

The Little book of Flow - revised

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Here is the 'Little book of Flow' in one long post.

The premise of this essay is that those exquisite but all too rare moments when we experience 'flow', when we are truly creative, happy and intuitively know exactly what is needed, are simply those instances when we glimpse our original and true nature. It sets out to show how, instead of trying to fathom the conditions for flow, we can realise this 'true nature' and make 'flow' our normal way of being, wherever we are and in whatever we do.

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This is an early draft of something I would like to publish so any criticism/feedback/pointers are welcome and appreciated. Thanks.

Chapter 1

Introduction

I have a naive trust in the universe.....that at some level it all makes sense, and we can get glimpses of that sense if we try."

.....Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

The idea of a 'flow' state was popularised in the book 'Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience' by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi in 1990. In that landmark book he describes states of peak experience that are almost transcendental and goes on to present an in depth study of the conditions for these Flow experiences. That book made a big impression on me at the time but I always had an inkling of a idea that what Mihaly was dealing with was something far more profound and accessible than we might imagine and also, could exist independent of the conditions that he described.

Many sports people have told stories about being in 'the zone'. Sprinters call it 'tipping' when they run with only the tips of their toes brushing the track as if they were flying. Basketball players call it 'going unconscious'. They tell us how everything is experienced in slow motion and there is a sense of total freedom and confidence to do whatever they want when they want. Being in 'the zone' can be so euphoric that it often becomes the ultimate goal for anyone who has once experienced it.

These experiences are not just confined to sports either - most of us have experienced something like this at least once in our life, usually by accident rather than design. They can be the most beautiful, sublime, carefree, creative and happy moments in our lives. We often recall them later in life - how we felt more alive and everything seemed more real than anything we had experienced previously or since - almost like tantalizing postcards from a magical kingdom that we never really got to go to.

The only sad thing is that these moments are all too rare.

The premise of this little book is that this need not be. What I'd like to show is that these illusive moments are in fact glimpses of our true nature and as such have nothing to do with technique or circumstance (although 'flow' does often seem to miraculously transform circumstance). Once we recognise that the flow state is our original and natural way of being, instead of trying to create the 'conditions' for flow we can learn how to access it directly and let flow infuse every aspect of our lives - let genius shine into all our doing, replace chaos or stress with clarity and ease, and to gain insight into the true nature of our problems so they can be resolved easily at their cause.

Bringing science, philosophy, spirituality, myth and everyday life together.

It seems that if you really want to know fundamental truths (What is life? How can we be fulfilled - experience flow and joy in our lives? etc.) and keep questioning in the face of confusion and dogma, then it doesn't really matter what discipline you follow because at their very core they all seem to converge and point towards the same thing. Ask a physicist 'what creates the universe' and they say energy. Ask them to describe energy and they tell you,

'It can never be created or destroyed; it always is, always has been and always will be; it is always flowing into form, through form and out of form.'

Now, ask a theologian 'what creates the universe' and they say God. Ask them to describe God and they might also tell you,

'It can never be created or destroyed; it always is, always has been and always will be; it is always flowing into form, through form and out of form.'

Hmmm, interesting! It seems that science, philosophy, spirituality and myth are all just different perspectives on reality, our different ways of enquiring into the nature of things.

I personally think that fundamental truths are best learnt in the school of hard knocks. Studying the

different disciplines is great for gleaning new perspectives but the proof of the pudding is always in the eating - there really is no substitute for our own direct experience. Look at what others have said, listen to your intuition, take what rings true for you and then test it out in real life. That's what seems to work for me and that's how I'd advise approaching the information presented here too.

A different way of reading this

Before we look at how we can make 'flow' an integral part of our lives we are going to examine our existing thought system and see how it arises from a self concept that is incredibly limited, one that seems separate and disconnected from everything and everyone outside itself, and therefore appears to be at the mercy of a very unstable world and has to strive to get what it wants. What I'd like to do here is to take us beyond the limits of this existing thought system to look back and see that the self concept that it is based on is not true, and discover a far more powerful and happy way of being.

The problem in attempting to do this is that reading and considering this stuff as we normally do doesn't help much. It's difficult to know unlimitedness from within a mind set that doesn't really believe in it – and so it will tend to remain just a concept instead of an experience. As the little boy said when asked for directions, "...if I were going there, I wouldn't start out from here." Therefore, instead of trying to understand the concepts as we normally would, it may help to relax and get a feeling for the meaning the words convey. Trust your feelings and intuition more than your thoughts. But most of all actually try the little exercises – it's the experiences gained from actually doing them that will tend to be most meaningful.

One caveat that I'd like to make is that I truly do not have any answers. I simply make the assertion that the key to unlocking our genius, 'flow' and everything else our heart desires lies within each of us. My purpose in writing this is simply to point towards the accessing of this key within ourselves.

"Whoever undertakes to set himself up as a judge of Truth and Knowledge is shipwrecked by the laughter of the gods."

"The only really valuable thing is intuition."

.....Albert Einstein

Clarification of terms

Throughout this little book I'll often refer to both the 'self' that we think we are - the one that sees itself as separate from the world outside itself; and our real Self - that one is mostly unrecognised but that is unlimited. To avoid confusion I've capitalized references to our true Self and left references to our conceptual, limited self in lower case.

Chapter 2

Thinking about thinking

"The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes"Marcel Proust

"Sometimes, if you stand on the bottom rail of a bridge and lean over to watch the river slipping slowly away beneath you, you will suddenly know everything there is to know."

.....Winnie the Pooh

Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, "People only see what they are prepared to see" and I tend to agree. What I'd like to do in this chapter is do some preparation by taking a look at how we presently think so that we might better understand just how reliable and authentic our existing thought system is.

We all revel in making judgement about things - what's right or wrong, interesting or mundane, good or bad, safe or risky, familiar or strange, signal or noise. It's how we attempt to make sense what we see 'out there'; and of course, we tend to admire and respect good judgement and usually try to develop it in ourselves. However, there's one thing that normally escapes this continuous stream of judgment and that is the basis of our thinking process itself - the underlying core beliefs and origin of our thoughts. What I'd like us to do is to take a few moments to engage in this 'thinking about how we think' (metacognition) and see if we can get a little insight into the true nature of our everyday thoughts and judgements.

Anyone of us who has taken even just a cursory look at the nature of our thoughts will most likely have discovered a few perplexing things. Please take a few moments to consider these next observations to see if they ring true for you. Let's start by considering just how trustworthy and intelligent our thoughts are.

Have you ever noticed that the things we do really well, we do without thinking too much - driving a car, riding a bicycle, knitting, fishing, brain surgery, cooking - excellence at anything is characterized by feeling and knowing. The less we think the better we seem to perform. In fact ask almost any sportsman, craftsman or professional performing at their peak and they tell us that if they start 'thinking' then performance often falters and mistakes are made. Those that report being in that illusive flow state report a total lack of thought or effort - just a feeling of oneness with what is happening and an inner knowing that faultlessly guides their actions.

This is the common thread that runs through all experiences of 'flow' and, if you remember those moments in your own life you can verify this is true; whether it's an athlete breaking a world record, a musician composing a great song or a mother in deep conversation with her child, we here about a state of feeling, of just knowing, with no thoughts to disturb the direct experience of what is happening and our response. Ironically as soon as a thought enters such as 'wow this is incredible' or 'my God we're doing fantastic' or 'this feels good', the flow disappears. Then unfortunately, the more we try to recapture it the more illusive it becomes.

This is true for learning something new too. Watch anyone who is naturally good at learning (a baby learning to walk and talk, a teenager creating a web page etc) and you'll see the same thing, when we are in as state of open awareness, directly experiencing something instead of thinking about it, we learn naturally and easily. I remember when I first learnt to ski. As soon as I allowed myself to relax and feel the edge of my skis instead of thinking 'am I doing this right', I was away and doing fine.

The same applies to problem solving as well. Isn't it when we are happy and relaxed, not trying, that we get inspiration and insight into the problems we are 'working on'?

If anything, it seems that thinking and our everyday thoughts are impediments; and it's when we get out of our own way, stop thinking, that our innate wisdom and our natural talent has an opportunity to shine through.

What about the thinking process itself.

We select what appears in our awareness according to what concerns or has value to 'me' - the things I like, the things I deem relevant or important, my work, my loves, my beliefs, my life. It's a process of selective perception based on our own self interest. All our sensory inputs are filtered through the prefrontal cortex of our brain so that we only 'see' what is valuable or deemed relevant to us. This is fine provided we recognize that we never see the whole show, only 'my' perspective of it - a universe centred on me. The same is true for our everyday thoughts - we think from the perspective of 'me'. We rarely see things simple as they are. Instead the whole world we do see and believe in is created by our sensory perceptions and our thoughts, which both arise from what I think I am - this 'me'.

So who are we?

What is this 'me' at the centre of my world? When we ask ourselves and each other this question, the answers are many and varied; usually an amalgam of mind, body or spirit, but with no consensus that could point to a definitive answer.[1] However, there is one commonality amongst all the answers we receive - they are invariable who we think we are, hardly ever a report of direct experience.

Let's recap what we've looked at so far: What we 'see' is what we choose to look upon, what we choose to look upon reflects who we think we are, and who we think we are seems to be very confused.

Does this reasoning sound a little bit obscure and self referential to you?

Maybe you get the inkling of an idea that what we have here is one giant self fulfilling prophesy. What we see supports who we think we are because who we think we are selects what we see. But what if who we think we are is not true? If the self concept that is doing the perceiving is false then wouldn't everything else also be an illusion?

We seem to be caught in a matrix of thought that binds us and yet is rarely seen because the core belief that it is built on, 'who we think we are', is never really examined.

I'm highlighting these things not to confuse in any way, but only to attempt to loosen the trust we have in our thought system so that perhaps we might be able to recognise that 'who it tells me I am' may not be true, the 'things it tells me I can do' may only be a faint shadow of what's really possible, and the 'advice and direction it gives' may help to maintain my very limited concept of 'me' but does nothing to serve the Real Me. Isn't it strange that we trust our good judgement and yet even a cursory look at what we use for judging shows us that it is self serving and inherently flawed?

What I'd like to help us see is that who we think we are is but a small, sickly shadow of who we really Are; and the way to transform our lives, solve our problems and 'change the world' (if that is what we wish) is simply to learn how to see ourselves as we really are and let this, our true Self, nourish us and live our lives. Coincidentally, when we do this we also recognize that, in spite of what we previously believed, we are not separate from one other. We are all part of one Universal Consciousness, and the intelligence, power and incredible love that are all aspects of this Life Force are available to every one of us.

In accessing the flow and genius within ourselves we also give the greatest gift to everyone in our lives and the world at large. In short, we become the change we want to see in the world.

Experiencing reality directly

We don't need thoughts to know who you are we need direct experience, and we experience directly through a mind that is still and unclouded by thought. In fact we could generalize that last sentence and perhaps restate it as 'anything we really know, we know not through thought but through direct experience'. Please take a few moments to consider whether, in your experience, this is true or not. When truth comes you know it - you feel it as an AHA! - an unshakable recognition. Thoughts are just thoughts. Knowing comes through direct recognition unencumbered by thought even though it may have been thoughts that led us to that recognition. As Bob Dylan said, "You don't need a weatherman to know which way the wind blows"

You may have noticed that sometimes it appears as if there are two different 'me's.

