

HOW TO FIND THE LIGHT

IN YOUR DARKEST HOUR

By

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FOREWORD

This is not about changing you into someone else but getting you to embrace the person you were born to be. It is about transforming your life and the way you think about yourself and the world around you.

This is not about me answering all your questions, because it is well known that it is the struggle of breaking free of the cocoon which helps the butterfly dry its wings and fly. If I were to open the cocoon before the butterfly was ready, it would simply die. What I hope to achieve is to create a subtle shift which will enable you to build on what you learn with each lesson.

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IT'S NOT EASY BEING ME

Judgment falls upon us, heavy, like a hangman's noose: "Suck it up," "Be strong," "Just get on with it." With each step, we feel the darkness coming after us, closing in, shutting out the light of hope. Our thoughts become an answering machine to our fears: "I am sorry, Jane isn't here at the moment; she is trying to stay sane. However, if you leave a message, she will get back to you."

"What's wrong with you?" A question thrown carelessly towards us, as if we are somehow blind to our situation and faults—another nail in the self-esteem coffin. Because if you can't cope with life and all it throws at you, of course you must be deficient in some way. "Look at me," the perfect people exclaim, "I just get on with it." "Yes, you do," I want to say, but I don't want to drag myself through the days being unhappy, bitter, or sad; I want more.

It's hard to keep going if your heart is breaking because you have had to say goodbye to a loved one or a relationship. It's difficult to take another step when you lose a job or get hit with another financial blow. It's faith-destroying when a health issue comes out of nowhere and takes away your freedom and, sometimes, your choices.

Sometimes it's not easy being me when my mind races ahead to all the challenges I will have to face. It's not easy to think positively, be positive, and keep the faith. The darkness descends so quickly you are left scrambling to find the light, tripping over things and sometimes hurting yourself even more in the process.

What others don't realize is—I don't stay in the darkness because I want to be here. I simply don't know how to find the light switch; I don't know where to look.

When you are struggling to take a step, breathe, or keep the faith, everything—even the small things—becomes a mountain instead of a speed bump. When your reality changes and the person or thing you turned to for comfort and reassurance isn't there, it's as scary as hell.

If this sounds like you, then know you are not alone. All of us at some stage have walked through the darkest hour, and you can do it too! It's not about fixing you because you aren't broken. It's not about magic beans or wands because they don't exist. You must be willing to take the steps—even if you can't see where they will take you yet. You will need to keep the faith, trust the process, and continue doing the work.

The words to follow are the matches you can use to light the candle of hope, which sits within your heart. As the song goes, "This little light of mine, I'm going to let it shine!"

THE STRUGGLE IS REAL

“It’s all in your head.” “It’s just hormones.” “You are too emotional.” “You aren’t dying; it’s not as big as you are making it out to be.” “First-world problem.”

These are a few of the judgments and assumptions which are nailed to the cross you carry as someone struggling with life. Society has conditioned us to believe you simply "suck it up" and get on with it. This belief has led to an increase in suicide, antidepressant use, and drug dependency. Spiritual movements are leaving behind those who can’t change their lives in 30 days by grabbing hold of the laws of the universe. It’s tough to feel alienated and alone. It’s even tougher when you feel deficient in some way, as if you are doing something wrong and nothing you do turns out right.

The struggle is real—it’s not all in your head. You can stop pretending everything is okay. People do not realize how alone you can be when no one understands the darkness which surrounds you. It’s like falling into a hole so deep no light can reach you—a hole where, every time you try to get a grip to pull yourself out, the darkness prevents you from finding anything to hold onto. Unless you are there in the hole, in the darkness with the person, you can’t make assumptions about what it’s like to be them. Even if you have had a similar journey, you can’t throw an “Oh, I did it—it wasn’t that hard” at them.

The struggle is REAL. Never for a moment discount what YOU are feeling and going through as unimportant or small, and never, ever believe you are less

of a person because, right now in this moment, you can't find a way out of the darkness. Don't make it about character, strength, or something you are lacking which everyone else seems to have. Beneath the surface of many lives is a story way different than what you may be seeing. The woman with the perfect marriage who seems to have all of her shit together may be hiding an eating disorder or could be battling a cheating spouse. The man who is on top of his career, driving around in a fancy sports car and who seems to not have a care in the world, may be wishing for the simple life you have.

This is not about what others think or believe, nor is it about comparing journeys. This is your journey, and you need to acknowledge the struggle, give it a voice, and not tuck it away hoping it will disappear. You can't change what you don't acknowledge! If there are monsters under your bed and they are preventing you from climbing out and enjoying life to the fullest, then what is happening to you is important!

The one thing I see all the time as a psychic is people hiding their feelings and struggles because they are ashamed of not being able to cope. They do not want to appear less than perfect to family and friends. It's a tiredness which creeps into their bones and keeps them from the life they so very much deserve. DON'T let this be you! The struggles you are going through are real; let go of the need to be perfect, or for your life to be perfect. Right now, in this moment, whatever is happening to you, for you, and within you, it's real. You aren't going to get out of the hole if you never acknowledge you have fallen into one.

MASTERY & EMOTIONS

We all have them—emotions, that is!

It's how we express ourselves and let the world know how things affect us. Sadness, anger, happiness, envy, love, lust, joy—the list is endless. Some people express their emotions very easily, while others struggle, hiding them behind masks; and then there are those who drown in them.

Where we get into trouble is when we become a slave to our emotions instead of a master of them.

- A slave lets emotion dictate a course of action.
- A slave allows emotion to push them into a decision.
- A slave blames an emotion for the direction taken.

Some examples:

After breaking up with a boyfriend, a woman allows herself to wallow in sadness. She plays sad songs all day long, avoids her friends, stops caring about her appearance, doesn't want to cook for one, and starts ordering in fast food. Sadness takes control; every life choice becomes a reflection of her sadness.

A man doesn't get the promotion he was promised; it goes to the younger intern with less experience. The man is consumed with envy and jealousy. He gets so focused on the intern that his own work suffers. People begin to avoid him, not wanting to hear his stories of why he is the better

man for the job. Envy takes control, and his new experiences become a reflection of this old experience.

