LIVING RELATIONSHIP

LIVING RELATIONSHIP

FINDING HARMONY WITH OTHERS

Scott Kiloby

The Kiloby Group

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INTRODUCTION:
Living Relationship

TODD AND TRACI *are on the train, heading home after a night out. Traci's nose is buried in the book she just bought at an old second-hand bookstore downtown. From where he's sitting, Todd can just see the first words of the title, "Good Health is a Matter of…" He smirks softly; even though he can't make out the last few words, he assumes that the book is about self-improvement, as always. Traci hears the familiar tone of his smirk but keeps on reading, pretending it didn't happen.*

They've just left their favorite restaurant. Todd ate his usual big plate of lasagna with a bowl of steaming hot garlic bread. Traci is stuffed to the nines with sloppy spaghetti. For a moment, she stops reading and thinks, "Why did I eat that chocolate cake?" Todd begins daydreaming about their favorite vacation spot in a quaint beach front town on the East coast. They both adore the quiet, cozy atmosphere there, ocean waves constantly splashing lightly outside the thick sliding glass door. He knows they can't afford to go there now, since he just lost the job he's had for the last fifteen years. His

daydream turns to worry about paying bills and their decreasing retirement account.

As Traci's gaze drifts back to the yellow, ragged pages of the book, she sees the words, "Many people have difficulty losing weight as they grow older." Just then, Todd turns to her and says, "Wasn't that meal fantastic?" Feeling insecure about her bloated belly, she responds abruptly, "We can't afford to eat there as often as we used to." Todd can't help but take that personally; he still feels bad about losing his job. Irritated, he shoots back, "What's that…another self-help book that you'll stop reading half-way through?" She hears something totally different in his tone, as if he really meant, "You're fat and ugly, Traci." She responds, "Don't worry about my books. At least I still have a job to pay for them."

They jump head first into a rapid exchange of insults, each one targeting the other's deepest insecurities. After ten years of marriage, Todd and Traci know just how to push the right buttons. They fall into the mutual silent treatment, each simmering in the hot sting of the other's words. For the rest of the evening, they both replay an old script in the mind.

As they lie down to go to sleep, Todd's head is endlessly spinning in a familiar story of financial insecurity and unworthiness. Traci lays her head on the pillow, listening to the nagging voice in her head tell her, once again, that she is unattractive and unlovable. She glances over at Todd. "He can be so cold sometimes. Who did I marry?" Todd appears to be a million miles away; he doesn't even notice her lonely stare. Powerless to stop his own rapid-fire thoughts, he has travelled back to a past that seems to confirm his unworthiness. Overwhelmed by fear, he finds himself blaming Traci. "She doesn't understand what I've been through. She doesn't support me."

The Core Deficient Self

Somewhere along the way through life, often in our early years, we begin to believe a lie about who we really are. And the lie sticks to us like glue because we unconsciously repeat it to ourselves as we grow into adulthood. I call that lie the "core deficient self." It's the part of our identity that makes up the core story of who we think we are. This story comes in many forms, but it's usually some version of, "There's something wrong with me." It's a lie through and through, because there is no core deficient self. It's a set of thoughts. That's all. The story only seems true because we believe it.

Todd's story of unworthiness and Traci's story of unlovability are variations of the core deficient self. These stories, when believed, are accompanied by a deep emotional wound in the body that is easily triggered in relationship. We may not even know that there is a wound within us. We may not even realize that we believe, at the most basic level, that we are deficient. The story remains, to one degree or another, not fully conscious. Quite often, we operate and react from it, rather than seeing it.

Exchanges like the one between Todd and Traci are all too common. We long for harmonized relationships but often come up short, finding conflict instead. These core stories lie dormant within us during times when life seems to flow smoothly. Like a fearful snake coiled up and waiting to defend itself, the story (and the corresponding emotional wound) comes screaming to the surface when the right buttons are pushed by others. This leaves us spiraling into self-judgment and doubt.

It's fight or flight, all the way. We either attack and defend or run and hide. Our reactions are often very intense, as if we are instinctually fighting or running as a matter of survival. After all, the very foundations of our human identities are being challenged when we are triggered in relationship.

Facing the emotional wound that lies at the core can seem way too scary. Even in those moments when we gain the confidence to look at the story more closely, in a desire to free ourselves from its grip, we often find ourselves reconfirming it instead. Our minds scramble to rationalize and understand what is happening and who we are in relation to others. But the scrambling is being done by the same mind that created the story in the first place.

A search engine can only find the same information within its database no matter how many times the search button is pushed. Similarly, when we consult our minds in the moment we are triggered by others, we often enter right back into the same loop of thought that we've always known. Our minds reconfigure themselves, again and again, back into the familiar script, "There is something wrong with me." The story of deficiency is much like a stone that is wedged solidly into the earth. We can polish or mask the surface of the stone. We can add new information to the script or improve the story through therapy, positive affirmations, or other means. But, unless the stone is uprooted entirely, it stays stubbornly embedded into our identities throughout our lives, repeatedly reasserting itself in some form or another in our relationships with others.

Notice how Todd and Traci slipped into an automatic response of pointing outward towards each other once they

were both triggered. This is what we commonly do, as a way of protecting ourselves from facing the deep emotional pain that accompanies our core stories of deficiency. We unconsciously trap ourselves in the fight or flight response. Facing the wound directly is just too much. If we don't have the right tools to free ourselves from the wound, it is easier and safer to point away from it.

The core deficient self is a blind spot. Outward pointing keeps us continuously blind to the inner lie, "There's something wrong with me." We can't see it as long as we are pointing away from it. The more we remain unwilling or unable to face the story and its emotional wound directly, the more we point outward to keep from having to look within. We protect these core identities and unconsciously feed them. We tend to blame others for the pain instead of taking responsibility for what we have come to believe about ourselves. And sometimes we even blame ourselves, further strengthening the story, "There is something wrong with me."

From that blind spot, we point outward. The outward pointing fuels the emotional pain. The pain fuels the need for more self-preservation and self-protection. And the self-preservation and self-protection trigger more outward pointing. It's an insidious and vicious cycle. And we are unconsciously doing it to ourselves. That's why it really hurts.

The Belief in Separation

The belief in self-deficiency is related directly to the belief in separation. A basic separation begins to pop up very early in childhood, between a sense of me v. not me. Life is turned into a play of separate objects in relationship to each other. And the main object is "me."

The sense of separation is rarely challenged when we are young. And why should it be? It's a matter of instinctual survival to treat our bodies as separate and to find food, clothing, and shelter. But early in childhood, the instinct to survive reaches beyond basic matters of physical survival. It begins expanding, more and more, into the realm of our psychological and emotional makeup. We literally identify with words, mental pictures, emotions, and sensations. These words, pictures, emotions, and sensations appear welded together, making up the belief, "I am a separate person." Somewhere along the way, the words and pictures turn into a deficiency script. The story, "There's something wrong with me," becomes intrinsically tied to the belief, "I am a separate person." This is the birth of the inner lie that fuels the cycle of pointing outward and seeking outside ourselves for what we believe we lack within.

As we develop, relationship becomes like a mirror. We start looking for what seems to be missing within us. If it seems that our parents did not fill in the missing hole, or even that they created the sense of deficiency by not providing what we needed as children, we look to fill up that hole in other relationships throughout life. As the story of deficiency gains momentum, we

become convinced that love, validation, security, completion, approval, importance, worthiness, and other desirable qualities exist outside ourselves. We long for these apparently missing qualities. We long for the wholeness we believe we have lost through believing ourselves to be separate from one another.

It is only natural that we look to our relationships for what seems to be lacking. As we experience hurt, invalidation, abandonment, insecurity, rejection, incompletion, or disapproval in relationship, the sense of separation is strengthened. We continue searching outside ourselves, never truly and permanently filling up the hole we perceive to be inside of us. And so the core story of deficiency is continuously strengthened, repeating itself over and over. By the time we are adults, deficiency becomes the programming that drives so many of our actions in both relationship and life in general.

Everything we believe about ourselves is mirrored back to us by others precisely because we bring our core identities into every relationship. If I feel invalid, you seem to confirm that story in me. If you feel unlovable, I seem to confirm that story in you. We get locked into these stories that mutually reaffirm themselves in relationship. Instead of looking directly at these beliefs in separation and deficiency, we point outward towards others. "You are the problem, not me!" This is how we stay blind to the inner lie, "I am separate and deficient."

On some level we know that if we begin to go inward to face the pain of separation and deficiency directly these beliefs will begin to crumble. Our carefully constructed personal stories will fall apart. And this brings up our fear of death. We're just really afraid. Our deepest fear about losing

these core identities keeps us locked in the cycle of focusing on others and remaining blind to who we have taken ourselves to be. This fear pulls us back into the mind with all its familiar words and pictures that tell us that we are separate and deficient. Relationship becomes like a well-oiled machine, perfectly designed to keep us locked in these lies.

Even when we begin to see that the belief in being a separate, deficient person lies at the heart of our struggles in relationship, we may not have the right tools to penetrate through the story. Without effective tools, we tend to rely on our minds, which usually weave us back into the story of deficiency—and back into the automatic response of pointing outward, away from our pain. This book provides very effective tools for seeing through the story of deficiency, by focusing directly on the emotional wound that lies at the heart of the story. By facing the wound head on, we are freed from its grip. We begin to see that we are protecting and defending mental images, and that these images are not who we really are.

Awareness

You will see references to "awareness" and "resting in awareness" throughout this book. There is a basic capacity within our direct experience to be aware of thoughts, emotions, and sensations as they appear and disappear. The belief in being a separate, deficient person arises when we identify with thoughts, emotions, and sensations, rather than seeing them as temporary, empty appearances that come and go to this basic

awareness. This basic awareness is more fundamentally who we are. We are often so busy believing or identifying with the thoughts that make up our personal story that we overlook basic awareness. Recognizing this basic awareness is critical to doing the inquiries in this book.

What is awareness? Stick with this simple approach:

> *Start with thought-free awareness. Stop and notice your next thought. As that thought disappears, rest as the thought-free space that is left. That is thought-free awareness. Take brief moments of resting as thought-free awareness repeatedly throughout the day, every day. How brief? At first, just three to five seconds at a time. How often? Do it as often as you can. As you do it more and more, the moments naturally become longer. It becomes natural and automatic to rest as awareness in all situations. This helps you to see that thoughts, emotions, and sensations arise and fall to awareness.*

If this seems difficult, start by bringing your attention, over and over throughout the day, to the felt sense of spacious, alive, presence in your inner body, including your chest and stomach area. Just return to that felt presence repeatedly, as often as possible. Don't think about the space. Just notice that it is there. This withdraws energy from the thought stream. Bringing attention into the space of the inner body is the same as resting in thought-free awareness. The inquiries are designed to help you face and allow painful emotions to be as they are. Resting attention in the body throughout the day makes it easier

to do the inquiries because emotions generally arise and fall within the chest and stomach area.

As a metaphor, awareness is like space. You begin to see that this thought-free space is always stably present. The space is inside and outside your body equally, and is present in your experience no matter where you go or what you do. You notice it at home, at work, in the company of others, and when you are alone. You notice it when you are experiencing no thoughts and even when thoughts are arising. This space is like your true home. Make relaxing into this present, restful space the most important thing in your life.

The voice in your head, playing one thought after the other, is seen to be happening within this space. You notice that this space is what hears that voice. So this space starts to feel more and more like the real you, as the thoughts start to seem less and less like you. The voice in your head is what tells you that you are deficient. When the voice is telling that story, emotions and sensations arise along with the voice. This creates the sense that thoughts, emotions, and sensations are welded together.

Resting in awareness is a present experience. It always happens now. Take a moment right now and rest in the here and now without your story. Keep it simple and let all the ideas you have ever learned about yourself, others, the world, and awareness come to rest right now. As you rest in the here and now, if a thought arises, let it pass. Just let it fall away or dissolve.

You may want to take some time just becoming acquainted with resting as awareness throughout each day

before you begin doing the inquiries. I can't emphasize enough that recognizing this basic capacity to be aware of thoughts helps tremendously with these inquiries.

My Work with Others

A few years ago, I experienced a profound realization that my "Scott" identity and my belief in being a separate person are illusions of mind. These days, it's generally referred to as a non-dual realization, or an awakening. I came to see that separation is not real, and that I wasn't who I'd taken myself to be. This realization meant the end of suffering and seeking. There was no longer any movement to change myself, others, or my present experience to obtain something that I felt I lacked within myself. Seeking for things to be different than they are is a direct result of our belief in separation, and it happens largely through thinking. It usually comes from a resistance to or judgment against what is happening and who we perceive ourselves and others to be.

In my book *Living Realization: Your Present Experience, As It Is*, I deal directly with seeing through the belief in a separate self, which gives rise to suffering, seeking, and conflict. You may find it useful to read alongside this book. The "living realization" is the direct experience of seeing through this belief, revealing a profound knowing of the inseparability of all things.

In the early days, I was very eager to help others come to the same realization, because it brings such contentment and well-being to one's life. I met with people in private sessions

and groups, and through the years, more and more people were awakening. It seemed that the intensity of suffering was revving up more and more, pushing people towards wanting freedom from separation.

But then something else started to happen. My eagerness met a wall. I noticed that the initial awakening did not always uproot this basic core idea of deficiency. In some sessions, I would be meeting with people who still clearly believed in separation. They would tell me of the struggles in their relationships with people and things—the suffering, seeking and conflict. In other sessions, I would meet with people who had already experienced an awakening to some degree. Yet, they too were experiencing some version of the core story, "I am deficient." Over the years, I noticed that it didn't seem to matter that much whether someone was claiming to be awakened or not. The core story was often very active in relationship, often in unconscious ways.

Some of these sessions were very intense. People frequently sobbed as they told me about lost loves, childhood traumas, failed romantic relationships, sexual abuse, addiction, anxiety, seeking, victimhood, alienation from friends and family, bullying, and many other things. Other people were basically happy, and not experiencing any intense suffering, yet they reported something missing in their connections with people and the world. Almost all of the issues that people talked about were connected in some way to relationship.

I also met with many spiritual teachers who were considered fully realized by most standards. These were just casual conversations, not sessions. In quiet moments of

honesty, we spoke of how this core deficiency continued to arise in our own lives, in different degrees, even after awakening. I heard disturbing tales of students who had been to teachers who refused to look at these issues. Those stories were quite revealing. I came to see why there's been a long history of spiritual teachers being involved in scandals around sex, money, power, control, jealousy, competitiveness, and other issues. It's the core deficiency still at work, in my view.

This book has developed out of a desire to bring the conversation of relationship into my work with people in private and group sessions. I developed the inquiries in this book for myself, as a way to penetrate through my own deficiency story. As I saw how helpful it was for me, I began using the inquiries with others. The sessions started to change dramatically. People began reporting a newfound, deeper freedom and love in relationship. I'm excited to share these inquiries with you now. They are designed to uproot and penetrate through the most deeply held beliefs in separation and deficiency. If you are reading this book, you are ready to see through these beliefs, face the emotional wound within you, and realize a deep and profound love, peace, freedom, and wisdom. You are ready to harmonize all your relationships.

CHAPTER ONE:
The Unfindable Self

THE UNFINDABLE INQUIRY (the UI) is the main tool in this book. This chapter provides an explanation of the UI. It is a virtual reprint of *Chapter Ten: The Unfindable Inquiry* in *Living Realization: Your Present Experience, As It Is*. If you are already familiar with how the inquiry works, you can skip this section. But if you are not, it is important to see how it works before you move to the other chapters. The UI, by itself, is not a relationship inquiry. It just invites you to try and find a particular person e.g. "me, the victim." The UI sets the foundation for the relationship inquiries in the next chapters: the Boomerang and Panorama Inquiries. As you will see, knowing how the UI works is integral to working with these relationship inquiries. All of this will become clearer as you continue reading the book.

The inquiries in this book are based on real sessions I've had with people. The names have been changed, as well as

some of the circumstances, to protect the privacy of the individuals involved.

In the example of the inquiry in this chapter, Caleb is trying to find the victim he takes himself to be. I've done this inquiry with people on just about every identity you can imagine, from father, to CEO, to worthless self. I've also done the inquiry with people on the basic belief in being a separate self (i.e., ego) without putting any additional label on it, like "worthless self." It works well either way. But I have to say, the inquiry is most potent when you add a label to it. The word "self" really doesn't point to anything in particular. We all have different stories that we take ourselves to be. Pinning the content of your story down to a particular label helps. The word "leaf" itself doesn't point to any particular kind of leaf in the forest. But when you name it a *maple leaf,* you know exactly what you are trying to find. Similarly, by adding a label to the self (e.g., worthless self or victim), you know exactly what you are trying to find—the real identity you take yourself to be. I think the remaining chapters in the book will make this clearer.

It may sound funny to say that you cannot find your self when you try to really look for it, but give the inquiry a try. It may surprise you. Even though it may feel strange to look for something that seems to be obviously there, it is a powerful inquiry. Once you've read this chapter, try it out for yourself. The inquiry is a trick, of course. The self that you try to find is empty when you look for it. Empty means unfindable.

The stories we tell ourselves only seem true until we look right at them and see that they are only passing thoughts. The inquiry is designed to reveal this. But you can notice it right

now even before you do the inquiry. Stop and rest as awareness. Notice that awareness sees thoughts coming and going. If you can see a thought, is it you? What is looking at the thought? That's awareness, which is more fundamentally who you are. The inquiry is a way of picking apart, one by one, the thoughts, emotions, and sensations that seem welded together, making your story seem so compelling and true.

There are several ways that you can do the UI. It can be beneficial to do it with someone else (a facilitator) who can ask the questions. You can also do the inquiry on paper, by yourself. Take your time as you answer the questions. As you become more acquainted with the UI and the other inquiries, it will be easier to do them on your own by looking at thoughts, emotions, and sensations as they appear to awareness. You won't need a facilitator and you won't need to write anything down.

How the Unfindable Inquiry Works

1. *Name it.* Name the person (e.g. the unlovable self, the victim, the inadequate "me"). What you are trying to find depends upon the content of your own story.

2. *Find it.* Try to find that person. Go through each of the main thoughts, emotions, and sensations (one by one) that make up the person. For each appearance ask, *"Is this me?"* (e.g., Is this thought me? Is this emotion me? Is this sensation me?). Of course, if you are facilitating the inquiry for someone else, you replace "Is this me?" with "Is this you?"

The Unfindable Inquiry: An Example

Scott: Name the person you would like to try and find.

Caleb: I'd like to find me.

Scott: OK, we can do the inquiry on the general sense of self. But sometimes it is helpful to see if there is something specific about you that brings up suffering.

Caleb: I've always thought of myself as a victim. Life treats me unfairly. I'm miserable most of the time. Yesterday is a good example. I just sat around all day feeling alone.

Scott: So let's try to find Caleb, the victim. Relax and make yourself as comfortable as you can. Close your eyes and look at the word "Caleb" in your mind. Take your time. Is the word "Caleb" you, the victim?

Caleb: No, that's just a name, just a word.

Scott: How about the thought, "Life treats me unfairly?" Is that you, the victim?

Caleb: Is that me? No, that's just a thought.

Scott: Be careful not to answer just with the intellect. Look directly with awareness. And remember to pay attention to your

body. Does the body react in some way when you see the words, "Life treats me unfairly?"

Caleb: Yes, there is sadness.

Scott: Look directly at the word "sadness." Is that word you, the victim?

Caleb: No. But the thought, "Life treats me unfairly" has returned.

Scott: Put the words, "Life treats me unfairly" into a picture frame in your mind. That can help you see that they are just words. Now look at the words in that frame. Is that the person who is a victim?

Caleb: No, those are just words.

Scott: Put the words, "I'm miserable most of the time" in a picture frame in your mind. Are those words you, the victim?

Caleb: Yes, that definitely feels like me. The sadness is back, along with contraction.

Scott: Whenever any thought feels like you, it always means that some emotion or sensation is arising along with it. Emotions and sensations are like alarm bells reminding you to be in your body, and to feel the emotions directly. So relax all words and pictures and rest as awareness. Take your time. Bring attention

to the nameless energy in your chest. Relax and let that energy be as it is. Is this energy you, the victim?

Caleb: That energy feels like me.

Scott: OK, whenever an emotion or sensation feels like the self, it just means that some thought is still arising along with it. What thought is appearing?

Caleb: The thought, "This is me."

Scott: Frame those words. Are the words, "This is me" you, the victim?

Caleb: No, I can clearly see that those are just words. Now they are gone.

Scott: Bring your attention back into the body, without any words or pictures. Is that energy you, the self who is a victim?

Caleb: No, that's just energy. There's no story on it. And the sadness and contraction are disappearing now.

Scott: Look at the picture (i.e., the memory) of you sitting around yesterday feeling alone. Is that picture you?

Caleb: I can see that it's a picture, but it feels like a victim. The sadness and contraction came up again.

Scott: Are the words "sadness and contraction" you, the victim?

Caleb: No, those are just words.

Scott: Be aware of the sadness and contraction but without naming them. Is that energy you?

Caleb: No, that's not me. But that energy feels stuck.

Scott: Whenever energy feels stuck in the body, there is still identification happening in thoughts. Sometimes the thoughts appear as mental pictures, instead of words. These mental pictures are being projected by the mind onto the sensation or emotion. Close your eyes and tell me if you see any mental pictures.

Caleb: Yes, it feels like the energy is contained in a knot.

Scott: Look just at the picture of the knot. Gently observe the picture without describing it. Frame it if you have to. Is that picture you, the victim?

Caleb: No, I can see it's just a picture and it just relaxed. Now the sadness is welling up.

Scott: Relax all words and pictures and just experience that energy, letting it be exactly as it is. Take your time. Is that energy you?

Caleb: Wow, no! It just moved through. I can see now that when no words or pictures are placed on emotion, it's not a victim. I don't feel like a victim.

Scott: Just rest as awareness now, letting anything and everything arise and fall naturally. Can you find the victim?

Caleb: I see a thought here and there, but when I ask, "Is that me?" I can see it's just a thought and it disappears. There is an emotion, but when I rest into it, it disappears too. I cannot find the victim. In fact, I cannot find a self. This is so simple and effective. I have literally been thinking of myself as something I cannot find when I really look.

A Few Helpful Tips

Let's go back over this inquiry and add some tips that may help you as you begin doing your own inquiry. Put yourself in the place of Caleb.

Simplify thoughts down to either words or pictures

If you look into your experience, you can see that thoughts arise in one of two different ways—words or pictures. Words are literally things like "Caleb" or "I am a victim." Pictures are mental images, such as the memory of sitting yesterday and feeling alone, or the picture of a body part or a knot. It is good to see the difference between words and pictures. Notice exactly which of these are arising to give you the sense of a separate person.

It may also be helpful to frame the particular words or pictures. For example, imagine the words, "I'm miserable most of the time" inside a picture frame in your mind. Stare right at the content in the frame. Keep looking straight at the words until they begin to fade away, and then ask, "Is this me, the victim?"

Refrain from trying to answer the question, "Is this it?" intellectually

Notice that I requested Caleb not to answer intellectually. Don't think about your answer. Don't analyze the question. Don't refer to other parts of your story to find the answer. Just look at

that one thought only. Look at the thought in the way you would look at a color without naming it—directly, with bare naked observation. From that direct observation ask, "Is this me, the victim?"

Intellectually, you may see that this is just a thought, and not the person (victim). But always pay attention to your body during the inquiry. Notice when the body reacts with an emotion or sensation. This is the body's way of letting you know that, on some level, you believe that you are that thought. Notice that Caleb was intellectualizing when I asked him if the thought, "Life treats me unfairly" was him. After he mentioned that he felt sadness and contraction along with that thought, I encouraged him to pay more attention to his body.

Keep your answer to the question, "Is this me?" to a simple yes or no

Don't add detailed analysis to the answer. For example, if you are truly a victim, and that victim is here, present in and as your body and mind, it shouldn't be hard to find. You should be able to find it right away, in your direct, present experience, without the need for elaboration. Take the example of looking for a pair of shoes in a closet. If you pick up a shirt, there is no need to give five reasons why the shirt is not the pair of shoes. You know that it is not the pair of shoes. No elaboration is needed; you just keep looking for the shoes. Treat this inquiry the same way. Stick to simply trying to find the person, with a simple yes or no.

