumps of warming, powdery snow collapsing in mushy staccato rhythms throughout the forest canopy; crystal serene icicles on the sunny side of my cabin faintly popping and crackling; the babbling brook of bird song floating from every tree. I could hear the wind whirrrrrrr through frantically flapping wings as tiny sparrows darted from this tree to that one.

I had all the time in the world. I had silence.

I've never been one for meditating much. I'm usually up and ready to jump into things immediately! But in these 30 days, I particularly began to cherish the quiet moments I spent just sitting and listening.

I had nowhere to go. No schedule to keep to. I was there to write my first book. But even more so I was there to reconnect with stillness.

Then I came back to the city.

Now, I once again hear the incessant rush of traffic close by, countless human beings zooming about in every direction. I sense that anxious drive to be productive, to obey the clock, to contribute ... to get busy!

I can literally feel the frenetic energy of the city in my body, the drive to just *do something ... anything!!*

Fortunately, that cabin stillness lingers with me like a lover's perfume on my clothing. I can hear the city. I can feel it pressing into me. But I can also hear the silence beneath it. I can feel the stillness of the mountains present even in the midst of all this chaos. It's here. I only need bring my attention to it.

Now, every morning, I've found a little spot in the sun to sit in just across the street from my house – I go in my slippers.

I remind myself that the relentless hustle buzzing all around me isn't true.

The story that I have to “get to work”, “be productive”, “make a difference ASAP!”, “get shit done!” ... that I must be constantly part of the frenetic, churning river of restless humanity all around me ... it's just not true.

I'll get done what I'm truly called to get done. I have my projects and my work. I once again have appointments and meetings and deadlines and goals and all that. I also now have the tranquil stillness of the mountains softly breathing through me ... everywhere I go.

It waits patiently, silently, smiling, content, just underneath the cacophony of this human society hustling for validation in every direction, waiting for me to simply notice that it's still here. Literally. It's *still ... right here.*

Can you feel it?



Most people only go where money can take them. Be among those who go where their hearts lead them.

Money is an important tool in the world we have created. But that's all it is, and we forget that. It's just a tool. We all know it's not a worthy goal in and of itself. It's hardly even the only means needed to reach a worthy goal. It certainly isn't central to living your authentic heart's dream.

It's easy to let money carry us. Anyone can do that. Most everyone already does. And when money *feels* scarce and we don't see enough of it to carry us along, we can succumb easily to life paralysis. That's why so many people remain unfulfilled and lost in numbing addictions to food, TV, shopping, sex, work, complaining, substances, games, dishonesty, etcetera ... anything to distract from that internal conflict where the false promises of money lord over cast-aside dreams.

“Money makes people cautious” ~ Alex (main character, *Into The Wild*)

If you're reading this, you're likely among those already aware of all this. Still, is money making you cautious?

Be among those daring souls with the courage to follow their true heart's desire. Trust in your deepest knowing that either sufficient money will show up to support the journey, or that you won't need it quite the way you thought you did.

“When you follow your bliss ... doors will open where you would not have thought there would be doors; and where there wouldn't be a door for anyone else.” ~ Joseph Campbell



Why you do what you do, and what to do about it.

This particular insight so blew my mind at a recent seminar I attended that it's all I want to talk about and share right now. In fact, it has literally changed the way I move about the planet, including the choices I make about what work to focus on every day, and I think it would serve you greatly to know what I learned.

Below are the **Six Basic Human Needs** needs that we all work to meet in ways positive, negative, or neutral, directly or indirectly, sustainably or not so much, and that a healthy balance of which seems essential for a fulfilling, pleasurable life, according to Tony “The Energizer Tank” Robbins:

1. **Certainty:** Even though certainty is ultimately an illusion, for us to focus on higher order things we need to confidently believe that our homes will be waiting for us at the end of the day, our partners will be honest with us, the sun will rise in the morning, and that the bogeyman doesn't actually live underneath our beds.
2. **Uncertainty:** If everything in our lives is too certain, we get bored. We need variety, spice, surprise! We crave challenge and excitement, and these only come from diving into uncertainty. Can you already see a potential inner conflict brewing with our need for certainty
3. **Significance:** We all want to feel like we make a difference on the planet, that our presence matters. We want to be seen and acknowledged, if not by everyone, at least by someone, even if that someone is only our own selves.
4. **Love & Connection:** Need I elaborate? Babies literally die when they're not physically touched. Sadly, us adults can ache for years and even shut our bodies down when we don't experience genuine emotional or physical touch with others.
5. **We Must Grow:** Why do we go to school even as adults? Why do we climb distant barren mountains or visit foreign cultures? Why is Google so successful? Why do we read books and explore space and practice sports and the piano and chess and yoga and everything else we practice and learn? When we stop learning and growing, we stagnate and distract ourselves with all variety of addictions designed for instant gratification: TV, sex, shopping, gossip, complaining,

working for money alone, etc. In fact, the 12-step addiction recovery program is an intense process of personal growth.

6. **We Must Contribute:** When you're feeling down about your life, go find someone and make a difference in theirs; it can make you smile faster than a good tickle. We're just wired to feel good about contributing our gifts and talents back to the community. Nothing makes us long-term grumpier than greedily keeping all our talents and possessions to ourselves.

These are the Six Basic Human needs. So what?

Well, we don't focus our energies on meeting all of these needs equally. Generally, most of us only focus on 2 or 3 at most, while the others get addressed only haphazardly and inadequately. What's more, they're usually the ones likely to bring us the most dissatisfaction. We're completely unconscious about it and thus ignorant to what these subconscious motivations cost us.

In fact, ignorance about which needs we most seek to meet can cost us everything we truly deeply desire: joy, happiness, fulfillment, and even authentic connection and love.

That's so what.

For example, if you're working feverishly to control everything in your life so that Certainty rules the day, then Growing, Contributing, and even genuine Love & Connection are not likely to be priorities in your day because those needs just overflow with Uncertainty. You might make contributions and grow, but that's going to happen reluctantly and under a lot of stress, and you're not going to get the full satisfaction that comes with genuinely spirited growth and contribution.

Some people focus more on Significance, working to get recognition at every turn. If that's you, you may find you're making contributions, seeking love and connection and to grow, even embracing uncertainty only so far as any of these serve to reinforce an elusive sense of Significance that fades as quick as validation turns its capricious eyes away from you.

When Contribution, Growth, Love and Connection are just reluctant servants to your ego's insatiable appetite for acknowledgement, you'll never be satisfied.

On the other hand, if **Growth** and **Contribution** are genuinely your primary focus, you set yourself up for an incredible feedback loop that brings **Certainty** - people want you around and may even pay you for your contributions, thus affording you a stable home environment if you want that; **Significance** - people routinely appreciate the gifts you bring to every moment; **Love and Connection** - again, people genuinely want you around; even **Uncertainty** - what's more uncertain than growing which requires constantly going into the unknown?

Again, though, if you use Growth and Contribution purely for the reward of Significance or Certainty, people will inevitably see through what are basically manipulative, inauthentic attempts to win their approval and admiration and make them behave they way you want them to.

When I first got this insight, I quickly realized so much of my focus in life had been seeking Significance and Love & Connection. I even realized how together these two deep hungers conspired to keep me in an unhealthy relationship for years. The promise of genuine love and connection with this one wildly beautiful woman - whose attention on me made me feel proudly significant - tantalized me so much that I stayed in the relationship even though we made few overtly meaningful contributions to each other (or others) and our relationship seemed to resist growth like it was a tropical disease.

Now, every morning, I wake up with the mantra, "How can I grow today? What can I contribute?"

"How can I grow today? ... What can I contribute?"

Naturally, I still want the certainty of a nice home to live in and deeply crave love and connection. But with Growth and Contribution as my daily mantra, I'm able to calm the always starving little manipulative lower-case bryan in my psyche who constantly frets that no one loves or even sees him ...

... and JAZZED-UP SUPERHERO BRYAN gets to step up and radiate a brilliant, uniquely-inspired truth committed to the thrilling expansion of all life with no concern for whether he gets credit or reward.

The irony is that I then do get recognition in various forms, love and connection, even certainty and uncertainty.

The real magic trick is being deeply honest with myself and not allowing my day to degrade into dogged pursuit of those egoic validations for their own sake.

I realize this is a simplistic discussion of all this- and I'm actually excited to really get out and start sharing and teaching this more. You can at least start to see how awareness around these 6 basic needs could make a profound difference in your life.

Which of these need have you been mostly living for, and can you see what that's been costing (or affording) you?



The Age of Authenticity.

Even as a straight man, I literally get ecstatic chills in my body when something majorly public happens that advances the cause for not just legal equality for gay people, but for the simple acknowledgment that ...
... gay people have every right to live an extraordinary life in their own authentic brilliance with all the freedoms, rights, appreciation, love, respect and deserving admiration that I'm afforded as a straight man.

Today, Jason Collins, a black NBA basketball player came out in Sports Illustrated with an article sharing that he's gay ... I find it fascinating that at first I wrote "confessing" instead of "sharing" as if he'd done something wrong and is now coming clean. Truly, what insanity have we been sold!?!?

It's historic because he's the first professional athlete in ANY of our major professional sports to publicly share that he's gay *while still playing*. Not long ago he would surely have been denigrated, disparaged, and destroyed by teammates, fans, and much of the non-gay community. Instead,

today the most famous and storied player in the NBA, Kobe Bryant, is tweeting, “*Proud of @jasoncollins34. Don’t suffocate who u r because of the ignorance of others #courage #support*”. In fact, loving and rambunctious support is pouring in from around the league and fans everywhere. Expect more professional athletes to come out soon.

Little saddens me more than to see our wondrous, authentic humanity repressed out of sheer ignorance.

Nothing THRIIIILLS me more than to see our wondrous, authentic humanity given permission to shine in all its cosmic-stardust glory!!

We are literally descendants of the stars, cosmic stardust seeded into earth via comet and left to incubate for millions of years. With billions of us now moving about the planet now, although we are so similar in our fundamental nature the way we each show up is naturally so fascinatingly diverse! **Who’s to say we shouldn’t be exactly as we are in this moment?**

I was once a Captain in the US Air Force. So it brings me a particular joy to know that since the military chose to allow openly gay members to serve, a new study concluded that “cohesion did not decline after the new policy of open service was put into place. In fact, greater openness and honesty resulting from repeal seem to have promoted increased understanding, respect and acceptance.”

Read that again ... *openness and honesty increased understanding, respect, and acceptance.*

It’s time to fully walk your brilliant, unique truth. Don’t believe anyone who tells you there’s something wrong with you just because you aren’t called to live the way they do. They’re mostly just desperate for others to validate what they do because they’re not so sure about it, either.

I’m thrilled at what’s unfolding before my eyes in our society. These are not just victories for the Gay community. Any moment that our essential humanity is affirmed and celebrated is a victory for us all.

It is indeed the Age of Authenticity.

Please welcome to life's stage ... the beautiful, brilliant, wondrously divine
You!



Healing sometimes just means learning to live in peace with the pain.

I'm pretty sure that sometimes "healing" just means learning to live in peace with the pain. I've been to countless workshops. I've questioned my stressful thoughts for days on end and accumulated countless hours of stranger eye-gazing to weepy Whitney Houston songs; I've sat still and starving on desolate mountainsides, determinedly reframed disappointments and disillusionment as profound blessings; I've danced in authentic celebration on many a dark cloud's silver lining, recited endless forgiveness mantras, lovingly held my phantom inner child and even walked (quickly) across 2000-degree glowing hot coals while screaming "YES! ... YES! ... YES!".

I've done it all. ... Well, I've at least done most of it.

Despite all the inner work I've done and all the beautiful insights my mind and heart are fortunate to see, there are some sorrows from my past that just never seem to fully exhaust their sadness. Yes, certain ones do get easier to bear with time, and perhaps someday I'll be completely healed when I finally discover the right technique or some flash of divine insight startles me awake in bed ... or maybe I just notice the wound no longer aches when life pokes its wild, meddling, sharp-nailed fingers at it.

For now, though, simply making peace with the pain seems to be the best healing I can hope for. It might even be the very salvation my sadness so deeply longs for.

SONG INSPIRATION: Listen to this Alanis Morissette song, "Incomplete", about how our desperate, incessant search for completion only delays the rapture of relief we're actually looking for, a rapture which can perhaps only be found in accepting that we are forever incomplete:

I have been running so sweaty my whole life

*Urgent for a finish line
And I have been missing the rapture this whole time
Of being forever incomplete*

NOTE: I dedicate this post to my dear beloved friend, Brian Kelly, a Marine and exceptional man and father of 3, and to my friend Angela, Brian's devoted wife and one of the coolest women on the planet. Brian is right now battling lung and brain cancer. May the incredible challenge you're moving through ultimately serve to deepen your awareness of the profound beauty and wonder forever present all around you. I love you both. I'm with you.



Stop trying to convince anyone of anything.

The most significant intimate relationship in my life so far has also been the craziest. By “crazy” I simply mean that we were both surely insane together.

We took each other into the darkest, most absurd realms of insecure, aggressive and offensive conversation that neither of us could have imagined we'd ever encounter in a “romantic” relationship. Although we did stop short of actually killing each other - and sometimes I wonder how short - it was downright awful at times.

However, through that experience I also learned an incredibly liberating distinction:

I don't ever have to convince anyone of anything about me (or anything else, for that matter).

Never mind our childish verbal communication, you should have seen the ridiculously long emails, endlessly scrolling text messages and rapid-fire facebook posts we would throw back and forth at each other. I, meticulous practitioner of the art of communication, would lay out my every essential, nuanced point in numbered bullet format with key phrases bolded or italicized, sentences scrubbed over and over for clarity and brevity, each word carefully chosen to ensure one desired outcome: that she finally “get” exactly whatever it was I was desperately pointing at.

Sound at all familiar?

Of course, at best her response would perplex me and suggest she'd barely read what I so carefully wrote. At worst, she would respond as if I'd sent a picture of a giant middle-finger with her face on the fingernail.

Either way, she would only come back to re-assert her original position on whatever imagined *slight of the moment* we were in upset about. I, now with even deeper certainty of my righteousness, would once again launch into a fresh reshaping of my perspective, believing THIS time it would finally fit in her throat as I worked to thrust it down with scant mercy.

Thus, we washed each other with mud, rinsed off with glue, and repeated for about 5 years.

Why was I so desperate to make her think like me?

Actually, I know why. She criticized me a lot, and somewhere deep inside I believed in her criticism, and so it hurt. If I could only get her to stop and see me in a different light, then I believed I wouldn't hurt inside anymore. I didn't realize the only person that really needed to stop criticizing me was ... myself.

Her words hurt me because I believed them. If I didn't believe them, they couldn't possibly have hurt. Sure, it might have been disappointing that this woman I wanted to love so deeply couldn't see the brilliant, innocent child of the universe that I actually am - that we all are. But at least I wouldn't have taken it so personally. I would have understood she was just having a nightmare and that no amount of my impassioned protesting was going to awaken her from an illusion she wasn't much willing to examine.

By taking her on and resisting her world view, by working so passionately to change it, I only gave it more power. What we resist indeed persists. I proved it in that relationship.

“We don't describe the world we see, we see the world we describe.”
~ Joseph Jaworski

Since learning that lesson, it's been among the most liberating experiences of my life to simply allow people whatever viewpoints they choose to believe in.

Admittedly, it's a work in progress. When I believe passionately in a thought, an idea, a perspective or a story, and I simply think it's "right", I can be tempted to fight for its survival if someone threatens to invalidate it. I turn into an extreme "thought-conservationist" willing to employ any measure to prevent my idea from extinction at the hands of some thought-poacher only hunting in ignorance.

But that's just more insane thinking at play.

It's actually the easiest thing in the world to let someone else think whatever they want to think.

What do I really gain when someone agrees with or validates me? A good feeling? I can feel good regardless whether anyone agrees with me.

It doesn't mean I have to hang around and stay in the conversation. In fact, with my ex, I bet one of two scenarios would have played out had I simply stopped trying to take her perspectives away from her: (1) she would have eventually grown weary of hearing herself repeatedly tell the same negative stories about me and shifted naturally to see me in a different light; or (2) I would have simply stopped resonating with the negative tone of the conversation and left years before I actually did.

But I needed to stay in there and battle it out for one reason: she brought me face to face with my deepest fears about myself. She gave me the opportunity to explore and ultimately discover that all those negative, critical thoughts I also believed about myself ... well, that they just weren't true.

It was the greatest gift because now I realize I don't have to convince anyone of anything. I'm only ever trying to convince myself, anyway. But I'm not perfect. I still mess up sometimes. I'm human just like everyone else and still have to work at living an authentic life with heart-centered intentions. But I don't have to convince anyone that I'm worthy of respect, kindness, consideration, and love; that I'm essentially an innocent child of the Universe consistently doing the best I know to do. I don't have to defend what I think or make anyone think like me.

If someone doesn't resonate with who they believe I am ... well, isn't it just the most delicious thing in the world to be with people who genuinely appreciate you for who you are today?

That's what I'm calling into my life! I figure the only way I'll do that is to stop trying to convince anyone of anything.

Are you struggling to convince someone in your life to see the world - or you - in a different light? How's that working out?

What's the worst that could happen if you simply let them think what they think?



The Arrogance of the “Enlightened Fool.”

I can't tell you how many times I've acted in ridiculous, immature, even aggressive fashion when making a stand for positive, high-minded ideals. It's soooo tempting to scorch another's ignorant ire with a blast of my own passionate fire (I blame it on the Spanish 25% of my blood).

But we all know that scenario doesn't generally play out well.

If I can't live at least leaning in towards my ideals, what good are they?

If I'm being judgmental, arrogant and antagonistic while making a stand for being open-minded, loving, and tolerant ... well, I am just acting a crazy hypocrite.

I'm certainly not making a credible stand for anything positive and high-minded when I'm telling a friend or my dad or a colleague just how flawed and ridiculous their ideas are, even if they are flawed and ridiculous. I'm also NOT in that moment creating the world I want to live in. Actually, In most ways it seems I'm just demonstrating the ignorance I'm railing against.

In such a moment, I'm certainly contributing one more crazy fool to the world ... me.

Thankfully, I'm learning to go easy on myself when this happens.

I'm also learning to apologize for this "*arrogance of the enlightened fool*" (we're all enlightened fools, no?)

Even if I just KNOW I was in the right before I *ridiculoused* things up by acting a fool, a quick, sincere apology for my hopefully brief moment of hypocrisy often seems to go farther towards demonstrating what I was trying to say in the first place than what I was actually saying.

Apologies also work wonders to create deeper intimacy, trust, and connection with the people I love, and that's a whoooole lot juicier than successfully vanquishing their ideas and winning admiration for my own (which rarely happens with force, anyway).

It can be the most delicious thing in the world to let people believe whatever they want to believe, even if it just seems like negative malarkey to me.

"When you find peace within yourself, you become the kind of person who can live at peace with others." ~ Peace Pilgrim



Leaping off the cliff is something you do everyday.

You figure it just takes one huuuuuge leap of faith to hurl yourself off the metaphorical cliff before you're off and ... well, dropping through the sky like a sweaty meat bomb until you magically grow wings and reclaim your wits about you and then it's smooth sailing forevermore.

But no, that's not how it works. At least not for me and most others I know who ran from safety some time ago. Nope.

Every morning you keep waking up and deciding whether to jump off the cliff again today.

Maybe it's the same cliff, maybe it's not. You might even feel like desperately clawing at the sheer mountain side, mad for grip to scramble your way back towards whence you recently leapt.

But once you've hurled yourself off into the great adventure that is your life, the expansive thrill of doing so becomes pretty intoxicating. There's usually just no honest way back, even when you're watching the ground rise way too fast towards your face.*

Just keep leaping. You'll find new ground before you know it.

Of course, you'll soon be compelled to leap off that new ground, too.

It's just a way of life, leaping off cliffs.

(*psssst ... by the way, it's an illusion. there actually is no ground. of course there's no cliff, either. happy leaping!)

“You find what you love and you learn everything about it. You bet your life on what you know and run from safety, off your mountain into the air, trusting the Principle of Flight to bring you soaring up on lift you cannot see with your eyes.” ~ Richard Bach, Running from Safety.



A Spiritual Military.

In honor of Memorial Day, I want to remind you that I was once a Captain in the US Air Force ... and now I work in transformational entertainment and write inspirational blogs like *“Tell The Truth, Let The Peace Fall Where It May”* and *“A Happy You is Good for the Planet!”*

Tonight at author Marianne Williamson's Monday night lecture in Beverly Hills, I asked all the servicemen and women in the room to stand up. There were about 10 of us there. I wasn't alone.

Yes, inside the military there is a tremendous amount of dense thought and strictly ego-fueled behavior. But there are also a lot of thoughtful people wrestling with deep, courageous questions like what did they really come to do on this planet and who are we as authentic, soul-filled human beings. The military can kind of force that on a person in countless ways.

Personally, my military service was deeply distressing ... spiritually speaking. I believe I served well, but I knew military service as we've created it wasn't what I came here to do. Still, living in that intense pressure cooker forced me to dive deeper into the big questions with an urgency and intensity that might have been missing had I simply been working a regular job making decent money.

It's easy to pay taxes and then completely overlook how our money empowers our government to wage the wars it wages. It's not so easy to wear the uniform and be the one actually waging the war. Although I never directly experienced combat, I participated in activities that directly enabled it. And I struggled with that fact immensely at a young age.

The military is an intense pressure cooking environment for the body, mind and spirit like no other widely experienced manmade environment. Although it took years for me to really understand the soulful life lessons I was learning in that experience, I wouldn't be the man I am today without having served in the military.

Believe it or not, the military was essential in helping me wake up to the truth of who I am.

I'm hardly the only one experiencing that.

There were 10-ish former military servicemen and women listening to Marianne Williamson's lecture tonight about war through the filter of A Course in Miracles. Just a few days ago a young active duty soldier found me on the internet and reached out to ask big questions about spirituality.

The essential point I want you to get is that there are thoughtful, spiritually-orienting people moving about in the military.

You know, the military might even be part of God's plan in helping us to wake up to the brilliant truth of who we are. I can't know that for sure God has anything to do with it, but I can tell you that such a thing is, in fact, happening. Because it happened to me.

Indeed, God bless the military.



Yes, The World Actually DOES Need Your Voice.

It's easy to get discouraged about inspirational writing and coaching when I think the stage is already too crowded. There's so many people already doing what I aspire to do ... and some are doing it *reeeeally* well.

When I attended Tony Robbins' *Unleash The Power Within* Seminar in Los Angeles 2 months ago, I thought, "jeez, there's six *thooooooooousand* people in this room all more or less wanting to do what I want to do. On top of that, Tony "Rockstar" Robbins has already mastered the field of human potential; he's created the CDs, the workshops and trainings, written amazing books and gives immense value in his lectures. What can I possibly offer this world that isn't already being offered at a masterful level?"