A woman is betrayed by her husband, who runs off with his secretary. She is so angry she burns all of his clothes and vows to make him pay. She makes the divorce as messy as possible and tells her children how horrible their father is. She spends every waking moment thinking of ways to make his life as miserable as possible. Anger closes her eyes to how the children are being affected by her behavior; anger pushes her into making decisions without thinking.

As a slave, you feel powerless, unable to fight against the emotions you are feeling. Your ego voice rises above your soul voice. "Do it," it says. Decisions are made in haste and return as regrets later on. You can't seem to help yourself; you are pushed in the direction the feelings take you.

It's like being in a raging river, clinging to a log. You do things which give you a temporary feeling of satisfaction: start rumors about the new intern who took your job, send nasty text messages to the woman your husband ran off with, or sleep with a lot of men to make your ex jealous. And all of these things come back to haunt you in the long term.

A master understands that emotions and feelings are not reality. They take the time to sit with the emotions, allowing them to come and go without becoming attached to them. A master will not act on impulse or allow themselves to be pushed into poor decisions by the emotion of the moment. A master seeks to understand the *why* behind the feelings and chooses to deal with the issues which created the emotion in the first place.

Hands up, anyone who has let their emotions take over and done so happily because it released the pressure of the situation! My hand would go up. When faced with difficult situations, it is far easier to let someone or something take control. Instead of being accountable for our words and actions, we can shift responsibility over to the emotion of the moment:

- “I was so angry I didn’t know what I was doing.”
- “I was so happy I just wanted to share it with everyone.”
- “I was blinded by jealousy.”
- “I was so filled with love I couldn’t see anything else.”

And remember, you can be a slave to any emotion, including the “nice” ones like passion and love:

- “I was so in love I moved in with him after two dates.”
- “I was so passionate about my job that I worked 40 hours a week and didn’t get to see my family.”
- “I was so overcome with happiness that I wanted to share the news with everyone; I didn’t realize they wanted it kept a secret.”

Go back over your life, and I am sure on more than one occasion you were a slave to your emotions. We have all done this; it’s human nature. However, as you become a master, your awareness will increase, and you will be able to recognize the moment when the shift from master to slave comes upon you.

No one is saying, “Don’t feel what you need to feel.” Holding things in is detrimental to your health and well-being. It is *how* you deal with your emotions that is important.

When you hold things in, you are more likely to slip into “slave mode” because everything builds up to a level which is unmanageable. Talking things over with a trusted friend, writing things down in a journal, or seeking professional help from a counselor—these are all good tools to help you feel the emotions but not stay in them.

Emotions are your body’s way of saying there is stuff you aren’t dealing with. As things build up, so do the feelings. But often, we focus on the emotion rather than the issue which causes us to cry, get angry, or feel sad. Again, you still need to feel what you need to feel, but you also have to understand where the feelings are coming from.

Masters are strong enough to allow themselves to feel and wise enough to know feelings are a reaction to a circumstance; they are not the real issue.

Look back over your life: what decisions were made based on emotions, and did they later turn into regrets? How do you deal with your emotions, or do you deal with them at all?

Are you aware of when your emotions are taking control of your life?

So, how do you master your emotions? I would say you don’t—you only seek to understand them. This may

seem like a contradiction; however, masters understand that what you seek to control will often end up controlling you. To become a master, one must first seek to understand.

Sit in what you are feeling. Ask: Where is it coming from? Am I actually angry that my partner left wet towels on the floor, or am I angry that they don't pay me enough attention? Am I truly head over heels in love, or do I want this person to fill an empty space inside me? Do I really feel so passionate about this project that I am putting in a 40-hour week, or am I really worried that if I don't, my boss will fire me?

What is driving the emotion? What is causing you to feel the way you do?

Masters know that to find answers, you must first find balance, peace, and quiet. You need to take time-outs. You need to take long walks. You need to have tough conversations.

If you are always moving forward, stepping into chaos, and never getting real about what is actually bothering you, then chances are good your emotions will always be in charge of the direction your life will take. Balance may mean taking some things off your plate. If you are always doing, you don't have time to simply be. If there is always noise and chaos surrounding you, your soul voice will never be heard. If you never talk about your feelings or release them...

They will sit as a heavy weight on your chest, dragging you down.

Masters hold themselves accountable. They take a step back to regain balance. They seek people they trust to act as sounding boards so they can talk things over and gain understanding. Masters do not become attached to emotions, recognizing them as reactions, not reality.

- Overwhelming sadness at a breakup doesn't have to mean, "No one will ever love me."
- Overwhelming grief at a loss does not mean happiness will never find you again.
- Overwhelming anger does not mean having to spend a lifetime getting even.
- Overwhelming love does not mean suffocating someone with good intentions.

It's all about balance and understanding. How good are you at taking the time you need to feel what you need to feel? How good are you at talking or sharing feelings with others? How good are you at recognizing the need to take a step back from whatever is going on to gain balance? All of these things are traits of a master.

I am sure there will be "buts..."

But I don't have any close friends to talk to...

Then phone a helpline, go to a church and talk to a minister, or consult a counselor. God has human angels everywhere, and if you look hard enough, you will see them. And if you don't have close friends, maybe this is an issue which needs to be addressed.

But I have a busy life and work long hours...

Then take a five-minute walk on your lunch hour to a bench and simply sit. Take a long bath and light some candles. Spend 30 minutes before you go to bed journaling, or 20 minutes before you go to work. Perhaps this is a good time to reassess what is in your life and whether it needs to be there. Maybe your priorities need to shift.

But it hurts too much... It may hurt, and it may be tough to talk about, but how long do you want to carry those feelings around? How long do you want to be in pain? How long do you want your emotions to be in control? Years, months, forever? Take the time to talk about your feelings, get them off your chest, and lighten your load.

Masters do not beat themselves up for being human and having emotions. They place no judgment on the feeling at all. It is simply a feeling—an indication of what is going on in their world at this moment in time.

Masters do not feed the emotion, allowing it to grow out of control.

Masters allow themselves to be vulnerable. They are neither ashamed nor embarrassed to have feelings and are able to articulate how they feel to others in a real and authentic way.