Remember that you are looking for the person, not evidence of it, thoughts that point to it, or parts of it

During the inquiry, it may seem as if every temporary thought, emotion, and sensation you encounter is "part of" the person, evidence of it, or pointing to it. Don't settle for this kind of thinking. Go deeper. *Look for the person itself.* If all these temporary things point to it, where are YOU—the real, permanent, separate, actual victim? If all words describe it, where are YOU? If these appearances are merely part of it, where are YOU? The YOU—the actual victim—is what you are looking for. That's what is unfindable when you look directly for it, instead of thinking about it.

For example, if you are looking for the victim you take yourself to be, it may seem as if the thought; "Life treats me unfairly" is part of the victim. Forget about finding parts. Look for the victim itself. *Is the thought, "Life treats me unfairly" you—the actual victim?* That's the proper question. We often assume that these kinds of thoughts are describing or pointing to an actual, inherent victim that is *really there* under the thoughts. To prove that the victim is not there under the thoughts, drop any thought that seems to describe or point to the victim. Notice that when you drop these thoughts, you can't find the victim when you are directly looking for it with awareness. But you can't find it when the thoughts are there, either. You find only thoughts, one after the other—no actual victim.

If you are looking at a thought and the thought seems to be the person, it always means that there is some sensation or emotion arising with the thought

If the body reacts in any way to the question, "Is this thought me?" just say, "Yes, this is me." Then bring your bare naked attention immediately into the body and experience the emotion or sensation directly, letting it be exactly as it is, without trying to change or get rid of it. If you find your mind labeling the emotion or sensation with words such as "sadness" or "contraction," ask yourself, "Is the word 'sadness' me?" "Is the word 'contraction' me?" If not, then relax all thoughts for a few seconds, and experience the energy of the emotion or sensation, without any labels.

Simply sit with the raw sensory experience itself, resting in thought-free awareness. And then ask, "Is this energy me—the victim?" If you see that it is not the person, let it be as it is, without trying to change or get rid of it. This frees up the energy to move and change naturally, and it often dissolves. But the point is not to try and get rid of anything. That's just more seeking. The point is to see that the energy is not the person. Once you see that no thought, emotion, or sensation is the person, it no longer matters whether these things arise. Any appearance can come and go, yet the victim is never found. This allows the story and the emotions to quiet naturally and effortlessly. Suffering, seeking, and conflict show up in our experience from unconsciously believing that these appearances form a separate person.

If an emotion or sensation in the body seems to be the person, it always means that there is a thought arising along with the sensation or emotion

If this happens, observe the thought stream to see what words or pictures are coming up with the sensation or emotion. Then look directly at that thought and ask, "Is this me?" An emotion or sensation only seems like the person when an identifying thought like, "This is me" is arising along with it.

Pay particular attention to the subtle mental pictures, such as images of body parts and other forms and shapes in the body, which appear to contain certain emotions and sensations. If you see any pictures when you are experiencing emotions and sensations, ask whether that picture is the person. For example, is this picture of a knot the victim? You can even imagine a frame around the image, if that helps you to see that it is only a mental picture, not a real knot. Observe the picture directly until it begins to change on its own or disappear.

As you see that these are just mental pictures, and that they are not the person, the pictures tend to change or disappear on their own. Even if they stick around, it won't matter as much, once you see that they are not the victim.

See that thoughts, emotions, and sensations are not actually welded together

When you think you are a separate person, notice that the thoughts, emotions, and sensations seem welded together. For example, when the thought, "I'm a victim" arises, it can feel as if

sadness is welded together with the thought and that the sensation of contraction is welded together with the thought and emotion. All three appear at once, as if Velcro is holding them together.

Really pick apart each thought, emotion, and sensation and ask, "Is this me?" for each one, one at a time. This is a powerful way to untangle the sense that thoughts, emotions, and sensations are welded together. In seeing that no thought, emotion, or sensation is, by itself, the person, the emptiness of the victim (or whatever identity you are inquiring into) is seen. The person is unfindable.

Notice that Caleb wanted to do the UI on the sense of self. The UI can be used on just the sense of a separate self, without naming a specific kind of self, like the victim. The question is still, "Is that you?" In this case, you aren't looking to see whether a thought is someone who is a victim, but whether the thought is a person at all. That can be a powerful way to see that no thought is who you really are. But, again, sometimes it is more helpful to do what I suggested here, and find out what particular content in your story seems to trouble you most. Name that self and then find it.

CHAPTER TWO:
The Unfindable Others

The Scandal of Objectivity

MUCH OF THE disharmony in relationship can be attributed to our belief in objectivity—the notion that we experience other people *the way they really are.* This belief in objectivity tends to arise with the belief in separation. Through this separate me, I see separate others. Once this division is made in the mind, there is a tendency to believe that I, the subject, can see other people, the objects, exactly as they are. And in that tendency there is a kind of mental sleepiness or blindness to the fact that every time I see subject and objects, I am thinking. I fail to see that I am looking through a filter of thought.

When we believe in objectivity, we have difficulty seeing that our thoughts, emotions, and sensations paint others in a way that is unique to us. Our views of other people are shaped by our memories, personal histories, cultures,

worldviews, and psychological and emotional traits, along with various other influences. The painter is inseparable from her painting. We don't see others the way they are. We see them the way we are.

A quick way to see this in your own experience is to rest in awareness without viewpoints about a particular person who is in your present company. This can be especially difficult to do around people with whom you have a long history, such as your spouse, close friends, or family members. But as you rest, even if only for a few seconds, you get an immediate glimpse that it is your thoughts that paint the picture of who someone is. In the moment of resting without thoughts, you don't know who or what the person is precisely because no thoughts are arising. Thoughts inform you of everything you think you know about someone. When thoughts begin to arise, notice that they are coming from your own set of memories. Each of the arising thoughts have to do with a particular past experience that was interpreted by you in a personal way. Your view of a person is actually a view of your own memories. It's like having a relationship with one's own memories. Emotions and sensations arise along with those memories to further paint your view of the person.

Notice that this is always the case, no matter who you encounter. The way you see a particular person depends completely on the particular thoughts, emotions, and sensations that are occurring in any given moment. And the thoughts have a lot to do with your own education, your upbringing, your fears, your thoughts about yourself, and many influences from your culture about who people are or who they should be. This

can be difficult to see until you begin meeting people freshly in the moment, without dragging your memories into each encounter and interpreting others' present words and actions through those memories. When we aren't able to see that thoughts produce our view of others, we buy into the belief that we see others objectively—exactly as they really are. We cannot see that our view is relative and subjective. We cannot see that our view is limited only to what we think, feel, and sense in the moment.

Even if, on an intellectual level, we know that our viewpoint about someone is subjective, relative, and limited, we often act as if that view is objective. For example, Brad and Tony are discussing the current leader of a Middle Eastern country. Brad, a Democrat, finds himself disagreeing with Tony, a Republican. Brad gets very upset as he listens to Tony. Brad may know, intellectually, that his view of the Middle Eastern leader is largely subjective. He knows that his views have been shaped by being a Democrat, as well as by all kinds of other experiences he's had. However, this intellectual knowing doesn't stop him from getting angrier and angrier as he listens to Tony.

Brad thinks that Tony "just doesn't get it." He really wants to show him that he is wrong about this leader. The very fact that he gets so angry as he listens to Tony indicates just how deeply he believes that his thoughts represent reality. There is nothing wrong with anger. It's a natural human emotion. But it is often based on a skewed view of reality. Brad is acting and responding to Tony based on a belief in objectivity. The leader is not just someone appearing out there, separately and

objectively. Both Brad and Tony are experiencing particular thoughts, emotions, and sensations that paint the leader in a certain light—as good or evil, right or wrong. And emotions tend to strengthen the mind's particular view, making it seem all the more real.

The belief in objectivity is a scandal. Look at the degree and depth of suffering and conflict that have arisen throughout history from the basic belief, "I see others the way they really are." I call it a scandal because the belief is universal, but we don't realize it's a belief. We mistake it for reality and this mistake comes at a great cost, creating widespread disharmony in human relationships. The scandal has left us with a trail of murder, torture, rape, abuse, war, conflict, bullying, divorce, control, manipulation, alienation, and loneliness in relationships. Whenever we fail to see the subjective nature of our experience, we treat others as objects somehow independent of our own thoughts, emotions, and sensations. This belief in objectivity is directly related to our desire to change, manipulate, abuse, judge, blame, bully, and control others, as well as our tendency to seek approval, attention, self-worth, validation, and love from others.

When we stop pointing outward, as if we see people and situations objectively, and focus instead on the thoughts, emotions, and sensations that are arising within us, a newfound clarity is available to us. We free ourselves from the belief in a self that sees others the way they really are. Our constant need to point outward begins to release itself in this intelligent clarity. And our relationships begin to harmonize themselves. When we are pointing outward, we are overlooking the projector—the self—that paints the world a particular way. Peace, joy, love,

compassion, and wisdom are found within through this way of seeing. And as a direct result, the world out there begins to reflect that inner peace, joy, love, compassion, and wisdom. The inner and the outer are One. Once this is seen, we can continue expressing our viewpoints, but without the belief, "I see others the way they really are."

The Unfindable Others

When people you are close to appear in your life, take a good look at what is happening. For example, imagine that you are a man married to a woman who nags you all day and who can seem so cruel when she speaks her mind. It may seem like your wife just shows up in front of you each day exactly that way. The story of who your wife is may even seem to be embedded into her body, existing completely on its own side, regardless of your thoughts, emotions, and sensations.

You may find many people who agree with your assessment of your wife. But someone, somewhere, probably thinks that she has good reason to nag and that her honesty in speaking her mind is refreshing. The point is this: the wife you experience is shaped deeply by what you think, feel, and sense about yourself. It is influenced by your own needs and desires, your personal story, your family upbringing, and the beliefs of the culture in which you live. This doesn't excuse her behavior. It just sheds some light on your view of it.

When your wife walks into the room, memories—both conscious and unconscious—flash into your mind. Perhaps

there is a memory of a hurtful thing she said yesterday, the memory of how things were when you first met, or the memory of how your mother treated you when you were a child. Emotions and sensations often arise in conjunction with memories, making them seem like real things that exist out there, completely apart from you. Others who experience your wife don't have those particular memories, so their experience of her will likely be different as she enters the room.

Notice that primarily, you are experiencing thoughts, emotions, and sensations that paint your wife into experience in a unique way. You don't have to intellectualize this. To see it, just use the UI. But this time you are not using it to find yourself. You are using it to find the other person. Can you find your wife? Walk up to your wife and intimately touch her shoulder, feeling the sensation of soft flesh. Ask yourself, "Is this sensation her?" Notice that the sensation itself does not tell a story. It is just the sensation of softness, by itself. It does not whisper to you, "wife." It is only a thought that does that.

Is the thought "wife" your actual wife? See that it is only a thought. Then look at the more emotionally driven viewpoints that you have about her. For example, is the thought, "She nags me all day" your wife? How about the thought, "She can be so cruel?" If these are seen to be thoughts, move to the next thought, emotion, or sensation that pops up. Try to find your wife as an objective, separate person. If the next thought seems as if it *really* is your wife, it just means that some emotion or sensation is coming up with that thought. Move attention to the emotion or sensation in the body, without labeling it. Is that energy your wife? Experience it directly until

you see that the energy is not your wife. It is an emotion or sensation. If the energy seems to be your wife, notice that some thought, in the form of words or pictures, is arising along with the energy. Observe the thought directly, without judgment, and ask, "Is this my wife?" See that it is only a thought.

What is happening in that moment when you can't find your wife, apart from these thoughts, emotions, and sensations? Is no one there? Is there no wife at all? That's taking it a little too far. Sure, there is a wife appearing. But your experience of wife is not just some objective experience. You are looking through a subjective filter to a large degree.

In looking for your wife through the UI, and not finding her, so much of what you were taking to be objectively true about her begins to relax. It is easier then to meet her freshly in each moment, without unconsciously dragging all of these thoughts into the present, and looking at her through such a clouded lens.

When we take our unique lens to be reality, we invite misunderstanding, disharmony, and conflict into relationship. As we see through this belief in objectivity, greater intimacy, compassion, and acceptance of others begin to appear.

Using the UI to Find an Other: An Example

In this inquiry, I help Tom to use the UI on his son, Brandon, who has just announced to the family that he is gay. Notice how I don't let Tom simply believe whatever he thinks. I help Tom challenge his most deeply held assumptions about his son, and about gay people and women in general.

Tom: My son, Brandon, just told me he is gay and I believe that homosexuality is wrong. I knew when he was a kid that he was more feminine than other boys. I put it out of my mind. I wanted him to "man up." But he didn't. I'm wondering if I did something wrong, if I didn't father him correctly.

Scott: Can you find your son?

Tom: Yes, he's my son, of course I can. He has lived with me all his life. I know him really well.

Scott: I didn't ask whether you know him or have lived with him. I asked whether you can find him. Is the thought "Brandon" your son, Brandon?

Tom: No, that's just the name we gave him at birth.

Scott: Is the thought "son" him?

Tom: No, just a word.

Scott: Is the thought, "Brandon is gay" your son?

Tom: Yes, that feels like him. And it doesn't feel good at all.

Scott: Whenever a thought feels like your son, it just means you are referring to a memory of him. And as that thought comes up, there is some emotion or sensation happening in your body along with it. These emotions and sensations are not always conscious. In other words, we aren't directly aware of them. So become aware of them now. What emotion or sensation happens when you think the thought, "Brandon is gay?"

Tom: Sadness and a bit of embarrassment, and shame for feeling embarrassed.

Scott: Is the word "sadness" your son, Brandon.

Tom: No, that's just a word.

Scott: How about the words "embarrassment" and "shame?" Are those words your son? Take your time. Really stare at each thought until it begins to fade.

Tom: No, just words.

Scott: Then just let those words fall away. Bring attention into your body and really feel directly what shame and embarrassment feel like when you aren't placing words on those energies.

Tom: Yeah, I'm feeling that. It feels very uncomfortable. I can see myself wanting to escape these feelings.

Scott: When you aren't labeling it, is that energy in your body your son, Brandon?

Tom: No, those are just feelings.

Scott: Let those feelings relax on their own, as if you have no agenda to push them away or make them stay.

Tom: As soon as I felt them, they became more intense. I saw a desire to get out of my body and go back into thinking. But I stayed with them, and now they are dissolving away. I can definitely see that, on some level, those emotions were playing into the words, "Brandon is gay."

Scott: Are the words, "Homosexuality is wrong" your son, Brandon?

Tom: No, I know those are just words.

Scott: Pay attention to your body when you answer. Is your body reacting to the thought, "Homosexuality is wrong?"

Tom: Yes, I feel a strong contraction in my gut.

Scott: Are the words, "I feel a strong contraction in my gut" your son, Brandon?

Tom: No, those aren't my son.

Scott: Drop those words for a few seconds and experience the contraction by gently observing it. Just notice that there is an inner, aware space in your body. Let that space be aware of the energy without labeling it. Take all the time you need. Is that energy your son, Brandon?

Tom: Yes, for some reason, that feels like him or closely associated with him.

Scott: Whenever a sensation feels like someone, it just means there are still some words or pictures coming through. Can you see any words or pictures?

Tom: Yes. I can't believe I'm about to say this, but what came up was, "My manhood is being challenged." Wow, Brandon's homosexuality feels personal to me, to my own sense of being a man. I can see how society has shaped my view about what a man is supposed to be. And that has nothing to do with Brandon.

Scott: It has nothing to do with you either.

Tom: That's a little harder to see.

Scott: Use this inquiry on that belief later. For now, let the words, "My manhood is being challenged" fall away for a few seconds. Just look directly at the thought and watch it

disappear. Then feel the energy of contraction without words and pictures around it. Is that energy your son, Brandon?

Tom: No, and it's not me, either. It's just energy. And I can feel it relaxing now. Funny how I thought that was Brandon and also that it was me.

Scott: Look at the mental picture of Brandon as a young child, looking feminine in your eyes. Is that picture Brandon?

Tom: It's a picture of him, yes. That's him, as a child. I actually try to put that picture out of my mind most of the time. You just brought it up and I can see that I take that picture to be him.

Scott: Let the picture fall away naturally by just observing it. What emotion or sensation is arising?

Tom: I'm feeling sad and disappointed.

Scott: Are the words, "I'm feeling sad and disappointed" your son?

Tom: No.

Scott: How about the energy of sadness and disappointment when you aren't describing it with words?

Tom: Yes, that energy feels like him.

Scott: That just means that some words or pictures are coming to mind again. What are they?

Tom: I'm embarrassed to say this. The thought, "Women are weak" came to mind along with the thought, "Brandon looks weak too." It's incredibly painful to see that I believe this. I must believe this about all women, including my wife.

Scott: Is the thought, "Women are weak" your son?

Tom: Ha ha, no, not at all. I can see that this is mostly about me, my ideas around manhood, and even my fear of women or feminine energy. It feels threatening.

Scott: Are the words, "It feels threatening" your son, Brandon?

Tom: At first it seemed like those words were him, but when I dropped into my body and just felt the fear, without calling it fear, it wasn't so bad. It washed away. So no, the words aren't him. And that energy is not him.

Scott: Is that energy in your body your wife or women in general?

Tom: No, that seems ridiculous now.

Scott: Look at the words, "I didn't father him correctly." Are those words Brandon?

Tom: No.

Scott: Take a moment and rest here in the present moment, letting anything arise, any thought, emotion, or sensation. Can you find Brandon, your son?

Tom: Not really. I do see a picture of him kissing a man. That feels like him.

Scott: Notice the emotion or sensation arising?

Tom: Yes, disgust. I'm dropping that word to just feel what disgust is really like when I'm not labeling it. Let me see…is this energy Brandon? No, it's not him. And when I look back at that picture, I see that's not him. That picture and those feelings have to do with my own beliefs about manhood and homosexuality.

Scott: Can you find Brandon?

Tom: Yes, he is sitting at home right now.

Scott: Is that picture in your mind of him sitting at home your son, Brandon?

Tom: Oh, that's interesting. No, that's just another mental image. I don't even know if he is at home now. I'm seeing something amazing. Everything I've taken to be Brandon is a thought with emotions and sensations. I'm feeling such a great

spaciousness now, such a peace and lightness around this whole issue of Brandon being gay. I can see that I love him. I mean…I love my story of him. I can see that I've always only had a story of him. It's like I've never met him. I've never allowed him to be who he is. I only wanted him to be my image of him. And so much of that just came from my beliefs about men and women, and homosexuality. This is such a release of all of that.

A Final Note about Using the UI on Others

It was so poignant to watch Tom come to the realization that he was not interacting with his son the way his son really is. He was interacting with his own thoughts, emotions, and sensations about his son, which were largely influenced by his cultural beliefs about masculinity, femininity, and homosexuality. From the time we are born, we are inundated by the prevailing beliefs of the culture in which we live. Those beliefs define and shape who we are and who we think others are. We are often looking at our own projections and fears when we look at others. But this isn't obvious until we start looking directly at the thoughts, emotions, and sensations that arise in awareness.

Now that you have seen the UI being used in this way, you can take this into your own life. How do you see your husband, your mother, your boss, your neighbor, your government leaders, your friends, and your enemies? For each person you encounter, look directly at the thoughts that arise. Do the inquiry. Notice how much emotions and sensations play into what you believe about someone. Don't analyze. Just use the UI to find the other.

The UI can be used on so many levels of our human experience. Imagine government leaders using the UI on other government leaders before contemplating war. Imagine a rapist using the UI before he acts out on his impulses. Imagine an angry mother using the UI before she lashes out at her child. Imagine the political pundits on TV doing the UI before they begin ranting and raving about what is wrong with the world today. All that it takes is an openness to look in a different way,

rather than immediately believing our thoughts to be objectively true. And if you look at the long history of suffering that humans have experienced with each other in relationship, we could use a different way of looking.

CHAPTER THREE:
The Deficient Self in Relationship

The Core Deficient Self—A Believable Illusion

NOW THAT YOU have seen how the UI works, let's take a closer look at relationship and how the belief in a core deficient self drives so many of our actions and reactions when it comes to others.

The deficiency story is like a false script, a fundamental lie about who we really are that we carry around from childhood into adulthood. It's directly related to the belief in being a separate person. In reality, there isn't a deficient, separate self; we just believe that there is. The deficient self comes in many forms: unlovable self, weak self, powerless self, inadequate self, unacknowledged self, abandoned self, invalid self, unimportant self, or some other version of the stories, "I'm not good enough," or "There is something wrong with me."

When I first started writing books, I didn't speak of the deficiency story. Back then, I couldn't see how pervasive that story really is. But it's everywhere, if you look. The world practically runs on the story, "There is something wrong with me." Our relationships are often controlled by this central belief about ourselves.

I saw this belief within myself through the years but I didn't have a name for it. I couldn't see how deeply it was operating in me, until I began using the UI. Once I started using that inquiry on myself, I began to see this basic belief, "I am deficient," as the trunk of a tree that has many branches. The branches are thoughts like, "I need to change," "I wish I could be more like him," "I am not successful enough yet," or "She doesn't like me." I noticed that if I focused only on the branches, trying to decide whether each thought was true, I found myself swirling in a bottomless pit of self-analysis, never getting to the root belief in a core deficient self.

Once I started to pin all those branches down to a single deficiency story, which for me was "I'm unlovable," it all began to come into view. I knew then that all I had to do was try and find that unlovable self whenever I was triggered in relationship in any way. Focusing on the trunk, instead of trying to cut down all the branches, made all the difference.

Relationship Is a Mirror

Relationship has a built-in mirroring effect. As we move through life, other people appear to reflect back to us this core

deficient self. When the deep wound that lies at its heart is triggered, we experience pain and suffering. This lie hurts, and it is responsible for much of the difficulty that we experience in relationships. If the pain gets too much, we may find ourselves trying to avoid it, blame others for it, or medicate it. We have a tendency to believe that others are the source of the pain. But others are just a mirror showing us what we believe about ourselves.

Here are a few signs indicating that the deficiency story has been activated in relationship:

- Insisting on being right and making others wrong
- Seeking love, praise, attention, acknowledgement, or approval from others
- Comparing ourselves to others as better or worse
- Belittling, ridiculing, or bullying others
- Trying to control or manipulate others
- Recoiling in the face of conflict out of fear when it would be more authentic to speak our minds
- Judging others negatively or complaining about them
- Expressing anger and other emotions in unhealthy, destructive ways

- Alienating ourselves and avoiding certain painful relationships

- Acting on selfish ambition

- Suppressing painful emotions and not expressing how we really feel

- Feeling jealous or envious of others

Much of this mind activity comes from being afraid to look directly at who we have falsely taken *ourselves* to be. The others in our lives are constantly mirroring this illusion of a core deficient self back to us.

If you look, the mirroring effect is happening in every direction. Having a view of others as successful often mirrors back an unsuccessful self. When a loved one does not respond to you in the way you expected, or a romantic relationship ends, this often mirrors back an unlovable self. Attractive people may mirror back an unattractive self. People who look important in the world may mirror back an unimportant self, or an unworthy self. When someone judges or criticizes you, this may mirror back a self that feels wrong. When others appear arrogant or authoritative, this may reflect back a weak, insignificant, or small self. If others appear powerful, you may feel less powerful or powerless.

It's not just other people. Anything can reflect deficiency back to you. A drug addiction, or problems with money, mirror back a self that is lacking. Past events may reflect

that you are currently a victim. Future things like enlightenment, recovery, and self-improvement may point back to a self that seems presently incomplete.

It's not always just a simple play of opposites. The outer circumstances in your life, no matter what they are, generally reflect *something* back about how you view your self. If outer circumstances appear inadequate, you may also experience yourself as inadequate. The point is that the inner and the outer are one, no matter how you slice it. Whatever seems to appear "out there" reflects, in some way, what appears "in here"—in the self identity.

In its most basic sense, pointing outward at others through the mirror of relationship means looking to people and things outside ourselves for our self-esteem. This book focuses mainly on the negative self identities that seem to keep us from experiencing genuine happiness. Not everyone is deeply unhappy all of the time, of course. To claim such a thing would be insulting to all the people who are living happy lives right now. But whenever we believe that true, stable, permanent happiness is *dependent* upon other people or the outer circumstances of our lives, we set ourselves up. We are deriving our self-esteem largely through the mirror of relationship. If one's positive view of himself is based on comparing himself to others, and those people or outer circumstances happen to change for the worse, quite often the inner view of self starts looking deficient again.

Identities based on mental stories and images are unstable. As the inquiries in this book reveal, true self-esteem arises out of selfless presence. It has nothing to do with mental

stories and images. It has nothing to do with defining oneself through the mirror of relationship. True self-esteem cannot be destroyed by the thoughts and actions of others.

