



THE ULTIMATE

*Inner Liberation*

BLUEPRINT

TAME THE VOICE OF THE INNER  
CRITIC AND BREAK THE SPELL OF  
IMPOSTER SYNDROME

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Nicola Drew

# TABLE OF Contents

---

04 Introduction

52 The Stress Response

08 Setting the Scene

59 Step 4 - Uncovering Inner  
Wisdom

13 Step 1 - Your Inner Resources

69 Meet Your Inner Owl  
Meditation

22 Healing Sanctuary Meditation

71 Step 5 - Awakening & Healing

26 Step 2 - Unveiling The Inner  
Critic

101 Step 6 - Inner Liberation  
Toolkit

41 Step 3 - Break the Spell of  
Imposter Syndrome

135 Congratulations You Did It!  
What Now?

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# YOU'VE MADE A WISE DECISION

## Here's Why

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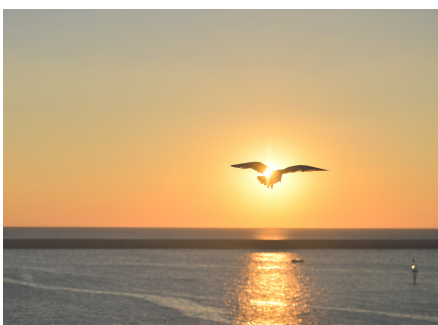
### ✓ Transform Your Inner Landscape

Experience an inner shift as you tame your inner critic and break the spell of imposter syndrome. Stop listening to and believing that unhelpful voice in your head. Remember who you really are, step into your power and reignite your inner spark.



### ✓ Embrace Your Potential

Break free from self-doubt and limiting beliefs that have held you back. Discover your true nature of wisdom, love, and peace, unlocking the boundless potential within you.



### ✓ Live a Liberated Life

Enjoy the benefits of inner liberation as you cultivate a sense of abundance, joy, and fulfillment. Embrace your passions, follow your soul's purpose, and share your uniqueness with the world, living a life of flow, ease, and meaning.

# HELLO!

I am thrilled to be your guide on this healing journey towards taming the voice of your inner critic and breaking the spell of imposter syndrome.

I'm Nicola Drew, a psychotherapist, coach, trauma specialist, energy healer, author and spiritual guide with a deep passion for helping individuals break free from limitations and embrace their true potential.

Drawing on my experience as a psychotherapist and my work as a spiritual guide, I have developed this blueprint to educate and expose misunderstandings of the mind so you can have a much more enjoyable experience of life.

In this book, you will find a culmination of many years of study, exploration, and practical application of teachings from ancient wisdom traditions and modern psychological approaches.

Together, we will navigate the inner landscape, overcome obstacles, and awaken the extraordinary potential that lies within you.

I am honoured to be a part of your journey towards inner liberation.

With gratitude and love,

Nicola x



# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to The Ultimate Inner Liberation Blueprint!

Congratulations on embarking on this healing journey towards taming the voice of your inner critic and breaking the spell of imposter syndrome.

My mission in writing this book is to help you to remember your true nature which has become veiled by layers of conditioning. I lived most of my life believing the voice in my head that told me who and what I was.

It caused years of struggle and it was all smoke and mirrors. I'd forgotten my true nature, I was identified with the voice. Luckily life events unfolded that cracked me open and led me on a mystery tour that allowed me to wake back up to who I really am. I'm so honoured to have the opportunity to point you back to yourself in the hope that you will remember too and be the pointer for others.

"We're all just walking each other home." Ram Dass

Within these pages, you will discover insights, practical strategies, and empowering tools to liberate you from the limitations imposed by self-doubt, fear, and negative self-talk.

You could read it to gather information and no doubt find some useful new knowledge. However, I encourage you to use this book as an opportunity for deep reflection, to inspire you to take new action and to allow an identity shift at the deepest level.

# WAYS TO CONNECT

“We have the most wonderful job in the world – we get to tap people on the shoulder, and be with them as they wake up to the full magnificence of life”

Sydney Banks

If you would like to connect with me, here are some ways that you can do that.

Check out my free Facebook group where you'll find lots of free resources - [A Free Mind Community](#)

If you would like to be guided through this process of inner liberation you can work with me one to one and you can also find details of my online programmes on my website.

[A Free Mind Website](#)





## 6 SIMPLE STEPS

# Inner Liberation Blueprint

### ● STEP 1 - YOUR INNER RESOURCES

We'll harness the superpower of your imagination and explore your Observing Self. Using the powerful tool of guided imagery, I will guide you to create your own unique healing sanctuary.

### ● STEP 2 - THE INNER CRITIC

Understand the nature of the inner critic as an internal voice that perpetuates self-doubt, criticism, and limiting beliefs, often stemming from past experiences or societal conditioning. Meet the parrot!

### ● STEP 3 - IMPOSTER SYNDROME

Explore imposter syndrome, the persistent feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt, and recognise its widespread influence across different areas of life. Gain insight into how imposter syndrome triggers the stress response, hindering confidence and potential, and set the stage for overcoming its grip and embracing inner liberation.



#### ● STEP 4 - INNER WISDOM

Remember your true nature and embrace the wise owl within. Discover the inherent wisdom, love, and peace that resides within you, beyond the influence of imposter syndrome and the inner critic.

#### ● STEP 5 - AWAKENING & HEALING

Explore raising your level of consciousness and self awareness. Learn to create a balanced life and embrace self compassion.

#### ● STEP 6 - INNER LIBERATION IN DAILY LIFE

In this section I share with you some of the incredible tools I use with my clients. I invite you to take them for a test drive yourself and then create your own Inner Liberation toolkit for daily life.



# SETTING THE SCENE

# Let's set the scene

"The discovery that peace, happiness and love are ever-present within our own Being, and completely available at every moment of experience, under all conditions, is the most important discovery that anyone can make."

Rupert Spira

When I talk about inner liberation I'm not talking about some mystical out of reach state that only a few special people can achieve following a life of struggle and dedication. I'm talking about the absolute present state of your true nature right now whether you experience it or not. Your nature is freedom and yet the psychological programming and unprocessed emotions can make us feel far from liberated.

**Inner liberation** refers to the state of freedom, authenticity, and empowerment that comes from transcending self-limiting beliefs, fears, disempowering stories and negative thought patterns.

It involves breaking free from the constraints of societal conditioning, the critical voice of the inner critic, and the grip of imposter syndrome. Inner liberation allows individuals to fully embrace their true nature, connect with their inherent wisdom and potential, and live authentically and fearlessly.

It is the path towards self-acceptance, self-love, and the realisation of one's innate value and capabilities.

**The Inner Critic** is the internal voice that often undermines our self-confidence and self-worth by perpetuating self-doubt, negative self-judgment, and fear of failure. It stems from past experiences, societal pressures, and internalised beliefs, creating an ongoing dialogue of self-criticism that can hinder personal growth and well-being.

The inner critic's influence can be tamed through self-awareness, self-compassion, and strategies that challenge its negative messages, ultimately allowing individuals to reclaim their inner power and pursue a path of inner liberation.

**Imposter syndrome** is a psychological phenomenon characterised by persistent feelings of self-doubt and inadequacy, despite evidence of one's competence and accomplishments.

Those experiencing imposter syndrome often attribute their success to luck or external factors rather than acknowledging their own skills.

This pattern of thinking can lead to anxiety, fear of being exposed as a 'fraud', and a reluctance to take credit for one's achievements.

We are going to be looking through the lens of understanding and compassion. All aspects of ourselves are deserving of our love, attention and understanding. We might not like the effects of the inner critic in our life but at some point it had a role to protect a vulnerable part of you. With self awareness and an openness to meet the inner critic we can help it see that it can relax.

01

**Inner Critic-** Let's get clear about the nature of your own inner critic. What does it tend to focus on? Are there particular times, places, circumstances that it gets very loud and critical? What eases it? Has it changed over time? What does it stop you doing?

02

**Imposter Syndrome-** Let's get clear about the nature of your own imposter syndrome. What area of your life do you feel like an imposter? How does the feeling of being a fraud effect you? What does it prevent you from doing? What feedback do you not let in? What do you hyper focus on?



# Step 1

## YOUR INNER RESOURCES & HEALING SANCTUARY

# The Observing Self

As we begin to explore the inner critic and imposter syndrome it is important to get to know the innate resource we have at our disposal. Every human is born with a set of physical and emotional needs. Our innate resources help us to get these needs met.

When the emotional needs of humans are met in a balanced way then we are emotionally healthy. It is difficult to get these needs met if the resources are missing, damaged, misused, or overwhelmed by circumstances. The inner critic and imposter syndrome can be thought of as a misuse of some of our innate resources.

The 'Observing Self' is one of the innate resources that we have as humans.

It is the part of us that can step back from the mind, emotions and conditioning to enable us to be aware of ourselves as a unique centre of awareness.

This unique centre of awareness is the essence of our being and has the power to attach and detach from the content of our inner experience or outer environment.

Nothing can damage it or take anything away from it so it is objective and never fully lost in the content of life. This ability to detach allows us to reflect on our own inner environment of thoughts and feelings. It helps us zoom out, stop reacting and resisting, get a wider perspective and reset.

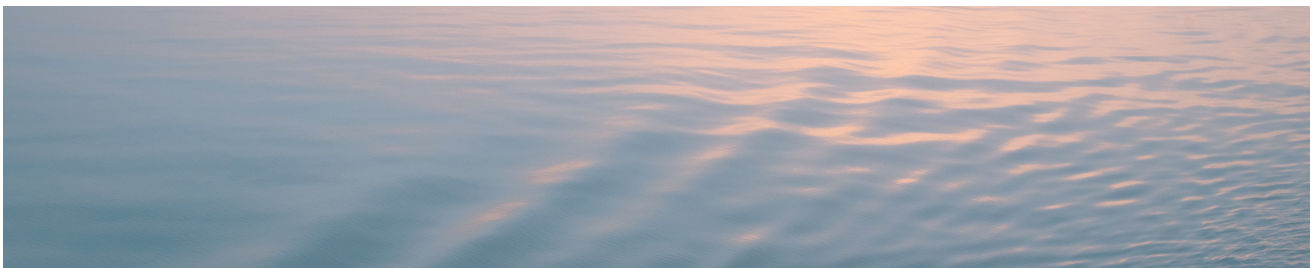
You can think of it like a torch which shines its light on the contents of our inner and outer experience but doesn't become enmeshed in the contents. When we understand this we can become consciously aware of where we are focusing our attention and we can learn to shift that focus away from anything that doesn't serve us.

The Observing Self can also be thought of as a state of consciousness within an individual that is capable of observing their thoughts, emotions, sensations, and experiences without becoming identified or entangled with them.

In other words, the Observing Self is the part of your awareness that can step back and objectively witness what is happening within your mind and body.

Key characteristics of the Observing Self include:

- **Detachment:** The Observing Self is detached from the content of your thoughts and feelings. It's not caught up in the emotions or thoughts themselves; instead, it simply observes them as they arise and pass away.
- **Non-Judgment:** The Observing Self does not judge or evaluate what it observes. It doesn't label thoughts as good or bad, right or wrong. It approaches experiences with an attitude of non-judgmental acceptance.
- **Awareness:** The Observing Self is aware of the present moment. It is focused on what's happening right now, rather than dwelling on the past or worrying about the future.
- **Perspective:** This aspect of your consciousness provides a broader perspective. It allows you to see your thoughts and emotions from a distance, which can be especially helpful in gaining insight into patterns of behaviour or thought.
- **Calmness:** The Observing Self is often associated with a sense of calm and tranquillity. It's not driven by the strong emotions or reactions that the inner critic might create.



# Observing Self Practice - Stop, Drop & Roll

I'm going to use the fire safety slogan Stop, Drop and Roll in this context as it can be an emergency when the inner critic has us in its grip.

For best results please practice this many times during the day and especially when your mind is calmer, to begin with. The more you practice the easier it will be to Stop, Drop and Roll when the 'voice' is really strong.

## Stop

Pause and notice that you are caught up in your mind. You are not present.

## Drop

Drop what you have been absorbed by. Say 'clear clear' internally or out loud. Relax your focus of attention – allow it to widen away from the content of the mind. You can bring your focus to your body, your senses, and the environment – a tree, a lamp, a pet etc.

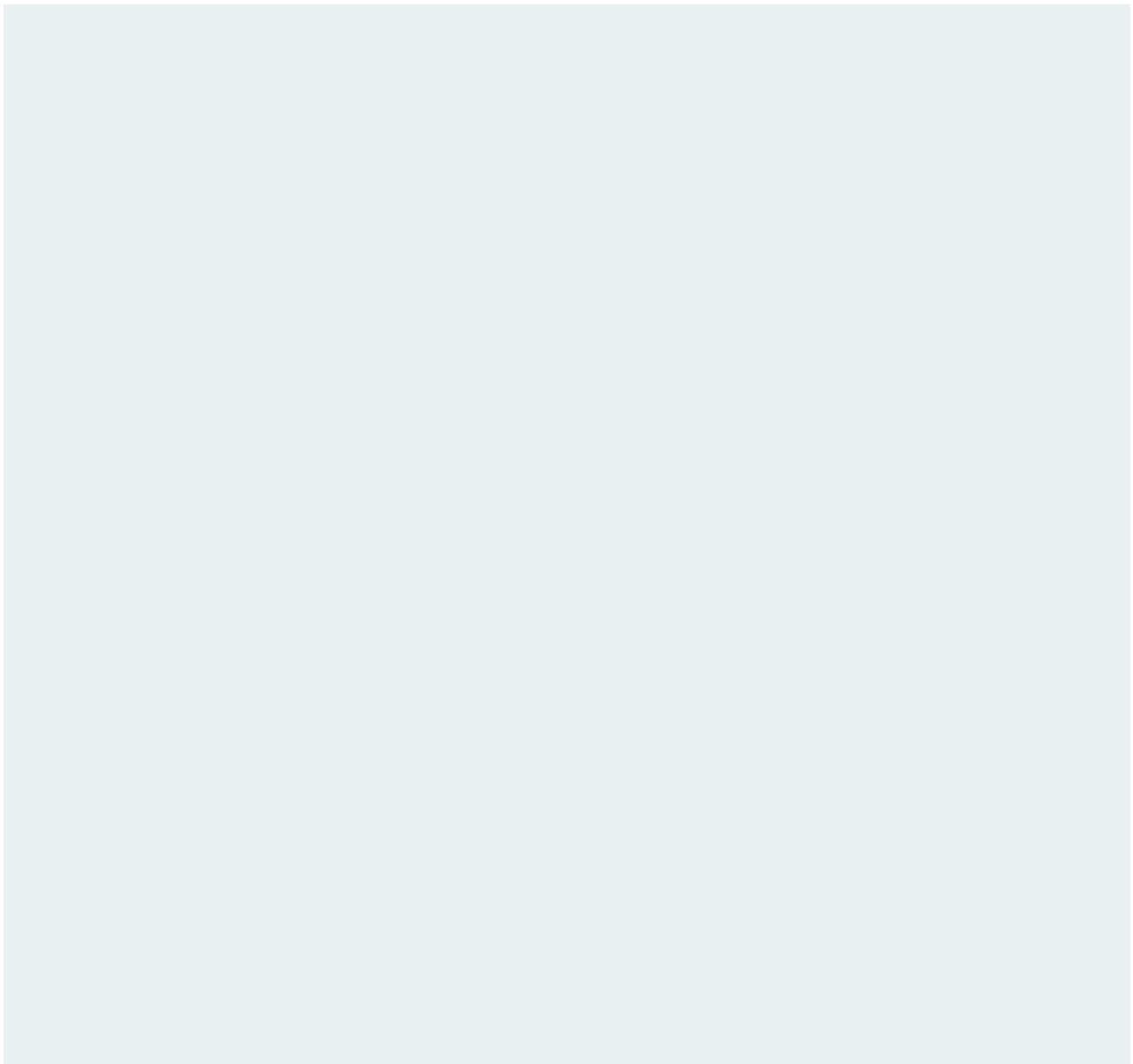
## Roll

Roll back into the Observing Self – the centre of awareness, the one that knows you are not the 'voice' or thought and can watch from a distance.

The more relaxed you are the easier it is to notice the Observing Self. There are resources for relaxation in the toolkit at the end of the guide. This is a skill and art so go easy with yourself and keep practising. I teach this skill in my online courses.

# The Observing Self - Reflection

Use the space below to reflect on what you have learned about the Observing Self. Are there times in your life or certain things that you do that you are aware of the Observing Self? Keep track of your progress with the Stop, Drop and Roll Technique.



# Harnessing the Superpower of your Imagination

Another resource we have is our imagination. The imagination is the theatre of your mind, it is an incredible superpower.

Without the ability to imagine something that is not here now we would never have developed incredible things in the world. We would be stuck in the now with what is.