MASTERY & AWARENESS

Before you can understand anything, you must first be aware of it. Before you can understand how your emotions are impacting your life, you first have to be aware of when you are in their grip.

Awareness is a self-mastery skill which brings with it understanding. First, you become aware; then, you seek to understand. How awake are you?

Are you aware of when your emotions are triggering you? Are you able to pull back and go, “Okay, I know what’s going on here!”

Awareness is a skill to be practiced:

- It’s the pull back: “Okay, this reaction is way over the top. What else is happening? Let me take a step back to figure it all out.”
- It’s the “something is not quite right here” and the “aha” moment when the light switches on.
- It’s the moment when you begin to see things differently.

Masters are always trying to bring awareness into the moment. They are not always successful, but then, being a master is not about being perfect. It’s simply about being:

- Being in the moment so you can gain understanding.

- Being aware of your reactions, your words, and your thought processes.
- Being honest about what is happening for you.

Awareness often comes afterwards:

- “Damn, I wish I hadn’t said those words.”
- “Oh my God, did I really do those things?”

What masters try to do is bring this awareness into the *moment*:

- “I am very emotional right now, so perhaps making any decisions today isn’t a good idea.”
- “Maybe it’s better I bite my tongue and wait for a better moment to say what I need to say.”
- “Is this a pattern in my life? Is reacting this way going to bring the same results?”

Awareness doesn’t always come easily; however, the more you practice, the more awake you will become and the more tuned in you will be to yourself and what is happening around you. Remember, being a master means you are living an authentic life in which you do not deny your flaws and failings. So again, don’t beat yourself up if you slip into old habits or, for a moment, get caught up in emotions and make decisions you wouldn’t normally make. It’s called being human, and all masters are human.

How can you become more aware?

- **Take a breath, then another one.** Breathing brings us back into the moment. Try it—it really works!
- **Write, and write some more.** Journaling about our day helps bring awareness.

- **Take a step back.** Try to look at what is happening as an outsider—take all of the emotion out of it. Pretend you are the other characters in the story; look at things from different perspectives.
- **Look for patterns and things which keep occurring.** For example: If I don't deal with my emotions, do I pick a fight with my partner to have a release for what I am feeling? If I get lonely, do I use sex to compensate for this loneliness? What part do I play in the drama which occurs in my life?

*Masters aren't looking to blame, but to understand.
Masters hold themselves accountable; they take
responsibility for their lives.*

How aware are you of the moment you are in? Are you simply walking through life to get to the next moment? Most people are. Most people couldn't describe in great detail a moment which occurred only a few hours before.

We not only have to be aware of our emotions; we should also seek to be aware of what is happening for the other person.

Knowing how someone else is feeling often helps us find truth in our own feelings. Our friend may make us angry by being distant; a master might ask, "You seem sad, do you want to talk about it?" And the friend might share their struggle with having to decide whether to put a pet down. Some of us will struggle to awaken, to become aware, because we would rather hang onto the feelings and assumptions. Some people like the attention that playing the victim gets them. It satisfies a need which perhaps isn't being fulfilled in other healthy ways. But at some stage, people tire of the game and walk away.

Some of us don't know we have the strength we need to face the reality of our situations. We prefer to ignore rather than deal with issues and emotions. It all seems too hard and too big to overcome.

Some of us don't want to be masters; we want to be followers. We want to do what will make other people happy, not what will make us happy. We want to say the words which will bring the words we want to hear. We stop listening to our soul voice.

Masters are everyday gurus who know life is measured by what we bring to each moment. They choose to awaken to the potential the moment holds. Masters know everyone is born with the spiritual strength to overcome any obstacle. Masters know true happiness comes from living an authentic life.

Remember, you were born a master; all it takes is a little practice and a little belief to bring your greatness to the surface.

Things to try:

Pick a time frame during your day—it doesn't matter which one. For example, you might pick between 1:00 PM and 2:00 PM. Then, make a commitment to observe as much as you can within this time frame:

- What emotions were you feeling, and why?
- What did you smell, taste, see, or touch? Let your senses go wild!
- What did you observe about the people you encountered? What were they feeling? Could you tell? What was happening around you?

It's like becoming a child again, being consciously aware of everything around you. The more you practice this exercise, the more you will start observing things without even knowing you are doing it!

And the more aware you become, the easier it will be to see emotions as clouds which drift by rather than rivers to drown in.

MASTERY & KNOWLEDGE

Awareness brings with it the knowledge needed to create an authentic life.

Masters know knowledge is power. Power to change, power to create.

Once you have a 'why,' you can move on to the 'what now?'

For example: After practicing the awareness exercise, you may discover you have a tendency to overshare in an attempt to impress people and feel

more important. Armed with this knowledge, you might hold back and listen more the next time.

For example: After practicing the awareness exercise, you might discover you overreact when someone says 'no' to you. After journaling about your experience, it may become clear that the real issue is your own lack of self-esteem and has nothing to do with the other person at all. So you may choose to work on this instead of blaming the other person for not agreeing with you.

What are your whys?

Why am I feeling sad?

Why am I holding onto this?

Why did I feel so lost when ... happened?

A child will ask 'why?' constantly in order to gain the knowledge needed.

Why do I feel sad when I am yelled at? Why do I cry when I am sad? Why do people say one thing and mean another? Why, why, why, why?!

They will ask questions not only of us but of themselves.

Masters will seek to understand the whys of their lives. They choose to live in truth rather than ignorance.

Ignoring why you feel the way you do won't help you create an authentic life of abundance. In fact, it will push you further away from your greatness. Yes, it's tough to sit with emotions, and yes, it's tough to realize you aren't perfect after all. And yes, there may be some things you would have preferred not to have known.

But the one truth masters know above all others is that we get limited time on this earth—limited moments to create lives of happiness. Every moment we allow emotions to take us away from our greatness is a moment we never get back. The greater our awareness, the more knowledge we are able to obtain about ourselves, and the more fulfilling our lives will become.

MASTERY & HONESTY

Being honest with ourselves is perhaps one of the hardest things we will ever do. Some people will spend countless hours keeping up appearances. Others will pretend not to notice the things going on around them. Others deny their reality right up to the last breath.

