

Laurusnotes: The Lost Keys



*Wit and Wisdom for Living a More
Successful and Meaningful Life*

By
Brad Yates

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Note: These essays are in the order in which they first appeared – not the order in which they must be read. While it is certainly alright to read them in this order, feel free to look at the titles and trust your instincts as to which one to read first, or next. Enjoy!

Do You Measure Up?

Yes – you do.

Sorry – kinda jumping to the point there – but I do want that to be clear, lest there was any doubt. Get it? Got it? Good. You may now continue with the article...

We recently took our kids to Legoland down near San Diego. Great fun – particularly if your kids are in the 3-10 age range. But even there, they have a couple of rides that have a height requirement. You know how it is – at the entrance to the ride, there is a picture of a cartoon character holding his hand out at a certain height saying something to the effect of, “You must be this tall to go on this ride.” It can be a little disappointing for those who don’t measure up – particularly when they only miss by a few centimeters. But the park has to do it for safety reasons, so what are you going to do? If they think my child needs to be 48” to be safe on this ride, who am I to argue? I want my kids to have fun, but I also want them to be safe.

Just like we want ourselves to be safe. That is the prime function of the subconscious mind – to keep us safe. Over time, we develop a sophisticated comfort zone that lets us know – often in no uncertain terms – when we are pushing the boundaries of what is safe for us. Some of us, like, say, Richard Branson (Virgin Record, Airlines, Cola...), have a pretty wide comfort zone. Others of us find it impossible to even step outside our front door.

Think of life as a great big amusement park. There are tons of fun things to do – particularly all the rides. Many of these rides make us look up and say, “Wow – that looks awesome.” Maybe it’s an exciting career, or driving a fancy sports car, or asking out that certain someone... What is it for you? What do you think of as definitely being an “E ticket attraction?” And then... many of us decide we don’t measure up. Perhaps without even going up and standing next to the measuring pole, we figure that dream is for someone else...someone better, stronger, more this, more that...taller. We can come up with plenty of reasons why we shouldn’t attempt to go on this ride...and often why we don’t deserve to do so.

Be very clear...there is no park attendant telling us that we are not big enough for this ride...we do it to ourselves.

Are you doing that...?

Cut it out.

You have already been admitted to the amusement park. You have an abundance of tickets. And...you are tall enough to ride the rides. All of ‘em. Sure, the same real-world safety warnings apply regarding people with heart conditions and the like, so you

may want to consult your physician before you plan your expedition up Mt. Everest. But don't be faint of heart when you look up at the roller coasters of life. There are downs as well as ups, yes – but that's life – and that's what makes it exciting.

Make the decision that you didn't come to the amusement park to sit on a bench and watch the others have all the fun. Dream big. What ride have you been admiring, thinking, "That looks fun...if only I were tall enough...?"

Go for it. Stride right up to the entrance.

And as you pass the picture of the cartoon character, pull yourself up to your full height – and notice that you tower above his hand – and will do so more and more each time you do this.

Enjoy the ride!

"The mind is not a vessel to be filled but a fire to be kindled."

- Plutarch

Free Crab Tomorrow

There is a seafood restaurant down by the river here in Sacramento that has the following ad boldly painted on the outside:

“Free Crab Tomorrow”

Now is that a great ad, or what? It certainly catches the attention – and it is absolutely safe for the restaurant. Since tomorrow never comes, they will never have to shell out... (sorry – I couldn’t resist.) (Just tap – the pain will subside, eventually...)

Anyhow... this restaurant has made powerful use of an unfulfillable promise. Here’s the question – how often do you get yourself excited about something and likewise withhold it by scheduling it “tomorrow?”

“I’ll start my diet/exercise program tomorrow...”

“I’ll call that person tomorrow...”

“I’ll work on that proposal tomorrow...”

The list is endless. And, when asked why you haven’t done it, you can answer, quite accurately, “Well, it isn’t tomorrow yet.”

Sure, you’re right – but would you rather be right or happy and successful?

You’ve likely heard the expression “Don’t put off ‘til tomorrow what you can do today.” (... or the popular foil for that, “Don’t put off ‘til tomorrow what can just as easily be put off ‘til the day after tomorrow...”) Now, obviously, you can’t do everything today. But you can’t do anything tomorrow. Today, this moment, in fact, is the only time you are capable of taking action – even if that action is to set a specific time at which you will undertake a task. “Tomorrow” never comes – but “3:00 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 12, 2004” sure does.

Simply state, that which gets scheduled gets done. How many things on your to-do list have a stated start time of “when I find the time”...? I don’t know about you, but I find it very difficult to “find” time for anything that isn’t important enough to schedule. If it’s important enough, we’ll make the time. If it isn’t important enough, then who are we kidding? We are about as likely to enjoy the benefits of that endeavor as we are the free crab.

Decide what you want to do, and write it down. Decide when you are going to do it, if not immediately, and put it on your calendar. Motivate yourself by imagining the benefits. Tap away any resistance – there is likely some fear that is making you reluctant to put it in writing – get that out of your way. Then, when the appointed time arrives, do it...and reap the rewards. Simple, yet effective.

Sooooo...when are you going to do it...?

*"The more you experience living your dreams,
the more your dreams become your living experience."*

Marelin Thornton

Supersizing

For anyone struggling with weight issues, there are generally a number of internal voices that promote overeating. I've worked with quite a few folks on different issues, but I don't recall anyone ever mentioning one that confronted me recently, and which I think must be fairly commonplace: the need to not pass up a bargain.

I recently took a little trip to visit my parents – about a 2.5-hour drive. A little over halfway through, I ... ummm ... thought it a good idea to make a stop. At the exit where I pulled off, I found that I had the option of stopping at the gas station I'd seen from the freeway – or a fast food restaurant that was across the street. I opted – as I generally do – for the latter. This usually means I'll feel compelled to be a paying customer, but that was okay, as I kind of had the munchies.

I ordered some hash browns and an orange juice – but then noticed that for only slightly more I could get a breakfast sandwich meal, which would include the hash browns and drink. I really didn't want that much – I'd already had a small breakfast just a little over an hour ago – but my inner bargain hunter was definitely making some internal noise. Sure, I didn't need the extra food, but how could I pass up such a deal? Well, I could pass it up by making the sane choice, and walked out with just the hash browns and juice.

Now, admittedly, fast food hash browns are not exactly diet food – and telling you that I bought them may not set me up as a fitness guru. (Then again, Dr. Phil has the hottest new book on weight loss, and he's not exactly Twiggy...) Anyhow, given the options, I felt it was the lesser of the two evils, and allowed myself to feel good about my choice. But it did make me think about how restaurants – particularly of the fast food variety – are contributing to America's issues with weight with these “deals.”

Now, before anyone starts a lawsuit, I am not intending to demonize the fast food industry. I am grateful for the convenience they provide on those (fortunately) rare times I have turned to them. And I like the price – usually. What concerns me is the way they offer you a bargain.

You hear the slogans all the time: “You get a lot for a little.” Or, “Remember to tell us to ‘Supersize it!’”

You might as well tell them, “Supersize me!”