So the imagination is an incredible gift but, for many, it is being innocently misused to create stress and anxiety in our life and also deferment of happiness – I'll be happy when....Let's explore the imagination further.

The imagination is a powerful resource that allows humans to create mental images, scenarios, and concepts that aren't directly present in their immediate surroundings. It's a double-edged sword, carrying both benefits and potential downsides.



## The Gift of Imagination:

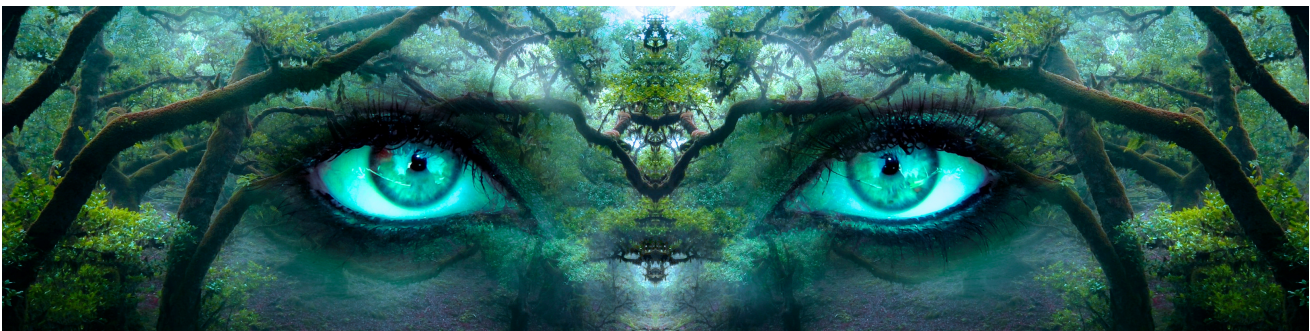
- **Creativity and Innovation:** Imagination is the foundation of creativity. It's the wellspring from which innovative ideas, inventions, and artistic creations emerge. Many of the world's greatest works of art, literature, and technology have been born from imaginative thinking.
- **Problem Solving:** Imagination helps in thinking beyond the constraints of reality. It allows people to envision alternative solutions and scenarios, aiding in problem-solving and decision-making.
- **Empathy and Understanding:** Imagination enables individuals to mentally step into the shoes of others, fostering empathy and a deeper understanding of different perspectives. It's an essential component of emotional intelligence.
- **Personal Growth:** Through imagination, people can visualise their goals, aspirations, and desired future. This can motivate them to take steps toward personal growth and development.
- **Entertainment and Escape:** Imagination is at the heart of storytelling, films, and other forms of entertainment. It allows people to escape their reality temporarily and immerse themselves in imaginative worlds.



## The Curse of Imagination:

- **Anxiety and Worry:** Imagination can lead to overthinking and ruminating on negative scenarios. People often create "what-if" situations that trigger anxiety and stress. The inner critic hijacks our imagination and uses it against us, often dragging us to a difficult time in the past or a made-up awful future.
- **Fear and Phobias:** Fear is often fueled by an overactive imagination, where people imagine worst-case scenarios that may not align with reality. Imposter syndrome also hijacks the imagination leading to fear and avoidance or perfectionism.
- **Distorted Perceptions:** Imagination can create distorted perceptions of oneself, others, and the world. Negative self-perceptions and body image issues can be influenced by an imaginative comparison to unrealistic standards.
- **False Memories:** Imagination can blur the line between actual memories and imagined ones, leading to the creation of false memories that feel real.
- **Procrastination:** Excessive daydreaming and imaginative planning can sometimes lead to procrastination, where individuals get lost in their thoughts rather than taking action.
- **Inhibition of Real Experiences:** Spending too much time in imaginative thought may lead to missing out on present experiences and interactions.

The key lies in harnessing the positive aspects of imagination while being aware of its potential drawbacks.



# Visualisation Exercise

In this exercise, we are going to use the Observing Self and also the positive aspects of the imagination to begin to build your psychological muscles allowing you to take back control from the inner critic and imposter syndrome.

This is an incredible skill to learn. I teach this in my online courses but you can develop your own skill.

To begin with, it is helpful to find a quiet space and close your eyes.

Begin to visualise a beautiful place in nature that you are familiar with or one that you are creating in your imagination.

It could be a beach, a garden a forest, near a river etc.

Use all of your senses to experience the place – to bring it to life.

Noticing the colours all around

Taking in every detail of the sky

The movement of the water or the trees

The smell of the fresh air

Feel the temperature on your skin

The sensation under your feet

The sounds of nature

As you get more experienced with your special place, you can imagine yourself rehearsing a goal, calmly and confidently going through the steps and rehearsing success.

If your mind wanders or goes off track it isn't a problem, just notice and bring it gently back to the beautiful place in nature.

# Healing Sanctuary Meditation

Once you feel comfortable with the visualisation exercise you can begin to practice the Healing Sanctuary visualisation/meditation. In an ideal world I would guide you through this verbally but you can still get great results from reading through these instructions and then practicing. You can also record yourself going through the process and listen to that. You can find the guided version in the online programme.

Find a quiet and comfortable place to sit or lie down. Take a few deep breaths, inhaling relaxation and exhaling tension. Allow yourself to be fully present in this moment.

- **Grounding and Centering:** Begin by focusing on your breath. Inhale slowly, feeling the air filling your lungs, and then exhale, releasing any stress or worries. Imagine roots extending from your feet, reaching deep into the Earth, grounding you in this present moment.
- **Entering the Sanctuary:** Visualise a beautiful serene place of your choosing. It could be a peaceful forest, a tranquil beach, a majestic mountain, or a blooming garden. Notice a welcoming retreat, building or shelter. Imagine stepping through the entrance, feeling a sense of calmness and anticipation.
- **Sensory Experience:** As you enter this sanctuary, take a moment to notice your surroundings. See the vibrant colours, feel the textures beneath your fingertips, hear the gentle sounds of nature, smell the fresh scents in the air, and sense the comforting temperature around you. Allow yourself to be fully present in this sensory experience.

- **Healing Elements:** Ahead, you notice elements that radiate healing and tranquillity. Perhaps there's a serene water feature, a tall and wise tree (it's your imagination anything is allowed), or a cozy and inviting fire. Take a moment to explore these elements. Feel the coolness of the water, touch the rough bark of the healing tree, or step nearer the warm embrace of the fire.
- **Personalising the Sanctuary:** Now, imagine adding personal touches to this sanctuary. These could be objects, symbols, or Beings that represent healing, strength, and comfort to you. Visualise these additions, and notice how they fit harmoniously into the space, infusing it with your energy.
- **Inner Wisdom Encounter:** Find a quiet spot within your sanctuary to sit or lie down. Invite an inner guide or wise figure to join you. This could be a version of yourself that embodies wisdom, a spiritual figure, or even a symbol of guidance. Take a moment to sense their presence and allow them to share any wisdom or guidance they have for you. You can ask for guidance and support around the inner critic and imposter syndrome.
- **Absorbing Healing Energy:** Stand or sit comfortably within your sanctuary. See a gentle, healing light or energy surrounding you. Feel its warmth as it envelops you, bringing a deep sense of relaxation and renewal. Imagine this energy flowing into your body, soothing every cell and filling you with healing energy. Be still for a few moments then intend for any excess energy to flow out of the body.

Slowly begin to bring your awareness back to the present moment. Take a few deep breaths, feeling the air entering your body and then leaving it. When you're ready, gently open your eyes and become aware of your surroundings.

Know that you can return to your healing sanctuary in your imagination whenever you need a moment of calm and healing. Allow the positive energy and insights from this meditation to remain with you as you continue your journey.

# Healing Sanctuary - Reflection

Take a moment to reflect on the experience you've just had.

Note down - how you felt, any special features of the sanctuary you want to remember, any symbols, wisdom or guidance you received, any objections or resistance from the inner critic.

# Other Innate Resources

In addition to our imagination and the Observing Self, we have other innate resources to help us navigate life and ensure that we get our physical and emotional needs met so that we can have a happy, healthy and balanced life.

**Memory** - The ability to develop complex long term memory, which enables us to add to our innate knowledge and learn.

**Rapport** - The ability to build rapport, empathise and connect with others.

**Emotions and instincts** - These play a vital part in our survival – driving us to take action, helping us understand what's happening around us and to respond accordingly.

**Rational mind** - A conscious, rational mind that can check out our emotions, question, analyse and plan.

**The ability to 'know'** - that is, understand the world unconsciously through metaphorical pattern matching.

**A dreaming brain** - that 'resets' the brain every night by metaphorically defusing expectations held in the nervous system because they were not acted out the previous day.

We will explore the emotional needs we have later in the book.

If you would like more information about our innate resources or emotional needs you can explore The Human Givens Institute website.



# Step 2

**UNVEILING  
THE INNER  
CRITIC -  
MEET THE  
PARROT!**

# Unveiling the Inner Critic

Based on the client sessions I've had over the years I'm going to take a chance and guess that you have no idea of how incredible you are!

I know that you used to know but you've forgotten. Your true self has been veiled and you have tuned out of hearing and feeling its inner nudges.

*Do you think he still knows how  
amazing he is?*



Of course he does, just look at the light radiating out of him!

At a certain point, even in the most stable of families, that light gets dimmed. The voice in the head starts up and we forget who we are.

As a young child we live in a type of brain wave similar to hypnosis, we are very suggestible and we learn very easily. Up to the age of seven, we are programmed to maintain a strong attachment to our caregivers to ensure survival.

Due to this need to maintain an attachment and regardless of our caregivers' behaviours we can't make them wrong. Instead, we make ourselves wrong. The inner critic tells us that something is wrong with us.

A parent has an angry outburst because they are worried about money or they've had too much to drink, they take it out on us and the young brain has no wider context for this behaviour other than I did something, I am unloveable, I need to be different etc.

We'll explore the different roles the inner critic has in our lives later on but for now I'm going to use one of my favourite characters to explain the inner critic and its effect on our lives.

Strap in and get ready to meet the parrot!



## MEET THE PARROT

Let me introduce you to one of my favourite characters, the parrot. I'm going to tell you about the parrot and later in the guide our other inner bird, the owl.

Imagine a bright, loud parrot that loves to talk away in your head. It is not you, but it can feel like you. It has been chatting away in your mind since you were about two years old. You weren't born with it; you came into the world a little bundle of presence.

If someone looked at you in your pram, there you were just curious, looking back and interested. There wasn't a parrot, a voice in your head saying, "Oh don't look at me, I've got chubby thighs", or "I don't like this outfit I'm wearing today". There was none of this self-referential thought until around the age of two when the parrot formed. The parrot is part of being human, it's not wrong, it's just that the parrot has been over-promoted.

Einstein's quote 'The mind is a beautiful servant, but a terrible master.' points to the parrot being over-promoted from servant to a harsh, critical, power-crazy master, often making us its servant. This mini dictator bosses us around not giving us a minute's peace which can cause anxiety, fear, self-doubt, and harsh self-judgement. It's a case of mistaken identity and so hopefully as I explain about the parrot, you'll get a sense of understanding and freedom.

When the parrot comes online at around two years old it is a programme that runs in the background. The programme is there so that we don't have to relearn everything and to keep us safe. This programme is informed by the era that we're born into, the culture, the family that we grow up in, what's happening in the news and media at the time, and the religion that we're exposed to. All of these messages come in and create our particular style of parrot. The people who pass these messages down to us, often, do so from their unexamined programming. They don't question the programming that they have taken on so this unconscious programming perpetuates.

This is why it's really important that we start to understand that yes there is a program running but programmes are not fixed, they can be updated and transcended. Lots of the programming we inherit comes from a low level of consciousness, it is very fear-based. It is mostly negatively biased because this program is part of the survival brain, its job is to keep us alive. It has its uses but it shouldn't be ruling our lives, it shouldn't be running our lives.

I'm sure you know what it feels like when the parrot is dominating. It feels heavy, limiting and scary. It doesn't need to be this way. The parrot gets its power in various different ways. One way is because we identify with it, we think that the voice in the head is who we are.

I was stunned when I found out it wasn't who I was and that it was just a program. It feels so familiar, chatting all day long. The parrot loves to say "This is right, this is wrong, blah blah blah". It's like the narrator of life and it's so familiar to us that it comes as a shock when we realise that's not who we are. So the parrot gets most of its power through us identifying with it, believing it, listening to it and following its instructions.

The second trick it uses to keep over-promoted is that the parrot is a time traveller. Think of it like a seeking resisting machine, it doesn't like what's here and it wants something different. It is always seeking something different and resisting what's here.

This time-travelling ability allows the parrots to fly out of the present moment and go to the past, often, leading to low mood and depression. It might focus on what you had in the past focusing on how great it was, the glory days, and then it tells you that it's gone, gone forever. Or it will say look at what terrible things happened in the past. It could be things that you did or didn't do or things that other people did or didn't do. It keeps showing us this film and that leads to low mood, guilt, shame, blame and depression.

The parrot can also fly into the future creating fear, anxiety, deferment of happiness and the dreaded favourite of imposter syndrome "They will find out

I'm a fraud". The parrot will get you out of whatever you're doing in life and into the mind and it will fly to a made-up future. It's like the most untrustworthy and biased fortune teller. The parrot pretends it has a crystal ball and it will show you a film, it will show you a future and you will feel that future as if it is true and happening now.

Depending on the nature of your parrot depends on the type of film it will show you. In the case of deferment of happiness, it will show you a film where you can be happy. It will lead you to believe that the future is going to be better, but there's a catch. The parrot will have a number of demands before that happiness can be felt. You will have to jump through certain hoops for the promise of peace and happiness. And if your parrot is like mine it will keep moving these hoops so it is a perpetual dance always just out of reach. The inner critic of perfectionism uses this to keep you in constant fear of not being good enough.

One of the main consequences of the parrot flying to the future is that of fear and anxiety. The parrot hijacks our vivid imagination and Steven Spielberg has nothing on us in terms of bringing things to life in our imaginations.

The parrot creates a film of a terrifying future and makes this image feel real and true. And then the amygdala, the security guards in the brain, scan our minds and they see this film and they say "Oh my goodness, there's real danger here. There is something to be afraid of". They then activate the stress response – fight, flight, freeze or fawn.

Typically with this type of film, it will be the flight response – "I need to escape, I need to hide, I need to avoid." Certain patterns of behaviour will be activated to help cope with this feeling that the film has generated - I need to do this ritual to feel okay, I need to drink this to numb these feelings, I need to avoid this presentation, I need to worry and ruminate to make me feel safe, I need to achieve x, y or z to feel good enough.

This has all been activated by the ability of the parrot to pluck us out of the present moment reality that we're in and take us to a scary made-up future.

The other thing to watch out for with the parrot is that it will pretend to have our best interests at heart but actually, it only has its own interests at heart. It wants to keep being over-promoted. It wants to keep us in this fear-based way of being as it can only see through the lens of fear -fear is its reality.

I'll give you an example of what my parrot tends to do. My parrot likes to use my weight and body image to keep me out of presence. It will say "You've had a hard day. Why don't you have some chocolate?" and if I'm not really present or if I'm a bit stressed or a bit tired, off I go. I'm eating the chocolate but as soon as the chocolate has been eaten, up comes the very same parrot saying - "Oh my, what is wrong with you? You never stick at anything. I thought you wanted to cut down on sugar. Remember that time in 2010 when you failed at .....".

It was the parrot's idea and now it's attacking me for it. You will all have your own particular relationship with your parrot. It scrambles to stop uncomfortable feelings that it has created by hijacking our imagination and our thought patterns. Then when we follow its suggestion it blames us!

Sometimes when I tell clients about the parrot they say "Okay how do I kill the parrot?" We can't get rid of it because it's part of being human but we can have a very different relationship with it. We can demote it back to being a trusty servant. We don't want to be fighting with it as the parrot wants your attention. Whether you're believing it or fighting it, it is just as happy because it seems to have the power, it has your attention. The relationship we want to start having is, "Thanks for the information, I'll just see how it goes".

We want to turn the volume dial on the radio down. Eventually, you'll be able to change the channel away from Parrot FM.

Do you recognise the parrot in your life? It is often easy to recognise in other people too.

# Get To Know Your Parrot

Incredible changes can happen in your life when you raise your level of awareness and can untangle from the parrot. You take back self-mastery and free yourself from the fear and demands of the parrot.

01

**Your parrot-** What type of exposure did your parrot have growing up? What were strong messages it was exposed to? If these messages have been adopted, do you still believe them? Do they still serve you? What patterns have they led to in your life?

02

**Your parrot & the past-** In what ways does your parrot drag you down by focusing on the past? What does it criticise you or others about from the past?