There's the me that delights in playing in the world - the one that gets caught in the daily drama of our lives. This is the one that has a ferocious appetite for anything it deems worthy of it's attention: an inflated invoice, a sporting event, another grey hair, tsunamis, sex offenders, AIDS, terrorism, the latest bug in my code, global warming, that last remark he made, corrupt governments, a favourite TV show, the pretty girl that just smiled at me and economic inequities. This is the one that creates expectations and then gets riled when life has a different plan, spraying our innards with toxic bio-chemicals in righteous indignation whilst simultaneously denying any part in creating the circumstances that catch us.

Then there's the 'me' that's not fazed by any of this. Maybe it's no more than a distant feeling calling us back when we get too lost in the play of life, or we recognize it again in those still moments when our masks slip and we allow ourselves to connect with someone. Although it's perhaps mostly forgotten, it's always there. This is the Self that's largely unknown because our egos would rather be right than happy. Better to stick to the business of earning a living, raising a family, or serving the community than summon the courage to deal with the unsettling immensity of what reality might really be.

Instead of just thinking about this, let's see if we can experience these two 'me's directly. Here's a little experiment that I'd like you to try. For this exercise I'd like you to become aware of your thoughts and not let the act of reading distract you. It may help if you record this paragraph and play it back to yourself, or get a friend to read it to you.

Please take a few moments now to let your mind relax a little.

Just as we can be aware of the feelings and movements in our body we can also step back from our thoughts and simply watch them.

We are not normally aware of our thoughts - one thought arises which then leads to another and then another, until we become lost in our own world. But right here, right now, step back in your mind and simply be aware of your thoughts as they come and go.

Just watch them for a few moments, nothing more. Simply sit still and wait for a thought to arise and then just be aware of that thought without following it or attaching any meaning to it. This is something we can all do. Simply watch them come and go.

Feels good doesn't it?

And just watch that thought come and go too.

Now, as we are doing this, simply be aware of who is doing the watching, the feeling of your own Presence.

Who we think we are, our self concept, is in the realm of thought - those things that we are stepping back from right now and are able to watch. But who we really Are is who it is that's doing the watching.

You can see now that they are two distinctly separate entities. Who you really Are is the observer.

As you are aware of your Self watching your thoughts, recognize now that who you really Are cannot be known or deducted from thought. Who you really Are can only be known through this awareness, through direct experience.

This is a simple yet profound understanding that is easy to forget but will stand us in good stead later on.

So what was the point of this little exercise?

It may have seemed silly but it has an important purpose, - to help us see that who we think we are cannot be true. Who we think we are is bound up in thought - those things our real Self has just been watching. As we start to step back from our everyday thinking mind and allow ourselves to relax deeper into the experience of who we really Are we come to recognize that this true Self is far more intelligent, alive, creative, loving, resourceful and unlimited than anything our thoughts could even conceive of.

As we have just experienced, there is no effort or journey required to access the awareness of our true Self - just a letting go of our **attachment** to our thoughts and the changing world they picture so we can step back in our mind and relax - letting our attention rest in the experience of what always Is. This is so simple and easy it is almost universally overlooked.

What doesn't change

As quantum physicists and some neuroscientists are now telling us, we are the choreographers of this dance of life - the world dances to whatever tune we call.[3] The problem is, having long forgotten who we really are, we no longer recognize ourselves as having these truly creative abilities, and therefore we **appear** to be limited by, and victims of, laws and circumstances that are not of our own making. This is very stressful; a stress we have become so accustomed to that the prospect of realizing our true nature, which is almost too wonderful to comprehend, can it's self seem frightening.

With a little practice in stepping back and simply observing our bodies and thoughts in motion we begin to not only recognize that who we thought we were is tied up in these things that we see changing, but also recognize that our own True Self that is doing the watching, is in itself unchanging. Our true Self isn't made up of matter that can be destroyed or thoughts that come and go; it is the pure intelligence that is aware of these things. It has no beginning or end, it never grows old or gets tired, it doesn't need to struggle to achieve anything at all, needs no maintenance whatsoever and isn't constrained by any limited self-concept or belief.

As this awareness of our own Presence becomes more and more tangible to us we also start to recognize, incredible as it may seem, that although our genius is expressed in our own unique way, this Presence is the same creative intelligence that we all share. What I am suggesting is that penning Hamlet, discovering relativity or healing the sick takes no effort - just the ability to get out of our own way so our genius, our true nature, can shine through.

If it is true that this divine spark and creative intelligence is who we really are, then why is it so illusive? Why are those moments in our lives when we are truly alive, happy and feel capable of anything so rare? Why are the Shakespeares, the Einsteins and the Siddharthas of this world so uncommon?

Let's take a look now at why we struggle to shine, so that we might find a solution.

Why is the flow state so illusive?

The problem we have with trying to get into the flow state lies with the word 'trying'. In the exercise we did in stepping back from our thoughts we could see how easy and simple it is to access the awareness of our own Beingness. Flow is simply an attribute of who we already Are and so any attempt to 'try', 'do' or 'attain' that state is a subtle denial that we already are - a move away from it. There's no journey or effort can take us to where we already are.

Virtually everyone who has experienced true 'flow' remarks on the complete absence of thought - that we just know what to do and say, with no delay between knowing and our response. We know from our own experiences that we do our best work when we are happiest and we are happiest when we are not thinking as much, more in a state of 'feeling'. We've also just looked at why the more we try to grasp flow the more elusive it becomes, and how attempting to get rid of our limited and fearful thoughts and beliefs is very difficult. Mystics and spiritual types have spent years trying to do this with only moderate success.

We don't need to do anything to let our own genius shine, it always has and always will shine; and it shines through in the space between our thoughts when we relax and give it welcome. 'Doing' is what hides it from our awareness. To be aware of our true Self requires the opposite of doing - it's a letting go, a relaxing into, welcoming the recognition of what already Is. This requires no effort whatsoever.

Those who 'seek' enlightenment are merely covering their own eyes. We are so conditioned to seeking, figuring things out, finding 'a way' to do things that we have great difficulty in accepting that we cannot 'go to', 'try to be' or 'attain' the recognition of our Self or the wonderful state of flow that accompanies it. We resist and dismiss what is closer and more obvious than our own breath as trivial and unimportant.

There are these two young fish swimming along and they happen to meet an older fish swimming the other way, who nods at them and says "Morning, boys. How's the water?"
The two young fish swim on for a bit, and then eventually one of them looks over at the other and asks, "What the hell is water?"

Think back to a time, perhaps an hour or a day when you were really happy, relaxed and everything seemed to effortlessly flow, when everyone and everything seemed to magically conspire to support you. In looking back you'll probably recognize that you were actually in a state of non-thinking - a state of feeling. Thinking has become the process which is mistakenly believed to be synonymous with knowing but in truth, knowing exists only through a state of feeling. We know something is true when it moves from the head to the heart and we feel it as an awareness and recognition. It's the thinking that generates the doubts and fears.

For most of us, those moments of flow have been when we're doing something we enjoy and so we have associated flow with doing these things, but this is backward thinking. It is in doing that which we love and being with the people that we feel safe, that we have let go of the need to think, which then

created the stillness and the mind space for our true feelings and nature to shine through. Genius, true happiness, love, perfect intuition and the flow state are simply attributes of who we Are and so they flow naturally from a still mind. Our true Self dances on in own volition in the white space between our thoughts, and so we need do nothing but give it welcome and get out of our own way.

The good news is we are more powerful, creative and naturally happy than we can even imagine. We are all creative geniuses - and there is absolutely nothing we can do to change this. What we do 'do' is hide this from our recognition. This is the great trick of the ego - continuous seeking keeps the presence of the seeker out of our awareness. The few we look upon throughout history as geniuses and miracle workers are simply those who knew how to get out of their own way, to become defenceless in the face of everything that seemed to be happening around them so that their own true nature could have a seat at the table.

Free Will

Most of us assume and insist we exercise free will but in reality we rarely do. In practice our thoughts seem to choose us, as though they had a will of their own. Try not thinking of anything for just one minute. Most people find this very difficult - our thoughts resisting all attempts to be controlled. When we make choices within our lives we call this free will, but how can we be exercising free will when we are making choices from a mind set that seems to tell us what to think?

The mind makes an excellent servant but a terrible master. Free will comes from knowing who we are, what makes us happy and following this will, unencumbered by self concepts, beliefs in limitation or fearful thoughts. Instead of exercising free will what we really do is choose between different aspects of the world that these illusory, wayward thoughts picture. This is not choice but entrapment. The problem is, whilst ever we do insist that we are exercising free will then there is no escape because we don't recognize ourselves as being trapped. If you are familiar with the allegory of Plato's Cave[2]; - whilst ever we believe the flickering shadows on the cave walls are real and the cave is home, there will simply be no reason to turn around, face the sunlight and take those few easy steps to freedom.

The only real choice we have is to decide to no longer be bound but our existing thought system - the illusion of relative powerlessness and limitation that seems to tell us what to give our attention to and what to think. Instead, we can allow our True Self, our inner knowing and innate wisdom, our Free Will if you like, to guide us, live our life and do whatever truly makes us happy.

Our usual, everyday thought system (thinking, organizing, efforting, judging) is one of limitation - an illusion of free will. But we do have this other choice - to express our unlimited nature. We'll look now at how we can do this.

Footnotes:

[1] I recently read a fascinating book entitled, ['the real meaning of life'](#) by David Seaman. It sampled some of the many thousands of responses to an Internet forum post of the same title. The answers vary from the trite to the deep and meaningful and from the funny to the tragic. What is interesting is the huge variety of opinions on who we are and what life is.

[2] An overview of the Plato's Cave can be found on Wikipedia [Plato's Allegory of the cave](#)

[3] They also tell us that when we look very closely at the world 'out there' all we find is energy, constantly flowing but itself unchanging. Form is how the mind, through the senses, 'sees' this. The

concept of separate things that act independently from us is an illusion we have come to believe, and (such is the the power of our mind) what we believe we seem to see.

Chapter 3

Real choice - the power of our Free Will

It's because we are so trapped in our culture, in the being of being human on this planet with the brains we have, and the same two arms and legs that everybody else has. We're so trapped that any way we could imagine to escape would be just another part of the trap. Anything we want, we're trained to want.".....Chuck Palahniuk

So how do we still our mind to let our true nature and the flow state show up?

Well the good news is we don't have to do anything. With a little understanding of how our **attention** and **intention** work, we'll see that this is all we ever need. These two great allies are our ticket to freedom, ready access to our genius, effortless problem solving and right action.

Let's look at **attention** first.

Our attention is the one thing we have complete dominion over. Although we're probably not consciously aware of it, we are moment to moment choosing what we give our attention to and what we ignore. This is the principle: **whatever we focus on expands in our life and it does so to the exclusion of everything else.**

Attention cannot multitask. It can quickly flit back and forth from one thing to another to give the illusion of multitasking but in reality it can never be in two places at the same time. Try it and see. This is why we don't need to try to still the mind or rid ourselves of limited self-concepts. When we feed our true Self with our attention we are withdrawing attention from our little, limited self. Without the support and nourishment of our attention our limited thought system simply withers away on its own. I think Buckminster Fuller nailed it quite succinctly when he said, "*You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete.*" and perhaps Mother Theresa knew it intuitively too, - when asked to march against the war in Vietnam, she replied, "*No, I won't but when you have a march for peace, I'll be there.*"

This is the same reason why we find we find it so hard to break habits and resolve many of the big problems in our lives. When we focus on solving a problem our attention is on the problem and then that attention just perpetuates the problem. This is what happens when we try to stop smoking, get out of debt or lose weight - we focus on the weight problem and then just get frustrated as hell at how difficult it seems to be to keep the weight off.

