

THE PATH



A QUEST FOR LIBERATION

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PREFACE:

My Soul's purpose in writing this book is to help Neuro-divergent people like me or people who may with no good luck of their own develop a brain disorder, or suffer such a terrible life event that they enter our realm and may need guidance.

Me? I was broken. I was damaged. However, it did not happen all at once. It started with a crack. To this day, I still do not know the origin of the fracture, the fault line that tore me apart and left me in pieces.

I spent a lifetime trying to figure out when, how, what, where, and who? Nevertheless, it was simple chemistry. No more. It does not matter. I assembled the disparate parts and reunited them and that piece, that missing piece, the piece I keep going into the dark to find, where that missing piece, where it used to be is where the light gets in.

The light illuminated me within and then throughout and purged and cleansed and purified and lifted me up and onto a higher plane of awareness and experience.

What makes music beautiful is not so much the notes as the spaces, the rests and pauses allows us to enjoy the stillness and the emptiness so that the sound, the light may enter and occupy and enshroud the fullness of and the magnification of the All, the Divine and Universal Mind of Being.

I am grateful that I have survived, that I may help others. Because I have contemplated ending my life every day for more years than I can remember. However, now I embrace each moment. I wake each morning energized and encouraged that come what may I can handle anything, and find the positive in the negativity of a situation. See the love amongst the fearful moments and the ray of light through the darkness. I am duty-bound to take what I have learned and to help others find their way out of the shadows of oblivion and

step into the light and to find their gifts, treasures, and strengths free of ego so that they may live a meaningful and purposeful life.

There can be no shadows without light and no strength without struggle and change without challenge.

Happiness and good can be found in the purity of love while we seek our truth. Evil is found in willful ignorance and turning a blind eye to, the absence of, and a distortion of the truth.

It is for all of us to find our way through the thicket of lies, fear, hatred that is Hell, so that we may value love, light, and the truth as we deliver ourselves from the bondage of the ego.

Without the trial and tribulations that we enter along the dark highway of awakening, we would never know that we are beings of light and the pilgrims of Eternity.

PART I THE THREE MORAL TRUTHS.

1.1 WE HAVE A SHADOW SELF.

Unbeknownst to some of us, another lurks within. We joke about evil twins, you may be familiar with Dr. Jekyll's Mr. Hyde, or with a multi-personality disorder, but within there is darkness.

We hide things we do not want others to see. We are ashamed of something or we are criticized for something we banish it, lock it away. Sometimes these things fade into the deep recesses of our being; others lie beneath the surface and do not pass up a chance to remind us that we have banished them from the bright light of being.

Sometimes our greatest gifts and passions are discouraged and for whatever reason, we comply with others views and opinions and we enter into an unconscious agreement and we

let our dreams die, and aspirations wither on the vine. In the desire to be accepted we fall in line and become part of the herd as we conceal who and what we are.

This shadow self-comes out to express itself and play when we are stressed. Besides suppressed hopes and desires there are elements of our worst self, the darkness within, our ugly, selfish, demanding inner five-year-old; our ego writ large.

When we fear, when we doubt, that our world or beliefs are being questioned or judged our shadow is roused. When we stumble and take things personally, our shadow moves to the fore and sometimes takes the floor and shows itself.

It is like some evil genii that escape from the bottle but instead of wishes, you are usually left with regrets. Even when we are at our best, if we are tired, or hungry, or suffering from

a lack of sleep, this troublesome specter can slip away and get the best of us.

Therefore, we must realize and acknowledge that it is there and that it can be a potent force. If we are not mindful of our thinking, feeling, and our willingness to do the work at bringing our dark aspects into the light, we could do something in the moment that could change our lives, alter our path, and disrupt our progress. We could be fired, lose a friend, a loved one or worse.

I have let my shadow appear to someone I care a great deal about and say something I should not have said, something I felt, something I desired but was not appropriate then that disrupted the environment that we were in. I wanted to be more than I could under the circumstances and I fell into an old pattern. It was selfish and self-serving, I was grandiose, and I almost lost more than I could afford to lose. Love is a

powerful force but unchecked can exemplify the shadow self as well.

1.2 OUR SHADOW HINDERS OUR HIGHER PURPOSE.

Our shadow stands in our way will stop us from communicating and when we see an unattractive quality, we do not like in someone else that we ourselves have, we will be offended and will project our darkness and distorted behavior unto him or her.

The more work we do on ourselves to reclaim what was left behind in the shadows and bring light to those deep recesses of our past pain, shame and hurt the lighter and less restrained we will be.

Shining a spotlight of truth, love, and compassion into the corners of our being will help to illuminate these fears,

fractures and fragmented parts of ourselves so that we can integrate these powerful energies into their counterbalanced positives to help us become the person we are destined to come.

We cannot heal apart from ourselves that we do not know is ill. I am not advocating countless retellings of past events, but to be able to look at these apertures into our souls, these wounds, and reclaim the wholeness that was lost in those moments and to replace them with what is not there with acceptance forgiveness and understanding.

