



Taking Charge of Your Life

An excerpt from “5 Steps to Freedom”

By Phil Golding

The next stage of the process is putting what we have learnt, and our new choices from that learning, into action every day. This has two important effects. Firstly, by living what we have learnt, we soon discover that there is more to learn. In the process, we gain a better feel for any given issue and can look deeper into it. Secondly, we are able to experience the benefits of our increasing ability to more skilfully take charge of our lives through positive conscious choice. This increasing self-mastery naturally gives us more confidence.

Being aware of the power of consciously and positively working with what every day brings and how essential this is to creating the life that we want, is another vital key to happiness and fulfilment. This next chapter addresses this fundamental law of life.

REALITY IS NOW

NOW is the only time we can act. We can only live our lives in the here and now. Now is where we find the power to create our lives the way we want. Living in the now aligns our life to reality and simplifies it as a result.

As a result of our accumulated confusion, living in the now can be a hard concept to understand and even harder to maintain an ongoing awareness of this reality. Understanding this concept and living it is essential, however, if we want happiness, peace, and fulfilment. So let me explain.

You cannot act yesterday or tomorrow. You may set an important goal for the future, but you can only make your way toward achieving that goal by what you do now, and the now in every day until you get there. What you are experiencing now was created by you with what you thought and did in the past; including the people you have drawn to you. The future, therefore, does not actually exist. It is just a set of possibilities based on what you envision and then put into action on a daily basis. The outcome of your daily action creates your future. This means your future is within your control. If you face, accept, and positively do your best to work with whatever life presents to you in each moment, including your own humanness, a fulfilling future is assured.

Our blind ego mind also gets confused about the difference between thinking and acting. What we may be thinking now about our future is just that, thinking. It is not our future. It is just our minds thinking. For the same reasons, we cannot change the past. The past is gone. Like the future, the past does not exist except for what resides in our mind’s memories. As a result of this confusion regarding thinking and acting, we fall prey to negative mind-states such as worry, regret, guilt, and

resentment. I will address this more in the next passage.

When trapped emotional energy is triggered, it may be the result of a trauma from years past, but it is flowing through our consciousness in the now from our memories that are in our minds now. The ego does not understand this. For example, our ego thinks about something that might happen in the future, or something that may have occurred in the past, or a past memory may be triggered by a situation around us in the now. We then have an emotional reaction to that thought or event and because of this our ego thinks that something real is occurring. In our confusion, we start to act as if this emotional memory is actually re-occurring around us in our lives now.

In reality, we are acting under the influence of a past memory—somewhat like being drunk on that memory! The memory, however, is no more real than watching a movie or reading a novel. It is only occurring within our own minds. A situation around us may be triggering the memory, but it is not causing it. The emotional memory is from the past. Because of this misunderstanding about the nature of the mind, the ego gets lost in its own self-created drama and becomes largely disconnected from the reality of what is really in the now moment. A common result of this confusion is relationship breakdown. We project the ghosts of our past onto the person we are with now.

Our ego does not know how to make use of what the mind has to offer, such as its powerful ability to imagine, for example. As a result, the mind gets lost and out of control. Our imagination can become driven by fear and we can lose touch with what is real. For the average person, much of what the mind is thinking is not about anything that is actually real now. The mind is full of imaginary stories about what we are afraid *might* happen, or what we wish *would* happen, or what we think someone else is thinking, and we are continually acting as though these stories are real. With its confused thinking, the unaware human mind tries to control the uncontrollable and stresses itself out in the process. Effectively and positively harnessing the mind's power is achieved with our conscious-awareness. Our blind ego is not up to the job.

Whether it is emotional healing or achieving your goals, skilfully managing what you are experiencing in the now will determine your future success.

WORRY, REGRET, GUILT, AND RESENTMENT RUINS YOUR FUTURE

One of the things we discover while we are learning to care for our minds is how much time we devote to not accepting the past and worrying about the future. This is a recipe for continual stress. Be certain that worry (or anxiety, a more acute form of worry), regret, guilt, and resentment are a complete waste of time. Not only that, they are the destroyer of a positive future.