Have you ever wondered why as soon as you want to break a habit the temptations seem to suddenly multiply? We tell ourselves we need to find a better diet or need to try harder or have more discipline, all the while oblivious to the fact that we are feeding the problem by focusing on it. The ones that find

it easy are those that see themselves as they want to be and feed that vision with their attention instead. Then, any diet would work. It seems to me that once we start to apply and teach these principles we could quite easily prevent all the lifestyle diseases that seem to be so prevalent and flourishing at this time.

So, instead of 'trying' to get into flow, and instead of battling with our doubts and habitual thinking patterns, when we simply choose to give our attention to our true Self, this is what grows in our awareness. The rest just falls away.

Now we'll turn our attention to our other ally, **intention**.

Our intent is the great power that each and every one of us has and yet we are mostly unaware of it. Our 'limited self' thought system would have us believe that to achieve anything we need to expend energy, to try, to 'work at it'; - over many millennia, we have so over-learned this that we have virtually forgotten this power of our intent.

The difficulty most of us have with this is that it is so simple it is tempting to overlook it or dismiss it as trivial. Our ego insists there must be something else. Perhaps fearing its own extinction it always seems to want to get in on the act and complicate things but by attempting more we withhold the little that is asked. It is the power of our intention and not our own effort that we need to trust. There isn't anything mystical or 'other worldly' about this and it's not something or someone outside ourselves that brings this awareness to us. It is simply our own ability to always know who we really Are.

Think back to the little exercise we did earlier where we stood back from the activity of our body and our thoughts and just watched them. By watching ourselves operating and perhaps floundering in the world we can become aware of our errant thoughts (grounded in beliefs in effort and limitation) and also what it is that's doing the watching. We can simply give our attention to this Observer, with the sole intent of reclaiming our Essence and our Free Will; and trust this, our true Self, to nourish us, lead the way and shine upon our lives.

Here is the principle: **We can call upon the power of our intent to bring our True Self into our awareness.** We can choose this and trust that in choosing it is done, nothing more; and to experience the result of our choice we need only relax and feel the peace that envelopes us as we recognise our Self in this space.

I am aware that this may sound a little too simplistic. Belief will come as we start to use it and witness the results.

Reassurance

You may think this all sounds well and good, but if you are anything like me then our everyday 'thinking' mind (call it ego if you like) sensing defeat, will either scream at you to get real or sneakily get in on the act. Typical commentary would be something along the lines of, "*What the hell are you doing? You're up to your neck in debt, you've not seen your kids since last Monday, the dog's sick, you've promised that proposal by tomorrow morning, you haven't slept for last 24 hours and your better half is threatening to walk out if you don't get your s**t together soon. And you want to wander*

off into ga-ga land?!"

For many of us this is the crux of the matter. How can we relax and stop trying when all these things are going on? How can I stop thinking when I am up in court next week? How can I simply choose to be happy when my world is falling in around my ears? The answer lies in our recognition that letting our attention rest in our True Self, the feeling of Love that comes from within, is the one real and practical answer to all our problems; the awareness that in doing this we're addressing the cause instead of struggling to apply bandages to the symptoms. It does take trust in the beginning, 'faith' if you like.

I remember soon after I started on this road, asking my Self for a little help in knowing 'what to do' to resolve my pressing problems. The answer I received was that I didn't need help, only a little reassurance. I guess I'll never forget the words given me.

Anticipation plays no part at all for present trust guarantees a future undisturbed, without a trace of sorrow and joy that constantly increases, so just relax and enjoy this day. If you need a thought, a word or just a tranquil open mind then that will be my gift for I [true Self] am in charge by your request.

What more could I have needed but this?

Here is everything we need - the strength, the source of all understanding, love, health, creativity, flow, true vision, the answer to all our questions. This is Home, where our safety, comfort and power lie. There is nothing our true Self cannot do. It is not limited by the 'laws' of space or time or any material, economic, social or other law that we think we are beholden too. It is equal in its power to solve all problems because there is no order of difficulty in what this Creative Spark can do.

Our true Self sees nothing of our problems; it only sees our potential and how to make that potential manifest in our lives. This is its one and only agenda and because this is all it sees, when we allow it into our awareness, this is all that we create. When we recognize our Self as being the presence of Joy, we know that there are no problems that accompany it.

So here's the thing: Our true Self **is** the answer to **all** our problems. Flow is the answer. When we think we have solved a problem there is always a sense of relief and perhaps a temporary elation, but no matter how effective we are at solving problems there'll always be an underlying uneasiness about when and what the next one lurking around the corner will be. We can never be truly joyful until we have the remedy to the cause of all our problems, until we can replace monkey mind with our genius, our true nature, this feeling of the loving life force that flows through us when step back and allow it.

Nevertheless, old habits die hard. It's so easy to be tempted to try to fix things ourselves instead of stepping back and trusting our Self to take over. When this happens with me this is the no-brainer question I ask myself: "Would you rather have your ego handle this or our genius, would I rather try to deal with this on my own or harness the power and intelligence of the universe, the life force itself?" In spite of appearances this is our one and only choice - the choice for free will or to be led around by a thought system that's grounded in an illusion of powerlessness and limitation.

Chapter 4

Flow on demand

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented and fabulous?

Actually, who are you not to be?

You are a child of God. Your playing small doesn't serve the world. There's nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you.

We were born to make and manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others."Marianne Williamson

We've looked at how we can use the power of our **attention** and **intention** together to bring our true Self into awareness and have the love, insight and flow that are simply attributes of who we really Are shine in our work, our relationships and our lives at large. Even though this is incredibly simple to do, it's the nature of our limited self to have us forget, complicate and to denigrate the power and simplicity of this simple invocation. We've so over-learnt the belief that we need to use our intellect and 'try' that its very difficult for us to accept that pure intention is everything, and that the doing is not by us but through us, when we step back and allow it happen.

I personally found it useful to have a 'mantra' to remind me of this real choice, our ability to invoke our power and genius at will, and you may too. Something like this might help you, "*I can choose to step back and enjoy letting our True Self nourish me and lead the way*" or perhaps, "*I choose to step back and allow Truth to shine true*".

It is usually as well to start the day right. Every morning, as we awake, we quite literally remember who we think we are and dress ourselves in our self-concepts. And then of course, we immerse ourselves and get lost in the busyness of our lives. So it's always easier to start as we mean to go on by catching ourselves in the moment we start to awaken, before we remember who we think we are.

Remember that this is nothing to do with positive thinking. Positive thinking just energises those things we are denying through our forced thinking. What we are doing is setting our **intention** to have a day that reflects our original and true loving nature rather than accumulation of fears, grievances and limited beliefs that are so pervasive. Perhaps we could use a little reminder such as, "*Today I choose to step back and just enjoy letting my true Self express itself and shine upon my day.*" It's hard to describe what an incredible a day we can have without our conscious planning when we allow ourselves to get out of our own way like this.

The words themselves do not matter. The map is not the territory and so the words can only be a reminder. It is the experience that they point to that is our concern. So remember that saying the words does nothing. Neither does thinking about them. It's only in actually stepping back from our world, our body and our thoughts and actually relaxing into the feeling of our own Presence that makes the difference. Simply choose to bring this into your awareness and trust that in choosing it is done. That is all. It is available to us at any time, in any place and in any situation simply because it is our original and natural state of being. It is who we Are.

Use whatever words you are comfortable with, the ones that resonate deep within you. If you prefer more religious terms and you don't see God as an entity separate from yourself or God's Will as different from your own then you could just as easily use words such as '*I choose to rest and trust in the Love of God that shines within me*' or perhaps, "*I can step back and allow God's Love to shine upon the world*"

Perhaps you'd prefer to use more reassuring words to help you in those times when are extremely

stressed and your willingness to choose to step back and call upon you Self is weak. Maybe something like, "*I am entitled to miracles. I can choose, in spite of my fear and resistance, to let my true Self shine true and trust that in choosing it is done*", or perhaps "*I count on God and not myself to give me certainty*", would remind you.

As I said, don't get hung up on the words. Words can be neither right nor wrong because they are only symbols. The choice that the words point to is the only thing that matters. What we are **not** trying to do here is create another belief, but rise above all beliefs so we can directly experience What Is, unencumbered by belief, religious doctrine or mental concept. Otherwise we just perpetuate the confusion and suffering of thousands of generations by letting words get in the way of experience of Truth. So why not ask your true Self what words would work for you?

There's a huge temptation, particularly if you're like me, to try to figure this stuff out and choose just the right words. This is all a distraction - our ego trying to muscle in. It's our recognition that our part is so little and letting go of our need to know, that allows this invocation to be so powerful. Our part is only to invite it in. By attempting to add more we simply let our ego get in on the act and that just messes up everything.

I know it sounds paradoxical, but it's in letting go of our intellectual curiosity and relaxing into the feeling of Love growing within is that enables us to understand. It's impossible to understand unlimitedness from within a mind set based on limitation. Knowledge and understanding are attributes of our true nature. When we accept ourselves as we really are the understanding comes automatically as part of the package. This is the feeling that must come from within.

Choose it and trust, then allow yourself to feel the warmth of the Love that envelopes you as you recognize your Self in this space. The rest will be known to you. Perhaps that's what was meant by, "*Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*"

Another common disruptive tactic that the ego uses is to hijack our best intentions by wanting 'flow' for something else. It's ironic that when we just hold the one goal, to let our True Self shine true, to live each day for the joy of having our Self nourish us and express itself, then we accomplish everything our heart desires effortlessly. When we just do this the 'work we were meant to do' finds us and we become a magnet for everyone and everything that perfectly supports us. Whilst it's true that all truly great works come from this state of flow, whilst ever we want 'flow' for what it can give us we are choosing littleness over magnitude and that's what we end up with. Such is the power of our choice.

Here's a personal example of having this choice in any circumstance:

A few years ago I took my eldest son Ash motor racing at the Silverstone circuit in England. There were about 80 drivers there with a full day of racing activities in sports cars, single seater racers, and off-road rallying. I guess I'm reasonable good in a fast car but had virtually no previous competitive experience, and that day there were a number of ex-professional racing drivers competing.

It was sweltering hot weather, we'd been wearing fire proof racing suits all day and in the excitement and frenzy of the racing I must have forgotten to drink enough fluids. After a few races I began to feel ill - a mixture of feeling feint and nauseous.

I guess I didn't want to be a kill-joy, seeing as it was Ash's big day out, so I pressed on and somehow managed to get through to the final race. This was the big single seater race that we had been practicing for and building up to all day. I was at the back of the grid with

the faster drivers in front. As I was being strapped into the car I began to feel much worse and realized I had serious problems.

I felt as though at any second I was going to pass out. As the heat and fumes from the racing engine filled the cockpit all I wanted to do was close my eyes and fall asleep. By now my mouth was bone dry and I could no longer swallow. I remember my limbs feeling very weak and shaky as I tried to focus on keeping my hands steady on the steering wheel. It was taking all my effort just to remain conscious. I knew I could no longer get out of the car as the race was just about to start but if I could only manage to drive around the circuit once, then I could pull into the pits and get help.