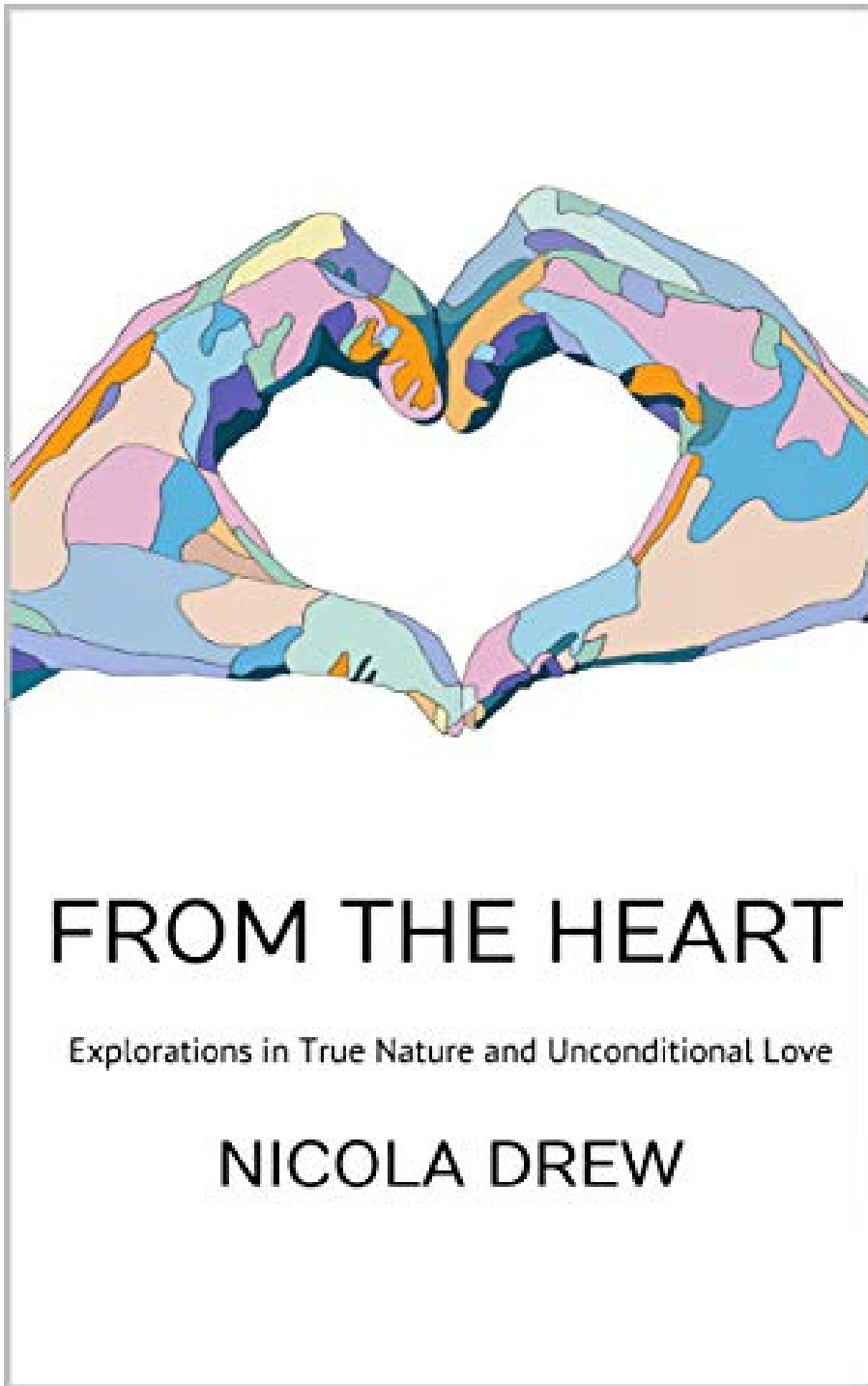
03

**Your parrot & the future-** In what ways does your parrot frighten you or defer your happiness by focusing on the future? Is it keeping you small in any way? It knows your Achilles' heel - how does it use this against you? What does it tell you that you need to be, do or have to be worthy?

04

**Your parrot & imposter syndrome-** What is your parrot telling you that if others knew - you'd be shamed and cast out? What is it telling you about being a fake or fraud? Who is it comparing you to? What is it telling you that you need to avoid or do to keep safe?

# Colin's Story



I'd like to share a chapter from my book 'From the Heart: Explorations in True Nature and Unconditional Love, about the parrot and the huge impact it had on Colin's life when he found out about the parrot and owl.

*"Love is everywhere." Colin Pitcairn*

I met Colin a few years ago when I was working for a charity supporting informal carers. Colin had been struggling with fear and anxiety for over 30 years, but he was open to change. In order to explain about true nature and unconditional love I told him the story of the parrot and owl. I'd been given this analogy to use in my work by my psychotherapy supervisor. I use the analogy often as it is so relatable for many people including myself. The story isn't written down but rather passed from person to person in a bespoke way to suit the needs of that person. Below I attempt to put the analogy into written form.

*The story of the parrot and the owl*

We each have two inner birds guiding our lives but in very different ways. One is a noisy and insistent parrot, and the other is an owl which is quieter, but a wise and gentle guide.

The parrot seems to live in our heads bossing us around with its great ideas and drama stories. The parrot likes to point out all the things that have and could go wrong. Sometimes it likes to tell us how great we are and other times it shows us every area where we just don't match up to its high and unrealistic expectations. The parrot is fear-based and although it thinks it is being a friend and keeping us safe, it is really misguided and is only interested in protecting itself. One minute my parrot is telling me how great I am and the next minute it is pointing out what a loser I am – which is true? The answer is neither, both are musings of an insecure parrot trying to feel secure and regain power.

Clients often ask how they can get rid of the parrot. The parrot loves drama so any attention we give it, good or bad, feeds it and gives it strength. Rather than getting rid of it the goal is to see the parrot for what it is – part of the human function repeating old, stale unhelpful patterns given to it through conditioning. The parrot has a loud voice, but it has no ability to make us do anything it is shouting about. The parrot hates the now – it finds its strength in time travelling to the past and the future. This is because in the now we have the greatest access to the wisdom of the owl and the parrot loses its ability to seemingly have power over us. The more we begin to notice the parrot at play we can wake up to the moment, fall out of its trance and regain our power in the now.

The Owl lives deep inside of us and it is made of wisdom and unconditional love. The owl will tell us things that will truly look after us, it has our best interests at heart all the time. The owl will tell us what is needed in any situation, like a wise and intelligent inner satellite navigation system. The owl will never let us down and is always trying to guide us by wisdom even when we don't notice it. The owl is reliable and can be trusted even if we have ignored it for years – it doesn't hold grudges like the parrot.

The owl lives firmly in the now and is grounded in the truth of reality not the imaginations of past and future. You might experience the owl as a big insight that changes your life, a moment of clarity, a good feeling state, a moment of peace, a great idea from nowhere, an inner knowing, or you simply find your body doing the next best thing to do in that particular moment. The owl's wisdom is specific to you in that exact situation so it can't be given to you by someone else ahead of time. Others can point you to the owl, wake you up to learn to tune in and to trust that wise guidance is always there.

The owl can be accessed in any moment but to begin with it certainly seems to be easier to 'hear' its guidance when we are in a calm state with a clearer mind. So, begin to get to know the characteristics and habits of your inner birds to help guide you from a life of fear and confusion to one of peace and inner contentment.

## Colin's Story

Before I found wise owl, my GPS was off center, and the parrot seemed to have a lot of power over me, messing with my head.

For thirty years I thought I was broken.

Then Nicola Drew came into my life and she has helped me change my life and to find the real me.

Now I know I'm not broken, what a relief!

The parrot was telling me lies and I learned that it is not to be trusted. Before I knew this, I thought that I had to believe everything that the parrot was telling me. I was scared and exhausted by it. Now I know that the wise owl is always there to guide me and will never let me down I can live more of the time from peace. The parrot hasn't disappeared and still looks for gaps when my state of mind is not so clear to tell me fear based stories, but I notice what is going on and I listen for the wise owl.

I notice that the parrot's stories look much more real and true when I am feeling stressed or overwhelmed. Nicola also taught me the 7/11 breathing technique which helps to calm me down so I can see through the parrot's drama. Having this breathing technique which works so quickly and so well has stopped me being so frightened. I can trust the intelligent system in the moment and don't need to overthink what might happen in the future as I have access to inner wisdom and more control over the stress response.

I love life!

Big Col

You will learn more about the owl in step 4 and you can learn the 7/11 breathing technique Colin mentions in Step 6.



# Step 3

BREAK THE  
SPELL OF  
IMPOSTER  
SYNDROME

# *Imposter Syndrome*

Are you familiar with that sinking feeling when you fear it is the moment you are going to be found out to be the fraud you know that you are?

You are not alone as it is estimated that up to 70% of people have experienced imposter syndrome at some point.

Imposter syndrome refers to a psychological pattern where individuals doubt their abilities, experience persistent feelings of inadequacy, and fear being exposed as a fraud despite evidence of their competence and accomplishments.

People with imposter syndrome often attribute their success to luck or external factors, dismissing their own skills and talents.

It can affect various aspects of life, such as work, relationships, and personal achievements, leading to self-doubt, anxiety, procrastination, workaholism, self sabotage and a lack of confidence.



## IMPOSTER SYNDROME CASE STUDY

I'd like to share Jane's story to help bring imposter syndrome to life for you.

### **Jane's Struggle with imposter syndrome**

Jane is a highly accomplished marketing professional with several years of experience in her field. She has consistently received recognition and praise for her work, including promotions and awards. However, despite her achievements, Jane constantly doubts her abilities and feels like she doesn't deserve the success she has achieved.

Jane experiences persistent thoughts of being a "fraud" or "not good enough." She believes that her accomplishments are a result of luck or other external factors rather than her own skills or hard work. She often compares herself to her colleagues, assuming they are more competent and deserving of their success.

Due to her imposter syndrome, Jane tends to overwork herself, constantly seeking validation and reassurance from others. She often downplays her achievements, attributing them to external circumstances rather than acknowledging her own abilities. She hesitates to take on new challenges, fearing that she will be exposed as a fraud.

Jane's imposter syndrome takes a toll on her emotional well-being. She experiences high levels of stress, anxiety, and self-doubt. The constant fear of being discovered as an imposter affects her confidence and hinders her from fully embracing her potential and pursuing new opportunities. She uses a glass or three of wine each evening to push away the discomfort that her inner critic then begins beating her up about!

Do you recognise yourself in Jane's story?

Now let's look in more depth at imposter syndrome.

## IMPOSTER SYNDROME TRAITS

Leading expert Dr Valerie Young offers up these 10 ways to know if you suffer from impostor syndrome:

**Fear of exposure:** While you present a facade of confidence to the world, you harbour an underlying fear of being uncovered as an imposter. The constant worry that your past successes are merely flukes fuels this dread, as you believe it's only a matter of time before you are found out.

**Every Challenge Feels Monumental:** Your successes stem from your ability to tackle new challenges head-on. However, each new challenge promises to be the one that exposes you as a fraud. Exams, presentations, interviews, and promotions become anxious trials and your mind catastrophises about failing and that being the end of your world.

**Explaining Away Success:** Although you've achieved remarkable milestones, you attribute them to external factors like luck, timing, or other people's efforts. Your accomplishments are systematically downplayed as mere products of circumstance, minimising your role in them.

**Mistakes Equate to Failure:** In the realm of an impostor, a mistake is synonymous with failure. You believe that true competence excludes errors, leading you to harshly judge yourself based on your perceived failures while sidelining your accomplishments.

**Self-Blame for Setbacks:** Unlike your successes, which you attribute externally, you internalise your mistakes and failures. Instead of considering external factors, you hold your supposed inadequacy accountable. This deep self-blame often clouds your perception of your own work.

**Perfection as the Standard:** Your pursuit of perfection is relentless, setting impossibly high standards. Any deviation from perfection is seen as incompetence, and even asking for help seems like an admission of being a phony.

**The Expert's Dilemma:** You believe that true competence demands absolute expertise in your field. This pursuit drives you to a never-ending quest for knowledge, fueled by the belief that only when you know everything will you truly be an expert.

**Overworking as a Shield:** Hard work is commendable, but you take it to the extreme. You work excessively even on routine tasks, as a way to hide your insecurities. The notion that you've reached your current position solely through sweat and toil becomes a constant companion.

**Embracing Procrastination:** Procrastination becomes a strategic tool for self-preservation. By delaying tasks until the last moment, you create an excuse for potential shortcomings. Even if the results are positive, you question their authenticity.

**Fear of Success:** Paradoxically, the idea of success often breeds more fear than failure. As you ascend higher, the stakes increase, and the pressure becomes overwhelming. Due to your difficulty in internalising achievements, the journey to success becomes blurred.

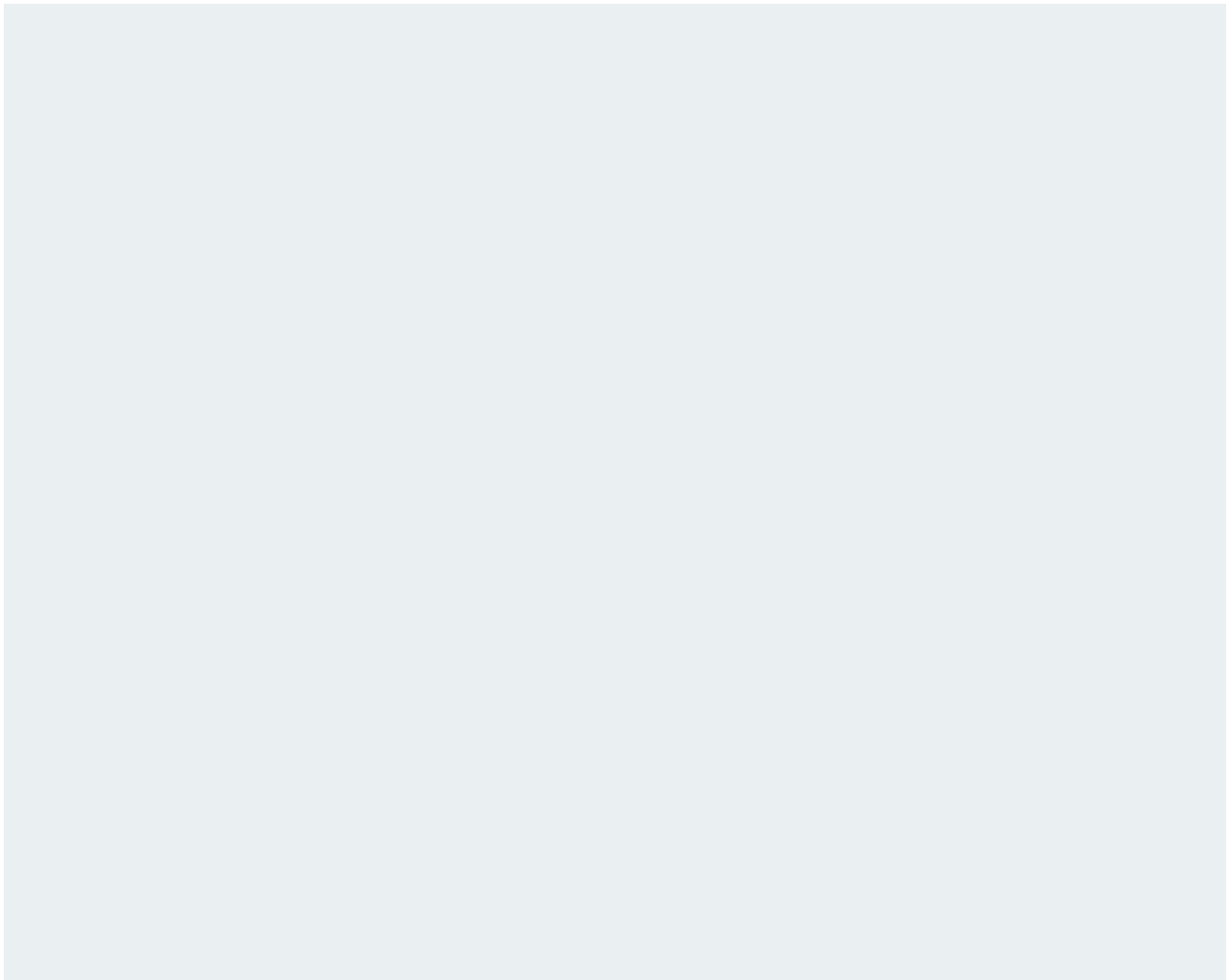


# Imposter Syndrome Audit

In a loving and non judgemental way it would be good to get clear on any imposter syndrome traits.

01

Consider the list of traits and write down which if any you recognise in yourself. Note down how this is impacting on your life and consider what your life would be like without imposter syndrome.