Then I thought, "wait, there's six thousand people in this room, but there's 18 MILLION people in the greater Los Angeles area alone."

There's a MASSIVE world out there literally dying to become aware of the insights you and I are waking up to. Only a very small percentage will ever be exposed to or even resonate with Tony Robbins or Marianne Williamson or Eckhart Tolle or anyone else who isn't me or you.

Someone out there is right now waiting to be seized by the inspiration streaming through you - whether your voice, your writing, your film, your song, your dance, your comedy, your truth. Whatever your offering, someone's waiting to be inspired by you. It might be millions of people or it might be a few. You'll never know until you go for it ... and keep going for it.

It might take 100 attempts, or maybe 1000. Maybe you'll simply release a slow trickle of inspiration that pleasantly tickles a few folks each time you hit "publish". That's what blogging often looks like for the first few years. Even *The Daily Love* wasn't born overnight and happened in the midst of all kinds of existing inspirational content.

Regardless, don't believe for one second that your voice isn't needed RIGHT NOW in this world because someone else out there is speaking a similar message. They may be, and thank goodness for that, but no one's speaking, writing, dancing, singing, teaching, training, explaining, embracing, visioning, laughing, expressing like you can.

Besides, there are seven billion people on this planet. A vast many of those 7 billion people are in pain. Unnecessary suffering is part of their everyday lives.

Even Tony Robbins could only get to six thousand on that particular day.

Get out there and share your voice; express what you see.

Don't worry; you're not competing with any other voices.

Rather, we're all now working in harmony to create the greatest, most thunderously inspiring chorus ever!

So sing it out!

What inner inspirations have you been resisting out of concern that someone else is already doing it? What would it look like to give up that belief and get going? What's the next step?



There's So Much Wild Goodness In The World.

In 2009-2010, I spent 12 months touring North America with a conscious music band - 6 men (and one guitarist's wife for a few of those months) - in an SUV vehicle which I'm certain shrank over time. During that entire year, we spent less than 10 nights in hotel rooms. The other 355 days we spent weaving in and out of the lives and living spaces, the living rooms and bedrooms and kitchens and dens and barns and trailers and basements and

RVs and porches and tents and offices and closets and anywhere else one could possibly lay down, of essentially complete strangers.

I'm sharing this now because I just watched the deeply touching movie, "Craigslist Joe", about a young man who travels across the country for 31 days with naught but the wildly random winds of Craigslist fortune to carry him along. This sweet, adventurous young Joe uses only Craigslist to find free rides, free places to sleep, free food, free things to do, and all variety of fascinating people to meet, for 31 days. He goes 'round the country, from LA to Seattle, over to New York then down to Tallahassee and back to LA, on one improbably inspiring adventure after another. At the poignant end of his journey, we find Joe back in his living room, overwhelmed by the unfathomable generosity he discovered living inside countless hearts across America, each one completely thrilled to delight and care for another.

I lived this experience for an entire year, moving smoothly - mostly - on the winds of pure grace and generosity, from one set of helpful, loving hands into the eager, open palms of another. I never thought to use Craigslist, but I was traveling with an incredibly talented spiritual pop music band, Here II Here, which was just as useful.

There were a few nights we showed up at our own concerts with no place to stay afterwards and someone in the audience would invariably take us all home. At our first concert in California, after a month spent touring across the country, there were 16 people in a meager audience. There were 6 of us. I assure you it's a tall order to consistently find free places to sleep for 6 people traveling in one truck. Nonetheless, before the concert was even half over, we had multiple wide-smile offers of comfortable places for us all to stay. In fact, one of my sweetest, most cherished stories from the road offered its impossible miracle that same evening (read about it here).

In those 12 adventurous months, just like Craigslist Joe, I witnessed firsthand the immense generosity stirring inside every human being we encountered. Yes, we also met some crazed and confused people ignorant to their wounds who were somewhat challenging to be around - and surely each of us in the band WAS one of those people at one time or another (except Edwin, that man is freakishly imperturbable. Seriously).

Still, I witnessed profound love and concern pouring out of people who had never even met us in person until we were walking through their front doors,

sometimes even during the darkest, bewitching hours of night. Even in the few chaotic, discordant homes we entered, I saw humankind's immense and deep-rooted desire to be of service to another.

I know on the surface this world is an ugly place sometimes.

But go a little deeper, peer just beneath the psychic armor we use to protect ourselves from the imaginary boogeymen we think lurk under every bed, and you quickly discover vast treasures of delicious goodness inside the human heart.

If you doubt that even a tiny bit, watch "Craigslist Joe" immediately.

"If your daily life seems poor, do not blame it; blame yourself, tell yourself that you are not poet enough to call forth its riches; for to the creator there is no poverty and no poor indifferent place." ~ Rainer Maria Rilke, Letters to a Young Poet



You can't build greatness on a foundation of bullshit.

Yesterday, I launched my new website and started giving away free an intensely revealing Chapter 1 of my coming book, *Tell The Truth, Let The Peace Fall Where It May*.

Yes, I'm nervous about it, a bit scared even. *What will you think of me when you read it?*

What I hope is that it helps you breathe a little deeper by reminding you you're not the only thoughtful person capable of acting like a crazy person ... umm, you have discovered you're capable of that ... right?

If all it actually does is convince you I'm a crazy person, then well, like my good buddy Helen Keller said: "*life is nothing if not a daring adventure.*"

Either way, I'm committed to fully living the truth of my experience, of who I am in this moment. Life just hurts far too deeply when I don't ... and I haven't for so much of this precious life.

I'm also committed to helping you live the same, even if it means exposing my own insanity.

**We are never going to build true greatness on a foundation of bullshit.
I was born for greatness. Just like you.**

It's time we live our truth and get on with enjoying that greatness already.



Putting yourself out there is supposed to be uncomfortable.

I'm always a bit nervous when I hit "Publish" on a blog. I never know how these words are going to be received by you. Like most creators, I want more than anything that you embrace my every creation like some precious discovered treasure glinting resplendent in your eyes that you can't help but stare at all day long and think ONLY of enthusiastically sharing this "precious" with everyone you know.

Reality is, though, some of you won't even read it. Some of you will even unsubscribe. Yes, I lose subscribers. Perhaps right now you're clicking unsubscr----- [that's simulated silence as one of you hang up on my blog forever, never to experience another word!]

Fortunately, readers subscribe regularly, too - far more than unsubscribe.

Still, I never know which way my words are going to move anyone.

Somehow, by the grace of me simply needing to write, I don't let that stop me. Ultimately it's not up to me how you receive my words, or whether you receive them at all.

The writer's / artist's / creator's job is to simply hold up their creation and say, "this is what I see right now."

That's it.

"Hey World! ... This is what I see right now."

My hope is that what I see will serve, inspire, ignite, and delight you. However, because it's so obvious to me, I often think, "Why share this? Everyone else must already see it, too. I'm only stating the obvious."

But often, even if you already see it, too, hearing it from me offers precious confirmation that your insight is valid ... that believing in and working towards your big dreams isn't futile or irresponsible or crazy or pointless because someone else is already doing it ... indeed, it's simply divine to hear from me (and others) that working to make real your dreams is both appropriate AND essential AND the thing you absolutely must do!

So put yourself out there. Show us what you see.

If it's honest, you're likely to be uncomfortable. It's scary thinking others might turn away from or simply ignore your best truth.

You can't let that stop you.

Your job is to simply show the world what you see.

Some creations will be crafted better than others. That's just the nature of creating. Some of my blogs create a firestorm of conversation and excitement. Yet others cost me subscribers and barely register a hiccup in the ever-flowing data stream. That's the risk I'm willing to take in service to sharing what I see.

I can assure you, though, if what you're creating is at the edge of your truth, it might be scary, but you'll definitely serve, inspire, ignite, and delight many of those who are walking close to the edge of theirs.

The need for your voice is growing ever more urgent. If we're going to evolve humanity to more compelling ways of being, we need people walking close to the edge of their truth.

So ... WHAT DO YOU SEE??



The best ideas happen where Vision meets Reality.

My best ideas come when I first get deeply honest about the gap between what I actually see and what I want to see.

I take in and acknowledge reality, the world I see around and within me at this moment; and then overlay that reality with my dream, my vision, what *I want* to see in the world and within or even for myself.

Here's the trick: rather than indulging in complaining or empty wishful thinking or letting that gap discourage or upset me, I just get really curious instead. I ask empowering questions like:

- *What action, service, offering, etc. could I put inside that gap between reality and my vision that would make that gap even a little bit smaller?
- *What can I easily add to this present moment that would immediately bring my vision closer into being?

I also look at my inner world and ask myself provocative questions like:

- *What stressful, limiting thoughts am I believing that may be preventing me from taking action in support of my vision?
- *Who would I have to be to live the vision I see?

Combining deep honesty and unflinching curiosity inspires creative - and useful - thoughts about what I can do to visibly move reality in the direction of my vision.

The best innovators and creators are masters at dancing on that sharp edge between reality and vision.

Steve Jobs was infamous for his “reality-warping” tactics, the often bizarre Jedi mind tricks he would wield towards people in an attempt to get them to do things they thought completely disconnected from current reality. Of course, Steve built Apple Computers, but he only did so by being fully aware of reality before attempting to warp it.

If you’re disconnected from reality, whether you’re lying to yourself or just delusional about what’s actually going on around and within you, then your dreams and visions have nowhere solid to ground. Your head will be stuck in the clouds and your feet, dangling high above the earth and moving frantically about, will essentially get you nowhere.

On the other hand, if you have no vision, or if you let the gap between your vision and the reality you see frustrate, upset, or otherwise deter you rather than get you profoundly curious ... well, then you’re just stuck with “reality”.

What exciting possibilities do you see where reality meets your vision?



Why I’m giving Up Women for 30 days.

I started a 30-day “woman fast” 7 days ago. That means: no dates, no sex, no actual flirting, no making out, no strategic loitering in the yogurt aisle or after yoga class, no exchanging phone numbers, no holding hands, no indulgent hugs, and *especially* no accepting a woman’s invitation to follow her into her tent to “have a few beers” ok, so I fell off the wagon Saturday night at a little hippie festival in Ojai and followed a lovely woman into her tent to share a few beers. No, we didn’t have sex, but I definitely went where I swore 7 days prior I would absolutely not for 30 days go!!

So, gotta reset the clock. I’m committed to 30 days.

Why?

Because I'm single, and I so profoundly crave being wanted, seduced, appreciated, touched, loved, just simply SEEN by women I'm attracted to that I expend so much energy in my daily life seeking it out.

Even if days or weeks go by without a satisfying interaction, just the very intense longing for it still has me frittering away precious energy most days. For example, I'll easily spend an extra 90 seconds in the produce section fumbling with weird vegetables I'd have no idea what to do with in the hopes that attractive woman browsing bananas might notice me but notice me and do what? Tell me how to cook a Squash? Ask if the Okra's ripe? Smile all friendly-like and thus clear the way for a long life together?

So that's 90 seconds minimum at the grocery store. Tack on another 5 minutes for the additional leg exercises I do at the gym after pretty little pink "juicy" pants shows up at the thigh squeezer next to me. At least my legs get stronger. And of course, I can't forget the incessant looking about and radar tracking head-swerve I do throughout the day whenever a potentially attractive woman traverses my air space. That's got to account for ... well, it's all just way too much time to account for in a day.

I'm ridiculous. And exhausted.

It's as if attractive women (attractive to me) have a powerful gravity-beam sweeping out in all directions that effortlessly seduces me into their alluring orbit.

Well, I want my life back!

Now, I've always been loyal in relationships. I've never cheated on a girlfriend. Once, when I thought I was at risk of doing so, I actually told my girlfriend first before anything happened, which actually dissipated the energy.

So please don't interpret this as the mere raving confessional of an undersexed horn-dog.

It's just that I've been mostly single for the last three years, and since my last serious relationship I haven't been able to really connect with a woman in that magical way I genuinely long for. I've dated a lot, but what I've really mostly done is follow women into conversations and relationships that I

knew in my heart would not go far. In fact, I've consciously watched myself, from a very first encounter, set us both up for that inevitable and hurtful moment of disappointment.

Over and over I've been that movie character under a devilish magic spell. Fully aware and disagreeing of what I see myself doing, the spell compels me to raise my arm, aim the gun at my own head, and pull the trigger with my own finger, despite my wild protests.

What is it in me that so craves the attentions of a woman?

Surely, it's perfectly natural and not something I should be either ashamed or even attempt to be rid of. I'm a heterosexual man! Of course I should want women to want me. That's the only way humanity can survive!

I think what I fear most is that, in my haste to receive the attentions of most any attractive woman, I'm not being patient enough for the attentions of the *right* attractive woman ... the right one for me.

I've probably spent a lot of time in relationships because the woman chose me, versus relationships where I authentically chose her, too.

I want to break this pattern in me, but there's one crazy belief I'm butting up against as I attempt it:

"My worth as a man as defined by a woman's attention: No woman = No worth."

I know it's insane. But that thought has haunted my brain synapses for much of my adult life.

So the question is, can I make the conscious decision to walk away from an attractive woman who would offer me her attention and affection, confident in the knowing that she does not define my value as a man, or even as a human being?

Addicted to Hope?

I also sometimes wonder if I'm actually addicted to the very experience of hope, itself, that today I might meet the long-legged, bright-eyed, vast-

hearted woman of my lifelong dreams. Very few days have gone by over the years that I did not harbor some heated desire that today would be that day. What if she shows up during these 30 days, excited to cook me Okra, but instead our paths don't cross because I bypass fresh produce?

Could I be addicted to hope?

Can I give up indulging in this intoxicating fantasy of anticipation for 30 days?

Perhaps I'll discover that by surrendering all hope for 30 days. I gave up sugar for 30 days in February - not even a blueberry - and that experience transformed my relationship to sugar. Perhaps I can do it with women, too.

There are so many amazing women in this world, but I genuinely just want one by my side. I can explore the entire universe within the embrace of just one woman's arms.

I have a male friend who fasted from women for 2 years! The thought of that just makes my chest hurt. I've gone thirty days, sixty, even ninety days and more in my adult life without the affections or attentions of a woman. But life imposed those droughts on me. This is the first time I'm doing it by choice, and in the midst of LA where delicious women literally run rampant. But so much of my identity as a man seems dependent upon the charms of a woman ... and I want my power back.

I do believe the woman I'm truly waiting for will show up when she's ready - or rather, when I am. I also realize the way I've been going about things for 20 years, well, although it's certainly taught me a lot, it's also brought me to being 39 and single.

Which ain't so bad. Actually, even in just these last 8 days, the clarity and strength I'm already experiencing has empowered me to rededicate myself to all the exciting work projects before me.

I've got a book to finish! Mindfulness courses to teach! A Deva Premal concert and Military Veterans events to produce! I've got lots of blogs to write and speaking engagements to rock! There's basketball to be played and coaching clients to be served! ... and I've got brief trips to the grocery store

to make that don't need me lolligagging about because some long pair of deliciously smooth legs is strolling all sexy-like down Aisle 8!

Please wish me well on this journey ... and I would really appreciate in the comments below your insight, feedback, and suggestions on how to move powerfully through this little adventure I'm setting myself upon!



My Woman Fast - Day 14 - Ashamed of My Sexuality.

I've been ashamed of my sexuality my entire life. Not the "*flog-myself-with-a-razor-laced-whip*" kind of ashamed, but merely the "*do-NOT-let-'em-know-you're-horny*" kind of ashamed ... as if being sexually attracted to another person is something I should be embarrassed about. How did this happen?? ... and I'm straight!

It's no wonder our society is so conflicted about homo-sexuality; clearly we don't even have a healthy relationship to our hetero-sexuality.

I'm a deeply, deeply spiritual man ... and I want to fuck women! Yes, I used the word "fuck". I love making love, but I really want to say here that I also LOVE fucking!

Now, I'm not interested in exploring the differences between love making and fucking; that isn't relevant here.

The essential point is that I have a strong sex-drive and I don't want to walk around ashamed of it anymore. I'm all for monogamy, and I actually look forward to experiencing it over many years someday. But I'm exhausted from carrying around this weird shame that I commonly have sexual desires for women whose paths I cross. That doesn't mean I want to always act on it; it simply means I want to stop pretending it isn't so.

Now, I confess I'm a bit afraid to write this blog, thinking that you, the reader, probably have a healthy relationship with your sexuality and will

therefore have no idea what I'm talking about. You'll just finally decide, once and for all, that this guy needs professional help.

But ... *do you* have a healthy, open relationship with your own sexuality?

You might! It's not unheard of!

I simply notice that, collectively, we live in persistent denial about this massive energy coursing strong through our bodies. But like a simmering volcano buried beneath an ice cap, our repressed sexual heat leaks out everywhere: seductive sexual advertising, immense amounts of pornography, sexualized violence in movies, high rates of infidelity and secret affairs, homophobic homosexuals, etc.

The real sexual revolution simply has not happened yet. If it had, we'd be comfortable talking about our sexuality. Nothing I have said in this blog would surprise you. But I bet, when I wrote "I like to fuck" ... part of you just cringed.



My Woman Fast - Day 16 - What I'm Discovering.

Caution: This post contains some graphic content and passionate language. I'm on a complete "woman fast". I'm rather aroused ... but you're still safe with me. Promise ... especially if you made it through Fifty Shades of Grey.

I'm now 16 days into my 30-day woman fast (as the original blog explains, **it's not just about sex**. I'm not enough "player" that 30 days would even be meaningful if it were about sex. This is really an exploration into my identity as a man and the deeper truths that may otherwise lay hidden beneath my incessant longing for a woman's attention).

I know 30 days doesn't seem like much, but at the beginning I assure you it felt like an eternity! **On Day 7, I fell off the wagon and, well, basically landed on top of a very lovely woman.** Although nothing got stuck anywhere it wasn't supposed to get stuck under the rules of my fast, my supportive

brothers, Fabian Alsultany and “man-coach” Zat Baraka, held me accountable and insisted I reset the clock ... so I did. I’ve been back on the wagon for 16 days.

Here’s some of what’s been arising for me, so to speak

1) It’s actually AWESOME walking around completely horny, wanting to fuck most every sexy woman I see, and not actually having to do anything about it.

It’s a thrilling freedom that almost feels foreign. Curiously, I’m feeling even more connected to my masculine core. That exhausting anxiety that typically accompanies my sexual fire, insisting I do something about it ... is essentially gone. My sex-drive is strong! But the anxiety is gone! At the gym today, I was able to just luxuriate in this deliciously deep appreciation for all these beautiful, sexy women, their deliciously undulating shapes and varying textures, without feeling the need to claim one as my own ... and since I’ve never before successfully claimed one as my own, ridding myself of that ridiculous task burden was a MAJOR relief to my whole fucking soul!

I just feel more like a solid man, thrilling in the fiery sexual rhythms rushing through every fibrous tissue in my awakened body, unconcerned whether I or anyone else does anything to indulge their lusty thirst. It’s kinda like walking around with a really scrumptious full-body itch that I don’t need anyone to scratch. It’s quite DELICIOUS.

2) I’ve been ashamed of having a strong sex-drive for most of my life.

I’ve always had a very healthy sex-drive, and I’ve been rather ashamed of it for most of my life. Somehow I learned early in life that my sexual feelings were mostly inappropriate. Maybe it was being shamed for looking at nudie mags as a kid, or maybe some authority ordered me with disgust in their voice to stop playing with my own penis. It also could have just been witnessing how girls repeatedly seemed to be repulsed by my innocent playful advances.

I think my lifelong shame is also indicative of a common “spirituality belief” that sex is a “low-vibe” expression of my being, and therefore not to be

much entertained. Which itself is partly a New-Age hangover from our puritan Christian roots ... as witnessed by the fact that my culture's mainstream entertainment routinely shows human heads exploding but cannot show the head of a penis rubbing up against a wet vagina ... as if THAT'S the perversion.

It's no wonder I experience shame that I want to thoroughly and routinely enjoy a woman's entire body.

This fast has really allowed me to enjoy my sexuality without the shame that can accompany it when I want desperately to openly confess it (in whatever way that might be respectfully done), but feel doing so would be socially unacceptable.

I don't want anymore to be ashamed, in any way.

I'm a deeply spiritual man. AND I love to fuck. I also REALLY love grabbing a woman's round ass tight with my hands and burying my face deep between her legs. I want to feel her wet vagina wrap itself around my hungry mouth as my soft, short beard gently tickles over the inside of her rich, buttery thighs. look, I'm on a woman fast. I'm horny as hell. I could probably write this Fifty Shades shit all day!!

The essential point is: IT IS RIDICULOUS TO BE ASHAMED OF OUR AUTHENTIC SEXUALITY.

I'm all for the sacred container of monogamy and fully intend to experience the adventure of my lifetime by someday committing to one life partner. I'll still probably desire other women when I'm in relationship with her. I just won't act on it, AND I won't feel ashamed of those feelings. This fast is really deepening my access to both of those superpowers.

3) I really miss the experience of "family".

I'm 39. I've already lived a wildly adventurous life. I live happily in California, and I do not intend to ever move back to the East Coast, where most of my family still lives. I'm lucky to already know so many amazing people here in California. But I also realize I have a bad residual habit from all my years of moving about and living in so many places around the planet:

I don't nurture the majority of my relationships into genuine, long-term friendships. I can go deep with most anyone, and do so easily and quickly, but I don't nurture that long-term with most people.

I was riding my bicycle alone last Saturday morning in Venice Beach. It was a sunny, beautiful July beach day. Countless people from everywhere strolling about, playing volleyball on the sand and crowding the eclectic merchant promenade. As I was passing long caravans of families and friends riding their own bicycles, I started to realize that ... I'm lonely.

I knew that I wouldn't comfort my loneliness with a woman's attention, and my closest friends were all at festivals I chose not to attend. I felt this deep and unfamiliar desire to just run home to mom's place for some dinner and rolling around time with her 4 amazing Bernese Mountain Dogs. I wanted to crack ridiculous jokes with my step-father and just kind of hang out in that familiar loving space. But they live in Maryland, some 3000 miles away. So I couldn't escape there. I had to face my loneliness.

As I reflected further on the diverse delightful people I already know locally, I realized that I'm lonely entirely by choice. I'm simply not inviting in those who would be my family if I only chose to create that experience with them.

In the moment that thought really hit me, my chest ached, but I immediately felt hopeful. I turned my bicycle around and headed back to my apartment. I made calls along the way and ultimately created an amazing weekend with my new, chosen and growing California family.

I realize I've partly been filling this "family" void with the affections of women. There's nothing wrong with me looking for the affections of a woman. After all, the survival of our species depends on my success! I'm simply working on clearing out the persistent anxiety and occasional desperation that accompanies the search.