We all love a bargain, so we are inclined to go with the extra value deal. For a little more money, you get a lot more food. You can't really blame them for this – it's good business to offer bonuses and incentives to up sell. But there's a price to be paid for taking advantage of these bargains. In the great deal you are getting, you are getting more food than you need – and too often we kid ourselves that there's no real downside

to that. Funny how we will justify spending more money than we need to if it looks like a bargain. Well, funny how I do that – but I suspect I’m not the only one.

When it comes right down to it, food is fuel. Imagine your local gas station saying, “Fill your tank for this price – and get five extra gallons at half the price!” Sure, your inner bargain hunter would be champing at the bit – but at least in this instance your rational mind would kick in. Right...? If they offered “all you can pump” for one low price, would you fill your tank, then start filling the trunk, or the back seat (which is usually what we fill when we eat too much...)?

If you’re like me, you also have trouble leaving food – “waste not, want not.” The irony, of course, is that it is going to become waste anyway – but not until after it has done its damage.

I love a bargain, but I’m almost wishing restaurants charged more for less food, giving more incentive to cut back. My wife and I have actually started splitting meals. We are thinking of writing a diet book based on this – “Good for Your Wallet – Good for Your Waist!” Or, “Waste Not – Waist Not.” Okay – so we’re still working on the title – but you get the idea. Granted, this practice doesn’t make waiters real happy, but as a former waiter, I always leave a good tip.

It’s been said that the key to weight loss can be summed up in five words: eat less and exercise more. It is a good idea to prepare yourself for the fact that restaurants are not inclined to support you in doing the first part. The inner bargain hunter is just one of the internal voices that will push for more than you need – and the more voices like this you can quiet, the better. Take stock of what persuades you to eat more, and go to work on these issues. As you do so, it will become increasingly easier to not be “supersized.”

"Reality forms around your commitments. The achievement of your goal is assured the moment you commit yourself to it."

- Max Steingart

The Death Card

Have you ever had your Tarot cards read...?

I have – on a few occasions. And I remember the first time I saw the Death card laid out. A chill gripped me, and I got very worried. Then the reader assured me that the Death card did not mean I was about to die, but rather signified change. I calmed down considerably.

I can imagine this same scenario being played out with thousands of people over the years – always concluding with that same sense of relief.

“What fools these mortals be,” as Puck put it.

We all calm down, focusing on the fact that we have not been given an imminent death sentence – but ignoring the fact that change does mean the death of something – which is why, when it happens, it tends to be so painful and frightening.

Now, I’m not saying we should get upset and scared about change. Rather, it’s my experience that the fear of change is one of the biggest blockers to our personal success. So I find it amusing that we find the Death card explanation comforting, instead of only slightly less horrifying. I, for one, was not so evolved in my thinking at the time I had that first reading that I could see change as something to joyfully embrace.

Okay – I’ll admit it – I’m not fully there yet even today. Not always – not on a gut level. But I am more able to acknowledge it both as necessary and as a blessing.

Everything is in a constant state of change. Energy is always moving. And part of us not only needs but also wants that. Who wants to perpetually remain the screaming infant they were at the moment of birth? Or the infant who couldn’t walk? The teenager who couldn’t drive...?

Look around, and you’ll see scores of people desperate to maintain their own status quo. Maybe, some days, you don’t have to look farther than your bathroom mirror... And yet, it wouldn’t take much to create a list of past circumstances that would produce a feeling of “Thank God that changed...!”

I’ll bet there are circumstances you are clinging to right now that, someday, you will gratefully watch change. I can think of quite a few of those from over the years in my life.

But we do tend to crave the familiar. Because it is known. It is safe. From our subconscious mind’s point of view, it is pleasurable – even if, by all accounts, it is a pain in the ... well, you name it. Butt, head, heart, etc. For instance, the familiar feeling of

toxins flooding into our bodies – either by smoke, liquid or junk food. Giving it up would mean a change. A positive change from a logical standpoint, but – emotionally – it is as scary as the Death card.

Living from paycheck to paycheck – and being in debt – may also be familiar. The idea of having wealth beyond reason may be a great fantasy – but you might be internally fighting it tooth and nail – the change would be just too painful. This is true of many kinds of success.

But the Universe is abundant. There is an abundance of health, wealth and happiness that is our birthright. It is ours for the asking – if we could ease our grip on what we've got and extend our reach a little farther. Some of the positive changes you could make in your life might be easier than you dare imagine – if only you can be open to change.

Take some time to examine your life, and consider what could conceivably be changed for the better. Allow yourself to look past the initial fear, and consider how the change could really be a good thing. Perhaps even allow yourself to accept that you deserve it.

Maybe...just maybe...the next time someone deals you the Death card, you'll exclaim, "Yes!!! Just the card I was looking for!"

"One of the annoying things about believing in free choice and individual responsibility is the difficulty of finding somebody to blame your problems on. And when you do find somebody, it's remarkable how often his picture turns up on your driver's license."

-- P.J. O'Rourke

Dancing with the Phantom

Imagine you are dancing with your significant other. The band is great, you're having fun swaying to the music, and you are enjoying being close to this special person. You are having a wonderful evening.

Then, they start playing a new song. A song that triggers memories – memories of another time...another person. They may be good memories, or maybe not so good, but they are phantoms – and they have taken you away for a moment.

Your partner is looking at you and saying, “Hello...? Anybody home...? Where'd you go...?”

You're no longer dancing with this person. You are now dancing with the phantom.

This might put a damper on the evening's enjoyment – at least for a little bit. Bummer.

Now, that's a pretty literal example of “dancing with the phantom,” but I like to use this expression for any time that we are no longer present. It could happen anywhere, really, and in many different ways. We might be in a meeting, and start wondering if we turned off the bathroom light at home. We are at a stoplight, and start worrying about whether a friend is going to like the birthday present we bought him. We are talking to someone, and start thinking about the accident we were almost in – and imagining what might have happened if the other car had come two feet further... Basically, we are doing one thing, and suddenly we are gone.

This moment is all we have – it is the only one in which we can really take action, and the only one in which anything can happen to us – but we often spend it dwelling on persons or events either from the past, or the possible future. And that can limit our ability to do what we can in the moment. The way certain phantoms dance can also make us very uncomfortable and put undue emotional stress on our systems.

I'm not suggesting that we should never remember the past – although a good deal of it may very well be best forgotten. We certainly want to remember enough to learn from the past, so we build on our successes, and don't repeat mistakes. And there are times that basking in a pleasing memory can comfort us. The point is, though, that we don't want to get stuck in the memories such that it takes us away from the persons or events that are right in front of us. Even if we are alone, dwelling on unpleasant memories is not likely to serve any real purpose. That can be simply masochistic – kind of like “slam dancing” with the phantom. Ouch.

I'm also not saying we should never look to the future. I advocate visualizing your desired outcome, which can be likened to dancing with the phantom of the future. However, this is something that I recommend doing at a time set aside for this purpose,

so that it is used to enhance your present - not take away from it. It is also certain to enhance your future – but we can only experience the benefits in the present. If you are visualizing financial abundance, you can enjoy the feelings that come from the imagined experience – and it will help you attract that prosperity - but you can't actually spend the money right now. (Please don't go filling your credit card based on the visualization, justifying it as unshakable expectation in your coming abundance. That's usually poor judgment rather than confidence.)