The Panorama View

To get a better view of the depth to which a belief in deficiency and separation may be affecting the way you move and act in relationship, try this out:

> *Imagine yourself sitting in the middle of a room, with all the people and other things in your life placed around you in a circle. Scan around the whole circle. As you look at each person or thing, notice how it appears to reflect back that you are deficient in some way. This panoramic view will help you see and name the particular deficient self that you take yourself to be.*

When you believe you are deficient at the core, the people and things in the circle seem to confirm it. Everything and everyone can act as a trigger for that core belief, "There is something wrong with me." The reverse is also true. Look around the imaginary circle at each of the people and see if you experience yourself as being *better* than some of them in an inherent way—as if there is something about your essential nature that shines more brightly than others in the circle.

When we are deeply honest with ourselves, we come to see that the only reason we believe that we're inherently better

than others is because, at the core, we feel inherently deficient. We hide the deficiency by overcompensating with the mind, creating a false sense of self to hide the deficiency from others and ourselves. We falsely prop ourselves up.

We can only know ourselves in relation to others; we never appear without reference to others. A person who takes himself to be better cannot sustain that identity without others around the circle who appear worse. More worthy cannot sustain itself without one or more others who appear unworthy or less worthy.

The Benefit of Seeing Through the Core Deficient Self

As we experience freedom from the belief in being deficient people, it becomes naturally easier to move, act, and respond in relationship more selflessly and confidently, with a clear mind and an open, fearless heart. We don't have to cultivate these qualities or put on a false act of being loving or enlightened people. Those would just be new manufactured self-images to replace the old ones. Selflessness and humility show up automatically when the fundamental lie, "There is something wrong with me," is seen through.

We find less need to define ourselves and each other through any mental stories, as if those stories are who we really are. We are able to meet each other freshly in the moment, without the mental masks that keep us feeling separate. The heart can't help but open at that point. We are no longer trying to protect ourselves from feeling the painful emotions that lie at the core of these deficiency stories. Psychological self-protection is only necessary if we take these stories to be our real identities.

Seeing through the sense of deficiency does not mean that we negate our individual skills, talents, and other qualities. We still retain our unique expressions. "Seeing through" just means that we no longer experience ourselves as separate and deficient. Who we are is no longer wrapped into what we think about ourselves. We can relax and simply be in the moment, without having to compare and contrast ourselves to others.

We no longer need to seek, control, or alienate ourselves. When the core deficiency story is seen as empty, we find that we want everybody to succeed. A deep care and compassion for everyone and everything arises.

Love, freedom, peace, balance, equality, and compassion are the nature of our human experience in relationship when the beliefs in separation and deficiency are seen through. Don't take these words at face value or merely as a new belief system. See for yourself. Let this become your direct experience. Do the inquiries.

CHAPTER FOUR:
The Boomerang Inquiry

IF YOU REMEMBER, the UI is the inquiry we use to see that a particular person (e.g., self or other) is empty of separate nature. It focuses on one person at a time. The Boomerang Inquiry is what we call the UI when we use it on the core deficiency story as it shows up in relationship.

Like a boomerang that returns back to the thrower, the deficient self is mirrored back to you in relationship. By using the Boomerang Inquiry, you'll see that mirroring effect and you'll also see through the deficient self that is being reflected back to you. You can inquire into your relationship with anything—any person, place, event, goal, or other thing. When we really believe that we are deficient at the core, almost everything can appear to confirm our story.

How the Boomerang Inquiry Works

1. *Use the mirror.* Whenever you are triggered in relationship, find out what deficiency story this person or thing is mirroring back to you.

2. *Name it.* Give the deficient self *a specific name* (e.g., unlovable self, unfulfilled self, lacking self, incomplete self, broken self, unsuccessful self, unsafe self or invalid self).

3. *Find it.* Try to find this deficient self, using the UI.

You can see that the Boomerang Inquiry is very similar to the Unfindable Inquiry; it simply adds a new first step—using the mirror of relationship to find out what you believe about yourself. Just keep in mind that the Boomerang Inquiry applies whenever you are investigating how something outside yourself seems to bring up your sense of deficiency.

The Boomerang Inquiry: An Example

Tricia: My husband, Brian, triggers me almost every day. I catch him looking at other women. I notice that he doesn't listen to me and this really bothers me. I've tried talking to him about emotions, but he can't talk about them. He says I'm overreacting to everything.

Scott: In those moments when you catch him looking at other women, how do you feel about yourself?

Tricia: Ugly. I feel like I'm not good enough for him.

Scott: How about the times when he isn't listening to you, or doesn't want to talk about the things you wish to talk about?

Tricia: I feel as if he is shutting me out and that hurts.

Scott: Now name the deficient self. If you could reduce this whole story about how he makes you feel to one specific kind of deficient self, what would it be? Reduce it down to something that really feels like you at the core.

Tricia: I'm unlovable. That sums it up completely.

Scott: Now find it. Try to find that unlovable self. Relax and just notice the capacity to be aware of thoughts coming and going. Look right at the words, "I'm unlovable." Are those words you—the unlovable self? If it helps, you can imagine

putting those words in a picture frame in your mind, to isolate them so you can look directly at them.

Tricia: Let me take a moment. Are the words, "I'm unlovable" me? Yes, that's me. That's how I feel about myself.

Scott: When words feel like who you are, it just means some emotion or sensation is arising along with the words. But the emotion or sensation is unconscious. In other words, you aren't directly aware of it. Take a moment, bring attention into your body, and see what emotion or sensation is arising.

Tricia: Sadness.

Scott: Look right at the word "sadness." Frame it. Is that you—the unlovable self?

Tricia: No, that's clearly just a word.

Scott: Let that word fall away and bring attention back into your body. Can you feel the energy that you are calling sadness? Not the word sadness, but the actual energy in your body?

Tricia: Yes.

Scott: Take a moment and just notice that you are presently aware of that energy, without a name for it. Gently observe that energy. Is that energy you—the unlovable person?

Tricia: Yes, that's me.

Scott: Whenever an emotion or sensation feels like you, it just means there are some words or mental pictures arising along with it. If you just take a moment and look into your mind, what words or pictures are arising along with that energy?

Tricia: The words, "I've always had this problem with men."

Scott: Look right at those words. Are those words you—the unlovable self?

Tricia: Those are just words. When I looked at them, they fell away.

Scott: Bring attention back into your body. Do you feel that energy still?

Tricia: Yes.

Scott: Look again at that energy, without labeling it. Just let all words and pictures come to rest. Observe. Is that energy you?

Tricia: No, that's just energy. And it dissolved as soon as those words dissolved.

Scott: Bring up a memory of the last time Brian was not listening to you and you felt hurt.

Tricia: That's not hard. He did it this morning.

Scott: Look directly at that mental picture of you talking this morning, while he is not listening. Frame it, if that helps. Is that picture you?

Tricia: No, that's just a memory. It's not me.

Scott: Look at the words, "He looks at other women." Are those words you—the unlovable person? Stick to yes or no. Don't elaborate.

Tricia: No.

Scott: How about, "He doesn't listen to me and this bothers me?"

Tricia: No.

Scott: Just rest as awareness, and scan the space of your inner body. Let any thought, emotion, or sensation arise naturally. Where is the unlovable person? Can you find her?

Tricia: I don't know what you mean.

Scott: You have come to me saying that you are an unlovable person. I assume that this is who you have taken yourself to be for many years, right?

Tricia: Yes, since childhood.

Scott: If this is really who you are, shouldn't you be able to find that unlovable person right now? When a child is looking for an Easter egg, she is not ambivalent about what she is looking for. Either she spots it or she doesn't. If there is an unlovable person sitting with me here right now, can you point me to her?

Tricia: Yes, it's me.

Scott: Are the words, "It's me" the unlovable self?

Tricia: Ha ha, no! Just words.

Scott: Look for the unlovable person.

Tricia: It seems to be in my name.

Scott: Look directly and only at the word "Tricia." Is that the unlovable person?

Tricia: No, but it seems to point to her.

Scott: Find the unlovable person that's right here. Not just words pointing to her. Find HER.

Tricia: I can't. Wait, yes, I can. I see the thought, "I know he loves me but I don't feel it."

Scott: Are those words you, the unlovable person?

Tricia: Well, intellectually, I know they are just words. But there is sadness arising again.

Scott: Bring your attention into the body to feel that energy without words and pictures. Is that energy you?

Tricia: No. I cannot find the unlovable me at all. I'm now just sitting here in peace, feeling totally free of that story. I can see the memory of my dad. He was cold. But when I look right at that picture, I can see it's not me, the unlovable person. Wait, there's a picture in my mind of me as a ten year old girl. That's the unlovable me.

Scott: Is that picture of the girl you, the unlovable self?

Tricia: I can see it's just a picture. I went straight into the body to feel the energy of sadness and it washed through. No, it's not me. Wow, I've been in this story for a long time. I can't find her, the unlovable self.

Scott: Take a look at Brian again in your mind. Does the sense that you are an unlovable person arise when you look at him? Is the boomerang at work again?

Tricia: No, he looks perfect just as he is. I can see I love him. Actually, it's more than that. It's just love. I don't feel like it's

missing. This was just a story I was placing on him. Thank you, thank you. This is as clear as day now. I feel so much lighter!

Scott: Yes, and when the story is "I'm unlovable," we believe others contain our love, withholding it from us.

Tricia: What a cruel joke!

A Final Note about the Boomerang Inquiry

Like a boomerang, Tricia has sent the message out that she feels like an unloved person. She's played the part, and spoken the language of an unloved person. She has consistently reacted to Brian from that belief about herself, interpreting his actions as unloving. Whether Brian's actions have been objectively unloving makes no difference to Tricia's story. The interpretation was happening in Tricia's mind. The boomerang of "I'm unloved" came right back to Tricia.

When we believe we are unlovable at the core, there is an unconscious drive within us to attract people and situations that confirm the story. We repeat the same pattern in our relationships. We continually interpret the actions of others according to that story. We may even unconsciously sabotage relationships. In these ways, we solidify the story over and over, until that deficient self is seen through. Tricia was never a deficient person. There are no deficient people, just old scripts running.

Notice that, near the end, I asked Tricia to look again at Brian, once she couldn't find the unlovable person. When she looked at him, she no longer felt that trigger. The deficient self was seen through. The old script of, "I'm an unlovable person" was no longer operating. Once that story is seen to be unfindable, love is seen to be our true nature. We naturally stop throwing the boomerang out because the story of deficiency is absent. Others cannot return what we no longer throw out to them.

This doesn't mean we must stay in every relationship. Either we stay or we leave. The right action to take becomes clearer as we are no longer looking at others through the lens of a deficient self.

For example, if a person's core story is "I'm unlovable," she may unconsciously choose a partner who cannot reciprocate love, who abuses her physically or emotionally, or who acts in other ways that appear unloving. Or she may unconsciously sabotage a healthy relationship in order to keep the core story of unlovability going. Although this results in pain, the pain is familiar. It reinforces her core identity. After all, who would she be without that core story? This is not about blaming the victim. It *does not* excuse any abusive or problematic behavior on the part of her partner. But this kind of insight can open her up to the possibility of seeing that her core story may have something to do with who she chooses as a partner and how she responds and reacts within relationships.

As she sees through that belief about herself, all of that unconscious mind activity comes into the light of awareness and then quiets. The magnetic pull towards a partner that mistreats her, which was based in her core deficiency, releases itself. The sabotaging stops. She may find herself staying in the relationship if it deepens into a more mature, deficiency-free, selfless love. In the alternative, she may find that she is no longer interested in being with that partner, especially if her partner is still acting out his or her own patterns of deficiency, unwilling to look within.

CHAPTER FIVE:
The Panorama Inquiry

LET'S REVISIT THE words of Chapter Three regarding the panoramic view of our relationships with other people and things:

> *Imagine yourself sitting in the middle of a room, with all the people and other things in your life placed around you in a circle. Scan around the whole circle. As you look at each person or thing, notice how it appears to reflect back that you are deficient in some way. This panoramic view will help you see and name the particular deficient self that you take yourself to be.*

In a way, our lives are already designed as a circle. All the people, situations, and events we encounter are all around us, feeding us information about who we are. Imagining this circle puts everything and everyone around you into focus. It allows

you to see how each person and thing is mirroring back to you some version of the story, "I am deficient."

How the Panorama Inquiry Works

1. *Create a circle and scan it.* Create an imaginary circle of the people and things in your life. As you scan around the circle, stop whenever you feel triggered in any way.

2. *Name it.* Name the deficient self that this person or thing appears to mirror back to you.

3. *Find it.* Try to find that deficient self using the UI.

4. *Repeat.* Scan the circle again, repeating steps 1 – 3 for each person or thing that triggers you.

As you move through these chapters, notice that we are merely building on the Unfindable Inquiry. We are adding steps in order to help you illuminate how the beliefs in separation and deficiency show up in so many different kinds of relationships.

The Panorama Inquiry is an extension of the Boomerang Inquiry. It merely adds more people and things into the mix. The more people and things you add to that circle, the easier it is to see how pervasive the deficiency story is in all of your relationships. The more you see it operating in each relationship, the easier it is to see through it using this inquiry.

No matter how you're triggered by the people or objects in the circle, you won't be able to find the deficient self. You'll see through it in all its incarnations. This inquiry ensures that no stone is left unturned.

The Panorama Inquiry: An Example

Kevin: I hate authority. I don't like it when people tell me what to do, or tell me what's best for me. I hate it when they pretend to know the truth about things. My mission is to show all authority figures how insane and arrogant they are.

Scott: Imagine yourself in the middle of a circle in which all the authority figures in your life are placed around you.

Kevin: I see my father, my high school principal, my boss, certain politicians, a spiritual teacher I followed around for a while, and my best friend who is a know-it-all. And…let's see, who else…oh yeah, you. I'm feeling that same resistance towards you because you believe you have this inquiry that is going to show me the truth.

Scott: Sounds like you have attracted lots of authority figures (laughs)!

Kevin: I don't attract them. They are just there. I like to just show them how arrogant they are.

Scott: Scan around the circle until you find yourself triggered, and then stop.

Kevin: I'm already triggered. My father stands out the most.

Scott: What deficient self does he mirror back to you? Name it.

Kevin: I don't think I'm deficient. He just tried to control me, and thought he knew what was best for me.

Scott: How did it make you feel about yourself when he did that?

Kevin: Small and weak.

Scott: There's the deficient self.

Kevin: Yikes, OK…

Scott: Find it. See if you can find that person who is small and weak. Are the words, "I feel small and weak" that person?

Kevin: I'm feeling a real tightness in my chest.

Scott: So that's a yes?

Kevin: Yes!

Scott: Are the words, "I'm feeling a real tightness in my chest" that small and weak person?

Kevin: No.

Scott: Let those words fade away. Just notice them and let them dissolve. Feel the energy in your chest without naming it. Just sit there for a while. Give yourself all the time you need.

Let me know when you can feel just that energy without naming it.

Kevin: (silent for 30 seconds) Yeah, I feel it.

Scott: Is that energy the small and weak person—the deficient you?

Kevin: No. It's fading.

Scott: Look at your father's face. Is that mental picture the small, weak person?

Kevin: No.

Scott: How about the words, "He tried to control me?" Is that you?

Kevin: If I don't put the picture of his face with those words and I just see the words, then no. That's not me.

Scott: How about a memory of your father trying to control you or telling you how to live your life? Can you see any memory of that? Is that memory you?

Kevin: Yes, that's me. The tightness is there again, along with fear.

Scott: Just sit and observe that picture without interpreting it. Watch it fall away. Feel the energy in your body without words and pictures. Is that energy you—the weak, small person?

Kevin: When I dropped that picture, the tightness left.

Scott: Take a moment and just relax, noticing your capacity to be aware. Look in your direct experience. Scan the inner space of your body. Look everywhere just as a child does when he is looking for an Easter egg. The egg you are looking for is the small, weak person. Can you find it?

Kevin: No, I can't find it. And instantly I feel forgiveness for my father. I see he had his own story.

Scott: Create the circle again. Scan around it until you are triggered.

Kevin: I see politicians. I see myself watching them on TV, pretending to be the authority for us all.

Scott: Are the words, "Politicians pretend to be the authority for us all" you, the small, weak person?

Kevin: No, it's not me. And that picture just fell away. Now, I see my spiritual teacher. He acted like such a guru. He thought he had the truth. Anyone who disagreed with him was made to feel insignificant.

Scott: So you felt insignificant?

Kevin: Yes.

Scott: See the pattern yet?

Kevin: Yeah, insignificant means small and weak.

Scott: "He thought he had the truth." Are those words the small, weak you?

Kevin: No. That's an idea. I know that. But I still feel that fear in my chest.

Scott: Relax the idea and feel the energy. Is that energy you?

Kevin: Yes, this fear feels like me.

Scott: Is the word "fear" you?

Kevin: No. But that energy is me.

Scott: That just means there are words or pictures still arising. What are they?

Kevin: It's just a picture in my chest, like a black hole.

Scott: Look directly at that image. Is that image you, the small and weak person?

Kevin: Yes, that's me.

Scott: Are the words, "That's me" you, the small, weak person?

Kevin: Interesting. No, I can see that's a thought. That's not me.

Scott: When you aren't emphasizing the thought, "That's me," is that black hole picture you?

Kevin: No. And now I see it loosening up.

Scott: Just observe it gently, without describing what it means for you. Watch it morph and change on its own. What is it changing into?

Kevin: A picture of a fist in my stomach and a feeling of rage.

Scott: Is that picture of the fist you, the small, weak person?

Kevin: No. It's falling away. And now I just feel this boiling anger.

Scott: Let it boil, but without words and pictures for it.

Kevin: I saw it rise up, as energy. And now it's releasing…into…peace.

Scott: Look back at your spiritual teacher. Are you triggered?

Kevin: Yes, but I'm looking at that thought. No, that's not me. That's not a weak, small person. It's just a picture of me, and the rest of his students sitting around him. There's no charge to it.

Scott: Scan the circle again.

Kevin: I'm seeing you there, and feeling a small charge. But in just feeling that feeling, it is releasing. I am not seeing you as an authority figure. You are not telling me what is true. You're just helping me look at my own beliefs.

Scott: Scan the circle.

Kevin: I see my dad and my spiritual teacher, but they seem totally OK now. I feel no aggression towards them. But I see my best friend, Mark, who thinks he knows it all. I love the guy but he pisses me off.

Scott: Are the words, "He thinks he knows it all" you?

Kevin: No. And I can see that the words, "He pisses me off" are not me, the small, weak person.

Scott: Can you find the small, weak person?

Kevin: No, it's nowhere to be found. Damn!

Scott: Scan around the circle. How does everyone else look now—all these authority figures?

Kevin: I don't see anything wrong with them.

Scott: Were you experiencing any peace by constantly trying to show these people the arrogance of their ways?

Kevin: Not only was I not feeling peace, but I wasn't changing them. They just continued saying and doing what they have always done. And it just kept enraging me. So I fought and fought.

Scott: But to no avail.

Kevin: I might have changed one or two people slightly in my life by my constant ravings against authority, but generally to no avail. Mostly a lot of damage done.

Scott: Do you see how relationships harmonize when you stop focusing on others and just turn towards this deficient self and try to find it?

Kevin: Yes. Oh my God, yes! I feel like I've been in a lifelong nightmare and I'm just waking up now.

Scott: Scan the circle one more time. Are you triggered?

Kevin: No, not at all.

Scott: Just remember: whenever you are triggered, do this inquiry.

Kevin: I will. I don't want to do this to myself anymore.

Scott: It's great to see that you were doing this to yourself. When you clean up your mess, everyone else starts looking cleaner too.

Kevin: Spotless (laughs). There was only one spot—me—sitting there in the middle making a mess of every relationship. But wait! Does this mean all opinions are bad and that I am supposed to never speak my mind again? Is that what you are saying?

Scott: No, you can always speak your mind. We all learn from and influence each other in relationship. You will probably find that your voice comes from a more authentic, honest place as you see that you are not a deficient person.

Kevin: Makes total sense. I can also see that there's not a lot to judge people about when I don't feel weak and small.

A Final Note about the Panorama Inquiry

The million dollar question is this: will you no longer be triggered in relationship after doing the Panorama Inquiry once? The answer differs with each person. In my work, I've noticed that some people see so clearly through the deficiency story the first time they do the inquiry that they never need to do it again. If triggers happen after doing the inquiry, they immediately see the thoughts, emotions, and sensations, and allow them to come to rest, without having to go back into suffering.

For many others, the Panorama Inquiry becomes a tool that they carry with them in their day-to-day lives. They use it every time they are triggered, going through the whole set of questions. One of the results of the inquiry, for some people, is that they begin to see the deficiency story popping up everywhere, and even more often, for a while. This is good news! It just means that the story has always been operating on some level, but that it was unconscious. The inquiry makes the story more and more conscious. And the more you see it, the more you are freeing yourself from its grip. Actually, you aren't forcefully freeing yourself from it. The core story of deficiency begins to dissolve on its own, or not even arise again, through the use of both the Boomerang and Panorama Inquiries. The story lets go of you, leaving you resting naturally in the present moment.

But here is a critical caveat: be careful not to turn these inquiries into a new story that you are really a deficient person who needs to be fixed by doing these inquiries. The inquiries are designed as a present exploration. Use them that way. They

are not designed to help you seek some later moment in your story when you are free. Thinking of the inquiries that way just reinforces the notion that you are deficient now and will be fixed later.

I've noticed that some people create a deficiency story around the inquiries themselves. For example, after doing the inquiry, one woman reported back to me that she realized she had to continue doing the inquiries to get rid of her deficient self sometime down the road, in the future. She was, in fact, using the inquiry as a way to believe that she was actually deficient now. She thought there actually was something wrong with her and the inquiry would fix her. Instead of helping her buy into that belief about a deficient self that needs to get rid of itself, I asked her to stop, right there, and try to find that deficient self. She couldn't find it in that present exploration. We both laughed as she noticed that she had used the inquiry to actually reinforce her belief in deficiency. That belief was seen through on the spot. Do you see how subtle the deficiency story can be? The fact is, there is no deficient self. It's a belief. And if you believe it's really here, and that you have to work towards getting rid of it in the future, you are already buying into it as something real.

Many people carry their deficiency stories into self-improvement work, recovery, and the seeking of something better or different. They look for self-improvement, recovery, or some future state that will cure their sense of deficiency. In that way, these future states are actually mirroring back to them that they are presently deficient. Be careful not to use these inquiries in that way. Don't look at this book as a way of getting

somewhere in the future. Right now, try to find the deficient self that believes freedom lies in the future only. If you can't find that self right now, what are you seeking in the future? Seeking future states only makes sense if you presently buy into the idea of being a deficient self.

A Note about the Inquiries

This book contains a lot of information, which is here to explain how the deficient self operates and to provide insight as you use the inquiries. Don't bog yourself down with memorizing the words. Use the inquiries when you are triggered in relationship mainly. If this book just gives you more information about yourself, it won't necessarily transform you. Spend most of the day just being present to the thoughts, emotions, and sensations that come and go.

If you find yourself spinning into a bottomless pit of self-analysis while doing these inquiries, take a break. They are not meant to send you into more mental activity about yourself. There can be such a strong pull back into self-analysis as a way to keep the core story alive. The inquiries are designed to reveal open, clear, spacious, selfless awareness as always and already present in your own direct experience. This is a quieting of the mind, not an activation of it. Take several days off. Come back to the inquiries later.

In the meantime, stick with the simple approach mentioned in the introduction. *Take brief moments of resting as thought-free awareness repeatedly throughout the day, every day. How brief? At first, just three to five seconds at a time. How often? Do it as often as you can. Make resting as awareness your top priority. Do it repeatedly. As you do it more and more, the moments naturally become longer. It becomes natural and automatic to rest as awareness in all situations.* This simple relaxation without viewpoints is tremendously healing and peaceful. And the more you recognize awareness as always present, the easier it is to do the inquiries.

CHAPTER SIX:
Conflict

FOR AS LONG as there have been humans roaming the Earth, there has been conflict. Conflict arises out of the belief in separation, the notion that me, you, us, and them are all separate. There is conflict on all levels of human experience, between people, between groups, and between nations.

Conflict is not a dirty word. In fact, conflict can be quite useful, if you are willing to use it to go inward to see what it is that you believe about yourself. It's usually a belief about the self that lies at the root of conflict and once explored, it can be a doorway to the deeper knowing that you are not a separate person.

Most conflict, if you look beyond the surface issue of who is right and who is wrong, is really about the fear of death. Being wrong is deeply threatening to the sense of "me."