I don't need a woman to scratch my family itch. The right one will come along whenever she does, and there's little I can do about her timing. Until then, I'm actually excited to cultivate my new chosen family. That's actually a big breakthrough for me.

4) My dreams have been really sexual ... and *reeeeally* yummy.

Yes, I'm having juicy ... juuuuuicy ... dream sex. No, I'm not resetting the clock. They're not lucid dreams, so I don't feel entirely responsible for their *fantastic* content.



My Woman Fast - Day 25 - BREAKING PATTERNS.

I went dancing a few days ago and quickly found myself surrounded by painfully hot hot hot ladies dressed in ... let's say, *enterprising* ways ... specifically designed to arrest my attention like it was a fugitive from the law. Then today, I ate lunch with 3 beautiful, amazing women. Did I mention I'm on a 30-day "Woman Fast"?

One of my lovely lunch mates, after learning that I recently fasted from sugar for 30 days, suggested I must enjoy fasting.

Truth is, I don't like fasting. Not at all.

I do, however, love breaking unhealthy patterns, also known as addictions. Fasting is a powerful way to break patterns. In 12-step programs, it's the only way. Of course, I don't want to rid my life of seductive female interactions forever ... haaayyyell no!!

No, this 30-day "woman fast" is about breaking various behavior patterns I have of interacting with women from a place of lack and need. (yo cynics: it's not just about sex!)

I have spent too much time engaging attractive women with the primary intention of filling some apparent, aching void inside me. That's an addictive behavior I am finally exhausted by and ready to transform. Thus, the 30-day fast.

People ask me what I'm going to do on Day 31. The joke is usually something like, "Orgy at my house!! ... Who's coming? I know I am!"

But honestly, on Day 31 of my sugar fast, I did NOT run to Dunkin' Donuts and shove handfuls of powdery sweet donuts into my body. Absolutely not. Since that fast, I have a much healthier relationship with sugar. I still eat occasional chocolate chip cookies, but I don't buy them as often as I used to. I no longer put honey in my teas. I don't eat desserts everyday anymore. Sugar is now maybe 1% of my diet instead of the 20% it probably was before I broke that pattern with fasting.

I expect new patterns to emerge after this fast, as well.

I am fortunate to have a lot of amazing lady friends, and some of them straight-up, drop-dead goooooorgeous. I was silently laughing at myself today, sitting beside these 3 lovely ladies, as I thought, "*Man, do I know how to woman-fast!!!*"

The thing is, I thoroughly enjoy people. I love laughter. I love being playful. I love making jokes and teasing and provoking for the sake of simply enjoying every moment. I'm allowing myself to do those things during this time.

I am fortunate to have a lot of amazing lady friends, and some of them straight-up, drop-dead goooooorgeous. I was silently laughing at myself today, sitting beside these 3 lovely ladies, as I thought, "*Man, do I know how to woman-fast!!!*"

I love to be playful. I love making jokes and teasing and provoking for the sake of thoroughly enjoying life. I'm allowing myself to do those things during this time.

Turning myself into a cold, unfeeling robot who refuses hugs and ignores women altogether for 30 days just strikes me as stupid. Anyway, I have 3 sisters and 2 mothers. I'm not going to pretend women don't exist for a month.

I know where my boundaries are. I know when I'm about to linger a moment too long in the produce section or seductively eye a woman across a crowded room, desiring to draw her in. I know when I'm foraging for a woman's flattery to ease my phantom pains. Life subtly tighten up on me, and the moment becomes lightly scented with a pungent hint of desperation.

This fast is about progress, not perfection.

It's about breaking a pattern.

On Day 31, there'll almost certainly be no orgy (I'm not really an "orgy-guy" anyway). I expect there will just be me, connected deeper to the power of choice; knowing I can linger if I want to, but feeling just as comfortable to head to the register and take my groceries home.

And you know what? ... If I ever do choose to linger a bit longer in the produce section with that comfort coursing through my body, I bet I'll actually say something meaningful to her for once. ... THAT would be breaking a pattern!!



My Woman Fast - Day 30 - Completion.

I did it. It's done.

"What did I do?" you ask.

Why, I completed a 30-day woman fast, of course. Haven't you been reading?

"What in Eve's name does that even mean?" you respond.

Ahhhh, a fair and cleverly articulated question.

As I've assured you before - and perhaps this lady doth protest too much - it wasn't just about sex. Although I confess, the lizard-brain part of me wishes I WAS having so much sex that a 30-day breather would be refreshing. But I routinely go well over 30 days without sex. Let's just say I'm moooooore ... Michael Cera ... than Michael Bublé.

Actually, these 30 days were simply a mindful practice, more than anything else. Previously, in the presence of women I felt attracted to, I had been seeing myself routinely act from an icky place of need and lack, hoping their attentions and affections might soothe an aching loneliness that sometimes

creeps through me like a dank, foreboding chill. But rather than any soothing goin' on, I only felt emptier.

So I wanted to spend time getting deeply aware of all that arises in my thoughts and in my body in the presence of women ... without indulging in any actions, at all.

I just wanted a clean break from trying to get any attention from women. As I wrote in my first blog, I was done feeling ridiculous and exhausted from tying my worth as a man to the validation of a woman.

Now, mind you, I didn't design these 30 days to go all crazy fascist on myself. I have 3 sisters and 2 mothers and a dazzling array of beautiful, brilliant, deliciously feminine friends. I didn't even attempt to cut off my interactions or emotional connections with anyone. That just struck me as harsh and overly-indulgent.

The ego can hijack any worthy project for its own fascist agenda.

"Just because a man has an erection doesn't mean he has to do anything with it."

~ Byron Katie ~

This time was about noticing where every one of my erections was coming from ... so to speak. It was about not doing anything with those erections - not even making them go away. Just noticing them. Sometimes literally ... "Oh! hey there! ... We're supposed to be sleeping!! What's up?"

I did reset the 30-day clock once, 7 days in, because I leapt so far over the boundaries that I knew I was in complete violation of my pledge.

Otherwise, I was quite willing to shimmy myself right up to the feet of enchanting temptation, look her deeply in the eyes, and then just breathe, softly, calmly, and witness the wild world inside me stir and moan and ache with all variety of impassioned desire.

At times I felt deeply the hungry loin-clothed hunter within me, arrowed spear raised and cocked back tight in his muscly grip, trembling and agonized, salivating and sweaty, poised ready to pierce the succulent prey lurking innocently in the cross-hairs of my tunnel-vision sight.

But I also felt the scared, innocent little boy, the one afraid of being left all alone in this giant universe, who only wants someone to love and hold him.

I felt everything.

During Week 1, I was just kinda nervous and uncertain. I had to live this week twice. During Week 2, I felt a little more confident as I started to deepen in my commitment to the experience. During Week 3, I was as sexually exuberant and loin-happy as a 6-month old puppy. You may recall my “50 Shades of Bryan” blog post from that week or my hilarious facebook rants about how “I want to fuck every hot chick I see and it feels great that I don't have to do anything about it.” During week 4, I was in the groove. I started feeling really powerful and calm, standing strong in my world, not allowing myself to be pulled this way and that by petty, uneasy urges. The end was near and I knew I'd make it. Curiously, I met an interesting woman that week, but there was no way I was going to reset the clock.

Anyway, this was about *progress* on the journey, not perfection.

I still had fun, even with attractive women. I just didn't cross any sexual or needy attention boundaries. I held the essential line for 30 days.

I do not encourage anyone to ever deny themselves of experiencing their genuine feelings, of joy or laughter, even sensual pleasure. I simply think it critical to notice more deeply where we try to fill our experience of painful emptiness with just any ol' content. To notice where we use things outside ourselves to distract from loneliness, despair, confusion, and sadness.

If we don't get awareness around this when we're alone, then we'll only burden our future lovers with the frustrating - and impossible - job of filling us up. That never turns out well.

Notice, how often do you show up and give the world your fullness, instead of taking for your emptiness?

How often do you simply offer the world your joy, instead of blaming it for your despair?

How often do you share your abundance with others, rather than demanding they address your lack?

Do you think how you show up - whether from fullness or emptiness, joy or despair, abundance or lack - makes a difference in your everyday experience?

Abso-frickin-lutely!!! You know it does!

When we act from our abundance, our already complete-ness, we make rich, nurturing, kind decisions for ourselves and thus everyone around us. When we show up in fear, believing in lack or unworthiness, we make bizarre decisions that ironically push what we truly want, farther away.

One other interesting thing to note: This fast also proved powerful in separating out my “99% attractions” from my “1% attractions”. In other words ... Discernment. With a Capital “D”.

Lack of Discernment - checking in with my inner knowing and responding from there - is responsible for essentially ALL of my wild misadventures. Wouldn't trade 'em for anything, but Discernment is a wondrous thing.

I'm very aware that I experience no internal drive to build meaningful romantic, intimate relationships with over 99% of the women whose femininity attracts me. I would say that less than 1% of my attractions make it through even the first filter of possibility. Perhaps I'm too picky, I don't know, but that's how it occurs for me.

When I'm distracted by the 99% - which, when not practicing discernment, I am - how likely do you think I am to even notice the 1%? Or that they will even notice me?

These 30 days were emotional at times. I made peace with the thoughts in my brain that insist I could be alone for the rest of my life; that my greatest days and relationships are behind me, and that I'm not likely to ever have a truly magical relationship with a woman. These thoughts are crazy, but they occur regularly in my head.

Rather than fight them, respond to them, or simply let them distract me, I can just notice them and keep going on about my day. It's pretty awesome, actually.

Anyway, it's Day 31. I don't actually feel any different from Day 30. I do feel very different from Day 1. Confident. Peaceful. Focused. Ready to make my way in the world. Ready to flirt and play with a woman when it arises effortlessly to do so, and to easily move on when it doesn't.

It's really that simple.

For all my intricate reflections and boundary games and self-inquiry, it comes down to the timeless wisdom captured so succinctly by that classic children's TV program they actually showed in public schools back in the 70s and 80s:

"I just want to be free ... to be me."



Sex, Scandals, and Living the Truth.

So many of us haven't been confessing our socially-awkward truths for a long time, around a lot of things, but especially around sexuality. Not to the people around us, and often not even to ourselves. We're persistently denying deeply-stirring desires, hiding fears and insecurities, and constantly fabricating convenient stories to maintain a safe status quo. Maybe it's your sexuality you're consistently repressing in some way. Maybe it's a job or relationship in which you're NOT honoring your deeper longings, instead rationalizing to yourself that the tight, constricted feelings you wake up to everyday are a necessary trade off for the security and comfort you think you have.

In so doing, we completely suppress the ancient, natural rhythms within that will ultimately not be denied and might even deliver us into much more fulfilling lives.

I'm not advocating for sexually promiscuity or that you simply leave an unsatisfying relationship. I'm just suggesting that we get real with who we are in these bodies.

You think Anthony Weiner and Elliot Spitzer - and millions of others - wouldn't appreciate being able to confess their passions openly AND respectfully? And still serve their communities in countless ways without their sexuality being an issue? Our politicians routinely invest in and legislate

for companies that profit from war, rape environments, harm our food supply, and pillage third-world countries ... yet we cut off their heads only when we catch them with their pants down? ... so to speak.

Life only blows up in our faces because we're so disconnected from our authentic truths.

We create huge gaps between our illusions and the truth. We fill these gaps with complete crap - dreary jobs, unsatisfying relationships, addictions, reality TV - that doesn't serve our highest good and only draws us further away from our authentic truth. When the truth finally does emerge, that gap suddenly slams shut with an explosive force like a psychological atom bomb that pulverizes false mental worlds into charred wreckage strewn wild with anger, disappointment, resentment, even rage.

I've been going through an intense gap collapse on this 30-day woman fast, particularly noticing how much my internal shame works to deny my authentic sexuality.

If you're with me on Facebook, you may have noticed me screaming from my status rooftop how deeply I enjoy making love in all its forms, from physical to spiritual. I've been asking a larger world to witness my confession - and renunciation - of some long-held crazy beliefs that there's something perverse and wrong about me, just because I have a strong sex-drive.

If I hadn't been hiding this truth in all the ways I do - mostly pretending I'm NOT attracted to or aroused by women when I genuinely am - then I wouldn't have to shout this from any rooftop. I also would have never stayed in a relationship for 4 years with a woman who enthusiastically reinforced my shame around these natural rhythms in my body.

Telling the truth about who we are is something we must do every day if we want to live an authentic life. It's not something we do once and then go back to pretending everything fits again in our cute little boxes. The longer we wait to confess the truth, the bigger that gap gets, and the more bullshit we fabricate to fill that gap ... and the bigger goes that inevitable BOOM!

I know this is a tricky subject, telling the truth. That's why I'm writing a book about it. *Tell The Truth, Let The Peace Fall Where It May* (publish date?) is a courageous exploration into what living our truth can look like.

The Indian sage Krishnamurti wrote, “it is no measure of health to be well adjusted to a profoundly sick society.”

If we’re going to reclaim our genuine well-being, we need to start telling the truth about who we really are every day, and indeed, let the peace fall where it may.

What deeper truth(s) are you denying? What is that likely costing you?



What Truth is Your Art Aching to Express?

Throughout history, we passionately admire the audacious artists who express what we may literally be dying to say but can’t say, don’t know how to say, or didn’t even know we *wanted* to say! Art is celebrated precisely because it transcends the rational mind. Truly great art reconnects us viscerally to the embodied wisdom that lies beyond our normal perception.

Art hijacks our timid caterpillar thoughts and sends us soaring unconstrained into the mysterious realms of wild, untamed truth.

In oppressive cultures where free-thinking is not only discouraged but punished, art still finds a way to out the truth with colorful whispers and scrambled symbols. Authentic artists, unmoved by society’s rules and traditions, are subversive conduits by which the truths that society denies are brazenly brought into the light. They are clear crystalline prisms daring enough to stare straight into the sun, grab with bare hands sizzling light beams of undiluted truth, and through their very being, fracture that raw light into infinite patterns of breathing rainbow that infiltrate the cold, calculating world of ego mind with disruptive explosions of spontaneous color and exotic form.

Each of us has such a seditious artist within. Some have locked her deep inside a tiny, quiet, dormant ventricle in their barely breathing hearts, her limbs chained together and her mouth taped shut. Nonetheless, there she

waits, an unbreakable revolutionary ready right now to reveal the feral truths that might upend the precious false beliefs the rest of the world takes for granted.

As the war for truth rages in the world outside us, between rebellious artist and cultural watchdog, so it also rages within us. We may have her gagged and bound, but the energy we spend keeping her so, slowly drains us of our life force.



Design Your Life.

“Action without Vision is ignorance; Vision without Action is impotence.”*

The idea of setting goals and scheduling my life ... well, it bores me. However, I’ve recently started “*designing my life*” ... thanks to an insight my own personal life coach helped me discover, and I’m so inspired that I want to share it with you.

Planning and goal-setting are absolutely essential if you’ve got big visions you want to manifest in this lifetime. But again, at least for me ... it’s totally uninspiring. And so generally what I’d do is work my tail off and get to the end of an average day and not have a sense of what I really accomplished. This can be long-term demoralizing because most of what I do only has long-term pay-offs. If I don’t feel I’m using each day wisely, it’s very easy to despair.

Now I’ve started living my *life by design* ... which just writing those words gets me all perky and giddy inside!

Instead of goals, I create wins.

Instead of planning my days, I design them.

I have 6-month wins, monthly wins, and daily wins. I like the word “wins” because it makes me feel like I’m winning my life ... and I do believe I’m just

constantly playing games in life ... career? a game I can win. relationships? games I can win ... which doesn't mean someone else loses; it just means I can make "winning" mean I create awesome experiences for myself and companions.

I don't speculate more than 6 months out for a few reasons. One, how the hell can I really know? Two, it takes the adventure out of living. Three, my main 6-month wins are such game-changers that massive unpredictability happens once I achieve them. My 6-month wins are visions I have of the life I want to step into ... a published author, thriving life breakthrough coach and planet-friendly entrepreneur.

Now, for my daily wins, I wake up and sit in silence for 5 minutes before surveying all my projects. I decide on 2-4 wins that, if I accomplished them today, would make me feel awesome and move forward my projects in meaningful ways. I never choose more than 4, because 4 meaningful wins in a day is already excellent. And my wins are meaningful. They aren't petty little things like ... making my bed. No, they're WINS! like edit 2 chapters of my book, write and publish a blog, do a yoga class.

On days when I don't design my day – for it's a muscle I'm still building – I still work a lot, but I'll probably get to the end of the day without a tangible sense of accomplishment. And without that, I live a little bit frustrated, by default, like I'm losing the game. I don't even fully relax in the evening because ... well, what the hell did I really do today and surely there's so much I didn't get done and I should keep working!!!

However, at the end of the day, when I can look up at my wipe board (I use 3 for my life designing) and check off 2-4 WINS! that I moved through during the day, I can move into my evening with deep satisfaction knowing that I indeed spent the day well. That's priceless ... and I relax much easier in the evening.

This is a really powerful tool for the mind that has big visions about what it wants to accomplish.

Even if you just want to enjoy each day fully, with no big vision for where it's all leading, this can be a powerful way to ensure you take care of your health, exercise, and take simple actions that you know would simply make you feel great every day.

Just 2 to 4 wins a day. That's all it takes!!

Try it out!

Right now ... give yourself just 2 wins for today that, if you did them, would make you feel awesome tonight.

What do you think this would do for you if you did it daily??

* unknown by me who said this originally. I heard it from author Marianne Williamson.



Can men be friends with women they're sexually attracted to?

I'm a Man. I have lived this question thoroughly.

The short answer is simply, Yes.

Yes, Mature Men can be legitimate, authentic friends with the women they're sexually attracted to. We can work respectfully alongside them, hang out with them, have lunch with them, talk sincere and impartial with them about their boyfriends and husbands and do pretty much anything else we'd do with any other friend.

Mature Men can experience sexual attraction and still honor healthy boundaries with women. Mature Men can do this.

Mature. Men.

On the other hand ...

Adolescent boys – and men perpetually stuck in adolescence – will have difficulty being honest friends with the women they're attracted to.

To be clear, this blog isn't about a man's ability to shift from an intimate relationship to a friendly one with a woman. That's called a breakup and deserves different consideration.

The question I'm asking is, *Can men be authentic friends with women they want to sleep with but haven't and won't because those women don't seem interested in sleeping with them?*

(note: I say "*don't seem interested*" because I'm pretty sure men are biologically programmed to never give up hope, no matter what a woman says or does.)

This blog is about men who, like adolescents new to the sexual experience, haven't yet learned how to move their sexual energy in healthy ways when among attractive women; men at the mercy of attraction which complicates interactions.

Unfortunately, so many adult males are stuck in a perpetual adolescence. Some haven't even matured *that* far. Anyone see similarities between toddlers and US Congressmen? Of course many grown men have learned how to be respectful human beings, as well as veritable mature men in various aspects of their lives (such as career and fatherhood), but *fewer of us ever really learn how to be mature masculine Men in relationship to feminine Women with whom we experience strong sexual attractions.*

Most men are stuck in perpetual adolescence because our culture feeds us immature ideas about what it means to be a man: real men win at all costs, make all the important rules, make lots of money, sleep with lots of women, have the biggest dick in the room, don't cry or feel emotions or show weakness, etc.

As a result, most adult men are profoundly confused about what it means to be a healthy mature man, whether they admit it or not – and of course most can't admit it because that would be a mature thing to do.

I have been confused for 20 years. And I never even knew it.

That said, here are 4 aspects of *masculine immaturity* that prevent men from being ... honest friends ... with women they're attracted to:

1) Men have not learned how to be with their sexual energy without having to do something about it

Just like adolescent boys, most grown men in our culture don't have a clue how to *simply be* with the powerful masculine sexual energy coursing through our bodies.

So it owns us.

The basic story culture teaches me from birth is that I was born an uncontrollable ravenous shark in a pool filled with tasty guppies. I was then given two strong conflicting directives: (a) eating guppies is a measure of a man's worth, and (b) try not to hurt any guppies.

Then I was left on my own to unravel this dilemma while living inside a sexually charged body ready to pound the bottom out of a boat with every erection that pops up.

Since men can't be vulnerable to work openly through the resulting confusion, we cope with the inner turmoil in countless ways unhealthy ways: we sex it, money it, game it, work it, porn it, drug and alcohol it, TV it, shame it, deny it or anger it into oblivion.

By doing so, we live perpetually disoriented, and sometimes a detriment to ourselves, to the women we genuinely love and also to those we don't.

For most of my life, whenever confronted with intense sexual experiences in my body, I would usually choose the easiest of shame, sex or masturbation as my main options for quickly dealing with it.

No one ever taught me how to wield my sexual energy in intentional, respectful ways; how to direct it constructively. Most men never learn this.

As long as a man is owned by his sexual energy, he remains stuck in sexual adolescence. Unfortunately this kind of man is all too common in our world, which drives attractive, intelligent women on Facebook to post frustrated public denunciations like the recent one my FB friend wrote: *"If a man has a penis, he wants to sleep with you. Period. It doesn't matter how old he is."*

But when a Man matures by learning how to be intentional with his sexual energy and not slave to it, he embodies the essence of what author Byron Katie wrote: *“Just because a man has an erection doesn’t mean he has to do anything with it.”*

Then he can be friends with an attractive woman. If he chooses to.

(Read my short blog *“Breathing Into (Untimely) Sexual Energy”* for a simple practice to begin working with this energy)

2) Men don’t know the difference between authentic love, romantic love and sexual energy

In his book, Intimate Communion, David Deida talks about the three separate elements of the intimate experience: love, romance, and polarity (sexual energy).

Like adolescent teens confused about the rich new experiences happening in their bodies, most men still confuse sexual polarity with romantic love. With such an immature man, you can trace the entire path from lust to love along the contours of a petite woman’s aerodynamic ass.

Those lust-love thoughts tempt me all the time in the presence of attractive women. They often insist I could love the woman attached to those long legs walking by. But I’m pretty sure such thoughts are just mental leakage from my lizard brain. I’ve learned not to trust them.

Having lived many years in a man’s body, I can tell you it is fascinating to have witnessed my own experience of what felt like love for a woman essentially vanish in the afterglow of a powerful orgasm. It’s astonishing – and disturbing – just how quick sex can switch a male mind from the “ocean-deep loving” setting to the “kiddie-pool shallow” one.

Why do you think urgent flash-in-the-pan sex often leads to short-lasting flash-in-the-pan relationships?

When two people don’t give themselves breathing space, time, to discern what’s really happening between them, they can’t easily see that more often than not it’s everyday sexual polarity at play, not genuine romantic love.

While genuine romantic love is fairly elusive, men can experience sexual polarity with different women ... every ... single ... day.