I am talking here about prolonged habitual mind-states that trap us into suffering. I am not talking about natural free emotions that prompt us to take responsible care of our lives.

Accepting the Past and Gaining the Benefits

Accepting the past does not mean accepting unacceptable behaviour. The same goes for forgiving others. An essential factor when learning from the past is learning how to honour and care for yourself now.

Forgiveness arises from the awareness that carrying hate and resentment within your mind is self-destructive and keeps you dependent on, and vulnerable to, those you have bad feelings for. You can still say “no” to someone you have forgiven. You can still hold them accountable for their actions

if you can, but as I already mentioned, be very aware that seeking justice is not necessarily going to bring healing and a bright future.

Guilt is about *not* forgiving yourself. It comes from not claiming full authority over your own life now. Guilt comes from not acknowledging your human right to make mistakes. Take charge of your life. Learn from your mistakes and move on. That is how to grow and mature. If you have harmed another through your mistakes, then making amends may be important to your moving on, but mentally thrashing yourself is violence and should play no part in this process.

Forgiveness is an important part of the first step of acceptance. Forgiving yourself and others, therefore, is essential for your healing and wellbeing. You are learning to act as an empowered adult, rather than continue to react as an oppressed, helpless and angry child.

Accepting the past and learning from it can transform the way we feel about it. In a way, it does change the past because we are healing our memories. A difficult past, if we can accept it and learn from it, can become a benefit rather than be a burden, because it can enable us to become stronger and wiser.

The Destructive Power of Worry

Worry is taking all the fear and confusion that your human-self has accumulated from the past and creating an imaginary future with it, and a scary one at that. In reality, the ego knows nothing about the possibilities of the future. It only knows its own confused perceptions of the past.

To justify this confused way of thinking, the ego looks into the past and says, “Considering what the past has been for me, I am just being realistic.”

The ego even thinks that worrying is being responsible. Our ego thinks it is doing something tangible by worrying. If we don't worry about a loved one then we think that it means we don't care. Of course it is important to have concern for a loved one, who is in need of help, and to do all we can for them. Worry is different. Worrying is not an action. It is indulging in futile thinking that does not do anything other than harm ourselves. Not only that, worrying does not help our loved ones in the slightest.

Worry disempowers us. It prevents us from clearly seeing what we can positively do now that will take care of our future. It prevents us from letting go once we have done all we can for that moment. Worry never lets us rest and it makes us feel guilty if we do. It makes us a slave to fear and negative conditioning. It is vital to realise the damaging effect worrying has on our minds. As a result of worry, we end up making poor decisions that keep attracting to us the same old unhappy experiences. We become the unhappy authors of our own drama.

Instead of being lost in our own self-created scary movie, we can look squarely at the reality in front of us and work with it as positively as we can. A large part of the work is sorting out our own human confusion by *paying attention to what we actually can control and what we can't control*. We can sort this through by making two lists under these headings. Examining our worries in our journal is an effective way of bringing the light of reality into the picture. What we can control, we can act on when it is possible to act on it. What we can't control in any given moment, reality dictates that we must let it go. This inner-work is absolutely essential to gaining the clarity to see life in the right perspective.

It would be a safe prediction to say that our future won't be bright if we spend our time worrying and resenting and beating ourselves up with guilt and so on. Our future depends on how we take care of ourselves today and every day.

HUMAN BEINGS LEARN BY TRIAL AND ERROR

Having gained a few insights into the nature of our troubles, our ego has a tendency to think that it has got it all figured out and becomes attached to this belief. We don't truly know if we have genuinely learned something, however, until we have attempted to put it into action. In doing so, our ego discovers that there is a lot more to learn. Our ego's pride tends to get upset at this and falls into thinking that it is all too hard and that life is unfair. The ego just makes it hard for itself by trying to grasp at the reward without doing the real work.

Unrealistic expectations placed on children to get things right first time is a very sad and common theme. Children often impose these expectations on themselves as well. As a therapist, this is one of the most common stories my clients share with me about their dysfunctional childhood experiences. Once their awareness is awakened to the destructiveness of this form of discipline, it is often a shock to my clients to realise how much their lives have been adversely affected by it.