In the midst of conflict, if you pay close attention to the play of thoughts, emotions, and sensations, you will notice that

it's the sense of self that is being protected and defended. Defending and protecting that sense of self, and attacking others who threaten it, can feel like a matter of instinctual survival. Fight or flight. After all, when you make me feel wrong, you are not just threatening a random, uninteresting thought I'm having. If I believe that I am my thoughts and emotions, it feels like you are threatening my very identity.

The Boomerang Inquiry on Conflict

This and subsequent chapters contain a series of examples that alternate between the three inquiries in this book (the Unfindable Inquiry, the Boomerang Inquiry, and the Panorama Inquiry). As you become more familiar with each inquiry, it will be easier to feel into which one works best in a particular situation. The example below involves Robert and his conflict with Charlie, a co-worker. I help Robert by using the Boomerang Inquiry.

Robert: I work with a guy named Charlie. We have lunch together. We always end up talking about politics, and the conversation always gets very heated. I want to be able to talk about politics without it turning into a fight.

Scott: Maybe the conversation isn't really about just politics.

Robert: I get what you mean. It gets very personal.

Scott: Let's use the Boomerang Inquiry on it. Use the mirror. When you look right now at Charlie trying to be right, what does that mirror back to you about who you are?

Robert: I feel wrong.

Scott: Do you see how there is a sense of a separate, deficient person that has to defend and protect himself?

Robert: Yes. Like I said, it feels really personal.

Scott: Let's name it specifically. Let's just call it the "wrong self" or "the person who is wrong."

Robert: Yes, I've felt that many times throughout my life. This must be why I keep getting into these arguments. I want to be right.

Scott: Find it. When you look right now, can you find the person who is wrong? Are the words, "I'm wrong" it?

Robert: Something in my gut says yes, that's me.

Scott: Whenever words feel like they are who you are, it just means there is some sensation or emotion arising along with the words. What is that sensation in your gut?

Robert: A clenching sensation.

Scott: Are the words "clenching sensation" you, the wrong person?

Robert: No.

Scott: Just take a moment and let the words, "I'm wrong" and "clenching sensation" come to rest. Rest here in the present moment without your story for a few seconds. Bring awareness

to that energy in your gut. Is that energy you, the person who is wrong?

Robert: Yes, it feels like me.

Scott: Whenever an emotion or sensation in the body feels like who you really are, it just means some thought (that is, words or a picture) is arising too. Do you see anything like that? Look in your body. Is there a mental picture down there in your gut?

Robert: I see a picture of my stomach.

Scott: Is that picture you, the person who is wrong?

Robert: No, it's just a picture.

Scott: Just observe the picture without placing any words on it. Watch it morph and change on its own.

Robert: Yes, it's starting to disappear.

Scott: Is there some emotion left over?

Robert: Yes, fear, but it's starting to release now that the picture has disappeared. It's not releasing totally.

Scott: That's OK. Let it be as it is. The point of this is not to get rid of sensations or emotions. The point is to try and find the person who is wrong. I want you to pull up a recent

memory of you and Charlie arguing over politics. What is he saying?

Robert: That I'm "confused, like all Democrats."

Scott: "You're confused, like all Democrats." Are those words you?

Robert: No, because I know that Democrats are not confused.

Scott: This inquiry is not about politics. It's not even about what is true. It's about seeing if you can find the person who is wrong, that core deficient self that feels like it needs to defend and protect itself.

Robert: OK, no. Those words aren't me. This is incredible. Something just fell away…a feeling of heaviness lifted. I was taking those words to be me. You're right—this isn't about politics. It's about me.

Scott: Can you find the person who is wrong as you sit here resting as awareness, just letting thoughts arise and fall?

Robert: Something is still hanging on. I'm seeing the thought, "I need to show Charlie this inquiry." That feels very personal, for some reason.

Scott: Are the words, "I need to show Charlie this inquiry" you, the person who is wrong?

Robert: (laughing) No, that's not me. And I can see I just wanted to show him that he is wrong and that this is not about politics at all.

Scott: As you sit here right now, can you find the person who is wrong?

Robert: He is in my body.

Scott: Are the words, "He is in my body" you, the person who is wrong?

Robert: No.

Scott: Close your eyes and scan the inner space of your body with awareness. Don't think. Just scan. Can you find the person who is wrong?

Robert: No, I can't find him. But I sense that he is this body.

Scott: Do you see the outline of your body when your eyes are closed?

Robert: Yes.

Scott: Can you see that it's a mental image, or picture?

Robert: Yes.

Scott: Look at that line, trace it all around the body, from head to toe. Is the mental image of a line you, the person who is wrong?

Robert: When I look directly at that outline, I can see it's just a thought. I feel a great openness right now, like there is no line between me and the space around me.

Scott: Look within that open space. Scan it. Can you find the person who is wrong?

Robert: No.

Scott: Now look back at Charlie's face. Are you triggered again?

Robert: Not at all. I have no desire right now to argue with him. I couldn't care less.

Another Option

I could have taken Robert through the UI, asking him to find Charlie as a separate, objective other. For example, I could have asked, "Is the picture of Charlie's face him?" How about the words, "Democrats are confused?" Sound is a sensation. I could have asked Robert to hear the sound of Charlie's voice. Then I could have asked, "Is that sound Charlie?" Any questions like that can help to reveal to Robert that when he is

thinking, he is not experiencing a separate, objective Charlie. He is experiencing thoughts, emotions, and sensations that paint Charlie in a way that is unique to Robert. When that sense of separation is released, the need to be right often releases along with it.

A Final Note about Conflict

Sometimes when we believe we are using logic in a debate to try and come to the "objective truth" about a particular topic, we are actually using it as a way of reinforcing our personal identities. Casual debate turns into conflict when we believe we see things objectivity, and overlook that we are seeing through the filter of thought. Thought is where our personal identities reside. This is why debate often gets so personal. Emotions and sensations arise with those thoughts, creating a sense of personal identity that seeks to be right, above all else. The more a viewpoint is emotionally charged, the more it can seem as if the viewpoint is true. In that way, it's not really about logic. It's about emotion. Being wrong can feel highly personal and threatening when we are identified with our thoughts, mistaking them for reality.

No viewpoint exists all by itself. A viewpoint cannot exist separately from other viewpoints, just as a person cannot exist separately from other people. Right cannot exist without wrong. The two arise together and are mutually interdependent. That's the mirror of relationship. Does this seem like too much to swallow? If so, try defending a viewpoint without having someone else to defend it against. For conflict to happen, there must be two sides. One side cannot fight with itself. When we are defending a viewpoint for personal reasons, we are using it as a way to define a self against an other. The more we personally identify with a viewpoint, the harder it is to hear another's perspective. We are so busy defending the viewpoint that we stop listening.

When you find yourself in a heated debate, are you defending the truth or defending a self? Certainly, it is healthy to be passionate about topics that we hold dear to our hearts. And it is healthy to express how we think and feel about something we are discussing with another person. There are times when we have to stand up for what we believe is a more appropriate view in a given situation. But we can do this without believing that the viewpoint has something to do with a personal identity. We are not thoughts. We experience thoughts. They come and go. Sometimes we deceive ourselves into thinking that we are merely passionate about something, when we are actually feeling personally threatened in a discussion and are reacting from the fear of being wrong.

How often do you use logic to benefit someone else's view when you are in a debate with them? It rarely happens. More commonly, we use logic to benefit ourselves in a debate. Each point we make is a way of solidifying the person who is making the point. Instead of finding the objective truth, we keep finding and reinforcing a self.

Instead of using conflict as a way of solidifying the belief in separation, we can use it as a way of waking up out of that belief. We can see through the self that is identifying with thoughts. The inquiries in this book can help. Once we are no longer using logic to solidify separation, a more authentic communication begins to happen. We begin to take others' perspectives more easily. All perspectives are taken into account, without making things deeply personal. This frees us from the grip of having to defend a self in our discussions with each other, yet we can still express our views freely.

CHAPTER SEVEN:
Perfectionism

PERFECTIONISM IS THE drive to change or perfect one's self, others, and situations. There is often an underlying sense that things are not as they should be, so improvement is constantly sought. Not everyone has this tendency. But for those who do, an inner sense of inadequacy or imperfection is often projected or reflected onto other people or life circumstances. Perfectionists are not only hard on themselves; they frequently judge other people (and situations) as wrong or deficient in some way. This can easily trigger a sense of deficiency in the ones being judged. As a result, many perfectionists report a recurrent pattern of frustration in their relationships.

The perfectionist's mind is trying to construct a perfect outer reality to fix an inner belief in deficiency. It's an impossible and exhausting game, which doesn't work. There are no winners. Even if a perfectionist is successful at changing

another person or situation, there is always something else out there to improve or change. The more a perfectionist focuses outward, the more he remains blind to the root of the issue, which is the belief, "I am imperfect." The outer circumstances are merely a reflection of this inner view of self. The key is to turn towards this belief in an inadequate self and see that it is an empty fiction.

The Boomerang Inquiry on Perfectionism

Zoe: I'm a perfectionist. I can't help it. I've always been that way. This is creating a lot of problems in my relationship. I'm always judging and trying to change my partner.

Scott: Does it feel like something is wrong with him, as if he shouldn't be the way he is?

Zoe: Yes. I just know he could be better. He is lazy.

Scott: When you look at your partner right now in your mind, what does that bring up in you?

Zoe: I'm frustrated with him. I know that if he would just change a few things, life would be smoother for both of us. I'd stop nagging him.

Scott: I'd like you to stop focusing on your partner for a second, and focus on what his behavior mirrors back to you about whether you are deficient in some way. Name it.

Zoe: I judge myself even more harshly than I judge him.

Scott: Now, we are getting somewhere. Just give a specific name to that self you are judging so we can look to see if that is who you really are.

Zoe: It's like…there is something wrong with me too. That's been there all my life, the self-judgment. OK, let me look, and see if I can give a name to it. Inadequacy.

Scott: Can you find that inadequate self in your experience right now? Are the words, "I'm inadequate" you, the inadequate person?

Zoe: Yes. That's me.

Scott: When you are identifying with a thought, it means there is some emotion or sensation arising along with it. What is that?

Zoe: Contraction. Frustration.

Scott: Is the word "contraction" you, the inadequate self?

Zoe: Yes, that's it.

Scott: Relax that word for a few seconds and find out what it is like to be aware of that contracted sensation in your body without calling it "contraction." Take your time. Whenever you can feel it without a name ask yourself, "Is this me, the inadequate person?"

Zoe: Yes, that's me.

Scott: Are there words still coming up with that energy?

Zoe: I don't see any words right now.

Scott: How about memories, mental pictures? Sometimes the picture can be so subtle that you don't see it at first, until you really relax and just observe the inner space of your body. It can even be a picture of the body part that seems to contain that contracted energy.

Zoe: Yes, I can see a picture of my chest.

Scott: Is that picture you, the inadequate self?

Zoe: Yes. It almost feels like that area of my body is responsible for all the self-judging thoughts.

Scott: Just observe that picture without any words. Scan the picture up and down, left and right. Are there any words on the picture?

Zoe: You mean written on the picture of my chest?

Scott: Yes.

Zoe: No. I see it's just a picture of a chest.

Scott: Stop and listen to that picture, as crazy as it may sound. Quiet your mind long enough to see if the picture itself is speaking. Is it saying anything?

Zoe: No.

Scott: When you aren't interpreting it, is this picture the inadequate person?

Zoe: No. And I can see it changing now. But there is anger coming up. I'm angry at myself and my partner.

Scott: Are the words, "I'm angry at myself and my partner" you, the inadequate self?

Zoe: No, that's not the inadequate me.

Scott: So just let those words come to rest by observing them directly. Is the word "anger" you?

Zoe: No, it's not me. But it feels really intense right now.

Scott: Are the words, "It feels really intense right now" you?

Zoe: No.

Scott: OK, let those words come to rest also. Really experience what anger is like when you aren't describing it or attributing it to someone. Just rest and let that energy do whatever it wants to do. Treat it like you treat the air around you. You can't make air go away and you can't make it stay.

Zoe: It's just energy. That's not me either. Now, it's losing intensity.

Scott: Look for the inadequate self. Scan the space of your whole body with awareness. Be aware of the inside of every body part, your head, everything. Scan without thinking. Can you find it?

Zoe: No.

Scott: OK, just let thoughts arise and fall. Can you find the inadequate person?

Zoe: I see the thought, "I'm not doing this right." I can see that I'm trying to do this inquiry perfectly, too.

Scott: Are the words, "I'm not doing this right" you?

Zoe: No. Now I can't find me, the inadequate person. It's just not here now.

Scott: Now look back at your partner. Does he seem to trigger that sense of inner inadequacy in you?

Zoe: Yes. I feel like I'm wrong for judging him all the time.

Scott: Are those words you?

Zoe: No. Something just dropped away. He isn't triggering anything now when I think about him.

Scott: Can you find the inadequate person as you sit here right now?

Zoe: No. And so I can see there is nothing wrong with him or me.

Scott: So what's not perfect about you or him?

Zoe: There's nothing that needs to be changed.

Scott: Right. Once you see that you cannot find the inadequate person you take yourself to be, suddenly others don't look inadequate either.

Zoe: It's that simple?

Scott: Yes. It only becomes complicated when you are focusing only on him, analyzing his behavior. In those moments, you are believing your thoughts about him, instead of trying to find yourself. The inadequate self is like a layer of film on your eyeball. It distorts everything you see. That's why you've been so busy trying to change people and situations around you. When you look for that inadequate self, you are turning your attention towards that layer of film. It's just an old script that says, "There's something wrong with me." It is not who you really are. It never was. There was never anything wrong with

you. When you can't find that self, the layer begins to dissolve. You see everyone as they really are. There is nothing wrong with them, either.

Zoe: Magnificent. Such clarity now!

A Final Note about Perfectionism

I have worked with many self-proclaimed perfectionists through the years, who have reported back to me that this inquiry has been quite helpful. Zoe is merely one example. The natural relaxation from perfectionist tendencies does not keep people from using discrimination in their lives. Many perfectionists have reported back to me that they are now able to use the capacity to discriminate in a more loving, compassionate way. As they are freed from the basic belief, "There is something wrong with me," their discriminating mind turns away from negative judgments of self and other and towards a natural creativity that sees everything as already perfect as it is.

In seeing a natural perfection everywhere, the movement to create change is no longer coming from the basic belief in deficiency. And yet the movement to create change can still arise. Circumstances can be improved without a corresponding belief that things are wrong. This is a gorgeous paradox that has to be lived to be experienced. Creativity flourishes when it is freed from the imprisoning belief that things are wrong. Discrimination is naturally more selfless in nature. These people often report back that their relationships are more harmonized also. Others around them feel less judged. When perfectionists see through the sense of an inherent, imperfect self, there is naturally less stress and frustration behind the viewpoints that arise to create change.

CHAPTER EIGHT:
Ambition

AMBITION IS THE desire for personal advancement, power, control, fame, or money. It often outweighs concern about how one's actions affect others. It is often based in fear and a core deficiency story such as "I'm lacking," or "I'm incomplete."

Aspiring to act in the world in a manner that truly cares for self, other, and all of life is not destructively ambitious. This kind of aspiration is not coming from a core deficient self. It is more selfless in nature.

Discerning the difference between self-centered ambition and selfless action can be tricky. We may think that we are being selfless, when in fact we are welcoming suffering into our relationships with others. We are often blind to the motivations that drive us when we are operating from a personal sense of lack or incompleteness.

The Panorama Inquiry on Ambition

John: My company has made a major profit this year through software development. Yet, I feel this sense that we need to do more. Our competitors are catching up with us. The consumer base for our products is limited. Our software helps people so I don't think we are overly ambitious.

Scott: So then why did you come here to do this inquiry?

John: Well, there is a nagging feeling in my gut that something is off when I think about our company, the competitors, the consumers, and all the material items I own. I can't put my finger on it. I'm hoping you can help.

Scott: Imagine yourself in the middle of a circle. Place all of those people and things around you in a circle. Scan the circle and tell me if that nagging feeling shows up in your gut.

John: You threw me for a loop there. I thought you were going to have my company be in the middle, not me.

Scott: Companies aren't ambitious. People are. A company is just a group of people. And since we don't have the other people in your company here, we can just put you in the middle.

John: When I scan the circle and see potential consumers, I can see that whether they buy our products or not matters a great deal to me.

Scott: Don't forget to put the consumers that refuse to buy your products in the circle too. What do they mirror back?

John: Fear. I'm afraid many people won't buy the products.

Scott: Name it. Name the deficient self. What's that feeling saying about you, the person?

John: Lack. It's a fear of lacking money and security.

Scott: Can you find the lacking self? Are the words, "I'm afraid many people won't buy the products" you, the lacking self? Stick to yes or no.

John: Yes.

Scott: Let those words dissolve away and bring bare naked observation to that feeling. Is that energy you?

John: Yes, feels like it.

Scott: That just means that there are still words or pictures arising. What are they?

John: I'm going to lose everything I own.

Scott: Are those words you, the lacking person?

John: Yes.

Scott: Do you see how thoughts, emotions, and sensations seem welded together, that they make you feel as if there is a person here who is lacking at the core?

John: Yes.

Scott: Whenever thoughts and emotions seem welded together, go back and forth between them. Bring your attention to the words, and then to the energy without the words, and then the words, and then the energy without the words—back and forth. Do you see that words have a different quality than the energy?

John: Yes, the words are just words. Those aren't me. But the energy feels more real. There is something about this fear in my body that feels like me.

Scott: Look directly at the energy without the words now that you know those words aren't you. Is this energy you, the person that lacks?

John: No, that's just energy. I see that now. Without a story, it doesn't have much force to it.

Scott: Look back at those consumers who won't buy the products. Is that mental picture of them you, the lacking self?

John: No.

Scott: Relax without thoughts for just a few seconds. Just notice your capacity to be aware. Scan everywhere in that awareness. Can you find the lacking person?

John: No, it's not there. So I'll scan the circle again. I can see the boss of my company pop up in the circle. I'm feeling that sense that something is off again. He could fire me at any moment.

Scott: Are the words "something is off" the lacking person?

John: No, just words. And now I'm looking at the words, "He could fire me at any moment." Those are not me either.

Scott: But does it feel like there is still a lacking self sitting right here with me?

John: Not right now.

Scott: Scan the circle and see if you get triggered again.

John: Yes, I see a memory of watching our competitors come out with some software that became popular.

Scott: Is that mental picture the lacking self? It might help to put it into a frame in your mind.

John: Yes, that feels like me for some reason, even though I'm nowhere in the picture.

Scott: Relax those words. Feel the bodily energy that came up. Is that you?

John: The energy relaxed. No, it's not me. OK, now I see my father, when I was young, sitting at the dinner table worrying about money.

Scott: Is that mental picture you, the lacking self?

John: Yes, that's me. I'm resting into the energy without those words now. OK, no, the energy isn't me. A peace just fell over me. I don't feel that feeling that something is off anymore. And I can't find the person who is lacking. I can see that I've deceived myself. I've been telling myself that I'm just doing this job to pay the bills and that's my only motivation. But I can see now that this story of lack has been running the show entirely.

Scott: Paying your bills is good.

John: Yes, of course. And my bills have been paid. Actually, I've made a lot of money. But I can see the real motivation for what I'm doing now. I'm motivated by this core belief. And I can't find that belief now. So my motivation is gone. That

scares me. Does this mean I won't care about working for the company anymore?

Scott: It doesn't mean that necessarily. It means that you no longer have to be fueled by something that is not really there—a self that seems to lack something at the core.

John: Now, I'm thinking about my future. I feel a striving to achieve.

Scott: That's great.

John: I've had lots of fun at my job, and felt really inspired. But as I look at the future, it doesn't feel like inspiration. More like fear.

Scott: Put your future in the circle. Better yet, put a future there in which you aren't able to achieve what you want. Is the mental picture of that future you, the lacking person?

John: Immediately I see that they are just words. And the fear was coming from believing those words. Yes, that feels good. I can relax a lot more in my life, and tend to other things that I enjoy, my family, friends, and hobbies. And I can still work there, but without this story. I've been taking this job home with me every day. And it seems like everything has been about this fear and lack.

Scott: Maybe you've taken the story, "I lack" home with you every day, because you thought it was you.

John: Right, of course, yes! The job is still there. It's that sense of lack that I can't find now. My job looks totally different and so do all the people in this circle. I can see that they are all thoughts. I can see that I took myself to be thoughts too. So there's much less stress right now. My mind is much quieter around all this stuff.

A Final Note about Ambition

John reported back to me that after doing this inquiry, he continued to experience freedom from self-centered ambition. He was able to take the inquiry into his job on a daily basis. He continues to experience an ongoing relaxation from the story, "I lack."

In doing the inquiry on ambition with many others throughout the years, I've seen a variety of results. Some people experience a bit of direction-lessness for a while, having realized that much of what they were doing in their careers was coming from a basic sense of lack. As that sense of lack relaxed, the desire to continue in that particular field fell away. There can be a kind of "down time" before one's true purpose reveals itself.

Others discovered a new career for themselves immediately. They became very clear about what matters most to them. One woman in particular jumped whole-heartedly into a new business after doing this inquiry. After years of being driven by a sense of lack, her newfound clarity allowed her to do what she really wanted to do, without the self-pressure that she had felt for so many years.

In my own life, my desire to be an attorney changed through this inquiry. I found that what used to drive me—this sense of lack—was no longer there. This led me into being of service to others through the use of these inquiries, private sessions, and group meetings. Ambition, based in lack, has snuck in now and again. But in using this inquiry, the lack has been seen through. This has led to my being very clear that nothing is lacking in myself or others. This provides a deep

relaxation within all my efforts to help people. When we are no longer operating on the story, "I lack," there is a natural flow to life that can be trusted completely.

CHAPTER NINE:
Bullying

BOTH BULLYING AND being bullied create and reinforce deficiency stories. Bullying often starts at a young age, and comes out of low self-esteem and feelings of powerlessness and inadequacy. When we don't see through the stories of deficiency as we are growing up, bullying can continue into adulthood; it happens in relationships at work, on the internet, and in just about every other situation imaginable. The Boomerang and Panorama inquiries can be used by those who are bullying as well as those being bullied.

The Boomerang Inquiry on Bullying

In this example, Werner is inquiring into feelings of not being good enough, the result of workplace bullying.

Werner: I'm being bullied at work almost every day. It's gotten to the point where I just want to quit. I can't take it anymore. I've actually fantasized about being violent one day, walking into work and putting them all in their place.

Scott: Are your employers able to do anything about it?

Werner: My immediate boss bullies me too, along with my co-workers. They all talk about me behind my back. Call me names to my face like "Werner the slow learner" because I ask a lot of questions during group meetings.

Scott: Create a circle in which you are sitting in the middle surrounded by everyone at work who is bullying you. Use the mirror. When you look at all these people, how do you feel about yourself?

Werner: I start believing the names they call me.

Scott: Can you tell me a couple of the other names?

Werner: The worst one is "ass face" because I'm ugly.

Scott: I see that this is what they call you. How do you see yourself? Name it. When you hear those thoughts in your head, what do they tell you about who you think you really are?

Werner: A loser who is not good enough.

Scott: I know that is what your thoughts tell you, but if you are really a loser who isn't good enough, we ought to be able to find him, right?

Werner: Yes.

Scott: Let's try to find you.

Werner: OK…

Scott: I want you to relax in your chair and get really comfortable. Take a few deep breaths. Then I want you to notice that there are thoughts coming and going in your head.

Werner: I notice them.

Scott: I want you to pull up the words, "a loser who is not good enough" and just stare right at them, without adding any other words to them. Imagine those words in a picture frame in your mind, if it helps. Are those words you?

Werner: Definitely.

Scott: How do you feel in your body when you believe that those words are you?

Werner: Really sad.

Scott: OK, I want you to imagine the words, "I'm really sad" in a picture frame in your mind. Are those words you, the loser who isn't good enough?

Werner: Yes, all these words feel like me. They are too close, you know? I can't see them as only words.

Scott: OK, take this paper and pen and write down the words, "I'm a loser who isn't good enough."

Werner: OK (writing down the words).

Scott: Now look directly at those words on the page. Are those words you?

Werner: I get some distance from them now, seeing them on paper. But I still have to say "yes" because there is sadness welling up as I read them.

Scott: Can you feel that energy in your body? Don't think about it. Just feel it.

Werner: Yes.

Scott: Is that energy you, the loser who isn't good enough?

