

choose *again*

transform your life

Six Steps to Freedom

The following few pages introduce a simple forgiveness process that I use to find freedom from any upset or conflict I have in my life. I have introduced this process to many people, and they have found it an effective way to work with their own thoughts; transforming their daily state of mind from one of conflict to one of peace. If you practice this process just a few times each day, you are bound to change your life in ways you cannot even imagine yet.

While this process is simple it is also radical. The forgiveness practiced here has nothing to do with what anyone may have done or what you may have done. The forgiveness we are practicing in these pages has to do with the transforming of core beliefs; the transformation of who you think you are. Who we are in Truth is unchanged and unchangeable. That Self just waits. The small 's' self is the set of beliefs we are transforming or undoing.

At an early age things happened, people spoke in a certain way, there were incidents and all of these had an impact on your young and impressionable mind.

As a very young person you interpreted the world to be entirely about you. For example, if your parents were used to saying to you: 'you make me so happy' then, logically, when they are not happy the message you give yourself is that somehow it is your fault that they are not happy. Yesterday you made them happy and now they are unhappy and you are, somehow, responsible for that!

Now, there may have been parents who were happy all the time, I have not had the pleasure of meeting any. Consequently every single one of us made up some limiting core beliefs about ourselves. It is these beliefs that run your life. Everything in your life is the result of your thoughts and your thoughts are chosen by your beliefs. So, that means that if you want a different outcome - a different reality - you must change your mind about who you think you are.

In other words, who you think you are is just a set of beliefs. You have no fixed 'character', you have no 'personality' or 'traits', all of these are just a set of core beliefs. You are not lazy, or attractive, or argumentative ... you just think you are and how you behave when you think these thoughts confirms your beliefs about yourself.

All the conflicts, arguments and irritations you experience arise from these beliefs. They are all the result of who you think you are. Tired of that? Then here is a way out, a true path to emotional freedom.

The process on the following pages is an extraordinarily effective way I have found to change my beliefs and hence change my relationships and my experience in the world.

You'll see it when you believe it!

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Here is what some celebrities might have said about the Six Step Process:

"I don't get it. Does this mean I don't get to bomb Madagascar?" - George W. Bush

"Duh...." - Mother Theresa

"Had I known this process I would not have gone into Poland. Can we keep this a secret?" - Adolf Hitler

"This process is neither great nor not great." - Nagarjuna

"Using this method I could have stayed in my yurt and played with my grandkids." - Genghis Khan

"Finally!" - Meister Eckhart

"Ah, the Friend brings the method, I bring the wine." - Rumi

"Get over yourself." - Saskia Wolsak

"I am rushing back to Africa to teach this to my chimps!" - Jane Goodall

"By George, you've got it." - Henry Higgins

"No one would have been afraid of Virginia Woolf, this ruins the play." - Edward Albee

"Are you saying that all the drama and craziness between me and Julius was unnecessary?" - Cleopatra

Six Steps to Freedom

1. I am upset.

I acknowledge that I am upset or in conflict.

The first step in the conflict / upset resolution dance is to own that I feel upset and to remember that this conflict is gold!

Every conflict serves a purpose and will lead to a joining if resolved. It's true. It can be hard to remember sometimes, but this upset is offering me healing. I have chosen the upset based on a belief I hold about myself and that belief is not true. The upset therefore gives me the opportunity to heal or correct that belief. Remember, Discomfort is aroused only to bring the need for correction to awareness!

Let's break this down a little. How many of us are used to being mildly upset, irritated, annoyed or out of sorts many times a day? I know I am. How did I used to deal with these disturbances? I would shove them aside. 'It's not a big deal,' I told myself, 'Don't sweat the small stuff.' I had a whole range of coping lines I'd use, but in the long run they did not work. In the long run, in fact, they lead to depression, anxiety and even physical illness.

So now I must remember that there are no small upsets. All are equally disturbing to my peace of mind. If I truly wish to be at peace, I must be vigilant and catch even the smallest irritation. I must acknowledge that I have been triggered, take ownership for my experience, and be determined to get to the root of it.

2. Me. This is about me.

“Before there can be conflict there must be doubt and that doubt is always about myself.”