If you are honest with yourself, there is acceptance—acceptance of realities. Once you have knowledge and an answer to the ‘why,’ you are still faced with a decision about whether you accept this truth or not.

For example: You might become aware of the fact that you have a short temper but choose to explain it away as a family trait—no big deal. However, eventually it will create more and more moments of anger in your life and fewer and fewer moments of happiness. People may choose to avoid you rather than risk a confrontation. Denying your truth is denying yourself a life of abundance.

Masters recognize that knowing the ‘why’ is not enough; there must be acknowledgement, acceptance, and eventually some form of action.

How often do you hear someone say, “I already knew it, but I just didn’t want to hear it, see it, or have to deal with it!”

We push our truths to one side and aren’t completely honest with ourselves.

While doing the awareness exercise, you might have seen a pattern emerging—one in which you pull people into your life to fill it up. Your ‘why’ might be that you are lonely and don’t make friends easily. And if you were being honest with yourself, you might recognize this comes from a need to be loved. However, if you are not being honest with yourself, you might explain it away as being your parents’ fault for not socializing you as a child, or use the statement, “I am an introvert; I can’t help it.”

Being honest with yourself is perhaps harder than being honest with someone else because it means you have to take ownership of your life.

I had a work situation where a person really pushed all of my buttons. Every time I was near them, I found myself getting angry for no reason. After a while, I became aware of the fact that it wasn’t really about them at all, but about my own control issues.

Now I could have explained it away as two people with similar personalities who simply clashed. But instead, I was honest with myself. This was about my fear of confrontation, lack of self-belief, and

inability to speak my truth. These were the things which I needed to work on.

Being honest isn't a lot of fun at times. Who wants to admit to flaws and faults? Not I!

We all need to get 'real' about the 'stuff' happening in our lives. It's like the wife who has a thousand clues which indicate her husband is having an affair but ignores them all, preferring to live in denial rather than deal with the issue of a cheating husband.

What are you ignoring?

Are there things which you are not being honest about? Are you holding back words, denying emotions, or hiding from situations you don't want to deal with? How honest are you being?

An example may be the woman who knows she doesn't love her partner anymore but keeps promoting the image of a loving wife. Or the worker who turns up every day to a job he hates but convinces himself he only hates the job because of his supervisor. Or the college student who enrolls in history to appease his parents but would rather be in the poetry class.

We are all storytellers, capable of fabricating a tale so convincing that we start to believe it ourselves. "If we go away for a romantic weekend, I know we could rekindle our love." "My job is just a little slow at

the moment; when things pick up, I won't hate it as much." "I know my parents mean well; maybe I will start to like history once we start to learn more."

If you are being honest with yourself, those statements would change to: "I don't love my husband anymore. Maybe it's time to seek counselling." "I hate my job. That's why I am never on time. I will have to start doing up resumes and applying for other jobs." "I didn't want to do history to begin with. Maybe I can change next year to poetry or make history a minor elective."

You can't build an authentic life of abundance until you get 'honest' about who you are, what you want and how you really feel.

Masters do not cloak their truths in stories.

Masters are not afraid to own their feelings, faults, or flaws.

Masters practice acceptance, not avoidance.

MASTERY & BALANCE

Balance is often seen in terms of how well you can fit everything into your life. The irony is that, when you are truly balanced, it doesn't matter what is going on in your life. When you are balanced, you are able to cope with any crisis and walk through the chaos.

I did a 'Reading' (as we psychics like to call them) the other day, and the words which came through for the person got me thinking about balance and what we perceive it to be.

The guidance was very clear: what we like to think of as balance is really a juggling act. People talk about having balance in their lives all the time. "I can balance work, play, my spirituality, my family." But are we really balancing all this, or merely juggling everything to fit it in?

To juggle is to manage or alternate the requirements of two or more tasks, responsibilities, activities, etc., so as to handle each adequately.

To balance refers to mental steadiness or emotional stability; a habit of calm behavior, judgment, etc.

So let's say one refers to the outside stuff (juggling) and one refers to the inside stuff (balance).

So when a mother says, “I am balancing my responsibilities as a mother, my commitment to my partner, and part-time work,” is she really balancing anything, or simply juggling it all to fit into her life?

Look at it this way: the outside stuff is something we have no control over. We have the illusion of control, and that’s about it. We are simply juggling things around, trying not to drop the ball. Why? Because you cannot control the environment or other people. Stuff is going to happen over which you have no control, and when it does, things are going to go out of whack.

Now, some people might say that is what we call becoming unbalanced. But if you think of balance as being within, it would not matter what was happening on the outside if you had achieved that inner balance. There would be no need to run around trying to fit everything back the way it was; you would simply flow with the situation and adjust accordingly.

So let’s go back to the mother juggling all her commitments. Let’s say one day her husband is fired and she has to go to work full-time, so now she has to juggle a full-time job, family, and an unemployed partner. If she had balance within, she would shift her thinking to problem-solving and solutions. If she was merely juggling, she would run frantically around from one thing to another, trying to create time to fit things in when there was no time, and probably end up burnt out and frazzled.

Masters know that if you have balance within, are calm and at peace with who you are, where you are, and what you are doing, then the outside stuff tends to take care of itself.

Having been a sole parent for many years, I have been down the road of trying to juggle bills, children, ex-partners, work, and so on. Oddly enough, the more I did my inner work, the less outside work I needed to do.

Self-Mastery Tip: Balance does not come by motion, but by stillness. When water is poured into a glass, it only becomes level when it is still.

When it comes to mastering balance, it's all about the body, mind, and spirit triangle. Neglect one and you will soon feel unbalanced. It's important to nurture your body and maintain a healthy lifestyle. It is equally important to deal with your emotions rather than ignore them. And lastly, we all need a connection to a higher source, whoever or whatever you believe this to be.

When I am calm and balanced, I can walk through any situation without feeling stressed or overwhelmed. Trying to be a superhuman is the modern-day version of balance, and it does not serve you well. Inner balance is way more beneficial than juggling as many things as you can on any given day.

Balance comes with the ability to simply be—without expectation, without the need to be doing, without the need to be somewhere else. At your most balanced, ‘stuff’ is something to walk through rather than something to react to, and life steps become a natural progression rather than an act of aggression where anything that stands in your way is gruffly pushed aside.