This shadow work is about going deep into ourselves, vanquishing our darkest aspects, and mining the depths of our hidden and forgotten treasure. It is not for the weak of heart. That is why we need to be warriors, set our fear aside, and be ever vigilant and conscious of what we may discover, uncover or realize as IT comes to the surface and into the bright light of awareness.

1.3 THE PATH TOWARDS THE LIGHT: FIVE CONDUCTS.

There are five conducts, behaviors, or practices that we can introduce into our lives' if we have not already: Know thyself, Except thyself, Love thyself, Heal thyself, and to Share thyself. It is a process of Self-Actualization that I undertook that helped end my struggle with Depression, Anxiety, and self-loathing, addictive behavior, and chronic illness. It helped me to turn my life around, made me a productive person, and helped me with my interactions with the world at large, and to heal and sustain the world within.

In addition to these five conducts I have also integrated the practice of morning gratitude expressions and evening forgiveness offerings (usually to myself) but with these five and two, there is also mindfulness and daily meditation which has been very helpful in my healing and well as my personal development and personal growth.

In the pages that follow, I will distill and explain the Alchemy of my Transformation from depressed and lost soul to Enlivened Enlightened Spirit. It will not be easy, the work that lies ahead, but it will be worth it in the end.

"There are only two mistakes one can make along the Road to Truth- Not going all the way, and not Starting" BUDDHA

PART II THE MAJESTIC FIVEFOLD WAY

2.1 KNOW THYSELF

Self-knowledge is imperative for personal growth and development. To know thyself you must be willing to look at all your being – the good the bad and the unimaginable.

There are parts that were forced into the depths and other parts that went willingly. We must brace ourselves and be able to process all of it.

Our personality, our identity, our likes and our dislikes, our habits, the way we think, feel and behave are all things that need to be looked at and evaluated. Nevertheless, we must do it without judgment. We must not favor this aspect or reject that aspect out of hand. It must all be given equal weight and scrutiny.

What I am suggesting is not navel-gazing or running through a checklist. However, a detailed accounting and self-assessment in and of our entirety. Because to heal, grow or enlighten we must access and understand who we are so that we may come to value all that we are.

I have spent many years in therapy and discussed the same issues ad nauseam infinitum. I found myself stuck in the past reliving ancient traumas as I strove to find new answers and liberate myself from these shadows and ghosts from my past; I was forced to re-litigate the past. The therapy was gestalt and each issue was a brick on my wall that I needed to deconstruct and then reconstruct with the parts that were vital and important to my well-being. Nevertheless, the cure had become worse than the disease, as was the medication regiment that I was prescribed. I was stuck.

I am not trying to diminish the therapeutic benefit of psychotherapy, but what I am advocating is a more dynamic

and expansive process of delving into the rather deep pool that is the quest of Self-Exploration.

I went around and round and found myself in a rut. It was not until I started practicing meditation and mindfulness that I began to notice what was happening to me. In addition, my life, and how I navigated through the world.

One fateful day, I acknowledged to myself that I alone was responsible for my life. Instead of feeling the full weight and measure of such a new personal paradigm shift, I did not feel crushed by life and the world or my environment but tasted my first kiss of freedom. I knew that to repeat the same behavior and habits was not improving or providing me with a different outcome. It is insane as they say doing the same thing and expecting a different outcome. Something had to give, and it did. My attitude. My way of thinking. I had been in a pain and spasm cycle up to that point and the only way out was to disturb it. I needed to be objective moving forward

about my own subjective reality, state of mind and being. The writing of this book is some of the fruit of that labor. I affected a change and lifted myself up and out of the dark place, I had spent so many years occupying.

A good start on the path to self-discovery might be, to begin with, what makes us happy. What are our dreams and desires and what gives our lives' meaning and purpose? If what makes us happy and is our desire and our dream is devoid of any meaning and purpose, we can start there.

It is all relevant. However, we must be honest with ourselves. We may not be striving to cure cancer or world hunger and may be satisfied with getting by and providing for our basic needs, and do not feel the urge or impulse to move heaven and earth and to save the world, and there is nothing wrong with that. Nevertheless, helping others helps us with depression and a sense of fulfillment, which helps with

growth and personal development. Nevertheless, we are all fertile soil but gravitate to it in our own time.

If all we can think about is material gains and material things, then we miss the opportunity to grow and learn if we are myopic in our vision of our world and ourselves.

However, knowing what makes us happy and what does not is important. If we find ourselves taking the path of least resistance instead of pushing through and doing the challenging work of overcoming difficulty or struggle, we won't know how much grit and resilience we have. If we can do this then it will lead us to more information to work with and will lead to other avenues to knowing ourselves and discover new areas where perhaps there is more work to do, but remember what is required? Honesty.

I recommend taking personality tests. My favorite is the Myers Briggs Type Indicator. It gives detailed information on all aspects of our life beyond the workplace. The Enneagram and Numerology will also assign you a number and a detailed personality description and profile. Like Horoscopes, you read into it what you want. You take the good with the bad and think about what rings true. I would also beseech you to think about the attributes you do not agree with, apply additional scrutiny, and let it sink in to see if any of it also ends up resonating with you as well.