Werner: It's just an uncomfortable feeling.

Scott: Write down the words, "It's just an uncomfortable feeling." Are the words on that page you, the loser who isn't good enough?

Werner: Looking at the words on the page, I'd have to say no.

Scott: OK, now bring a very light quality of attention to the feeling itself, without any words on it. Take your time. Relax as awareness. Is that feeling, by itself, the loser who isn't good enough?

Werner: Yes, that feels like me.

Scott: Write down the words, "Yes, that feels like me." Are those words you?

Werner: No.

Scott: Now, experience that feeling again without even placing those words on it. Is that feeling you? Don't try to push the feeling away, just bring a light attention to it. Look at the feeling directly without any ideas about it.

Werner: No, that's not me, the loser.

Scott: Now I want you to bring up a mental picture, a memory, of when you were bullied at work recently. Do you see that?

Werner: Yes.

Scott: Relax and look directly at that picture. Is that you? It's "yes" if your body reacts in any way. It's "no" if your body doesn't react.

Werner: Yes—immediate anger.

Scott: Write down the words "immediate anger." Are those words you, the loser who is not good enough?

Werner: (pausing in silence) No. Haha, it's just energy and it feels kind of pleasant when I just let it be there as it is.

Scott: Now, look back at the picture of being bulled at work. Is that picture you?

Werner: I don't know. There is still a charge to it.

Scott: OK, so remember, if there is any charge, just say "yes."

Werner: Yes.

Scott: When words or pictures feel like you, the loser who isn't good enough, it means the words or pictures feel welded

together with emotions or sensations. That's the Velcro Effect. Do you know what Velcro is?

Werner: Yes, I have Velcro on my weight bench at home. I use it to keep my hands fastened to the barbell. Yes, I can see the Velcro Effect between my thoughts and the emotions.

Scott: That Velcro Effect is how self-identification happens. See that?

Werner: Yes.

Scott: Does it seem like the mental picture of being bullied is stuck to the feeling of anger?

Werner: Yes.

Scott: Sometimes, when the Velcro Effect is happening, there is a subtle mental picture of the body part or some shape or form around the emotion. Relax and bring gentle attention to the feeling. Do you see any picture like that?

Werner: Yes. It's a bunch of steel bars over the feeling.

Scott: Relax and look directly at that mental photograph of steel bars. Is that picture you, the loser who isn't good enough?

Werner: No. It's fading. But now I see a picture of a little boy being teased at school. That's me.

Scott: Look directly at that picture. Is that you, the loser who isn't good enough?

Werner: Hmmm, I don't know. No, now that I look again, that little boy is fading too. But the words, "You suck at everything" are coming up.

Scott: Look right at the words. Are those words, by themselves, the loser who isn't good enough?

Werner: No, those are just words. When I looked directly at them, without adding more words, they faded and the charge in the body faded.

Scott: How about the word "assface?"

Werner: That seems like me. I can feel the sadness again.

Scott: Sit there allowing the energy to be, without trying to understand or label it. Then ask yourself if that energy is you, the ugly loser. Take your time.

Werner: No, just energy. It's so healing to just let these feelings flow naturally.

Scott: Look back at the word "assface." Is that word, by itself, the loser who isn't good enough?

Werner: By itself? No. Wow, this is interesting. I'm seeing all this dissolve in front of me.

Scott: How about the words, "Werner the slow learner?"

Werner: No, those words aren't me. They look like silly rhyming words. It's kind of funny now.

Scott: As you relax as awareness, can you find the loser who isn't good enough?

Werner: (laughing) No, I feel an incredible weight off my shoulders right now. I feel free. But…somehow it feels like the loser is still here, waiting in the wings.

Scott: Look at the words, "The loser is still here, waiting in the wings." Are those words, by themselves, the loser?

Werner: No.

Scott: Do you see any picture of a loser waiting in the wings somewhere?

Werner: Yes, I see a picture of him peeking around the corner, waiting for you to finish with me so he can come back out.

Scott: Look at those words. Are the words you, the loser who isn't good enough?

Werner: No, the words are not the loser.

Scott: Look at the picture of that figure peeking around the corner. But look without any words. Is that picture you, the loser who isn't good enough?

Werner: No. It's fading now…

Scott: Look at a future picture of you walking into work being violent towards all those people. Is that picture you? Relax and just look directly at the picture. Take all the time you need.

Werner: Ha, no. That's not even interesting now. That's not the loser.

Scott: Sit there, resting as awareness, letting everything be as it is. Whether there is thinking or no thinking, feeling or no feeling, can you find the loser who isn't good enough?

Werner: No! (smiling) It's amazing how long this story has been there. I've believed it totally.

Scott: Scan the circle of bullies now. Does the sense of being a loser who isn't good enough arise within you?

Werner: No, in fact, they just look like middle aged men.

Scott: Do you see how going to the root, and looking for the deficient self, is where the most direct freedom is found?

Werner: Absolutely!

Scott: We continue to think of ourselves as deficient only because we don't look. We think about ourselves, instead of looking for that self.

Werner: Yes, that is so obvious right now. I was focusing so much on them that I wasn't seeing what I believed about myself. From now on, I'm going to look for that self instead of just buying into this story.

Bullies Feel Deficient, Too

Werner was the target of bullying, so the inquiry centered on the belief in deficiency that was showing up for him. But imagine if we could do the inquiry with the co-workers who have been bullying him. We would see deficiency stories operating there, too. Bullies are often overcompensating for a deep sense of deficiency in themselves, accompanied by feelings of inadequacy, insecurity, or weakness. They deflect and project that deficiency onto others. Deficiency is safer to target as something out there, outside ourselves. The inner sense of deficiency is a blind spot. It is difficult to see, and even more difficult to face once it is seen.

Regardless of whether one is bullying or being bullied, it's a matter of naming the deficiency that is running the show and then trying to actually find it. In Werner's case, this doesn't mean that he must continue to work at his job. He may find clarity about the whole situation and find that he doesn't want to work in that atmosphere anymore. Or he may stay and continue to see through any of the projections coming from others. Either way, the inquiries will provide a deep insight for him about how deficiency gets tied into identity and how, "I'm a loser who is not good enough" is not really who he is.

A Note about the Inquiries

Are you using these inquiries as a way to seek the future or to over-intellectualize yourself or others? Having restless energy within your body, or an overactive mind, are good indications that you're using the inquiries in this way. Spend the majority of your day just resting as awareness, letting all thoughts, emotions and sensations be as they are. Notice that when you rest in this way, there is nothing you have to do with thoughts, emotions, and sensations. They come and go to awareness, leaving no trace. Use these inquiries only when you are triggered in relationship.

When you're not doing the inquiries, stick with the approach mentioned in the introduction. *Take brief moments of resting as thought-free awareness repeatedly throughout the day, every day. How brief? At first, just three to five seconds at a time. How often? As often as you can. Make resting as awareness your top priority. Do it repeatedly. As you do it more and more, the moments naturally become longer. It becomes natural and automatic to rest as awareness in all situations.*

CHAPTER TEN:
Abuse

ABUSE COMES IN so many forms that it is hard to find one definition that truly fits all cases. Whether it is physical, sexual, emotional, or verbal, abuse is improper, often violent treatment of an individual or group. Through the years, I've worked with those who have abused others and those who have been abused.

Deficiency stories permeate abusive relationships, on both sides of the equation. The first inquiry below involves Juliette, a woman who reached out to me because of the ongoing verbal abuse she received from her husband. The second inquiry is with Zan, who brought up a desire to molest children that, at the age of thirty five, had begun to rule his life.

The Boomerang Inquiry on Being Abused

Juliette: I have been in a marriage for fifteen years with a husband who verbally and emotionally abuses me. He yells and calls me names. Sometimes I think I even deserve some of the abuse he gives me. I am too afraid to speak up. When I speak up, he uses that against me.

Scott: When you look at your husband's face right now as a mental picture, what does he mirror back to you about being deficient in some way?

Juliette: Completely invalid.

Scott: Can you find that invalid self as you sit here talking to me?

Juliette: Well, I know that all of these are just thoughts and that thoughts are not what I am.

Scott: You may know that intellectually, perhaps because you've read spiritual teachings that say, "You are not your thoughts," but does it feel like you are really an invalid woman?

Juliette: Yes, it feels like more than thoughts. I am invalid.

Scott: Look directly at the words, "I am invalid." Are those words you, the invalid woman?

Juliette: Yes.

Scott: That means that some emotion or sensation is arising with the words. What is arising?

Juliette: Fear…and sadness.

Scott: Let's start with the fear. Is the word "fear" you, the invalid woman?

Juliette: That word is not me, but I am afraid.

Scott: Let the word "fear" come to rest for a few seconds. Just look at it directly until it dissolves away. That word is not the fear itself. It is a word pointing to energy in the body. Can you feel the actual energy in your body, when you aren't labeling it?

Juliette: Yes.

Scott: I want you to rest into that feeling, without any words or pictures on it. Rest as the spacious awareness that allows the feeling to be there as it is, without trying to make it go away or label it. I'll drop out for a while as you do that.

Juliette: I can't be with the fear. I keep seeing his face and memories of things he has said to me.

Scott: Are the words, "I can't be with the fear" you, the invalid woman?

Juliette: No.

Scott: How about the words, "I keep seeing his face and memories of things he has said to me?"

Juliette: No, that's not the invalid me.

Scott: Look at the picture of his face in your mind. Is that picture you, the invalid woman?

Juliette: No, that's just a picture of him.

Scott: Look at the most prominent memory in your thought stream, a memory where he has said something that frightened you.

Juliette: I hear him yelling at me, telling me that nobody will love me if I leave him.

Scott: Look at the words, "No one will love me if I leave him." Are those words you, the invalid woman?

Juliette: They feel true.

Scott: OK, but I'm not asking if they feel true. I'm asking if those words are the invalid woman. Remember, we are trying to find that invalid woman.

Juliette: Those words are not me.

Scott: Can you find the invalid woman that the words seem to point to?

Juliette: I feel the fear in my chest again. I'm afraid of him.

Scott: Are the words, "I feel the fear in my chest again" the invalid woman?

Juliette: No.

Scott: How about the words, "I'm afraid of him?"

Juliette: Yes, that feels like me.

Scott: That means there is emotion or sensation arising along with the words. I presume fear. Can you now sit and allow the energy of fear to be as it is, without words and pictures?

Juliette: Yes.

Scott: Is that energy, itself, the invalid woman?

Juliette: (long pause) No, it's just energy. And when I am not feeding it with stories, it loses its strength. That's nice…

Scott: Look at the words, "I am invalid" again. Picture them in a frame. Are those words you, the actual invalid woman?

Juliette: No, now they just look like words.

Scott: Can you find the invalid woman?

Juliette: I feel an incredible sadness, as if I've wasted many years of my life with a man who doesn't respect me.

Scott: Look at the words, "I feel an incredible sadness." Are those words you?

Juliette: No.

Scott: How about, "I've wasted many years of my life with a man who doesn't respect me?" Imagine there is a typewriter in your head spelling out those words. Look at all the letters, one at a time. Are those words you?

Juliette: Yes. I mean…I can see that they are words, but they feel like me.

Scott: Is there sadness arising along with the words?

Juliette: Yes.

Scott: The words and the emotion can feel as if they are welded together, until you observe the emotion without words on it. Then you can see that it isn't really welded to words. It's just energy that needs to arise and pass through. Can you rest in awareness and just let that energy be as it is, without words and pictures?

Juliette: Yes. And now those words are gone. The feeling, once I let it be there, turns to warmth. I feel present.

Scott: Can you find the invalid woman?

Juliette: No, I just feel spacious, warm, like a loving energy everywhere.

Scott: Look back at your husband's face. Does that seem to bring up the sense that you are an invalid woman?

Juliette: Yes, but it's much more subtle now. There aren't any words or pictures. Just a sense that I am invalid.

Scott: Are the words, "Just a sense that I am invalid" you, the invalid woman?

Juliette: No.

Scott: Can you find that sense when you aren't labeling it? Where is it?

Juliette: In my stomach, a tightness.

Scott: Are those words you?

Juliette: No.

Scott: Where is the invalid woman?

Juliette: It's this body. This body is invalid.

Scott: Are the words, "This body is invalid" you, the invalid woman?

Juliette: (giggling) No, it's funny how words sneak in there to make me believe that. No, those words are not me. But it's the body itself that feels invalid, not the words.

Scott: With your eyes closed, I want you to bring into focus the outline of your body. Trace that outline from the top of the head, down your side, to your feet, and back up the other side until you reach the top of your head again. Do you see the line that seems to contain you, an invalid woman?

Juliette: Yes, that's what I'm saying. The body seems to contain me, someone who has no worth or validity.

Scott: Is that line, by itself, you—the invalid woman?

Juliette: No, not at all. I see that it's an image.

Scott: Where is the invalid woman?

Juliette: I have a sense that it is inside this image.

Scott: Are the words, "I have a sense that it is inside this image" you, the invalid woman?

Juliette: No, those words are not me.

Scott: Without thoughts, scan the inside of that image. Scan that space left and right, up and down. Can you find the invalid woman?

Juliette: I can't find the invalid woman at all. It's a total fiction…that I have believed for years. I feel incredibly light and spacious, as if there is no invalid woman here at all. I don't feel any boundaries around me. In some way, this spaciousness feels like I am life itself, which is totally valid. But my eyes are closed. I feel that if I open my eyes, that invalid woman will be here!

Scott: Then open your eyes. Can you find the invalid woman with your eyes open?

Juliette: I see my body. And somehow that looks like an invalid woman.

Scott: Are the words, "I see my body" the invalid woman?

Juliette: (giggling again) No!

Scott: How about the words, "Somehow that looks like an invalid woman?"

Juliette: No, just words.

Scott: Touch your leg. Is that sensation, by itself, the invalid woman? Don't place any words or pictures on the sensation. Just experience the sensation of touch by itself.

Juliette: No, that sensation is not an invalid woman. And now, as I touch other parts of my body, those sensations are not it either.

Scott: Are any of the colors or shapes of your body an invalid woman?

Juliette: (laughing) No, just colors.

Scott: Close your eyes. Can you find the invalid woman?

Juliette: No.

Scott: Now open your eyes. Can you find the invalid woman?

Juliette: No. What a relief this is. What incredible relief. The whole weight of that story is gone.

Scott: Look back at your husband's face. Does the invalid woman show up again?

Juliette: No. He just looks like a middle aged man. He looks sad. I can see that he has believed things about himself. He doesn't know this love that I'm experiencing now. He must be really hurting inside to want to hurt me.

Scott: How does the relationship feel now that you are clear about not being an invalid woman?

Juliette: Well, without this fear, I feel empowered to leave. I mean, I would love for him to change. But I don't see it happening. I can see how this fear has kept me trapped.

Scott: Right! Seeing through the story of deficiency can bring utter clarity about what you want to do, whether it is to stay or leave. It clears the mind and opens the heart. Seeing through that story does not mean you have to stay and take whatever he dishes out. You don't have to be a doormat. But, of course, I cannot give you advice about what to do. With this newfound clarity, you are the authority for your own life now.

Juliette: Yes, and it's not that I am telling the story that I am a valid person now. Somehow, it is a validity beyond the mind. It seems very clear that I want to leave this relationship. And I think I can do it now.

A Final Note on Being Abused

Juliette met with me several times after this inquiry. Occasionally, she fell back into believing that there was something wrong with her or that she was invalid and paralyzed by fear. Each time we met, I took her through the inquiry. Eventually, she was able to do the inquiry on her own. She is now in the process of getting a divorce and moving on with her life. Juliette is a success story.

A few of the people I've met with through the years did not follow through with the inquiry and instead fell back into a sense of stuckness in the deficiency story. For example, I met with a woman who used the inquiry to find freedom from the story, "I'm a lonely person" only to fall back into that story. She didn't contact me for a whole year. After the year had passed, she set up another session, and told me that she had been somewhat depressed. She had forgotten the freedom she experienced through the inquiry. We did the inquiry again. She walked away free and clear of that story. She wasn't quite ready the first time we met. There is nothing that I can do for someone who is unwilling or unable to be with the painful emotions that lie at the heart of these stories. There is often a magnetic pull towards thinking of oneself as broken at the core.

If you find yourself trapped in an abusive relationship, seek help. You may benefit from therapy or some other program or method. The inquiries in this book are not therapy in the traditional sense of the word. In many (not all) forms of therapy, the focus is on replacing an old deficiency story with a new story such as, "I am a valid person." If that is what you are

looking for, therapy might benefit you more than these inquiries. Whether you believe you will benefit from these inquiries or traditional therapy, find and use whatever works for you. These inquiries are not designed to provide a better story, although you may choose to mentally land on a new one. It's not about improving your personal story and defining yourself as better or more valid than others. Rather, the inquiries are designed to free you from all stories. The power that Juliette experienced came from the recognition that she is not any story. She did not end up with the story, "I am a valid person." She recognized a deep and profound presence. Notice that she said, "This is a validity beyond the mind." She was experiencing a non-dual recognition; she realized that she was beyond both deficiency and non-deficiency. The inquiries open you to a knowing of clear, open, space-like Oneness. In that openness, you begin to see everyone and everything as perfect, valid, and loving.

The Panorama Inquiry on Abusing

Zan: I remember when I was twenty years old. I had a crush on a ten year old girl. Lots of sexual fantasies about that. But I put it out of my mind. At the age of thirty five, fantasies about young girls came back. And now they are very powerful. I'm actually afraid that I'm going to act out on them. When my young niece is around, I can't stop the thoughts about wanting to be intimate with her.

Scott: I want you to imagine yourself sitting in a circle, with young girls all around you. How do you feel as you think about acting out?

Zan: Excited. Powerful. Alive. And also scared that I'm going to act out.

Scott: Imagine now being unable to act out with any of these girls. There you are, sitting in the middle of the circle by yourself unable to do anything. How do you feel about yourself? What deficiency story is operating?

Zan: Powerless. I feel really alone, depressed actually. I can see that I'm trying to feel better or more powerful through these fantasies.

Scott: Trying to cover up the pain?

Zan: Yes.

Scott: Let's not cover it up with the fantasies. Instead, I want you to try and find this powerless self. Stop focusing on the girls as a way to medicate your pain. Where is that powerless self?

Zan: Right here. It's me. I've felt that way ever since I was sexually abused as a child.

Scott: Are the words, "Right here, it's me" you, the powerless self?

Zan: Yes.

Scott: That means that there is some emotion or sensation arising. That is the pain you are trying to medicate. Would you agree?

Zan: Yes. Feels like a black hole in my stomach.

Scott: Are the words, "It feels like a black hole in my stomach" you, the powerless self?

Zan: No.

Scott: I want you to observe that black hole without describing it with words.

Zan: OK.

Scott: Do you see it?

Zan: Yes.

Scott: Is that picture of the black hole the powerless you?

Zan: When I'm not describing it that way? No, it's a picture.

Scott: When you look right at the surface of that picture, does it have the words, "I'm powerless" written on it?

Zan: No.

Scott: Stop and listen to that picture, as odd as that sounds. Is that picture talking? Is it saying, "I'm powerless?"

Zan: No.

Scott: Observe that picture directly, without words, and watch it begin to change on its own. Tell me what happens.

Zan: It's starting to fade. But a picture of me as a little boy is showing up now.

Scott: Are the words, "A picture of me as a little boy is showing up now" you, the powerless self?

Zan: No, the words aren't, but the picture itself is me.

Scott: Are the words, "The picture itself is me" you, the powerless self? I want you to look just at the words themselves, as if there is a typewriter in your mind spelling out the words.

Zan: Those are just words.

Scott: Stare at the picture of that boy, without words. What happens?

Zan: It fades. Now I feel a deep sadness.

Scott: Are the words, "I feel a deep sadness" the powerless you?

Zan: No. But now I want to focus back on those girls. I can see that I use those fantasies to medicate the sadness.

Scott: Don't medicate the sadness. Feel it, without words and pictures.

Zan: (long pause) OK, this hurts.

Scott: Are the words, "This hurts" the powerless self?

Zan: No. The energy is moving through now. It feels quite peaceful as I just let it be there.

Scott: Then just sit with that energy for a while, without going back to words and pictures.

Zan: Feels good to just let it be there.

Scott: Is that energy the powerless you?

Zan: No.

Scott: How about the words, "I'm powerless?" Are those words you?

Zan: Yes.

Scott: Look back at the young girls. Is there a drive to imagine acting out again?

Zan: Yes, to cover this pain.

Scott: The pain is arising because of identification with certain words you carry about yourself. Don't cover the pain. Go deeply into it, without words and pictures.

Zan: I see that as the pain dissolves through observing it, the drive to act out releases too. I'm a predator.

Scott: Are the words, "I'm a predator" the powerless self?

Zan: Society makes me feel that way, as if there is something inherently wrong with me for feeling the way I do and wanting to act out.

Scott: Are the words, "Society makes me feel as if there is something inherently wrong with me" you—the powerless man?

Zan: No.

Scott: How about the words, "I'm a predator?"

Zan: There's a lot of pain with those words.

Scott: So you think those words are you?

Zan: Yes.

Scott: Sit with the energy of that pain, without labels. Let it arise and fall without trying to medicate it, understand it, or go back to labels about yourself. Is that energy the powerless you?

Zan: No, it's not me. Just energy. And it is relaxing.

Scott: Scan the circle of girls again. Does that powerless self appear again?

Zan: Yes, when I see my niece.

Scott: Is the picture of your niece the powerless self?

Zan: No. But I see myself acting out with her.

Scott: Is that picture of you acting out with her the powerless self?

Zan: No, it's just a mental image. But it brings up excited feelings.

Scott: Are the words, "It brings up excited feelings" you?

Zan: No.

Scott: Let those excited feelings arise without labeling them or doing anything with them. Let them wash through naturally.

Zan: They are gone. And the pain is not there either.

Scott: Scan the circle again. Does the powerless you seem to arise again?

Zan: I see my uncle in the circle. He sexually abused me. And I instantly feel powerless again.

Scott: Is that picture of your uncle the powerless you?

Zan: No, that's a picture of him.

Scott: Look directly at the mental picture of him abusing you, as painful as it may be. Is that picture the powerless you?

Zan: Yes, definitely!

Scott: Again, that means emotion or sensation is arising with the words. And the emotion or sensation feels welded together with that picture. Stare at that picture directly, without interpreting it, until it falls away. Then sit with that energy in the body, letting it be exactly as it is. No words and pictures on it.

Zan: Intense sadness.

Scott: Are the words "intense sadness" you, the powerless person?

Zan: No.

Scott: Feel the energy without those words on it.

Zan: This is such a release. I've been avoiding this pain. It's moving through now. It's OK to be with this pain. I didn't know that it was OK until now.

Scott: Is the nameless, pictureless energy that is moving through the powerless self?

Zan: No, it's not. And I can't find that self.

Scott: Scan the circle of girls and your uncle. Does that powerless self arise again?

Zan: No. It's not here.

Scott: Is your desire to act out with those girls still here?

Zan: No, it's gone. I can see that when I'm allowing the pain, being with it, I don't need to medicate it with the fantasies.

Scott: Right. As you said, the desire to act out arises out of a need to medicate the pain. But when you sit with the pain, it washes through.

Zan: This is powerful. Very powerful. I have tried so many techniques, but none of them go this deep.

Scott: Your work is to do this Panorama Inquiry each time you feel a desire to act out. Immediately stop focusing on the object of your desire and, instead, try to find the powerless you.

Zan: Wow, yes, what a tool. I will do that. This is about me, not them.

Scott: It's about a you that is an illusion. You have believed a lie about yourself for years, that you are powerless. Can you find that person now?

Zan: No, no. I can't find him. I feel completely at ease, as if there is nothing outside myself that can truly medicate this pain.

Scott: Right. The belief in yourself as deficient is what drives the acting out and the fantasizing. Even if you act out, it's only a temporary fix for the pain. With any temporary fix, the

deficiency story will pop up again after the fix is over, making you want to act out again and again. This is why your work lies in seeing through that story and being with the pain.

Zan: Makes logical sense.

Scott: It does make logical sense. But you want to go deeper than logic. Actually try to find that powerless self whenever you see yourself fantasizing and trying to medicate the pain.

Zan: I see what you are saying. The mind can only take me so far. This isn't about logic really. It's about seeing through this lie I carry about myself.

Scott: Exactly. See through it each time it arises. That's where the healing is.