In reality, one of the most joyful and satisfying experiences a child can have is the freedom and encouragement to explore new things. There is a certain thrill about approaching a new project in various different ways, suffering a bit of frustration at times, but with some gentle guidance and encouragement, finally mastering a new skill. If the parental guidance is appropriate, what the child will remember the most is the excitement of the achievement. All the mistakes and frustrations along the way will not be regarded as a problem. Instead, they will be regarded as the natural stepping-stones to success. As a result of this positive mentoring, the child grows up confident in his/her natural abilities and creative power. Disappointments are taken in one's stride without a sense of reduced self-worth.

How different it is when a child is expected to get a task right the first time. The child is criticised and ridiculed when he/she naturally lacks understanding or stumbles over new challenges of coordination and problem solving. Fear and shame quickly invades the experience. Trying new things soon becomes a source of anxiety. Lack of self-confidence and creativity is the inevitable result, along with a limited ability to effectively face life's challenges.

In reality, trial and error is a natural and essential mode of learning for any human being. Denying this is a fast-track to suffering. Everything takes time to learn, no matter how academically clever we are, and no matter how naturally adept we may be in something.

Playing golf is a good analogy for this. You can digest a library full of golfing books and DVDs, but it is a very different matter when it comes to placing that little white ball onto the tee and slogging it straight and high down the fairway, especially if there is a group of onlookers. If you think learning to play golf is hard, try changing an old ingrained habit, such as regret or worry. It can be done, but it takes time, persistence and a lot of trial and error.

It is impossible to grasp the nuances of such complex tasks in a short time. Repeated experience is required to simply gain awareness of what there is to grasp.

How long did it take you to learn your trade, or to gain your diploma or university degree? How much effort did you put into that? Do you think mastering your human mind is going to be any easier? Think again. It is your life's work, and be sure that everything else in your life depends on it. Being skilful at caring for your mind in the now is the foundation of all your happiness and wellbeing in every area of your life.

Be very aware, therefore, of when you are being hard on yourself for not getting things "right". Fully mastering some deep issues may not even be possible in your lifetime, but learning to

skilfully manage these issues certainly is possible. Other issues go less deep, and with persistence can be completely overcome.

I am routinely helping people to manage and to even overcome self-defeating behaviours, just as I have overcome the chronic depression of my past. Often more orthodox therapists have given up on these people. My clients are often told that medication is their only solution. I have had the pleasure of showing them otherwise.

To achieve this success, each of these people has learned to accept and care for their human-self, using their own adapted variations of this powerful process. Their success was assured because they did not give up. They have learned to open their hearts to what is in front of them in each moment and make the most of it.

DISCIPLINE, ONE DAY AT A TIME.

Putting this process into action requires discipline. Discipline in the form of persistence, determination and structure is essential for facing life's challenges and creating the life you want. Discipline brings with it freedom to be who you want to be, but only if this discipline is in the spirit of self-acceptance.

Discipline is about setting goals, making plans, creating routines and then sticking by them. It is about your commitment to your life. This brings forth the power of your potential and an opportunity to gain more awareness of how to care for your vulnerable human-self.

Unfortunately, for many people, the word discipline brings up bad memories of being dominated by unskilful parents or other authority figures. When a child is disciplined with unrealistic expectations and harsh judgment, necessary guidance becomes oppressive and Soul-destroying. The child either gives up or rebels or becomes an unthinking conformist or a stressed out perfectionist. Depression, anger and anxiety are common consequences.

When the discipline is erratic and contradictory, the child becomes confused, scattered, angry and fearful. There can be a lack of consistency in adult life, leading to many disappointments. The individual's character can often lack sincerity, trust and trustworthiness, due to not having someone to rely on as a child.

When the child gets too little discipline and is left alone too often without positive mentoring, there develops a shallowness and a lack of commitment. Depression and various habits of trying to escape life may develop because the child didn't learn how to push through with difficult tasks.