Forget about everything you thought you knew about yourself and let your imagination wander. Perhaps, just perhaps some of the things may startle or be jarring you the most are the things that may in effect be more you than you are willing to admit, at first. You are worth the work. Be curious, you may discover something that will change your life.

On our quest to know oneself, if we view things through the three lenses of awareness which are 1. Thinking, 2. Feeling, 3. Willing we can ascertain more information and if we are able to be truthful and accepting of our true nature we are better suited to see and experience a more holistic picture of who we are.

We have our nature which is at the core of our being and who and what and how we are and behave is ingrained but unchangeable, perhaps, suffice it to say, a leopard can change his spots, but he must want too. Be it melancholy, depression, or bliss and serenity there are also various states we find ourselves gravitating towards. These states present themselves during pleasant times or tenuous moments all of which are transitory. In certain instances where things come to the surface and come to light, instead of glossing over them, for some reason we become aware because we may have had enough, and we are ready to witness and acknowledge a much-needed truth.

We may stumble into some random occurrence and something touches off an epiphany. Then we are at the right or wrong place at the right place or wrong time and we have an experience where years of pent-up emotions, thoughts, and feelings come flooding into our point of view, perspective, worldview, whatever the case it hits home and for whatever reason we wake up, sit up and take notice.

If we want to make a change, effective our world or make a difference then our willing comes into the picture and demands that we act. This sets off a whole other world of thoughts, feelings, and stress.

We may have discovered our purpose in life and now we hear a calling and our life is on the verge of having the real purpose. The hero who reluctantly begins his quest and must leave the ordinary world - he hears the call, the call that must be

answered. To leave what he knows and is accustomed to, to a new world where there are uncertainty and new dangers.

So, when long-lost thoughts and now feelings arise, and we apply our willing, willpower and intentions on all becoming all that we can become we must apply this willing energy to reach even higher and ask ourselves what do we want from this life?

When we aspire to new and greater heights and the common good to lead a virtuous life in a loud, confusing and chaotic world we must shine our loving light like a beacon to what we identify as our North Star and establish that which we can become.

However, if we allow negative thinking, unhealthy feelings to become willful vices instead of our higher-self and we do not do the work that is required what is the point is? If that is the

case, we are not living only waiting to die as we bide our time in soulless entertainment.

Know thyself without question and without reservation to conquer yourself, vanquish, and purge the darkness within.

2.2 ACCEPT THYSELF

Self-acceptance is not surrender. It is acknowledging what is. If we cannot accept who we are and what we have become or have not achieved, there is no chance for growth or personal-development and moving forward in life and our endeavors. If we cannot we will become static and be in a constant battle with ourselves.

The Stoic philosophers tell us to know what is and what is not within our control and within our power. We have the power to accept ourselves, as we are, good, bad and indifferent.

Nevertheless, it is the bad that we need to work on, and bring it out of the shadows – process and integrate if we are ever going to self-realize and incorporate all our powers and energies. We can learn from the undiscovered treasure from the dark matter within.

Self-loathing will get us nowhere. Not acknowledging that we have a shadow side or that we have narcissistic tendencies is to put our heads in the sand, or oven and not living the ultimate reality, but the reality of circumstance and choice.

I am also not advocating staying who we are either, but we must accept what is and begin there. If I were not able to grasp and experience clarity, above all else my life would always be a struggle and a fog bank of discontent and uncertainty.

Self-acceptance demands and requires that we go into the shadows of our being on a quest to look at parts of our being that are repugnant, offensive, disturbing and defensive, a warning they want to be acknowledged but not admonished.

Since we have done the initial work of self-exploration of knowing ourselves, we have a good idea of some of the ghosts of our past, skeletons in our closets and our monsters under our beds. So now, it is time to go where we need to and to do what we must. I am mindful not to stay too long in my darkness, less I remain there. Recently, I did, and it took a while to process what I came back with. The adage does not carry more than you gave lift also applies to shadow work. This work is not for the faint of heart but the determined, for it must be done if we want to realize who we are meant and capable of being and becoming.

What does not kill us does make us stronger, and more beautiful. It gives more personal power and insights that will guide us to where we are destined to be. We will have more

energy to reach new and greater heights. It will lighten our load and will provide an increase in our psychic awareness and spiritual vitality.

It inspires us to go back time and time again to do more plumbing the depths and dark recesses of being to make us, each one of us, a better person and help us reclaim our sovereignty of self.

"Knowing your darkness is the best method for dealing with the darkness of other people."

Carl Jung

Before we go to the deep into the shadows let us start with injurious behavior, unhealthy habits, and unhealthy inclinations that we know of and that we can own and start there.

Do you have a temper? Do you swear? Do you like to push people's buttons? Do you always have to get the last word in? Do you always need to be right? Why is that? Do you know? Have you ever thought about it? If so, why not?

In the past, people would see me flummoxed over some perceived little thing and accuse me of being frustrated. I would never understand that. Why because whatever was causing consternation must have been important to me, to make me lose my patience, right?

They were only experiencing the outward signs of my struggle with the given little thing making me easily frustrated. Easily? I think not. It took a lot to get to that point. What they missed were all the things that pushed me to that point. Why are people so quick to judge? First of all, they did not know I was having a tough time with things that were not tiny, small, irrelevant or easy.