## TYPES OF IMPOSTER SYNDROME

Dr Young has also identified five types of impostor syndrome:

**The Perfectionist:** These individuals set extremely high standards for themselves and strive for flawlessness. They are never satisfied with their achievements and are quick to attribute their success to external factors rather than their own abilities.

**The Superwoman/Superman:** These individuals feel the need to excel in all areas of their lives, often juggling multiple roles and responsibilities. They believe that they must excel in every aspect, and any perceived failure is a blow to their self-worth.

**The Natural Genius:** People with this type of impostor syndrome have a pattern of coasting through tasks and achieving success with minimal effort. When faced with a challenge that requires hard work, they fear that they are not as intelligent as others think they are.

**The Soloist:** These individuals believe that they must accomplish tasks and goals on their own without any help. They are reluctant to ask for assistance and view needing help as a sign of weakness.

**The Expert:** People with this type of impostor syndrome believe they need to know everything before taking on a task. They fear being exposed as inexperienced or not knowledgeable and may avoid new challenges to avoid being seen as a novice.

You may feel that you fit neatly into one of these types or that you are a combination. It could be that you would give your type its own definition. These concepts are useful but should be held loosely. I see expert tendencies in myself which has caused me to get an abundance of qualifications and caused some procrastination!

# Imposter Syndrome Audit

In a loving and non judgemental way it would be good to get clear on which type/types of imposter syndrome you can see in yourself.

02

Consider the types of imposter syndrome and think about which type you most relate to or make up your own type. Think about how you might be in the world if you weren't identified with this type of thinking, feeling and behaving.

## THE ROLE OF THOUGHT

If I had a magic wand that could take away the feeling of imposter syndrome instantly I'd be waving it right now. But here's the thing - we live in a thought-created reality. If we repeatedly think and believe imposter-type thoughts we are going to experience the feelings of imposter syndrome. If you plant a lemon seed you won't grow a banana.

If you have had this thinking style for a while, the body and brain will be well rehearsed in the thought/feeling connection of imposter syndrome. It will be a well-trodden and easy path for the system to activate. So while the feeling of being an imposter may take a while to leave, the good news is that you have already begun the process of change by engaging in this book to raise your awareness. As soon as you become aware and actively change your thinking style the rewiring will begin and change is inevitable.

Knowledge is power!

Also, it is worth pointing out that people who don't wrestle with imposter-type feelings are not inherently more intelligent or capable. The difference between them and us lies in the thoughts they entertain when confronted with situations that could trigger imposter insecurities.

The thoughts in your head are not who you are! Imposter-type thoughts can come into your mind but if you don't identify with them, latch on to them, believe them, resist them or act on them - they have very little effect on you and they will pass by just like the thousands of thoughts that flow through your system every day. I'm sure you're not still hanging onto the thought about making a coffee or tea this morning, unless, of course, you are trying to change a habit so the thought has more meaning for you.

It is estimated that we have between sixty thousand and ninety thousand thoughts each day.

That is a lot of thoughts!

We can think of it as a river of thought flowing through our minds each day. Ninety per cent of the thoughts are the same old thoughts that we have had before – like a stuck record.

Most humans are consumed and hypnotised by this flow of thoughts, believing them and acting on them because they have identified themselves with the thoughts.

At times most humans will resist, fear and fight the stream of thoughts as a result of this identification.

There is a common misconception that to be at peace we need to have an empty mind, to stop the flow of thoughts.

Have you ever tried this? Just like our ability to hold our breath for a short time, some people seem to be able to pause thoughts but soon enough they come rushing back. The person then gets frustrated with themselves as they have failed to empty their mind.

Humans are designed to have a flow of thoughts running through their minds just like we have a flow of blood running through the veins and a flow of breath in and out.

The problem is not that we have a flow of thoughts running through our minds. The problem is that we have identified with the thoughts – we think they are who we are and that they mean something about us and our life, that they are telling us about reality.

When there is a space between you and the mind, then what the mind is doing is not an issue.

There is another common misconception that negative thoughts are bad and positive thoughts are good.

When we fear negative thoughts and we get busy trying to get rid of them we innocently give the negative thoughts more power and the mind can get out of control.

There is no such thing as a good thought or a bad thought – only unconscious thought identification and conscious awareness of thought.

Key point - The content of the mind is not negative. The fact that it is happening unconsciously in an identified way is what is negative. You can have imposter-type thoughts and not be identified with them, believing them, acting on them and being afraid of the feelings that accompany them.

You do not need to take your thoughts personally and you certainly don't need to believe thoughts or fear the feelings they create.

A thought in itself has no power but if you think it is a reality it can destroy you!

The aim, through understanding and practice, is to create a natural distance from you and your mind to come to know that you are not your thoughts.



## THE STRESS RESPONSE

# *The Inner Critic & Imposter Syndrome*

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Many of us spend most of our life in the stress mode and think this is a normal way to live. The inner critic & imposter syndrome create stress in the system.

Fight	→	go towards	→	Anger
Flight	→	run away	→	Anxiety
Freeze	→	shut down	→	Withdraw/hide
Fawn	→	people please for safety		



We are designed to visit the stress response occasionally for 10 or 15 minutes to get out of real danger. In this modern world, many of us are innocently living in the stress response most of the time.

### **Perceived threat in the environment**

We have security guards in the ancient part of the survival brain constantly monitoring our senses for the perceived threat of danger – they use a crude pattern match – this reminds me of that. Think of a person running away from a coiled rope as the security guards perceived it as a snake.

### **Psychological threat – mind made**

On top of the ancient brain, there is a newer addition of the neocortex (new layer). The ancient brain is only interested in survival but this newer layer is focused on understanding and thriving. It houses the gift of the imagination, the ability to have perspective and rational reasoning.

This part of the brain has the ability to time travel, it can take us to the past and relive a memory. It can visualise a future that doesn't yet exist and we feel it as if it is true. This is a huge benefit and humans have advanced so much creating things that didn't exist before. The problem is that the security guards in the lower brain didn't get the memo, about the new layer, and when they scan our mind and see us reliving a past event or imagining a scary future they respond as if these events are happening right now, not in the mind, and they trigger a stress response.

## *The Effect of Stress on the Brain*

So whether the stress response is triggered because of a perceived threat in the environment or a psychological threat, the system will automatically get prepped for running or fighting. Long-term functions such as digestion, immunity and reproduction will temporarily shut down so essential resources can be moved to the arms and legs, the tools for running and fighting. To move the resources the heart will begin beating faster, breathing will change, and we will sweat to cool us down – I'm sure you know the physical symptoms of stress.

What you might not know is that the brain will also change its state. The survival brain sends up stress hormones and hijacks the rational, logical neocortex and sends it offline. The neocortex is slower and asks too many questions so the survival brain takes over the controls.

The survival brain operates in a very different way than the zoomed-out rational neocortex and we go into a very narrow focused hypnotic trance state, locked on to the perceived threat. Thinking changes to black and white, all or nothing and catastrophic. The survival brain 'chooses' which of the stress modes to activate and we will find ourselves fighting, running, freezing or fawning.



In this state we are not making rational, logical decisions we are reacting to survive which is excellent if a tiger is chasing us but less helpful if we are road raging because someone is driving at the wrong speed for our liking. In this hijacked state, it is difficult to have empathy, make decisions, remember things, relax or sleep.

If there is actual danger and we are running, fighting or freezing, then running when it is safe to, the body utilises the stress hormones and as soon as the danger is gone the system quickly resets, the long-term functions switch back on, heart rate and breathing regulate and the neocortex comes back online, puts the situation in perspective and learns any lessons it needs to for the future.

We come back to ourselves and can once again see other perspectives. We are often ashamed of our reactions while in the stress response but you can see once we are hijacked we are at the mercy of our ancient brain. While we aren't to blame, we do need to take responsibility. So it is very important to ensure that we aren't living in a state of stress and that we learn techniques to understand the mind and not be activating a survival mechanism with a perceived psychological threat.

Spend a moment to consider how often the inner critic or imposter-style thoughts have activated this ancient survival system activating a stress response.

# Thought & Stress Audit

It is important to get clear about where you are so that you know the areas in which you want to learn and make healthy changes. There should be no judgement here just a healthy reflection.

01

**Thought** - Note down the main thoughts that the come up around imposter syndrome.

02

**Stress** - Reflect on stress levels in your life. What does calm feel like to you? What are the early warning signs of stress - emotional, physical & behavioural? What happens when you are highly stressed? What unhelpful habits do you use to manage stress? What helpful habits do you use?

*Remember - You have an amazing in-the-moment survival system and innate wisdom to keep you safe in real time.*

# SEPARATE REALITIES

Our perception of the world and ourselves is not a uniform experience; rather, it is a tapestry woven from individual threads of personal experiences, emotions, cultural backgrounds, and cognitive biases.

At the heart of separate realities lies the notion of subjective perception. When our inner critic takes the stage, it frames our self-perception in a way that aligns with its narrative. This narrative is influenced by our individual cognitive biases—those mental shortcuts that filter information and shape how we interpret the world. What we see, what we remember, and how we evaluate ourselves are all subject to the lens of these biases, leading us to perceive events and experiences in a way that reinforces the inner critic's voice.

Our cultural backgrounds not only lays down our norms and values but also influence the lens through which we view the world. Different cultures may interpret the same situation in contrasting ways, leading to a profound divergence in perceived reality.

Emotions, too, play a pivotal role. An individual's emotional state can tinge their perception, subtly altering the colours of the world. The inner critic thrives on these emotional currents, magnifying insecurities and emphasising flaws. Positive emotions might dim its voice, while negative emotions can amplify it, shaping our understanding of ourselves and our capabilities.



## RETICULAR ACTIVATING SYSTEM

Have you ever had the experience of getting a new car and then it seems that everywhere you go you see the same type of car? Or you begin thinking about having a baby and then suddenly you hear about pregnancies and see pregnancy related things everywhere?

This phenomenon is due to the Reticular Activating System (RAS) a network in the brain that acts like a funnel or filter. In every moment there are millions of bits of sense data vying for our attention. However, our conscious awareness has limited processing capacity and we wouldn't be able to function if all of this data bombarded us.

The RAS is the system that filters 99% of this data out so only 1% gets through to our conscious awareness! You might be asking how does the RAS choose what to let through and what to filter out? The slogan for the RAS is - the thinker thinks and the prover proves!

The RAS shows us a world that matches the thoughts that we have been focusing on. It says "Jane is interested in silver Volvos" and if by magic all of the silver Volvos that have always been around Jane, but she hadn't noticed, come into her conscious awareness.

It is a great system but can you see the implication for our experience of life if we are dwelling on the voice of the inner critic or focusing on imposter-type thoughts?

Our very experience of the world and ourselves will be reflected back to us. The RAS can prove most things as there are millions of bits of potential it can draw on.

The background of the page is a close-up photograph of blue feathers, likely from a bird, with a soft, out-of-focus effect. The feathers are arranged in a way that creates a sense of depth and texture, with some sharp edges and others blurred. The overall color palette is a range of blues, from light to deep, with some white highlights where the feathers catch the light.

# Step 4

UNCOVERING  
INNER  
WISDOM -  
MEET THE  
OWL

# Uncovering Your True Nature

“The discovery that peace, happiness and love are ever-present within our own Being, and completely available at every moment of experience, under all conditions, is the most important discovery that anyone can make.”

Rupert Spira

“All we are is peace, love, and wisdom, and the power to create the illusion that we are not.”

Dr Jack Pransky

**Reflection** - Consider the possibility of the truth of the two quotes. Can you feel the impact of the quotes? What feelings are arising for you? What are the implications of these quotes for your life? Are there any resistances?



Some of the messages I'd love for you to be receiving from me are;

- You are so much more than you can ever know yourself to be.
- You are not the voice in your head and you are not the thoughts that flow through your mind. The inner critic cannot know the real you!
- Your true nature is the awareness, the consciousness, that is untouched by the programming you have picked up in life and that nature is peace, love, happiness and wisdom.

Our true nature is what we long for but we search outside of ourselves for it. The parrot will send you off in the wrong direction to fill its sense of lack. The parrot can never know your true nature - it is a veil seemingly obscuring it.

We have forgotten or we feel that we have lost our true nature as we are so distracted by life and the mind but we can never lose it as it is what we are, but it can become veiled.

Our mission in life is to unveil and remember our true nature, before we die, so that we can fully embrace our life in the world and shine our light and beautiful unique gifts.

# My Story

From a very young age, I lived with fear and worry. It always felt that other people knew what was going on but I just didn't get it. I never felt like I fitted in. I didn't feel clever enough, popular enough, pretty enough, or thin enough and as a consequence, I tried to make myself invisible outside of my close friendships. Now I know this to be the work of the inner critic, but it would be decades before I discovered this!

Despite this life went along okay until three major events happened to me. In 1999 while driving to the hospital to say goodbye to my Dad I fell into the most loving and beautiful experience of oneness with life. It was the moment he passed away, his parting gift to me.

Just three years later I was standing next to my baby son listening to a surgeon tell me how my son's open heart surgery had gone. I was paralysed with terror and again I fell into pure unconditional love and peace. The wires and machinery fell away and I was fully present with my baby. I knew at that moment that whether he lived or died he would be okay, I saw briefly the eternal nature of our life energy - our pure essence.

I didn't understand what was happening at the time so I kept quiet but the perfume of these loving experiences changed me forever. These peak experiences, into the nature of life, started a twenty-year search to understand the human mind, myself and the deeper nature of life.

When I was 40 my life fell into turmoil when I discovered my husband was having an affair and the marriage ended. I had two small children and the shock, hurt and fear about the future floored me. There was no peaceful experience this time and I went through a deeply painful period. The inner critic really took hold showing images of me living under a bridge!

As I healed I knew I was being called to help others heal from their past and their misunderstandings about the mind and so I retrained as a coach and psychotherapist. My passion comes from my own journey in life and I'm honoured to walk alongside my clients as they heal and uncover the magnificence of who they really are.

These spiritual experiences also led me into a deep search for the truth and eventually into a spiritual awakening revealing my true nature. You don't have to wait until life gets difficult – you can begin to get to know what you are not so it opens the door to who you really are.

I look back at my life and feel so much compassion for my younger self. She was gripped by the inner critic from a very young age. It was like living with a toxic bully inside my head. It led to decades of dieting and body shame - something I didn't begin to heal until my late forties. It led to the need to be a 'good girl' and to people-pleasing, putting my needs last.

The inner critic led to imposter-style thinking, which I believed. This led to me playing it small, flying under the radar, not promoting myself, leaving a job with a London consultancy because I didn't feel good enough, avoiding public speaking at all costs, terrible visibility anxiety. It wasn't until I was in my fifties that I faced the discomfort and began showing up on videos.