When discipline is rightly employed, our conscious-awareness develops a great strength of will that serves our highest good. Setting up and persisting with daily routines such as reading, journaling and meditating, as a process of caring for our human-self, for example, develops an ability to stay above our old negative conditioning. With persistence, new life-sustaining habits are built into our mind, over-writing our old self-defeating habits. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, it can be hard work at first, but it gets increasingly easier as time goes by, because, with persistence, our level of skill naturally increases and the new good habits take over.

Discipline is also much easier when you divide it into small chunks. Life is lived in small moments, which go together to make a bigger moment like a day or a week. Conserve your energy by focusing on NOW. Do the best you can in the moment you have. Every small effort is taking you forward. Mistakes are no problem. When accepted and used as learning opportunities, they help guide you forward. Only giving up or beating yourself up is taking you nowhere. Tomorrow is a new day. There is always a new opportunity to put into practice what you have learned from the previous

moment.

Focusing on and making the most of this moment sets you up in the best possible way for the next moment. Even if you make a complete mess of one moment, you always have the next moment to try again, armed with what you have learned. There is no tomorrow to worry about. There is only now. When tomorrow comes, it will be a new set of now moments to apply your ongoing process to. If you want to climb a mountain, start with the rock in front of you, and then the next one and so on. If you continue to look up at the peak and allow yourself to keep being daunted by it, you are likely to give up. It is how we do the journey, including taking care of our human-self along the way, that makes all the difference. Reaching the peak is then an inevitable reality.

Goal Setting

When we set a goal, we are focusing ourselves on a definite course of action. In the course of trying to create this particular outcome, we inevitably run into obstacles in the form of other people, physical and environmental limitations and, in particular, our own negative conditioning. This unpredictability must be accepted as part of the journey.

To our unaware ego, this can be a source of frustration and inevitable conflict. The ego thinks events should unfold precisely the way that it wants. Our ego, however, is just being grandiose. Our ego often thinks it has some sort of godly powers over life, the universe and everything. But then in the next moment, it thinks it has no power at all, because it starts blaming others when things go wrong. We don't like accepting that we are human and therefore often confused and unaware, just like the other human beings we are relying on to help us achieve our goals. This is reality. It is an inevitable and natural part of the journey.

We cannot know all the variables. The outcome of any goal is in many ways unpredictable. Rather than getting attached to the outcome that we think is necessary, we need to be open to positively working with whatever the moment brings. This positive approach brings inevitable success, but not always in the form we expect.

The more we accept what comes to us in every moment, including our humanness, and positively work with it, the more efficient our journey to our goal will be. While we are working toward accomplishing a chosen goal, we are learning, healing and growing along the way.

Setting goals is essential for giving your life conscious direction. Goals can be short, medium or long term. If we don't take responsibility for our direction in life, we risk being taken over by our negative conditioning and also by other people's agendas. We risk not paying attention to what feels right for ourselves.

Regularly keeping track of your goals and your progress in your journal is essential to success. If you don't, it is very easy to get distracted and forget your intentions. Six months later, you may suddenly remember the goal that you set and wonder how you lost track of it.

Using your journal in this way is like managing a business, your life business. A manager is lost without his/her work diary and frequent staff meetings that keep track of progress and problems. Your mind is like your staff who you have been given the responsibility to manage.

Creating Routines

Routines are essential for ensuring that your journey toward your goal stays on track. For instance, getting up earlier than normal may help you achieve your goals (I wouldn't get my writing done without doing just that!). Your human body/mind may not agree with this routine, but your

conscious-awareness, utilizing your will, must override this. To carry this extra load you may also need to improve your diet and get to bed earlier. You create this new routine and keep it consistent by using your conscious-awareness.

The old habits will naturally resist. The primal body/mind is a habit-bound creature. Habit forming is important for survival and efficiency. It gives our conscious-awareness less to think about so it can get on with more important things. When it comes to changing a habit, it is you as conscious-awareness who must make this happen. The new habit must be burnt into the brain's synaptic pathways while the old habits are erased. Erasing these old habits means going against them—driving through them with the new program. To use the previous example, getting out of bed earlier than usual might feel like pushing against a heavy object. We may literally need to let out a roar of galvanized strength and determination to push our human-self out of bed. In order to achieve our goals, that are envisaged and created by our conscious-awareness so that we can express and achieve our potential, we must not let ourselves be controlled by our old, blind, habit-bound mind that clings to the same old ways.