Alas, I realized there was absolutely no way I was going to make that first lap. I longed to be with my family waving from the track side blissfully unaware of my plight as I cursed my bad judgment for pig-headedly getting in the car in the first place. I felt my heart starting to pound and race in panic at the hopelessness of the situation, and my eyes close as I started to slide into unconsciousness. In that very moment, and for the first time all day, I remembered what I've been writing about here. I chose, in spite of my fear and the sickness, to stop resisting what was happening to me and fully experience my Self and my situation in that moment. What happened next beggars belief.

I'm telling this story sequentially, but it must have been at the exact same moment that I made that choice that the starting lights turned green. I remember steering to the left and center of the track to avoid the car in front of me on the grid, because the driver was waiting for the lights to turn green before he accelerated away. It's not that I had false started by jumping the lights. It's just that I drove away at the exact same instant as the lights were changing. Not 1/1000th second before or after - just as they changed. Please don't ask me how I knew.

The experience that followed was both surreal and sublime. I found myself driving through a pack of racing cars at over 120 mph with just inches between us, and at the same time felt such an incredibly serenity and overwhelming peace. Whatever car was in front of me I passed at will, but with absolutely no sense of competition - just a knowing what needed to be done and doing it - and enjoying the process.

I recall at one point driving flat out into the back of the car in front of me as we approached a long sweeping left hand bend, knowing full well that it was about to spin off, leaving the racing line and track space for me. I shudder to think of the carnage if I had been wrong, but the risk was zero because I just knew there was no way I could be wrong. Again, I have no idea how I knew what was happening with everyone else around me but I just did. The strangest thing was that it didn't actually seem strange at all, as though this is how it is supposed to be.

I remember at one point in the later stages of the race thinking I must be in the lead, or at least very close, but the very next instant I recognized the error of entertaining a thought. I then instantly felt myself being pulled back into the stillness, safety and sanctuary of my Self. That was the last thought I had before taking the chequered flag.

After the race had finished and the customary slowing down lap we got out of the cars and everyone came over to greet us. I was basking in a warm glow of well being that had enveloped me and it was only then, for the first time since the start of the race, that I actually remembered I had been ill. I had completely forgotten.

This had been Ash's day - a birthday present from me. He was just 18, had driven brilliantly and apart from this one race had been better than me all day. So I felt a bit pissed off with myself at the prize giving for actually winning. This was his day out and here I was stealing the limelight. I kept the trophy they presented for winning the race - not for any sentimental reasons or as a sporting memento but as a reminder of the power of our simple decision to experience our Self at any moment of our choosing.

Sat on the starting grid and hidden behind my full face helmet everyone track-side was blissfully unaware of my plight. When I stepped out of that car at the end of the race I was as happy as a sand boy. There was no way anyone could possibly understand what had just happened to me if I had told the so I guess that's why I've never recounted this before.

The point of the story is that we can at any moment and in any circumstance step back from the world and our thoughts and choose to simply rest and receive. This is the easiest thing in the world. Choose it and trust that in choosing it is done for it our Self that knows the way to us. When I say 'rest in your Self' I mean rest like a lion cub and not like a monkey. The lioness holds and carries the cub wherever she wants. The cub has nothing to do with it. On the other hand, a baby monkey must hold onto its mother by itself. It clings to its mother's waist and is always in fear. You can see it in its eyes. When a mother jumps from one branch to another the baby monkeys are afraid they will fall and sometimes they do. So surrender to your Self in trust, like a lion cub would.

In doing this we become a magnet for everyone and everything we need, intuition replaces thought, knowing replaces questioning, serendipity replaces effort and perfect ease replaces stress.

This is the choice for miracles. Just **choose to rest and receive**, - rest in the feeling of our own true Presence that's growing within you and trust in This to nourish you and shine upon your life. This is the one thing that really satisfies, the most enjoyable experience imaginable, the greatest good we can do for ourselves and everyone else, and we don't have to wait one instant.

Chapter 5

Towards a permanent Flow State

And the creatures downstream, to which he was a stranger, cried, 'See a miracle! A creature like ourselves, yet he flies! See the Messiah, come to save us!'

And the one carried in the current said, 'I am no more Messiah than you. The river [of life] delights to set us free, if only we dare let go.' 'Illusions' by Richard Bach

Hopefully we've now cast enough doubt on our everyday thinking mind (some call it ego) to recognize that it doesn't serve our best interests. It operates mostly from a fear of what we don't want disguised as 'what we think we want', rather than from a love for what we really do. If we can recognize this then it's a great place to be.

We've also seen that although it appears that we have many choices in this life there is in fact only one. The choice we have is always between letting our attention follow the dictates of the ego that weaves our self-concepts and tells us what to think; or to let our attention return to where it came from, to the awareness of our own Presence, our true Self, so that our inner knowing can guide our life, our natural state of Flow can do all our 'doing' and our own Presence can connect with everyone we meet.

So it all boils down to this choice of attention.

But we can't force attention - attention follows desire. You can't make yourself want what you don't want - we like what we like and there's not a lot we can do about that. What we can and must do then, is get absolutely clear about what we do really want.

Now, here's the problem. There's absolutely no way to know what we really want by pondering or thinking about it - our ego, or 'everyday thinking mind' as we have been calling it, will never sign its own death warrant. Our egos supply us with a continuous stream of things we think will satisfy us, that are 'worthy' causes and we think will help us to feel fulfilled, successful or valued. Ultimately they all disappoint, as all temporary things do.

The sad thing is, that most people spend the vast proportion of our lives in this rat trap before they finally fall down exhausted or resign themselves to making the most of what they've 'been given' with a cheery smile and a life of quiet desperation. It usually takes a serious illness, a traumatic mid life crisis or arrival at the point of despair before we finally wake up to the fact that despite our best efforts we still feel unfulfilled. Why is it that we choose to go on suffering so long before we are willing to let go of our seeking for answers in the world, and open up to the possibility that there might be a better way?

We don't have to wait, but if we are really serious about living our whole life in a state of flow then this transformation has to be the most important thing to us. At any moment we can choose to take the quiet time to allow our True Self to show us what would really satisfy us. This is the easiest thing in the world to do but we do need to be vigilant in case our ego subtly gets in on the act under the guise of 'worthy goals'. Whenever we ask 'where can I find the work I love', 'where is my genius' or 'what is my purpose in life' we are still asking from the perspective of 'me' - this vulnerable little thing our ego would have us believe we are. Questions like these craftily maintain the belief in a separate 'me' and it is this belief in a separate, disconnected self that is the cause of our feelings of powerlessness and the root of all our problems.

What we can do instead, is back up a little and ask a more fundamental question. Ask, "Who is it that asks these things' or simply 'Who am I?' and then give yourself the space to experience the answer. Ultimately we learn there is no 'little me' and we are not separate, but for now we need only concern ourselves with the direct experience of our own Presence. Do this and everything else is known and makes perfect sense. Ironically it's when we nurture the feelings of Love growing within us, the recognition of our true Self, that the 'work we love' and were 'meant to do' mysteriously has a way of finding us and our 'genius' shows up in everything we attempt to do.

So how do we gain clarity about what we really want?

Clarity and certainty come from our true Self, so our part is only to create the space in our life to step back and give it welcome. We each have our own pet ways of creating a little space. Maybe it's a long soaky bath, a walk in the woods or chilling out with soft music in a comfy chair. The important thing to remember is that our part is so little - only to give our true Self welcome. Attempt more and we take away the little that is asked.

Here are a few words from the book, 'A Course in Miracles' that may be helpful by way of 'setting the scene'. If you find the religious connotation of some words off putting then by all means substitute for your own. Some would rather use the words Source or Truth than God. Words are just symbols; it's the meaning they convey to you that's what matters. So use these words or something similar if they

help, or no words at all. The form of this asking is not important, only your intent and your willingness to get out of your own way so that you are open to receive.

Simply do this: Be still and lay aside all thoughts of what you are and what Truth is; all concepts you have learned about the world; all images you hold about yourself. Empty your mind of everything it thinks is either true or false or good or bad; of every thought it judges worthy and all the ideas of which it is ashamed. Hold onto nothing. Do not bring with you one thought the past has taught, nor one belief you ever learned before from anything. Forget this world, forget with wholly empty hands unto your God.

Is it not He Who knows the way to you? You need not know the way to Him. Your part is simply to allow all obstacles that you have interposed between your Self and your God to be quietly removed forever. God will do His part in joyful and immediate response. Ask and receive. But do not make demands, nor point the road to God by which He should appear to you. The way to reach Him is merely to let Him be. For in that way is your reality acclaimed as well.

I'm never been big into meditation myself but this next exercise is a type of meditation that is particularly powerful and effective at what we are attempting to do here. The process is simple. If you do not find it easy at first, don't worry. You can't help but benefit, even the first time you try it. We find it difficult enough to break old thought patterns and replace them with new ones. What we are attempting to do here is to break old thought patterns and allow no new patterns to replace them. The more frequently you attempt this, the more completely you will find you are able to become immersed in it.

Again, there are words here that attempt to point to Universal Truths. If you find them irritating or offensive then just substitute with words you feel more comfortable with.

Envision an hour glass, sand in the upper half, floating in a clear, cool pond which is nestled in a beautiful meadow lush with wild flowers. The rim of the glass and sand is just level with the surface of the pond. The hourglass is a metaphor of your mind, completely filled as the sand symbolically illustrates. It is so full that the water of the pond, representing the Universal Consciousness, the stream of your fully conscious Self, can only ripple across the top.

As you watch the sand slowly drain away, allow your mind to open up space as you see the sand slowly going down and more space being created until the sand is all gone. As the sand has been draining away, the water from the pool of Consciousness just naturally fills the space. Its flow has a very gentle, peaceful, loving feeling. It is this feeling that reassures you that simply because the sand thoughts have drained out doesn't mean there is nothing left except a void. But more appropriately, this space is filled with this flow of feeling that is totally cohesive and not fragmented and into which you can just allow yourself to become totally immersed in it, you know that what is happening is that you are allowing your Divine Mind to embrace you.

Allow the feeling that being in this fluid is like being in the womb of your Divine Mind. This feeling, if you hold it and allow it to give you a sense of nurturing, will encourage you to see yourself as being born into the Divinity of your natural Self. While you are engaged in this process, you won't be receiving answers to any specific questions but the very act of

experiencing yourself being in this womb of Divinity will open up the feelings that will allow you to recognize those problems that you are working on for what they really are, and they will no longer seem fearful to you.

Hold no expectations. Allow the process itself to unfold for you and allow yourself to be open to the experience of that unfoldment. Enter this process in total trust, absolutely total trust, that what your Divine Mind represents for you will be known to you in ways that require no questioning. It will become a process of Knowing.

When we start allowing ourselves to step back and experience our Self it soon becomes apparent that what we are relaxing into is far more tangible, real and trustworthy than anything we have every experienced in the physical world. Remember that whatever we feed with our attention grows in our awareness so the key is to just **give ourselves permission to savour and enjoy these moments of experiencing our true Self**. This we can do anywhere and anytime.

Our monkey mind will give us 1001 reasons why we haven't got time, why we need to think about our 'responsibilities', and will supply us with plenty of negative feelings about this stuff; but the choice is ours. At the end of the day this is the basic decision we must make to be happy and no-one else can make it for us.