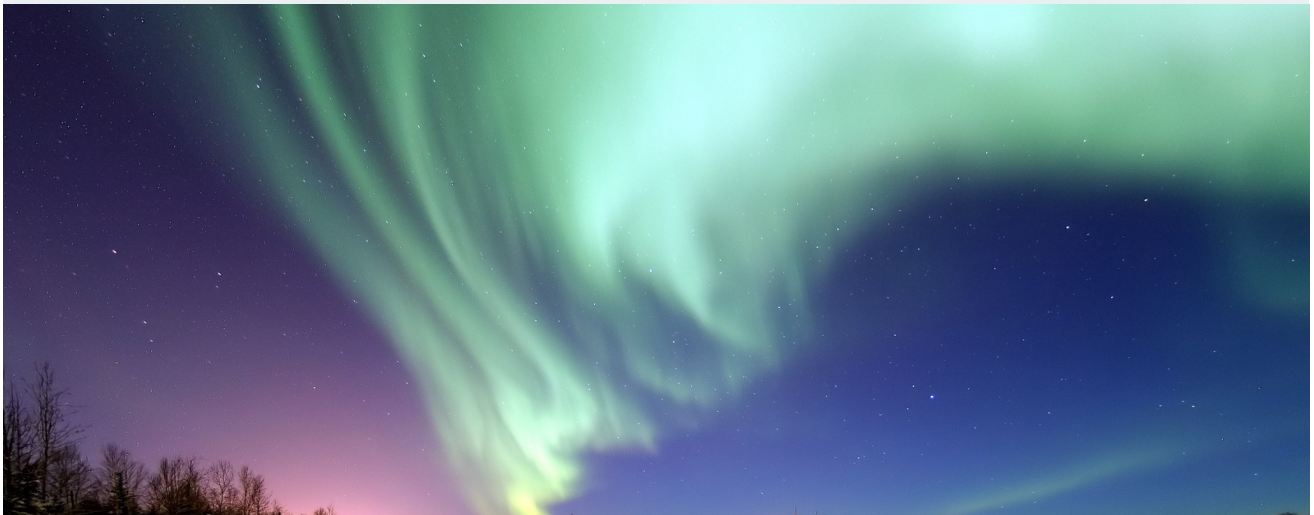
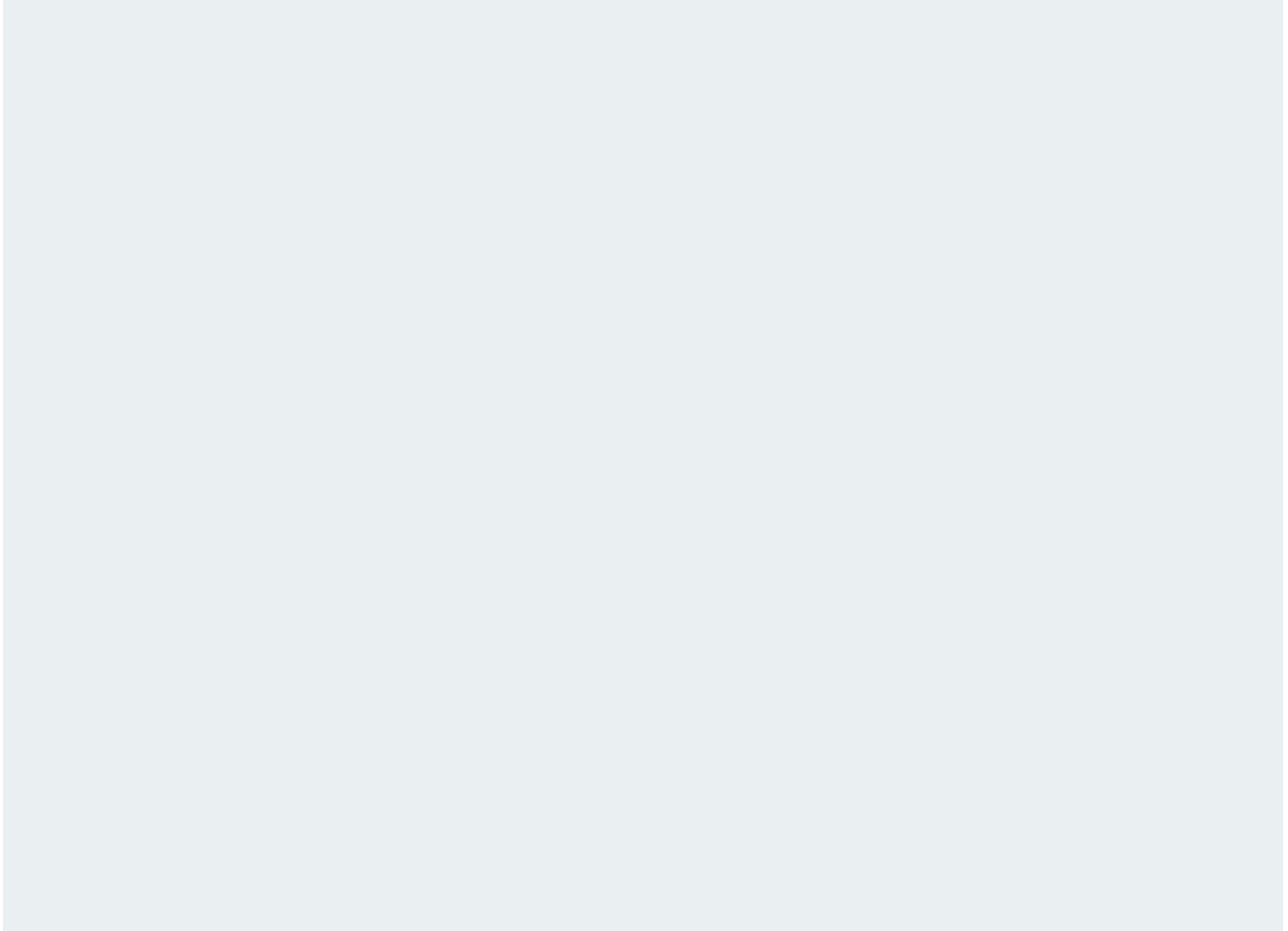
This is why I have written this book - I want to make a difference in your life so that you can show up in the world, in your own unique way, and shine your light for yourself and others.

“Love is what we are born with. Fear is what we learn. The spiritual journey is the unlearning of fear and prejudices and the acceptance of love back in our hearts. Love is the essential reality and our purpose on earth. To be consciously aware of it, to experience love in ourselves and others, is the meaning of life.

Meaning does not lie in things. Meaning lies in us.”

— Marianne Williamson

**Reflection** - Consider times in your life when you have fallen into a peaceful state of being that you perhaps didn't understand at the time. Do you feel any resistances to exploring your true nature? Are there any activities or ways of being where you feel your true nature is more obvious to you?



## Meet the Owl

If you remember back to our friend the parrot, I mentioned that there is another bird I wanted to tell you about. If the parrot represents the inner critic you might like to think of this bird as our inner cheerleader or wise guide. Let me properly introduce you to the owl.

Whereas the parrot seems to live in the head, the owl is much more body and heart-centred. The owl is unconditional love, it's our wisdom, it's our creativity, it's our presence. As you now know the parrot is programmed by life circumstances the owl is outside of that programming. It is untouched by anything that has happened to us in this life. It's the light shining out of that beautiful baby's eyes earlier in the book.

The owl is pure, fresh, wise and loving all through your life. The owl is a beautiful and trusted guide. Many of us aren't taught to trust or recognise the owl in our lives but at certain times you may feel a hint of its presence. Think about the things that you love to do, it is probably because it quietens your mind enough so the gentle essence of the owl can be felt. It could be a sport, being with a loved one, painting, walking in nature or being with your pet. It is not about the activity or person – it is about being in a certain level of presence or awareness so the ever-present essence of the owl is felt. It is often called the flow state in psychology. I call it being aware of your true nature. States come and go – what you are is eternal and ever-present.

Sometimes it's enough for the parrot to quieten a little so you feel the inner okayness, you feel your guidance system giving you the next small step. Often it is in a crisis that the parrot seems to short-circuit and the beautiful owl is waiting to catch you. This was certainly my experience when my dad died and I was in the intensive care unit with my baby.



The owl's guidance is very different to how the parrot operates. You can think of the parrot being like a brass band, it is loud, it demands and it constantly talks. The owl is much more like a flute, it is a gentle intuitive knowing, an inner nudge. It's an intuitive, responsive guidance system and it's always recalibrating based on the current reality.

The reason the parrot wants you to time travel to the past or the future is that it knows when you're present in the body, present in the moment that you are more aware of the owl. The owl's wise guidance can take over and you'll be able to feel the intuitive nudges of wisdom. Your level of consciousness will rise and you'll have access to the intelligent creative life force.

The owl's guidance system is on a moment-to-moment basis. It knows that life is an unfolding and will give the small steps that are just right for the moment with perfect timing.

This is why the parrot worries us so much because it thinks into the future into all the made-up unknowns and it doesn't take into account the brilliant inner guidance system we have available in the moment that life actually unfolds. So we are cast adrift into a made-up land without access to the resources to deal with it.

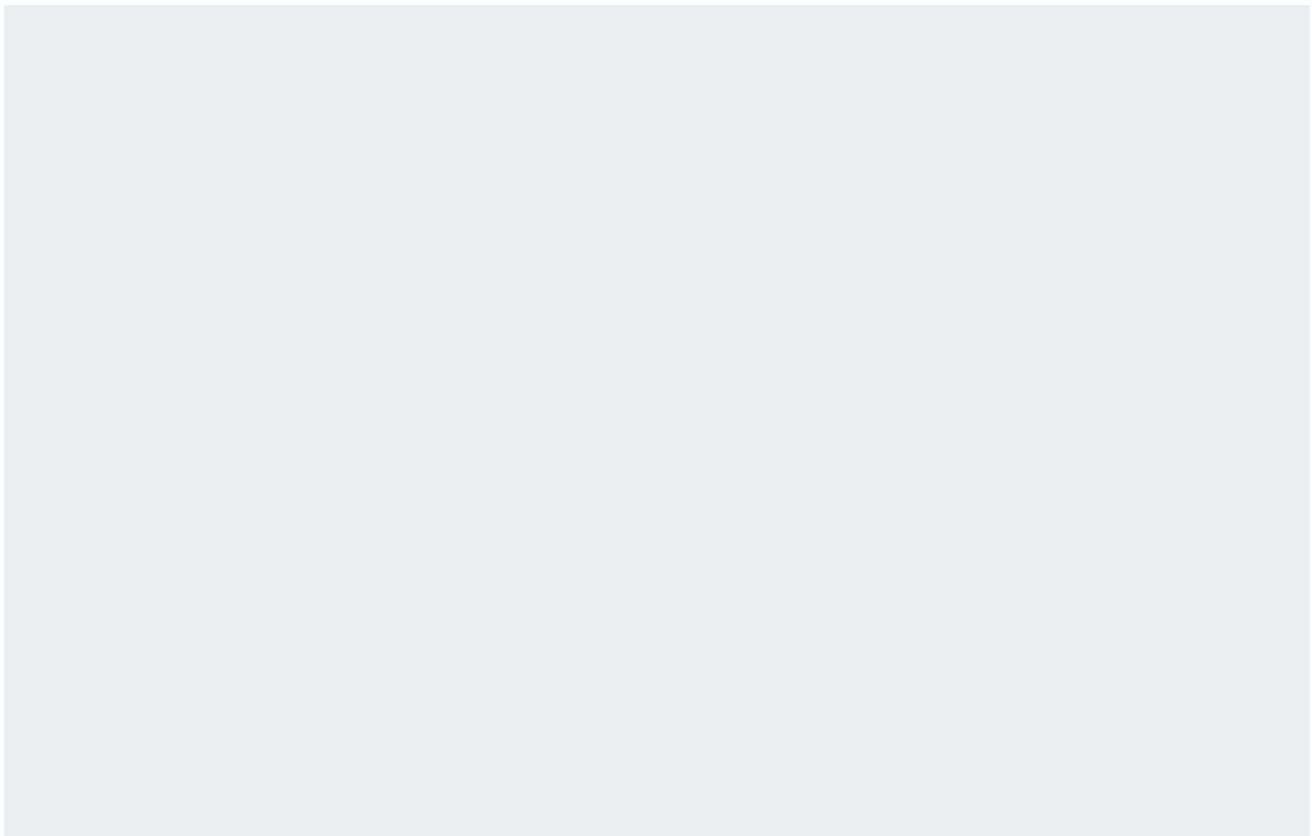
The owl is wisdom, the owl is guidance, the owl is safety, the owl is unconditional love, your true nature and can be trusted.

Do you recognise your owl? Have you stopped doing the things that make it easier to feel the owl? Do you discount the inner knowing of the owl because of unhelpful thought habits?

The owl is always present, you can't lose it or damage it, but it can be veiled by a busy mind, the voice of the inner critic and strong imposter-style thoughts that grab our attention. Awareness is the key.

Has the parrot been able to pull you so far away into time travelling that even when you're doing a hobby or with your loved one you're not really there? Physically you are present but your mind is all over the place. Now with increased knowledge and awareness, we begin allowing the space, taking a step back from the parrot by getting to know it, seeing its tricks and opening up to the wisdom of this owl.

Use the space below to reflect.





# Meet Your Inner Owl

## GUIDED MEDITATION

Close your eyes and take a deep, cleansing breath. Allow your body to relax and settle comfortably. Feel the weight of your body sinking into the surface you're resting on. Another deep breath in, and as you exhale, release any tension you might be holding.

Imagine yourself in a tranquil forest, surrounded by the calming sounds of nature. The air is crisp, and the scent of pine and earth fills your senses. You are safe, and this space is all yours.

As you stand there, a feeling of anticipation stirs within you. You sense the presence of something special, something wise and gentle. It's your inner owl, the essence of your wisdom, creativity, and unconditional love.

A soft hooting sound catches your attention. You turn, and there, perched on a branch, is a magnificent owl. Its eyes gleam with an otherworldly wisdom, and its feathers seem to carry the secrets of the universe.

With a feeling of reverence, you approach the owl. As you draw nearer, you notice that the owl's eyes hold a comforting warmth. You feel a deep sense of connection, as if you're reuniting with an old friend.

The owl stretches its wings and then gracefully lands before you. It regards you with a calm and knowing gaze, as if it understands every part of you, every fear, every aspiration.

With a soft voice, the owl begins to speak. Not with words, but with an energy that resonates deep within you. It's a voice of truth, love, and guidance. As you listen, you feel a sense of understanding, acceptance, and clarity washing over you.

You realise that this owl is a part of you, a part that is untouched by the challenges and doubts of life. It's a source of unwavering love and wisdom, a compass that always points to your true nature.

The owl invites you to ask any question that's been on your mind. Take a moment to formulate your question, and when you're ready, silently ask it to the owl.

The owl responds not with words, but with a feeling. You might sense an answer in your heart, a gentle knowing that settles within you. Trust this response, for it comes from your inner owl, your guide on this journey of inner liberation.

Now, take a moment to express gratitude to your inner owl. Feel a sense of appreciation for its presence, its wisdom, and the connection you share. As you do, the owl's eyes seem to shimmer, radiating even more love and light.

Know that you can return to this forest, to this meeting with your inner owl, whenever you need guidance, comfort, or a reminder of your true essence. The owl will always be here, waiting to share its wisdom with you.

As you open your eyes and return to the present moment, carry the warmth and wisdom of your inner owl with you. Allow its energy to guide you in your journey towards inner liberation, helping you overcome the inner critic and embracing your authentic self.

You can record yourself going through the process and listen to that. You can also find the guided version in the online programme.

The background features a serene sunset scene with a large, glowing sun partially obscured by a teal circular graphic. The sun's light reflects on the rippling water below. A white rectangular box is centered on the page, containing the text.

# Step 5

AWAKENING  
& HEALING

# Awakening & Healing

We've already begun the work of awakening and healing by becoming aware of the programmes that we have taken on in life, increasing awareness of the power of thought to create your experience of self and life and by exploring your true nature.

In this section, I want to continue this theme of awakening and healing. In the final step, I have provided many resources that you can explore and take out into your everyday life.

Let's begin by exploring our needs as humans. We are going to look at Maslow's work - a renowned psychologist and also the excellent research by The Human Givens Institute.

## MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is a psychological theory proposed by Abraham Maslow in 1943, which outlines the stages of human development and motivation. This model is often depicted as a pyramid, with each level representing a category of needs that individuals strive to fulfill. The hierarchy suggests that as lower-level needs are satisfied, higher-level needs become more prominent and influential in our lives.

The original five levels of the hierarchy, from the most basic to the highest, are:

**Physiological Needs:** These are the fundamental requirements for survival, such as food, water, shelter, and sleep. When these needs are unmet, they dominate our thoughts and actions as we seek to fulfill them.

**Safety Needs:** Once physiological needs are met, the focus shifts to safety and security. This includes physical safety, financial stability, and a sense of order and predictability in our environment.

**Love and Belongingness Needs:** With safety secured, individuals seek social connection, love, and a sense of belonging. This involves forming relationships, friendships, and connections with family, friends, and community.

**Esteem Needs:** After establishing a sense of belonging, people strive for self-esteem and recognition. This includes achieving a sense of accomplishment, gaining the respect of others, and feeling valued.

**Self-Actualisation Needs:** At this stage, individuals aim to fulfil their potential and become the best version of themselves. This involves personal growth, self-discovery, and pursuing activities that align with one's true passions and talents.

In the mid-1960s, Maslow had a heart attack and subsequent health issues. This experience led him to reflect on his life and work and to explore deeper questions about human existence and the nature of reality. During this period, he had what he described as a "peak experience" or "mystical experience" that greatly impacted his perspective. Similar to the experiences I had when my dad died and in the intensive care unit with my baby.

This experience involved a profound sense of interconnectedness with all of existence, a feeling of timelessness, and a sense of being in the presence of something greater than the individual self. It was a moment of intense clarity and euphoria, accompanied by a deep understanding of the unity of all things.

Maslow's encounter with this transcendent state led him to recognise that his Hierarchy of Needs, while valuable, didn't fully encompass the highest aspects of human development and motivation.

He realised that individuals could be motivated by a desire to connect with something greater than themselves, whether through spiritual experiences, creative expression, or a sense of unity with the universe.