Your body/mind is your vehicle in this life. You, as conscious-awareness, are the driver. It is like riding a horse. You train your horse and guide your horse, not the other way around. A well-trained horse knows what to do in a way that is in harmony with the rider, but the rider must ultimately be in control. In order to achieve your goals, you must take full responsibility for what is required. You must implement self-empowering behaviours and persist with them until they become the new habits. Routines are essential, therefore, for creating new life-enhancing habits. After all, that is how your conditioning was created in the first place.

Of course, in the process of galvanizing our will and pushing through with the new routine, it is important not to push ourselves too hard. There must be a balance between nurturing our human-self and expanding it. When we extend ourselves, we often trigger old emotional wounds that can start to undermine our progress. This is one of the challenges of discipline. This must be accepted. Time out needs to be taken to process and heal these old wounds in order to gain the strength to push forward once again. Slow and steady wins the race when dealing with our humanness, otherwise we are likely to give up, or if we keep driving through regardless, we could burn out.

Reading, journaling and meditating, for example, needs to be set to a routine as much as possible to ensure that time is created for it.

Of course routines, as well as goals and plans, may need to be adjusted as we gain more awareness of what is best for us along the way.

JOY AND SERENITY IS NOW

Despite what our ego thinks, true joy and serenity is not found by getting what we want in the material world. This may satisfy us for a while, but then the mind soon takes its gains for granted and starts looking for something else. This also includes relationships. True joy and serenity, and even fulfilment, is found by transcending the mind's propensity for holding other people, places and things responsible for our happiness. This treasure of treasures is found in the stillness of being present in the now while accepting everything as it is. The stillness and its accompanying peace arises to the degree that we stop fighting reality as it is. Even as our human mind continues to react, we can consciously stop, rest in our open, flowing breath and observe, while allowing all this reaction to flow through us, knowing that this disturbance is not our true Self. We can even get to the point of having a bit of a laugh at our silly human-self as it gets itself all tangled up yet again, like a parent lovingly

laughing at the antics of a beloved child, without, of course, shaming the child.

Our vulnerable human mind suffers anxiety because it thinks that it can't bear this or it can't live without that. When we consciously step back and look within ourselves in the spirit of self-acceptance and personal responsibility, when we can stay still and observe the anxiety that is flowing through us without falling into all of it, we have a chance of seeing that the anxiety has no real foundation.

Without the guiding principles of Unconditional Love and Personal Responsibility, consciousness has no real power and descends into being mere ego. Without the power of this greater knowing, the ego is held captive and under the control of the confusion and primal instincts of the human-self. The human-self, without the guiding power of an awakened consciousness, only displays the pseudo power of fight-or-flight. This lower level of being is reflected in all the misguided behaviour that causes suffering in this world.

When we empower our detached and observing conscious-awareness by seeing ourselves as the loving guardian of our vulnerable humanness, a new level of inner-strength is available to us. A key aspect of the power of conscious-awareness comes from the fact that it operates in the present moment, above and beyond all past conditioning and human limitations. It is infinitely adaptable. This power of our consciousness is always available to us. Within this aware consciousness is the knowing that no matter what comes and goes in the turbulent human mind, consciousness can remain still and tranquil, ready to act. From consciousness comes our ability to observe our life from a higher perspective

If this greater self was not a true reality then of course we would just be deluding ourselves. Any attempt to live this process, no matter how dedicated we may be, would have little or no benefit. This is not the case, however.

When we accept ourselves as we are and do our best to be the loving guardian for our humanness on a daily basis, we are actively creating a sanctuary of loving kindness, forgiveness, acceptance, clarity, commitment and so on for our vulnerable human mind to flow into and through. In effect, we have created a controlled environment within our conscious-awareness that insulates us from the negativity of the world around us, and even the negativity of our own conditioning.

Joy is a natural result of being centred in conscious-awareness. Joy, flowing from the heart of consciousness, does not depend on the conditions and circumstances of our everyday changing human affairs. When centred in conscious-awareness, even when we are in the midst of a difficult challenge, joy can be found.