So...it is not necessarily a bad thing to dance with phantoms – so long as we recognize that they are phantoms. They are not tangible – they are not present. Thus, we want to limit how much time we spend doing this. We also want to do it by choice. Too often, the phantoms just cut in and sweep us across the dance floor – away from the person or event we want to be experiencing. Very often, the phantom that pulls us into a dance is fear. It's been said that fear is an acronym for False Evidence Appearing Real. In other words, nothing more than a phantom – phantom outcomes that have us trapped in an unpleasant dance – often leaving our partner of choice alone and feeling jilted on the floor.

Can we clear out those phantoms? Potentially, with some work. We all have some that can be easily identified and tapped away. But not likely all at once. We may always be at risk of having phantoms come tap us on the shoulder and say, "May I?" Our real job is to do right by our partner and tell the intruder, "No thank you." The extent to which we can remain true to the partner or task at hand will have enormous impact on our success and happiness.

So, the next time you get taken out of the present, just recognize that you are dancing with the phantom, and remember that you have a choice. Choose wisely.

"Remember that there is only one important time and that is now. The present moment is the only time over which we have dominion. The most important person is always the person you are with, who is right before you, for who knows if you will have dealings with any other person in the future? The most important pursuit is to do good for the person standing at your side, for that alone is the pursuit of life."

- Leo Tolstoy

Thank God for Problems

No... really. I mean it. Literally. Thank God – however you understand God (Goddess, Creator, Universe, Unifying Mathematical Theory...) – for your problems. Not that you should keep them – that idea would put folks like me out of business. However, even as you get yourself free of them, you might recognize them as the blessings they are.

Some of you are thinking, “Well, obviously!” And others are thinking I’m crazy. And some are thinking both. Ah well...

Let me explain with a personal story.

I am generally in very good spirits – being a habitual tapper and all. And I was feeling very privileged and excited about presenting at the conference last week. Yet, just before leaving, I experienced some anxiety.

My first thought (human being that I am) was, “You ought to be ashamed of yourself! You’re a somewhat renowned energy therapist...you help people get over this kind of thing all the time – what gives? You shouldn’t have problems!”

Then I tapped a bit, and did the sensible thing – I sought an outside opinion. Marla reminded me that, while one of the beauties of EFT is that it can be used so easily on one’s own, there are some things you should get help with.

While working with her, we were able to get to some other issues that were not the presenting problem. Things that block me on such a subtle level that I’m generally not even aware of them. But as I find and clear them, my blessed life gets even better.

So, I thanked God for the anxiety that prompted me to look further. It was just my higher self’s way of letting me know I could be freer.

Of course, I have a choice to follow that, or let it be. Like the majority of people, I could just say. “It’s no big deal – I can handle it.” I have it very good, and could probably get along just fine with things being status quo. But, why? Why sell myself short of the abundant joy that is available to each of us?

On Friday mornings, I lead an EFT workshop for people on probation at Drug Court. The intention is to use this technique to clear the wreckage of their past and support their recovery.

I presented this idea of being grateful for problems to them yesterday. And while I would most likely lose in a “My baggage is heavier than your baggage” argument, there were some who got it.

I worked with two different individuals who were pretty upset about various issues. As we cleared the uncomfortable feelings, they gained new insights that will undoubtedly make a difference for them.

And they both could see that if they hadn't been having those problems that day, they would not have volunteered to work with me – and would not have reached that new place.

They started to experience some gratitude for those problems.

I certainly am not wishing to be beset with such problems on a daily basis – rewarding as that may be from this perspective. I don't wish that for you either.

But if you are experiencing some problem, I hope you'll consider that it may offer a doorway to a greater level of happiness.

And, thank God for it – 'cause gratitude beats complaining on an energetic level any day.

Then make a decision to do what you can to get through that door. You deserve the reward on the other side.

"Genuine security arises from actual, first-hand knowledge that one is both capable and worthy of achieving happiness (through conscious, responsible action) and, once having attained it, that he deserves it."

- Michael J. Hurd

"Every adversity contains within it the seeds of an equal or greater benefit."

- Napoleon Hill

Manifestation 101

Well, I had a number of ideas for articles this month – or rather was given great ideas from the unseen creative powers. But, I’m not going to use them. At least not this month.

Instead, I want to give you the four-step Law of Attraction manifestation process that I taught at the conference in Phoenix last month. I’ve been meaning to share it with you all, and now seems the time.

Meanwhile, you can tap on “Even though I’ll miss reading one of Brad’s witty articles this month...” You can always click on the link on my web site to read archived issues...

Anyhow, here it is – the four-step process for manifesting what you really want (and yes, it works for money – I have successfully used it to create amounts from \$10 to over \$1200. To be honest, it kind of freaked me out when I did so. I mean, I intellectually knew it would work, but...)

Create It
Clear It
Live It
Let Go

There you have it. Enjoy! Happy manifesting!

Oh, all right – I’ll go into a little more detail...

Step One: Create It

First, decide what you really want. Is it a new house, car or job? Is it a special someone? Write it down. Start with something like:

“I am so happy! I have...”

Then list the qualities and features of what it is you want.

It’s important that you write it in the present. If you write “I want this,” then you are vibrating at a frequency of want – and the wanting of it is what you will continue to attract. You want to be vibrating in harmony with already having it.

Write positive things, always the features the objective has, rather than what it doesn’t have. If you write, “My new boyfriend isn’t a loser,” you are putting “loser” vibrations into the ether. I feel compelled to discourage that.

Rather than asking for money, focus on what you want to have. The \$1200 didn't come because I asked for the money – I focused on the trip I wanted to take, which I estimated to cost about that much.

And, don't limit the Universe by saying it has to be paid for in cash. If you want a new car – focus on the car. The money might show up, but you might also win the car.

Once you've given the parameters of what you want, write at the end, "This, or something better – for the highest good of all concerned." Give the Universe an opportunity to give you something better and/or more appropriate – it knows better than we do.

Step Two: Clear It

Here's where EFT come into play. Too often, we are sending out contradictory energy, keeping what we consciously say we want at a distant from ourselves.

Imaging going into a restaurant and ordering a hamburger. As the server walks away, you say, "Hmmm... I really shouldn't have that. Maybe I should order a salad..." Then you think some more and say, "Hey – a chicken sandwich probably is what I should have!" The server stands there waiting for you to make up your mind, and you wonder why you don't have your hamburger yet.

Clear any contradictory thoughts. The Universe picks up on them all. The biggest, in my experience, is: "I don't deserve to have this." Tap on it, or use whatever other tools you might have for releasing blocks to your success.

You also want to be clear on your intentions. If you have doubts about your motives, you will either block the attainment of your objective, or limit your ability to receive it in a joyful manner. Make sure you want it for the right reasons (and only you can decide what is right for you.)

Keep at this until you can think about the successful attainment of your objective without feeling any resistance.

Step Three: Live It

Now that you can think about the successful attainment of your objective without feeling any resistance – do so. Really think about having it – and allow yourself to enjoy that.

Indulge in all the positive feelings you expect to experience while enjoying this thing in your life. Really feel how good it feels.

Now would be a good time to tap yourself into trance and visualize yourself really enjoying your objective. As you do so, allow the positive feelings to wash over you and

through you – feeling good in every muscle, nerve, fiber, tissue, cell and atom of your body. Do this once a day – a daily reminder of what you are up to.