Polarity attraction happens. Constantly. In the grocery store. At the DMV. In our cars. At the bars. On a plane. In a rocket ship ... to the stars.

We're like polarized magnets walking around bumping into each other everywhere. Of course we're going to feel the pull. But that doesn't mean we have to act on it.

Sadly, many immature men intentionally use this polarity-love confusion to manipulate women into sex.

Such immature men help confuse the trust right out of women.

For us to become mature men, we must learn to distinguish this sexual polarity energy from both romantic love and our deeper authentic love. We must stop manipulating women into false romances fueled only by sexual energy. And we must gain some level of mastery around how we ultimately wield that sexual energy.

Otherwise it will own us and continue ruining potentially great friendships.

3) Most men do not fully respect the boundaries set by women, because they do not fully respect women

Adolescent boys and aging toddlers clearly make up most of culture's rules. **So we still don't fully respect most feminine ways of being.** We place high value on immature masculine expressions of competition, rational thinking, control and domination, achievement for achievement's sake, etcetera. We place far less value on the feminine gifts of consensus building, intuition and heart-centered thinking, holistic well-being, beauty for its own sake, emotions and vulnerability.

This bias is so fundamental to our world that I don't even need to offer examples to convince you (think politics, business, military and war spending, money-driven popular entertainment, billionaire sports athletes and broke school teachers, paternalistic religions ... and on and on).

Until we silly men fully honor and understand that feminine wisdom is as essential as masculine wisdom to the healthy functioning of the world, we will not be able to fully respect the boundaries of our hot female friends.

We will continue exploiting weakness in their defenses, whether with subtle manipulation or actual violence.

4) Men don't know how to be authentically vulnerable

Most men don't know how to be with awkward feelings and experiences without having to do something "manly" about them. We believe we are supposed to act on our feelings, even if that means forcibly suppressing or drowning them in addictions. We are compelled to take whatever action will get us most quickly away from our discomfort.

That's why we usually hate it when women cry.

We don't know a middle way.

We do not know how to simply be with awkward truths, nor do we know how to express them without playing for an outcome.

Because so much of our worth is tied to a woman's approval, being vulnerable is particularly difficult in relationship to women.

Our fragile adolescent egos can't risk feminine rejection of our authentic inner worlds. So we'll be vulnerable and tell women how we feel, but we'll do our best to control the scenario so that we either get what we want in the end or keep them far enough away that they can't possibly reject us. Which is how adolescent boys behave.

It's hard to create genuine friendships without being genuinely vulnerable. Even with other men.

Image a world where Men ...

Imagine a world where Men could differentiate between sexual energy, romance and pure love; and where he could acknowledge this openly,

without shame, to the women in his world who would appreciate his honesty.

Imagine a world where Men could breathe into their sexual energy and simply enjoy their own erections without always having to do something with them.

Imagine a world where Men fully respected Women and the wisdom they offer.

Imagine a world where Men knew how to be vulnerable with their deepest truths, their joys *and* their sorrows, and could easily share them with women (and men) without manipulating for an outcome in the sharing.

Wouldn't the Men in such a world make for incredible masculine friends to women? ... not to mention spine-tingling intimate partners, too.



6 Reasons Why Men Must Give Up Pornography.

In my boyhood teenage days of yore, using pornography required patience, even imagination.

One of my early adventures with porn occurred on weekday afternoons when I got home from middle school. Before anyone else arrived, I would sneak into my parents' bedroom closet with a small foot stool. I have no idea how I first found it, but resting atop the center ceiling panel, just inches from my horny little brain, was my step-father's erotic treasure trove of betamax video tapes with titles like "The Oriental Babysitter" and "Taxi Girls." I'd pop one into the black betamax box, hit play, and kick back on the lounge as sounds and images of ecstasy flooded my lusty synapses while I enjoyed myself a dozen or so times (oh, to be a teenager again).

A few years later, during high school, my tastes grew more sophisticated when mom started getting Victoria Secret catalogs in the mail. Although I

kinda already knew what the big secret was, these glossy mags made my imagination work harder at unlocking it each time, and I delighted in that. But a new catalog once every few weeks was far too infrequent for my insatiable teenage libido, and I could barely wait for the spring issues when lithe Victorias would return to wearing sexy sundresses and seductive short skirts.

Those days of porn patience and teasing my imagination are gone.

At this very moment, I – and most every other man in Western Civilization – have in my hands a little device loaded with the entire known universe of pornographic material ready to stir my lust and blow my loins wide open. I never have to wait till Spring again.

“Enough is Enough” and “CovenantEyes,” two internet safety organizations, offer these sobering statistics:

- Every second, 28,258 Internet users are viewing pornography.
- American children begin viewing pornography at an average age of 11.
- About 67% of young men and 49% of young women believe that viewing pornography is acceptable.
- The pornography industry is a \$97 billion industry worldwide.
- Men are 543% *more* likely to look at porn than women.
- More than 1 in 5 searches are for pornography on mobile devices.

I also learned in my research on this topic that “Time Warner, CBS, Verizon, Comcast, and other telecommunication and media corporations earn over \$1 billion a year from pornography through services like video on demand.” (<http://voices.yahoo.com/the-relationship-between-pornography-human-trafficking-6612026.html>)

“If you have the Internet, you have pornography in your home.”

— Jill Manning, Ph.D., Marriage and Family Therapist

Porn is ubiquitous. You might be surprised who uses online porn.

According to the National Catholic Registry, even the priesthood is currently subject to an epidemic of porn use by future priests (which may not be surprising, actually). I have amazing male friends, attractive and dynamic, who’ve spent countless hours over many years caught in the sticky

pornographic web. I have also used internet porn in the last few years. More than I care to admit, though I'm admitting it here.

As a single man for the last 4 years, great sexual encounters with women have been a rare luxury. My iPhone, on the other hand, is all too willing to dance for me, undress for me, tease me, lick me, suck me, screw me and all around indulge me, whatever I want, any time I want.

I do not generally have an addictive personality, yet I have at times gone weeks using internet pornography every night to quickly arouse and then satiate myself. There were times I seemed to need it just to fall asleep.

I would watch up to an hour or more in bed before exhausting myself enough to fall asleep, which ironically carved into an already sleep-deprived entrepreneurial lifestyle. At one point using porn actually gave me repetitive stress injury, messing up my otherwise formidable basketball game for a few weeks. I experienced other disconcerting side-effects of porn, too, some of which I'll detail below.

There's nothing wrong with masturbation. But modern pornography can be a serious detriment to everyone, not just to men, but to the women they love, too.

Here's 6 reasons why men must give up consistent use of pornography for personal stimulation:

1) Porn ruins our erections with actual women.

After I had been using porn moderately for about a year, I began to notice that I couldn't sustain erections with women as long as I once could. I was horny as ever, but without the constantly changing visual erotic stimulation that watching video after video offered, one woman's body couldn't hold my erotic focus as effectively as it used to. To my frustrated surprise, real sex had become somewhat under-stimulating. Tragic. Since I gave up porn, even morning wood has made its return like an exotic tree rescued from the brink of extinction. Here's a great article with more information about this for men: <http://yourbrainonporn.com/how-long-will-it-take>

2) Porn tunes our bodies to premature ejaculation.

I never had a problem with quick climax before I consistently used porn. I could always match, if not outlast, my female sexual partners, with or without a condom, with solid erections.

With porn, I could watch a short video and within minutes have myself rocketing towards climax. But I'd stop myself before I went too far, because I always wanted to see what different erotic adventure awaited me in the next video, just a click away. I would do this for an hour, rapidly rising in mindless bliss with every new short video, stopping myself at the edge each time. Eventually, I'd realize how much time had gone by, so I'd choose the best video I'd seen and let it throw me over the edge.

I was tuning my body to quickly rise and climax. I can immediately stop moving my own hand when I masturbate. A real woman's aroused body doesn't stop moving so fast. It's like trying to slam on the brakes of a speed boat in deep water. I just couldn't often handle her enthusiasm, and I started getting really concerned.

Thankfully, quitting porn has allowed my body's nervous system to retune itself to a less hurried sexual pace and rhythm.

3) It's a cop out from interacting powerfully with actual women.

Most men in our western culture generally do not know how to interact powerfully with women in the everyday world, certainly not as mature healthy masculine men. We routinely fail to proactively step up to women we're attracted to in effective and honorable, respectful ways. So many of us routinely let our silent crushes slip away forever into the dark painful cave of our regrets. Masturbation can take the edge off all the resulting frustration, so much so that we don't then have to do anything useful about it, like learn how to be more powerful in our interactions with actual women.

4) It's such a waste of time.

Watching porn is a stupid use of our precious time on Planet Earth.

5) It creates unrealistic expectations of women.

Porn just makes us think women should be easier to get into bed. It makes us think we might get laid more if we were more bold or clever, or simply more aggressive. Which is actually probably true. In fact, there is surely room for western men to be bolder with women, but not at the cost of genuine care for women.

Women in porn videos are always willing to let a man (or men) aggressively open them up and do whatever they want. They'll take the money shot right in the face, on their knees beneath a cock and a camera, as if to fully underscore their willingness to be conquered and owned by a man, and for all the world to see.

In my experience, actual women don't react to calculating male aggression by opening their legs. Even if they do – and sometimes they probably do – that doesn't create an authentic intimate relationship. It just creates two bodies slapping into each other.

Women are lusty, sexual creatures, for sure. But when men are ready to relate to women in deeper ways, ways that include sexuality and also transcend it, porn is an awful study. The wondrous feminine mystique of a woman, the mystique us men so desperately crave to experience, is only made available to the men who learn how to cherish a woman in her fullness. That doesn't happen anywhere in porn.

6) When we watch porn, we support human trafficking, slavery, rape, and blackmail of women all over the world.

Despite my tame taste in porn and the fact that I never paid for online porn, I still unwittingly saw videos on the average free porn site that disturbed me.

I am horrified that I almost surely watched men manipulate, even outright blackmail, women into otherwise unwanted sex in fake taxi cabs, fake doctors offices, fake casting sets, and more. The camera never showed the man's face; always the woman's.

I likely saw videos that vindictive men posted of them having sex with newly ex-girlfriends.

Since I started researching this, I've discovered countless examples of criminal cases worldwide where people, mostly men, have been arrested and prosecuted for creating pornography with women they trafficked from other countries; women who were enslaved in buildings they couldn't leave; women kept in place by physical violence; women threatened with exposure to their families; and more. I know now that I must have watched videos where women did sex acts they were forced to do. And my tastes in porn were completely tame.

I'm still tempted to watch porn sometimes. Even as I write this, my iPhone sits quietly beside me, able in a matter of seconds to unleash a marauding army of sexy oriental babysitters straight into my lizard brain. But clearly nothing good ever comes from that, so to speak.

Men, we've got to stop using porn. I know it's a quick fix. I know some couples even use it to spice up an otherwise fading sex life.

Find other ways. Get creative. Porn is easy, low-hanging fruit. It's beneath our brilliance. And it's hurting us. It's also hurting our women.



Embracing The Ache of Loneliness.

This blog is dedicated to the lonely. Even the lonely who have partners.

Have you ever felt *really* lonely?

I mean that kind of loneliness where you lie awake at night and your chest pulses with soft ache and your heart slowly burns as some persistent thought insists you're destined to go through this lifetime alone, that you're never going to find The One – or even anyone – in whose loving arms you'll finally experience ... Home?

One late autumn, many years ago, I was canoeing in the Canadian North Woods when I heard a faraway loon's evocative cry float despondent across the still, dark surface of the vast lake. The haunting sound of its longing sank into me like winter sadness. I've never forgotten it.

It's the sound my heart whispers out through my chest when I feel my aloneness severe.

Have you ever experienced this kind of loneliness?

You might have experienced it lying next to someone. Maybe even your husband or wife. That kind of loneliness can be torture. To be so close to a Bliss that refuses to let you in.

We've all felt such deep loneliness, regardless how or to what degree. It's a byproduct of the human experience called "separate." I've felt it plenty. Both alone and in bed with my partner. I felt it last night, alone. It visits me for various reasons.

For years I've distracted myself from facing whatever that ache really is by pursuing unhealthy relationships, engaging in empty flings and empty promises, desperate online dating, medicinal masturbation and eating sugar ... lots and lots of sugar. I've made girlfriends responsible for fixing it once and for all. As mere mortals who don't have such powers, I would blame them when it showed up again. I've also drowned myself with work, arrogance, porn, denial, even spiritual seeking; all so that I would have neither time nor energy to acknowledge its gnawing presence.

Since last summer, though, I've been cutting out most of that behavior (except a lot of that sugar). As I discover ever more what it means to honor my life as a masculine Man, **I realize I must turn into and face this loneliness that stalks me like death, and that I can trace back to my earliest memories.**

Not to conquer it, but to embrace it and explore whatever wisdom must lie beneath its menacing mask.

So I have decided to get intimate with it, to invite it in and ask it questions.

I want to know it.

Not every day all the time – for I far more enjoy being my enthusiastic playful self. But when it clearly wants to come in, I allow it.

"If you want to get rid of something, you must first allow it to flourish."
~ Byron Katie

When it shows up, as it did last night, I breathe with it. I ask what it believes.

This is what it tells me: “I’m unlovable. Not good enough. Unworthy. Forever separate from everyone else, from Life, itself. Therefore no one will ever truly touch or know my true heart. I’m destined to be alone for all my days, and there’s nothing to do about it.”

Ouch.

Intellectually, I know it’s insane, this reclusive pain. Though it might be right about the last part. I might be destined to live out my days alone. How can I know?

Anyway, I just breathe with it. I give my chest freely to this ache and let it weep without trying to make it go away. I even agree with it, thinking silently, “Ok, fine, so this is basically how it’s always going to be. Me, alone in bed at night and through my days. Forever. So be it.”

And I let it cry.

I watch this passing weather. I breathe.

Within a short time, a few minutes, it dissipates like a dark storm cloud that has shed all its rain. The sun may not immediately return, but the ache settles and I feel my body whole again.

I notice I’m cozy in my warm bed, deeply grateful for the life I got to live today. I think of all the amazing friends I have and the brilliant, beautiful women I’ve been fortunate to know and experience love with in this lifetime.

At this point, even though I’m alone, my hope will often flicker as the sweet-tasting thought quickly returns that there must be a good woman on this planet right now dreaming up someone just like me. Even through my doubting, I can feel her presence. And when she shows up, I think to myself, this ache will surely never return. Of course, I know better now, so I remind myself that it probably WILL return in a moment of sudden disconnect and fear. Such moments happen. In partnership and without.

Hopefully, facing and embracing this loneliness now will help me breathe into it then and not make it anyone’s fault. After all, it’s just weather passing. Insane weather, perhaps. Still just weather.

Then, as I lay thoughtful and alone in my bed, my awareness quickly fading, I turn excitedly towards my nighttime Dream-Team, curious to experience whatever epic adventures they've prepared for me this night. They never let me down.

And I sleep.



Women are not defective Men (and vice versa).

Life is blowing my mind right now ... over something remarkably silly. But bear with me. This gets *reeeeally* good.

In all my years of intense (and sometimes tortured) exploring how to live passionately and *truly feel my life*, I've essentially ignored one fundamental aspect of living. It's so basic and obvious that ... well, as my appreciation for its implications really sink in, I just don't know how I missed it all these years. I see it everywhere now. It's like learning to read after a lifetime of illiteracy; I can no longer NOT read the signs.

Ok, this is almost embarrassing to say, but here's the insight ... I'm a Man.

More to the point ... I am a Masculine Man.

I told you.

You'd think that growing up with three sisters and two mothers, I would have developed a deep appreciation for the implications of this insight. But no. Not really. Watching my strong mothers hold my two families together, I could clearly see that women needed to own their rightful place in our world alongside man, not beneath him. That's pretty much where my awareness hit a mirrored glass ceiling.

Honestly, I never though this fact was all that interesting. Yeah, I'm a man.

So what?

I'll explain why this matters more than almost anything else I've ever been made aware of. It will sooner or later blow your mind, too (if it hasn't already), if you jump down this rabbit hole with me.

Take racism, for example. I've always known I couldn't truly appreciate the real effects of racism on a person. I'm white; my skin color mostly rules the world. I don't directly feel the effects of racism any more than I feel the tidal effects of the moon. I can see the water go in and out at the beach; but the only time the tides seem to directly affect me is when I gotta get my boat through a canal during high tide ... and I've never owned a boat. In other words, because I'm white, racism is mostly an intellectual exercise for me; one that Life hasn't forced me to spend much time considering (although I certainly have, but still, mostly as an intellectual exercise).

Likewise, being a masculine man in a world overwhelmingly ruled by masculine energy has kept me cloaked in the comforting ignorance of the privileged. Man lives atop the social hierarchy (especially white man). The only thing that's ever forced me to consider that there might be something other than being a man is being in difficult intimate relationships with feminine women. Even then, I just figured these women were merely more emotional and confusing versions of me ... in other words, defective clones of men.

"If I could only show her the obvious error of her ways," I would reason to myself (and often to her), "then everything would work great between us."

Holy shit was I clueless!!

The Masculine essence and the Feminine essence are completely opposite expressions of Life energy. They move through space differently, think differently, connect differently, hear differently, make love differently (*I sure don't yearn to be penetrated*), communicate differently (*fewer words, please!*).

Our relationships – our entire lives – get all tangled up because we completely overlook this basic reality.

Women have been led to believe that men are just emotionally defective women with penises.

Men have been led to believe that women are just intellectually defective men with vaginas.

As a result, so many of us are confused, resistant, angry, lost or even resigned to a cynicism beyond hope. Once we understand that the Masculine essence and Feminine essence each want something very different from the other, exciting new possibilities arise. Sure, we all want love and connection. But the way we go about that wanting it, and so much else about our natures, is vastly different.

This Wild Waking Journey blog has always been about the miraculous journey to reclaim awareness of our brilliance as Conscious Stardust ground into Earth and magically come alive! It will continue to be.

Life just threw a powerful switch that thundered 10,000 volts of crackling lightning electricity into my spirit, compelling me to turn my awareness towards the enigmatic masculine-feminine dynamic of our humanity.

After years of making all the stupid life mistakes that the ignorant make, I want to explore what it really means to be a strong, authentic Man ... and an authentic Woman, profound and deliciously wild like the ocean. And everything in between and beyond.

I want to explore what can happen when Strong Man and Wild Woman meet in Conscious Relationship, open-heart to open-heart, and fire-dance together in Rumi's magical field just beyond rightdoing and wrongdoing.

This is not merely about hetero-sexuality. As the world before me transforms in light of this new awareness, **I believe our labels of gay, straight, bi-sexual are woefully inadequate.** Like the drop of yin buried within the yang, and the drop of yang buried within the yin, even masculine men are infused with feminine essence, and vice versa.

What does it look like to integrate those feminine and masculine essences in our very own being?

This is the journey I am on. These are the questions I will explore. I feel as though I have just climbed Mount Everest, and here at the summit I merely find myself at the foot of Mount Olympus.

This year, 2014, is officially *My Year of Mastery*.

For the last 20 years, I have been a man who did not know where to find his balls. I did not even know they were missing. **I have repeatedly chosen strong feminine women as ignorant as I, who I subconsciously knew would find my missing balls and then beat them, kick them, stomp on and stab at them without mercy or apology ... but only to help me find them, too.**

I believe I've found them. It's time to master how to use them.

This year, whether you're a Masculine Man whose lost or just disoriented along his way, a Feminine Woman tired of wearing prosthetic balls just to survive in a man's world, or some other combination of sex, sexuality and self-awareness, my sincere hope is that this blog, *This Wild Waking Journey*, will continue to serve you well on your own magical journey home to your Truest Self.

"Relationship magnify human experience." ~ Tony Robbins



Don't give Into This Temptation.

Sometimes I hear a voice in my head grumble, "*Why bother blogging?*" If there's already so many thoughtful blogs out there, what difference could my voice possibly make? Anyway, it seems I've set a high standard for myself; if I don't think I have a real wowzer to share with you, why say anything?

But then I remember how much insanity there is in the world today. I'd be doing a disservice if I did NOT share the empowering thoughts constantly rushing through my head. Some of you may choose to not read them, or even unsubscribe. Some of you will choose to share what I write and pass on the empowering thought to another. It's not my business what happens after I hit "publish". It IS my business to simply publish.

Writing lights me up like a glow stick. That's reason enough for me.

So if you ever catch yourself thinking about whether to share your gift and you hear a cynical voice say, "*oh, what's the damn point?*" ... don't listen to it. It's tempting you to hide, to play it safe and small.

Yes, it's risky to put yourself out there. Your offering may be rejected or, perhaps worse, ignored. Either way, you can't know till you get it out. The point anyway is to be your own glow stick.

So when that voice groans, "*what's the point?*" ... you just say, "*The damn point is for me to express whatever I came to this planet to express! So you just go sit in your little corner and sulk while I get on with living my brilliant life!*" ... and then you hit "publish" ... or sign it, print it, sing it, ship it, release it, dance it, romance it. Whatever it is you came here to do. You just do it and then feel awesome about it. Whatever happens next is not your business.

Do you ever hear a voice holding you back from expressing your gift(s)?



The One Thing women are deeply afraid of in Men (it's Not Aggression).

I used to think women were only afraid of aggression in men, in all its forms: anger, rage, physical violence, verbal abuse, sexual aggression, rape.

I grew up with all kinds of conflicting social messages about the wrongs (and subtle rights) of violence against women. With three sisters and two mothers (married to my two fathers), I learned early there was something inherently special about women, that they were different from men not just in body parts, but in *essence*. I knew they should be protected and respected.

In addition to the daily masculine aggression towards women I encountered outside my home, I also watched my alcoholic step-father terrorize my mother, me and two sisters with an explosive rage. Seeing these beautiful,

brilliant women in my life routinely recoil in the face of a horrifying masculine aggression only reinforced my ideas about a woman's singular fear.

I learned to loathe the thought of making a woman feel unsafe in my presence. I wanted to make women feel good, to like me, and I had seen how aggression made them not feel good, how it made them hate a man.

So I did my best to never express aggression with a woman.

Even sexually. I shut down sexually towards women for fear that my desire would be interpreted by them as aggression. Throughout my dating life and well into relationships, until I was 100% certain a woman welcomed a next step with me, I would not proceed with a next step. A woman had to practically stick her tongue down my throat before I understood that kissing her was welcome.

I castrated myself in countless ways to protect women from any hint of masculine aggression in me.

I often practiced what I believed was the most certain way to make a woman feel safe: **I made myself invisible to her.**

Whether that meant backing down, staying out of her way, leaving the room, or simply pretending I didn't want to ravage her when I so desperately did, I made myself as non-threatening in a woman's presence as I could position myself to be.

I taught myself how to disappear. To save her from what I thought was her primal fear of my aggression.

I was completely missing what was really happening.