This does not cut us off from the world—the opposite in fact. We are in the world, interacting with it, but less likely to be thrown off centre by it. As a result we see the reality of things more clearly and can respond to the world around us more effectively. We have taken command of our own mind. We are now creating our own reality, a reality that is in tune with the higher laws of consciousness, regardless of how out of tune everyone else is. Study the lives of people like Mahatma Gandhi or Nelson Mandela and you will have a graphic example of what I mean.

Mahatma Gandhi (2-10-1869 – 30-1-1948) provided us with a great example of this power of conscious-awareness. His faith in unconditional love and total personal responsibility was unwavering. This one skinny little man was able to unshackle India from its unjust subjugation by the British Empire without the use of brute force. He also managed to calmly and constructively direct the volatile passions of the Indian masses.

His greatest weapon was his own self-awareness process. His final act of passive resistance

that broke the back of Britain's control over India was achieved through weeks of meditation. While Indian statesmen were waiting impatiently for their leader, Gandhi, to offer them insights as to what to do next, Gandhi simply continued to meditate and contemplate. Finally he came up with a strategy that was so simple and yet so powerful that only a supreme consciousness could have known of the potential of the act. I encourage you to study the life of Mahatma Gandhi. You will learn much from his example. A quick way to do this is to watch the Academy Award winning movie ("Gandhi") that was made about his life. I recommend this to all my students.

Our conscious-awareness has a greater power to love. This is the power to love unconditionally. This is the ultimate power. This true love is difficult for the ego to grasp. Ego is created out of conditioned love. Unconditional love can even scare the ego because true love can see straight through the ego's facade. In contrast, the hearts of those who are humble and wise (which is a deep, quiet inner-strength born out of self-acceptance) know this greater love as their foundation in life.

Joy and serenity is within your power to create here and now, regardless of your circumstances in life. It is the very core of your being, your true home and refuge from the confusion of this world and your own human mind.

Our emotions and feelings are telling our conscious-awareness vital information that we need to know in each moment. They are there to prompt our conscious-awareness to pay attention, to observe, and to assess the reality of the situation, rather than blindly react from old fearful imaginings, like our ego does.

As we put steps 1, 2 and 3, into practice, we can *feel* what is going on within us and know, or at least discover, what these feelings mean in relation to caring for our vulnerable humanness and honouring our potential.

When we accept that our life is a journey of continual learning, growing and awakening, we can then harmoniously work with what comes our way. We are no longer in such conflict with the circumstances and conditions of our lives, or so emotionally dependent on things happening the way our egos think they should. We can see that every moment is an opportunity to accept our humanness, to know ourselves better, and to gain a greater mastery of ourselves. We can be more aware of what our human mind is doing with that moment and how it gets itself all tangled up and lost. We can relax into the moment we are in and see the benefits that are there for us. We can step forward with our conscious-awareness, our open heart, and be the skilful manager of our lives in every now moment.

Exercise

Embracing the Day

Ongoing Self Maintenance

Establishing and maintaining the right attitude toward each new day, regardless of what challenges may lay ahead, is essential for continued growth, for increasing inner-harmony and for successfully achieving your goals.

What this means is that you will be using the skills that you have learned so far in this book in a summarised daily process. At times though, the challenges that you face in your life may be such that they take up much of your attention, and much of your process work will be focused on these issues. You may be in the process of trying to survive each day as you battle through these major challenges.

There is a tendency, however, to drop our personal growth work when the crisis is over, which leaves us unprepared for the next major challenge. As a result, we tend to lurch from one crisis to the next. This roller-coaster ride can be reduced, or even avoided, by maintaining a daily self-awareness process, such as I am going to lay out here.

This process of embracing each day is usually done in the evening or first thing in the morning. This will of course require discipline. For example, if processing in the morning, getting to bed earlier and setting the alarm to get up earlier may be required. Such discipline may be tough at first, but the energy-saving benefits of consistently sticking to this process will soon compensate.

Of course not everyone's circumstances and schedules will allow for doing this work first thing in the morning. Doing the work at some other time in the day or evening will still work, providing it is consistent.