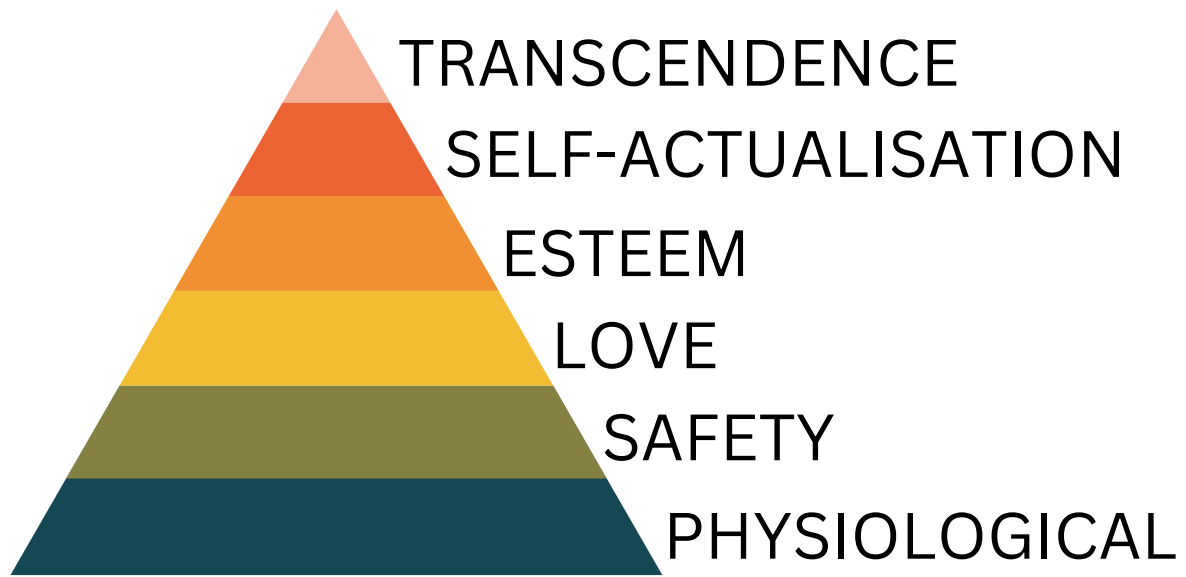
As a result of this experience, Maslow expanded his theory to include a new level called "self-transcendence" or "transcendence." This level reflects the pursuit of higher values, spiritual experiences, and a sense of connection with all of humanity. It represents a shift from self-centered concerns to a broader concern for the well-being of all.

Incorporating transcendence into his theory was a way for Maslow to acknowledge the potential for individuals to move beyond the confines of their individual needs and to seek higher states of consciousness and unity. This addition reflects his personal journey of transformation and his recognition of the profound significance of transcendent experiences in human life.

Transcendence represents a pinnacle of human development where individuals move from self-actualisation to self-transcendence. It's not about personal achievement but about contributing to the greater good and finding meaning in life through acts of compassion, altruism, and service to others.

Incorporating Transcendence into the hierarchy emphasises the importance of spiritual and altruistic pursuits in our overall well-being. It acknowledges that once our basic needs are met and we've realised our potential, our search for meaning and purpose often leads us to engage in activities that uplift others and make a positive impact on the world.

Unfortunately, due to Maslow's death, this added level of higher consciousness didn't generally get added to his model which is a real shame for the field of psychology and humanity. In this book I'm encouraging you to check the lower levels are in balance and to explore this higher level of transcendence.



You can use the space below to reflect on the different levels of Maslow's hierarchy to see if any areas of your life require more balance.

## HUMAN GIVENS -EMOTIONAL NEEDS

Emotional needs play a vital role in maintaining psychological health and balance. The Human Givens model identifies a set of innate emotional needs that, when met, contribute to a person's overall well-being. Here are the emotional needs outlined by the Human Givens approach:

**Security:** Feeling safe and secure in one's environment is a fundamental emotional need. This includes physical safety as well as a sense of stability and predictability in one's surroundings. When this need is met, individuals are better equipped to develop fully and manage stress and uncertainty.

**Attention:** To both give and receive attention. Humans have a need for positive attention and recognition from others. Healthy social interactions and relationships fulfill this need and contribute to a sense of belonging and connection.

**Sense of Autonomy & Control:** People need to feel that they have a degree of control over their own lives and choices. Having autonomy fosters a sense of self-determination and empowerment.

**Feeling part of a wider community:** Being part of a community or social group satisfies the need for a sense of belonging and connection with others who share common interests and values.

**Emotional Intimacy:** Meaningful relationships and emotional connections with others are essential for psychological well-being. These connections provide opportunities for emotional expression, empathy, and a sense of belonging. To know that at least one person accepts us totally for who we are, "warts and all".

**Privacy:** Individuals require time and space for reflection, relaxation, and personal introspection. Privacy allows for emotional processing and rejuvenation.

**Sense of Status:** Status represents a person's sense of value and recognition within their social environment. Positive recognition and the ability to contribute to one's community or group fulfill this need.

**Sense of competence and achievement:** People need opportunities for intellectual and creative challenges to keep their minds engaged and active. To feel that we are good at something whether in work or through a hobby or caring role.

**Meaning & Purpose:** This comes from being stretched in what we think and do. Activities that focus attention away from ourselves towards something bigger than us are useful to meet this need.

The Human Givens approach emphasises that emotional needs are interconnected and influence each other. When these needs are met in a balanced way, individuals are more likely to experience emotional well-being and mental health.

If you go to the Human Givens Institute website and search Emotional Needs Audit you can do an audit for your self.

If your emotional needs aren't being met in balance it will lead to a feeling of something not being right in life and can start worry and rumination.

If you find any needs on the lower end of the spectrum - say a 3 you can coach yourself to consider what a 4 might look like and be open to working towards that change. Consider what you would be thinking, feeling and doing at this higher number.

<https://www.hgi.org.uk/resources/emotional-needs-audit-ena>

You can use the space below to reflect on your emotional needs. Consider in what small way you can begin to improve getting your needs met. Is the inner critic preventing you from getting more of your needs met? What would you be doing, that you aren't now, if you didn't listen to the inner critic? How is imposter syndrome getting in the way of your emotional needs? Is it preventing you from feeling a sense of status or meaning & purpose for example?

# LEVELS OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Now let's move on to an important conversation about our levels of consciousness. As we begin to deepen our understanding of consciousness and our true nature, the old outdated programming of the inner critic and imposter syndrome begin to fade into the background. There is a lot of information in psychological and spiritual literature about levels of consciousness all with varied interpretations. I tend to use the words awareness and consciousness synonymously. Here's a general overview of these levels:

## **Ordinary Consciousness:**

This is the most familiar state of consciousness that we experience in our daily lives. It's characterised by our waking awareness, where we are focused on external stimuli and engaged in everyday activities.

In this state, our thoughts, emotions, and sensory perceptions dominate our awareness. We are primarily identified with our thoughts and external circumstances.

## **Self-Reflective Consciousness:**

At this level, we begin to move beyond simply reacting to external stimuli and start observing our thoughts, feelings, and behaviours. This self-reflective awareness allows us to gain insights into our patterns, habits, and motivations.

We start to recognise that we are not just our thoughts but that there is an observer behind these thoughts. This level often marks the beginning of introspection and personal growth.

## **Expanded Consciousness:**

Expanded consciousness refers to moments when we experience a heightened state of awareness that transcends ordinary reality. This can occur through deep meditation, contemplative practices, or even spontaneous mystical experiences.

In this state, individuals often report a sense of oneness with the universe, a dissolution of the ego, and a deep connection to all things.

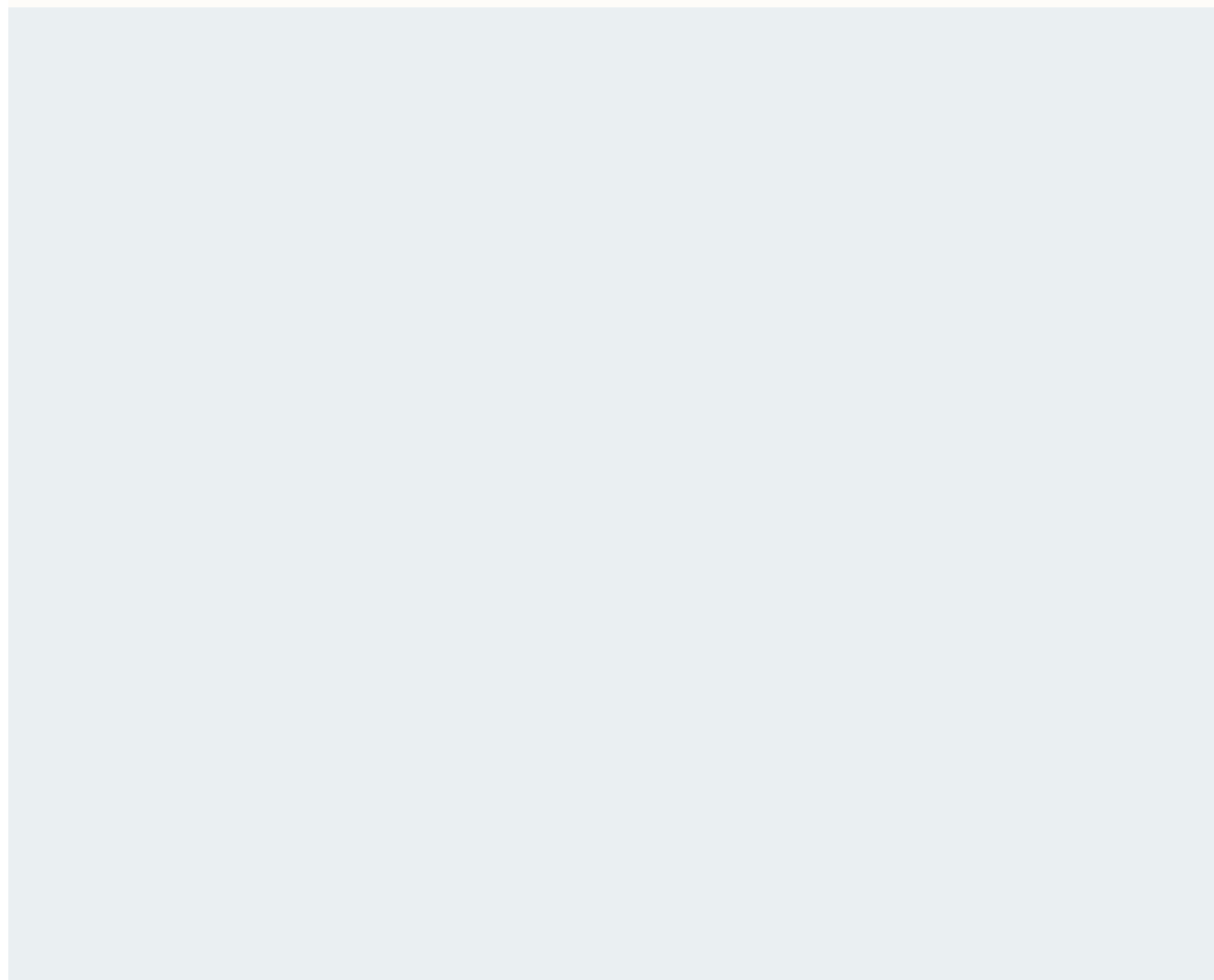
Expanded consciousness may also involve accessing insights beyond the scope of ordinary thinking.

**Transcendent Consciousness:**

At this highest level of consciousness, individuals are said to have transcended the ego and personal identity altogether. This state is often described as a complete merging with the divine, universal consciousness, or the source of all existence.

It's characterised by a profound sense of unity, unconditional love, and an overwhelming sense of peace. Those who have experienced this level often describe it as a state of pure being, beyond words or concepts.

You can use the space below to reflect on the different levels of consciousness and consider levels you may have experienced.



Another model of consciousness is called - To me, By me, Through me and as me and it describes the progression of consciousness and our relationship with the world. This model is often used to explain how individuals evolve in their understanding of reality and their role within it. Many leaders and spiritual teachers discuss this model but I cannot find an original source of this model.

### To me, By me, Through me and As me

#### **To Me:**

At this level of consciousness, individuals perceive themselves as passive recipients of external circumstances. They feel that life happens "to them." They often see themselves as victims of their surroundings and believe that their experiences are determined by external forces or fate. There is a lack of personal agency, and they may blame others or external events for their situation.

#### **By Me:**

In this stage, individuals begin to recognise their capacity to influence and shape their experiences. They move from a passive role to an active one. They understand that their thoughts, choices, and actions play a significant role in how their lives unfold. They take responsibility for their decisions and start to realise that they have a degree of control over their circumstances.

#### **Through Me:**

At this level, individuals experience a deeper sense of connection and alignment with a higher purpose or universal flow. They recognise that their actions and intentions are guided by something greater than themselves.

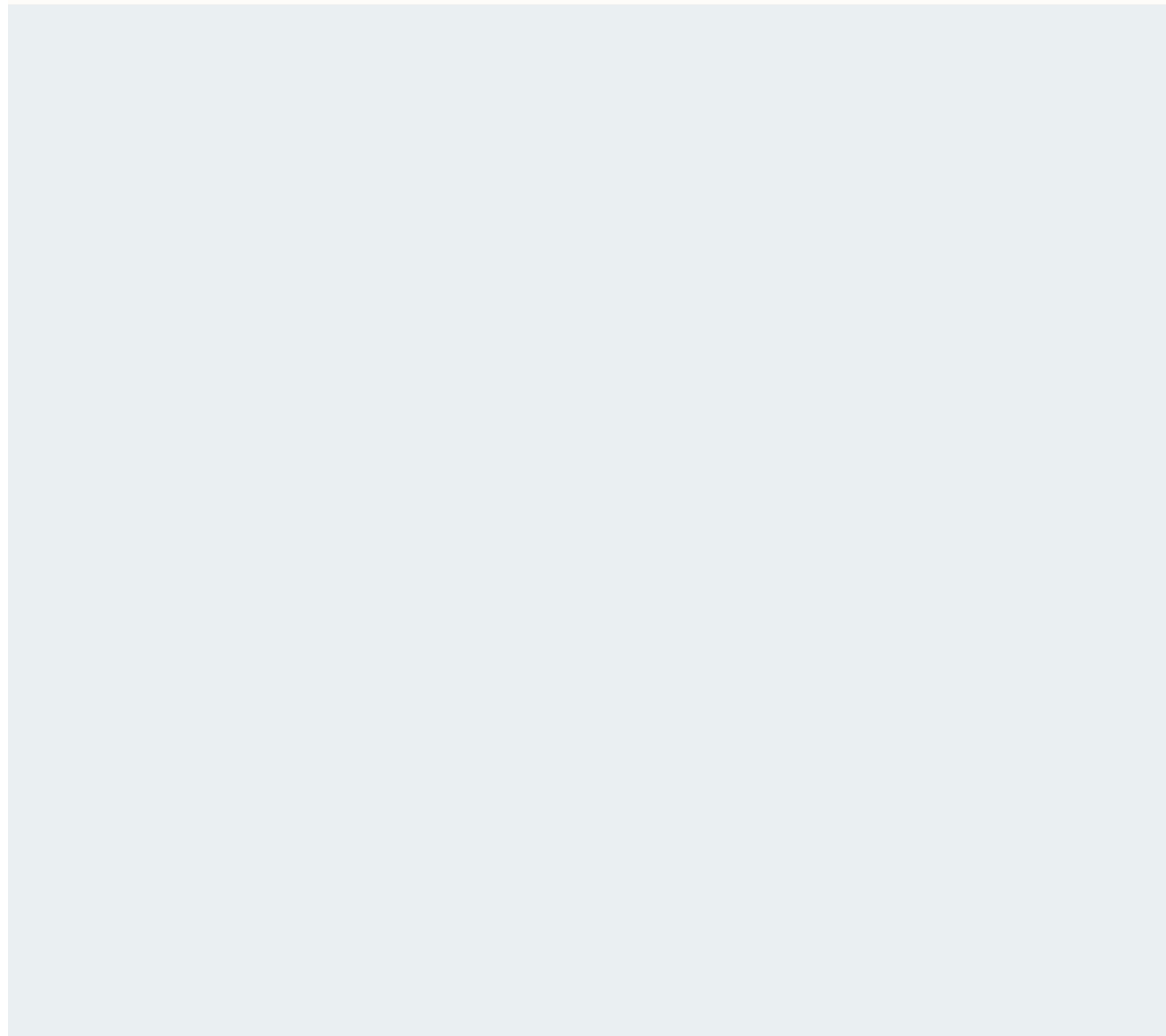
They feel a sense of co-creation with the universe, and they allow themselves to be conduits for a higher wisdom or energy. They trust in the process and allow life to flow through them.

**As Me:**

This is the highest level of consciousness in this model. At this stage, individuals experience a profound shift in identity. They realise their interconnectedness with all of existence.

They see themselves as expressions of the divine or universal consciousness. There is a deep sense of unity, love, and oneness with all living beings. They no longer identify solely with their individual self but with the entirety of creation.

You can use the space below to reflect on the where you feel you mainly sit with this model. Where would you like to get to? What difference would it make in your life?



Through my journey of raising my level of consciousness, the inner critic is now seen as a pattern, an old programme. It reminds me that I'm identified with my mind as a limited sense of self which has fallen asleep to its true nature.