Another great way to do this step is with a partner. Tell them, “I have this new _____ in my life – and I’m so happy!” Again, in the present and in positive terms.

Your partner says, “That’s great – tell me more!”

And you do – and they ask for more – and so on. Keep repeating this as you joyfully share your happy situation and both of you feed each other’s excitement – building the vibrational energy.

And remember – turn about is fair play. Let them get excited sharing something with you, too.

Step Four: Let Go

I also call this “Let Go and Let God.”

You need to be unattached to the outcome. Otherwise, you might start clenching your energy, asking “Where is it?”

Not great attracting energy.

A farmer doesn’t plant a seed, then stare at it in frustration hoping for it to grow. He does what he can to nurture it, but otherwise leaves it to nature to do what it does.

Also, you don’t want to be attached to how it happens. You might be staring at a door waiting for that someone to walk in, and completely miss them because they came through the side door.

Now, this doesn’t mean you don’t take action. Do what you can – let the Universe know you are serious about making things happen. Just don’t be surprised if the manifestation comes in a way that doesn’t seem to be directly related to what you are doing.

Tapping can be very helpful with this step, too. “Even though I feel I HAVE TO HAVE THIS NOW!!!...” Let that go.

If you’ve created your vision, cleared all internal objections to it, allowed yourself to experience living it and really feel how great it would be to have it – and it still isn’t showing up – then you need to trust that maybe it really isn’t in your best interest to have this objective at present.

But, “God’s delays are not God’s denials.”

More often than not, there's more clearing work to do. Abundance just is. It is all around. The extent to which we are not experiencing it is the extent to which we are resisting it.

Stop resisting it.

Manifest it.

You deserve it.

And let me know how helpful this is, and how it works out for you – I'd love to share testimonials

Many thanks to the many teachers who have shaped this process, including (but certainly not limited to) Abraham-Hicks, Shakti Gawain and the Pauleys.

"Live your life each day as you would climb a mountain. An occasional glance towards the summit keeps the goal in mind, but many beautiful scenes are to be observed from each new vantage point."

- Harold B. Melchart

Unfinished Paintings

My favorite piece of art, hands down, is Michelangelo's "David." It is a breathtaking masterpiece, and seeing it up close in Florence will always be one of my favorite memories.

In the hall leading to the room where "David" resides are a series of sculptures by Michelangelo called the "Prisoners." These four figures, still half imprisoned in the stone, were never finished by the prolific genius. One can only imagine how brilliant they would have been.

Most, if not all, great artists have one or more might-have-been masterpieces that were started, but never completed.

Great artists like... well, like you.

You see, thoughts are creative – with them, you create your life, and everything in it.

Each thought you have – each great idea – each goal – each desire - is a budding creation.

Wallace D. Wattles, in his classic "The Science of Getting Rich," put it thusly:

"There is a thinking stuff from which all things are made, and which, in its original state, permeates, penetrates, and fills the interspaces of the universe.

A thought in this substance produces the thing that is imaged by the thought.

A person can form things in his thought, and, by impressing his thought upon formless substance, can cause the thing he thinks about to be created."

In fact, he writes, *"No thought of form can be impressed upon original substance without causing the creation of the form."*

So, when you have a thought of something you'd like to have, it is as though you have begun a work of art.

Imagine yourself standing in front of a canvas, palette and brush in hand. As you imagine a picture, you begin to paint it on the canvas.

Then, for some reason, you stop. Maybe you were distracted, or decided you couldn't do it... but, for whatever reason, you leave it unfinished.

You move on to another canvas, and start another creation.

But that first unfinished painting is still there – left hanging – because you have put the thought out there - and it has been impressed upon the formless substance.

Look back at the gallery of your life...how many unfinished paintings are there...? Half finished canvases that might have been masterpieces, if only you had stuck with them longer?

Now, it is certainly not my intention to shame you, or have you feel deep regret over lost opportunities. If those or other negative emotions are coming up, tap on them – they won't serve you. Just think what those kind of thoughts create...

Rather, forgive yourself, if necessary, acknowledging that you have done the best you could – and consider that you can now make a choice to do things differently.

Recognize that when you merely think of something you wish to create in your life, the Universe is already going about creating it.

There's no telling, in most instances, how long it will take the creation to fully manifest. But if you really want it, you need to commit to it. Don't abandon it too soon, leaving it unfinished and hanging there half-formed in space.

Maybe you can even go back and put the finishing touches on a painting you started some time ago. Might it have been a piece of art that would have touched millions, like those of Michelangelo?

Doesn't the world deserve to see it manifested? Don't you?

Absolutely.

Remember – you are a creative artist, and you are bringing things into being simply by thinking them.

So...what will your next masterpiece be...?

“There is a thinking stuff from which all things are made, and which, in its original state, permeates, penetrates, and fills the interspaces of the universe.

A thought in this substance produces the thing that is imaged by the thought.

A person can form things in his thought, and, by impressing his thought upon formless substance, can cause the thing he thinks about to be created.”

- Wallace D. Wattles

If Only I'd Have Said...

Once again, I am coaching my son's soccer team. It's so wonderful to work with these 6 and 7-year olds. They are so young, sweet, loving, joyful, innocent...

They named our team the Flaming Skulls.

We recently had our first practice. We share fields, and I went over to introduce myself to the coach of the other team, and ask if he'd be interested in doing scrimmages.

It was a brief conversation. Let's just say he was not altogether the most agreeable fellow I've ever met.

Not long afterwards, he came over and accused me of stealing some cones. I explained that the coach from the earlier practice had apparently taken them by accident. He replied, "There was no other coach."

Now, it's possible that I'm just a no-good cone thief and made up a story about another coach to throw him off the trail of my black-market cone plot, and he was too clever to be taken in ... but that wasn't the case. At least not this time.

Being the enlightened individual that I am, it would have been fitting for me to psychically send him love and light as he stormed off. But I'm sorry to report that wasn't the case either.

Instead, I sat there considering what I could have said that would have put him in his place. That would have forced him to admit how wrong he'd been. That would have had him "wriggling in the crushing grip of reason," as Hobbes once put it.

(That's Hobbes the stuffed tiger, not the seventeenth-century philosopher.)

As I was doing my exercises the following morning, I caught myself still doing it. I had a bad case of unresolved repartee.

(The clinical term is "undelivered communication," but what's the fun of writing a newsletter if you can't make up your own terminology?)

Ever catch yourself doing this? Rehearsing for moments that have passed? Writing a script for a show that has already closed?

Surely, we have better things to do with our time.

The fact is, no matter how great a comeback I come back with – it's too late. It would be out of context. And, it really wouldn't have been right to do even if I had come up with it right then.

I'm not saying one shouldn't be assertive – but to deliberately make someone feel small...well, it doesn't exactly put a person in vibrational harmony with an abundance health, wealth and happiness.

And, I'm not likely to see him again. Turns out he wasn't supposed to be on our field in the first place.

Anyhow, when I recognized what I was doing that next morning, and how I was robbing myself of peace of mind, it occurred to me that this was a tappable issue.

So...I tapped. And I released. And I stopped rehearsing my killer repartee, and got on with my life.

And I was able to send this guy love and light.

It's not at all uncommon for folks to revel in clever ways to put someone in their place. It's also not at all uncommon for folks to fall short of what they say they want to accomplish.