A Final Note about Abusing

My work with people who abuse others has shown me that they suffer from deficiency stories, just like so many other people. This doesn't excuse their behavior. We are not concerned with merely healing the sense of deficiency in the abusers; this work is about freeing them from wanting to act out against others. In this way, there is healing for everyone, including the victims of abuse. When abusers no longer see themselves as deficient, their desire to act out diminishes further and further. There is no guarantee that someone will not act out on their impulses to sexually, physically, verbally, or emotionally abuse others. The work lies with those who are prone to these impulses. While they are pointing outward and focusing on others, they are unlikely to look within themselves. But looking within is how the healing happens.

Many people who abuse others do not or cannot see that their actions come from a sense of deficiency and separation. Not seeing this, they may not even be open to the inquiries in this book. In all cases, children and other victims have to be protected. We can protect children and others by placing abusers in jail or on sexual offenders' lists, or using other public safety measures. But ultimately, our work as fellow humans is to see through and heal this deep sense of deficiency no matter where or how it shows up—in the offender, victim, or family members affected by abuse. The more we stigmatize sexual offenders, the more we feed the sense of deficiency in them.

When you heal yourself, you heal all relationships. You heal the world because the world you see is a product of your own thoughts, emotions, and sensations. The more we create an atmosphere in which everyone—abusers and those abused—feel free and safe to look inward at these deficiency stories, the more we create an overall atmosphere of compassionate healing. We are all in this together. These inquiries can be done in conjunction with therapy, prison or rehabilitation programs, victim advocacy or assistance programs, and other healing measures. When our focus is on healing this sense of deficiency in all of us, we'll use whatever works. The well-being of all humans, and all of life, is that important. This becomes even more apparent as we see through deficiency and separation as it arises in each of us.

CHAPTER ELEVEN:
Overcompensation

SOMETIMES THE CORE deficiency story is so painful that we conceal it from others and ourselves. We act as if the opposite of the deficiency story is true. The mind overcompensates in an effort not to feel the painful emotions that lie at the core.

When we overcompensate, a palpable self-deception is going on. We may truly convince ourselves that we are more worthy, special, important, knowledgeable, or spiritual than others. We hide behind this false façade. Others then appear in the mirror of relationship as less worthy, less special, less important, less knowledgeable, or less spiritual.

When we are truly free of the core belief, "I'm deficient," we find no reason to overcompensate. We feel little need to identify with the stories, "I'm good," or "I'm worthy," or to define others as "bad" or "unworthy." When we are free of the belief in separation and deficiency, we naturally exude

that freedom, which may come off as confident, but not arrogant. There is nothing to brag about because we aren't trying to convince anyone of anything anymore.

When overcompensating is clearly happening, there are two ways to reveal it while doing the inquiries:

1) Remember a time from the past when you felt deficient. Sit with that memory until painful emotions arise. Then ask, "What are these painful emotions saying about me?" Usually, painful memories arise along with emotions that have been buried. Overcompensating, by telling yourself that you are better than others in some way, keeps the emotions buried and unconscious.

2) When doing the Panorama Inquiry, imagine others in your life in a circle around you, and notice how you define them as less than you. Then imagine no one and nothing in the circle around you. In that moment, you are not using the mirror of relationship to define yourself in relation to other people. This usually reveals that you do not exist as "more important" without others who are "less important." Everything is relationship. Identities such as, "I'm more important," begin to fall apart when you have no one else with whom to compare yourself.

The Panorama Inquiry on Overcompensation

Ray: This may sound arrogant, but I don't feel I am deficient at all. I think I'm really special, frankly.

Scott: Are the words, "I'm really special" you, the special person?

Ray: No, they are just words. But they are words about me and I feel they are true.

Scott: Pull up a memory from your past when you didn't feel special.

Ray: Got it…when I got fired from my job.

Scott: Does that bring up any painful emotions?

Ray: Yes, something feels off in my stomach.

Scott: When you sit here, playing that memory over and over, and sitting with that feeling, do you feel special?

Ray: No, I feel awful. I felt like a loser back then. I want to put that out of my mind.

Scott: And go back to thinking you are special?

Ray: I see your point.

Scott: That's overcompensation. It's great to feel good about yourself and even love yourself. But when you tell a story that is merely hiding pain, you bring disharmony to your relationships. Think about all the people in your life that you have treated as less than you.

Ray. Yes. I have treated people that way. Ask my ex-wife. She would love this if she were here.

Scott: Imagine a circle in which you are surrounded by all the people that you have defined as less than you. What do those people mirror back to you about yourself?

Ray: That I'm special. I can see that I'm defining each one as if there is something wrong with them.

Scott: Now, eliminate the circle. Imagine there are no people around you at all. Can you feel special without these others to define yourself against?

Ray: Yes, I feel special.

Scott: Compared to whom?

Ray: Well, for example, compared to a friend of mine who hasn't accomplished much at all in his life.

Scott: See how you had to bring someone back into the circle so that you could feel special?

Ray: Yes.

Scott: This time, I would like you to imagine there is no one else around you. Just let your mind be quiet with regard to all the others in your life.

Ray: This is really hard. I want to go back to comparing myself. This is actually really scary.

Scott: What does that feeling seem to indicate about you?

Ray: That I'm insignificant.

Scott: Maybe that's the core story. You named it.

Ray: It is. I know it is.

Scott: Add someone into the circle who doesn't believe you are special.

Ray: My ex-wife. My father.

Scott: What do they mirror back to you about yourself? Who are you in relation to them?

Ray: Insignificant, especially with my father. I could never gain his approval.

Scott: Can you find that insignificant self?

Ray: Yes. I'm feeling that right now.

Scott: Where is it?

Ray: I remember sitting on the couch when I was a kid and hearing my father yell, "You're not worth a damn thing!"

Scott: Is that mental picture you, the insignificant self?

Ray: (crying)

Scott: Take your time.

Ray: Yes. That's me.

Scott: I want you to look directly at that picture, without adding any words to it. Just watch it fade away on its own. Then bring attention into your body, without thoughts. Feel the energy that is there.

Ray: I feel it. I'm angry.

Scott: Are the words, "I'm angry" the insignificant self?

Ray: No.

Scott: Feel the energy without words and pictures. Is that energy you?

Ray: No, it's just energy. Feels good to finally experience it. I know it's been there a while. Now I'm thinking about my divorce from my ex-wife.

Scott: Is that picture you, the insignificant person?

Ray: No.

Scott: Can you find the insignificant self?

Ray: No.

Scott: Can you find the really special self?

Ray: No, I just feel love.

Scott: Notice that when you are gut honest like this, willing to look at whatever deficiency is causing you to overcompensate, a greater freedom shows up.

Ray: Absolutely, I'm feeling no need to tell myself I'm special.

Scott: Or to judge others in the opposite way.

A Final Note about Overcompensation

Overcompensation can be tricky to spot. Authentic confidence exudes itself naturally. It never has to announce itself by saying, "Look at how great I am." To spot overcompensation, we need to look for ways in which our beliefs about ourselves, such as "I am important," carry with them a sense of doubt or fear under the surface. The doubt or fear starts showing up when someone challenges that identity in us. If we were truly confident and feeling good about ourselves, we wouldn't need to be defensive at all.

When we are defending a positive self-image, our minds are engaging in self-protection. We are trying to convince ourselves and others that we are better, more worthy or important. We are likely unconscious to the doubt, fear, and insecurity that underlies that image. The fact that we become sensitive in the moment of being attacked is telling us everything we need to know. We are overcompensating. There is a core sense of deficiency underneath the false posturing.

What should you do when you see yourself defending a positive self-image? Don't judge yourself for it. That just feeds the underlying story, "There is something wrong with me." Make the bodily fear conscious when your self-image is attacked. Really feel it. Let it flow through, without words and pictures. Almost everything in your system may want to avoid facing that fear. When your self-image begins to crumble, it can feel like the fear of death. This is why there is so much energy put into keeping the false self-image alive. It feels like a matter of survival.

Vulnerability is often thought of as a weakness, especially in men. But when you are vulnerable, you are open to being triggered in relationship and open to face the underlying fear that keeps the false self-image in place. Vulnerability allows you to transform out of limiting self-identities. When you face fear directly in this way, you no longer have to maintain some false self-image as a way of overcompensating for it. The self-image is then seen as illusory—just a passing set of words. Your true power lies in this open-hearted vulnerability.

Authentic confidence is not based in a self-image. When you come to know this for yourself, you are likely to experience a natural, unmanufactured confidence. When you rely on a positive self-image such as, "I am more important," that identity can only exist as long as you continue to define yourself against others whom you interpret as less important. A manufactured story must be defended at all costs precisely because it is a lie. The lie protects you from feeling underlying fear. Authentic, unmanufactured confidence never has to defend itself.

CHAPTER TWELVE:
Helping

HELPING OTHERS COULD be considered one of the most virtuous human actions, especially when done selflessly, without expecting anything in return. Yet helping is so often done with some personal agenda behind it. We may not even realize we are operating on an expectation of return, such as praise, acknowledgment, personal validation, or love. We invite suffering into our relationships when we operate with this expectation. The core deficiency operating is, "I'm not lovable" or "I'm not valid." We then seek love and validation from others through helping. We may even try to control others or manipulate them into acknowledging our helpfulness. "How can you treat me like this after all I've done for you?"

The Boomerang Inquiry on Helping

Sandra: I've been helping my mother clean her house and take care of her personal matters since her divorce from my father. I know I am doing it out of love. How can helping my mother be coming from a sense of deficiency?

Scott: It may not be coming from deficiency at all. You may just love helping your mother. Let's try the Boomerang on it. Use the mirror. When you look at your mother, does that bring up any trigger, like emotional pain?

Sandra: Not really, until I imagine her not saying thank you. She doesn't say it much at all. It's very selfish of her.

Scott: Look at a memory where she didn't thank you after you helped her. What does that bring up in you?

Sandra: I'm hurt. It feels like she doesn't love me, even though I know she does.

Scott: Good, you've named it. Can you find that unlovable self? Are the words, "She doesn't thank me" it?

Sandra: No.

Scott: But did your body react in some way when you heard yourself say those words?

Sandra: Yes, sadness.

Scott: Is the word "sadness" you, the unlovable self? Look right at the word itself.

Sandra: No, not me.

Scott: Bring your attention into your body and feel the sadness without calling it anything. Is that energy you?

Sandra: Yes, that's me.

Scott: What words or pictures are coming up with that energy?

Sandra: I see a memory of my father ignoring me when I was little.

Scott: Is that picture the unlovable you?

Sandra: Yes.

Scott: Put it into picture frame in your mind.

Sandra: I can see now it's just a memory. It's not me. I feel like the unlovable me is right here.

Scott: Where is it? Look for it.

Sandra: It's this energy. It's in my chest.

Scott: Can you see any shape or form around that energy, like a picture of your chest or anything else?

Sandra: I don't see a picture of my chest. I see a heart and it looks like it's locked up, like it can't open.

Scott: Is that mental picture you, the unlovable person?

Sandra: No, but it seems to belong to me, the unlovable person.

Scott: We aren't looking for things that belong to her. We are looking for her. Is that picture her?

Sandra: It's fading now. No, it's not her.

Scott: Look for that person who is unlovable.

Sandra: I see the thought, "Mom is selfish." But that's not me. I cannot find it.

Scott: Just rest as awareness, soaking in the experience of not being able to find the self that is unlovable.

Sandra: I feel warmth in my heart. But I can see it's not me either. It's just a really open, warm space, almost impersonal. Very loving.

Scott: Is this the love you've been looking for?

Sandra: (crying) Yes, it's right here. I've been trying to get it from my mother, even though I already know she loves me. Somehow knowing that in my mind was not enough. I didn't feel it.

Scott: Look back at your mother. Does her picture trigger that unlovable self?

Sandra: No, I can see her not thanking me. And there's nothing wrong with her, or me. It's all so silly now. I can see that.

Scott: Anytime you feel triggered when you are helping others, and they don't appreciate it, you can look and see that you are buying into that core story again. And then look for it, just like we did today.

Sandra: It no longer makes any sense to expect my mother to give me what she cannot give me. She can only be herself. It's me. This is all about me.

Scott: Can you find that me?

Sandra: Ha ha, no. What a relief! I feel such a deep love right now.

Scott: It's painful to think we lack love and that only someone else can give it to us.

A Final Note about Helping

There are often mixed motives operating in us when we are helping. For example, there may be a part of us that just loves selflessly helping others. Along with that, we may also be seeking validation or love through our helpful actions. We may not even be able to detect that we are seeking these things until we don't get what we want. Subtle resentments may start to develop. We may find ourselves weaving stories about someone we are helping. "He doesn't appreciate all that I do!" These resentments and stories are indicators that part of our motive for helping is to seek validation or love. "He doesn't appreciate me" really means, "I'm not loved" or, "I'm not valid."

It can be difficult to see that the issue does not lie with the other people we are helping. They are only mirrors for the belief in deficiency in ourselves. When they don't appreciate our efforts or help us in return, that core wound of deficiency comes up. It's the fuel for our resentment. And the more we feel invalid or unlovable, the more we seek those things in others. Helping then becomes a seeking game—a continuous pattern of looking outside ourselves for what we believe we lack within.

How can you come to see if you are helping others, at least in part, out of a sense of deficiency in yourself? Easy—do the inquiries! They are designed to reveal how deficiency shows up in relationship and to bring up the emotional pain of what it's like not to get what we are seeking—love or validation. They are designed to penetrate through that story and the pain. As the story is seen through, selfless service begins to happen more automatically. We find ourselves wanting to help,

regardless of whether our actions are appreciated or whether others help us in return.

A few years ago, I was working with a man named Eric on his constant need to help others. Eric became pretty angry and defensive with me as I brought up the possibility that his constant desire to help might be coming from a belief in self-deficiency. He said things like, "But helping is always good so it doesn't matter why I do it," and "The world needs more people like me who are just trying to love and take care of others." Those sound like reasonable statements. But Eric was suffering on some level. That's why he contacted me in the first place. He couldn't connect the dots. He had been working as a caretaker for years. And despite all those years of what he considered to be selfless service, he was deeply unsatisfied with life. Eric became so reluctant that he refused to do the inquiries at first. He didn't want to look directly at the core story and the pain that drove him as a caretaker.

A willingness to look finally opened up in Eric once I explained to him that I help people on a daily basis and have had to look into whether there are various selfish motives operating in me. By being transparent with him about my own life and work, he felt safe enough to do the inquiry. He was amazed to see that, from an early age, he had felt invalid and unlovable. It started with his parents. As we did the Panorama Inquiry, he noticed that he held resentments, to one degree or another, for many of the people he had helped during the years. Once he was able to point back and name the deficiency story, "I'm invalid and unlovable," the inquiry began to open him up to new insights.

The more he sat with the pain of resentment, without labeling it, the more the pain started to feel like a warm bath of love. The love was almost too much for him at first. He would scurry back into the story of how others did not appreciate him. Finally, he saw that the whole story of being invalid and unlovable was an empty lie.

After working with Eric, he reported back to me that he kept doing the inquiry on all his relationships. He noticed that, before he did the inquiry, some of his helpful actions had been quite aggressive. He would literally force his helpfulness on others, even when they didn't ask for it. Through allowing pain to be as it is without adding stories and labels to it, he is now experiencing love as the natural state of presence. This allows him to relax a lot without needing to force his helpfulness on others. He sees now that helping is most rewarding and natural when it is selfless, without any expectation of return.

True selflessness does not come from trying to fit the image of being a helpful person or trying to get others to love and validate us. It arises automatically once we see through the story of deficiency. When this is seen, love arises as presence itself, rather than from our personal stories (which are mostly self-centered in nature). This is the most satisfying and *validating* recognition. Love is seen to be everywhere, in everything we see, and in everyone we meet. We cannot get it. We are it. Life is love. It's the nature of our experience once we stop believing the lie, "I lack love and need to get it from others."

CHAPTER THIRTEEN:
Peacemaking

THE WORLD WOULD probably be better off if more people concerned themselves with making peace, rather than conflict and war. Many people have a tendency towards wanting peace in relationships and in the world. On the surface, this can appear as very virtuous or highly spiritual or selfless. Sometimes it is.

But peacemaking sometimes carries with it a personal deficiency story that seeks peace and harmony in order to avoid anger and conflict. The story is usually some version of, "I'm not loved" or, I'm unlovable." Peacemakers cannot always see why they have a tendency towards peacemaking; the core deficiency story is usually unconscious.

To this core story, anger and conflict are personally threatening. Peacemakers can find themselves people pleasing and agreeing with everyone else's viewpoints in order to avoid rocking the boat. Love is equated with agreement and kindness.

They are often uncomfortable expressing their own viewpoints and opinions for fear that others will react with anger or disapproval, resulting in conflict. Anger and fear are not loved and welcomed when they arise. The peacemaker is at war with conflict, anger, fear, and discomfort.

When the boat is unavoidably rocked, and conflict arises, the sense of, "I'm unlovable" comes to the surface. This is a deeply threatening story. Making peace becomes a way of harmonizing relationships in an attempt to quiet or avoid facing this inner self that feels unlovable.

The Panorama Inquiry on Peacemaking

Geoff: I'm not exactly sure why I'm here. I just know that these inquiries can bring a lot of peace to the world and I'm all for that.

Scott: Me too. I value peace.

Geoff: Of course, me too. When I look at other people arguing and fighting over who is right and who is wrong, it makes me sick to my stomach.

Scott: That's not very peaceful. Create a circle in which you are sitting in the middle. Put all of the people in your life who have been arguing and fighting around the circle. Do you see them?

Geoff: Yes. I see my mom and dad arguing. I see my brother who is always challenging me on what I say. He seems to just want to be right all the time. I see an old friend that I no longer speak to, Seth. Seth and I got into an argument one evening and it ended badly.

Scott: Use the mirror. What do these people mirror back to you about yourself?

Geoff: That I desire peace above all else.

Scott: But all these people in the circle are arguing and in conflict. Do you find yourself in conflict with how they are acting?

Geoff: Yes. That's good to see.

Scott: Sit for a moment and just be gut-level honest. When you see conflict around you or towards you, does this bring up a sense that there is something wrong?

Geoff: Yes. It feels unloving.

Scott: Does it feel personal?

Geoff: Yes. It brings up fear. I don't want to be around them. So yes…when they are in conflict, especially with me, I feel…frankly…like they don't like me. I don't feel loved.

Scott: Let's try to find that unlovable self. Look at the memory of your mom and dad arguing. Is that mental picture you, the unlovable self?

Geoff: Yes. I'm not even in the picture, but somehow that's me. Weird…I have that sick feeling in my stomach now.

Scott: Are the words, "I have that sick feeling in my stomach now" you?

Geoff: No, they are just words describing the unlovable self.

Scott: In this inquiry, we want to stick to finding this unlovable self, not just words that describe it. Let that memory of your mom and dad relax and fade away, as well as those words. Is that energy in your body you, the unlovable self? Just observe the energy. Don't think about it.

Geoff: No. It's dissipating now.

Scott: Look back at that mental picture of your mom and dad. Is that you?

Geoff: No.

Scott: Scan the circle and let me know when you feel triggered, when that sense of being unlovable pops up again.

Geoff: As much as I don't want to revisit that argument with Seth, it's coming up.

Scott: In words or pictures?

Geoff: Both. I see myself trying to avoid him. And I'm thinking, "He needs to work on his anger." I'm definitely not at peace with him.

Scott: Are the words, "He needs to work on his anger" you, the unlovable self?

Geoff: No. Frankly, I don't even know if I feel unlovable at the core. I just sometimes feel rejected or excluded when others are mean.

Scott: That's OK. If that core story is not operating, this inquiry won't harm anything. You'll just find that it wasn't useful. Look at the memory of you trying to avoid Seth. Is that picture you, the unlovable self?

Geoff: I know it's just a memory. But I'm feeling fear. So I'll say yes.

Scott: It's always good to say yes, when your body is reacting to a thought. Is the word "fear" you?

Geoff: No. I can feel that fear now, without many words about it. That energy is not me. It just came and went.

Scott: Scan the circle again.

Geoff: I can see something else in the circle now, my colleagues at work in a heated discussion. I'm there being quiet and feeling uncomfortable.

Scott: "I'm there being quiet and feeling uncomfortable." Are those words you, the unlovable self?

Geoff: Yes, the whole scene looks pretty crazy, lots of conflict.

Scott: Let all those words relax, even the word "uncomfortable." Can you just sit and feel that discomfort without trying to change it or label it?

Geoff: Yes. But that feels like me.

Scott: That just means some words or pictures are arising.

Geoff: The words, "I don't want to do this." Those words keep repeating themselves in my mind, over and over, as I try to just observe the energy in my body without thoughts. They seem to keep getting louder and louder.

Scott: Put those words in a picture frame in your mind. Look right at the picture. Are those words you?

Geoff: No. OK, now the words fell away. Let me sit with this pain. The discomfort is just there, not doing anything. Just energy. And now it's expanding into space, diminishing. It's not me, the unlovable self. It has no story on it at all right now.

Scott: Can you find that unlovable person right here, right now?

Geoff: No, and as I scan the circle again and see people arguing, it just seems OK as it is. There's nothing to get worked up about. I can see that I've been at war with war, in conflict with conflict. I want people to like me. And when they are upset or angry, I feel rejected.

Scott: Yes, unlovable.

Geoff: I can also see that I've been misunderstanding what love really is, as if it's only there when everyone is agreeing with everyone else and when no one is challenging me.

Scott: Right.

Geoff: Love is just here. It's not just a loving feeling. I'm seeing that even conflict and discomfort are OK. It's all love somehow.

Scott: Sometimes conflict can be the very thing that wakes us up from certain stories we are holding onto about ourselves.

Geoff: Yeah, the story, "They don't love me." I can't find that person. I didn't even know that story was operating. What a blind spot!

Scott: Just remember that if you find yourself making peace again, and avoiding conflict, that old script may be running. When the core story is "I'm unlovable," people seek agreement, surface-level kindness, and peace as a way to feel loved. But it doesn't really work because in reality, conflict happens.

Geoff: Yes. I've been at war with conflict, especially when it involves me directly.

Scott: Many peacemakers wage a kind of war against conflict. Notice that peacemaking that comes from the core belief, "I'm unlovable" is also often centered around an internal war with basic emotions within you like fear and anger. Conflict brings up those emotions. And when those emotions are arising, they are considered non-peaceful emotions.

Geoff: How can it be true peace if there is an internal war within myself against these emotions? This inquiry shows me that these emotions can be welcomed totally. I just didn't see that I was trying to make peace in order to feel love. That's a surface level peace only, a way to try and protect myself from feeling.

Scott: Yes, and when you aren't at war with these emotions, and they are allowed to arise freely, the emotions themselves are seen to be loved.

Geoff: I'm speechless. (long pause) I just don't have any other words for how loving presence is.

A Final Note about Facing the Core Emotional Wound

Notice that when Geoff began to feel the discomfort in his body, without words, his mind kept shouting, "I can't do this" over and over. This is very common in these inquiries. These core deficiency stories strike at the very heart of who we think we are. They often operate under the radar in many of our relationships. The story is like a blind spot. We can't see it directly because we are too busy pointing outward at all the others. We are constantly deflecting attention away from the core pain that holds the stories together. Here, Geoff had been busy pointing towards all the others who are in conflict. He couldn't directly see the story, "I'm unlovable." As we began to inquire into that core deficiency, thoughts came screaming to the surface, as if to say, "No, no, you can't take this central story from me. This is who I really am."

This is the mind's way of overcompensating for emotions. Frankly, it can feel safer to point outward and stay locked in mental viewpoints than to actually sit with the emotional pain that lies at the center of the deficiency story. But these inquiries are really designed to make that emotional pain conscious. The more it becomes conscious and is allowed to flow freely, without the mind returning to overcompensate, the more the story loses its power.

In working with people from all over the world, from many different cultural and personal backgrounds, I've noticed that one thing humans have in common is an incapacity to just

sit and feel painful emotions, without labeling them. So many of us learn in childhood that painful emotions are bad. We are told to think positively, go out and play, or otherwise distract ourselves from emotional pain. Young boys are often told, "Boys don't cry," as if sadness is a weakness having to do with gender, instead of a natural human emotion. Tantrums in children are often met with discipline, scorn, or judgment by parents. Parents send the signal that the feelings arising in the child are bad and should be suppressed. The fear of death and even anxiety around things like illness, bullying at school, or athletic and educational performance are rarely dealt with directly when they arise in children. Parents are often quick to soothe the fear, instead of teaching children how to let it arise freely, without overcompensating with the mind.

