

I HAVE TO BE PERFECT IF I WANT TO BE LOVED

Transcribed Session Facilitated by Marcia Martin for Sumitra Burton

Sumitra: *I can't be trusted. This is a feeling I have which goes back to a recent situation where I accused a dear friend wrongly of something that she didn't do. At first when we talked later, I couldn't even raise my eyes to look at her, though by the end of our talk I was feeling some sense of innocence and forgiveness and I could look at her.*

But some energy around this situation has lingered, and I realize now that there's still a sense of shame. It feels like it's not possible to truly be forgiven. There's a sensation in my chest and throat, of not being able to talk, of being choked off.

Marcia: Let's be with what's here right now. Is that sensation still here in the chest, that sense of being choked off and not being able to talk still here?

Sumitra: *Yeah, there's a sense of heaviness in the chest and that sensation in the throat. Yeah, and "not deserving"; those words are definitely there.*

Marcia: Just be with this, just exactly as you are. And just hear those words, "Not deserving."

Sumitra: *Yeah, I don't deserve to be forgiven. It's really not okay, what I did. (tears)*

Marcia: "I know it's not okay, what I did." Just looking at or hearing those words, acknowledging that these words are here. Allow yourself to experience this from a sense of rest; just observing, hearing the words and feeling those sensations.

Sumitra: *I see what it is. On some level I know deeply that it's okay to make a mistake, it's human and that we all do. But there's still something in me that tells me I need to be perfect.*

Marcia: Yeah. "I need to be perfect." Just notice those words. And with a sense of innocent curiosity, check and see, is that a command to be perfect?

Sumitra: *Yeah, there is. I can see an image and feel an energy, kind of a command to be perfect. I'm looking down and something up above is pressuring me, "Yes, you have to be perfect."*

Marcia: Yeah, so just looking at that image, noticing that image.

Sumitra: *Yeah, I just can't!* [be perfect] (tears)

Marcia: Just let that be here.

Sumitra: *I can feel it like a little child, but there's no memory of a situation where someone told me that.*

Marcia: So stay with the sensation, this sensation that says, "I can't." Just really let that be here. And check and see, what's the worst that can happen if you can't be perfect?

Sumitra: *It just continues on. I can see an image of hiding out in a cave.*

Marcia: So just be in that cave, hiding out. And check with that and see, what are you hiding from?

Sumitra: *It's like I'm afraid I'm going to be hit.*

Marcia: Yeah, you feel that fear in the body? Just move into that sensation, that sense of fear.

Sumitra: *I was spanked as a kid, you know. I was a very sensitive little girl.*

Marcia: So just let that sensitive little girl feel this fear, whatever's here. Do you still feel this fear?

Sumitra: *Um hmm.*

Marcia: Is this sensation the one who doesn't deserve it?

Sumitra: *Yeah.*

Marcia: What tells you yes?

Sumitra: *Just the need to stay there, all rolled up in a fetal ball, I guess.*

Marcia: So just let that be here, that need to roll up into a fetal ball. Is that an image that you're seeing?

Sumitra: *Um hmm.*

Marcia: Yeah, so just looking at that image. And let me know if the image begins to shift or fade in any way. And check and see, is there sensation or emotion tied to this image?

Sumitra: *Yeah, there's definitely fear, and there's something that I don't understand. Something like if I come out, I can't know for sure that I won't make another mistake and then I'll get hit again, you know. It's not like I got hit all the time or anything, but my dad had a wooden paddle that he had from his college fraternity, and my mom would have him spank us at certain times. I guess there's a sense of not being quite clear, you know, about what's going to cause that. And definitely, you know, it's scary. Just now it all seems a bit stupid.*

Marcia: Just indulging all those memories, and even acknowledging the thought, "It all seems stupid." And just check and see, are any of those thoughts protecting you from something? What is it that needs to be seen?

Sumitra: *They don't love me! (tears)*

Marcia: Yeah, just let that be here.

Sumitra: *It's not okay to make a mistake. I'll get hit. Wow, and this means I have to be perfect, if I want to be loved!*

Marcia: Yeah, they don't love me. It's not okay to make mistakes. I have to be perfect to be loved.

Sumitra: *Yeah, you know, I think it was a cultural thing back then. I know my parents loved me, and they were kind and gentle people, and our household was mostly peaceful, and I would say even to the point of being boring. But there wasn't that sense of warmth, you know, like something that I did wrong – whatever they deemed was wrong – I would be spanked. The message I received from this was that I was bad – not that the behavior was bad, but I was bad. I felt unloved and unlovable.*

And I don't remember being picked up and held, or being hugged much. I don't remember that in my childhood. So it feels like, for whatever reason, that spanking stands out more than being hugged or comforted.