What they missed was my brother was a few days away from cancer surgery and my cousin was missing presumed dead. Saying that, everyone is going through something we are not aware of, so be kind.

Well, this was not the first instance of people stating that my feathers were ruffled, but I use the previous example to point out the behaviors of myself and the objective observer of my expressed frustration. There is ample evidence there to show all of us can do better with communication, empathy, and compassion. Some would have asked if I was ok given the triviality of my upset.

I have come to accept others behavior because I have no authority, nor do I concern myself what others think, but I am concerned with how I comport myself with my behavior, with my speech, and with my deeds.

After that exchange, I got exhausted with the idea that people perceived me as short-tempered, so I did some work on myself. I do not share a lot with other people. It is no wonder that person did not get where I was coming from. How could she, she had no context to work with? Some issues are super personal and very important to me, so uncomfortable unless I have taken the time to get to know you. I abhor small talk and I guess you would say - I am guarded.

More than anything, I was not processing my internal experience and feelings, so I needed to do some work there. Letting things sit and pile up only creates a toxic environment, in my heart and my mind and within my sphere of influence.

I alone am responsible for how I behave, react, act, communicate and how I present myself. I needed to be vulnerable yet strong at the same time. Practicing mindfulness would help me to raise my awareness of my thoughts, feelings, and my ability to exhort my will to act and

bring into reality the way I want to perceive the world and the world perceive me.

I accepted the fact that I let emotional dross back-up which would cause me to be raddled and lose my composure. When I was able to deal with the reality, I made changes without judgment to help me lower stress and mitigate uncomfortable moments with others. Nevertheless, to help me grow as an individual and to help heal pieces of myself in the areas of confidence and self-esteem. This was an issue that was in the bright light of day that it hadn't been addressed could have slipped into my shadow self and intensified in energy and expanded in my bandwidth of negativity only to become integrated into my personality and my identity.

I accept myself for who I am. I accept there are some parts I cannot change and some parts and aspects I can change. However, I accept complete responsibility for my life. I accept

that the only control I have is over my thoughts, my feelings, my actions and my will to control these.

Acceptance would not be possible without forgiveness. We must be able to accept what is and then without equivocation forgive ourselves.

We must have forgiveness and acceptance with grace and gratitude. We must strive to be grateful for our blessings and our trials for they all shape us into who we are and most become.

2.3 LOVE THYSELF

After we have discovered ourselves, accepted what we found and have forgiven our trespasses, and expressed gratitude for the good as well as embracing our struggle, we are now better prepared for the conduct of loving ourselves.

It is harder than it sounds. You can say the words - I love myself... Nevertheless, unless you have done the work, your words will not ring true and resonate in your heart. The worst lies are the ones we tell ourselves. We need to be honest with ourselves, or else all the work we have done and will do will be for nothing and we are spinning our wheels and wasting valuable time.

If you have ever heard of Inner Child work you may be familiar with the process, but unless you have gone through the program it may be just a concept. If you have never heard of it or done the work, it will have no value at all. You may have heard the phrase channeling inner your child, or getting

in touch with your inner child. That is the ultimate and much sought-after goal and treasure.

When we were children, we were pure love and consciousness. It is not until the world gets a hold of us that the unlearning and purging of our innocence begins. It is our mission and journey to wholeness and wellness to recapture that which we lost. The treasure and gifts that were left behind, that sought refuge in the shadows, that are now waiting to reemerge and to return us to our original pristine state of love and well-being.

In the Inner Child work, I watched twelve videotapes of John Bradshaw's PBS special from the 80's and 90's. They were two to three hours long and then had a multitude of questions and exercises that I had to complete and then review with my therapist. It was hard as hell. It at times destroyed me but the follow-up work brought the disparate parts together again. For months, I would blow myself up emotionally and then

reconstitute. It was hard and worth every moment. Because I eventually visited my five-year-old self. I held him comforted him and soothed him and encouraged him.

When I returned, I had everything that I needed to cope with struggles and the strength I required to take full responsibility for my life. I would not be whom I am today if I had not. I am grateful for meeting my therapist and the work that we did. I still have a few cracks from all those times putting myself back together. However, that is where the light gets in. The light of love and of self-empowerment.

Since I had some light to show me the way, I was able to start the process or my five-fold way. I got to know myself, was able to accept myself for who I was, and know now that I am able to love myself.

You need not do the inner child work to reach the point I attained. However, this vehicle delivered me there. It will be different of course for everyone, but the goal is to get there.

Name your pain and move on where you are. I did not need to know who or what broke or injured me or what had robbed me of my innocence. It happens to all of us. We need to reclaim and regain that spark we had as I child.

That expression of love that states that we cannot give what we do not ourselves possess is true. We enter relationships with others when we have yet to do the demanding work of healing, so we get in a loop of capitulating the same patterns of trying to solve that which is unfinished. The work that we have yet to resolve. We meander like a free radical hopelessly searching for that matching energy to help complete us and in so doing wreak havoc and do damage to countless others and ourselves.