In the last few years I've discovered something women fear even more in men than mere aggression. It's something far more common in our everyday world. Something us men even fear in ourselves, though most aren't even conscious we're doing it.

A feminine woman is most afraid of her masculine man disappearing.

She's afraid of him failing to show up for her. Not stepping up. Walking out. Not staying strong and present, particularly when things get a little crazy and confusing.

A woman's deepest desire is to be cherished. When a man leaves, even just emotionally if not physically, she is left completely un-cherished. Aggression is simply the extreme expression of a man not cherishing a woman.

I checked out for years when my women got too emotional for me, especially when they were angry. I thought if they just saw things differently – if they saw things like I see them – everything would be fine. So I tried like mad to convince their minds to shift. Which rarely worked. They weren't waiting to have their intellects adjusted. So I would constantly give up and run, even when I stayed in the room.

If she fought me long enough, eventually I fought back. A feminine woman can't out-masculine me. I will win that battle. And I did. Every time. But I really only ever lost. So did she. Heartbreaking how blind I was to what was actually going on.

I realize now she was simply screaming out her fear, desperate for me to step up strong and claim her heart, to let her know without a doubt that I'm here, not going anywhere, that she's safe in my love, to simply reassure her deeply that I got her and won't let anything bad happen to her ... like only a healthy masculine man could reassure her.

Women weren't just afraid of my aggression. They were afraid of my leaving, which ironically I was doing in countless ways often to avoid my own innate aggression which scared me, too.

Had I known this deeper truth, I likely would have married my last girlfriend. Instead, I labeled her immature and mean, and I ran in every direction. I couldn't stand in the illusory fire of her pain – a pain largely caused by masculine abandonment in her past. I was so triggered by her pain, so caught up in my own, that I couldn't reassure her that I loved her and would hold her safe as she learned to trust again. I lost the woman I loved most in my life because I couldn't see what was really happening; what she was really asking of me.

She was asking me to step up and fight for her heart.

Fight what? Fight myself. Fight my desire to run. To check out. To disappear. She was begging me to be aggressive with my own inner demons, and perhaps hers, too, in the battle for her sacred feminine heart. I lost that battle. She's married to another man now.

Oh what fine messes of hearts I helped create over the years. I didn't know. I'm so sorry. Please forgive me. I see now. I'm growing up. I'm a Man. Eager to share what I've learned through so much pain, with other men who don't yet see, but who are ready to.

And I'm finally ready to step up and fight for a woman's heart.



Give Your Family The Gift Of Letting Them Think Whatever They Want.

This holiday season, give the gift of letting your family think whatever they want to. In other words, **don't try to convince your mother, brother, father, sister, crazy uncle ... of anything.**

I went to visit my mom in Maryland for Thanksgiving. My mom's amazing. She's in a Maryland Woman's Hall of Fame for her lifelong humanitarian service. She's a knockout champion for the underserved and overlooked. We got to talking about all the mindful awareness work I'm doing with military veterans and people diagnosed with autism, my breakthrough coaching practice and volunteering for Marianne Williamson's US Congressional campaign. You'd think we'd do nothing but nod along in emphatic agreement to each other's convictions and perspectives. But not so!! My mom's on constant high alert for any signs of idealistic arrogance in her children.

On Saturday after T-day, while talking to my mom in the car, I suddenly noticed my voice rising and a light sweat begin seeping from my forehead as she contested one of my fundamental observations about western civilization - that most people are suffering in ways we don't even recognize because

we're distracted with countless diversions, addictions, and made-up disempowering beliefs. Rather than be open to her different perspective about all that and consider the points she was offering, I chose to press in and not just work to convince her that I know what I'm talking about, but to get her to think the same way.

Idealistic arrogance, indeed.

Does this happen to you?

Do you ever find yourself talking to family when suddenly you find your head swirling with stress, your palms sweaty, your voice agitated, and you'd gladly trade your good health for earplugs and a vodka ... or a large mallet (to beat the walls, not your loved one)?

If so, try this experiment. If you notice yourself getting stressed inside a conversation, examine your body. Are you feeling tighter or heavier somewhere in your body? Is your heart beating faster? Are you experiencing a desire to flee ... or attack?

First, do neither. Take a deep breath and consider the conversation you're having. Can you see where you're getting attached to winning over this person's point of view?

Now ask yourself, Is it really so important this person agree with you? What do you get if they do? Validation? A good feeling? An invigorated sense of self-esteem? You can give those to yourself. You don't need anyone's permission to think what you think or to feel good about yourself. What is the worst that could happen if you simply let them believe what they think?

Ironically, even if you disagree on a sensitive issue, they'll probably appreciate your presence even more if you just give them the space to believe whatever they want to.

As much as this will be a gift to your family - and don't you think they'd just LOVE to NOT hear you challenge their beliefs? - this is actually a powerful gift to you. Think of all the internal laughter you'll get to enjoy as you stop jockeying for intellectual superiority and start simply marveling at just how insane these people are! Think of how much shorter these crazy

conversations will be, and how much more restful sleep you'll likely get. Doesn't it just sound marvelous!

This holiday season, give the gift of letting other people believe whatever they want to believe. Even their beliefs about you.

The only thing you have to lose is your attachment to their thoughts, and you stand to reclaim your freedom ... and your sanity ... and your joy ... and your enthusiasm ... and and and ...

Try it today and let us know how it goes!!



Be around those that inspire you.

I just spent 6 days in Dominican Republic at Awesomeness Fest, an adventurous 5-day networking event for visionary professionals doing grounded big-dream work to push humanity forward.

I had simple, heartfelt conversations with inspiring people like X-PRIZE founding investor Anousheh Ansari, the first Iranian woman to soar to Space, and Luminita Saviuc, the beautiful young lady brutally abused by a sociopathic father when she was a child, who wrote the viral blog “15 Things to Give Up To be Happy” (1.2 million Likes on Facebook). I danced under the Caribbean stars with the people behind The Shift Network and Notes From The Universe and Hay House Radio, along with people who own multiple multi-million dollar companies that are making a genuine positive difference on this planet, and plenty whose big-vision projects have yet to really take off, like mine. And we often didn't talk business ... but about our lives on planet earth, odd sleeping habits, the finer points of a truly great hug, and our kids and partners and beloved pets back home.

I don't share this to brag or inspire envy.

I share this to impress upon you how important it is to put yourself in the midst of people who inspire you, as often as possible.

Yes I felt intimidated at times, small even. I'm in a tiny room sitting among massively successful business women and t-shirt clad tech guys who've made more money than I + my parents + my sisters + most of my descendants have ever known ... I'm even interacting with immediate FOB's (Friends of Richard Branson).

But almost every one of these successful visionaries has walked a path similar to mine – broke at times, sleeping on couches, lonely and distraught, wracked by the frustration of ever-elusive success. They simply kept moving forward, even when it felt like moving backward. All of them had failed projects in their back pocket, which comforted me greatly. I've got at least 2 big ones under my belt.

“Massive Project Failure” is practically a badge of honor for such entrepreneurs.

In this Age of Authenticity, the most genuinely inspiring successful people will never try to make others feel inferior, regardless where they are on their journeys. They've been through dark hells and are thrilled to help others find their own way through.

I'm coming home from AFest super-jazzed, reinvigorated. I'm coming back with powerful distinctions to help improve my game and move my work forward. I'm also coming home with new soul family, people I'll manifest new dreams with.

Earlier this year I declared my 2013 Proclamation: **“Go Big ... or Go Homeless.”**

That's why I brought myself to Awesomeness Fest. That's why I'm going to Tony Robbins' Date With Destiny in December. I've given up playing small, passively accepting low standards of life living.

Put yourself in the midst of people who inspire you, as often as possible. If that's not easy physically, do it virtually. Hire a life coach (like me). Just be in conversations that powerfully support raising your game. Cut out of your life, if you can, those that don't. We, humanity, the planet ... we want you playing at your highest level.

This is no time for hiding behind stale excuses. You don't serve anyone by playing small.

Capping off the event on Monday, the rambunctiously brilliant Lisa Nichols boomed this proclamation towards us:

“You don't get to have selective amnesia on who you were born to be. You are powerful beings, and you don't get to turn that off.”

Step up and take your rightful place among those who inspire us all. Get going. Time is NOT on your side.



No One Ever Taught Me How To Be A Man.

I never realized what not having healthy masculine role models as a young boy and teenager was costing me and the women I loved. Until I neared my 40th birthday, a single man, and looked back at the relationship wreckage littering my past.

No one ever taught me how to be a Man.

I love my two fathers, my dad and step-dad. I'm grateful to have both of these good men in my life from a young age. But it was my two mothers, my mom and step-mom, who have really been the strong leaders in my life. They held the two families together and made sure that I always knew everything would be ok. Although I wasn't cognizant of it as a young boy and teenager, my dads were never fully present and mostly seemed to be hanging on to their strong women, my moms, for dear life. One was an alcoholic and the other mostly a fantasy with whom I mostly interacted by phone during the formative years of my life.

I didn't just grow up with disoriented fathers. I have been immersed in a world dominated by warped, immature expressions of masculinity:

Constantly sexualizing women

Ridiculing vulnerability

Woman-magnet, gun-toting hero-worship

Homophobia

Power-focused blame-game government politics

Bullying from every angle

A win-at-all-costs / winner-take-all competitive ethos

Anti-feminine misogyny of infinite variety

Even the offensive words I learned to use as a young boy to assert dominance: pxssy, bitch, fag, crybaby, nancy-boy, coxksucker, motherfuxker. All these insults strike their blow by chopping at feminine expressions of life. We even throw around the word “douchebag.” As far as I understand, an actual douchebag helps keep a woman’s vagina clean and healthy. Why isn’t that reserved for the highest of praise rather than a tool for insult? Us and our misogynistic genital shame.

One consequence of this immature masculine ethos is that we don’t learn how to step up as mature masculine men in our intimate relationships with women.

At 40, I’m only now discovering what this has cost me and the women I’ve tried to love for years. I’ve demeaned my female partners by treating them as emotionally-flawed versions of men. I’ve run away from them, fed up and disgusted, when they only needed me to stand fast and love them deeply. I’ve lied because I thought their weaker sensitivities couldn’t handle difficult truth. Little did I know I was the one who couldn’t handle difficult truth. I’ve also used their bodies for my pleasure and then disappeared quick as I came, so to speak.

I’ve failed my feminine partners in countless heartbreaking ways.

I don’t mean details like paying for everything or being the one to get the car fixed or simply opening doors. I don’t believe in fixed and firm rules like this. I simply mean that no one ever taught me how to show up in my life and the lives of those around me, fully present, as a Man.

I see so much of it now. My heart still breaks as I look back upon the wake of female wreckage I created in years past. Sure, they had their own growing up to do, too. I still see so clearly how I failed to show up for my intimate partners, over and over and over.

“Kids have a hole in their soul in the shape of their dad. And if a father is unwilling or unable to fill that hole, it can leave a wound that is not easily healed.” ~ Roland Warren

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 24 million children in America -- one out of every three -- live in biological father-absent homes (the black father stereotype, by the way, is a myth, as black fathers are just as involved in their kids' lives as fathers of other races). Nine in ten American parents agree this is a “crisis.”

<http://www.fatherhood.org/father-absence-statistics>
<http://www.thecharlottepost.com/news/2014/08/25/life-and-religion/cdc-study-shatters-myth-about-black-fathers/>

Western men are growing up more and more without healthy masculine role models.

Our young boys today are in crisis. They commit suicide at a higher rate than girls. They feel isolated and angry. They're the only ones shooting up schools.

We're confused as ever, disoriented around the profound gifts at the core of our masculine/feminine natures. And we're still infusing a new generation of boys and girls with stunted-growth versions of masculinity and femininity.

Fortunately, we're collectively growing more wise to this deception. Movements like Mankind Project, websites like Good Men Project, inspiring online campaigns such as #LikeAGirl and the Dove Beauty Sketches, and more, are blowing up hurtful stereotypes by creating new conversations about what it means to be a healthy man and woman in the 21st century.

As I quickly round past my 40th birthday, the mature masculine Man in me is finally waking after decades of ignorance and pain. I feel like a giant in heart, vision, commitment, and appreciation for feminine wisdom everywhere. I'm

very careful of my language, dropping any feminine-shaming slang from my vocabulary, except for douchebag, which I reserve for those doing only the highest work for humanity. That Ghandi ... what a douchebag!

Since no one taught me how to be a healthy mature man, I've had to teach myself. It hasn't been easy, and it's surely a work in progress. But I'm on a mission to claim a deeper wisdom that fully embraces the gifts of both masculine and feminine expressions of life.

For a healthy mature masculine man knows such wisdom is essential if our world is to ever truly thrive; which also goes for me and the woman I someday hope to fully love.



Hiding Weakness Kills Men.

Most men think we have to bear our burdens alone. We don't confess our worries, our sadnesses, our confusion, our despair. And that's killing us.

"I used to think the worst thing in life was to end up all alone. It's not. The worst thing in life is to end up with people who make you feel all alone."
~ Robin Williams (as a movie character)

Most men think we have to do it alone. Bear whatever burden alone. We don't ask for help. We don't confess our worries, our sadnesses, our confusion, our despair. We don't engage other men in vulnerable conversations, and we sure don't let women know what's really going on inside us – unless we think doing so will get us laid, or admiration, or something.

We don't even tell our intimate partners our deepest truths. Yeah, sure, we hear them say they want the truth. But we don't believe them. One of my close man-friends recently told me he grew up in a home with this core message: "Always tell us the truth ... and we will *NOT* be able to handle it." Somehow I learned that message growing up, too. You?

Another close friend grew up believing he would be abandoned and essentially die if he told a truth he thought might upset his family. He was sexually molested. He told no one and carried the confusing shame alone into adulthood, and then into his marriage. Although he told his wife about the actual event, he didn't tell her about the unhealthy behaviors he had developed over the years to distract himself from the burden of that memory, notably an addiction to porn and excessive romantic flirtations with women who never knew he was married. His inability to share the depth of his very human challenges nearly sabotaged their marriage when she suddenly found out by looking through his phone.

There's a core cultural message that says men can't ever show weakness. We can't need to rely on anyone, and we can't make a mistake. If we do, the world will fall apart. Or at least we won't have an honorable place in it anymore. Our women will leave us. Or they'll no longer respect us, in which case they might as well leave us.

So we grin and bear it. We do it ourselves. We bear our own burdens and don't let anyone else help us carry them. When it gets too heavy, we check out. Run away. Drink it, porn it, fuck it, TV it, work it, war and rage it out.

In those check-out moments, even when we stay in the room, we leave our families and our communities to fend for themselves. We send everything to hell, screw the consequences.

When it gets too heavy, we check out. Run away. Drink it, porn it, fuck it, TV it, work it, war and rage it out.

That's probably why women outlive men. We slowly kill ourselves with unhealthy behavior. Women don't drive men to an early grave, as comedians would have us believe. We drive ourselves.

At its worst, "grin and bear it" leads men to the gravest act of check-out possible: suicide.

At its worst, "grin and bear it" leads men to the gravest act of check-out possible: suicide. What Robin Williams just did. What 22 despairing military veterans will do today, and again tomorrow, and again the next day. What aging NFL football players do to themselves. The same thing many teenage boys do, who die by suicide four times more often than girls.

According to Forbes magazine, despite women experiencing higher incidents of depression, men across the planet commit suicide more frequently.

Jimmy Stewart, a defensive back with the Saints and Lions who retired and became a family therapist to work with athletes and military personnel suffering from PTSD, told ESPN Magazine, “The four years I played pro football were some of the most horrendous of my life. I cried alone. I was frightened. I badly needed somebody to talk to, and I know so many guys today who feel the same way. ... Players are not committing suicide just because they have CTE [brain injury]. They are committing suicide because they refuse to be vulnerable. CTE can cause symptoms of depression, but it's isolation and invulnerability that causes you to commit suicide.”

We must stop trying to do it all alone. We aren't supposed to do it alone. Throughout human history we have been a tribal creature. We have always banded together to protect ourselves, our families and communities, from the threats of the day. Today, in our fast-tech individualistic society that still rewards masculine expression (e.g. competitiveness, ambition) over feminine (e.g. vulnerability, sharing), male aloneness and isolation is one of the biggest threats we know. Especially, as Robin Williams pointed out, when we're actually surrounded by people.

Even as men who culture tells us we're supposed to know what to do next, the fact is we often don't. We're each as clueless as anyone else on this wild miraculous planet. We daily deal with emotions and burdens that are way too big for us to carry alone.

We're each as clueless as anyone else on this wild miraculous planet.

These are not weaknesses we're supposed to manhandle into denial. They are our human realities.

Confessing that is as good as place as any to start.

We can be strong men and still not know what to do. We can be strong men and still ask for help. Actually, it takes a stronger man to reach out and ask for help, because that man has to push through his internal masculine resistance to the act of being vulnerable.

But we weren't meant to bear the burden of our lives, even our internal lives, alone. We were meant to hunt together, live together, work together, heal together, dance together, suffer together ... and learn together. We were meant to thrive everyday, together.

In the quote at top, Robin Williams was pointing at the awful loneliness we might feel when surrounded by people to whom we don't feel safe confessing our deepest truths. I'm not suggesting Robin's wife or family wasn't making him feel safe to be himself. I wouldn't dare put this drastic decision on anyone but Robin. We are each ultimately responsible for whether we choose to allow ourselves to be fully seen, or not.

In the next 24 hours, I invite you to have a real conversation with someone you care about. Tell them about your deepest secret fear, and also what you love most about their presence. Get real with someone.

Tell them about your deepest secret fear, and also what you love most about their presence. Get real with someone.

Your woman (or your man), your family, your community – your own life – may very well depend on it.

There's one more thing.

Just as you don't have to do it alone, you don't have to make others do it alone, either.

As thoughtful men, we must ask ourselves ...

Are we the kind of men others feel safe to fully be their human selves around, too?



Lying about what you can afford ... costs you everything.

Just recently I discovered that I've been lying pathologically for the past year. Specifically, I've been repeating this lie like my personal mantra:

“I can't afford it.”

I've applied that mantra to good food, outings with friends, compelling workshops, intriguing books, health care, a trip to see my mom in Maryland, yoga classes, and so much more.

Yes, finances have been tighter in the past year than in the last 15 as I go through major professional and personal transitions. Anyway, I believe there's always a place for thoughtful money management in support of a larger vision.

However, we can turn any belief - especially around money - into a chronic source of dis-ease; one we're not even aware we're creating.

I don't have insight into other people's actual bank accounts, so I don't know what everyone else is truly experiencing. But I hear this “can't afford it” mantra all the time. I'm sure some people genuinely live hand to mouth and really can't afford it whatever “it” is. They may legitimately not have enough money to pay for something AND pay their rent.

But I'm pointing at the lie that surely most of us employ that claims the same story - “I can't afford it” - while there's actually enough money in the bank to afford it AND still pay the essential bills.

Here's where this lie gets its juice: from a future-based scarcity paradigm that insists if I spend the money I actually have right now on X, then in the future I won't have the money to spend on a different and probably more important X; therefore, I should forego the joy, health, opportunity, relationship, etc. available to me today, so I'm prepared for that unknown tomorrow.

This lie also assumes the Universe doesn't flow and evolve. It believes the present perceived condition of scarcity and stagnation reflects future reality, so I better hoard what I have today so I can survive - never mind thrive - in that future scarcity.

Which is totally insane.

Sooooooooo in order to survive scarcity and stagnation, I'm going to take actions that essentially promote scarcity and stagnation???

WHAT??

It's literally a definition of insanity: hoping to change a particular circumstance by creating more of the exact same circumstance.

I recently bought Marianne Williamson's new book, Law of Divine Compensation. I realize I have money issues. When I picked up the book at the bookstore, I noticed the price tag: \$24.

"Youch!!" ... was my first thought.

"Can I really afford to buy this book?" was my second.

Which was totally ridiculous because I absolutely have the money to buy this book in my bank account; more than enough.

Fortunately, because I'm aware of my tendency to lie about what I can really afford, and given this book IS about DIVINE COMPENSATION after all, a new question sprang to mind.

"Can I afford NOT to buy this book?"

A friend of mine, Kyle Cease (a popular comedian and growing transformational speaker) once said to me: "We generally know what we already have. Whether it's a relationship, a routine, a career, money in the bank, etc. What is already present, we know how it makes us feel, what it gives us, what it asks of us, its upsides and downsides. When we decide to give something up, whether it's a job, a friendship, or an excuse, what we don't know is what we could gain as a result. The choice to truly let go of something brings us directly to the feet of the Unknown, which is where new possibilities really begin to open up for us ... big-time."

As I held the book in my hand, which honestly felt tiny for a \$24 book, this interesting question danced through my head, taunting me gaily: "Can I afford NOT to buy this?" I already knew what my life seemed to look like right now. Financial stagnation, money worries, holes in socks. This is what I didn't know: what could I gain by giving up \$24 for this new information?

I bought the book, went to the beach and immediately began reading.

The following week, because I attend Marianne's weekly public lectures in Beverly Hills, I took the opportunity to ask her a question about her book in front of 800 people. We shared a powerful exchange that both served people in the audience (many told me so afterwards) and led to an even more intriguing outcome that I had no idea could result when I was debating whether I could even afford the book. (I also promised her I'd buy 4 more copies and give them away before my 39th birthday, this May 18 ... so if you want one, contact me through my website below).

I'm not financially rich yet (it's only been 3 weeks), but responding from a place beyond that insane lie of scarcity has already added experiential richness to my life.

The power of upending that lie clearly has immense consequences for our lives. First, we never know what comes first: tomorrow or our death. There's no guarantee I'm even going to be around to experience whatever I think I'm future-scrimping for, which I often don't even know. By reframing the lie into a contrasting question, I give myself a fresh perspective on the choice at hand that completely short-circuits this future-scarcity thinking. I give myself the opportunity to truly live today.

Which is my second point: it kicks my butt to get busy living today!! Tony Robbins teaches us that if you want better results, ask better questions. "Can I afford NOT to?" is a far more empowering, possibility-provoking question than "Can I afford to?"

Can I afford NOT to eat healthy food?

Can I afford NOT to leave this job I don't enjoy?

Can I afford NOT to do yoga and stretch my body among a fleet of pretty women every week?

Can I afford NOT to end this friendship that clearly doesn't respect my boundaries?

Of course, sometimes the genuine answer is going to be, “Yes, I CAN afford to NOT do, buy, leave, experience ... whatever”. Sometimes the more uplifting, better-feeling answer actually is to stay where we are, keep what we have, continue the path we’re walking.

At least by reframing the scarcity lie as an empowering question, we take the decision away from our scared little ego-brains scrapping for survival and place it under the wise, loving guidance of our all-knowing hearts.