We can come back to this point time and time again until we finally choose to accept ourselves as you really are, and when we do we also realize that this is the most responsible thing we ever did. Not only for ourselves but everyone else in our life too. So maybe we can start by just enjoying a few minutes retreat into our Self when we happen to remember - on a bus, the few minutes waiting for our little ones to come out of school, driving to the office in the morning. The more we try it, the more delicious and compelling it becomes, until it is our everyday default 'way of being'.

Chapter 6

A short cut to Perpetual Flow

Some day, after we have mastered the winds, the waves, the tides and gravity we shall harness the energies of love. Then, for the second time in the history of the world man will have discovered fire."Pierre Teilhard De Chardin

Here's a little story from my past to illustrate the power of allowing ourselves to be defenceless and connect deeply with one another.

I started my first business in my late teens after leaving home at 15 with just a basic schooling. I was determined to make my own way in the world but in my early twenties, with the business growing a lot faster than my capabilities, I thought it best I got myself some sort of business education. That's how I came to be sat at the back of a room full of business men listening to a lecture by [John Wareham](#) on the 'Secrets of Corporate Head Hunter'.

I listened intently not because the material was so interesting (it was), but because I had to. You see, the lecturer was afflicted by the worst stutter I had ever heard. I started to really admire this man who had the balls to talk at a lectern for three hours in front of mostly seasoned leaders and industry captains with such an impediment. He must have sensed my empathy and in the break he came over to chat.

He had seemed to be far older and wiser than his years (he later told me he deliberately groomed himself to appear this way), but close up I realized he couldn't have been that much older than I was. As we talked and made friends I think we both sensed that, although we were from totally different backgrounds, we connected as two young men striding out into the world of business on nothing more than a wing, a prayer and a few ideas. 'Bottle' and 'bare faced cheek' were our weapons of choice.

Later that year, just after Christmas, John sent me a letter telling me about something that had just happened to him. This is the story -

It was five o'clock on the Friday before Christmas and he was standing in the Grand Central Station at the bottom of the escalators that cascaded a slow motion cargo of jaded executives down and out of the Pan Am building. He'd been there all week and I'd seen him every night. He faced the descending throng and, catching any eye that would look, he would softly intone "Merry Christmas" or "Hello". Only that. He wasn't soliciting or proselytizing or selling records. Just saying "Hello" or "Merry Christmas".

"He's crazy", explained a woman behind me to a friend.

"Crazy", I said, turning. "Is it crazy to say 'Hello'?"

"It is in New York", she answered.

He was in his early 30's, had shoulder length blond hair and a modest beard. He stood about five-ten, was neatly dressed, in corduroy trousers, a shirt and a jacket. He might have had some beads around his neck but I didn't think he was from California. It was his voice, however, that caught my attention. It made a beautiful, soft, mellifluous sound as he said "Hello" and "Merry Christmas". Sometimes both.

I was leaving work and my wife had met me. "He's there again", I said.

"Who?"

"Just a fellow saying 'Hello'"

Riding the escalators down on that Friday before Christmas, I was both fascinated and sad on his behalf. Almost everybody avoided his eye and darted off. One or two people looked at him warily. Nobody said 'hello' or 'Merry Christmas'.

I decided to say "Hello" but was past him with the Christmas crowd before I could stop. "I'll just go back and say hello to him", I said to my wife.

"Don't look into his eyes", she cautioned. "These cult people can get you if you don't watch out." I laughed at her naivete.

I walked to him from behind. "You're not Father Christmas?", I said.

He turned, caught by surprise. "I beg your pardon?"

"You're not Father Christmas?", I said again. The joke falling a little flat and me with it.

"No no", he said.

"And you're not a Moonie, or a Hare Krishna, or anything like that?"

"No", he said. "I'm the son of God".

It was a matter-of-fact statement; not pompous; not strange; not, the way he said it, odd at all. But still I was vaguely disappointed at the prospect of a conversation with just another Grand Central cultist.

"Not really", he said; as if seeing my thoughts, "no more than you are; we're all the son of God, aren't we?"

"Ah yes", I replied, slightly relieved by his non jealous tone. "That we are"

Then I looked into his eyes, and from that moment I just haven't been able to get him out of my head.

It was as if time ceased in those eyes. They were like two deep black pools. Deep black pools that I was swimming into. "Can this be real?" I thought, as I stood there transfixed by two infinitely deep dark shimmering lakes.

It was like looking into my own unconscious or catching sight of a million darkening reflections in two barbershop mirrors. I was suddenly quite lost as his soft mellifluous voice masked all the sounds of Grand Central Station. At that moment there seemed to be only the two of us standing in the middle of nowhere. Everything, everyone had disappeared. I heard his voice but didn't see him.

"All religions have there truth", said the soft mellifluous voice; then he grasped my hand with both of his and held it a moment. "Merry Christmas, my friend, Merry Christmas"

Gradually I became aware of the people about me again. Receding from the darkness of his eyes I held his gaze for a long moment, now able to focus on his whole face. It was gentle, friendly, alive, sympathetic.

In that instance I sensed his own awareness and delight of having made contact with a face from the descending throng. More than that, he saw that I recognised his gratification. It was one of those rare, fleeting, curiously magical moments: a fluttering candle in the dark caverns of Grand Central Station, that daily crossroads of a million lives where no one ever meets.

"And to you", I said, now drawing away, trapped once more within the catatonic tempo of the city that never wakes; conscious that I must hurry to my wife, dinner and a Broadway show.

"That fellow had the strangest eyes", I said to her.

"Told you not to look", she laughed. We both laughed.

But that night, in the theater, I just couldn't get him out of my head.

Immediately after the holiday break, I took the escalator down from the Pan Am building to Grand Central, as indeed I do every night.

He wasn't there and he hasn't been back since.

But I just haven't been able to get him out of my head.

The point I'm trying to make in recounting this is that **connecting with each other changes us profoundly**, whether with strangers or those close to us. We cannot truly connect with each other without being more aware of who really are, without our egos shrivelling just a little, and without feeling the warmth of our true nature. Then, in this new found ease and clarity of mind, our true creative Self is able to shine through a little more clearly.

Maybe there isn't my Presence and your Presence. Maybe Presence is all there is, and so the feeling we get in the company of someone who is courageous enough to lower their mask and allow more of their real Self to shine through, is simply Presence recognizing itself through us.

In the rush of our busy lives we mostly trample on this flower of connection. In our pursuit of happiness and success we forget to look at the key in our own pocket. All it takes is the willingness to be defenceless, to let our masks slip down just a little so we can recognize each other's true nature.

This is the shortcut - the simple, easy stepping out of [Plato's cave](#) into the sunlight of our own genius and to where the real fun begins.

These connections we are making, when we appreciate them, can be miraculous. We don't have to sit crossed legged in an Ashram or on a mountain somewhere for years of quiet contemplation to curb our wayward thoughts and our overactive monkey minds. We don't need to become an ego archaeologist or visit a therapist or re-examine the crime scenes of our life to find our peace and power. And we certainly don't need to look for someone claiming to be the son of God or spend our lives looking for our 'soul mate' to have a truly happy and creative life. The treasure we seek is inside, and we need no-one's permission to claim it but our own.

The way to heal the world of its problems is to let ourselves be healed. A clear, untroubled mind is totally compelling and infectious. Ideas that are shared grow stronger and truth spreads like nothing else. As we become willing to recognize our true Self we create an opportunity for others to recognize and remember this Presence within them selves. Every contact we make, whether it be with a person, an animal or simply a flower gives us another opportunity to be still and recognise the presence of our Self, to let the mind that thought it's self separate and powerless be healed.

Chapter 7

A miraculous way of getting things done

*Tao abides in non-action'
Yet nothing is left undone.
If kings and lords observed this,
The ten thousand things would develop naturally.Lao Tzu*

We've been brought up to believe that to have a successful and happy life we need to work hard, be disciplined, organized and focus on our goals; but we rarely ever stop to consider that there might be a better and easier way. We do our best to manage or eradicate the 'negatives' in our busy lives such as lack of focus, procrastination, being stuck, and the stress of dealing with all the interruptions and lack of balance but we don't really ask ourselves why these negative feelings are there in the first place. We seem to take as a given the idea that success takes effort and dismiss the 'miraculous' as being from the world of fantasy and myth.

Resistance or Flow? Pick one.

Behind our good intentions to manage our lives and many of the 'time management' and 'getting things done' type of techniques is the subtle yet debilitating belief in powerlessness - that things happen in our lives that we have no part in creating, that we must wrestle what we want in order to make ourselves safe and happy, that to get into 'flow' we must block out a period of time without distraction or interruption. When we organize our lives in this way it's as if we are telling the universe to 'get out of my way' because 'I know best'. Then we wonder why we get stressed, have to expend so much effort to get what we want, deal with 'unforeseen circumstances' and life often seems to be against us. We battle against life and then wonder why it's such a struggle - talk about a self fulfilling prophecy! Remember the 'attention' principle we looked at earlier - that whatever we give our attention to we get more of. Well, by the same principle and as Carl Jung observed, 'whatever we resist persists'.

The idea that 'flow' comes from being disciplined and focused is a myth. **Flow comes from non-resistance - a still mind** from letting all things be exactly as they are. It comes not from managing the events in our busy lives or resisting negative feelings or emotions but from a willingness to be open to receive - a quiet, effortless, playful, open receptivity to the guidance, the support and the gifts that our intuition and the universe long to give us. We don't need to manage our days - in 'flow' we receive instead of plan. Our intuition knows exactly what we need in every moment and every situation when we remain present and attentive. If there are plans to be made then we are told.

Even the achievements of the ones we think of as the most successful and happy amongst us on this planet, pale into insignificance against what we are capable of when we learn how to consciously and effortlessly shape each day and create our hearts desires by harnessing the power of the Love within us. The term 'self development' becomes a meaningless concept when we recognize and access the perfection and the power that are an immutable part of who we **already** Are.

Scientists have been telling us for some time now that when we look really closely at matter all we find is energy and it is us, the Observer, that calls the tune that this energy appears to dance to. When we see how easy it is to create an abundance of flow, creativity and joy into our lives, then there is nothing left to organize and manage. All of life bends to support us when we choose to step back and let our own Self shine because, I believe, this is life's only purpose.

Trusting the power within us.

Life delights to set us free from our fearful illusions of separation and powerlessness. When we step back and let our intuition guide us, instead of being hostage to the egos limited thought system, we are choosing to call life friend - and that is what it becomes to us. When we allow the Love within us to nourish us and shine upon our world then everything in the world reflects that Love back. As an effect it can do no other. No-one and no-thing is missing that we need, no-one meets by chance and we can't help but be in the right place at the right time.

We've already looked at how power lies in our intent, and although it appears that we have infinite choice, in reality the choice is always between these two: To remain hostage to our everyday thinking mind that seems to tell us what to think and is grounded in illusions of limitation and weakness. Or, radical Self-acceptance; to let our attention return to where it came from and allow our true Self to run the show. What do we want to give our attention to, fearful illusions or the Love that we Are? That's the choice. The world is simply a reflection of that choice. It's the best of teachers.

Life just wants us to be happy, to teach us what we really want as opposed to what our ego has us think we want. If we ignore life then maybe it has to knock a little harder next time to help us hear, but that's never a bad thing. When we do step back and allow all things be exactly as they are, we can recognize that our Will and life's purpose are the same thing - to restore to our awareness our natural, loving and miraculous creative abilities. Instead of resisting what seems to be happening in our life we can choose to let every experience be a vehicle to bring us closer together and deeper into our natural and permanent flow state. We can choose to let ourselves be changed. Or, more accurately, we can let who we think we are be changed.