So take a breath, stop what you are ‘doing,’ and figure out exactly what this moment holds for you. Moments should not be links in a chain of acts which take you to the end of a lifetime and leave you wondering where the years went. Moments are the gift each breath brings us; they should be unwrapped, treasured, and used to bring peace, joy, and love into our lives.

To find balance, find self—not the ego self, but the divine self: the peace that encloses your body and gives you a knowing that, no matter what, everything is going to be okay. Don’t make time; take time to not do, but be, with the things and people which bring the most joy into your life. Get to know who you are at your core level. Have a spiritual spring clean: throw out what doesn’t serve you anymore and bring in more of what does make your life brighter, happier, and more joyful.

When you have peace within—a knowing, a faith, a belief in yourself, and the knowledge that there is something bigger than all of us out there—

nothing will throw you off balance. People have the mistaken impression that balance is being able to fit everything in and make everybody happy. Not so.

Balance is the combination of the spiritual, the physical, and the emotional—the body, mind, and spirit triangle. When you have mastered all three, then you have balance; but if any one of these is not being attended to, it throws the other two off. Pay attention to all three. They are interwoven in such a way that neglecting one will throw the other two off balance.

It may also pay to heed the words of Gandhi: “There is more to life than increasing its speed.”

MASTERY & LETTING GO

Breathe in; let it go. It is a simple fact that when you hold onto something and are unwilling to let go, a number of things occur.

Firstly, it may prevent you from moving forward; you could end up stuck where you are.

Secondly, you might end up dragging whatever you are holding onto with you wherever you go, creating an extra burden which will drain your energy. Either way, it doesn't seem to be a very productive thing to do.

Maybe you cannot let it go. Maybe you have too much invested in whatever you are holding onto. Maybe you have used this thing to define who you are, and letting it go scares you.

Masters know that when we do not have the faith to let go, we do not have the tools to move forward.

Imagine resenting your parent, holding onto the anger, wondering why you didn't get the perfect parent everyone else had. Now, there may be a number of scenarios here. Firstly, you may hold on so tightly that you never shift from the past; you remain that little hurt girl all your life. Secondly, you may have let go enough that you drag that baggage

wherever you go, always blaming your parents for not being enough, then looking for ways to validate how their actions have created your life. Thirdly, you may decide you should get someone else to help you. You may say, “Here, hold this for a while,” and take your anger out on a partner.

Let it go. Nothing in this life is permanent; nothing lasts forever. It is true: you can’t take it with you when you go. So why would you drag it up to the train station knowing they aren’t going to let you board with it? In the final moment, you will discover it’s true what they say: you can’t take it with you when you go. And when you let go, you depart the physical world into the next world with only the core truth of your existence. You do not take anger and resentment with you, and when you go, no one left behind is going to pick up what you were holding onto except, perhaps, your children.

Let it go. Move on to the next moment. We have talked about how we complicate our lives. We have talked about how we use our experiences to define who we are, and now we are letting go of our attachment to all those things. We are going back to the “I am,” letting go, being in the moment, free from the strings of the past and free from the pull of the future.

Letting go is easy. It is the step before letting go that we find the hardest—the one where we have to trust, we have to believe in ourselves, and we have to

let go of any crutches we may have had to help us. Maybe you cannot let go right now. That's okay. Maybe you have to take some baby steps and practice loosening your grip.

But if you can let go, take a breath, trust, and let go. And remember, letting go is not the same as giving up. In fact, letting go is giving in and surrendering to life.

We are taught to hold onto things at a very early age: relationships, jobs, friendships, love, even family. But has this mindset done anything except keep us from letting go and taking a chance on ourselves and others? It takes a great deal more trust to let something go than it does to hold onto it. Who hasn't heard these words before:

"You should hang onto that job because you are lucky to have one at all."

"You should hang onto that man/woman because good men/women are hard to find these days."

"Good friends are hard to find; don't let them go."

It is all about hanging onto things. We become like adult children dragging a security blanket of the familiar around with us. And it doesn't matter how

many holes are in the blanket or whether it no longer serves us, because we come to believe having is better than trusting and letting go.

So what would happen if we let go? Would we feel a sense of relief, let out a breath? What would happen if we decided to let go of the need to be in this job and trusted enough to walk towards another? Letting go does not mean walking out the door and never coming back; it refers to using the job you are in as a stepping stone to the job you want. It means allowing a relationship or friendship to grow naturally instead of being propped up by expectations and assumptions.

Have you ever tried to pry a broken toy away from a child who doesn't want to let go? It is almost impossible. The child fears that if they let go, they might not get the toy back; they would rather hold onto something which doesn't work than risk handing it over to someone else to fix.

Oddly enough, faith is very much a handing over of the toy. We hand over to the universe all those things we can no longer fix ourselves and ask for help. When relationships break down, we can either hold onto them and squeeze whatever life is left in them

out, or we can let go and ask for help from outside and inside sources.

When our footsteps become heavy at the very thought of going to work each day, we can let go of the idea, “This is the job I will be in for the rest of my life,” and replace it with, “This is a stepping stone towards the job I have wanted all of my life.”

When we let go of expectations, we are left with things to discover. When we let go of fear, we are left with things to explore. When we let go of the need to have, we are left with things to share. When we let go, we trust; when we trust, faith grows; when faith grows, dreams grow; and when dreams grow, miracles happen.

Self-Mastery Tip: It may be Spirit which allows us to fly, Soul which allows us to see, and Heart which allows us to feel, but it is letting go which sets us free.

MASTERY & SELF-BELIEF

Self-belief is all about not needing the seal of approval from others. It is about not needing outside validation that you are worthy of abundance and love in all its forms. It is about trying and failing, but not using the failure to validate other people's opinions of you and what you do.

It is very easy to slip into victim mode and let the messages from your childhood and the opinions of others determine your life. In fact, we can get to the point where these things become a cop-out for actually taking a risk, taking responsibility, and stepping out of our comfort zone.

Self-Mastery Tip: How we determine what is of value will also determine whether we believe we are worthy of the good things in life.