We have only so much time... it's our choice how we spend it. Do we fill our days with positive energy, focusing on what we can do to make a positive difference and attracting good things into our lives – or slide into negative energy, wallowing in self-righteous indignation and dwelling on how we could have justifiably made another person feel badly?

My intention isn't really to place judgment on the latter choice – but rather to make it less desirable than the first.

See, I want you to succeed.

And, the world needs your positive energy. In a big way.

Thanks for choosing wisely.

“There are risks and costs to a program of action. But they are far less than the long-range risks and costs of comfortable inaction.”

-- President John F. Kennedy

What's Right with People!?!?

Where's your focus?

It's important to know, because what you focus on expands. (I believe that's how Wayne Dyer worded it, though it is an ancient concept.)

There's a lot going on around us, and we have a choice about what we focus on.

On a recent teleclass, I gave the analogy of being in the Louvre museum. Imagine walking around, surrounded by some of the most famous and beautiful pieces of art in the world.

Then, you come across a painting you really don't care for.

You stand there thinking, "Who in their right mind would put this in a museum?"

Then you start saying to people around you, "Look at this! Can you believe they put this awful picture in here? What's wrong with people?!?"

And you keep focusing on this one painting, allowing yourself to feel worse and worse, until it is closing time and you must leave the museum.

And all that time, you could have been focusing on the multitude of works of art that really appealed to you.

It's so easy a trap to fall into. It pains me to have to admit my own shortcomings, but here we go again.

Last week, I was in Yosemite for a business meeting. While most of the week was spent indoors at meetings, we cut out early one day in order to enjoy what the area had to offer.

I drove down into the valley to admire one of the most amazing natural views I know.

As I was walking around, I kept coming across bits of trash – particularly cigarette butts.

And I got angry.

As I picked up bits of trash, I started asking, "What's wrong with people?!?"

Beautiful trees... Half Dome... El Capitan... absolutely magnificent scenery...

...and I'm focusing on one little cigarette butt.

Pity.

Fortunately, I snapped out of it pretty quickly and realized what I was doing.

I was misusing my power of choice about what I focus on.

So, I drew my focus back to the abundance of natural beauty surrounding me.

That felt a lot better.

And, while I was enjoying God's wonders, I changed my question to, "What's right with people?"

Even if, at times, the list seems pretty short – it's a much better question to ask yourself, because it gets you focusing on the positive.

And what you focus on expands.

"You are walking into the future of whatever you do with your mind. So, where is your mind? Perusing puzzles and problems of the past; perusing problems of the world; looking for reasons to feel bad? Or is it looking for reasons to feel good. It is your life. You get to focus wherever you want to focus."

-- Abraham-Hicks

Likely Action

What ever did we do before Mapquest...?

Now, when I have a destination in mind, I can type it in and be told the best course to take, and how long it will take, and even get suggestions of restaurants along the way.

Before this, I had to figure it out for myself.

I'd look at maps, and wonder which road was best. Sometimes I could add hours to a trip just in the planning stages – wondering the right thing to do. I didn't want to start until I knew I was going to do it right.

Ever done that?

Ever done that in other areas of your life...?

We had a saying in hypnotherapy school: Perfectionism leads to Procrastination leads to Paralysis.

It's always funny to hear people who are paralyzed say with a certain amount of pride that they are perfectionists. As though they are saying, "I am THAT good."

Maybe. But they are also often THAT stuck. Hardly a bragging point.

We all have wants and desires, hopes and dreams. And things we want to do that could make a wonderful difference in our lives and the lives of others. But, too often, we don't take action because we demand knowledge of the right way to do it.

This is what Mike Dooley calls the "cursed hows."

We want to know how it is going to happen.

Silly us.

The Universe has many ways of making something happen – and yet we routinely limit ourselves to what we can think up on our own.

Our job is to decide what we want, and focus on that in a positive way. Not to figure out how it is going to happen.

That's the Universe's job.

But...

This doesn't mean we sit like a lump waiting for payday.

Many of us are familiar with the legend of Lana Turner – sitting innocently at a soda fountain when a producer discovered her and turned her into a star.

In my Hollywood days, I apparently thought I was so much better than Miss Turner that I would be discovered in my apartment.

Didn't happen.

We need to be out there taking action.

So, then we get stuck in that original question: which is the right action to take?

Don't get hung up on that.

As one of Mike Litman's mentors put it, "You don't have to get it right – you just have to get it going."

So, instead of waiting until you know the right action, take a likely action.

That is, an action that is likely to move you toward your goal.

If your goal is to lose weight, a likely action would be to join a gym.

Signing up for the "Ice Cream of the Month" club would not.

If you lived on the coast of California, and wanted to go skiing in Wyoming, chartering a fishing boat would not be a likely action.

Going on Mapquest would.

There are many other actions you could take. Many would be better. You may not be in a place to come up with the best plan of action. But you can certainly come up with lots of likely plans of action. Act on one of them.

When thinking of your goal, ask yourself: "What could I do that might get me there?" No need to censor yourself – let the ideas flow, and ask of each, "Is this likely to move me in the right direction?" Then choose one and begin.

Sure – you might make a mistake, and there may be consequences for that. You don't have to be married to an idea – you can change strategies along the way. But there is a definite consequence for not taking action: you stay stuck.

If you insist on waiting for the best action, the snow may be melted by the time you get to Jackson Hole.

Decide what you want. Be clear. Then take likely action.

That's how the Universe knows you are serious about your intention. If you aren't willing to move on it, the Universe may consider it just one of countless whims. Show your commitment to your objective by getting going.

And don't be surprised as better ways to do it "magically" show up along the way.

Now...what are you waiting for...? Get going! Do something now!

"Until one is committed, there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness. Concerning all acts of initiative and creation, there is one elementary truth the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans: that the moment one definitely commits oneself, then providence moves too. All sorts of things occur to help one that would never otherwise have occurred. A whole stream of events issues from the decision, raising in one's favor all manner of unforeseen incidents, meetings and material assistance which no man could have dreamed would have come his way."

- W.H. Murray

*"Whatever you can do or dream you can, begin it.
Boldness has genius, power and magic in it."*

- Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe

Enjoying the Challenge

Soccer season has once again come to an end. Sigh...

This was my third year coaching my son's team – and probably the most exciting. Lots of great plays, close calls, and blossoming talents and skills.

On Saturday, we played our last game. It was a real nail biter, with both teams seeming very evenly matched. I heard some players on the other team talking about how they'd never lost a game.

After the game, the other coach told me this was the most exciting game they'd played all season.

That was really exciting news for my boys. Sure, we lost 3 to 1, but we were missing some of our players, so that everyone had to play the entire game without a break, while the players on the other team had rest periods.

And, the two boys who were missing were two of our best players.

That day, each of my boys got a chance to really show what they were made of, and held their own against a talented team. I was really proud of them.

Very different from the last game of last season, which our team won 10 to 1.

Now, that was fun, too. Don't get me wrong - I like a winning. But I can't say that it was quite as exciting.

See – it's the challenge that we came for.

If you play chess, do you like to play against people who are new to the game, such that you win in a few moves without losing a piece...?

If you watch sports, do you really want to watch your team shut out the opponents every game...?

Where's the fun in that?