Here's a way to do this:

Letting all things deeper into Flow

Life shows us all the ways in which we hide our light, deny our genius and rationalize our erroneous belief in powerlessness. You could call it a process of disillusionment – helping us replace our fearful illusions with the recognition of our own love and power. Once we see this, the trick is to allow ourselves to become defenceless - not to avoid any 'negative' feelings or event but to seek the gift of learning in each of them. Turn to them, see what it is that they have to offer us and accept the gift. Then we are free to move on wiser, richer and untroubled, having resolved 'the problem' at its source once and for all.

Insight comes from allowing ourselves to fully experience whatever feeling presents itself without a need to enact it, deny it or tell a story about it; - just to be still and let it flow through us. When we allow ourselves to be defenceless and sink deep into the direct experience of the feeling without an agenda or need to resolve anything, insights reveals the lessons, and these lessons are the stepping stones to a life of endless flow, creativity and healing.

We can find plenty of good advice about how to overcome procrastination and maintain focus on our goals but all of them are based on the mistaken assumption that these feelings are inherently bad and to be avoided. When we try to overcome any of these states we are passing up the gift of learning that they always bring. In the drive for efficiency and order in our lives we pass up the myriad of blessings that come our way when we allow all things to be exactly as they are and simply pay attention to them. This **attentive defencelessness** is how we allow life to take us deeper into our natural 'flow' state by highlighting and healing ever thought that still holds us back.

Choosing miracles

There may be times, perhaps when we are stuck in the heat of an argument, or when we are feeling overwhelming emotion or stress, or our bodily condition has nose-dived, that we feel unable to step back and trust our Self to handle the problem. In these situations we need to first orient ourselves to be able to receive help. One way of doing this is to first asking a question that our ego is unable to answer: By asking ourselves, "How can I be truly helpful here", we open ourselves to the realization that there is absolutely nothing that our true Self cannot happily resolve if we are simply willing to receive, by letting go of our expectation of how this ought to be resolved. From here our attention can turn naturally towards the stillness of our Self and rest, allowing the problem to be resolved. Maybe we need to remind our self of the power of our choice with words such as, 'In spite of my resistance, I can choose to let this be resolved happily and trust that in choosing it is done'. It takes no more than

an instant.

Remembering how to soar

Efforts to make our lives more productive, more efficient and more 'safe' remind me of the little story:

The story is about eagle who got lost at birth and ended up being raised on a farm amongst a group of chickens.

The gist of the story is that as the little eagle grew up amongst the chickens he lived as they did, and learnt to accept and make the most of his little chicken life as he competed with the other birds for the scraps of food that were thrown amongst them. Until one day when he saw a strange yet somehow familiar figure soaring magnificently above them.

As he watched the wonderful bird soar and glide above him, the one in the sky called down and said, "I am your brother and you are an eagle just like me, you simply got lost but now you are found. You too are free to fly and roam the skies at will, just like I am; and you will do far greater things than these. Come and join me.' Being of chicken mind the other birds urged him not to listen. "He is not like us", they crowed, "think of your responsibilities, there are nests to make and food to be collected, you have no time for think of flying or freedom or doing your own thing".

And so it came to be that the eagle lived his life as a chicken believing in what chickens do, but having now learnt that it's not good to look too long at the sky lest another eagle appear and unsettle him by reminding him of who he really is.

Just like the eagle in this little story we turn away in disbelief and recommit ourselves to making the most of our little lives and to being the best chickens we can be. Some of us have been known to write stories about the eagles that fly above us from time to time, we worship them as 'heroes' or 'chosen ones' or 'gurus' and some hope that one day they'll come back to save us, not recognizing that they are just the same as us and the way to freedom is simply to remember how to fly again.

Our efforts to organise and manage our lives are sorry substitutes for trust in our innate wisdom and creative powers - a lack of faith that we might not know moment to moment what is needed, what to say and what to do, doubt in our natural ability to create whatever we truly want in our lives. When we plan and organize we set aside our natural creative power and hand over control to our limited 'thinking' minds and so constrain ourselves to outcomes that are by design limited to the beliefs, thinking patterns and laws of our culturally conditioned mind set. When we plan and organize we set up future expectations that blind ourselves not only to the countless blessings and opportunities to learn and grow each day but also to the awareness of the ever present creative genius that is our own Presence. We were created to soar and yet we peck around in the dust as if we were chickens.

When we let our attention rest in this open receptivity our inner knowing knows exactly what to do with every so called 'interruption' or 'chance event', and without reference to the past or future. It uses all things for the benefit of everyone involved. In real 'Flow' we receive instead of plan, give instead of organize, because all of life bends to help us when we get out of our own way and invite it in. And best of all, there's an incredible ease and quiet confidence that comes from recognizing that once we've learned how to step back and allow our divine spark to shine, it's quite literally impossible to fail at anything we set our heart on.

We don't need to organize our lives when we learn how to use the power of our intent for good because everyone and everything comes to serve us. Instead of trying to create the conditions for Flow we can learn to access it directly and bring it with us to transform any chaotic situation, bring peace wherever there is stress, bring light-heartedness to anything 'serious' and naturally resolve any problem for the benefit of all concerned.

Chapter 8

Overcoming our resistance to Flow

Life flows. This flow of consciousness is the stream of feeling, of energy, of Love that we are all a part of and immersed in. It knows no boundaries and knows no part as separate from itself. But we don't know this until we stop resisting it and allow it to flow through us.

As I said at the beginning, there is actually nothing to learn here. I am just attempting to point to that which is already radiant in the core of our being and inviting us to turn our questions and attention to That, so it can lead the way, do all our doing and live our lives.

What we are is Love, and it's now time for us to switch off our dumb ass auto-pilots and trust in this power within us. This is the place where work stops and effortless creation begins. It doesn't matter whether we are presenting to an audience, performing neurosurgery, fixing the plumbing, updating our website or just walking the dog, when we let our attention rest in This we are at perfect ease and that ease infuses everyone and everything around us, infusing everything we do.

There is absolutely nothing difficult or complex about this. Being our Self is the easiest and simplest thing in the world. It is us that makes life so complicated and difficult. Whilst ever we continue to deny our own natural creative ability we will continue to see ourselves as victims of a fickle world and, as Bill Shakespeare put it, 'suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune'. This is difficulty and complexity.

We have seen how we can call upon the power of intent to bring our True Self into conscious awareness. Flow, and all the other wonderful attributes simply come as part of the package. It really is that simple. Simple but perhaps useless, because there are two impediments to realisation that we need to see and deal with. Let's look at these two one last time.

The **first impediment** is that we pursue the sizzle and not the sausage. We want flow, happiness, miracles in our life, and all the other goodies without recognizing that they are simply a reflection of who we Are. We need to first learn how to recognize our Self, to recognize that this is its own reward, that everything else is trimmings.

I have now reigned about 50 years in victory or peace, beloved by my subjects, dreaded by my enemies, and respected by my allies. Riches and honors, power and pleasure, have waited on my call, nor does any earthly blessing appear to have been wanting to my felicity. In this situation, I have diligently numbered the days of pure and genuine happiness which have fallen to my lot. They amount to fourteen.Abd Er-Rahman III of Spain

You see, anything we pursue that changes (or we think might change) can bring suffering. We first want something, then, when we think it might change or we might not get it, we get disappointed or fearful. We suffer. This obviously includes 'bliss' states, as they are also subject to change.

Anything that can bring us disappointment is not worth pursuing. Who we really Are does not change and cannot suffer in any way. This is where our treasure lies. Find This and we find everything.

The solution to this impediment is to just get started. Once we start to experience our Self and also witness the incredible transformative effect it has on everything in our life, there's no problem at all in wanting it. It becomes totally compelling and infectious. The trick is to get started in the first place, to get ourselves to value and give our attention to the white space between our thoughts, because this is where the awareness of our Self shines through.

Trust is the grease that makes this work and trust can only be built through using it and seeing the results. So, please don't take my word for it, try it and see; then take what works and adapt it to you.

Please remember that what I have written here is what seems to work for me but the only right way for you is your way. I'd love to see you succeed so if you think I can help, or if you have a story to share, then please drop by my weblog at [Life 2.0](http://www.Life2point0.com) (<http://www.Life2point0.com>) and post a comment or send me an e-mail.

The **second impediment** is that this is totally counter intuitive to what we have been conditioned to believe. We have developed such faith in our good judgements and our intellect that it is difficult to grasp that our true potential lies in the space that's created when we lay these two aside. We've become so immersed and familiar with the world of our thoughts, beliefs and concepts; and so reliant upon them for direction, that we try and bring them with us here as well. This makes progress virtually impossible because a limited mind set cannot go beyond itself. Limitedness simply cannot hack unlimitedness. You cannot raise yourself up by pulling harder on your bootstraps. I guess Albert Einstein said it best when he told us, "*You cannot solve a problem at the level it is created*".

The solution to this second impediment is to get ourselves to appreciate and use the power of your intent. This is a lot trickier than it would first appear, but only because our everyday thinking mind will do absolutely anything and everything to keep this incredible power out of our awareness. It's as if it senses that as soon as we recognize this power, and the rest of our innate natural qualities, then the ego will be no longer be needed, which is true. After all, to use a previous analogy, why would we want to scavenge around in the dust like a chicken when we've been given the mighty wings of an eagle? Why would we want to suffer from frightening beliefs in weakness and vulnerability when they are simply not true? Intention to allow our true Self to shine true, is where our real power lies - not in trying.

The ego has us 'think' that we have to go looking for our Self but it's impossible to seek for what we already Are. Our Self is closer than our own breath and it is only thinking, our 'mind activity', that hides it from our awareness. So, the trick is just to appreciate and enjoy the white space between our thoughts, take the quiet time to step back from the world without agenda or anticipation and allow our Self to nourish us. Just enjoy this. And remember that we don't need to do anything to get here - it's our Self that knows the way into our awareness, we just need to choose it - trust the power of our intent. Choose it and trust that in choosing it is done. Trust our Self to give us certainty.

In times of stress and uncertainty

But what to do in the times when we are really troubled and under great stress, when we need this stuff the most? How do we relax into our Self then?

Here are a few words given me that may help.

..... But what about responsibility you may ask? What about the worn and tired world ravaged by winds of fear and suffering? How can I rest here and 'choose to be happy' when our world is crumbling around us? Well, just for once, stay and rest a little while. Lay down these questions and your troubles and leave them here in trust. Simply let your attention rest in this feeling of your own Beingness and see what happens. Soon enough you'll start to notice different things begin to happen in the world around you. Perhaps a bird with broken wings begins to sing, a dry and dusty brook begins to bubble and flow, an ancient hurt forgotten and friendship returned, or an intractable problem 'magically' disappears. Savour and take joy in these things but don't let them seem strange to you, for you did this. Such is the power of your Love."

Chapter 9

Allowing quantum principles to work in our life

*This is your last chance. After this, there is no turning back. You take the blue pill - the story ends, you wake up in your bed and believe whatever you want to believe. You take the red pill - you stay in Wonderland and I show you how deep the rabbit-hole goes.....*Morpheus talking to Neo in the film 'The Matrix'.