They say there is someone for everyone. Nevertheless, what if that is not true? Do we live life alone? Do we continue the path of heartache and continue struggling to become complete bonding with another?

Alternatively, do we ourselves do what is needed to attract that energy to us and in so doing find the suitable missing piece that we so long for to feel good. I know myself that when I was not a healthy person I did not attract a healthy relationship but one that reflected and fed my unhealthy behaviors and compulsions. I drove off and sometimes made people disappear and avoid me at all costs lest they are sucked into my web of illusions and maladaptive inclinations.

Self-loathing is infectious and yes, misery loves company. It fuels and reinforces itself and our ego refuses to admit any wrongdoing.

When we know who we are and can accept it, we can make the momentous leap into self-realization, call bullshit on our nonsense, and make things right in the moment. Health be it mental, physical, and spiritual requires attention and awareness. We need to tend our own gardens and police our own territories of our inner landscapes as well as well as our own exterior environment's.

Do you feel like a- nobody? Like not one-person cares if you live or die? Or, listens to you? Why is that? Do you love and value yourself?

The way we care for ourselves and treat ourselves sets the example how other people communicate and interact with us. I saw a pregnant woman smoking the other day; I was aghast that she was not only harming herself and her lungs but also the child she was carrying. No, judgment - just concern.

Our interior landscape has a way of being expressed to the outside environment. What we think is expressed in words and actions and what at times can be conveyed by the look on

our face. Remember our eyes are our windows to our soul and at times the mirror to others'. Our behavior will always give us away. It will tell the world - "I feel like crap today and I can't stand myself please treat me the same."

If you constantly demean yourself using self-deprecating humor, at some point I am going to start thinking you are putting yourself down. Then my personal reaction would be to look for the good in you and try to reassure you that you have valuable attributes. Nevertheless, others may not be so kind. They may add fuel to the fire and make the situation worse. Then you will be a- nobody to everyone, even to those who gave you life, and call you friend and sibling.

If you smoke when you are pregnant, or binge drinks every day and have a terrible diet you may not be aware that your values and how you feel about yourself are on display to the world. And, you are showing no concern for your sovereignty of self.

If we do not love our self, we have a problem. If we do not care for ourselves, we will make the problem worse. If we do not value ourselves, it is because we do not understand our self. If that is the case, then we must go back to knowing our self to be able to accept our self so that we may love our self.

Before we can move onto healing ourselves and then onto sharing ourselves, we must love ourselves, totally and unconditionally.

So, Know, Accept, Love, Heal, and then Share thyself whilst being mindful and meditating on areas of concern while we forgive and offer gratitude for our blessings and struggles in kind.

2.4 HEAL THYSELF

You might have heard in the past that healing is a process. However, it can also be instantaneous. The moment we are born our mortality begins and we are given a gift - the gift, or miracle of life. We are animated with life force and it is our responsibility to make the best use of it and choose and behave wisely.

Our entire body can regenerate within a seven-year period. You can stop smoking today and your lungs will regenerate but only partially. Your lungs will get better in time, but some of the damage from years of smoking is permanent, irreparable and irreversible. Again, make good choices, but why not stop and choose a healthier more beneficial lifestyle devoid of toxins.

As the expression goes - It is never too late! However, actions have consequences. A process is only as good as its initial start and then adherence to willing participation.

Like the effects of a placebo, the results are predicated on you having a belief that you will get better. Alternatively, faith, which is a belief without evidence but is also a form of positive thinking, cannot hurt. However, it is only after you see tangible signs of relief or recovery that you embrace and accept the healing process as reality. Patience and determination are key factors that keep one focused and resolute to a favorable outcome.

Therefore, if we have done the primary work of the conducts of Knowing, Accepting, and Loving Ourselves, we have fertile soil to plant the seeds of believing and receiving our intentional resolution.

Now we must apply the triad of the Three Lenses of Awareness. Which are Thinking, Feeling, and Willing. Which when initiated and maintained will sustain our mission of healing. So that we can move to the fifth, conduct Sharing ourselves.

Instantaneous healing begins when you accept that anything is possible and you are open - heart and mind to healing that it becomes a reality.

When what your plant takes root and grows to maturity and that which needs healing regenerates and that which does not requires acceptance and we start where we are and work with what we have we make a life-changing agreement and a commitment or covenant to do the work and to be the Process.

2.5 SHARE THYSELF

You cannot give to others what you yourself do not possess. You cannot love others if you do not love yourself. You cannot help others to heal if you yourself do not know what that is or have not done the work yourself. The expression - Physician heal thyself - has so much relevance if you are inclined to help others.

If you do not want to help others ask yourself why? Do you have more work to do on yourself? Fine, then go back to the beginning and begin anew. Take as much time as you need. However, do the work. Nevertheless, do it for yourself then when you are ready, the world needs your cooperation and input?

I read years ago, that if you are feeling depressed go help someone. I took this to heart and applied the principle. I usually want to help; it is in my nature, so I realized that when

I did it took my focus off my situation and troubles. When I focused on someone else, someone other than myself I felt a sense of empathy and community. It further drove home the fact that we are all in this together.