This constructive approach to your daily affairs covers four main areas, which are: **Acceptance and Responsibility, Gratitude/Connection, Clarity and Ongoing Awareness.**

Acceptance and Responsibility

- 1) If you are in conflict with what is going on in your life, in other words, if you see yourself as a victim, you are not in the optimal position to successfully work through whatever challenges you may have or may think you have. I say "may think you have" as a reminder that most issues are really created imaginings, that we project onto life, that are not real at all. When you believe you are a victim, you are actually denying your potential as an empowered being of conscious-awareness. You cut yourself off from the power and knowing of your higher-consciousness.

- 2) Know that everything that comes your way today is an opportunity for you to grow. See all things as ultimately beneficial to you and not as a problem, or as unfair. To work with life and overcome your challenges, you must accept it as it is. You must be willing to step up and face it squarely. Take some deep breaths, therefore, and prepare yourself to let in, without resistance, all that faces you this day, including your own human vulnerabilities, with compassion and with courage.

Gratitude/Connection

- 3) Before the practical part of this exercise begins, spend some time raising your awareness of what you have to be grateful for. An “attitude of gratitude” is an essential step up to connecting to your higher-consciousness. Looking for the good in your life lifts your consciousness to a more constructive and motivated frame of mind. It will also remind you that just a shift in focus can make all the difference when it comes to having a positive frame of mind.
- 4) Open up your journal and make a list of what you have to be grateful for and spend some minutes contemplating on this. Don’t just look for big or special things. Have a more aware look at the everyday mundane things that you may take for granted.
- 5) Other ways of lifting your consciousness are achieved by reading some inspirational literature, meditation and music, or whatever helps you to connect to your own inner-sanctum.
- 6) This will help to empower your consciousness so that you can see/feel the reality of things more clearly.

Clarity

- 7) To begin the practical part of this process, make a spontaneous list of what is ahead of you this day.
- 8) When this is done, examine each point and separate *fact* from *fiction*. The facts are the things that you actually know, such as a bill you need to pay or a job interview you need to attend. Fiction is all the worry that your ego’s imagination may add to the mix, such as convincing yourself that the person who is to interview you for the job is bound to reject you.
- 9) Create two separate lists—one for the facts, and one for the fiction. Separating the content of what you have previously written in this way will help you to process it.
- 10) Re-examine your fact and fiction lists and expand and refine them if you need to.
- 11) Using the “fiction” list, under the Heading of “Vulnerabilities”, spend some time writing about any fear or concern that you may have about what lies ahead of you this day.
- 12) Knowing that you are conscious-awareness, the representative of Unconditional Love to your human-self, spend some time processing these thoughts and emotions with an open compassionate heart. This will help you to redirect this vulnerability through your conscious-awareness throughout the day, while at the same time being able to stay above it enough to act consciously and constructively.

- 13) Don't forget to keep your breath open and flowing as an essential part of the process of channeling and welcoming your human-self into your heart of consciousness.
- 14) Now revisit your fact list and get in touch with how you are going to plan out your day. Draw yourself up a quick schedule and a list of things you need to remember. Bear in mind that this will just be a working plan, which will no doubt need altering as the day unfolds.
- 15) Often, what you thought would be a straightforward task ends up taking far longer than expected. Sometimes something unforeseen occurs that demands a greater priority over what you had previously planned. It is essential, therefore, to be flexible.
- 16) This plan, nonetheless, will give you some good direction and allow you to be much more aware than you would normally be.

Ongoing awareness

- 17) Throughout the day, frequently refer to what you have written in regards to your schedule and other reminders, as well as any fear and insecurity that you were able to identify from within your vulnerable humanness.
- 18) Throughout the day, use your open, conscious breath as a way to stay in tune with your whole self. Stop, breath and let yourself into your awareness. Pay attention to what you are feeling so that you can stay in touch with your human-self with your conscious-awareness.
- 19) Now you have raised your conscious-awareness to what your day may have in store. You have also prepared yourself to be in tune with the needs of your vulnerable human-self. You will be in a better position to deal with the unexpected, and also your own negative conditioning that can threaten your balance.
- 20) As conscious-awareness, you have the power to take charge of your day, to embrace it as a most precious gift from life.