Take one scenario in your life where scarcity rules the day, where you’ve been telling yourself you can’t do, be, have, leave, experience something. Sit deeply with the contrasting question, “Can I afford NOT to ... ?”

What arises for you? Please share below ... and inspire us all.



You don't have to suffer for your growth.

I once spent 4 days and nights on the side of a remote mountain in southern Chile, on one tiny spot of earth my body could barely lie down upon, with no shelter, no food or water (that’s right, no water for 4 days), and a scorching throat-infection that stabbed at my neck each time my death valley mouth reflexively swallowed phantom saliva. I would awaken throughout each night to peel sticky slugs off my neck and fling them off into the thick, black distance. Apparently I survived because I’m writing this ... unless I’m Bruce Willis in that movie, “Sixth Sense” hmmmmmm

The real crazy part? I did all that on purpose. I believed such extreme deprivation would yield the spiritual insights I so desperately craved.

Another time, I damn near steam-cooked myself alive inside a small domed structure covered with 6-inch thick layers of tree saplings, leather skins, and heavy blankets. It was my first Sweat Lodge, and it was a Miami summer. The lodge leader kept bringing in these breadloaf-size hot river stones glowing sparkly red from cooking in a nearby camp fire. Stone after stone, he drenched each with water which hissed and seethed as it burst into thick,

choking steam that wrapped tight around my body like a ghostly python. My skin was literally cooking.

Round after excruciating round, I stayed inside the dome, believing I had to make it through this purification ritual to ... to ... to ... geez, I don't even remember "to" what. To feel better about my life? To see the Wizard? To attract my soul mate? To be at peace with George Bush in the White House?

I tortured myself intentionally, thinking this ritual purification would give me the peace of mind I deeply wanted. I will say, I've never felt such ecstatic gratitude as I did immediately afterwards when I emerged from that easy-bake human oven and collapsed upon fresh grass, gazing stupefied up at a vast blue sky while someone drizzled cool hose water across my steaming, loin-clothed body. But that peace of mind faded a day later; all I was left with was a crazy tale of near self-immolation, and really great skin.

I could go on ... and on ... and on.

Always desperate for liberation from, well, who knows what ... I've been playing life as if the Uni-verse is that wicked crazy guy in those gory "Saw" movies and he's hidden the best truths deep inside my gut. I just have to stab my car keys through my belly button and sort through 30-feet of my own intestines to find it.

Wanna know one of my favorite lessons? ... Ok, I'll tell ya!

After going back over and over to a consistently heavy relationship experience, I finally learned the ironic lesson that I don't ever - and I mean never! - have to stay in a consistently heavy relationship experience!

I love something Eckhart Tolle said: "If you chain me to the bar in a nightclub, I'll find the experience of "now". But as soon as you unchain me, I'm outta there."

Look, I'm not advocating for bailing when times get tough. I'm not suggesting we renege on commitments or walk away from situations when things bog down or get difficult. Heck no!

Navigating tricky, treacherous waters is the only way to make truly wise sailors of us all.

I'm also a big fan of pushing ourselves to new horizons. Our evolution - not to mention humanity's evolution - depends on it. Pushing ourselves in pursuit of a new skill or state of being, like getting a Masters Degree or improving health by eating less sugar and doing more yoga, is sometimes difficult.

But there's an enormous difference between pushing myself to limits in the pursuit of sound mind and body and willingly throwing myself into dangerous waters because I think there's some profound lesson to be learned in the grip of a shark's mouth. (sure, there's a lesson: stop throwing yourself into dangerous water, Bryan!)

The difference is joy. There's almost no perceptible thread of joy in throwing myself into treacherous water, knowing I'm going to get bashed against jagged rocks and ripped apart by sharks. There's just agony and torment.

When I'm pushing myself in healthy ways, taking action that truly serves my mind and body, there's an underlying, satisfied awareness that ultimately has the cells of my body smiling, even as my face might be grimacing.

Finally, after years of intentionally inflicting harm on myself or denying myself joy for the sake of some lesson or a better life, I've discovered that if there's no joy in it, there's no point to it.

Sure, life might sometimes throw me into harm's way, but then it's on me to find a little current of joy and let it carry me away from the clear danger.

Otherwise, I'm totally free to say "no thanks!" to that meditation that requires me to sit in one spot for ten days straight, in silence, literally without moving or lying down for ten hours each day. With no judgment, no fear, no arrogance or contempt, I simply recognize that it doesn't sound even remotely enjoyable. Not long ago, I was hungry for that meditation: can you imagine what insights I'll surely gain from destroying my comfort zone with extreme stillness?

Naaaah. No thanks.

Some of the greatest things I've ever learned, I learned with far more pleasure than pain. Learning French in Bordeaux, France. How to take in a spectacular sunset and how to cook; how to be vulnerable, make love to a

woman, appreciate silence, truly accept my father (it was my resistance to him that was painful; genuine acceptance is exhilarating).

It seems to me if the joy is truly in the journey, then it's up to me to ensure my journey is as joyful as possible. Every lesson always seems to point back towards discovering deeper, more lasting experiences of joy, anyway.

Might as well skip the self-torture and go straight for the joy.



Stay off the Upset Train.

“If you think you're enlightened, go visit your family.” ~ Ram Dass

Like many of you, I spent the holidays with family. It's just fascinating how the families we grew up with, and often return to around the holidays, so expertly find the buttons we were sure we'd expertly hidden that trigger us into wild, limbs-akimbo freak-out mode.

Actually, I'm pretty sure my dad has my freak-out buttons wired onto a convenient little pocket remote he keeps in his back pocket. If I'm in range, he just needs to accidentally sit on it at breakfast and I feel my blood begin to heat up.

One morning in the days before Christmas, my sister Cska burst into the guest bedroom I was sleeping in. She was on a tirade about my dad on a tirade in the kitchen. Whatever his freak out, the message didn't clearly come through my sister, her words all jumbled and frenzied as they burst forth from her tizzied mind. It was about 10am, and although I was already awake, I had earlier decided to ease into the day and rest in bed a bit longer ... until my sister crashed in on my peace.

Ahhhh, home for the holidays.

Since his children began converging on his spacious Nashville home just a few days earlier, my dad had been leaking out little complaints here and there

about our sleeping, eating and hygiene habits. For most of the years I've known him, my dad has struggled to speak his truth in an authentic, straight-forward, loving way. Usually, critiques and complaints pop out of his mouth in the form of cynical, degrading jokes designed to tear down the world around him. It's like he has "criticism tourette's syndrome". He means well and has a good heart. It just seems he knows no other way of connecting to the world around him.

So when my sister came bursting into my room, I kinda knew it was coming. I'd been experiencing a cresting wave of heat in my own belly those past few days, the familiar precursor to a confrontation with Dad. Rather than give into that heat and let it fuel my ire, however, I had simply been observing it for what it is: my own insecurity and self-doubt being tested by a man with my buttons on remote control.

Within a few seconds, I saw what was happening. My dad was going into upset in the kitchen, probably about dishes or people still sleeping (it was only 10am, and on holiday vacation, mind you). My sister had been in the kitchen when it started and obviously agreed to take on his upset. I then heard her rush into her room adjacent to mine and excitedly try to urge her boyfriend into panic. She then burst into my room, mumbling something about dad's upset before leaving as quickly as she came.

So there I was. I caught what was happening. There was an Upset Train in motion. My dad was the conductor, my sister agreed to get on board and tried to drag her boyfriend on. Now she was urging me to buy a ticket.

Three specific reactions began to stir within me.

First, the "Upset Rebel" within began a hunger strike. "Screw that! I'll just stay in bed longer than!" that voice demanded. "I might even stay here all day! That will show them!!" I fantasized how my sit-in - or rather my bed-in - would show my would-be oppressors that I could not be controlled.

Then my "Upset Warrior" joined the rebellion and began to sharpen his spear. I quickly saw myself jumping out of bed, running into the kitchen and triumphantly vanquishing my opponents with righteous force. I would stand boldly up to my oppressors, strong and self-determined, and psychologically slay these silly enemies before me ... and I would be ruler of the world in that moment.

However, there was also a curious third voice speaking. It was far more still than the others. It suggested I just breathe. I heard the question, “what was I originally intending to do had my sister not burst in my room?” It was answered with, “it doesn’t even matter; she did burst into your room. This is the new reality now. Just breathe.”

Somehow, that third experience was in opposition to nothing. It lovingly held the warrior and the rebel; it also held my sister and my father. It even patiently held my desire to reconnect with the peaceful place I was experiencing before Cska burst into my room on The Upset Train.

Quietly, I went back to what I was doing, watching funny videos on my phone. I fed neither the desire to defy nor fight. I simply lay my head back down, let the Upset Train pass me by, and went on about my day.

A short while later, I arose and made my way out to the kitchen, calm and peaceful as could be. My sister was in front of her laptop at the dining room table. My dad was preparing some coffee. Everyone seemed fine. The Upset Train had apparently come and gone, without me ever hopping aboard.

I felt peaceful.

Yes, later that day the Upset Train came roaring back. My dad, a masterful conductor, again called for all passengers. At my side, as always, were my easily excitable warrior still sharpening his spear and that cunning rebel always going over his plans.

There was of course also that third voice, imploring me to simply breathe and stay off the train.

As my father cleverly tempted me onto the train and I dangerously toyed with sabotage and battle, I chose instead to use my spear like a machete and hack my way into the thick dangerous jungle that protects my father’s authentic truth like some long lost ancient ruin. I could faintly hear his heart’s deep wishes buried in his complaints, and I chose to open myself up to those faint whispers rather than do battle with the complaints themselves.

I've ridden the Upset Train enough. I've done enough battle. Sure, it makes me feel powerful for a time, but it alienates my father even more than he no doubt already feels, and it robs me of a relationship with him.

I can't keep other people from jumping on board, but I can sure keep myself from taking that tumultuous ride!!



Tell the truth and let the peace fall where it may.

“If I tell the real truth about me, you won't love me ... actually, no one will.”

That single thought has driven me to madness for most of my life. It's like having a nasty little thought-vampire living in my head with fangs like dagger straws sucking out the oxygen-rich blood that would otherwise fuel clarity in my brain and allow me to actually make healthier decisions for myself ... or to simply BE myself.

Yeah, it's that bad.

“You won't love me for who I really am.”

Thus could begin most of my tales of woe. For that blood-sucking little thought-vampire creates a brain freeze locking me into all kinds of bewildering behavioral patterns and stupefying choices.

Oh, the wild tales I could tell of diving in, over and over again, to ill-advised relationships because I somehow believed the treasure of “being fully loved” was to be found in the conquest of those ultimately unruly continents. And I've surely dynamited amazing relationships before they even began, too fearful of rejection to confess the juicy experiences simmering hot inside me. I've worked jobs I loathed (for years) and done things for others that I completely resented doing. And - I love this one - do you have any idea how many complete chunks of time I have squandered hardly listening to people drone on and on about things probably THEY weren't even interested in

talking about simply because I had no courage to confess my severe disinterest in that topic? I actually don't have any idea, either. But it's LOTS of chunks.

Oh woe to the heavens!! I simply cannot count the ways my life has shown up a cowering hunchback shadow of its highest princely potential simply because I believed no one would love me if I confessed my moment-by-moment truth!

But what is this gooey, jagged gob of chunky reality-butter that scratches and claws at my tender throat as I choke it down, determined to never let it meet the outside world?

What is "my truth"?

I've actually been learning to recognize what it is, by what it clearly is NOT. The truth is not the complicated, elaborate sentences that start spewing from my mouth in the midst of an uncomfortable situation. The more complicated my sentences get, the more I'm obviously avoiding an unsettling inner truth, creating instead some fantasy that requires acrobatic imaginative effort. I'm scared of reality, so I play make-believe in a happy-place to avoid it, hoping everyone else will hide there with me.

Thing is, I'm miserable in that happy-place.

More and more I'm discovering the crazy truth that the simple truth is just that: crazy simple.

When my truth gets complicated, I'm actually dancing around some deeper truth that just tells it like it is. My simple truth, like a good business idea, can generally be written down on one side of a cocktail napkin and requires no justification. Justification comes from needing another - or even myself - to approve of that simple truth. But the truth itself doesn't give a damn who accepts it. It's perfectly content to be what it is.

I want this. I don't want that. I feel this. I think that. I like this. That hurts. That angers me. Yes to that. No to this. That pleases me. I'm confused. Sometimes that's the truth, too, that I just don't know.

The truth is simple. Only my cover-ups are complicated.

However, as I learn to fully speak my truth, it does take courage to brave the consequences.

The reason we manipulate with fantasies and half-truths is because the uncertain consequences of telling the full, simple truth frighten us. We really do believe - and in some cases may even be right - that if we confess our truths other people will abandon or hurt us in some way. But when we manipulate with fantasies and lies, we're not giving anyone an opportunity to be with the real us, anyway. That's all we really want, to be loved and seen for who we truly are, right now.

When we tell the simple truth, as it rises in this moment, at least we give ourselves the chance to be loved for who we are. We also give *ourselves* the chance to love *ourselves*, as we are, right now.

But there's no guarantee you'll get you what you think you want, at least not externally. Your partner might leave you. You might lose a friend or a job. I believe, however, that living with partners, friends, jobs, etc. that can't fully embrace you is an insidious and ultimately deadly self-torture, anyway. As brilliant reality-advocate author, Byron Katie, said: "Whenever someone leaves me, I know I've been spared."

Life is messy. Being human is messy. It's not so neat as our "shoulds" and "shouldn'ts" would have us believe. Truth arises inside each of us in infinite ways. It takes shape as the good, the bad, the ugly and the beautiful.

More and more, I notice that when I tell the simple truth about who I am in any given moment, I'm overcome with a deep, abiding peace that doesn't depend on anything outside me. By allowing the outside world to NOT have to fix what hurts or give me what I want, I'm simply left with the most indescribably delicious freedom and sense of peace.

The truth is going to be what it is, anyway, whether or not it has anyone's cooperation, including my own. So I'm learning to just, as the Beatles wisely sang, let it be.

Jamming our jagged, chunky truths deep into our guts just cuts and slowly bleeds us from the inside.

Better to just spit it out, tell the truth and let the peace fall where it may.

What's one powerful action you could take today to tell the truth about who you are?



The only True Failure is not being willing to Fail.

Failure.

Just writing that word conjures up nasty sensations in my body.

I don't even have to put it in context - failure at what? Well, actually my mind immediately knows where to go. Still, it only needs a moment to romp around my thoughts before my body begins to issue a cascade of awful reactions.

Disappointment begins to seep heavy through an aching chest. Shame dances melancholy across my face, long and heavy. Dread churns my stomach with nausea. Hopelessness just short circuits my entire cellular matrix, threatening to make me one lethargic, ice cream-processing, TV-watching burlap sack of couch potato defeat.

All this from just the thought of failure!

What a crock of perceptual BS!

I'm in major transition, professionally and personally, which basically means I'm experiencing major transition in every direction I look, inside and out.

For 5 years, I've put my hopes, dreams, my insight, passion and intense focus, into artistic projects that held tremendous promise to inspire and support millions of people across the globe in awakening to their own divine brilliance, and eventually, to reap great financial rewards.

After 5 years, whatever the reasons, my artists are barely known outside their enraptured fan base, despite performing on national TV and touring all over North America. Sure, we've inspired countless people around the globe with brilliant, conscious mainstream music, but judging by album sales, concert attendance, and youtube views, I can measure that group of inspired fans in the tens of thousands at most, certainly nowhere near the millions I hoped for. And I've made very little money with these projects; less than \$40,000 total for 5 years work!!

Every external measure I thought would signal success has not come to pass. In fact, these artists have even given up (at least for now) creating the art I was so sure would ignite a worldwide sensation. Time's up. Game over. We all lose.

By our culture's common thinking, I've failed. I didn't accomplish what I set out to.

It's easy (and sooo tempting) to make disempowering stories about who I think I am as a result: unworthy, stupid, unattractive, incompetent, incapable, useless ... unlovable. I could flog myself mercilessly or bathe in self-loathing, or perhaps I could just run back to mommy and let her bake me chocolate chip cookies while I work to stitch the bloody wounds oozing shredded remnants of my self-identity. Don't think I haven't seriously considered that; my mom makes amazing chocolate chip cookies.

Yes, these thoughts - and worse - have passed furious across the vast sky of my mind's imagination, some like a Cat 5 hurricane.

But I know better.

During a conversation with insightful songwriter Ash Ruiz about a friend's struggling music career, Ash said "the point of life is not to succeed in our careers or find our soul mate or do great things and inspire millions ... no, the point is simply for us to wake up."

Shortly afterwards, my brilliant new life coach, Catherina, said "the only true failure is not being willing to fail."

The external objectives I envisioned when beginning my work have not come to be.

But if the big game is really about waking up - and according to my artists, most ancient wisdom teachers and Oprah Winfrey, it IS about waking up to the truth of who we are: inspired, beautiful, remarkably delicious and already-whole children of the Universe - then as I look closer I begin to notice something else.

As I contemplate these 5 years which seem to culminate in failure, I start to see the outlines of a man open from the start - even if haunted by the thought of it - to potentially someday meet that failure.

Then I see a man who enthusiastically brought a group of talented musicians and their inspiring, transformational musical brilliance on a broad sweep across North America, deeply touching the lives of countless people. Perhaps we didn't meet millions, but as in the story of the boy on the beach throwing stranded, dying starfish back into the ocean, one by one, I know that touching even one person makes a big difference. Because inside, I already know that life is so inter-connected that touching even one person ultimately means touching all of existence.

As Rumi said, we are so connected that the word "connected" doesn't even make sense.

Now, from here, I can finally see the man whose open-heart, in the midst of no obvious measure of worldly success, deeply touched all of existence.

That's right. Rather than simply seeing someone who failed to obtain externally measurable goals, I now see the bad-ass wild success of a human being who repeatedly said yes with an open, enthusiastic heart.

Sure, I can learn from failing to accomplish my goals. No doubt there's lots of nutritional juice there, but I no longer need to connect such worldly "failure" to my value as a human being.

In fact, measured by how calmly I have learned to breathe during difficult times; by how I increasingly trust in Life to show the way; by my courage to live with complete, enduring uncertainty to follow my white rabbit dream; by my willingness to laugh at my own insane thoughts ... measured in these ways, I'm successful beyond ... well ... beyond any measure.

Fascinating. It seems I just turned failure on its head and watched an absolute wealth of success tumble from its pockets.

Can you bring the light of awareness to your most recent failure and discover where you succeeded beyond measure?



Inside the cocoon, it's perfectly appropriate to do nothing.

Some of the best advice my mom ever gave me was, “when in doubt, do nothing.”

That's some tough advice for this man to swallow. Our culture doesn't really value doing nothing. In fact, collectively we pretty much loathe it. Especially in a man.

I'm not sure I even really know how to do “nothing”. Certainly not how to do it well. Look at dogs and cats; they have it down. They sit there. Mostly still. Resting. Basking. Maybe they pant a little or placidly lick themselves all over. They might look patiently at me before allowing their gaze to nonchalantly drift aside as if daydreaming about simple things like chipmunks and cupcakes.

Animals have this “do nothing” thing nailed! I'm envious.

I'm involved with lots of things; I work with GATE (The Global Alliance for Transformational Entertainment) and a few transformational artists. But GATE is currently a volunteer organization and my artists aren't in a phase of heavy work right now, so presently I'm a bit professionally discombobulated! (isn't that a fun word?)

For the first time in my adult professional life, I don't quite know what to do with most of my time.

A dear friend years ago told me he was suspicious of patience; as if being patient meant allowing oneself to be at the mercy of life's whims, embracing

passivity and letting other people/circumstances decide for you. Essentially, he was advocating for impatience as an effective way of dealing with everyday life: better to be proactive and do something - anything! - and accept the consequences rather than just sit back and accept ... well, the consequences.

Honestly, that just sounded stressful to me. I also noticed that either way, there were consequences.

Impatience can only emerge from a fearful, desperate mindset that insists this moment is not working as it's supposed to; that life doesn't know what it's doing and it would be far better to do something - anything! - to change things as quickly as possible to my liking.

I can't actually find fault with wanting to change "now" more into my liking. I typically want to feel yummy as much as possible. There's nothing wrong with that.

However, I have experienced too long the complete futility of working to change external circumstances to extinguish an internal angst. Sometimes it's not about external circumstances, like a neighbor's loud music or stinky feet.

Sometimes it's just something inside me that hurts without really knowing why, that feels disconnected or left out ... that simply feels unseen.

This anxiety tends to hit when I think life isn't showing up for me in the big ways I believe it should be. When professionally things aren't going the way I want, or I'm waking up alone, aching to share all this magic with the right woman. Or maybe I can't have a dog and just really want one.

When this anxiety hits, I often feel an intense desire to move the external pieces around fast as possible to just get relief. I'll feel desire to hook up with an ok-for-now partner or just find whatever work I can find just to have something to occupy time; even if I don't really need the money.

I often counsel my clients not to confuse movement with progress. Acting from anxious impatience is like ripping open a caterpillar's cocoon because, c'mon butterfly!! I want to experience your beauty now!!

But instead of experiencing the awesome brilliance of the butterfly's fully developed, intricately patterned wings flitting off to ride a streaking sunbeam, we pull out a soupy, colorful carcass that, sure, may be different from the caterpillar but certainly ain't a butterfly! And it sure don't fly!!

I was convinced 2012 would be a year of massive growth and excitement in my career and personal life. It's 2012 after all!! This is the year, baby!!!

But it's not shaping up that way. 2012 is clearly a year of deep, profound transition.

I wonder what the butterfly feels inside the cocoon. Does it experience anxiety thinking it isn't out flying about, pollinating plants and playing a productive role in Life's master plan? Does it fret that this damn cocoon thing takes way too long and who can I speak with about increasing the efficiency of cocoon transformation times?

I doubt it.

Just as I doubt my mom's dogs are concerned whether they're being productive members of the household when they lazily watch her vacuum fluffy sheets of their loose hair off the couch.

I'm not advocating for laziness as a lifestyle, or for husbands to act like house pets and watch their wives do all the housework. I'm only suggesting that life may sometimes call for us in the larger picture to be patient and do nothing.

Deeper processes may be taking place within that we're not conscious of. The Universe may be rearranging circumstances such that waiting to act at the very moment we're called to act - versus acting now for the sake of simply doing *something* - will set us up for brilliant success that also deeply aligns with our inner compass, our deepest truth.

So despite my claustrophobia, I'm going to be patient and trust I'll eventually emerge a handsome butterfly with fully formed wings. I'd rather take that chance than risk prematurely ripping myself outta this discomfort only to drip down the stalk a gooey, sluggish travesty of life's possibilities.

Is life calling you deeply to be patient? Do you notice the difference between patiently and enthusiastically working in alignment with your deepest truth and simply working for the sake of doing something - anything!?