And, where's the growth...?

There's an old saying, "Smooth seas never made skilled mariner."

It's the challenges that push us to grow.

To be more than what we were.

To be more of who we really are...

Magnificent Children of God.

Sure, if we'd had all our players on Saturday, we would likely have won. But there was some greatness that was pulled out of the players by the increased challenge they faced.

And they felt great about themselves afterwards. And isn't that what they are there for in the first place?

Well, perhaps that is what we are here for, in this big game of life.

I am not saying I'm opposed to some easy wins – and much of the tapping is about allowing the wins to be easier.

But I wouldn't want to tap away all challenge. That would be boring.

So, the next time the going gets tough, don't just get going...

Get grateful.

Grateful for the opportunity to find out how magnificent you are. And know that you are indeed magnificent, and are big enough for the challenge.

Even if you don't succeed in every challenge...

And you won't... (If you are, you probably aren't playing big enough...you don't want to be like a 19 year old playing against 4 year olds...)

...You can walk away knowing that you are better than you were before.

That you are moving closer to the magnificent potential that is within you.

And allow yourself to really enjoy that.

My boys felt great on Saturday. They were proud of themselves. They knew they'd played their best, and they'd had a blast. That was what mattered.

Surely you have at least the wisdom of a seven year old...

Our greatest glory is not in never failing, but in rising up every time we fail.

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

The Freedom to Succeed

Well, the New Year is almost upon us.

And you know what that means, don't you?

Yup...resolutions.

Does the thought excite you...? Or do you dread the thought of once again being expected to make some positive changes in your life?

After all, how many times have you been all geared up for a new beginning, thrilled with the prospect of starting the new year slimmer, richer and happier...

Only to convince yourself, maybe as early as January 2nd that it really wasn't what you wanted after all ... not worth the effort...and the timing really isn't right...?

You had the idea to success. You had the plan to success. You had the wonderful dream to succeed. You even had the motivation to succeed.

So...what happened...?

There may have been a couple of missing components, but mainly you lacked one thing...

The freedom to succeed.

While we may want a lot of things, one of the biggest wants of the subconscious mind is to avoid change...to maintain the status quo.

And it will usually do what it takes to stop you from changing – despite an abundance of anticipated benefits from the change.

This unwillingness to change is very much a prison – one we call the “comfort zone.” It's as though there is an electric fence all around the perimeter, shocking you anytime you start to make a move out of the area.

You just are not free to succeed.

Every time you start to make a move, there's an uncomfortable jolt. After awhile, you learn to not even go near the fence, preferring instead to avoid the shock. And you may turn to food or TV or something else to distract you from those seemingly unattainable goals that once excited you.

You become comfortably numb.

Problem is – that comfort zone really isn't that comfortable. If it were, you wouldn't be reading this article right now.

Some are able to make the dream powerful enough to keep pushing through the wire. It hurts – but they break free – or at least expand the occupied territory. Success is gained – but it does exact a price.

So...what if, when you approached that border, there wasn't a jolt...?

What if the wires were cut...?

See, it really is like the electric fence. The subconscious warns you of danger by sending an uncomfortable sensation through the energy system. It doesn't feel good. You experience what we label as negative emotions.

That's what Emotional Freedom Techniques™ work on. It balances the energy that felt uncomfortable.

It cuts those wires.

Whenever you set a positive goal for yourself, it is normal for your mind to produce reasons why you can't reach it. Why you shouldn't have it.

Why you don't deserve it.

It's those reasons that have you imprisoned.

Tap on them, and they lose their power.

They might even seem silly (most, if not all, of them are). It's like realizing that the guard dog has no teeth.

Or the Bumble has no teeth, in keeping with the season. (You know..."Rudolph"...)

If you can identify the reasons, that's wonderful – you know what to tap on.

If not, tap on the goal, and any reasons that would keep you from it will come up.

It doesn't hurt even to do some preemptive tapping, just in case there may be unconscious reasons lurking in the shadows – waiting to pounce and drive you back into the prison of your comfort zone.

Visualize yourself having reached your goal. Consider all the possible ramifications, so as to stir up any possible negative feelings about it.

Then tap to get clear on your goal. Make peace with it. Tap until your energy is flowing freely while you imagine the desired outcome.

Eventually, any resistance to the positive change will be gone. The wires will be cut.

Then, you will be free to succeed.

*“Of what use to make heroic vows of amendment
if the same old lawbreaker is to keep them?”*

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

Spreading Hoaxes

Recently, an associate of mine made a confession...

While she is a successful individual, she is fairly new to the internet – and the various kinds of e-mails that find their way to our inboxes.

So, she thought she was doing something helpful – and potentially very profitable – when she forwarded an e-mail to a large list of folks with the understanding that Microsoft would pay her \$250 for every person she sent it to – as part of beta test of a new tracking system.

Sound familiar...?

I think I first saw this one nearly ten years ago. And it is still be forwarded on.

After all, it supposedly comes from a “reliable source,” right...? (“My friend sent this to me, and she’s a lawyer” etc...)

And, after all, there’s no harm in it, right...? (Sure, the amount of server space taken up with these hoaxes is staggering – as is the amount of time wasted – but, no, I don’t think anyone is physically harmed...)

These things are sent with good intentions – especially the ones that are about children who are missing or ill, or warning people about viruses – but they are sent with misinformation.

Fortunately, there are now a number of hoax sites you can check before forwarding these – just Google “hoax” to find one.

What I’d really like to see, though, is a site that debunks more dangerous hoaxes.

Misinformation that is passed on with “good” intentions, and come from “reliable sources”... well, at least, they come from “authority” figures, at any rate.

You know... parents, teachers, clergy, older siblings, romantic partners, the guy in school who didn’t get good grades but he dressed so cool that he must’ve know what’s what...

They said things like: “You’re so lazy.”

“You’re a disgrace – you’ll never amount to anything.”

“Money doesn’t grow on trees.”

“Finish everything on your plate – there are children starving in China.” (Well, that may be true – there are children starving everywhere – but the idea that you overeating would somehow benefit them was a hoax.)

“God won’t love you if you do that.” (!)

There’s a million more, but you get the idea.

Here’s one that came up during a teleclass last week:

“Don’t get your hopes up – you’ll only be disappointed.”

Oy!

Thank God that people like Mahatma Gandhi, Helen Keller and the Wright Bros. either didn’t get that one forwarded on to them or, if they did, they deleted it.

What if Thomas Edison had bought into that one? He probably would not have gone past the first failed light bulb experiment, much less a thousand or so more.

All of us have had things like this “forwarded” on to us. Who knows the thinking behind why they were “sent” to us? I’m not sure that matters. But...

They are hoaxes. Please don’t continue to forward them.

And, please, stop believing them.

They won’t just fill up your inbox and waste some precious time – they will rob you of the abundance of health, wealth and happiness you so richly deserve. (And probably have done so for years.)

Keep looking for the truth. The truth is this:

You are a magnificent child of God – capable of far more than you know – and worthy and deserving of great joy and prosperity.

And, Microsoft is not going to pay you to send an e-mail to all your friends.

(Unless you have a friend who is a lawyer who says otherwise, in which case, send it to me!)

“Now is the time to act. Why? Because it is too late to do it sooner!”