Summary

1. We don't truly know if we have genuinely learned something until we have attempted to put it into action.
2. The ego's pride tends to get upset and falls into self-rejection, blame, or denial when things don't live up to our expectations. This makes our path of personal growth unnecessarily hard.
3. When we accept that our life is a journey of continual learning, growth and awakening, we can then work harmoniously with what comes our way, rather than be in conflict with it.
4. You can only manage your life in the now. You cannot act yesterday or tomorrow.
5. Whether it is emotional healing, or achieving your goals, skilfully managing what you are experiencing in every moment will determine your success.
6. Worry, regret, guilt and resentment are a complete waste of time. Not only that, they are the destroyer of a positive future.
7. An essential factor in learning from the past is learning how to honour yourself and care for yourself now.
8. Accepting the past does not mean accepting unacceptable behaviour.
9. We can still say no to someone we have forgiven.
10. You can still hold people accountable for their actions if you can, but be very aware that seeking justice is not necessarily going to bring you healing and a bright future.
11. Carrying hate and resentment within your mind is self-destructive and keeps you dependent on and vulnerable to those you have resentment towards.
12. Guilt is about not forgiving yourself. Acceptance is another word for forgiveness.
13. A difficult past can become a benefit rather than be a burden because, when faced, it can enable us to become stronger and more mature.
14. Worry is taking all the fear and confusion that your human-self has accumulated from the past and creating an imaginary future with it.
15. In reality, the ego knows nothing about the possibilities of the future. The ego is the unhappy author of its own drama.
16. The inner-work of sorting out our own human confusion, by paying attention to and taking compassionate responsibility for what we are feeling, enables us to have the clarity to see the reality of what is in front of us.

17. Our future depends on how we take care of today, everyday.
18. Unrealistic expectations placed on children to get things right first time can have a deep negative impact on the rest of their lives.
19. Suffering under the pressure of such unrealistic expectations means fear and shame quickly invades the experience of learning, and trying new things soon becomes a source of anxiety.
20. In reality, one of the most joyful and satisfying experiences a child can have is the freedom and encouragement to explore new things.
21. If the parental guidance is appropriate, what the child will remember the most is the excitement of the achievement. The child grows up confident in his/her natural abilities and creative power. Disappointments are taken in one's stride without a sense of reduced self-worth.
22. Everything takes time to learn, no matter how academically clever we are and no matter how naturally adept we may be at something.
23. Being skilful at caring for your mind is the foundation for all your happiness and wellbeing.
24. Discipline in the form of persistence, determination and structure is essential for facing life's challenges and creating the life that you want.
25. Discipline brings with it freedom to be who you want to be, but only if this discipline serves the heart, the greater principles of your higher-consciousness.
26. Unfortunately, for many people, the word discipline brings up bad memories of being dominated by unskilful parents or other authority figures.
27. When discipline is rightly employed, our conscious-awareness develops a great strength of will that serves our highest good.
28. Setting up and persisting with daily routines such as reading, journaling and meditating, as a process of caring for our human-self, develops an ability to stay above the old confusions and creates new life-sustaining habits.
29. Turning our life around can be hard at first, but as our life-sustaining habits become stronger and begin to overtake our old negative habits, life gets increasingly easier.
30. Discipline is much easier when you divide your time up into small chunks. Life is lived in small moments, which go together to make a bigger moment like a day or a week.
31. Conserve your energy by focusing on NOW. Every small effort is taking you forward. Only giving up or beating yourself up is taking you nowhere.
32. Aware consciousness is the knowing that no matter what comes and goes in the turbulent mind, consciousness can remain still and tranquil, ready to act.
33. Joy flows naturally from the heart of conscious-awareness, even in the midst of a difficult challenge.

34. Consciousness is like a higher will. In order for it to be a powerful force in our lives, it must be activated. We must actively exercise our power of choice and parent our human-self.
35. If we don't face our fears, we don't access the power that enables us to transform our lives.
36. Those who are humble (which is a deep, quiet inner-strength) and wise know Unconditional Love as their foundation in life.