As we have already seen we can, at will, stand back and take a moment of pause and respite from our thoughts and the world they picture. In doing so we can also recognise the mistake we make in believing our self concepts. We can see that who we are is the one that is doing the observing and not the one we thought we were - the one that appears a victim in the drama of the 'human condition' - the world of thought, bodies and the physical world that I am watching. There's immediate benefit here. In simply stepping back like this we are free of any recurring fear, habitual behaviour or debilitating addiction - no therapy, no drugs, no process, no effort - WE ARE FREE!

When we do this we are faced with a similar situation to Neo in the film 'The Matrix. We can 'take the blue pill' and return to the linear, separated, Newtonian world that we have become so familiar and comfortable with; or, as Neo did, we can summon the courage to 'take the red pill' - to welcome the world of the unknown and see what is really going on. This is the choice for free Will - to escape the mind that tells us what to think and let our own Will be done, to let our Divine Spark into our conscious awareness and trust This to nourish us and live our Life. To do so is to enter the amazing quantum world where everything changes. When we allow this to happen, what now seems extraordinary and miraculous is seen simply as the way things are; and the world that now appears to be so fixed and capricious we see for what it is, a 'bad dream' where we once imagined ourselves split off from the rest of life, and so things seemed to be happening that were beyond our control.

We use electricity every day and yet when we ask some of the most eminent scientists what electricity is they have great trouble explaining it. Just as we don't need to fully understand electricity to use it, so too we can readily apply the principle of quantum physics in our lives. I've already introduced you to these principals, but what I'd like to do here is tie them all together so we can apply them as one.

Let's briefly review the three principles.

Attention - whatever we give our attention to expands

This is how we determine; out of all the possibilities in the field of potentiality, what gets brought into manifestation. This is the quantum 'observer effect' in action. Unfortunately, for the most part, it's what we think we want that drives our attention; and as we've already seen, what we think we want is driven by a 'separate' self concept that is by definition weak, fearful and troubled.

We never stop creating. The principle of attention has always been at work, we just have never recognised it. By bringing our attention into conscious awareness we gain control over what we are moment to moment creating in our lives. When we've looked at a world that appears untrustworthy, chaotic and full of separate beings, we have looked at a world that simply and perfectly reflects our current state of mind - the 'human condition' - the mind-set that mistakenly thinks itself separate, weak and limited.

So to recap: Who 'we think we are' generates our beliefs and our thoughts; which then focus our attention, creating the world we perceive. When we bring our attention into conscious awareness we begin to see that the problems and confusion in our lives, and in the world at large, are merely the effect, the end point of this little 'chain-of-hell' that starts with a mistaken self concept.

The way out is not to try and resolve our problems directly (this would not only exacerbate the problem by feeding it with our attention but also reinforce the belief in powerlessness - the need for 'effort' - which is the central belief in our mistaken self-concept, and the cause of our problems) but to give our full attention to what we really want, and create that. This leads us nicely to the second principle - 'Trusting Intent'.

Trusting Intent - getting out of our own way to allow our true Self to flow.

So, the question is now, what **do** we want to create?

We have already seen that what we think of as choice is a myth; - how all the choices that appear to be available to us are in fact just us following the dictates of this limited mind-set that seems to tell us what to think. Freedom comes from stepping back in our mind and letting our attention rest in our true Self, our true nature that is grounded in nothing but Love. Changing the source of our thought in this way allows us to follow our own Free Will and attain anything our heart desires, by trusting This to answer all our questions and do all our doing.

When we step back and get out of our own way so our true Self can take the driving seat there's also another benefit. Not only are we coming from a place of Love within us and creating that in our lives, but we are also aligning our will with that of the Universe - and so all of life bends to support us. In

stepping back with a **trusting intent** to let our true Self take control, serendipity replaces the need for luck, our innate 'in the moment' intuitive wisdom replaces the need to organise and plan, and our natural flow state replaces the need for effort.

Allowing our true Will to flow through us in this way is to follow our Free Will rather than a life driven by many goals. Let's review the differences between these two:

A Goal driven life versus a life following our Free Will

Life driven by many goals	Having a single purpose of allowing our true Self to shine true
Driving force: fear of what I don't want (under the guise of pursuit of what I think I want)	Driving force: the Love within - the expression of what stirs my soul
Believes that I will not receive what I want or need unless I strive to get it	Trusts that in exercising my true Will I share the same purpose as the universal life force; and so all of life turns to support me.
Perceives a separate me - my needs, my life, my likes, my concerns, what I believe is right and wrong	Recognises that our creative power, the resolution to our problems, and our happiness, comes from the healing this illusion of separateness.
Scarcity thinking - if I give to you, then you have more and I have less	Quantum thinking – the more I allow to flow through me the more there is to flow.
Modus operandi of 'good judgment' , goal setting and effort	Modus operandi of intuition, allowing and effortlessness
Intellect - thinking and believing	Intuition - feeling and knowing
Planning, organising and managing events	Trusting and listening to our innate intuitive knowing and allowing all things to serve us.
Techniques, methodology and accumulating knowledge are our tools of choice	The 'flow' that comes from trusting in our true Self is the only tool that's ever needed
Results are constrained by all the laws of this world -	Results are not constrained

space/time, economic, social, medical, physical etc etc	
Discipline is required to stay focused and filter out whatever doesn't serve our goals	Relaxation required to be aware of our own Presence and receive the gifts of everything around us
Fear in all its forms (procrastination, guilt, unworthiness, jealousy, anger, frustration, apprehension etc) is to be overcome.	Any fear that arises is best experienced directly to recognise and let go of the underlying causal mistaken self-concept.
Worthy goals: self development, growth and enlightenment	The belief that we are not already whole, omnipotent and perfect is what keeps us seeking, and it is seeking that keeps the true nature of the seeker from our awareness. Therefore the only worthy goal is to give up worthy goals and in the stillness that follows welcome the recognition of our true Nature.
Purpose: to find our unique role in life and the work we were meant to do.	Purpose: to let our Divine Spark shine in everything we do, knowing that in doing this our 'unique role' and the 'work we were meant to do' finds us.
Life requires choosing between trade-offs and multiple competing goals whilst trying to keep a sense of balance between work, play, community, family, friends etc	Requires relaxing and enjoying the perfect synchronicity and support of everyone & everything in our lives when we choose this one life affirming purpose (see 'Purpose' above).
Rewards are in the future, fleeting and transitory.	Rewards are immediate, cumulative and permanent

Attentive Defencelessness - allowing life to highlight and heal the thoughts that holds us back

We already talked about this in the chapter, 'A miraculous way of getting things done'. This is allowing all things to take us deeper into our natural 'flow' state. Life has a way of freeing us from the fears and beliefs that hold us back, and when we recognise this we can use every single thing in our life that perturbs us as a mirror to the thought that created it.

We have become so accustomed to trying to get rid of 'negative' thoughts and feelings that we are oblivious of the gifts that each of them brings. We try to 'think positive' and focus on the solution, blinding ourselves to the message and learning that our thoughts and feelings are desperately trying to tell us. Each one is a stepping stone to where we want to be, showing us how and where we still resist these principles - our own miraculous capabilities. When we allow all things to teach us, we create a virtuous circle of learning and accomplishment that builds a natural path of least resistance to our nirvana.

Putting it all together

I thought all I had to do was ski fast to the bottom. I wouldn't make it any more complicated than that ... Sometimes that's all it takes. Sometimes, everything takes care of itself..... skier Julia Mancuso after her unexpected Olympic gold medal win.

Attention is the psychic energy that moves the world and creates the world we see. By bringing our attention into conscious awareness we gain control over what we are creating in our lives.

Trusting Intent is getting out of our own way so that our true Self can bring us what we really want. It is the choice for free Will – to step back from our everyday thoughts into the 'flow' of our true Self so the life we create is reflective of our true, loving nature rather the doubts, fears and contradictions of our everyday 'thinking' mind.

Attentive Defencelessness is allowing all of life to support us. It is about getting real and accepting responsibility for what we moment to moment create in our lives, and learning from it. It is the way we see and heal the underlying erroneous thoughts that hold us back.

In choosing to step back from our thoughts and judgments, and resting in the feeling of our own Presence – trusting This to nourish us and guide us, is to put all three of these principles to work for us. For want of a term we can call it **Self Trust**. Stepping back in trust and allowing ourselves to be carried by our True Self is the most restful, enjoyable and powerful thing we can do in this life. The results of doing this consistently are beyond what words can adequately describe so I won't even attempt to go there.

Chapter 10

The takeaway - 4 steps to Flow

Harry Potter is one boy in a long line of mythical heroes who have reminded the human race that we are so much more than we think we are, so much more powerful than we seem to know. Jesus said that we would someday do even greater works than He; should we not take Him at His word? And should not 'someday' be today?"
.....Marianne Williamson.

Here's a great line taken from the first comment I received when I first mentioned this book on my weblog. *"Are you proposing to show us how to drop into flow? to be more our Selves? Personally,*

that's why I'd buy the book - I don't want to read how great it is, how it's changed other peoples' lives, etc. I want to know of techniques that will let me be in that state more often and less accidentally."

What a challenge! Hopefully we've seen that being in a state of flow is not a 'doing' but a letting go of 'what it is we do that blocks the natural flow of our Self'. Nevertheless, in an attempt to address this request here's the back-of-a-napkin takeaway:

4 steps to Flow: - get real, get clear, step back, enjoy

1. Get Real

- **Recognise cause and effect as it really is.** We are cause. Recognise that everything starts with a thought and the world we see reflects our thoughts and beliefs, not the other way around.
- **Accept responsibility.** We are in control. In stepping back and watching our limited thoughts, beliefs and our self concept that spawns them, we recognise that who I thought I was cannot be true, that who I am in this Presence that is to doing the watching. Remember how easy this was to do? This is the choice for Free Will. From this non-resisted 'place of rest', happiness, understanding, the flow state, creativity and perfect intuition are able to flow naturally - simply as attributes of who we Are
- **Acknowledge the power of our choice (intent).** There's little use trying to still the mind or overcome fear in order to get into flow, but thankfully we don't have to. The only way to get rid of darkness is to turn on a light. The Truth within us dispels our illusions just as one candle will light a cave that has been dark for thousands of years. It is our true Self that knows the way into our conscious awareness - effort and 'reasoning' play no part in this - the ego simply cannot go beyond itself. We need only call upon it and trust it to be so. And to experience we need but step back, relax and feel the warmth of the Love that envelopes us as we recognise our Self in this space.

2. Get Clear

Once we realise that our one real choice is between either being led around by our everyday thoughts (ego) or stepping back and letting our true Self flow and run this show of ours, the question is, 'which one?'. Attention follows desire, and so rather than struggle with our ambivalence, apathy or confusion the key is simply to take a few moments whenever needed to get clear by asking this question. We need to direct this question to the heart (what we **really** want) rather than the head (what we think we want) because the ego will never sign its own death warrant.

Our Self 's only agenda is to express itself, to shine true, and so we cannot experience it if we try to either control it or impose our own goals. It is in letting go of our attachment to our own agenda and preferred outcomes that allow our Self to flow. In whatever situation we are in we need ask ourselves, 'Why am I doing this?'. - Is it to experience my true Self or for some other reason? Am I willing to let go of control and what I think I want, so my true Self can bring me what I really want? Or, put another way: Right here, right now, do I choose to express my ego or my real Self. Whatever we do and wherever we are, the choice is always between expressing Love or some form of fear, and whichever we choose the outcome has to reflect this choice.

Would I rather be right or be happy? This is the choice. So which is it to be? Why not take a moment to ask our true Self give us clarity? It's hard to image how incredible a day we have when we are willing to let go of control and allow our true Self to come out and play.