- Steve Bhaerman (AKA “Swami Beyondanonda”)

You MUST Do It!

Ever come up with an idea of something you'd like to do ... and then not do it...?

Like getting up when the alarm goes off...?

Again, assuming you are human (see section I), the answer is likely a resounding “yes.”

For the most part, we can dismiss these episodes of inaction. Perhaps it just wasn't convenient...or it wasn't important...or both. Usually a combination of both.

In fact, it is almost always a question of inconvenience.

Not so with importance.

I'll bet there are plenty of things that you could have done that had some importance to them, but because of discomfort (read: fear) you avoided them, maybe even casually tossing them off as things you didn't really need to do.

That's what the comfort zone says.

“I don't have to – I'm doing fine - why bother...?”

But somewhere – perhaps deep inside – you know that you need to do it.

“Spirit is always for expansion and growth,” as Bob Proctor puts it (he may have been quoting Wallace D. Wattles...).

Our higher self knows we were put here to do certain things – big things. And it will let us in on these as we go along.

But we will often minimize their importance depending on the level of fear, which is brought on by our past programming.

We might even label our inaction as laziness, which is more palatable to some than fear.

Whatever is blocking you from taking action, decide that you won't stay stuck anymore.

Decide that you **MUST** take action!

Again, your higher self wants to do it – it is screaming to do it. You may prefer to not listen, but you **MUST**.

Think of something you really want to do, and come up with reasons why you must do it.

If you don't have a good reason why you must do something, it's a good bet your comfort zone will have a good reason why you must not do it.

When my alarm clock went off at 4:30 this morning, my comfort zone started giving me reasons why I should ignore it, stay in the cozy warmth of my bed and go back to sleep.

Fortunately, I had already decided that I must get up – I had important things to do.

Not urgent things – I could have gotten by without doing them.

But my higher self is not content to just get by.

Guess what – neither is yours. You may have drowned out its pleas to some extent, but it is waiting for its chance to be heard – and listened to.

You were put here for a reason – you have gifts and talents with which you can be of great service to those around you.

Recognize that it is important to your higher self to become fully free to manifest what you desire - and share your gifts to the greatest extent possible.

Convince yourself that you MUST do this.

For instance, what can you do to increase your prosperity consciousness this week? Decide that you MUST do that. Make it a need.

Not only will you benefit, but so will countless others.

If making a commitment to yourself is not sufficient to begin with, make one to a partner – tell them what you intend to do, and enroll them in the idea that you must do it.

If you feel resistance, don't be fooled - the voice that tells us we don't need to do any of this - that we are getting along just fine - is coming from fear.

Deal with the fear. Tap it away. And...

Be Magnificent!

"If you are ultimately going to do something important that will make a real difference...do it now!"

- Howard Wight

Sincerity

I once saw a bumper sticker that read:

“The key to success is sincerity. Once you can fake that, you’ve got it made.”

Now – I only mention that for humorous effect – I am not endorsing it as a practice...

I have read different versions of the etymology of the word sincerity, but it is my understanding that it comes from the Latin *sin cera*, meaning: without wax.

So... if you are walking around without wax, you have the key to success. Go forth – waxless – and succeed!

Okay... maybe a little more explanation is needed.

If you know anything about Rome, you know they are very big on statues. As you may have noticed from the EFT chart on my website, I am particularly fond of Michelangelo’s “David.”

In ancient times, statues would be sold at outdoor markets – the streets would be lined with them.

Some sculptors were a little more skilled than others. For those with a little less skill, there was a handy band-aid for those unattractive cracks in the statue: wax. A little here in this fissure... a little there – often “a dab’ll do ya.”

Except, of course, on those warmer days... when the wax starts to melt a little... not pretty.

So, the finer statues were *sin cera* – without wax. If you went to a sculptor advertising this, you could be confident you wouldn’t get a lemon.

And you...?

What are the cracks in your way of being that you try to cover over... but which reveal themselves when the heat is on...?

When everything is cool, it is much easier for us to pretend we’ve got it all under control, and we are on our best behavior.

But when situations get stressful, any flaws in our character start to show themselves.

Now, most people don't want to deal with those flaws. They hope to remain cool, and then no one needs to be the wiser.

They aren't being sincere.

Fortunately, I know you aren't like that. I know that you are interested (dare I say: committed...?) in always growing more into the person you were born to be.

Flawless.

Nothing to hide.

Sin cera.

An unattainable goal of perfection? Sure. We are unlikely to transcend all our human limitations in one lifetime. But are you ready to say you've gone as far as you can go...?

There are pains and fears at the root of any of these issues, and you can heal those. And as they are healed, the more you can stand the heat.

That way, you can stay in the kitchen – and isn't that usually the most fun place to be at a party.

Okay – is it just my experience that people gravitate towards the kitchen at parties...?

Anyhow, keep clearing those places that start to look ugly when the temperature goes up. The less your need for wax, the more successful you are.

Or maybe they meant without wax teeth – because it is really a challenge to be successful in most situations while wearing those... hmmm...

*“Live in such a way that you would not be ashamed
to sell your parrot to the town gossip.”*

- Will Rogers

Heaven on Earth

A colleague wrote to me the other day saying that she had agreed to a second term in a challenging role, and then said:

“All I have to say is that there HAS to be an easier way to get to heaven!!!!”

I replied with: “There is... you recognize that you are already there, and release your need to deny it...”

I haven't heard back from her yet. She is either pondering the significance of this statement, or has written me off as insane.

The latter is possibly a correct diagnosis, but there's little point in delving into it – so let's consider that there might be something to what I wrote.

First, I have to acknowledge that I'm not sure where it came from – it is simply what popped into my head when I read her e-mail.

Second, I must acknowledge that I am incorrect in suggesting that it is an easier way. I don't know that it is easy at all. It is, rather, the simpler way.

The traditional description of Heaven is a place where everyone wears white robes, has wings, and plays the harp. They float from cloud to cloud, wearing a blissful smile.

Nice – but not exactly everyone's cup of tea.

Wouldn't it be more of a Paradise to be somewhere where you create what you want – where your garments might be white robes if that's what you fancy, but might also be blue jeans - or leopard print spandex - if you so choose...?

What if you prefer a metropolitan environment to clouds...?

Electric guitar to harp...?

A world of your own making...?

Guess what...you are there.

This is what everyone is talking about in terms of the Law of Attraction. Most of the gurus out there are saying that the world we each experience is of our own making.

So maybe the problem is not that we are not in such a Paradise, but rather that we don't know how to work it.

And, we don't believe we deserve it.

You might say that we are not experiencing Heaven to the extent that we believe we must experience Hell.

Biblical history tells us that we were evicted from the Garden of Eden. But...what if the gate was left open for us...?

In moments of frustration, I have sent my children to their rooms – but I have never done so on a permanent basis. I have always allowed them out again. Usually within a matter of days, even. ;)

Sometimes, in a fit of belligerence, they will refuse to come out.

Are we doing the same...?

Is it possible that we might have an open invitation to come back to the Garden...but are refusing to do so...?

I think of the opening to the TV show “The Odd Couple,” where it is explained that Oscar and Felix were both asked to remove themselves from their place of residence, and were asked to never return.

Maybe God wasn't that angry. Maybe we have been forgiven. It's just up to us to forgive ourselves now.