To accomplish your dreams, you've simply got to show up.

I recently told a young artist asking me for advice about a career in music that there's just no guarantees in the entertainment biz ... well, except one. If you don't show up - and I mean day after day after year after year - you're guaranteed NOT to succeed.

Right now, I'm in the Santa Monica guest room I've been renting the last 4 months, clothes and suitcases and costumes and dust masks and all kinds of tomfoolery strewn about. I'm packing for two very different journeys.

First, I'm leaving tomorrow for a week in the northern Nevada desert where I'm attending Burning Man, that massive extravaganza of liberated human expression and unfathomable imagination. Then, right after I get home and take a 3-hour shower, I need to find a new place to live ... again.

You know how Mastin talks about his years-long journey of complete uncertainty, following the incessant whisper of a deeper calling? The one in which he slept on couches and made little income and - my inspiring personal favorite - was rejected by over 100 women over about a 5 year period?

Yeah, I'm pretty much on that journey. Only I sleep on more beds than couches, and I haven't had the courage to approach that many women during my time of instability. Serious props to Mastin for that!

I used to make decent money as a military officer and a lot of money later in "corporate America". When I left my \$10,000 per month job to manage a Miami band I had fallen in love with, a band I knew would help heal the world with its incredible AND conscious, life-affirming pop music, I thought

for sure within a few years we'd be rolling in financial prosperity. I made \$25 my first month with them. A year later, I was making about \$250 per month. Still, I was fully confident we were destined to touch hearts and shake booties the world over.

I never imagined six years later I'd be couch surfing around Los Angeles, still pursuing that dream.

But this is what “showing up” for a dream may sometimes look like.

Sometimes it looks like couch surfing and unsettling uncertainty. Sometimes it looks like no one is paying attention to the wildly inspiring inspirations you're either creating or supporting. Sometimes it looks like you have no idea where your rent money is gonna come from this month. It may even look like you not having rent money this month.

Showing up for your dream sometimes means going through things that you never imagined or desired for your life.

The director/actor Tyler Perry says in his inspiring video blog, “How to be Successful”, that his company has a motto: “Where Even Dreams Believe”. He shares in this video (which I highly encourage you to watch), that his own experience taught him that showing up is essential, and it's no guarantee of any outcome. He affirms that it's common in pursuit of a dream that you get to places where you can't hardly bear the burden of the dream anymore. It's then that “that dream has to take on the belief for you” ... when your dream must believe in you.

It's been my dream for 16 years, since I was 22 and a young lieutenant in the US Air Force, that I would offer my life in powerful service to humanity's awakening to its own brilliance. I didn't know the details of what that might look like. But I knew I could never sell sugar water to the planet. I knew that on balance my time on this planet would have to leave it a bit more uplifted for my being here. For 6 years it's looked like managing transformational artists.

These last few months, as I undergo what feels like complete upheaval on every level of my experience - personal and professional - I've had to surrender ever more deeply my own will to the wisdom of that dream.

As I head off to Burning Man tomorrow, I'm reminded of an interesting phenomenon. It's imperative to have goggles and a dust mask at Burning Man because the festival takes place on a 200-square mile desert lake bed and you're essentially living on a bed of fine white powder dust. Sometimes that lake bed whips up a massive storm with powerful wind-driven clouds of dust that can obscure vision beyond a few feet and last for hours.

Life may sometimes appear like that when you show up for a dream. You may feel like you're caught in an intense dust storm with obscured vision, uncertain about which way to go. Sometimes it passes fast and you can see clearly again. Sometimes the dust storm just seems to go on ... and on ... and on.

But that storm will pass. It always does.

Can you imagine if Mastin had woke up on a couch one day and said, "I'm tired of sleeping on couches, I'm gonna go get a real job"? We wouldn't have The Daily Love. There was never a guarantee that his dream would yield the fruit it has. He couldn't possibly know that Oprah Winfrey would become a friend.

But Mastin kept showing up. Every day. One blog. One email. ... and whole lotta tweets.

Mastin's journey has been deeply inspiring to me. I can't know that my work will yield the fruit I long for. But that's out of my hands, anyway. It's my job to just keep showing up.

To let the dream believe in me.

I surrender.

I'm off to Burning Man.

Dust storms ... take me away!!!!

p.s. what would simply "showing up" for your dream look like today??



You already have permission ... and you never needed it.

This past weekend, I attended the “*Lightning in a Bottle*” (LIB) festival in southern California. LIB is kind of a “*Burning Man*” Festival warm-up weekend, though in the same way you go to Kindergarten to warm-up for a Ph.D. program.

While I was there, I had a conversation with a brilliant artist friend that completely blew open and beautifully clarified my own understanding of this global shift we seem to be moving through.

If you’ve only heard about Burning Man, you probably have some idea that it’s one of the most other-worldly festivals on the planet. One of my other friends (whose clearly never been) recently said, “yeah, it’s that naked hippie festival, right?”

No, not quite. While you may encounter a few naked hippies there, Burning Man Festival is really about “permission”. Just as The Daily Love community is also about “permission”. Just as Oprah Winfrey’s work is about “permission”.

Think about this: the global shift happening on our planet right now may really be a shift in our understanding of “permission”.

It seems to be fundamental in our human nature to seek permission from the world around us; permission to feel what we feel, to think what we think, to behave the way we want to behave, to dress the way we want to dress. Often, we find ourselves at odds with what we feel deep inside to be true for ourselves and what most of our social community loudly endorses as appropriate and right. Thus, we suffer, because this contrast suggests something is wrong with us, that we’re somehow different from everyone else and that this is not ok ... and we buy into that insanity, which hurts.

As we read The Daily Love blogs, watch Oprah’s Life Classes, experience gatherings like Burning Man and LIB; as we both discover and build more and more a world - and please note, we are both the explorers AND the architects of our world - in which we are given permission to be ourselves and give others permission to be themselves, we discover that who we are

right now is not just ok, but divinely inspired, even necessary for this magical world to be complete!

Then, after this radical discovery, things really get exciting. Because the next thing that happens is the realization that we never actually needed permission outside ourselves in the first place. Nor has another ever needed our permission, either.

This is the shift that's happening. We're discovering that we don't need to struggle to conform to social opinions about what is appropriate, or right, or beautiful. We are already appropriate, and right, and beautiful, just as we are. RIGHT NOW. and we discover that everyone around us is also already appropriate, and right, and beautiful.

There's no job we need to keep, no amount of money we need to make, no right person we need to marry, no right thoughts we need to think, no right ambitions to have, no particular right way to live ... there's nothing we can do or be or get that will make us any more amazing than we already are right now.

This powerful insight frees us to simply, fully express who we are in this moment, whatever that looks like. Importantly, it also allows us to support everyone else doing the same.

Events like Burning Man Festival and communities like The Daily Love are so thrilling because we get to witness first-hand the unfathomable brilliance that emerges from the imaginations of people who are fully self-approved to live out their dreams and inspirations in the present moment.

Sure, there are a lot of people working to fight this shift, scared of the hell they think will break loose when they give others permission to live out inspirations that don't jive with their own.

Truth is, you really should see Burning Man. To the mind scared of stepping outside a particularly specific way of thinking, the unfathomable cacophony of sounds and sights and expressions of imagination might be overwhelming and confusing, even frightening. To some, even The Daily Love world of self-love and self-approval may seem inappropriate and offensive.

However, as you're discovering, to be among those creating and living this world of complete self-permission, is to experience a world of deliciously unconditional love, authentic expression, sweet vulnerability, compassion, a lot of laughter, and inspired action for the benefit of all.

The shift we're experiencing is about permission. Permission to simply be ourselves.

Imagine what us human beings are going to create on this planet as we deepen our experience of self-approval, giving ourselves complete permission to live out our unique inspirations today, all the while supporting others in theirs.

What possibilities do you see leaping out of your heart for both yourself and our planet??

p.s. deep props to brilliant illustrator/artist Dave Zaboloski for sharing his insight around permission.



True Transformation - Embrace the Void.

“When going through Hell, keep going.” ~ Winston Churchill

I'm driving to Death Valley tonight with my music artist, Ash Ruiz, for a desert sunrise photo shoot at 430am.

Driving to Death Valley is powerfully symbolic for me as I'm in the chaotic throws of a deep transformational moment ... you could say the “shift is really hitting the fan!”

I'm in the midst of that kind of rare Transformation that grinds down deep into your cellular matrix and with brute force and no apology just rips your tired electrons out of their atomic orbits, injects each one with a bitter wheatgrass cocktail before tossing 'em all up in the air like confetti, and then simply sits back and smiles smugly as each little bit of you slowly drifts back

together to form some newly imagined being whose fundamental nature no longer resembles that which existed just moments prior.

THAT is Transformation with an oversize capital “T”!!

Often this kind of deep Transformation gets kickstarted by Life abruptly reaching in and ripping away from us our prized beliefs, circumstances, people, etc. like a crazed hot bikini wax specialist on an uninvited sacred waxing mission! (I consulted my three sisters and two mothers for metaphors. This one won). And sometimes we finally get enough sense to do some wax ripping ourselves.

Either way, before a satisfying new reality has a chance to replace what’s been ripped away (and we’ll leave behind the bikini wax metaphor here, otherwise things will just get awkward), if we’re really in the midst of True Transformation, we are inevitably confronted with a period of nothingness.

“No-Thing-ness”

No-thing-ness is an experience during which our precious, fundamental truths about life, such as who we are, what we’re supposed to do, who we’re supposed to be with, how we’re supposed to be, etc. become unclear. We may not even be capable of imagining what could replace our current reality, currently crumbling at our feet.

Genuine No-Thing-ness is a place in which our identity, the very basic idea of who we think we are, loses certainty and we find nothing rushing in to save us from this confounding void. (By the way, did you catch that? “No-thing” rushes in to fill the void ... Sit with it.)

However, this time of No-Thing-ness is a delicious and mostly misunderstood gift of True Transformation. For that moment, if we choose to see it, we get to directly experience our true nature as infinite beings of this wondrous Uni-verse. Rather than identifying ourselves by some set of circumstances or responsibilities, a job, a relationship, a religion, a name, for that moment of No-Thing-ness we get to be ... possibility, itself!!

Let me repeat that. In confronting “No-Thing-ness”, we get to experience our true nature as POSSIBILITY, ITSELF!!

Yes, as creative engines made of Universal desire, we are every moment empowered to freshly invent ourselves and the world around us. We can create anything, imagine anything, dream anything ... BE anything.

We are literally Earth, come alive. Conscious stardust. We just usually live in ignorance of that. Transformation only serves to remind us.

To truly reinvent ourselves and create new realities, we must let go our stories of the past. This is the invitation of No-Thing-ness. It's frightening, I know. If I am NOT Bryan, the manager of this artist, or the boyfriend of that woman, or the guy that always has satisfying work to do, and who has a nice home, enough money and his shit together (and life is showing me that I'm not always ANY of those things) ... then who am I?

Often we rush to fill this odd No-Thing-ness with new partners, new jobs, new beliefs, new circumstances, which really only delays the opportunity for True Transformation. Simply witness how many mistakes you've sworn you learned from and would never repeat again, only to live them again soon after. ... Can I get an Amen!?!

There's a great line in the Will Smith movie "I Am Legend". Years after human civilization has ground to a halt and is near extinction, a woman says, "We can hear God speak to us when it is silent."

In the quiet space of No-Thing-ness, when I'm not distracted by all the circumstances, relationships, responsibilities, and beliefs that I normally use to define myself, I see clearly that I'm just a brilliant child of and actually wanted by this Uni-verse!

How do I know the Uni-verse wants me? Because I'm here. It created me. Just as it created you.

I'm not exactly sure what this child of the Uni-verse is supposed to do next, however. As I wrote earlier, everything in my life is completely uncertain right now. It seems for this moment I'm just supposed to drive to Death Valley for a photo shoot.

I am encouraged by the Death Valley National Park website which says that "rare rainstorms bring vast fields of wildflowers. Lush oases harbor tiny fish and refuge for wildlife and humans ... a great diversity of life survives in

Death Valley.” It seems even Death Valley, despite its harsh, lonely, desperate conditions, offers powerful gifts of beauty and resilience.

So as my caterpillar body burns in this void of No-thing-ness, which like a black hole slowly devours past ideas of who I think I am or what I’m supposed to do, my Transformational journey continues undeterred towards the next brilliant Wonderland awaiting my butterfly spirit.

Have you experienced this place of No-Thing-ness? What have you discovered there?



You Can’t Push The River.

I’ve never tried to pull a caterpillar out of its cocoon, hoping to catch an early glimpse of the butterfly. I don’t recall ever ripping open the closed bud of a spring flower, desperate to experience its full bloom glory. I do, however, sometimes eat raw cookie dough before I bake the cookie. But if I always did that, I would never experience the sweet succulent warmth of crispy melting chocolate-flavored heaven swarming my taste-buds and rocking my entire being with orgasmic waves of sensual bliss ... and I do love a good cookie.

Anyway, I know the caterpillar must emerge in its own time for her wings to be fully formed. I know that flower is under a contract with the universe for which I can only be a steward, guiding with proper nutrients, ensuring access to sunlight. I cannot force the fulfillment of that contract before its time by drowning it in water and chemicals. And, I know that cookie ... well, if cookie dough were truly better than the actual cookie, there would never have been cookies. Just cookie dough.

Despite knowing better, it’s amazing how often I force my will on life all around me, ripping open cocoons and flower buds, pushing things to happen before their time. Even when life clearly reveals that my will is not the driving factor - and I’m noticing more and more it’s pretty much never the driving factor - I’ll throw my will around as if I know what’s best for the Uni-verse.

“It's wise not to push the river, Bryan,” said Bob Duggan, a TEDx Speaker and founder of Tai Sophia Healing Institute in Maryland, to me years ago as I worked feverishly to make an event happen at his school. Although there was little actual support from his staff, I believed I had something profound to offer with that event, and I wasn't genuinely willing to consider objections. What I had, I was convinced the world needed.

Long story short, that event didn't come off.

Nor did the lesson.

Countless times since, I have worked myself into frenzies of all shapes and varieties, in moments large and small, to make something happen that just didn't seem to have the full support of the Uni-verse. Sometimes whatever I was forcing along actually did happen, at least technically. But my forceful approach often left a wake of resentment and disconnection, sometimes subtle, sometimes obvious, between me and the world around me that hadn't been part of my original vision.

It was as if the cookie got baked, but the higher oven temperature I used, combined with compromises I made to hasten mixing the batter, left me with a burnt, crunchy mound that tasted like a dry sugar biscuit. Despite not one orgasmic spasm in the tasting, I would figure next time I just need to crank the temperature up a bit higher, shorten the mixing time even more ... and definitely add extra sugar.

Result? Ever sweeter, charred stones of flour that began to chip my teeth.

Blessedly, a few challenging experiences have begun really bringing this lesson home.

About 6 months ago I crossed the subtle line from simply *offering* my talents and skills to *pushing* them on someone. It was an opportunity for which I had an incredible amount of enthusiasm and excitement. But instead of allowing the moment to unfold naturally at its own inspired pace, I grabbed scissors and started poking at the cocoon, impatient to drag the butterfly out and set her flying! Well, that butterfly never flew. The holes I poked leaked the nutrients she apparently needed for her wings to grow. I was deeply

disheartened when I saw what I had done, but it was the perfect, bittersweet lesson. (no butterflies were harmed in the making of this metaphor)

The road to hell is paved with good intentions, indeed.

The very same recent morning that lesson landed, I was about to crank up the temperature on another critical project because I wasn't convinced things were happening at the pace I wanted them to happen. Fortunately, as I saw myself reach for my phone to make the call, I noticed an ominous anxiety wrapping itself around me. I stopped. I allowed myself to breath. I then told myself I had already performed my role in allowing the cocoon to form and the nutrients to be delivered. Now it was time to hold a safe space and protect the cocoon, not harass the caterpillar.

Later that same evening, I received the most divine gift as the butterfly began to emerge under her own power, winking playfully at me. She's still emerging as I write this (in the actual form of a song being written for a powerful upcoming event). I confess I'm still a bit nervous. Something in my thinking demands she be born by next Tuesday. I can literally feel the compulsive movement in my body to hasten the process.

But as I realize that it's just not true, that she doesn't have to be born by next Tuesday; that the world won't stop spinning and no one will genuinely love me less, even if she never emerges, I'm able to relax into my body and breath and simply be here ... right where I am, right now, allowing these words to pour forth from the authentic, deliciously sweet depths of my own true heart, the same as your heart, in which there exists a profound love and enthusiasm for life no matter what actually happens.

This belief, that what I want to happen simply must happen ... for the world to be at peace, function efficiently, spin, be round, be fun, be easy, be safe, love me, protect me, entertain me, etc. ... it's just a lie.

As I really allow this to sink in, I can literally feel my body, my thoughts, relaxing into an experience of causeless joy that Benedictine Monk, David Steindl-Rast, described as "that kind of happiness that doesn't depend on what happens".

I could go on and on with such tales as I've described here. I see clearly how this lie pervades my life; how it pervades humanity, in fact.

This phenomenon is at play everywhere, in our daily lives and in the larger world around us. The degraded quality and endangering of our food supply is a direct result of our collective insistence that food grow faster, cheaper, and in greater quantities. When was the last time you ate a truly orgasmic tomato from the grocery store? They don't come that way anymore. They're plucked before they are ripe.

The trashing of our oceans and rivers is a direct result of our wanting to urgently experience prosperity, with far less care for whether product life cycles are in harmony with the whole.

And we routinely damage our relationships when our partner doesn't do what we want him or her to do. We're so busy trying to rip open the bud to hurry and enjoy the flower's fragrance and wild beauty that we completely miss the beauty and wondrous miracle of the life-holding bud itself.

Where are you insisting life serve you the cookie before it's fully baked?



Everything has its wondrous moment of Bloom ... before it fades away.

Mind-blowing sex, sweet butterfly-stomach romance, big nights out, the beauty of that woman/man you covet and can't seem to have, your own beauty, parenthood, careers, volcanoes, flowers, our bodies, broken hearts, caffeine highs, arguments with your partner, nations, species, beliefs, spiritual experiences, youth, marriage ... absolutely everything has its moment of full wondrous expression before it inevitably fades back into the silence from which it arose. Every minute we spend in desperation trying to hold onto (or get rid of) that which just cannot last anyway, is a minute spent overlooking the peace and juicy wonderment available in this exact moment, regardless of what's happening.

“Joy is that kind of happiness that does not depend on what happens.” ~ David Steindl-Rast, a Benedictine Monk into Buddhism.

I have spent so much of my life either running towards something or running away from it. I have a fascinating capacity for expecting experiences, circumstances, things, people, etc. to make me happy forever or to ruin my life (and everything in between), thus living painfully outside the awareness that absolutely everything has its moment of bloom and will inevitably, simply, fade away.

The evidence for this completely surrounds all of us. Our entire life experience is witness to this phenomenon of perpetual coming and going, expanding and contracting, inhaling and exhaling. It is a source of our greatest sorrows. It also holds the key to our greatest capacity for true joy.

A few years ago, I went through a phase (for even this "phase" only had its moment) shortly after reading Eckhart Tolle's book, [A New Earth](#). As I would sense I was about to move from one place to another - say, simply moving from the living room to the bedroom - I would silently ask myself, “Am I complete here with this experience? Am I leaving in anxiety, as if there's somewhere better for me to be right now? Or is this moment, what I came here to enjoy and experience, simply complete?”

It was a powerful reminder that (a) everything must inevitably end, and (b) there is ultimately nowhere for me to go. Anywhere I go, I'm always going to be HERE, right where I am, anyway. There is no escaping myself. There is no “better” place to get to. There is simply the next moment, the next experience. It might feel different than this one, but it, too, will have its full expression, and inevitable conclusion.

As I dove into those questions at that time, I noticed how calm my mind and body became. I noticed sometimes I even sat a bit longer, in silence, wherever I was. Sometimes a reeeeally juicy peace, a playful, full-bodied joy even, would overcome me, simply because I knew that right where I was at that moment, was perfectly enough.

Everything around you is going to disappear. EVERYTHING. Even your own body. The things you love deeply and can't imagine living without. The things you despise and have been trying desperately to get rid of.

This is good news. Because it liberates you to simply enjoy what's happening in THIS moment, regardless whether the sensations feel good or not. The real beauty is that even if you don't like what's happening, you don't have to DO anything to make it go away. Sure, try your best if you will, but even pain and suffering will have its season of full bloom.

Byron Katie, author of Loving What Is, said, "If you want to get rid of something, you must first allow it to flourish."

Now I know that one might chafe a bit; I've certainly struggled with the idea and it's worth a whole other exploration. For now, simply place your awareness on the fact that it's wondrously impossible you're even alive. Just really soak that in. Be where you are, in the sense that you allow yourself to fully inhabit your experience right now. Whether you like it or not; no matter how hard you struggle to keep it or lose it, this moment will inevitably give way to the next. And the next. And the next.

This is your life, this very moment, YOU are in delicious, sweet fantastic bloom. Enjoy every little crazy bit of it!!



The word “difficult” is unnecessary vocabulary.

As far as I can tell, we've done nothing to earn our lifetimes on this planet.

I've never heard of sperm training to win the frenzied race. ... have you? No, this life was simply awarded each of us by the most improbable lottery victory in all creation.

Every single breath, heartbeat, kiss, smack in the face, every victory, defeat, chocolate chip cookie, lying spouse and toothless smile is a purely unconditional gift from the Uni-verse ... all for you.

Sure, we humans go through a lot in our lifetimes.

Our bodies get sick. We interact with people that we want to love and connect with and get rejected. We lose jobs we enjoy. We lose money. We make decisions that don't work out the way we hoped. We experience addictions of infinite variety - drugs, sex, shopping, TV, stressful thoughts - addictions that often result in our lives smashed up against the giant boulders of unwavering reality.

We lose people we love. Sometimes we even seem to lose ourselves.

We all go through stuff. It never ends. During the last two years, I experienced a transition which seemed to wipe away years of hard, impassioned work like light dust off a coffee table. Although I've come through the worst of it, there are still days when I experience feeling a bit lost, disheartened, or just unsure about my choices.

You may be going through something right now, in some aspect of your life, that has you wrapped up in a tight little burrito of worry, doubt, fear ... maybe even sheer dread.

At times, it may seem like you will never get to fully, sustainably, experience what you so deeply want to experience: freedom, comfort, passion, peace, excitement, joy.

Let's face reality, though: right now, as you're reading this, in this moment, you're just fine.

You're almost certainly in a safe, comfortable spot. You've got an electronic toy in your hands and eyeballs to read these words - or ears to hear the dictation, fingers to interpret the bumps on a braille pad. I certainly doubt you're reading this as you sprint across rooftops frantically fleeing a boogiemán. (though if you are, I strongly suggest stopping, turning around, and hugging your boogiemán. that's all he really wants. a free hug.)