3. Step Back

Recognise that we need do nothing. It is in stepping back and getting out of our own way - trusting and allowing our attention to rest our intent to let our true Self shine true, that allows the miracle to happen.

Remember, anticipation plays no part at all as it's our true Self that knows exactly what we need in each and every moment. If we need a thought, a word or just a tranquil open mind then that will be It's gift.

4. Relax and enjoy letting our true Self express itself.

Just rest and receive; and enjoy the process. Not only because it the most enjoyable experience imaginable but because it is the most helpful thing we can do. Remember when we looked at attention and how what we focus on expands? Allowing ourselves to savour these Flow experiences and all the joy that comes our way as we start to apply these principles, is what perpetuates the whole process. This is the basic decision we make to be happy.

And that's it.

If it sounds a bit long winded and 'processy' don't worry. Once you start to use this and experience the power and joy of your Self, trust will build and this choice will take only an instant. Soon enough you'll wonder why you'd ever want to choose not to be in Flow.

A word of caution: You might find that to start with you'll experience extreme resistance to accepting and using the principles described here. This is just the ego kicking off in protest. One way to overcome this is to deal with it on its own terms by asking a perfectly rational question. You could ask yourself, "Instead of trusting my beliefs, my doubts, my reasoning or anything I have read or told, would it not make more sense to just test this out and see whether or not it works for me? What have I to loose by trying?"

Chapter 11

Overview of this Little book of Flow

*The happiness that is genuinely satisfying is accompanied by the fullest exercise of our faculties and the fullest realization of the world in which we live.*Bertrand Russell

There is a huge historical inertia to continue with the way things are now, to perpetuate the 'human condition', to maintain the illusion of separateness. One of the ways our ego maintains the status quo is to take simple truths and make them complex, turning them into yet another mental concept. So, in the interest of keeping things simple and having an overview of this little book for those who don't have the inclination to read the whole thing, this a review of concepts in a few short paragraphs:

Flow experiences

For most of us this 'Flow' state has occurred while when we are doing something we really enjoy. This is because it's while doing something we enjoy that we our minds relax enough to let our true Self have a seat at the table. The natural reaction of anyone - sportsman, scientist, musician - when they loose their 'flow' is to practice harder, to 'try' to get back in flow - but this invariable makes things worse and get deeper in the rut. Paradoxically it's when they give up trying and just go hit a few balls or strum a few chords for the fun of it, that magically the flow and the muse 'mysteriously' return. There's nothing strange or complex about this. It's just that in a relaxed state of mind who we really Are can shine through the fog of judgements, thoughts and beliefs that normally fill our mind.

The ones we think of as true geniuses and masters in their field are simply the ones that have learnt how to relax and get out of our own way. This is not something that is available to a select few through accident of birth or good fortune. It is available to each and every one of us, whenever we want it and in whatever circumstance we find ourselves. It is an attrinute who we Are, and so it is instantly recognized and known once we let go of who we think we are. This takes no effort whatsoever.

Those incredible joyful, transcendent, 'flow' moments where we just know we can accomplish anything and the world is our oyster, always occur when we let slip the normal control our mind tries to maintain over our world, allowing us to relax into the feeling of our own Beingness. Sometimes it's in a situation, perhaps during a business presentation or a sporting event, when we realize that there's absolutely nothing more we can do and so we decide we might as well just trust and enjoy the moment; for some it's in our youth or amongst friends or loved ones where we feel safe enough to let our mask slip and simple Be, for some it's when we are suddenly shocked into stillness by a fortuitous 'accident' or act of nature, and for others its on the point of death of the physical body when we let go of the struggle for life and suddenly become aware, often for the first time, of our own radiant Presence.

The good news is that these seemingly chance events are simply glimpses into our own, every present, true nature and the only thing that hides it from our awareness is our everyday thinking mind that judges everything, and fights to maintain control over our world. If we accidentally or deliberately let our minds surrender control over 'our world' just for one instant, who we really Are becomes instantly recognizable. Strange as it may seem, most of us spend our lives not knowing who we really Are and many would rather die than let our masks slip and have a moment of self recognition, to let Truth shine true.

Denial of responsibility

Most of us who have been fortunate to experience these incredible joyful, transcendent 'flow' moments tend to get a little delusional. We use an amazing piece of mind trickery to convince ourselves that this didn't come from us. We dismiss the possibility that it is simply our own true nature shining through in those moments when we relaxed and let our mind fall still, by associating the experience with the activity or person we were with. We con ourselves into dismissing the fact that it is **us** that 'feels' this way.

This delusion causes most of us spend our lives pursuing those activities, those things and those people that we think will bring back these wonderful moments where we felt truly alive, invulnerable and omnipotent. This very seeking then prevents us from every relaxing enough to experience an instant of self-recognition that would show us how backwards our thinking is. Once we recognize that the source of Love is within us then it's a small step to letting it return to our conscious awareness where it can shine upon and transform everything in our lives. This is where our power, our happiness, our safety and our knowing lie.

The myth of the need for effort

One of the big misunderstandings about mastery and genius in anything is that it takes effort. True, we believe it does; but beliefs tend toward self fulfilling prophecies. What I am suggesting here is that it takes no effort at all. In fact it takes the opposite of effort. It's a letting go of all effort, a willingness to relinquish control and allow all things to be exactly as they are, that allows our mind to fall still and create the space to simply Be. And in the state of simply being aware of our own Presence, our 'genius' and natural 'flow' show up and shine through as a unavoidable aspect of who we Are. The only thing that's required to learn and master anything is a clear mind - a relaxed, open, trusting awareness of what Is - a felt sense of our own Presence.

In whatever we attempt, concentration and discipline will take us so far, but only because that is our intent. But using concentration, disciple or any other form of effort to wrestle success is a sorry and feeble substitute for the effortless, joyous and often miraculous performance that's ours for the asking when we allow ourselves to get out of our own way and trust the power of our intent to let our own incredible true nature carry the day.

When we do anything with a clear mind, learning and mastery occur spontaneously. It's a state of 'feeling' not thinking. It's thought that creates the doubts and fears, that blocks our natural ability to learn and accomplish. Happiness happens of its own accord in the space between our thoughts, and we always do our best when we are happy. It has got absolutely nothing to do with anything that we do, but it has everything to do with what we don't do. Create a little 'white-space' between our thoughts for our true Self to play and the magic happens.

The forgotten power of our minds

The pervasive thought system of the world is the ego - a thought system built on a belief in a 'me' that is separate from, and therefore has limited influence over, the world it sees outside itself. Such is the power of our mind that because this is what we think, this is what appears to be true in the world the mind perceives. It appears that we are a physical entity separate from everyone and everything around us, and therefore it seems as though 'stuff happens' in our life that is beyond our control. This thought system, or ego, hides and avoids the recognition of what science is now pointing to – that mind is the one creative force.

In this illusory, 'separate' world there appears to be many choices but in fact there is only one real one. The choice is always between continuing to follow the dictates of this everyday limited mind - the one that seems to tell us what to think, and uses judgment as a substitute for awareness in order to maintain the illusion of separation and powerlessness; or, to turn our attention to who we really Are and let this live our life. By changing the cause, the source of our thought, our whole life changes. This is the choice to follow our own free Will, and to escape the constraints of our limited belief system and all the perceived 'laws of this world' that result from this.

What's love got to do with it?

The central premise of this book is that who we think we are is not true, that who we really Are cannot be known through thought but only through direct experience, and that this direct experience is very straight forward and takes no effort.

We are now coming to know that, what we think of as a separate world outside ourselves that seems to be beyond our control, is an illusion. We are in fact continuously affecting the field of possibility to determine what actually comes into being in our lives. [1] Whilst we struggle to understand this intellectually it is neither complex nor difficult to know directly by stepping back from our thoughts and beliefs and learning to trust our true Self – our intuition and our direct awareness of what is really happening here in the present.

When we allow the awareness of who we really Are to shine away our self concepts (who we believe we are - the egos ideas of a limited, separate self) we are replacing the basis of all our thoughts and perceptions. What we think and see then reflects this truth and our Free Will instead of our illusory self concepts. Love replaces all forms of fear and concepts of limitation in our minds, and our world reflects this – as an effect it can do no other.

In recognizing our true Self we see that there is nothing about ourselves that is not constituted wholly of Love - the one thing that endures. By learning how to bring our real Self into our conscious awareness we create, moment by moment, a life and a world that reflects only this Love.

Big issues as distractions

We ask ourselves big questions such as 'how can I find the work I love' or 'what is my purpose in life' without every realizing that to simply step back and allow who we already Are, the Love within us, to shine in our life is the greatest and most practical gift anyone can could ever give. We seek for answers to many problems whilst denying ourselves and the world the one thing that would dissolve all problems. Our true nature is totally compelling and infectious and so we quite literally change the world simply by becoming the change we want to see in the world. So to those of us who despair at ever finding what we love, I'd say congratulations - because this is a great starting point. If we think we'll never find our true niche in life then we have far less resistance to calling off the search and being open to the recognition of the brilliance that has always shone within us. Our purpose in life is simply to let our own light shine, and in this the rest becomes perfectly clear.

Settings ourselves free - one of many way out of the rat trap.

The **first step** is to see that who we think we are, and the matrix of our thoughts that maintains this self concept, cannot be true. This is simple enough - we did it in chapter 2. Just stepping back from our thoughts, our bodies and the things that these perceive; and simply watching this dance of life both offers us an opportunity for a moment of self recognition - to feel our own Presence, and at the same time see that who we really are (the observer) cannot be who we thought we were (what we are observing), and also give us a welcome respite from our heavy burden of judgement - the habit of selective perception that our ego uses to play us like a puppet and maintain the illusion of separation and limitedness.

We cling so tightly to our self concepts that we are blinded to anything that does not validate them. As Paul Simon wrote, "Man hears what he wants to here and disregards the rest". The inevitable product is a world of war, greed and competition, driven by fear and paranoia. All problems no matter how seemingly complex or intractable are simply some form of fear made manifest. The one antidote to fear is perfect Love. The one antidote to paranoia is trust. Love is who we Are and in spite of appearances we are learning to trust this.

Once we allow a moment of self recognition to cast doubt on our self concepts and the illusory thought system that maintains them, the **second step** is to call upon the power of intent to let our true Self, the feeling of Love that's growing within us, to nourish us and take control. This is the beginning of **Self Trust** – trust in our true Self. This trust builds as we use it and witness its effects.[2]

This is how we create a 'heaven on earth', but it can never be a solitary endeavour. In surrendering to the truth of ourselves we find ourselves in everyone and everything; and like all experience, as it's shared it grows stronger. Truly, no one meets and nothing happens by chance, and so every one we meet gives us another opportunity to heal the mind that thought itself separate and limited.

Our everyday logical thinking minds will give us many things to do and paths to follow, in order to avoid recognizing what is closer than our next breath. There will always be another teacher, another book and another good practice, but at the end of the day it can only be us who take the quiet time and give ourselves permission to allow this feeling of Love that comes from within, and longs to get our attention, to totally envelop us and always be with us.

Footnotes:

[1] For an excellent introduction to quantum physics and how we create our own reality you might like to watch the film 'What the Bleep do we know'. Here's a little video excerpt.

[2] The process can be summarized as one of **self recognition** followed by **self acceptance** leading to **self reliance**, although the final step tends to follow automatically from the second.