Now, admittedly, I'm no religious scholar – but this is an idea that has been hitting me upside the head – and I wanted to share it.

Consider the possibility.

There are a lot of people living the good life... maybe they have simply allowed themselves to enjoy Heaven on Earth a little more than most others have.

Maybe we all have permission to do the same.

Maybe we don't need to try so hard to get into Heaven, but rather need to stop denying that we are already there.

"Finish each day and be done with it. You have done what you could; some blunders and absurdities have crept in; forget them as soon as you can. Tomorrow is a new day; you shall begin it serenely and with too high a spirit to be encumbered with your old nonsense."

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

Don't Kid Yourself

So...really...how many times a day do you do something you know isn't in your best interest (or, not do something that would benefit you), and then console yourself with the age-old pacifier:

“It doesn't matter.”

Now, you could argue that much of the time that might be true.

I'll bet there are a number of times when it is decidedly not true.

So – just whom are you trying to kid with that line...?

Yourself...?

Probably.

A word of advice: Don't.

On Friday mornings, I have the opportunity to lead a group of folks at Sacramento Drug Court through rounds of EFT. The point is to support them in recovery from drug addiction through both relieving their cravings as well as clearing negative emotions and memories that create the perceived need for “medication.”

These are folks who have definitely kidded themselves about what didn't matter.

The group I have at present is a great group, and most are very receptive to the tapping. And, some are not. But I expect them to do it anyway. They have chosen to be in the program rather than being in jail, so participation is mandatory.

The other day, a couple of them were not tapping along with the group. Instead, they were talking amongst themselves, which some other participants found very distracting.

I had to call them on the carpet.

They were making a decision that they could just go through the program doing whatever they pleased – behaving the way they'd always behaved.

They were saying that it didn't matter.

They were kidding themselves.

I made it clear that I didn't get a commission for each person I got to tap. However, I do have a profound desire to see each of them live the best life they can. I can't make that choice for them, and I won't hinge my personal happiness on that – but I will do what I can in that one hour.

For me to allow them to kid themselves in that class – to turn a blind eye while they carry on in a way that suggests that their non-participation doesn't matter – is to do them a disservice. I'd be enabling the kind of behavior that got them into trouble in the first place.

They have a goal of staying clean. Not that they necessarily want to – but the court has told them they have to. I'm there to support them in reaching that goal.

Now... assuming you aren't in a court ordered rehab program, you may be asking what this story has to do with you...

But, you're a smart cookie, so I trust that you aren't kidding yourself with that thought.

What are your goals? What do you really want to do with your life...?

And, do you consistently make positive choices and take positive actions that support those goals...?

Or do you consciously take contrary actions, and try to kid yourself that it doesn't matter.

Here's an exercise: Set as a goal to go over and flip the light switch. But, for each step or two you take, take one or two (or more) back, telling yourself, "It doesn't matter."

How much longer would it take you to get to the light switch?

Depending on the ratio of backward steps to forward steps, you may eventually get there – and it may not even take you that much time. But it would take you longer than necessary, and that could lead to some frustration – "Why the heck haven't I reached the light switch yet?!?"

Project this scenario onto a larger goal, and you might see the real consequences.

How many times have you done this, and gotten so frustrated with your lack of achievement that you eventually gave up on the goal?

Maybe you tried to console yourself with, "Eh – that goal didn't really matter." And, hey, maybe it didn't.

But ask yourself, for each abandoned goal – for each step backwards – are you just kidding yourself?

“It doesn’t matter” is the consolation, but in most cases it is a fear that is the cause. Some limiting belief that has the subconscious mind scrambling for safety. Retreating into your comfort zone rather than advancing into success.

Perhaps the even greater danger of kidding yourself that a slip doesn’t matter is this: each time you do so, the definition of what makes for an acceptable slip tends to get broader. Once you’ve convinced yourself that one step backwards doesn’t matter, it doesn’t seem that big a deal to take two steps backwards.

Pretty soon, you are walking in the opposite direction.

When you set a goal, decide that it does matter. And when you find yourself contradicting that, look for the reason you might be kidding yourself, and clear it. If necessary, get help.

Decide that you deserve to succeed.

It may be just my opinion, but I believe that you do.

(I also believe that the people who could potentially benefit from you reaching your goal likewise deserve to have you succeed. Don’t kid yourself that it won’t matter to anyone else...it very well might – more than you know.)

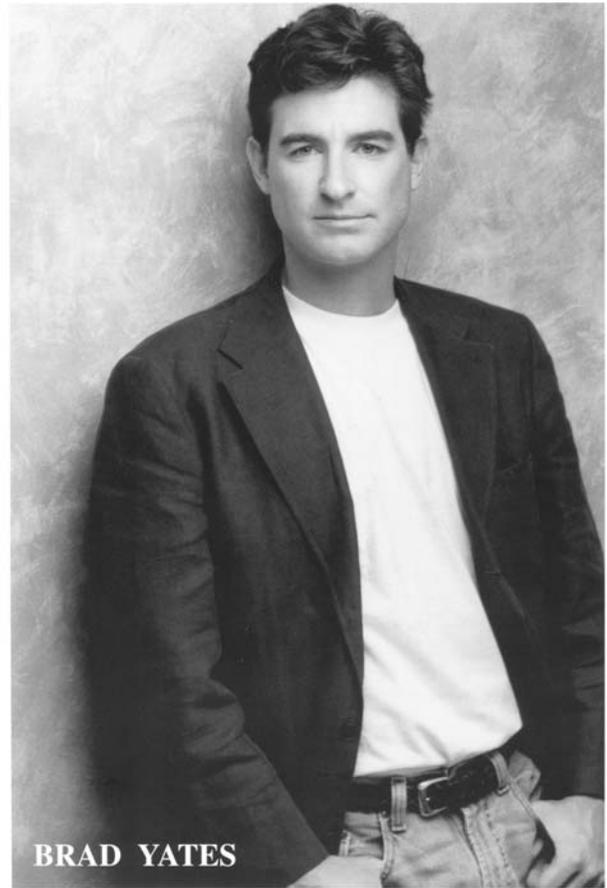
"Difficulty is the excuse history never accepts."

- Edward R. Murrow

About Brad Yates, C.Ht.

Brad is a member of the Association for Comprehensive Energy Psychology, the National Guild of Hypnotists and the American Counseling Association. He was trained and certified at the respected Hypnosis Motivation Institute in Tarzana, CA, where he served on staff. Combining this background with training in energy psychology and various schools of thought in the area of personal growth and achievement, he coaches groups and individuals in achieving greater success, health and happiness in their lives.

Brad has worked with a diverse group of clients, from CEO's to professional and NCAA athletes, from award-winning actors to residents at Turning Point Transitional Housing, a program for homeless men and women in Santa Monica. He currently teaches a weekly class using EFT and guided imagery for the Community Addiction Recovery Association (CARA) at Sacramento Drug Court. He has also been a presenter at the past three International Energy Psychology Conferences.



For those who have suffered through dry seminars, you should know that Brad's eclectic background includes several years as an internationally performing actor, and he is a graduate of Ringling Bros. & Barnum & Bailey Clown College, where he was selected to be the emcee and a featured performer in the final show.

Brad is a caring professional with a sincere interest in seeing people produce extraordinary results.

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