All of this creates an atmosphere where painful emotions are repressed or suppressed. As we grow into adults, we rely mostly on thinking. We intellectualize and think our way through life, avoiding the more primal emotional energies that lie at the core of our personal stories and that arise when we are triggered in relationship. Many people turn towards addictive substances and activities as a way to cope with basic human emotions that they haven't learned how to feel directly.

It's no wonder so many people turn to seeking self-improvement, recovery, religion, or what some call enlightenment. In this atmosphere, where so often the direct experience of emotions is avoided, it is only natural that humans seek ways to cope. In my work with seekers, I've noticed that many treat enlightenment as a way to not have to feel emotions. They dream of a perfect state of peace or bliss where they will

no longer be triggered emotionally or feel sad, angry, or fearful. But what is "enlightenment"? It's the seeing through of ego. And ego is that sense of a separate, deficient self. The seeing through of this separate, deficient self is a present seeing. That's how I would define enlightenment. And that's what these inquiries are designed to reveal. When you cannot find that deficient self, you experience life free from identification with the thoughts, emotions, and sensations that are presently arising.

But this is where it gets tricky. Enlightenment, in this sense, is not a way to avoid present feelings. It's the complete allowing of those feelings to be as they are. Once we are not labeling the feelings and going back into the story, the energy of emotion is allowed to flow freely. All of the mind's strategies fall away in that moment. Finally, we are able to be with our pain, instead of avoiding it through relying on our intellect or pointing outward at others, as if they are the source of the pain. We are responsible for our own well-being. When we are clear, our relationships clear up.

Often, people start doing the inquiries with the assumption that I am going to help them find a way to not have to feel the darkest emotional energies within them. They are surprised to find instead that these inquiries direct us to fully face these energies.

Notice that Geoff was avoiding certain emotions. His mind tried to put up a block. Once he saw that the words were not him, he was able to sit and allow the emotions to be as they are, without labels. This is how the healing happens. The freedom Geoff was experiencing near the end of the inquiry was the recognition of a basic, stable awareness in which all

thoughts, emotions, and sensations arise and fall freely, without identification. In allowing the emotions to be as they are, he was no longer overcompensating with the mind. He was finally able to face the emotional pain that lay at the core of the story, "I'm unlovable." He saw through his peacemaking efforts, which were largely an attempt to avoid inner pain and "make peace" as a way to feel loved.

Geoff was excited after this inquiry. He kept emailing me, over and over, to let me know that he was experiencing a deeper, selfless peace that was not at war with emotional pain or conflict. He said that, for a while, he kept seeing his mind want to make peace as a way of overcompensating for the uncomfortable feelings that would arise in the face of conflict. At some point, he no longer needed to do the inquiry. He began to feel emotions directly, as soon as they arose. Once emotions are allowed to come and go freely in awareness, the mind begins to naturally quiet around these stories. The need to overcompensate diminishes. As a result, the inquiry is no longer needed.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN:
Abandonment

FEAR OF ABANDONMENT is a common issue. It usually stems from childhood experiences, when parents or other significant figures were absent physically, psychologically, or emotionally. The core story is "I'm abandoned," or "I'm not supported."

Just like all deficiency scripts, the story of being abandoned is an interpretation of a self that feels deficient. The deficient self interprets most situations and the actions of others through that deficient lens, so that the truth of the story seems to be confirmed. When this core idea is operating, relationships can be a source of real suffering, as if no one is really there for you. And when someone appears to leave your life, through a breakup, divorce, conflict, or death, the core story can come screaming to the surface. This may cause you to look for someone else to cover up the pain. But the pattern often

repeats itself. So when the new person leaves, or is emotionally unavailable or unsupportive, the wound reappears.

The Boomerang Inquiry on Abandonment

In this example, Sarah worked through the inquiry by herself. She had noticed her core abandonment story and decided to use the Boomerang Inquiry. This is what she wrote.

I can't believe he left me. A ten year relationship and he just leaves, without even saying why. I feel so alone. I'm never going to be in a relationship with a man again.

Use the mirror. He is mirroring back to me that I'm alone. This is what I really believe I am.

Name it. Abandoned self.

Are the words, "I can't believe he left me" it?

No.

Are the words, "He just left me, without even saying why" me, the abandoned self?

Yes, that's me. I'm sad.

Are the words, "I'm sad" me?

No.

(She rests in awareness without words or pictures, feeling the emotion directly.)

This energy is not the abandoned self.

Where is it?

"I'm alone." Yes, that's it.

(She rests again, without words or pictures, feeling the emotion.)

No, that feeling is not it.

(She rests in awareness, looking for that self.)

I can't find it.

Doing the Inquiries by Yourself

Sarah's inquiry was fairly short. It didn't take her long to see through that core assumption. It might arise for her again, but she can use one of the inquiries to look into the unfindability of that abandoned self.

Sometimes the looking has to go deeper and take longer. When doing the inquiries on your own, you'll know which thoughts, emotions, and sensations to observe. It's all in your own direct experience. And you'll know when you have seen the emptiness of the self that you're looking for. You

simply won't be able to find it. No one can abandon you unless you buy into the fiction, "I'm an abandoned person." If you have difficulty doing the inquiries on your own, try writing them down or finding a partner to ask the questions.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN:
Control

THE DESIRE TO control others doesn't just arise out of the blue. It has its roots in a particular belief about one's self, which is usually expressed as "I'm afraid," "I'm powerless," or "I'm weak." Like most deficiency stories, the focus is often turned outward in an attempt to monitor, meddle, and fix other people and life situations as a way of protecting the core belief.

We don't necessarily intend to be controlling. It just happens automatically and unconsciously as a way of coping with the sense of deficiency. All the outward pointing keeps the core deficient self hidden from view. It's easier to be the boss of life than to be vulnerable and face the sense of powerlessness within. We believe we cannot be at peace unless we keep the underlying fear and sense of powerlessness at bay. Our relationships tend to support our controlling behavior. We may find ourselves surrounded by people who depend on us and cannot function without our support, and people who resent us

and complain that we need to mind our own business and stop trying to fix them.

The Panorama Inquiry on Control

Michael noticed he was triggered by his son, mother, and wife, and decided to do the Panorama Inquiry on his own.

My mother has to change the way she is doing her finances. I've got to make my son attend the state university instead of the community college. And I'm not going to let my wife interfere with all of this. This is how it's going to be.

(He puts his mother, wife, and son in the circle, and scans around.)

What is mother mirroring back to me?

I'm a control freak, I know that.

I feel a lot of fear in my body right now. To be honest, I'm afraid. And fear always makes me feel as if I'm really powerless over all this. Name it. I hate being powerless. Find it. Can I find the powerless self?

(He looks at the memory of his son telling him he wants to attend community college.)

That's not me.

(He sees the words, "My mother needs to change.")

That's not the powerless me.

(He rests in awareness. A picture of his wife interfering comes up.)

That's me, wanting to stop her.

Are the words, "I want to stop her" this powerless self?

Yes.

(He feels the fear as energy, without words or pictures.)

That energy is not me.

(He looks at the words, "I'm afraid.")

Yes, that's me.

(He feels the fear, and watches it fall away without a story on it.)

That energy is not me.

Let me scan the circle. My mother is there. She's a trigger. I can see myself feeling weak as a child around her.

Is that picture me?

Yes.

(He observes the picture of himself as a child until it fades, and then he feels the energy.)

That energy isn't me.

(He scans the circle once more.)

No trigger. I can't find the powerless self. Now I see no reason to control anyone or anything.

A Final Note about Control

All that Michael had to do was stop all the outward focus and analysis of others for one moment, turn his attention inward to the fear, name the deficient self, and then try to find it. Notice that when Michael felt that certain words were the powerless self, he brought his attention into the body and relaxed into the energy, without feeding it with a story. This heals the core wound.

Michael can use this tool whenever he finds himself trying to control things. Now that he is aware of his history of controlling behavior, he can see it is not working. But knowing that controlling behavior doesn't work is only half the battle. In order to see through the self that tries to control, he has to stop whenever he sees it happening again and go inward, to really look for the powerless self that seems to run the show.

When Michael does the inquiry, he is not trying to change or stop his thoughts. He is not trying to kill his mind. He is not trying to will himself into freedom. That would just be a sort of self-control, which is the same mechanism of control but turned inward instead of outward.

He is not engaging in what is conventionally called self-improvement either. Self-improvement often involves rearranging the story or devising methods to change one's behavior. This may provide some relief from suffering. But it may leave the core story, "I'm powerless" still lurking within him. Even if he tries to convince himself mentally that he is not powerless, he may simply be overcompensating. He may be leaving it only on a mental level, still turning away from the

bodily feeling of fear. Even if he is successful at rearranging his story, as long as he takes himself to be any story, he may find himself having to defend and protect it on some level. This just causes more disharmony in his relationships.

Instead of trying to improve his story or control himself, Michael is gently observing his thoughts and asking a simple question—is this me? By asking that question, he is penetrating through the false belief about himself. If his thoughts quiet as a result, as they may do, it's not because he is forcing them to quiet. He has seen that the powerless self is empty and unfindable. That present seeing instantly changes the way he perceives others. The mind naturally withdraws from the story of a powerless self that needs to control others. His relationships then harmonize themselves. The problem was never "out there."

CHAPTER SIXTEEN:
Hiding

SOMETIMES, IT'S NOT clear what the deficiency is. It isn't always possible to reduce the overall sense of deficiency to a specific name. Our story of psychological and emotional pain can't always be neatly placed in a particular package.

In this example, I work with Alexis on a vague sense that she is hiding herself. To begin with, we use the Boomerang Inquiry. As Alexis goes deeper, other people and situations begin to surface in her memory. I then change to the Panorama Inquiry. It is absolutely fine to change the inquiry midway through if it seems appropriate; one size does not fit all situations.

It is inevitable that some details of one's story emerge during an inquiry; specific examples help to see how the deficiency story shows up in one's life. Remember, though, that this is not talk therapy. Don't get bogged down in either telling or analyzing the story. The point is to try to find the core

deficient self, by resting as awareness and looking. You'll notice that when Alexis starts to analyze herself, I bring her back to the inquiry.

The Boomerang and Panorama Inquiries on Hiding

Alexis: I don't know what to inquire into. I just can't pin it down. But I know that I've always had a feeling that I have to hide myself, that I cannot show who I really am to people. I can see this in my current relationship with my boyfriend. I'm hiding myself from him.

Scott: Let's do the Boomerang Inquiry. Look at your boyfriend. Use the mirror. What does he reflect back to you about your own deficiency, about having to hide yourself?

Alexis: Vulnerability, shame, fear of being exposed. It's just the sense of wanting to hide. You see? I can't pin it down.

Scott: It's OK. You don't have to. This is your inquiry, your discovery. You know how you feel about yourself at the core. Let's just call it something so we can move forward. Call that self anything that seems to include that vulnerability, shame, fear of being exposed, and the sense of wanting to hide.

Alexis: I'll just call it "hiding self" even though that doesn't sum it up completely.

Scott: Can you find that hiding self? Is the word "vulnerability" that self?

Alexis: No, I feel a slight or vague pain with it, but it goes away quickly.

Scott: How about "shame?"

Alexis: Yes, that's me. I feel ashamed.

Scott: Let those words relax. Bring attention into the body. Take your time and rest as awareness, letting that energy just be there as it is. Is that energy you, this hiding self?

Alexis: Feels like it, yes. And now all sorts of memories are popping in. I can see this little girl, me, being ridiculed as a child over and over. I can see my parents, and me as an adult not wanting to let them know about my life.

Scott: Let's change it to the Panorama Inquiry since other people and situations are arising. Put your boyfriend, that little girl being ridiculed as a child, and your parents in a circle around you. Scan the circle. Which one triggers you the most with regard to wanting to hide?

Alexis: The little girl.

Scott: Look at the picture of that little girl being ridiculed. Put it in a frame. Is that you, this self who has to hide?

Alexis: Yes. That's me. I've always felt that way. When I was twenty, I remember having a bunch of friends who were really

open and could share anything about themselves. I just didn't want to open up. Do you think that means that I'm in denial about something? I've often thought that I'm in denial. Yesterday, I had that insight about denial. There must be something there. I should look into that. I also believe my boyfriend is in denial. We often don't talk a lot. We love each other but there is a distance between us. Sometimes I'd like to know more about how he really feels, but I'm not sure I want to hear it. It might scare me. I don't know if I am causing this distance between us or if we both are doing it. I'm starting to get really worried about our relationship as I sit and think about it now. Do you think he has a sense of wanting to hide himself too?

Scott: I understand that it's important to talk about yourself so that we can do this inquiry. But I feel you are getting off track with questions and analysis. Have you ever been able to figure those things out through constantly thinking about them?

Alexis: No. I've been thinking about this stuff for a long time and nothing seems to really get at it.

Scott: So let's try to stick to the inquiry. Go back to the picture of the little girl being ridiculed. Is that you, the hiding self? Stick to yes or no.

Alexis: No. The picture is fading.

Scott: Scan the circle. Who triggers you?

Alexis: They are all triggering me. I see a wall between me and them.

Scott: Look directly at the wall. Can you see it?

Alexis: Yes.

Scott: Is that mental picture of a wall you, the hiding self?

Alexis: No, it's a picture. The wall is more like a sense. I sense that there is a wall there.

Scott: OK, stare at the mental picture of the wall until it fades. Bring your attention to the sensation that is left.

Alexis. There is no sensation. The picture faded and the sense of a wall faded.

Scott: Scan the circle. Who or what triggers you?

Alexis: My parents. I don't feel comfortable opening up to them.

Scott: Are the words, "I don't feel comfortable opening up to them" you, the self that has to hide?

Alexis: Yes.

Scott: Drop the words and feel the feeling without any words or pictures. Just rest into it. Is that energy you?

Alexis: No.

Scott: Scan the circle.

Alexis: The little girl is coming up again, along with a memory of boys calling me "Patty Panda." I was heavy as a child.

Scott: Are the words "Patty Panda" you, the hiding self?

Alexis: I can feel a big rush of pain. Yes!

Scott: Look at the words "big rush of pain." Is that you?

Alexis: No. I'm feeling the energy now. It's just energy. It feels warm, almost nice, when I'm not calling it anything or putting it in my story.

Scott: Scan the circle.

Alexis: My boyfriend is triggering me. I feel paralyzed around him sometimes.

Scott: Look at his face. Is that picture you?

Alexis: No.

Scott: How about the words, "I feel paralyzed around him sometimes?"

Alexis: Yes, that's me. That's definitely me!

Scott: Go into the body. Feel.

Alexis: Wow, my whole body is tingling. Something is releasing. It feels so good to just finally feel that. I just want to sit with that feeling.

Scott: Yes.

Alexis: That energy is not me, the hiding self.

Scott: Rest as awareness. Can you find that person who has to hide?

Alexis: No, no. I can't. I just feel totally open. And I can see that it's not just about wanting to hide. I've had a story of not being worthy. And that story makes me want to hide.

Scott: Yes, sometimes it takes going through the whole inquiry before you can pinpoint that central belief about yourself. So can you find that person here who is not worthy?

Alexis: No, it's not here. I see thoughts coming and going, but no unworthy self anywhere. There's just awareness here and it's really impersonal, transparent, and sweet. Everything is in full

view—the whole story of being unworthy—but it doesn't feel like who I am. It's like a false movie and I'm here, as awareness, looking at it.

A Final Note about Alexis' Story

Notice that Alexis couldn't pinpoint the central story, "I'm unworthy," until near the end of the inquiry. This can happen. These inquiries are more of an art than a science. If you have trouble naming the story at first, just go with whatever comes up and work from there. The point of the inquiry is not to just put your story into a neat mental package. The point is to face the emotions that arise when you look directly at the words and pictures that you take to be who you are. Often, once those emotions are felt and faced, the central story becomes clearer.

The central story, "I am unworthy," is quite common. I've worked with many people who feel that their creativity and natural expression has been stifled by fear. In my own life, I experienced fear around expressing my viewpoints as well as expressing myself as a musician and songwriter. It paralyzed me at times.

Fully facing this fear is a doorway into letting ourselves shine as who we are. If we turn away from the fear, we continue in the loop of feeling unworthy or wanting to hide. As fear is allowed to arise fully and freely, without hooking into the core story, we are able to express ourselves more fearlessly. And even if fear arises, it's just another opportunity to see what we believe about ourselves.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN:
Seeking

SEEKING IS ENGRAINED into the very fabric of the story of self. It is based on one fundamental assumption, "I am separate and deficient." We can spend our whole lives believing this basic assumption about ourselves. Until it is questioned, it tends to continue operating, driving so much of what we do and how we act towards others.

When the basic assumption in separation and deficiency is undermined and seen through, seeking naturally relaxes and we experience a stable sense of completeness with life as it is in the present moment. We can enjoy relationships, create things, express ourselves, follow our interests, and enjoy life in every way. We find that we can still move and operate in the world fully, but without the belief that something is missing at a fundamental level.

The Panorama Inquiry on Seeking

Tony: I can't stop seeking. I've done it all my life, looking for material items, love, sex, approval, happiness, drugs, self-improvement, and spiritual development. Nothing truly satisfies me. I'm basically seeking the future.

Scott: Put all those people and things in a circle around you, including "the future." Scan the circle until you feel the seeking energy arise. That's the trigger.

Tony: They all trigger me.

Scott: What do all these people and things bring up in terms of your own deficiency? Name it. Reduce that deficiency into a particular kind of self you take yourself to be.

Tony: Incomplete.

Scott: Let's try to find the incomplete person. Are the words, "I'm incomplete" you, the incomplete self?

Tony: Yes, that triggers it.

Scott: Bring attention into your body, without words. Is that energy you?

Tony: No.

Scott: Can you just let that nameless energy be there as it is?

Tony: Yes.

Scott: Is it you?

Tony: Me, the incomplete person? No.

Scott: Scan the circle until you find something in particular that brings up seeking.

Tony: I see people in my life who don't like me. I want them to like me.

Scott: Are the words, "I see people in my life who don't like me" the incomplete person?

Tony: No, just words. But when I see the face of a particular person, I feel that seeking energy.

Scott: Is the picture of that face you, the incomplete self?

Tony: No, and it just relaxed. It's crazy that I'm chasing pictures.

Scott: Scan the circle.

Tony: I used to use tobacco. I feel a pull towards going to the store to buy tobacco.

Scott: Is the picture of tobacco the incomplete self?

Tony: No.

Scott: Imagine yourself driving to the store to buy tobacco. Is that picture you?

Tony: No, it's not even happening. It's just imagination. It's not me.

Scott: Scan the circle.

Tony: I see the vision of other people who seem happier than I am. I want their happiness.

Scott: Is the picture of those other people you, the incomplete person?

Tony: No.

Scott: How about the words, "I want their happiness?"

Tony: Just words. I can't find the incomplete person. I can find nothing to seek right now.

Scott: Great, scan the circle again.

Tony: I see a picture of a spiritual teacher who looks enlightened. I want that.

Scott: "I want to be enlightened." Are those words you, the incomplete self?

Tony: I know they aren't intellectually. But something in my body wants to say yes. I'm not there yet.

Scott: "I'm not there yet." Are those words you?

Tony: Ha, ha. No, definitely not. And as I see that, it no longer feels like my body is saying, "I'm not there yet." The energy is there, but it doesn't feel like a big deal now. It feels OK.

Scott: Right, because the body doesn't speak. It never says anything. There are only emotions and sensations there. It's only the words and pictures that give meaning to the emotions and sensations. Look at the picture of the spiritual teacher, but add no words to it. Is that picture you?

Tony: No, that's totally clear right now—a picture.

Scott: Scan the circle.

Tony: I'm feeling complete right now. I see myself as awareness and it's just aware. It can't get anywhere.

Scott: Right, but scan the circle again.

Tony: Now I see this work, this inquiry, and I want to use it all the time. I can see myself using it to seek something in the future.

Scott: "I want to use this inquiry to seek something in the future." Are those words you, the incomplete person?

Tony: No, not at all. I saw how I wanted to use this inquiry for my own story. Now I'm wondering what I would be seeking through the inquiry, some different story?

Scott: Yes, the story always tells you that you are incomplete. It wants to complete itself, but it never can because it is always a story of time continuously chasing the future. But the inquiry is not about seeking. It's a present looking into whether you can actually find an incomplete self. It's the belief in an incomplete self that results in seeking. Can you find the incomplete person as you sit here right now?

Tony: A flurry of seeking thoughts and energy is happening. It's not directed towards a specific thing, just restlessness.

Scott: Are the words, "A flurry of seeking thoughts and energy is happening" the incomplete you?

Tony: Yes. I feel that strong sensation of restlessness.

Scott: Relax into thought-free awareness. Let that energy be there, without labels. Is that energy the incomplete you?

Tony: (long pause) No. The restlessness just relaxes whenever I do nothing with it. But the thought arises, "I really am incomplete even though I can't find that self."

Scott: Look right at those words. Are the words you?

Tony: (laughing) No!

Scott: All words vanish when you look directly at them, unless some emotion or sensation arises along with them. That's what makes them sticky. It makes them feel not only true, but that the words themselves are YOU. Can you find that incomplete you?

Tony: No, it's completely unfindable right now. It doesn't even feel like it's vaguely here. I feel invisible, but in a good way. So freeing!

Scott: Scan the circle again. Does it look like these things and people trigger you to seek?

Tony: No, there's no pull towards them at all now.

Scott: So who or what are you really?

Tony: I can't even say I'm a complete person. That feels like a false story. It's like…storyless freedom or completion. That's the best I can do in trying to describe it.

A Final Note about Seeking

Seeking is happening in so many ways in our lives that it can make our heads spin when we begin to look more closely at it. The Panorama Inquiry works well with seeking because it places all the people and things in our lives in a circle around us. By creating the circle, we can see that we are seeking in just about every direction.

Notice when you take a moment and rest as thought-free awareness, there is nothing to seek. There is nowhere to go. Here you are in the present moment. Your thoughts have relaxed and you are at peace. Even as you relax thoughts, you may notice that the energy in your body feels restless. Let that restless energy be as it is. Let it arise and fall without going back into the story of needing to seek something in the future or from someone else. As the energy is allowed to relax, the mind relaxes with it more and more.

It's worth repeating that these inquiries are not designed to create another avenue for seeking. They aren't designed to get you something you believe you lack. They are here to help you see through the self that lacks. That is always a present seeing. The inquiry brings you right back to where you already are, resting in the present moment. In presence, there is a well-being and contentment that is stable. It is not based on getting to some later point or getting something from someone else.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN:
Anxiety

ANXIETY IS OFTEN considered to be a condition that an individual suffers from, as if a person can exist in isolation, apart from his relationship to other people and things. If you suffer from anxiety, look at what is happening. There may be times when it feels like you are anxious for no apparent reason. But much of the time, you are anxious about someone or something in your life that you have a relationship with: work, future, death, illness, suffering, other people, animals, crowds, germs, hospitals, or something else. Looking at anxiety in the context of relationship can shed light on the core deficiency story that underlies the symptoms.

The Panorama Inquiry on Anxiety

Tamara: I suffer from anxiety.

Scott: About what?

Tamara: What do you mean about what? It's a medical condition.

Scott: I realize that. But can you be anxious about nothing?

Tamara: (laughing) No. I'm anxious about a lot of things.

Scott: Put those things in a circle around you. What do these things bring up about you? Name that self.

Tamara: Unsafe self.

Scott: Scan the circle until anxiety comes up.

Tamara: It's here. I see a future in which I won't be able to find a job.

Scott: Is it a mental picture, words, or both?

Tamara: Words.

Scott: Are those words you, the unsafe self?

Tamara: Yes.

Scott: Stare at those words until they disappear. Feel the energy in your body. Is that energy you?

Tamara: Yes.

Scott: That means words or pictures are still arising. What are they?

Tamara: I don't see any.

Scott: Sometimes there is a picture of a body part or image in the body that's so subtle you don't see it at first.

Tamara: I see it now. It's a tightly wound ball in my chest.

Scott: Are the words "tightly wound ball in my chest" you?

Tamara: No. Now it's just pure anxiety, with no picture.

Scott: Are the words, "It's just pure anxiety" you, the unsafe self?

Tamara: No. I can see that I was still putting words on the energy.

Scott: Feel the energy without words and pictures.

Tamara: There's not much there without thoughts, just a buzzing energy.

Scott: Are the words "just a buzzing energy" you?

Tamara: No. Wow, now that energy is releasing…it's not a big deal when I'm not thinking about it.

Scott: Scan the circle.