Often, we take steps based on what we believe will make us more in the eyes of others. We enrol in courses, put in applications for jobs which hold status, and yes, we can even throw ourselves into being the perfect citizen. And none of these things are 'bad' if

they are not tied to how you define yourself. But if your sense of self is tied to a job, a title, or a perception, then it is going to be a pretty sad world when it all comes to an end and the mask falls off.

Masters know self-belief will come when you are comfortable in your own skin, when you are at peace with who you are and where you are right now.

Masters know self-belief is not about proving anything to anybody, including yourself. In fact, it is the opposite: it is not having to prove anything to anybody.

My challenge is to accept responsibility for my own life and to take a risk on me and my greatness. My goal is to reach a point where I no longer seek approval or validation because I have a knowing that, as long as I am walking my truth, it will always be okay.

When you believe in yourself, you are willing to try and risk failure. When you believe in yourself, you aren't swayed by the words and opinions of others. When you believe in yourself, you reach for your dreams despite the words and opinions of others.

To become a master, one must know God gave us everything we need to live the life we were meant to live.

Do you believe in yourself? Do you believe you have the God-given ability to create positive change in your life? Do you?

Self-belief begins with self-talk.

I can

I am able to

I will

People with little or no self-belief start their sentences with:

I might

Maybe I can

If only I could

Self-belief is a faith in the divine child of the Universe you are. You have to believe someone greater than yourself has your back. You have to believe there is a bigger picture, even if you can't see it. You have to believe you are where you are meant to be, doing what you are meant to be doing.

You have to say to yourself, as Mother Teresa did, "God wouldn't give me anything he thought I couldn't handle."

You have to say to yourself, “I’ve got this.”

Masters build self-belief by patting themselves on the back for jobs well done, by trying new things and going out of their comfort zones, and by knowing they were put here for a reason and have all the resources within them to manifest their destiny!

MASTERY & HEALING

Everyone walks this road differently; no one can stand up and say, 'This is what will work for you.' The old saying 'time is the best healer' still rings true.

Self-Mastery Tip: Be gentle with yourself. Be your own best friend.

It will do you no good to beat yourself up for not being smart enough or for being too trusting or for not doing something sooner. The past is gone and becoming a victim of your own thought processes will only make the cut deeper.

Wrap yourself up in a comfort blanket of "No matter what, I will be okay" or "This too shall pass." Comfort yourself as you would your best friend: "It's tough, but you will get through it. That hurt, but you will only grow stronger." Those little thoughts will prevent the seeds of doubt and fear from taking root.

Don't run from reality: I wish I had a magic wand, but I don't. The only way through 'stuff' is through it; there are no shortcuts or happy pills. Drowning yourself in work will not make it disappear,

cutting yourself off from people will not make it go away, and avoiding your emotions won't work. Why? Because you have to do the work, but before you do the work, you have to stand naked in the truth.

There used to be a saying: 'Pretend you have a box, and every time you have a problem, put it in and shut the lid on it.' The problem is, there is only so much 'stuff' you can shove in a box before it explodes. And it will explode, and then it will be even harder to walk through your 'stuff.'

Self-Mastery Tip: Acceptance is part of acknowledging reality. If you do not acknowledge the existence of an issue, then you cannot begin the healing process.

And here is a little side note: sometimes we create illusions which become our reality. For years, as an abused child, I created scenarios which explained away my family's dysfunctional behavior. These became my reality because, as a child, we all want to believe we are loved.

I kept looking at the past through the eyes of the child I was. When I started to look as an objective outsider, the reality changed, and I had to accept that my parents made some choices which hurt me greatly.

Up until this moment, although I thought I was going through the healing process, I was still really in denial, putting band-aids on sores which continued to fester.

Masters understand that sometimes we also have to accept we will never know, until the last breath, why something happened or the reasons for someone's behavior.

Let the love in: People care about you. Honor them by allowing them to help you and be there for you. It's okay to show vulnerability; it is what defines us as human beings—the ability to feel. If you have to cry, then cry. Accept the hug, the arm around the shoulder, or the hand with a tissue in it.

Love heals; it's true. Nothing heals wounds quicker than a little TLC—tender loving care. Let people in. We are not meant to be martyrs who suffer in silence. Strength is having the courage to show your weaknesses.

Ever read the poem 'Footprints in the Sand'? When there was only one set of footprints on the beach, it wasn't because you were deserted; it was because you were being carried. To allow people to help is a gift you give. It gives them a means to show

their love, and you should not deny them the right to do this.

Take time to be alone: So here is the contradiction: not only do you have to let people in, you also have to make time to be alone with your thoughts. It is very easy, as stated earlier, to get wrapped up in the ‘doing’ as a way of avoiding the ‘feeling.’

In my aloneness, when it is just Creator and me, we can be honest with each other. I can talk freely and get angry if I need to, but I can also get closer to another kind of healing love—the kind which comes from within.

‘Only in silence can a person hear their own voice.’

We tend to hear the voices of parents, partners, and friends all coming at us in the chaos of the world, and sometimes we mistake their voices for our own. This is why we need a moment’s silence to clear our heads and hear our hearts. Let the love in, but let the voice of your soul be heard as well.

Go towards the lightness: We all need laughter and joy in our lives, and in our darkest hour we need

it even more. Some people beat themselves up for feeling happy when social etiquette demands they feel sad. If you smile at a funeral, you are being disrespectful—but what brings a person more to life than a happy memory of good times spent together?

Masters know it's okay to feel happiness in the midst of sadness. It is okay to laugh when you feel like crying; it is more than okay—it is necessary.

You need to bring moments of joy into your life. This is not betraying the experience or event; it is not making light of what happened. It is simply easing the load and lifting the darkness.

Let go of expectations: For example, forgiveness may be a virtue of saints, but we mere mortals don't always reach the heavenly planes as fast. I know the common thing is to proclaim that when you forgive, you can move on, and yes, it is true. But you know what? You are not the worst person in the world if you cannot reach that place yet. The same can be said for loss of any kind: you have to let go of what you think the process and the outcome should look like.