You may be a member of another political party, race, religion what have you, but when things get tough we come together. Unless there is a part of ourselves that we have not yet integrated into our consciousness.

Depression is anger turned inwards. Hatred is an unexplored fear expressed in an unhealthy manner. Violence is said to be an act of an exhausted mind.

Socrates said the unexamined life is not worth living. Living in a bubble on autopilot excludes instead of includes others. Who should be looked upon with open eyes, mind, and heart?

When you shut people or ideas out, you shut and lock yourself in.

When you are healthy, you look for ways to bring value to the greater good of your community and humanity. When you do not understand something, someone, you cannot value them or it. What we do not understand we most often fear? Fear turns to hate. We do not try to understand something due to willful ignorance so we do not value information, people, or points of view.

I challenge you if you have trouble accepting what you do not value or agree with, to push yourself to put yourself into the opposing view mindset, shoes, position. Be honest and try to see through a different lens. Turn the telescope around without judgment and see what you may be missing.

I try to practice these three things 1. Cease to cherish my opinions 2. Question my beliefs 3. Release my convictions. In essence, do not believe everything. Novelty creates opportunities and opens doors you did not know where there.

Be present. Make the person you are talking to the most important person in that moment. Listen twice as much as you talk. Listen do not wait to speak. Honor and serve the moment. Realize that time is finite and every word could be your last. Be in love with what happens, good or bad. Make the most of a bad situation. Look for the lesson in your struggle. More than anything do your best to live a value-driven life in a loud and chaotic world and enjoy the ride. You are not alone. We are not alone.

Give because you can and expect nothing in return, do not keep track or keep count. Accept that the gift is in the giving. Be good to yourself and you in return will be treated well by others.

These are not platitudes these are truths. To live in truth is not easy there will be challenges, but live in truth and it will set you free. Speak the truth no matter the circumstance and people will see you as the healthy person that they can trust and can feel safe with.

Share yourself because we need you to so that we can share ourselves with you. Together we can move mountains; together we can change the world.

PART III

DOCTRINE OF RADICAL FORGIVENESS.

3.1 EXPRESS GRATITUDE

Do you have an attitude of gratitude? No. Why not? Do you think you are special? You are when you can realize that you are not alone in this world and you are one of the many and not the few. You are special. We all are. We are all created equal. It is what we do in this life that matters.

I am grateful that after all the struggles that I can share with you my thoughts and feelings and my experience how I went from being suicidal and depressed and bipolar with no hope and no direction to a healthy, happy, productive father, son, friend and citizen.

When I accepted responsibility for my life and looked at my paternal responsibility as a single father not as a financial commitment but as the greatest job and being given the greatest gift, someone could receive my life completely turned around. In short, I stopped feeling sorry for myself and began to be grateful for everything.

We cannot be grateful and express gratitude until we accept what is and begin to see things in a different light. It has been my experience that when things become difficult or when we find ourselves in a challenging situation that if we are able to humble ourselves and give thanks for the smallest of favors then it helps to center us and put things in perspective.

If we can take solace that all things are temporary and the difficulties will subside and pass we can be grateful even for our trials and darkest of times for they help to forge character and show us who we are and what we are capable of doing.

3.2 CHECK ATTITUDE

Attitude is everything. A positive attitude will get you through the bleakest of times lift you up and carry you forward. A bad attitude will stop you in your tracks, destroy everything that it touches and will spoil the milk and poison the water. It serves no one accepts our shadow and ego. In an attempt to protect, it divides and creates derision and division.

What is an attitude but a feeling, which transforms into an emotion that solidifies into a mindset, frame of mind, a point of view and a filter or lens in which defines how we interact with the world. The exterior world and our inner landscape.

If you have an open mind have a positive attitude are open to change and approach problems or challenges creatively you will most likely be happier more productive make friends easier are more productive and odds are enjoyable to be around. You are an optimist always seeing the glass half-full

and has learned to embrace the suck and make the most of a bad situation and know that this too will pass and realize that everything is temporary and take responsibility when you make a mistake. You always are able to rise above the fray and wrap your mind around a situation can put yourself in an others shoes to walk a mile or so and empathy comes naturally.

If however, you have a closed mind are judgmental and have a bad attitude you don't like change are fixed in your thinking and feel things will never change you most likely struggle to navigate through your work day get sick often you are in a war of words with friends or family or co-workers and are difficult to be around and have a conversation with. You are a pessimist always see the glass as half empty run from a challenge have a short fuse think that you have the worst luck think things always happen to you are stuck on the trivial issues and always looking to find fault and blame someone else for your mistakes. You enjoy wallowing in misery with or

without company, takes refuge in indulging in name-calling, and cannot see another's point of view to save your life.

Now, you may be an admixture are some of this and some of that, or you may be clueless or mindless of the difference or turn a blind eye because you could careless or you are present and mindful and know sometimes you stumble and fall but pick yourself up without condemnation or quit and try harder the next time and live to fight another day. Perhaps you are just a wretched human being. If that is the case - it is never too late.