When I am upset or in conflict, it is never about another person or an external situation. My old voice comes in, “Yeah right,” it tells me, “this time it really is their fault!” I am so used to thinking (and saying) about others, “you are so annoying”, “you infuriate me”, “she is so depressing”, “he is so domineering”, etc. In other words, I am very used to seeing the cause of my upset as outside of myself. Sometimes I even get friends to agree with my point of view and then I get to be right. But now I have to ask myself, “Would I rather be right or happy?”

In truth, the conflict is never about anyone else. I must trust this step even if when I don’t believe it. Without this step, peace and joining will not happen. “Okay, okay, so it’s about me.” I tell myself, “I accept that blaming anyone for this conflict will not get me what I really want. And what I want is to be happy, to be at peace.”

The benefit of taking complete ownership of my upset is to realise that I am the author of my experience; I can determine how I feel in any circumstance. I choose my experience, not the situation.

Most of us are used to perceiving ourselves as victims of the outside world. But when I accept that I am the author, I have to let go of blame. The good news is that I have to let go of all blame, not just the blame on others but on myself as well. Remember the earlier line that upsets are gold? Blaming others and/or blaming myself only serves to strengthen a negative belief about myself. I must learn to take responsibility – which is essentially empowering – without any blame.

I can assure you that when I practice just this simple step: ‘it’s about me’ all my relationships are well on their way to being magically transformed.

3. Focus on the feeling.

How do I feel?

It is surprising to see how hard it is to really know how I am feeling. So in this step, I take the time to identify the feeling – or the strongest three feelings – and allow myself to experience it completely. (See the Feeling Sheet on last page)

I have to be ‘in the feeling’ in order to make a genuine change in my life. I have to feel it to heal it. Why is that? Because I choose my feelings based on who I think I am. Underneath each feeling is a belief about myself that I constructed at an early age. It is important to remember that these are just beliefs; they are not the Truth. The Truth of who I am has never been affected by any of these beliefs.

So now it may become clear that if I truly wish to have another experience in my life, I have to change my beliefs about myself, I have to radically transform my small ‘s’ self, (my self-made identity) back to my big ‘S’ Self (the part of me that is unchangeable). In the next step, I focus on uncovering those beliefs. But first I have to identify how I feel and allow myself to really feel it!

4. Remember the feeling.

Is this familiar?

Surely this is not the first time I have ever felt like this. It is very important to recognize that my reactions are recurring emotional patterns. This awareness teaches me that the feeling I have chosen

has nothing to do with the circumstance of the upset. The circumstance simply 'triggered' a core belief and the core belief triggered the feeling. Remember: I am never upset for the reason I think.

Once I realise that this is a pattern, I ask myself: When did I first feel this way? I go back as far as I can in my memory. After a little searching I remember an incident when someone said or did something that made me feel the same way. I allow myself to explore it: How old was I when this happened? What was happening then? Who said/did what? It does not have to be some hugely traumatic event. Whatever memory comes up at this point will do.

5. Establish what my judgment of myself was at that moment.

What did it say about me?

Focusing on that memory, I ask: What was my perception of the situation? How did I interpret it? And - most importantly - what was my judgment of myself? To discover this, I might ask: What did it say about me that this person acted or spoke in that way? And, what kind of a person deserves to feel the way I did?

My interpretation of that childhood event led me to form a belief. For example, let's say my mother drank and that her anger was unpredictable. Now, I could make up any number of beliefs around that issue (perhaps, some of you whose parents had a drinking issue can relate). Following are some beliefs I may have made up:

I believed that I was not important.

I believed that I was not lovable.

I believed that I didn't matter.

I believed that the world was a dangerous place.

I believe that chaos was scary.

I believed that there was something wrong with me.

I believed that I didn't belong.

I believed that people could not be trusted.

Because they were beliefs created in formative years, they stuck. They formed the lens through which I saw my entire world, and then continued to run my life to this day. Now, for example, I may notice that:

I get nervous when anyone is angry.

I hate conflict.

I have trouble trusting people (worse: I attract people who cannot be trusted).

I get anxious when things are not going to schedule.

I am hurt when someone is late for an appointment with me.

I am even afraid of walking into a room full of people.

So, what is the way out? Well, I must now retrain my mind. I made up these beliefs and I am the only one who can undo them. It is that simple.

6. Embrace the Truth about me

My worth is intrinsic and unchangeable.