People walk through life challenges differently because they have different personalities and have had different life experiences. The healing process will take as long as it takes, and rushing it to fit some imaginary timeline is unrealistic and dangerous. Why? Because sometimes we trick ourselves into believing we have done the work when, in fact, we haven't.

Seek the help you need: Some wounds are deeper than others, and sometimes we need a little bit of help with the healing process. I have said it before, and I will say it again: throw pride and shame out the window. They do not serve your highest good.

Creator has given you all the resources you need to walk through your struggles; use them. That is what they are there for.

Pride is not useful; humility is useful. Why hold out trying to prove how strong you are when you could seek help and reach a place of peace right now? It is not logical in any sense not to utilize the skills of those who have made it their life's purpose to help people heal.

More acceptance: This comes with a little bit of all of the above. Sometimes you have to accept that

some people and things are never going to change, no matter what you do. It is about letting go of expectations and acknowledging realities.

For example, as much as I had this fantasy of my father admitting his love for me, I know the reality is that even if he were alive today and standing before me, chances are good he would not say the things I wanted to hear.

So I have to be gentle with myself and wrap myself in the love from those who do care and support me and in the love of my Creator. I have to remind myself of the things which brought joy into my life and I have to remember to step into the lightness.

Become a Healer Yourself

When your child, partner, or friend comes to you distressed, take a moment to just be with them without distraction.

Giving our time to somebody shows we care, we value them, we want to be with them, and we think they are worth being with. This can make somebody start believing in themselves and their own capabilities.

When you see someone whose belief in themselves is slipping away, take a moment to tell them one thing you think is wonderful about them.

Love: To feel loved again is to feel part of something, to belong. Empathy: Knowing they are not alone and that they are heard can give somebody the courage to make changes. Feeling heard can bring somebody back from the brink of despair.

When someone close to you experiences a loss, be the shoulder they can lean on, the hand they can reach for, and the arms they can seek comfort in.

A simple touch on the arm in support can give someone the strength to climb mountains.

When a stranger says hello, take a moment to say hello back; it may make all the difference to their day. Listen—not just listen, but hear the words. Ten minutes of listening can give somebody the release they need so they can let go of anger.

HEALING & GRIEF

I encountered a young man whose best friend had just died in a motorcycle accident. He said, “I have to stay strong,” and my response was, “Why?”

Why can't you cry, be upset, get angry, and crumble into a heap? Seems perfectly rational and normal to me!

Too many of us don't acknowledge our feelings or feel guilty because we aren't 'holding it all together.' REALLY! I am not sure who came up with this rule, but it's stupid!

You have to crack to let the emotions out because it's the only way healing can begin. If you keep being strong and being strong, pretty soon you will forget how to release your emotions, and this would not be a good thing.

Masters know the trick is to release the emotions, feel them, but don't get stuck in them.

As for being strong, it's highly overrated. You can be supportive, compassionate, or encouraging—much better options. And you can be these things and still feel what you need to feel.

We are taught to hide our feelings when, in fact, we should be taught how to express them. As for the young man, he will need to walk through the grieving process, and how long this will take will

depend on how willing he is to let go of being strong
and simply 'be.'

MASTERY & THOUGHTS

We all struggle with our thought processes at some stage. Our ego minds overwhelm us, and a train of thought can threaten to derail us.

Masters do not become attached to their thoughts. They know they are neither good nor bad.

Sometimes there is no logical reason why we think the things we do. Sometimes our minds store images and words which we have glimpsed in a magazine or on television, and these trigger thoughts later on.

Beliefs and stored-up emotions can produce random thoughts which come out of nowhere. Thoughts are not your enemy, although at times it seems like we can never get ‘out’ of our heads.

It's how attached you become to the thoughts that creates the problem.

At the moment, there is a lot of new-age thinking around that makes us feel guilty if we do not have a positive thought every single moment of the day. Then, when ‘stuff’ happens, we are made to feel it's our fault for not thinking the right thoughts. Which, of course, is new-age gobbledygook, for want

of a better word, because ‘stuff’ is going to happen to everyone regardless of what they are thinking.

No one is immune to challenges. Even Mother Teresa had doubts about her faith and purpose in life, as is shown by letters which have come to light. You cannot think the realities of your life away. You have to start with acceptance of your truth as it is in the moment before you start thinking ‘happy’ thoughts; otherwise, you run the risk of, as someone once said, “painting everything with pink paint.”

You are what you think.

There is, however, some truth in this statement. If your ego voice (the inside-your-head voice) keeps saying, “You are useless; you will never achieve anything,” chances are good you are going to manifest this result. If you keep thinking negative thoughts, you are likely to manifest what you don’t want rather than what you do want.

Masters know that if your thoughts are positive and upbeat and aligned with who you want to be and where you want to be, chances are you will be more likely to walk towards your dreams.

Masters are also aware that too many thoughts, regardless of whether they are positive or negative, can indicate you are ungrounded.

When thoughts come racing into your head at an alarming rate, or if your mind churns at night with thought after thought, then chances are good you are ungrounded.

If this is the case, you may need to try to ground yourself. Meditation will help, as will long walks in nature. Doing an activity which gets you 'out' of your head is also a good idea. Maybe it's watching a movie, reading a book, exercising, or being creative. What you do is less important than whether it gets you focused on the task and less focused on your thoughts.

One thing which has always worked for me is repeating a mantra over and over again, such as, "I am courageous and capable," or my favorite, "This too shall pass."

Ironically, the more you focus on not thinking, the more you will think. Becoming aware of what you are thinking is a good thing, but getting angry at yourself for what you are thinking is not.

You are human, after all. You will have thoughts which aren't very nice. We all have them. People will make you angry, situations will frustrate you, and events will occur which will confuse or hurt.

It's not about stopping every 'bad' thought you have; this would be impossible. It's about not acting on every thought you have.

I will repeat this: “It’s about not acting on every thought you have.”

A lot of people act on the thoughts they have when they are very emotional, and it usually ends very badly.

Perhaps the challenge lies in walking through life with as much grace, dignity, and compassion as we can, regardless of what we are thinking.

MASTERY & GROUNDING

Masters know that to touch the Stars, we must feel the Earth beneath our feet.