Believing the inner critic is now a sign for me to 'wake' up and realise that I am bringing to that moment a story of seeking, resisting and expectation which can only ever be temporarily resolved, pushed down or coped with in some way.

I now see this identification as an invitation to pause and sink back into my true nature of peace, love and happiness. To meet the situation with presence and understanding and to take any necessary action following the intuitive nudges of my inner owl.

For decades I had let the inner critic push me into diet after diet with its cruel words. In 2020, I stopped the cycle of dieting for good despite the inner critic's protests. This is one area where the inner critic can still hook me. I continue to notice the pull of the inner critic, heal the relationship with my body and learn to listen to the intuitive guidance of my incredible body to get the nourishment and movement it requires. This is huge for me - I'm sure, without this understanding of the inner critic, I would have been stuck in a diet cycle well into old age. What a relief!

As far as imposter syndrome goes, I'm now willing to show up, to be visible. I'm willing to be seen and heard in ways I never was before. I avoided public speaking and being on video at all costs, in the past, due to imposter syndrome and now I'm free to do those things with no or very little inner resistance.

I'm willing to show up and share my truth as I want to be in service to others even though I know some people just won't 'get it' and I could be ridiculed. I've chosen the path of truth despite the inner critic and years of imposter syndrome. I know that you can too!

In step six, I share some of the practices I used to help raise my level of consciousness.

## MISTAKEN IDENTITY

Are you beginning to see that you've been experiencing a case of mistaken identity? My work here is done if your focus now shifts to exploring and embracing your true identity.

The inner critic and imposter syndrome are like mirages in the desert of our minds. They appear real, but they are illusions. I'd love you to remember that your true identity is not the inner judge or the fear of inadequacy. Your true identity is the boundless consciousness that gives life to every experience.

The path to liberation is recognising these mental constructs for what they are – creations of the mind. By embracing our true nature, we dissolve the mistaken identities and find freedom from the shackles of self-doubt.

Behind the noise of the inner critic and the doubts of imposter syndrome lies a serene presence, the true essence of who we are – consciousness. This consciousness is the canvas upon which all experiences are painted. It's the unchanging observer of thoughts, emotions, and circumstances. It's the silent witness that has been with us since the beginning.

Our true nature, as consciousness, is not defined by fleeting thoughts or judgments. It's the unwavering awareness that underlies all mental chatter. It's the stillness within which the inner critic's voice echoes. When we remember this, we realise that the inner critic's judgments are not truth; they are merely passing clouds in the sky of our consciousness.

Imposter syndrome also loses its grip when we remember our true nature. We no longer need to prove our worth based on external validation. Our essence is not measured by achievements or accolades. It's the infinite awareness that connects us to the entire cosmos.

# IDENTITY SHIFT

The programming we receive in life means that we begin to confuse the essence of who we are with the labels that we take on, the physical body, the thoughts, beliefs and experiences.

Sometimes our true nature or consciousness is talked about as 'I AM'. It is a useful way to consider how we forget ourselves and get tangled in the identity.

For example, I might say 'I am a woman.', 'I am a mother.', 'I am a psychotherapist.', 'I am anxious.' These qualifiers that we use in everyday life are useful labels. However, when we get lost in them and believe that they are essential to who we really are then we can suffer. Your true nature is inherently free of these labels.

If you close your eyes for a moment and without referring to memories or thoughts can you even know that you are say, a woman, a mother, anxious? These things are added to 'I AM' by the mind. Feelings can arise in the body but it takes a mind to label and give meaning to them.

At its core, 'I AM' refers to a state of being that transcends the ego or parrot, the individual identity, and the roles we play in the external world. It is a state of direct and unmediated experience, where we are fully present in the current moment, aware of our existence without any attachment to the past or future, without judgment or labels.

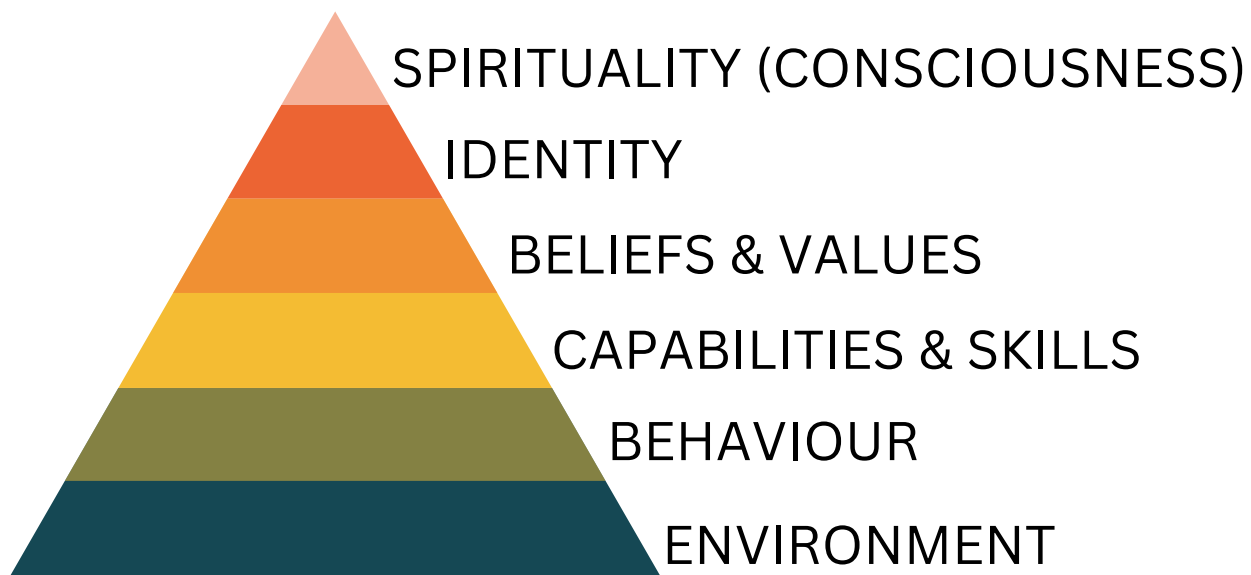
In many teachings, 'I AM' signifies a connection to the divine or the universal consciousness. It represents the essence of our being that is beyond the limitations of the physical body, thoughts, and emotions. 'I AM' is often associated with a sense of oneness, unity, and interconnectedness with all of existence.

Mystical experiences and moments of deep meditation can lead individuals to a profound realisation of the 'I AM' presence.

During these moments, the boundaries between the self and the universe seem to dissolve, and we may experience a deep sense of peace, love, and clarity.

It's important to note that the concept of 'I AM' is not just a mental affirmation or a philosophical idea; it's meant to be a direct experience. This experience is not something that can be grasped by the thinking mind alone. Instead, it requires a shift in consciousness, a moment of pure awareness where the individual transcends the usual limitations of the ego and taps into a deeper reality.

Robert Dilts has a useful model which demonstrates why no real change happens until a person has a shift in identity and a higher level of consciousness.



Before delving into Dilts' model, it's crucial to grasp a fundamental aspect of its application: any alteration in behavior within this model's framework primarily influences the current level and the levels positioned below it. The dynamics of change do not ascend upwards through the levels.

To illustrate, consider this scenario: you summon your willpower and succeed in modifying a specific behavior. Yet, if this behavioral change isn't accompanied

by a deeper transformation at the levels of beliefs or identity, it's likely that the newly adopted behavior will eventually succumb to the influence of preexisting beliefs and identity constructs.

Let me explain by using the example of Sarah who decides to go on a diet.

**Environment Level:** Sarah is surrounded by friends who frequently dine out and indulge in calorie-rich meals. This environment makes it challenging for her to maintain a healthy eating regimen.

**Behavior Level:** Sarah decides to embark on a diet to lose weight. She starts counting calories and exercising regularly, managing to stick to her new routine for a while.

**Capability Level:** As Sarah continues with her diet and exercise, she develops better nutritional knowledge and gains physical fitness. She begins to see visible improvements in her weight and overall health.

**Belief Level:** However, Sarah has an underlying belief that she's not inherently disciplined when it comes to food. This belief stems from childhood experiences and past failed attempts at dieting. This self-doubt casts a shadow on her efforts.

**Identity Level:** Deeper still, Sarah has an identity as someone who struggles with self-control around food. This self-image is deeply ingrained due to years of negative self-talk and reinforcing experiences.

In this scenario, Sarah's initial success in behaviour change (following her diet) originates from her efforts at the behaviour and capability levels. However, her progress is hindered by her underlying belief that she lacks discipline and her identity as someone who struggles with self-control.

Sarah needs to recognise her unhelpful programming and raise her level of consciousness so she can listen to her innate wisdom about how to nourish and move her body for optimal health.

Now let's look at the model and how it relates to an example of imposter syndrome.

**Environment Level:** Emily works in a highly competitive corporate environment where colleagues often showcase their achievements and talents. This environment triggers feelings of self-doubt and insecurity in her.

**Behaviour Level:** Emily tries to compensate for her perceived inadequacies by working long hours and meticulously preparing for meetings and presentations. She puts on a confident facade, but inside, she constantly fears being exposed as a fraud.

**Capability Level:** Through her hard work, Emily acquires valuable skills and knowledge in her field. Her dedication to research and preparation for her work is noticeable, and she becomes known for her attention to detail.

**Belief Level:** Despite her achievements, Emily still believes that her success is purely a result of luck or external factors. She dismisses compliments and accolades, attributing them to others overestimating her abilities.

**Identity Level:** At a deeper level, Emily has developed an identity as an impostor who is just waiting for others to realise her lack of competence. This identity is rooted in past experiences and self-critical thoughts.

In Emily's case, her behaviour changes (working diligently) and capability improvements (acquiring skills) stem from her efforts at the behaviour and capability levels. However, her impostor syndrome persists due to her deeply ingrained beliefs that she's not truly competent and her identity as an impostor.

Can you see how essential it is to wake up to your true identity and raise your level of consciousness?

Finally, let's look at how this model might relate to someone with a strong inner critic.

**Environment Level:** Alex grew up in a family where financial struggles were common. His parents often argued about money, creating a tense atmosphere. Close connections were also challenging in his family, as emotional expression was discouraged.

**Behavior Level:** Alex avoids pursuing higher-paying job opportunities or negotiating for better pay. He often gives away his time and resources without expecting much in return. In his personal relationships, he hesitates to open up and be vulnerable, fearing rejection.

**Capability Level:** Despite his qualifications and skills, Alex doubts his ability to handle financial success or maintain close connections. He believes that he doesn't have what it takes to thrive in these areas.

**Belief Level:** At a deeper level, Alex holds strong beliefs that he is not deserving of financial abundance or meaningful connections. He associates money with stress and conflict, and he fears that close relationships will inevitably lead to disappointment.

**Identity Level:** These beliefs have become ingrained in Alex's identity. He sees himself as someone who is destined to struggle financially and emotionally. These beliefs reinforce each other, creating a cycle of self-doubt.

If Alex knew about the inner critic and he was able raise his level of consciousness so he knew his true identity just image what a different experience of life might open up for him. You can see that the inner critic isn't based on truth, it is based on old and outdated programming which Alex is identified with.

Here is a general description of Dilts' levels through the lens of the inner critic and imposter syndrome.

### **1. Environment (Outermost Level):**

This level represents the external world, the circumstances, and the situations you find yourself in. It includes the physical spaces you inhabit, the people you interact with, and the events that occur. In the context of the inner critic and imposter syndrome, the environment can trigger these feelings. For example, being in a competitive workplace or surrounded by high-achieving individuals might activate feelings of inadequacy.

### **2. Behaviour:**

Behaviour refers to your actions and interactions in response to the environment. It's how you behave and engage with the world around you. In the case of imposter syndrome, your behaviour might include overworking, perfectionism, and seeking constant validation. Your inner critic might drive behaviours like self-doubt, self-sabotage, or avoiding situations where you fear failure.

### **3. Capabilities and Skills:**

This level pertains to your skills, abilities, and competencies. It's what you can do and what you're good at. When facing imposter syndrome, you might downplay or dismiss your own skills and capabilities, attributing your successes to luck rather than acknowledging your own competence. Your inner critic might amplify feelings of inadequacy despite evidence of your skills.

### **4. Beliefs and Values:**

Beliefs are the convictions and opinions you hold about yourself and the world. Values are the guiding principles that shape your decisions and actions. Your inner critic often arises from deep-seated negative beliefs about yourself, such as "I'm not good enough" or "I don't deserve success."

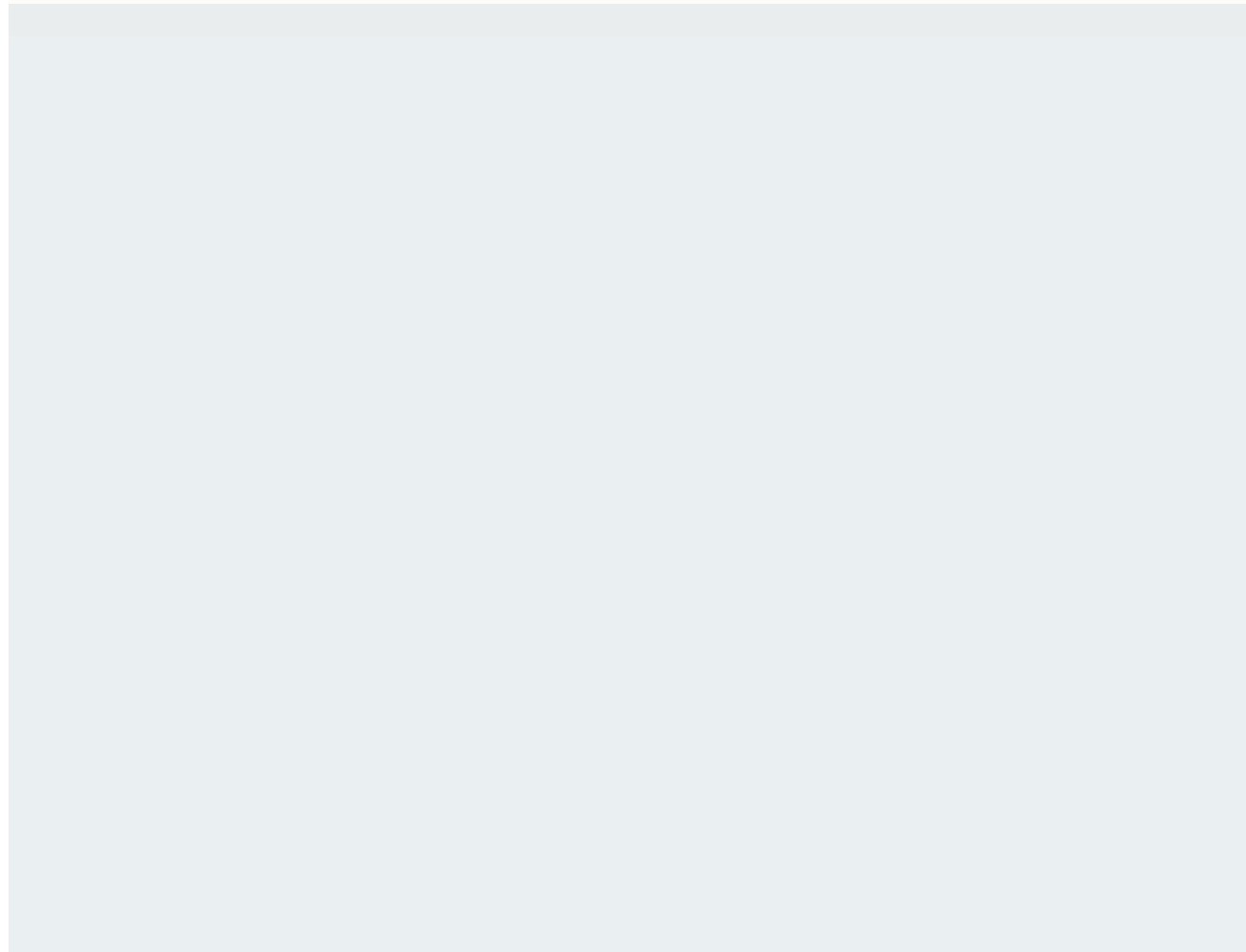
### **5. Identity:**

Identity represents your sense of self, your core identity. It's how you define yourself in relation to the world. Imposter syndrome can significantly impact your identity, causing you to doubt your worth and authenticity. Your inner critic can create a gap between your external achievements and your internal self-concept, leading to feelings of incongruence.

### **6. Spirituality and Purpose (Innermost Level):**

This level reflects your connection to something larger than yourself and your sense of purpose in life. In the context of imposter syndrome, cultivating a deeper sense of purpose and connecting with your inner wisdom can help counteract the influence of the inner critic and the impact of imposter-type thoughts and feelings.