In this final step, I am going to correct the negative beliefs with a two-step forgiveness process. With this process, I am going to shift my perception about that childhood circumstance and what I thought

it said about me. I will realise that my judgment of myself at that moment was wrong. Whatever happened way back then was not about me. The belief I formed about myself was wrong and does not serve me. I will now start to correct that belief and remember that who I am in Truth is unchanged and unchangeable.

There are a number of ways I can do this, but forgiveness, first and foremost, is the most effective, and it is what I use in this process.

It is important to note that the forgiveness I practice here has nothing to do with another person. I am not forgiving my mother for drinking or for getting angry, yelling at me, and so on. Also, this forgiveness is not the same as condoning unacceptable behaviour. Rather, I am forgiving myself for the beliefs I made up about myself around that circumstance.

I am forgiving myself for believing that I am who I could never be.

I am forgiving myself for believing that I am worthless, or unlovable, or powerless, or guilty.

It is simply not True.

Let's go back to the example of the (neutral) fact that my mother drank. I ask: "What did that say about me?" Let's say I made that to mean that I am not important. Now is the time to undo that belief.

"Forgive me for believing that I am not important," I say to myself. And, because this is an inside job, I respond with, "Thank God that is not True. I made that up. It is just a belief and now I can let it go."

I go on to ask myself for forgiveness for every belief I made up at the time (that I am weak, powerless, unworthy, unlovable, shameful, undeserving of love, not good enough, don't belong, guilty, etc.). Most of us have one or more of these limiting beliefs. I may have to do this forgiveness more than once; old beliefs are sometimes hard to shake. After all I am now changing my identity! I am setting out to change the one I have lived with for many years.

The final step of the process is to confirm the Truth of me. I do this through the next level of forgiveness. This time I seek to forgive myself for forgetting the Truth about who I am. I may say, for example, "Forgive me for forgetting that I am Love." And this time my response would be, "Thank God that is the Truth."

Other corrections might be: "Forgive me for forgetting that who I am is unchangeably innocent", "Forgive me for forgetting that my worth is intrinsic and is not established by what I do or think", "Forgive me for forgetting that I am One". (whole, unchangeably innocent, love etc) It is important to correct each belief I uncovered in the upset. So if I was believing that I was powerless, I will now remember that I am the author of my own experience, and that my power (the power of Love) is infinite.

This process sets me free. When I practice it frequently, it radically changes all my relationships. That is because all of my relationships are with my 'self' and I am now transforming that little 's' self to connect with my big 'S' eternal, universal, Self.

"Life is very beautiful. The world is very beautiful. And relationships are very beautiful because they are with your Self." SRI H.W.L. Poonja

I am responsible for what I see. I choose the feelings I experience, and I decide upon the goal I would achieve. Herein lies true peace.

I 'M F R E E.

choose again

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The following list is an extensive, but certainly not exhaustive, compilation of thoughts, attitudes, beliefs and emotions that may characterize your experience.

- ABANDONED
- AFRAID
- ALONE
- ANGRY
- ANXIOUS
- ASHAMED
- BETRAYED
- BLAME
- BORED
- BURDENED
- CHEATED
- CONCERNED
- CONFUSED
- CRAZY
- CORNERED
- DEJECTED
- DEPRESSED
- DESPAIR
- DEVASTATED
- DISAPPOINTED
- DISGUSTED
- DOUBT
- DREAD
- EMBARRASSED
- EMPTY
- EXHAUSTED
- FEARFUL
- HEARTACHE
- HEARTBROKEN
- HEAVINESS
- HELPLESS
- HUMILIATED
- HORRIFIED
- HURT
- INADEQUATE
- INSECURE
- INVALIDATED
- LAZY
- LETHARGIC
- LONELY
- LOSS
- LOST
- OFFENDED
- OUTRAGED
- PERSECUTED
- PRESSURED
- PUNISHED
- PUT DOWN
- RAGE
- REBELLIOUS
- REGRET
- REJECTED
- RESENTMENT
- SADNESS
- SCARED
- SELF CONCIIOUS
- SHAME
- SILLY
- SUFFERING
- SUSPICIOUS
- TERROR
- TORTURED
- TRAPPED
- UNCERTAIN
- VULNERABLE
- WARY
- WORRIED
- WORN OUT