Tamara: I'm afraid of hospitals. I see a hospital in the circle.

Scott: Is that mental picture you?

Tamara: No, but now I see myself lying in a hospital bed, unable to breath.

Scott: Are the words, "I see myself lying in a hospital bed, unable to breath" you, the unsafe self?

Tamara: No, but the unsafe me is the one lying in the bed.

Scott: That mental picture is you?

Tamara: Yeah.

Scott: Stare at that picture until it dissolves. Rest as the awareness that allows the energy to be as it is, without a story.

Tamara: The picture of the ball is not there. But I can see I want this energy to go away.

Scott: "I want this energy to go away." Are those words you?

Tamara: No. And, again, just buzzing energy. Not a big deal anymore. It's relaxing.

Scott: Scan the circle.

Tamara: I'm afraid of dying. It's hard for me to breathe right now.

Scott: Are the words, "I'm afraid of dying" you, the unsafe self?

Tamara: Not the words, no.

Scott: How about, "It's hard for me to breathe?"

Tamara: No, it's the breathing that feels like the unsafe me.

Scott: Experience the sensation of breathing without words and pictures around it. Is that the unsafe self?

Tamara: No, it's just breathing, and it is starting to be normal now.

Scott: Scan the circle.

Tamara: Nothing is triggering me.

Scott: Can you find the unsafe person here?

Tamara: No.

Scott: Whenever you feel anxious, imagine the circle again. Then stop focusing on those things and people in the circle. Turn your attention to the sense of an unsafe self. Then try to find it.

Tamara: I will.

Scott: Remember, you are almost always anxious in relation to someone or something. You can't feel like an unsafe self unless there is something that seems to threaten your safety.

Tamara: But what about basic physical safety, like not getting hit by a car?

Scott: Your body knows how to protect you, when that is needed. It will instinctively move out of the way of the car. What we are talking about here is the psychological belief that you are unsafe at the core. That's more like an identity, or story, not an instinctual movement to get out of the way of a car.

Tamara: Thank you so much. This goes deep!

CHAPTER NINETEEN:
Envy

ENVY COMES IN so many varieties. There can be such a stinging emotion that comes with envious thoughts as we encounter others who have something we don't have or who seem more successful, attractive, rich, powerful, knowledgeable, or important. These traits in others have a way of really triggering the core deficiency story. In the following inquiry, Preston is doing a lot of pointing outward, blind to what is operating within him. Just helping Preston refocus on himself and what is driving the outward pointing made all the difference.

The Panorama Inquiry on Envy

Preston: I have this gut feeling about certain people who I see as overly concerned with material wealth or who parade around others showing off their pretty wives and getting lots of attention.

Scott: What kind of feeling?

Preston: I despise them.

Scott: Create a circle of the people that trigger you the most. Scan the circle. Who do you despise the most?

Preston: One particular guy seems to love money. People flock around him. I think it's disgusting and shallow how they snuggle up to him. He eats it up.

Scott: OK, that's what you think about him. I get it. When you stop pointing the finger outward at him, and instead point it back to yourself, what do you see? How do you feel about yourself in comparison to him?

Preston: I don't see anything.

Scott: The self can be a blind spot. But there is some reason you are doing all that outward pointing. Does he bring up some sense that you are deficient, inadequate, invalid, or something like that?

Preston: The first thing I see is that I feel I'm much more humble about things like making money.

Scott: Is that really how you feel about yourself? Is there a bit of overcompensation going on there, as if you are having difficulty telling the truth about how you actually feel about yourself at the core? You came to me because you are humble?

Preston: (laughing) I guess not. I feel a bit envious of him. I've had to work hard for what little I have.

Scott: Now we are getting somewhere. What is it that he has that you feel you lack?

Preston: He gets attention. He gets to have a lot of fun. He has a beautiful wife.

Scott: Pin it down to one specific kind of deficient self, so that we can have a name for it. Fill in the blank: "There is something wrong with me. I lack _____"

Preston: Importance. I feel unimportant when I look at him.

Scott: Let's try to find that unimportant self and see if that clears things up about how you see him. Are the words, "I feel unimportant" you, the unimportant self?

Preston: Instantly I feel a big lump in my throat and in my gut. So, yes.

Scott: Are the words, "I feel a big lump in my throat" you?

Preston: Of course not, I'm just describing what came up.

Scott: OK, stop describing the sensation in your throat. Just sit here with me, resting in awareness without words to describe the sensation. Do you see a picture of your throat in your mind's eye?

Preston: Yes.

Scott: Is that picture you, the unimportant self?

Preston: I have to say yes. For some reason it feels like that is me.

Scott: Are the words, "I feel like that is me" you?

Preston: No. It's so subtle. The mind is so subtle. I didn't see that the voice in my head was actually putting those words on that picture.

Scott: Rest in awareness. Just notice the open space of the present moment. Feel its expansiveness. Feel the alive space within the body. Now, do you see that picture?

Preston: It just fell away once I began to rest in awareness. And the lump fell away too.

Scott: Can you find the self that is unimportant as you sit there resting in awareness?

Preston: I see his face.

Scott: Is that picture of his face you, the unimportant self?

Preston: There is a charge to it, so yes.

Scott: Can you let that picture fade for a few seconds and feel the emotion or sensation that arose with it?

Preston: Yes, I feel sad.

Scott: Are the words, "I feel sad" you?

Preston: No.

Scott: Sit with the sadness without labeling it. Let that energy expand into the space of awareness.

Preston: I feel a great resistance to doing that.

Scott: Are those words you?

Preston: No.

Scott: You can probably see now why you were doing all that outward pointing, so you wouldn't have to feel this inner sadness. Feel it now, but without describing it.

Preston: (crying) This is embarrassing. But somehow it feels good. I feel a release.

Scott: Is the energy that is releasing the unimportant you?

Preston: No.

Scott: Can you find the unimportant you as you rest in awareness, letting whatever thoughts and emotions arise and fall naturally?

Preston: Some of the thoughts seem sticky until I just look right at them and then they fall away. No, I can't find that self.

Scott: Scan the circle again. Who triggers you?

Preston: I'm not getting a trigger from him anymore, but now I see my wife being extra nice to this guy who does plumbing work for us. I despise him too.

Scott: Are the words, "I despise him" you, the one who is not important?

Preston: No.

Scott: How about the mental picture of your wife being nice to him?

Preston: No. It feels like I'm the one watching all that. The unimportant person is watching her do that.

Scott: Are the words, "I'm watching her do that" the unimportant you?

Preston: No, but the words seem to point to me.

Scott: Can you find that "me" that the words point to, when you drop the words?

Preston: Feels like someone sucker punched me in the gut.

Scott: Are those words you?

Preston: No.

Scott: Rest without those words and feel the sensation in the gut.

Preston: It feels really stuck.

Scott: Are those words you?

Preston: No. I can see my mind just wants to come back in and describe everything.

Scott: Are any of these descriptions the unimportant you?

Preston: No, again it feels like they point to me.

Scott: Find that me.

Preston: It's in my gut.

Scott: Is that description you?

Preston: No. OK, I get it. Let me sit with the actual pain instead of describing it (long pause). The sensation turned to sadness and as I let that sadness expand, without words, it seems to diminish.

Scott: Is that diminishing energy you?

Preston: No.

Scott: Scan the circle.

Preston: Oh, this is weird. I see my mother paying more attention to my brother than to me, as a kid.

Scott: Is that picture you?

Preston: Yes. But I'm resting and letting the feeling be there. Let me have a moment (sobbing). God, I feel like I've been left out of everything in life.

Scott: Are those words you?

Preston: They are just words.

Scott: Remember, we are not here just trying to rehash the past or psychoanalyze you. We are doing something very specific, trying to find the self that is unimportant. Can you find that? Look everywhere.

Preston: None of the thoughts feel like that self. It's this body. There is something wrong with this body. I'm not attractive.

Scott: Look at the words you just said. Picture them in a frame in your mind. Stare right at the words. Are those words you, the unimportant self?

Preston: No.

Scott: Can you find it?

Preston: I feel completely relaxed right now. No, I can't find it.

Scott: Scan the circle. Are you triggered?

Preston: No, just a mild sensation or emotion here and there. They are not an unimportant self. What an incredible story I've been secretly telling to myself.

Scott: It results in a lot of outward pointing, doesn't it?

Preston: Hell yes! It's really unintelligent to do all that pointing when the issue lay with me, with this sense of being unimportant.

Scott: Don't beat yourself up. The sense of deficiency is a common human story. Just stick to seeing if you can find that self here.

Preston: I can't find it.

Scott: Now, look back at all those others. Is there really anything wrong with them?

Preston: No, they just are who they are. This was all about me. They look perfect. I don't despise them. I despised myself, I can see that.

Scott: Are the words, "I despised myself," the unimportant you?

Preston: (laughing) No.

CHAPTER TWENTY:
Jealousy

JEALOUSY IS SIMILAR to envy, but there is a critical difference. Jealousy involves the fear of loss of something or someone valuable. If a husband flirts with another woman, his wife is not really envious of the other woman. She is experiencing jealousy, which is a fear of loss of her husband. This fear strikes at the very core of our sense of self-worth. This is why we sometimes experience a very intense reaction at the prospect of losing someone valuable to us. Our sense of self-worth is dependent on that person. If the person strays, the fear of loss surfaces, creating an intense response.

The Boomerang Inquiry on Jealousy

Frank: My wife works for a dentist who is very attractive and charming. They have lunch together regularly. She often talks about him in very endearing ways. I know that this is how marriages often end, through affairs that start at work.

Scott: What is your wife mirroring back to you about your own perceived deficiency?

Frank: Well, I thought that we would do the inquiry on the dentist, since my anger is directed towards him mostly.

Scott: Let's start with your wife and see where that goes.

Frank: I'm angry at her too.

Scott: That's the outward pointing. But point the finger back at yourself. What is she mirroring back about you?

Frank: When she talks about him with that sparkle in her eye, I get furious and afraid she will leave.

Scott: That's good. Those are the emotions. And those emotions result in the outward pointing. But what do the emotions seem to say about you, about how you are deficient in some way?

Frank: I feel less attractive and charming than him. It's as if I was not born with some important parts and he got them all.

Scott: Reduce all that down to a specific self.

Frank: I'm insignificant.

Scott: Can you find that insignificant self right now?

Frank: Ugh! Yes. Pit of my stomach.

Scott: Are the words "pit of my stomach" the insignificant self?

Frank: No, but it feels like that self is in the pit of my stomach.

Scott: Are those words you?

Frank: No.

Scott: Then actually observe into the space of your stomach. What do you see or feel?

Frank: There is a black hole there.

Scott: Are the words "black hole" you, the insignificant person?

Frank: I know they are just words, but they carry such an intense response. So yes!

Scott: Relax all words and pictures and look right at that black hole. What do you see?

Frank: It's a really dark area that feels as solid as a rock.

Scott: Look at the picture your mind is projecting into your gut, but without describing it. Is that picture you, the insignificant self?

Frank: Well, now, it doesn't look like it's me. It looks like something I am looking at.

Scott: So you see that there is an awareness looking at the picture?

Frank: Yes.

Scott: Rest as awareness, letting the picture just be there but without any words with it. Is that awareness the insignificant self?

Frank: That's a funny question. I thought you were going to ask if that picture is the self. No, awareness is just aware. It's not insignificant or significant. It's not really any story.

Scott: Don't skip over that seeing. Notice yourself, in the most basic sense, as this clear, open, unchanging awareness to which all these words, pictures, and feelings are coming and going.

Frank: Yes, that's peaceful, knowing myself as that space. But now the picture of the dentist is coming up and it feels like I am insignificant. Happens so quickly.

Scott: Is that mental picture of him you, the insignificant self? Look right at the picture, but notice that it is happening within this clear, open space of awareness.

Frank: Yes, I feel rage towards him when I see that picture.

Scott: Let the picture come to rest by looking right at it as it dissolves. Then look at the word "rage." Is that word you?

Frank: No, I am just using that to describe the intense feeling.

Scott: Take a moment and rest without describing the intense feeling. Take your time. Let that energy be there as it is.

Frank: When I stop describing it, it relaxes. That energy is not me. I can see that.

Scott: Can you find the insignificant self as you rest as clear, open awareness?

Frank: No. There are some subtle pictures and words, but nothing is sticking. It's all moving through and I'm just watching it come and go.

Scott: Look back at your wife. When you see her, does that trigger the sense that you are insignificant?

Frank: Sadness arises. This feels like the genuine emotion behind all this. The rage was covering it up.

Scott: The word "sadness" covers up the actual sadness energy. Rest and allow that energy to be in awareness, without any words on it. Is that energy you?

Frank: Yes.

Scott: That just means words and pictures are still arising. Just notice what is arising but don't follow the words and pictures. Let the sadness fly by as a bird flies through the air, leaving no trace.

Frank: Ahhh, the sadness almost feels nice, like it's turning into a warm sensation.

Scott: Is that sensation you, the insignificant self?

Frank: It feels good, but no, it's not an insignificant self.

Scott: Can you find the insignificant self?

Frank: No. It's not here. Each time I see something arising, it just falls away into the space.

A Final Note about Pointing Outward

Jealousy is a good topic to discuss how pointing outward is the way we deal with inner pain. Imagine a person standing with his finger pointing outward at everyone else. All that outward pointing is obscuring the self that is doing the pointing. When our energy is focused outward, we are blind to painful feelings. We cannot experience them directly, without words and pictures, until we begin to relax as awareness, letting those emotions be as they are.

Jealousy can bring up such an intense desire to point outward. The source of one's pain always looks like it lies in another person. For Frank, it was his wife and the dentist. Seeing through the insignificant self does not mean that Frank cannot express his concerns to his wife. He can still say to her, "Honey, I think you are getting a bit too close to your boss." They can then engage in a mature conversation about what feelings come up for Frank around his wife's admiration of her boss.

But focusing inward, to see the insignificant self as empty, changes the way Frank relates both to his pain and to his wife. In that open spaciousness, and the unfindability of that self, Frank is in a better position to be honest about his own feelings, instead of trying to deflect away from those feelings by focusing outward in blame and rage. Obviously, all that outward pointing was bringing little healing to Frank, or he wouldn't have come to me in the first place.

Sometimes it takes years of pointing outward before we see that it doesn't work. It doesn't heal us. And it doesn't clear

up the conflict in our relationships. Chances are Frank has tried to speak to his wife about this matter, but was speaking from the pain, instead of facing it. By not facing it, he remained blind to his core sense of deficiency. That blindness creates a constant loop of turning away from pain and focusing on the actions of others. When people are willing to face the core wounds within them, authentic communication can finally happen.

A Final Note about the Inquiries

If doing the inquiries seems a bit daunting at first, have patience. They become easier to use as you delve into them. You may want to start with a facilitator, partner, or friend. When someone else is asking you the questions, it is easier to just look at the thoughts, emotions, and sensations that are arising.

Couples can use these inquiries together. In fact, people in any relationship can benefit by doing the inquiries with one another: parent and child, sibling and sibling, or friend and friend. It can be enlightening to see what the people closest to you really believe about themselves. Exploring together in this way opens up an atmosphere of compassion, vulnerability, and transparency.

Of course, you don't have to wait for another person before you start the inquiries. Many people have benefitted by doing them on their own. As you see how the inquiries work, they become a part of you for a while. You are able to do them more and more quickly and easily. They become second nature. You are likely to get to the point where you simply look at a thought and ask, "Is this me?" You immediately see that it's just a thought, not a self. It falls away.

As the inquiries become second nature, there will be a more immediate seeing that thoughts, emotions, and sensations never form a separate, deficient self. It's an instant recognition. The story is immediately seen to be empty and unfindable. That story may stop arising altogether. And even if it arises, it's just another opportunity to see that, in that moment, no self is really formed. There are only thoughts, emotions, and sensations

appearing within awareness and then disappearing, leaving no trace.

One of the most beneficial things you can do with any painful story is *absolutely nothing*. Just letting thoughts, emotions, and sensations be exactly as they are allows them to pass through easily. As they pass through, notice that they come and go within self-less awareness. This self-less awareness is what you are in the most basic sense. Everything that appears is inseparable from this clear, open, selfless awareness that has no boundaries to it. As this is recognized to always be the case, not only will it seem as if the inquiries are no longer needed, they won't even work anymore. They only work when you believe yourself to be a truly permanent, separate, deficient self. That's exactly what you come to see as empty and unfindable.

CONCLUSION:
The Middle Way in Relationship

WORDS CAN NEVER adequately describe what is realized when you see through the sense of separation and the story of the core deficient self. Our language is dualistic, a web of opposites. It seems to describe life as it really is, when we believe its every word. It implies a strict separation between all objects, including people. That belief in separation is exactly what is released through the inquiries in this book.

The best way to experience what this realization is and how it benefits relationship is to do the inquiries. Don't just read the book and close it. If you do, you'll only have an intellectual understanding of the Middle Way, at best. And at worst, the Middle Way will just seem confusing and perhaps contradictory.

What is the Middle Way? *The Middle Way is freedom from the extreme views of "Everything is separate," and "Nothing exists." It is the seeing through of separation and deficiency, while retaining an*

appreciation for the diversity of appearances—me, you, us, them, and the world. We don't pretend that nothing exists. The play of life is always happening, and the play of relationship appears within it. Things and people still appear, but they appear non-fixed and non-objective. They are seen to be inseparable from the thoughts, emotions, and sensations that arise to paint them into experience a certain way. Yet despite the appearance of things and people, separation is nowhere to be found.

As this strict sense of separate self and other relaxes, people and things appear emptier. There is a lightness and ease in communication, as you see that you experience other people as a play of thoughts, emotions, and sensations, a filter that is unique to you. You see the reverse also. When others relate to and communicate with you, they experience you through their subjective filter. When the people you are close to also use the inquiries, the belief in objectivity is released both ways, creating a peace and harmony that must be experienced to be appreciated fully. While it is great if the people close to you are doing the inquiries in this book, you will still be aware of their subjective filters whether they are aware of them or not. Once you have seen through your own subjective filters, it's impossible not to be aware of those filters operating in others.

There will be times when you are interacting with others who are not interested in this realization. If you find these interactions challenging, the inquiries are perfect to see the ways in which you are buying into separation in your relationships with them. The inquiries are for you. When you clean up your side of the street, it's hard to find something wrong with others. They are as they are.

Even as we see through separation, deficiency, and objectivity, we retain our unique, subjective view of things, which is influenced by our history, thoughts, feelings, culture, and family upbringing. All of these influences continue to operate in us as long as we are speaking and thinking. Our minds are like computers that pick up information. That information is processed and becomes the subjective filter through which we experience each other and the world of things. By looking for triggers in relationship, we continue to be open to seeing how this subjective filter is being mistaken for reality.

In the Middle Way, self and other, and all other opposites, are experienced like mirages or reflections on the surface of water. Each reflection is inseparable from the next, but each contains its own uniqueness. We may find that we enjoy being with each other in silence, where thought is not arising much at all. In that silence, there can be a profound knowing of Oneness. This can be a very sweet and intimate way to be with each other. When we are together in silence, we aren't processing life through the dualistic web of language.

Once we have seen through separation, we find a natural peace, compassion, love, and ease of being with each other, whether we are resting in silence or talking. Language is no longer a problem when we aren't using it to define ourselves as inherently separate and deficient. Ideas swirl around, but they don't belong to anyone. They don't land anywhere. They come and go, leaving no trace. We can then use language for practical purposes, and as a way to communicate. It's an intelligent tool. There's no need to make an enemy out of it.

Through working with the Panorama and Boomerang Inquiries, we come to see the mirror of relationship everywhere we look, yet we don't feel trapped by it. We see that whenever we express a view, its opposite is automatically implied. Self implies other, us implies them, black implies white, deficient implies non-deficient, worthy implies unworthy…no longer do we take these things to be strict identities that exist in isolation, apart from their opposites and apart from the thoughts, emotions, and sensations that arise.

In the Middle Way, life is relationship. Everything is interconnected. Separation no longer makes sense and it is no longer our experience. There is a deep intimacy among and between all things, including people, countries, political views, and perspectives. Yet viewpoints still arise. They are naturally held more lightly, without a need to make a sense of self and other out of them. We retain the capacity to speak our minds and take whatever action feels authentic to us. We retain the ability to move in and out of different relationships, including leaving relationships that are abusive or no longer working.

As you do the inquiries, the mind clears. Thoughts, when they arise, are more transparent and quieter. They no longer seem to be who or what you are. They arise and fall within the clarity of selfless awareness. As the mind clears, the heart area begins to open on its own. This heart opening comes about organically through seeing that separation is never your experience, and neither is deficiency. You feel emotions more immediately, as soon as they arise, without a need to label or identify with them. They come and go more quickly, and they no longer hook into a story of separation. The more you rest

your attention into the heart area, the more it feels open and welcoming towards whatever appears in your present experience. The body feels more vibrant, alive, open, spacious, and peaceful. This is not about seeking. This deepening happens by itself as you experience a natural freedom from the belief in a separate, deficient self. As selflessness is seen to be your natural state, relationship is no longer a source of suffering, seeking, and conflict.

ABOUT:
Scott Kiloby



Scott Kiloby is an international speaker and the author of *Reflections of the One Life: Daily Pointers to Enlightenment, Love's Quiet Revolution: The End of the Spiritual Search,* and the companion book to this one, *Living Realization: Your Present Experience, As It Is.* He is also the creator of an addiction recovery method called Natural Rest. His book on this method is called *The Natural Rest Method: A Revolutionary, Simple Way to Overcome Addiction.*

Scott travels all over the world giving talks in which those attending experience nondual presence. In these meetings, every position and belief gets challenged. This leaves those attending completely open to allow the present moment to unfold in a new way, free of identification with thought. The point of the meetings is to allow people to go home and discover for themselves the freedom Scott's message is pointing to.

Scott is simplifying and demystifying the message of enlightenment or non-duality. He reaches out to people who are suffering or seeking or cannot seem to find fulfillment in this life no matter where they go or what they do. He communicates

that freedom is available and that it is actually contained in their very presence, yet it is overlooked.

Connect with Scott:

www.livingrealization.org
www.kiloby.com
https://twitter.com/#!/Scottkiloby
http://www.facebook.com/kiloby

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This book was truly a labor of love. Thanks to everyone in my life, too many to name, who acted as teachers reflecting back my own story of deficiency so that I could see through it. Special thanks to Curt King, Fiona Robertson, and Chad Sewich.

TESTIMONIALS

"As a long-time seeker who has *believed in* the non-dual teaching of no separate self (yet still experiencing a separate self) I have found the Unfindable Inquiry to be the missing key. The Unfindable Inquiry is like a laser that focuses precisely on the experience of the separate self to reveal that it is in fact not findable as an actual, objective, entity."

"Thanks so much, Scott. I found the session yesterday, and the Unfindable Inquiry, really powerful (mind-blowing, actually). Thanks for laying it all out so clearly."

"I like the use of the inquiry into the 'deficient' self...it really is such an amazingly simple tool to dissolve all mind constructed actions to realize what I really am. Beautiful..."

"As a result of my work with Scott and these very simple and direct inquiries, the assumption of a separate me fades and the ache for something other than life as it is now disappears along with it. What's left is unencumbered presence - the natural love and peace and clarity that had always been overlooked."

"Doing the Unfindable Inquiry with Scott provided me with the felt experience of boundlessness and the discovery that, within this field of awareness, I couldn't locate what I ordinarily think

of as my "self." Seeing through the notion of a "self" brought about a sense of relaxation and awe."

"Through the practical application (with Scott's loving guidance) of the Boomerang Inquiry, I was able to see that the attributes in the 'other' were really a perfect mirror that reflected a deficient self, enmeshed in stories of inadequacy, lack, fear, and judgement, to name a few."

"Using his Panorama Inquiry, Scott was able to point me to the direct experience that indeed, none of the imagined "others" in my life were expecting anything of "me." Seeing this cut through years of identification as a victim of the expectation of apparent others."

"What amazement it is to find that the very things that I was so scared to see or to find, and projected on to the world, others, and myself, do not exist in the first place."

ADDITIONAL TITLES:
Available from the Kiloby Group

Living Realization: Your Present Experience, As It Is
Scott Kiloby

Love's Quiet Revolution: The End of the Spiritual Search
Scott Kiloby

Reflections of the One Life: Daily Pointers to Enlightenment
Scott Kiloby

The Natural Rest Method: A Revolutionary, Simple Way to Overcome Addiction
Scott Kiloby

Doorway to Total Liberation: Conversations With 'What Is'
Scott Kiloby

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