Marcia: Yeah, "They don't love me. If I do anything wrong, I'll get spanked."

Sumitra: *Yeah, so when I think about my friend I wronged, I feel like I'm still on the hook. I can't get off the hook somehow. Like what I did was unforgivable.*

Marcia: Yeah, still on the hook and unforgivable. Just acknowledging those words. And if it feels right, I'm going to ask you to take two fingers and just tap in the

middle of your forehead. And take a deep breath and just drop into that sensation again, the sense of being on the hook.

Sumitra: *(laughing) Now when I see the image of being on the hook, it's like a big hook that you'd have on your wall to hang your clothes on. And I'm hooked there from the back of my sweatshirt, just hanging on that hook. I'm hanging on the wall. But the sense just came that it's up to me to unhook myself; she can't. She already showed me how she's over it, mostly anyway.*

Marcia: Yeah, so just acknowledging that, full appreciation for the insight.

Sumitra: *Yeah, and it's like I need to hug myself, you know. That's what was missing, and being told that everything's okay.*

Marcia: So can you do that? Just hug yourself, inside and out.

Sumitra: *It sure hooks in with my core life story that I'm unlovable.*

Marcia: Is it still here or has it faded?

Sumitra: *Yeah, I'm not on the hook any more. I'm somewhere between the hook and the floor. I've gotten off the hook, but I've not quite landed yet, I think. It's still hard; it's a really deep one. It's not okay to make a mistake.*

Marcia: So just acknowledging those words: "It's not okay to make a mistake." "It's not okay to make a mistake."

Sumitra: *Yeah, I need to learn to forgive myself. Duh!*

Marcia: So when you hear those words, "It's not okay to make a mistake," does your body react to it? "It's not okay to make a mistake; they won't love me."

Sumitra: *Yeah, I'm beginning to understand that they did love me and they didn't know any better, about the spanking.*

Marcia: Full appreciation for that seeing.

Sumitra: *Yeah, so I'll give this some time to work itself out. I see that it's at least a two-part process, when I make a mistake, that I need to apologize to the person that I hurt, and then I need to apologize to myself. And I need to learn to forgive myself. That's really something I don't know very well.*

Marcia: Yeah, so really hear those words, "I need to learn to forgive myself."

Sumitra: *Yeah.*

Marcia: And what will it give you, to learn to forgive yourself?

Sumitra: *I could get off the hook and move on, and not stay stuck.*

Marcia: So just taking that in, and checking these words one more time: "It's not okay to make a mistake. They don't love me." Does the body react to those words?

Sumitra: *There's something happening, like in the solar plexus.*

Marcia: Yeah, so moving directly into the solar plexus area, and opening to this as much as possible, with that innocent curiosity, "What's this?"

Sumitra: *(sigh)*

Marcia: If the solar plexus had a voice, what might it say?

Sumitra: *I don't know. It's kind of hard to stay with it. I feel like I should be done.*

Marcia: And just hearing those words, "It's kind of hard to stay with it. I feel like I should be done."

Sumitra: *Yeah, like I shouldn't put you out and make you listen to all this whining.*

Marcia: Yeah, "I don't deserve it; they won't love me." I'm going to ask you to take two fingers and just tap on your forehead.

Sumitra: *I really feel like tapping on my belly, maybe my solar plexus.*

Marcia: Perfect. And just focusing on that sensation, the tapping itself.

Sumitra: *(sigh, tears) It's like a big, booming, deep voice that says, "I love you, no matter what!" Feels like God talking.*

Marcia: Yeah, thank you for arising, I love you, stay as long as you want.

Sumitra: *Yeah, love just IS, you know? It's bringing me back to the sensation in my throat, and it still feels a little choked there.*

Marcia: So noticing the sensation that's there, and gently, very quietly, check and see, what do you want to say? Just being with this sensation in the throat area. And very gently just ask, "What do you want to say?"

Sumitra: *It says, "Just hold me." So I'm taking that little girl on my lap. It's time she gets held....*

Marcia: Can you feel that in the body, that sense of being held?

Sumitra: *Yeah, and I can hear the voice again saying, "I love you, no matter what." Unconditional love – who knew?!*

Marcia: Just check out these words, "I don't deserve it. They won't love me." And does the body respond to those words?

Sumitra: *No, they don't make sense now.*

Marcia: Yeah, full appreciation for that, for this seeing, for these thoughts that come and go, for this ebb and flow of sensation, and for this love that's always here. And just let yourself rest here for a minute.

Sumitra: *That's really beautiful, and I feel like I need to sit with a little bit more. It's a really deep one. How amazing, that I've lived my whole life since then believing I needed to be perfect in order to be loved. Thank you so much.*