Start where you are because you are worth it. Open your mind, free it from the darkness of ignorance and to the light of curiosity, and be interested in the world and people around you. Tomorrow is another day. Be grateful have a positive attitude and miracles will come and find you.

Attitude directs and drives us. Either to great heights or into a ditch. A positive attitude is a light in the darkness. It allows us to step over and move beyond what does not matter and is insignificant. Focus on the virtue of the moment and the common good rather than serves me, mine and more.

Negativity like violence begets itself. It draws more negativity to us and colors everything we think, feel and will. It puts on blinders, narrows our vision it quickens our wick and shortens our fuse. It diminishes our patience effect our health and our sleep. We always want an answer for why things are the way they are instead of accepting things as they are and working with what we have.

If we are able to feel grateful, learn to love our life, what we already have and the fate that we are given and awaits us we will be better suited for the work of clearing our shadows that need to go and accept those that need to be integrated if we can have a sense of where our attitude is and be able to adjust it if need be and get back to the business at hand. Which is to

stay optimistic while being realistic about what needs to be done - show up and join the evolution revolution to change the world and then ourselves.

3.3 FEEL ENOUGH

Do you feel enough? No? Why not? Do you feel that you are not worthy of love and respect because other people judge you and tell you so? Have you done something that appears to others that is irredeemable? Guess what, so what!

We have all done something in the moment that was an error indiscretion or stupid. However, self-loathing will not get you anywhere or help anything.

What if you killed someone while driving drunk? Was it an error in judgment? Absolfrickinglutely! What were you

thinking? You were not. I do not know how anyone could live with their selves after ruining so many lives and killing someone. However, that is the question? How do you live after that?

I would surmise that you could feel sorry for yourself climb into a bottle and call it quits or jump off a bridge because you cannot live with what you did.

Alternatively, you took responsibility for what you did and committed the rest of your life to save as many lives from other drunk drivers. You may have admitted your guilt from the very beginning and took the necessary steps to change your life from that very moment?

I cannot make you enough. No one can. You can tell yourself that you are but only you know. To be enough you have to give enough. What I mean is that you cannot take and take

have a bad attitude, think the world owes you everything, and ignore your part in your community.

The example above is an extreme one, killing someone while driving under the influence. However, the influence needs to be examined. Not just alcohol influences in negative ways, there are other stimulants as well - groupthink, mob mentality, our biases, judgment, ignorance, instant gratification, closed minds, and a whole host of things we tell ourselves, that keep us from being all that we can be to be enough more than enough to help us change our mind and heart and lives.

We fight with what is instead of accepting the situation. Make peace with what is and change yourself and that in return will change how we interact with the world.

So, feel enough. Be enough. Do enough. Engage enough. Give enough. Are you mindful enough? Be mindful. Do a self-

assessment in the moment. Ask yourself what else- what else can I contribute. Have I covered everything? Is everyone good? How am I?

So, check in with yourself, ask - Do I know myself? Do I accept myself? Do I love myself? Am I taking the steps to heal myself? Am I adequately sharing myself? Am I expressing my gratitude? Do I feel enough? If not? Why not?

Have I done the work and am I self-aware of my shadow self. Have I vanquished the shadows that need to be eliminated and integrated the ones that enrich and complete me?

We are all redeemable. However, it is up to us to find what is missing. Alternatively, do the best with who and what we are. Moreover, we know if we are showing up.

3.4 SHOW UP

Do not give up! Show up! I know you have your good days and your bad days. However, it is imperative, that we bring our best selves wherever we may go. It is hard sometimes, I know. It is easier at times to curse the darkness then shine your light, but you and I must try.

If we can achieve a state of Equanimity- a feeling of spaciousness and ease that is not caught up in preference or prejudice. In essence, taking every instance good and bad with the same calm open understanding and not as they say - **DON'T SWEAT THE SMALL STUFF**. Because it is all small stuff. Nothing lasts and time is fleeting.

The STOICS have a couple of axioms the first is difficult to grasp at first but once you do, it puts all things in perspective.

1. Amor Fati is a mindset that you take what life or fate gives you and you make the best of it. Gratitude comes into play here. We must love what and who we are and our role that we are meant to play. Free will is only as free as the choices that we make. Love and Accept everything thing that comes our way no matter how challenging and we will be better off. Enjoy the suck; really, it will not last. 2. Memento Mori reminds us that we are born, we live, and then we die. It reinforces the simple idea that life is precious and we could shed this mortal coil at any moment. So we must enjoy the time we have and be grateful for each moment. Do not squander the gifts you are given.

If we seek to see and experience the beauty all around us and immerse ourselves in its grandeur, we will not have only showed up but have become a witness and a servant of the eternal moment.

3.5 OFFER FORGIVENESS

I forgive you. I am sorry. Two of the most powerful statements a person can make.

It is freeing and healing to speak and to hear these words. It allows us to relax, to put our shame and guilt aside, and to connect with another, if only for a moment.

It could be someone that you have known forever, like a friend or a relative. It is the stranger that is the most powerful. The unknown quantity. Because we will let our guard down. Forget our ego and our desires and be present. Be on our best behavior. Let a perceived slight go, be attentive, and show humility. If we could greet everyone as if for the first time. What an inviting place the world would be. Alternatively, we have our guard up and we do not want to appear unfriendly. Either way, we tend to be polite even if it is an act.