Life on this planet as a human being is just wondrous. We humans are expressions of an infinite Uni-verse. We are literally earth come alive! And while we're here, stuff happens. All kinds of imaginative and unthinkable stuff. That's the non-negotiable deal. At least until we die and then stuff stops happening. (although who knows if that's even true.)

It's easy to lose focus of the amazing miracles happening right now in SUPPORT of each of us even being here, especially if we give our full attention to the so-called "difficult" stuff.

But that's the thing. Anything that happens in our lives is only difficult because we label it "difficult."

There is nothing we can not experience with open arm gratitude if we resist the temptation to label it as "difficult". I know that sentence is one of those awkward double-negatives, but the point is we can experience anything - losing a job, our home, a limb, freedom, even our own selves - without insisting the experience is "difficult". We only make that choice in our own heads, anyway.

Now, I know some of the things we go through on this planet are truly painful ... and excruciatingly so, like losing an intimate loved one or a child. I don't want to make light of such experiences. Although I genuinely believe we can meet profound grieving with gratitude and appreciation, as well, I'm going to respectfully leave this for another time.

We live in a culture that tells us to run away from our pain rather than embrace it. But in running away from it, even denying these "pain" experiences, popping pills to excess or indulging our distractions, we either just prolong the pain or bury it such that it festers, grows, and inevitably returns in some form of all debilitating dis-ease.

It's tempting - and quite popular - to label a lot of what we humans deal with as "difficult".

However, you and I are no longer interested in "popular". After all, we're up to big transformational living!! ... not living like sheeple.

You can label life and its infinite variety of circumstance "difficult" if you choose. You certainly make yourself right when you do so. But when you

focus your eyes on the fact that it's a complete, 100% bona-fide miracle you've even been given the opportunity to experience these things called "having a child" ... "having a body" ... "experiencing love" ... "experiencing heartache" ... or just simply "time on this planet" ... you find that the word "difficult" has no useful place in your vocabulary.

You can relax and allow yourself to notice all the amazing stuff that supports you even having these crazy experiences in the first place ... like the ground you stand on, the air you breathe, the skin that contains you, the clothes that warm you, the brain that interprets for you (and keeps your intestines and everything else functioning that you wouldn't have a clue how to operate if it wasn't automatic!), the waters that water you, and the heart that animates you.

What do you think would shift in your life if you dropped the word "difficult" from your vocabulary and started telling yourself another story, that your life and everything appearing within it is an absolute miracle? Might events, circumstances, experiences show up differently for you?

Please share your thoughts in the comments below ... and enjoy the absolute miracle of your life! It's all so gloriously fleeting :)



Living on Bonus Time.

When I was 25, I was in a car accident that should have ended my life. Literally one tiny second separated me from being smashed to smithereens head-on by a Mac truck on a snowy Oklahoma highway. But rather than going out splat-on-a-windshield style, I barely squirted in between two rapidly oncoming 16-wheelers and crashed into an exit sign on the opposite side of the road ... with nothing but a cute little scratch on my forehead to show for it (and a remarkably sore body two days later). I remember vividly my friend, a woman in the driver's seat next to me, screaming in high-pitched horror as I watched with a curious deer-in-headlights serenity this massive, shiny steel truck grill barreling towards my face.

One simple thought flashed through my mind: "What is this going to feel like?"

I'm now 37. I've spent many a moment since that accident upset about some otherwise trivial thing - a girlfriend's criticism, my dad's disapproval, a traffic ticket, someone eating my last cookie. But when my attention somehow finds its way back to that day when my own death was vividly imminent, I realize I'm living on bonus time.

Suddenly, it's like I've been slapped upside my crown chakra!! My stressful story of whatever I think is happening at the moment just completely, utterly, fantastically implodes as a much larger awareness rushes through my being, filling me with gratitude that I'm even alive to experience this improbable moment!

My perspective shifts completely ... everything becomes a gift.

My girlfriend and I are breaking up ... Wow. I got to experience having a girlfriend!

My car needs an expensive repair ... Amazing. I get to experience driving a car and somehow having the means to pay for the ongoing experience.

My business isn't making money yet ... Incredible. I get to walk the journey of creating something from nothing, perhaps even watch it rise and fall and never turn a profit no matter how hard I try. What an experience!

My mom is sick ... I emerged from that body; what a miracle that I now get to participate in taking care of it!

I know this may sound trite and exaggerated. But look, it's one thing to know intellectually that life is a gift, that there's only this present moment, that we should be grateful for everything ... yada yada blah blah blah.

It's another to reeeeeeeeeeally marinate in the embodied awareness that by all calculations, I should be dead at this very moment. Think of the billions of people who were once alive that are no longer here. What about the improbable reality that you and I were even born at all? Do you know how many other wildly ambitious sperm you competed against for one lone prize? Something like ... zillions!! Do you understand the odds against your success?

Why, you've already won the most statistically impossible-to-win and insanely-stupid-to-spend-any-money-on Powerball Lottery in the entire known Universe!!!

Your Prize?

One *roundtrip* of uncertain duration to Planet Earth ... which you're presently experiencing. Congratulations on your impossible success!!

The question is, what are you doing with this bonus time? Let me repeat that, because the question is not “what are you GOING to do?” ... the question is WHAT ARE YOU DOING ... WHO ARE YOU BEING ... NOW?

I encourage you to really let this really sink in, because this bonus time will end, probably before you're ready.

Just remember this one thing: you never know what comes first, tomorrow ... or your death.

Steve Jobs famously asked himself everyday when he woke up, "Do I feel good about what I'm going to do today? Do I like who I am?" He lived with constant awareness that death was always lurking and would someday knock on his door, which eventually it did ... and it took him before even WE were ready to let him go.

When we relax into the awareness that each moment, painful or delightful, is just part of this improbable existence, beauty and gratitude blossom in our lives in ways we had never experienced either before. We get to see everything, every triumph, tragedy and traffic ticket, as a gift. We even start to oddly appreciate the ... ummm, let's say “sharp” fragrances of the shitty parts.

That doesn't mean we make them last longer than they need to, but we no longer resist their presence in our lives as we used to. We no longer suffer as deeply as we would before, because we now walk with more awareness that this painful experience is just evidence that we're still alive, that it has a gift for us, even if it's difficult to see ... and like everything else, our lives included, it will pass.

Consider this: what's one challenging aspect of your life today that might be completely transformed by just noticing it's a miracle you're even alive to experience it at all?

Enjoy the journey!!



Want To Love Yourself (and Others) and Feel Great? Welcome Insult.

Have you heard the expression, “the world is your mirror”?

I originally learned that means whatever I saw in the world/people around me only reflected something within me. More interestingly, whatever I *rejected* in others, in the world “outside” me, only pointed at the same quality within me.

At first, that idea pissed me off.

I despised my father's obvious arrogance; there was no way I was arrogant like him. I despised my then-girlfriend's shallow judgmental thoughts; I didn't judge people like she did. In fact, I was awesome, possibly even headed for sainthood. After all, the only way I could see the judgmental and arrogant nature of others was because I was so wise and insightful, so unusually compassionate and loving (it made sense at the time).

So, saintly being that I was, I would use “the mirror” as a spiritual weapon to vanquish the unseeing. For example, at the slightest provocation by that former girlfriend, like when she made a judgment about my character, I would just smash the “mirror” over her head (metaphorically speaking). It generally went something like this:

“Say what? You think *IIIIIII* am selfish, disrespectful and immature?? Weeeell, what does that say about you??? ... After all, I'm just your mirror!!” [SMASH!!!]

It was basically the spiritual version of “*I’m rubber, you’re glue, whatever you say bounces off me and sticks to you!*” Obviously, I sensed wisdom in the idea but just couldn't figure out how to make it work for anyone.

One day, a friend reacted angrily to news of a child being murdered. In discussing the “mirror” idea, he refused to accept that his angry reaction to the story meant that he also was violent and could do such a thing to a child.

I understood his objection. It seemed a solid refutation of the idea. So I went home and meditated on it.

Then it popped.

It hit me that perhaps he wouldn't do actual violence to a child, but he would do violence to that violence. He would, with his own violence, eradicate violence.

It swept through my awareness like a tsunami that only arrogance can have a problem with arrogance. Only judgment can have a problem with another who judges. Only ego can have a problem with ego. Only aggression can tell aggression to “suck it!”

My mind was blown open.

During that 4 year romantic relationship, I had developed a long, self-righteous list of my partner's “intolerable ways”. Now, I was face to face with the realization that all those things I just knew she was ... somehow, I was.

Everything supposedly “in her” that I rejected - her shallow judgment of others; her rude arrogance and blind selfishness; her emotional cruelty - oh man, I was now confronted with the astounding revelation that somehow, I was all those things.

As I went deeper, I saw that only my shallow judgments could get stuck on the limited part of her that judged and refuse to see the depths of her wondrous nature as a child of the Uni-verse. I realized the only way I could get upset when she insisted life revolve around her, was because I had a hidden desire that life actually revolve around me!! I was even emotionally

cruel ... at least towards myself (and surely towards her, too). Only a lack of emotional respect within me could keep me (and watch her) living in such emotional pain.

Suddenly, there was nothing I could pin on her that I couldn't pin on myself, too.

I would love to say from that moment of realization life completely changed for me. It's more fair to say this awareness only continues to grow every day.

Life continues to "offend me" constantly - aggressive drivers, wildly simplistic politicians, cell phones at the movies, higher taxes on the poor, traffic tickets (especially in LA! I got one today!).

Rather than blaming life for being unkind, every uncomfortable reaction I have is now a brilliant opportunity to go inside and see how I'm being unkind to myself ... to observe how my own arrogance would smugly vanquish yours ... to notice how my own shallow judging diminishes the miracles happening all around me.

As I discover deeper layers of my own unkindness, arrogance, and more, I discover a common thread of humanity that binds us all together in one shared experience. I no longer even need to forgive your offenses because I notice they're all mine, too. All of them. There's no longer anything to forgive. I'm literally the same as you.

Compassion spontaneously arises. If I'm just as ridiculous and insane as I think you are, well, all that's really left to do is laugh about it. To even delight in the insanity of it all. As I awaken to the divine perfection within me, I begin to experience it in you, too.

Although it's definitely a work in progress, when I really allow it in, experiencing insult is just thrilling. It's the juiciest opportunity to bring awareness around the internal stuff that only gets in the way of being deeply, wildly in love with this amazing world ... with you ... exactly how you show up.

To feel great, I no longer need to manipulate, force or beg you to be different than how you choose to be. You get to show up and be you. I get to be me. I get to love you for the miracle that you are, even if you judge me, curse me,

cut me off, unfairly tax the poor, or write me a traffic ticket. By you simply being you, I get to watch all that arises in me and discover ever deeper truths about who I really am.

You really are my most cherished, brilliant, teaching mirror.

QUESTION: Think about your most recent strong, angry reaction to someone/something outside of you. Can you find the same offense inside you, as well? Does that shift anything for you?



You can't know how your actions change the world.

Recently on sabbatical from touring the country for 2 years with Here II Here, the conscious music band I manage, I took up a practice that both inspired me and scared me silly. I would simply stand on a busy street corner in Manhattan Beach, CA, for a few hours each day and hold a big black and white cardboard sign that says "You're Perfect".

Scary as it was at first (everyone will think I'm homeless ... even pretty girls!!), it's one of the most powerful meditative, self-awareness practices I've ever undertaken.

It's fascinating to watch the world (not to mention my own thoughts) show up in myriad ways. Often it shows up delighted: families stopping to take their picture with me and the sign; young teens laughing and inspired, insisting they're going to hold the sign in public, too (and often they do in that very moment); wide, joyous smiles from every race, background, age group and fashion sense!

Sometimes the world shows up awkward: suspicious eyes searching out my beggar's cup (I don't accept money ... unless it's a LOT! Just kidding ... I think); small herds of men in business casual wear sneering condescendingly in my direction; people waiting to cross the street, fidgeting nervously to avoid looking at me or the blaring sign just inches from their noses while the red crosswalk light-bright-man quietly mocks them in their discomfort.

One day, a woman drove past the sign and kept driving, as countless do. I didn't take any specific notice. A few minutes later, halfway to her home, she was compelled to turn the car around and come back. I was literally 30 seconds from leaving for the day when she walked up to me, breathless and relieved.

Talking excitedly, she shared that she'd awoken that morning into a difficult day, her left eye puffy and swollen, an unwelcome reminder of the cancerous tumor she had wrestled with and thought beaten a few years back. She sat on the sandy, sunlit beach that afternoon in disheartened solitude, praying for something to carry her through. Had she not turned her car around, I would have never known that driving past my simple sign completely shifted her experience, giving her the insight and uplift she had been desperate for.

Upon reading “**You’re Perfect**”, she realized that no matter what she was going through, no matter how her body was expressing its truth, in this grand unfolding of the Uni-verse’s infinite intelligence, everything, including her body, was already perfect. AAAAAND she can still do the “cancer dance” in the most intelligent way she knows how, but without the limiting, painful experience of believing something is “wrong” with her or her body.

After she left, positively glowing, it occurred to me I had absolutely no idea how many other countless passersby never turned around their cars, but who were similarly, deeply moved in coming across this sign held up by an otherwise seemingly inconsequential human being.

The Moral: If it inspires you, put it out there. No matter how many people ignore you or think you crazy, you just can't possibly know how you are changing the entire Uni-verse with your every thoughtful (or otherwise) action.

As the Sufi poet, Rumi, wrote, “We are all so connected that the word ‘connected’ doesn’t even make sense.”

How about you? Share a moment in the comments where you were surprised by how your actions changed the world in ways you couldn't have predicted.



Authentic Love is ALWAYS Unconditional.

“Love asks for nothing. Only personalities want something.”

~ Byron Katie

I first read this quote in the agonizing midst of the most painful relationship experience in my life. I was dating a woman I deeply loved more than any other before her, and yet what we created together ... well, I can only best describe it as *wildly passionate chaos*.

We were so *madly in love* that we were both truly “mad”. In retrospect, most of what we acted out towards each other could hardly be described as “love”. We were both acting out that beautifully human drama I like to call *“I love you just the way I wish you were”*.

As a result, we were both terribly caught up in wishing the other would act differently than either of us seemed capable of acting at the time. It’s only recently dawned on me how ironic it was, waking up next to each other with a sweet “I love you” just moments before launching attacks in our ongoing war about who had to change more so the relationship could work (meaning I / she could be happy).

I’ve since come to appreciate that Love asks for nothing. Love simply loves. Whatever is, Love just loves it. Personalities want things, and some personalities want more things than others. But Love, without actively condoning anything, embraces everything.

Love is always “unconditional”. And you might think that unrealistic or idealistic. But I suggest you consider that there’s no other kind of love than the unconditional kind, just as there’s no such thing as “99% committed”. Sure, there are impediments to the full experience of Love, particularly personalities and belief systems. Just as there are impediments to the full experience of Light, like dimmer switches, fog and eyelids. But light either is present ... or it is not present. As with Love.

Where there is a genuine experience of love, it exists simply, completely, wholly without condition. Every other kind of so-called “love” is simply the residue of either miraculous chemistry - who doesn’t love the tingly rush of

sweet romance! - or a clever ego manipulating the world around it, often very subtly, to get what it wants.

Now, you might object as I did during that painful relationship, that to love “unconditionally” really is unreasonable, the sweet dream of a foolish idealist, because it must mean that I accept even my partner’s toxic behaviors - verbal or physical abuse, lying, manipulation, etc. Surely “unconditional love” would never leave someone.

Hogwash.

You can unconditionally love and accept your partner as you confidently walk out the door. You can even unconditionally love and accept your partner as you’re dialing the police to come protect you and take him or her to jail (women can also be dangerously abusive, fellas). Leaving your partner might even turn out to be the most loving gift you could ever give them!!

Because while Love doesn’t ask anything, it sure knows how to move!!! Love is like water flowing and dancing down a river. Embracing everything it encounters, it flows smoothly around jagged rocks, finding its way brilliantly into and through the tiniest openings of any obstacle; it never stresses itself to flow uphill or fight against its own perfectly natural way; and sometimes, when amassed in significant strength, the immense force of its own pure nature completely obliterates everything in its path!

When I brought this awareness to my relationship at the time, I immediately felt incredible peace in my body ... because I could finally see the genuine, complete experience of love inside me that fully embraced her no matter how she showed up every day. In truly opening to love her, all I could see was her as a complete expression of Love! It was exhilarating!!!

I did eventually leave the relationship, but not because I wanted her to be different anymore; actually it was the opposite. In finally accepting her completely (as completely as I could, anyway), I simply had to accept that I was not likely to experience the truly magical, vulnerable conversations I wanted to have with my partner. So I blessed her deeply within my own heart, truly in love with the *actual her* more than ever before, and left in gratitude to allow other possibilities.

Who or what are you insisting be different?

I challenge you to examine who and what in life you are asking - or insisting - be different than it is. That includes yourself. Are you insisting you be different than you are? This questioning doesn't condone detrimental behaviors. It's simply an invitation to reflect on how your personality - your likes and dislikes, your memories, your hopes and dreams - works like a child playing doctor to "treat" the so-called trouble spots in your life. Notice your thoughts about how you would be fulfilled, happy, etc. if only these things were different.

Now bring the "experience of Love" into your reflection. Allow yourself to mentally embrace this thing you believe responsible for your pain. Just for a moment. Get a sense of how pure, unfiltered Love - independent of your personality, with no dimmer switch - would experience this person or situation.

Notice how your body relaxes.

Notice how new possibilities may even open up for you. For love, like water, always chooses the most delicious path according to its nature. Sometimes it waits patiently while the world around it shifts, and sometimes it surges forth in full uninhibited raging expression of its wondrous, dancing self.

I'd love to know what happens for you when you bring the experience of Love, even for just a few moments, to your thoughts about a difficult person or situation.



Discover the Joy in the Journey (because there is no destination).

The joy is in the journey. You've probably heard that before. What does that really mean? Especially when parts of the journey are challenging or just plain dreadful?

Something within me seems so unquenchably hungry to arrive somewhere, as if I'm incessantly hunting for a place of rest, of peace ... a place where I simply feel really good by no actual effort of my own. That hunger plays out as I look for a romantic partner, with the thought lurking just below my conscious mind that if I can only find the right partner, I will finally be able to relax and know that all is now forever well.

Of course, every time in my past when I thought I'd found the woman who just might be "The One", it turned out I was simply beginning a new adventure of self-discovery that would often be mildly uncomfortable at best, excruciatingly painful at worst.

Perhaps one day I will meet a woman who makes it clear to me why all the others didn't work out. Right now, however, I hear even that last sentence as just buying into the story of a destination again. More likely, I'll meet an amazing woman I'll want to build a life with ... and, well, therein lies that particular journey: building a life with.

I see this "it's the journey, there's no destination" story play out everywhere in my life. I certainly play it out over and over as a manager of music artists.

One of my artists just released their debut music video. I was there every step of the way. It started of course with making the music, writing the song and working with producers to record it. It took months, years really, building relationships with the best directors for the project, followed by months of detailed conversations and long road trips to scout locations, do photo shoots and heartstorm concepts for the video. It took months working with investors to get the money together. It took months working closely with the artist in myriad ways, simply to ensure the project was actually carried through. It only took a day to shoot the actual video. Then it took another few months of editing and feedback, editing and feedback, editing and feedback. Finally the video was ready.

The night I saw the final video for the first time, I was alone in my bedroom just before going to sleep. The director had sent me a private link. I opened it. When I saw this final vision of beauty streaming through the screen, the laughter, the celebration of life, this unfiltered expression of unconditional love for planet earth, well ... I was just flabbergasted (I love that word). All of a sudden, right before my eyes, I watched a completed, tangible video monument of human splendor and achievement.

As I strutted wildly around the room like an ecstatic rooster, high-fiving imaginary bros, I felt the elation of arrival. I experienced a moment of what simply felt like “successfully arrived at destination.”

(you can watch it here: <http://youtu.be/tRE63-tNQLM>)

Goal accomplished. I had just successfully created a worldclass music video that would add joy and light to the world while showcasing my artists’s brilliant music in a way that’s sure to get people’s attention.

Phew!!! Hallelujah!! Kingdom Come!! All Hail Ceasar!! Cinnamon Sugar Toast Delight!!

But as that moment passed and we actually released the video into the “real world” a few weeks later, and after YouTube views initially shot up then began leveling off, my euphoria quickly morphed into the awareness that not only had we not arrived anywhere, but in fact a new journey had just begun.

We live lives of never-ending motion ... motion that our egos hope is always “forward”, although if there’s no destination, how can we ever tell which direction we’re actually moving in? Perhaps you’ve noticed times when it seems like you’ve just gone “two steps forward, but one step back.”

Well, where are you going two steps forward to? If there’s truly no final destination - or at least, if once we reach a destination there’s only another journey there waiting for us - why are we so rushed to get somewhere? Anyway, there’s no guarantee you’ll ever get to where you think you need to be going, anyway. Life is far too unpredictable and fickle for us to ever know what comes next. Might as well enjoy this particular journey you’re on right now as if it could be the last journey you ever embark on. Because it might be.

One of the great challenges our planet is working to overcome right now, I believe, is our persistent, insistent belief that there’s actually somewhere for us to go. In the name of somewhere to go, some destination we’ve gotta get to, we tromp quickly along our path with little or no regard for the miracles and beauty along the way. Often in our haste we lay waste to our surrounding beauty and completely miss out on the everyday miracles pervading our world. Witness the plastification of our oceans, the gridlock of

our highways (where are we all so desperately needing to go??), the voracious humanity-oppressing plundering of worldly riches.

It seems life on this planet is simply one of perpetual motion. Alanis Morissette, in her song, “Incomplete”, sings:

“I have been running so sweaty my whole life
Urgent for a finish line
And I have been missing the rapture this whole time
Of being forever incomplete”

There are so many delicious gifts in my world right now, regardless of whether I have the “right woman” to share them with. And after 6 years working with brilliant heart-centered artists, whether or not they ever break out of obscurity into ... well, “scurity” ... I can authentically say the wonder of that journey itself is perhaps the most amazing adventure so far in my lifetime; an adventure that will continue until one day I decide simply to set off on a different journey.

Give yourself a break. Keep moving if you must, but be aware that when you get there, you’ll just discover another journey waiting. Perhaps you think that one will be more interesting than the one you’re on right now. Could be. But there's no guarantee you'll ever make it to that journey, and along the way you might miss out on the incredible beauty and miracles all around you ... RIGHT NOW.

I love to remember this Irish saying (at least I’m gonna credit the Irish for it):
“When God made time, She made enough of it.”

Breathe. Right now, you are exactly where you’re supposed to be. Enjoy the journey!



The Journey Continues

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