People are like electrical wires being charged by the energy in the environment, and as any good electrician will tell you, if you overload a system with too much energy, it will eventually explode. That is why there is a wire specifically used to ground electrical units. We, as humans, are no different; we need to find a way of grounding ourselves so excess energy can be released.

Symptoms of Being Ungrounded

Mind racing with a million thoughts

Panic attacks

Indecision

The need to hurry

Increased nervousness

Extremes in emotions

These are signs that our bodies are starting to overload and we need to take time to ground ourselves. Some ways to ground yourself are:

Walk in the forest

Walk on the beach

Meditate

Garden

Read a book

Work out at the gym

There are many ways to ground, but for today we are going to start with a few simple exercises. Take a deep breath in through your nose, hold it for a count of four, then exhale. Do this four times. Plant your feet firmly on the floor; try not to cross your arms or legs. Imagine a connection with the ground beneath your feet. Close your eyes and breathe. If you want, you can imagine white light filling your body, making it lighter, or you may simply want to sit and focus on your breathing. Or just sit and be still, safe in the knowledge that all is well in your world. Open your eyes and breathe gently in and out.

Masters learn to listen to their bodies and act accordingly; they know it is neither selfish nor indulgent to take care of their own well-being.

Masters find the tools they need to nurture not only their physical well-being, but also their emotional and spiritual well-being.

Ungrounded people have a high level of anxiety which prevents them from functioning in a productive

way. It's hard to make good decisions when your mind is racing a hundred miles an hour and there is a constant stream of thoughts drowning out your soul voice.

When you are ungrounded, it is almost impossible to find any kind of balance or peace in your life. You tend to rush around from one thing to another, never taking a breath. You are likely to suffer from burnout and exhaustion.

Masters can recognize when they are ungrounded, and they are able to take a step back to regain balance.

MASTERY & THE NEXT BREATH

I think if you are still breathing, then you have found the meaning of life. I do not believe it is some complex intellectual formula of biblical proportions.

It is as simple as the next breath you take, the next beat of your heart. I believe, however, we tend to take for granted that there will be a next breath; to contemplate otherwise would be to face our mortality.

Maybe life is given meaning when we become aware of how precious a gift it is. The old saying is very true: you do not know what you have until it is no longer there.

As I get older, I appreciate that time is not a commodity that anyone, no matter what their circumstances, can manufacture more of. The homeless man and the millionaire, so far apart yet connected by a single breath—the next breath—and this moment are all that both really possess.

A lot of people assume that, in order to bring meaning into their lives, they must be constantly doing, constantly filling up the moment. Yet, with all the chaos, the moment comes and goes unnoticed.

Masters know the only so-called ‘reality’ is the moment you are in—the next-breath moment.

The past has gone; it is a memory. The future does not exist, so that leaves the now.

For me, right now, everything is meaningless. I have no attachment to feelings, emotions, past, or future. I am simply a breath that comes and then goes. I let go and see my life as a series of breaths that have been and gone, but I recognize they are of little importance compared to the next breath. Because the next breath tells me I am alive, I am here, I am living. It gives meaning to my existence, and I am grateful for it, in awe of it, and I savor each breath as it comes.

Take a breath; let it out. You now know the meaning of life, so you can let go. Let go and simply be.

Take a breath. Wow, you are alive. Not everyone will get to the next breath—how privileged are you? Without that breath, life as you know it ceases to be. Without that next breath, it does not matter how many possessions you have, how much money you have, or how much you have achieved. All those things become meaningless.

Self-Mastery Tip: Bring gratitude into the breath. As it comes into your body, bring gratitude with it. Thank you, Creator, for everything this moment is and for the privilege of being able to experience it.

Let go. Breathe out and let go. Phew, it's okay. Everything is okay. No matter what is happening around me, it's okay. Let go.

Take a breath, close your eyes, and know what a gift that breath is. Every moment is a moment of great meaning because it is filled with life. It is life itself that gives our existence meaning.

When 'stuff' is happening all around you, take a breath, feel it fill your body, and know it's okay. No matter what, all any of us have is the next breath.

Now you can simply be. You can stand in your greatness, follow your heart, and listen to your soul because you are not holding onto a need; you are simply a moment, a breath. There are no anchors keeping you tied to the past, no tentacles reaching out to the future and pulling you out of the moment.

As a master, you will become aware of when you are rushing through life and holding your breath. I see it in people all the time: their shoulders hunched up, their chests tight, and their breathing shallow.

There are times when I am rushing down a corridor at work and an awareness will hit me. Then I will stop, exhale, take a breath in, and let my shoulders drop with the next breath out.

It is amazing how therapeutic this simple exercise can be. All of a sudden a weight is lifted from

your shoulders, the need to rush through the moment
leaves you and peace settles in.

MASTERY & ME

Everybody is born a master—everybody! We lose our Jedi powers as we grow up, turn into adults, and forget who we were born to be.

The good news is you can awaken the master within by the simple act of becoming aware of the moment you are in, because really, that is what it is all about: being aware of your words and actions as they occur in the moment.

Masters are tuned into their feelings and emotions; they do not discard them or wallow in them. They deal with them.

Masters seek the knowledge and resources they need. They do not let pride stand in the way of them obtaining what they need to create the life they deserve.

Masters know balance comes from within. They make sure to take the time to connect to their higher power, whoever this may be. They take the time to nurture their bodies, and they take the time to deal with their emotions.

Masters live authentic lives because they are honest and real about who they are, what their lives look like, and what they are contributing to any situation.

Masters look at themselves with gentle eyes. They are aware of their faults and flaws but do not beat themselves up for having them. Masters know growth and understanding take time, and that the learning curve remains until the last-breath moment.

Masters know kindness and compassion towards others are keys to bringing peace and harmony into their own lives.

But above all, masters know they are simply everyday humans awakening to the people they were born to be!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Robin Roberts is an Australian Psychic and Medium currently residing on Vancouver Island, off the coast of British Columbia, Canada. Over the last 30 years, she has sought to bring what she terms 'simple wisdom' into the lives of the people who come to her. She hopes, through her writing, to lead people to the corners of their souls so they may rediscover the people they were born to be. As a Psychic, she offers a unique perspective on personal transformation and the challenges facing all of us.

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