The connection is important. Without it, as species, we would have exterminated ourselves eons ago. Countries go to war then make peace. Couples have a fight and then makeup and sometimes make love. Love and peace. Forgiveness.

There is something about experiencing an emotion that destabilizes and the counterbalance of letting go and communing to reconnect after a raw exchange that strengthens connections.

It is cathartic to know you have done wrong, been wronged and then bury the hatchet and move on. However, the hatchet must stay buried but needs to be addressed, processed, and worked out. If done probably it can be a valuable learning experience for all involved.

Shame and guilt cannot exist in the light of day. Out in the open discussed freely and openly with trust and understanding. Remember when we understand something

we value it. When we value it, we know it is worth our time and energy.

We need to be vulnerable and be ready to put it all out there, on the line come what may. Countless times I come across people, usually families, who were close that have not spoken in years. When you ask them why and what happened they most times could not remember. Most likely over the smallest of perceived slights.

Remember, we are born, we live, and we die. Time is precious. Love your fate. Make the most of every moment. Seize the day and live it to its fullest.

Be present. Make the person you are talking to the most important person in that moment. Listen twice as much as you talk. Listen do not wait to speak. Honor and serve the moment. Realize that time is finite and every word could be

your last. Be in love with what happens, good or bad. Make the most of a bad situation. Look for the lesson in your struggle. More than anything do your best to live a value-driven life in a loud and chaotic world and enjoy the ride. You are not alone. We are not alone.

Shake hands. Hug. Cry. Smile. Make love. Get over yourself. However, what if you cannot? You hold a grudge and cannot let it go? What then?

If you are stuck and cannot see beyond your anger, frustration or disappointment you are in hell. It is easy to say - Let it go. Nevertheless, that is what you must do. The longer you stay there the harder it is to leave and move on. The weight gets heavier and becomes harder to put down, let go, and let it be.

I have an approach I have named the - Surrender Protocol. It is very simple yet hard. Put it down. Let it go. Let it be. First you to need to practice a bit of objectivity. Imagine an issue as a boulder, an anvil, something heavy and cumbersome. Something that one is glad to put down. Imagine putting it down. Then see yourself backing away. See it there for what it is.

Ask yourself why this something has you bent out of shape. Has you off your game, distracted and allowed it to consume all your attention and energy.

It could be that whatever it is may be an issue that you have personally, unconsciously you know you need to work on. Many triggers could spark that ember into a roaring fire. One that seems impossible to extinguish. Which makes it that much harder to deal with.

Surrender to it in the moment. Breathe in and out slowly. Find a blissful moment from your past. Mine is the birth of my daughter. Your happy place. Be still. Let your thoughts wash over you. Forgive yourself. Say it aloud. I forgive myself for XYZ. Apologize for losing your cool, composure, temper etc... Alternatively, for drifting off and not being present. Forgive that person in your mind. Allow yourself to feel it. Smile. Then move on.

Just calming yourself by breathing the thinking will follow and then the feeling. It will affect you on a chemical level, as you self-sooth serotonin replaces the adrenalin and cortisol levels lower and the fight or flight response lessens, the wall falls down, and the path to empathy and compassion will present itself. However, it is up to you to want it and to will it.

CONCLUSION

Therefore, I know that is a lot to digest. Very practical. Very simple. Yet, very hard. It is a quest for the truth. The truth they say is hard to handle. It is but it is worth all the blood, sweat, and tears. Pain, as they say, is inevitable but suffering is a choice.

Faith in yourself is more consequential than a deity. The deity that matters is the divine within us. However, if you believe in a higher power from up high and that works for you, by all means, embrace whatever works and use it. Do what you will but hurt no one is the pagan dictum. We are all capable of so much more than we give ourselves credit for.

As stated before, we all have a dark side. We have shadow aspects that hinder, or can help but we need to do the work to bring it all into the light to see what needs to be abolished and what needs to be incorporated.

We need to be grateful, thankful and appreciate what and who we are. Being mindful and present in the moment as we self-monitor our thoughts, feelings, and our will to act.

This project is all about sharing what I have learned in my healing process. It has worked for me. I hope some of what I have shared brings value to your life and wellness.

We can have a brain disorder, survive a life-threatening disease, or struggle with addiction, have anger issues and struggle with anxiety, but healing and recovery will not be complete unless we are living a virtuous, positive, life and

have a proactive frame of mind and a creative and open mindset.

We must know who we are. Accept who we are without question. Love that person unconditionally. Do our best to heal the psychic wounds from our youth and our past. In addition, to take what we have learned and share our light and love with the rest of the world to create a community of peace and unity.

Attitude will carry us a long way on the road to truth. With the right spirit of gratitude and acceptance that we are enough, we can forgive others and ourselves and maintain a healthy sense of purpose and community to evolve and achieve our highest selves.

The spirit of truth will give us wings so that we may fly as high and as long as we seek the best in one another and ourselves. JEFF TURNBULL