You can use the space below to reflect on your new understanding of this model and how it might put some context to your life.



## QUOTES FOR REFLECTION

I'd like to share some quotes with you. It would be great if you could reflect on these quotes and see what stirs for you.

"You came here with something to do. You are part of a universal consciousness, and there are no accidents in it. In your true essence - not the false self, not the ego part of you, but in the true essence of who you are - you are infinite and you have something very profound to accomplish while you're here. Otherwise, you wouldn't be here."

Wayne Dyer

"There is a state of great peace within you that cannot be disturbed by the world, your thoughts, or even your emotions. These objects can continue to freely exist, but they will no longer dominate your life. You will be free to fully interact in life, but you will do so out of a sense of love and service, rather than fear or desire."

Michael A. Singer, *Living Untethered: Beyond the Human Predicament*

"Your Self, Aware Presence, knows no resistance to any appearance and, as such, is happiness itself; like the empty space of a room it cannot be disturbed and is, therefore, peace itself; like this page, it is intimately one with whatever appears on it and is thus love itself; and like water that is not affected by the shape of a wave, it is pure freedom. Causeless joy, imperturbable peace, love that knows no opposite and freedom at the heart of all experience....this is your ever-present nature under all circumstances."

Rupert Spira

"The moment you become aware of the ego in you, it is strictly speaking no longer the ego, but just an old, conditioned mind-pattern. Ego implies unawareness. Awareness and ego cannot coexist."

Eckhart Tolle

"Awakening is not changing who you are, but discarding who you are not."

Deepak Chopra

"The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and science."

Albert Einstein

"Happiness is the song of consciousness, constantly playing in the background of our lives."

Rupert Spira

"Happiness is not the result of what happens, but the recognition of our true nature."

Rupert Spira

"We are not human beings having a spiritual experience; we are spiritual beings having a human experience."

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

"The state of heightened consciousness is the precursor to all great self-discoveries."

Raheel Farooq

"The first peace, which is the most important, is that which comes within the souls of people when they realize their relationship, their oneness with the universe and all its powers."

Black Elk

"You are not a drop in the ocean. You are the entire ocean in a drop."

Rumi

You can use the space below to reflect on these quotes. Notice how the inner critic tells you the opposite of this. Note any resistances that come up along with any tingles of Truth! Have a go of writing your own quote.

# THE BRIDGE FROM SUFFERING TO JOY

"True happiness is not found in things, experiences, or achievements, but in the unchanging awareness that knows them all."

Rupert Spira

My intention is not only to help you alleviate the suffering of identification with the inner critic and imposter syndrome but also to help you remember that your true nature is peace, happiness and love.

To help you to wake up to the cosmic game that we come into this world knowing who we are, we forget and we suffer and that this suffering is an invitation to remember, to once again unveil our true nature of joy. We don't have the initiations others would have had in the past to remind us of who we really are so many of us go through our whole life not remembering.

We also take on beliefs from our culture and era and we've been taught to believe that happiness is an emotion and it comes and goes. It can be lost and found - I want to break that myth and invite you into an initiation process so that you can once again knowingly be the joy, love, peace, happiness - (choose a word that resonates with you) - that you have always been and will always be.



## The Paradox of Joy

So here is the bridge.

We think our vulnerability is in our pain. What I've come to see in my own life and those of my clients is that it is living a life of true embodied joy which is our authentic vulnerability.

Do you know that you have a threshold, an upper limit, for deep joy? Not the joy the mind craves, getting this, doing that.

Rather the joy of your Being - meeting life open, aware and awake. To allow life to flow from you and through you without filtering and resisting. The bliss of unconditional love, the call inwards to know the magnificence of life.

Our pain and programming, the inner critic and imposter syndrome, and the stories we tell ourselves are familiar and feel safe to us. They serve as a distraction from the joy and love of our true nature.

The mind craves joy, of course, but it seeks it outside of ourselves and in time.

The mind believes joy can be found and therefore can be lost. So while it craves joy - it at the same time resists and fears the thought of losing joy.

Joy, happiness, peace, love whatever you prefer to name it is not an emotion that comes and goes. It is your true nature that is ever present but can be veiled making it feel like it can come and go.

The mind doesn't and can't know this true nature and so it treats it like something that can be lost and found. This leads to a constant seeking and a fear of loss, it creates a habit of clinging.

Generally, in this culture, the mind moves outwards to experience and the material world to find the joy it seeks.

It sometimes finds pleasure i.e. sensory pleasure and labels it joy but that is always only ever temporary and not joy. There's only so much chocolate etc. we can consume before the pleasure signals turn off.

Sometimes as the mind gets what it seeks, it temporarily collapses and we feel our true nature of joy.

The problem is we don't know this is our joy unveiled and so we attribute it to the outside experience, person, circumstance etc.

The other problem is that the mind doesn't stay satisfied long so it comes back up seeking and resisting and that seems to veil our true nature again.

When we get tired of seeking joy in the outside some of us turn inwards. When we do this we are then faced with the necessary task of meeting all parts of ourselves and all of the emotions etc. that we have shut away.

Our true nature is already liberated but in my experience, this deconditioning is part of the process of disidentifying from the story of me.

In some people spontaneous enlightenment happens and the whole thing is seen but this is rare and can be very disorienting.

Our true nature would lovingly guide us through this deconditioning process but the mind can put up a fight. It doesn't know how to handle this inner journey to uncover joy so it brings up fears, distractions, beliefs, over complications etc to put us off the scent.

I have to say the inner journey is worth it and the discovery that your true nature is and always has been peace, love and happiness, despite life's happenings I believe is the most important discovery anyone can make.

Your true nature is joy and love but are you willing to explore this possibility further? Are you ready to face your vulnerability and take a leap of faith?

Here's a lovely quote by Berne Brown:

"When we're overwhelmed by love, we feel vulnerable—so we dress-rehearse tragedy. Though I study scary emotions like anger and shame for a living, I think the most terrifying human experience is joy. It's as if we believe that by truly feeling happiness, we're setting ourselves up for a sucker punch."

You can use the space below to reflect on what comes up for you when you consider that joy/happiness/love/peace are not emotions that come and go but rather they are who you really are and cannot be lost, only veiled.

Rupert Spira has been one of the spiritual teachers that I have followed to help me understand and deepen my spiritual awakening. Not only does he have a deep understanding but he has a beautiful way of talking about the nature of happiness. I'll do my best to share some pointers from his work with you. He is very accessible via his website and on YouTube if you want to learn from him directly.

Rupert is a contemporary spiritual teacher who explores the nature of consciousness, reality, and our fundamental essence. In his work, he delves into the concept that happiness is not something we need to seek externally; rather, it's our intrinsic nature.

Rupert is known for his teachings rooted in the philosophy of non-duality, which emphasises the oneness of all existence. He often draws from various spiritual traditions, including Advaita Vedanta and contemplative practices, to guide individuals towards a deeper understanding of their essential nature.

He suggests that the search for happiness is a fundamental pursuit for human beings. He asserts that true happiness is not dependent on external circumstances, experiences, or achievements. Instead, he proposes that happiness is an inherent quality of consciousness itself, something that is ever-present and not tied to the fluctuations of life. I've had first-hand experience of this in very difficult life situations.

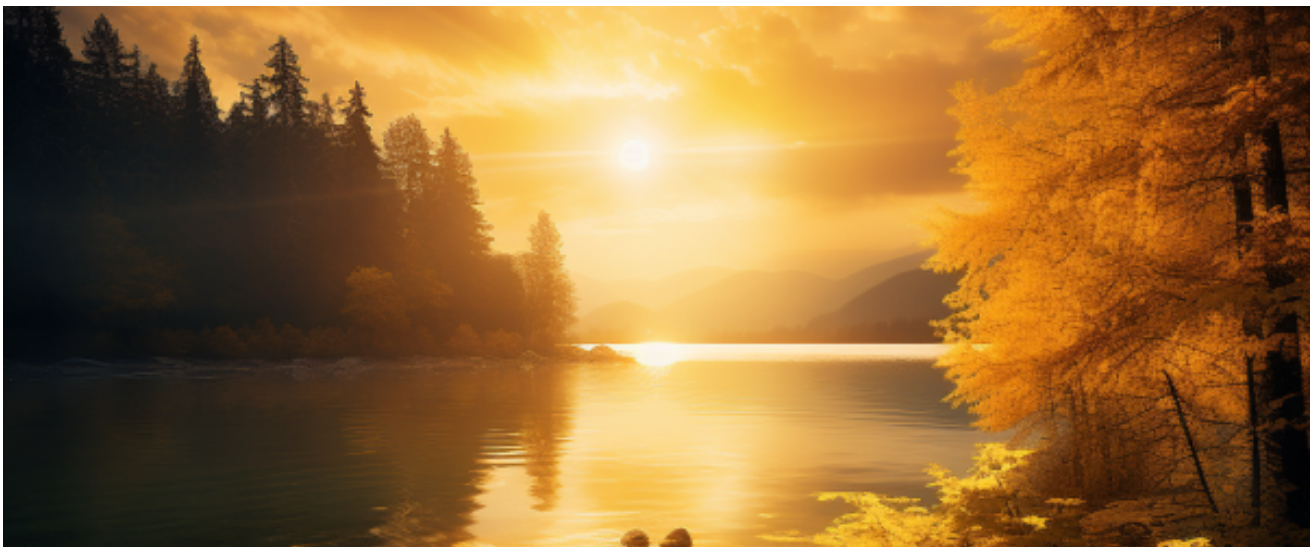
According to Rupert, the key to realising our inherent happiness is to recognise our true nature. He describes this nature as pure awareness or consciousness that underlies all experiences. By turning our attention inward and investigating our thoughts, emotions, and perceptions, we can begin to recognise that the one who is aware of these experiences is untouched by them, inherently content, and free from suffering.

Rupert encourages a shift from the perpetual seeking of happiness in external circumstances to the realisation that happiness is not an object to be obtained, but rather a state of being. He guides individuals to investigate their thoughts, emotions, and sensations and question who is the one aware of them. Through this inquiry, one can begin to unveil the underlying presence of awareness, which is always serene and fulfilled.

He also emphasises the illusion of separation as the source of human suffering. He explains that when we identify solely with our thoughts, emotions, and body, we create a sense of isolation and lack. By recognising the unity of consciousness that connects all beings, we dissolve the boundaries that separate us from the inherent happiness that resides within.

His teachings encourage individuals to live from the perspective of their true nature. This involves embracing each moment with presence, recognising the interconnectedness of all life, and cultivating a compassionate and loving relationship with oneself and others.

In essence, Rupert's work on happiness being our true nature invites us to embark on a journey of self-inquiry and realisation. By diving into the depths of our consciousness, we can unveil the abiding happiness that is always present and recognise that it is not something we need to attain, but something we inherently are.





# Step 6

## INNER LIBERATION TOOLKIT FOR DAILY LIFE

# Inner Liberation Toolkit

In this section, I am going to give you some valuable resources which you can practice in your daily life. Along with your own helpful tools, you can create your own Inner Liberation toolkit which can be used and updated as you go through life. You'll find sheets on pages 130-134 where you can keep a note of your tools.

In an ideal world, your toolkit will include:

- Resources related to **psychological education** to help deepen your understanding of how the mind works.
- Tools to help you **calm** the mind, body and nervous system.
- Tools to help you create a **balanced life** in which you can get your emotional needs met in balance and in healthy ways.
- Energy practices to **ground, clear, transmute and protect**. You'll find a free guide - The Art of Energy Alchemy at [www.afreemind.co.uk](http://www.afreemind.co.uk)
- Spiritual practices to **raise your level of consciousness** and unveil your **true nature**.

Everyone is unique so there is no right or wrong way here. I would encourage you to set an intention to make these things a priority and make space in your life to really get to know your inner world. Not only will this enhance your experience of life, but you also get to be part of the solution in the world just by showing up in love, peace, happiness and wisdom.

# No Bad Parts

Internal Family Systems (IFS), created by Richard C. Schwartz PhD, is a useful model when it comes to exploring the inner critic and imposter syndrome. It posits that individuals have various internal parts that often emerge in response to trauma or challenges. These parts are not inherently negative, even if they manifest as critical or destructive. Instead, they serve as protectors and have valuable stories to tell about their roles in the individual's life.

Schwartz emphasises that parts are not to be feared or shamed, but rather understood and embraced with love and compassion. This approach allows for healing and transformation within the inner world, akin to the concept of bodhisattvas in Buddhism or Christ-like love in Christianity.

**Self as Core:** At the centre of the IFS model is the concept of the "Self." The Self is an undamaged, calm, and compassionate core within every individual. It is the source of wisdom and healing. What I call the owl.

**Protector Parts:** Parts within a person's internal system often take on protective roles. These roles are developed to shield the individual from pain, trauma, or distress. Protector parts can range from inner critics to more nurturing or controlling parts.

**Exiled Parts:** Some parts carry unresolved trauma, pain, or difficult emotions. These are known as exiled parts. They often contain emotional burdens from past experiences that they aim to shield the individual from.

**Manager Parts:** Manager parts are proactive and controlling. They work to keep exiled parts suppressed and protect the individual from getting hurt. These parts often engage in behaviours like perfectionism or overachievement.

**Firefighter Parts:** Firefighter parts emerge when exiled parts break through and trigger intense emotions or behaviours. Firefighters respond by engaging in impulsive or distracting behaviours, such as overeating, substance use, or self-harm, to numb or manage emotional distress.

**Unburdening and Healing:** The IFS model focuses on understanding and working with these parts in a compassionate way. The goal is to unburden exiled parts by addressing their pain, trauma, and beliefs. This leads to transformation and healing, allowing parts to take on more positive and productive roles.

**Self-Leadership:** The process of IFS involves helping the individual connect with their Self—a place of wisdom, compassion, and non-judgment. When the Self takes a leadership role, it guides the individual in managing and relating to their parts in a healthier way.

**Internal Relationships:** IFS emphasises developing a healthy relationship with all parts. This includes listening to their concerns, understanding their intentions, and fostering cooperation among parts rather than suppression.

**Healing and Integration:** The ultimate goal of IFS therapy is the integration of parts and the Self, creating a harmonious and balanced internal system. This leads to a greater sense of self-awareness, emotional regulation, and overall well-being.

If you would like to be guided to heal trauma we can work together one to one. Check [www.afreemind.co.uk](http://www.afreemind.co.uk) for details.

If you wish to learn more about IFS you might like this book;  
"No Bad Parts: Healing Trauma and Restoring Wholeness with the Internal Family Systems Model" by Richard C. Schwartz PhD

# Inner Boardroom Meeting Exercise

## MANAGING THE INNER CRITIC AND IMPOSTER SYNDROME

Welcome to the Inner Boardroom Meeting, a powerful visualisation exercise. This exercise will help you explore and address your inner critic and imposter syndrome.

**Objective:** To gain insights into your inner critic and imposter syndrome, understand their intentions, and foster cooperation.

**Instructions:**

### **Creating the Space:**

Find a quiet and comfortable place where you won't be disturbed.

Take a few deep breaths to relax your body and mind.

### **Visualisation: Inner Boardroom Meeting:**

Close your eyes and imagine entering a spacious and elegant boardroom. In this boardroom, you are the CEO of your life, and you're about to hold a special meeting.

In front of you, there's a long table with two empty chairs. These chairs represent the inner critic and imposter syndrome. Modify this to suit you - you may only want to work with one.

### **Inviting In:**

One by one, invite your inner critic to take a seat in one of the chairs. Visualise it clearly, giving it a distinct form or appearance. Then, invite your imposter syndrome to take the other seat. Picture it in detail.

### **Dialogue and Exploration:**

Begin a conversation with your inner critic:

Ask, "Why are you here? What do you want to achieve by being critical?"

Listen to its responses with openness and curiosity.

Switch to imposter syndrome:

Ask similar questions to understand its intentions and role in your life.

### **Switching Perspectives:**

Now, imagine you're sitting in the chair of your inner critic. See the world from its perspective.

Answer the questions: "Why do I behave this way? What am I trying to protect? How might I be helping the person?"

Repeat the process by sitting in the chair of imposter syndrome and answering the same questions.

### **Integration and Cooperation:**

Return to your CEO seat at the head of the table, embodying your true self—the core of compassion and wisdom within you.

Reflect on the insights you've gained from this visualisation.

Consider ways in which your inner critic and imposter syndrome can work together with your true self to support your growth and goals. Reflect on what you are no longer willing to accept from the inner critic and imposter syndrome. Convey this to them with love.

### **Action Steps and Gratitude:**

Think about how you can nurture a more compassionate relationship with your inner critic and imposter syndrome.

Set some action steps to integrate their positive aspects and align them with your aspirations.

Express gratitude to both your inner critic and imposter syndrome for their protective intentions.

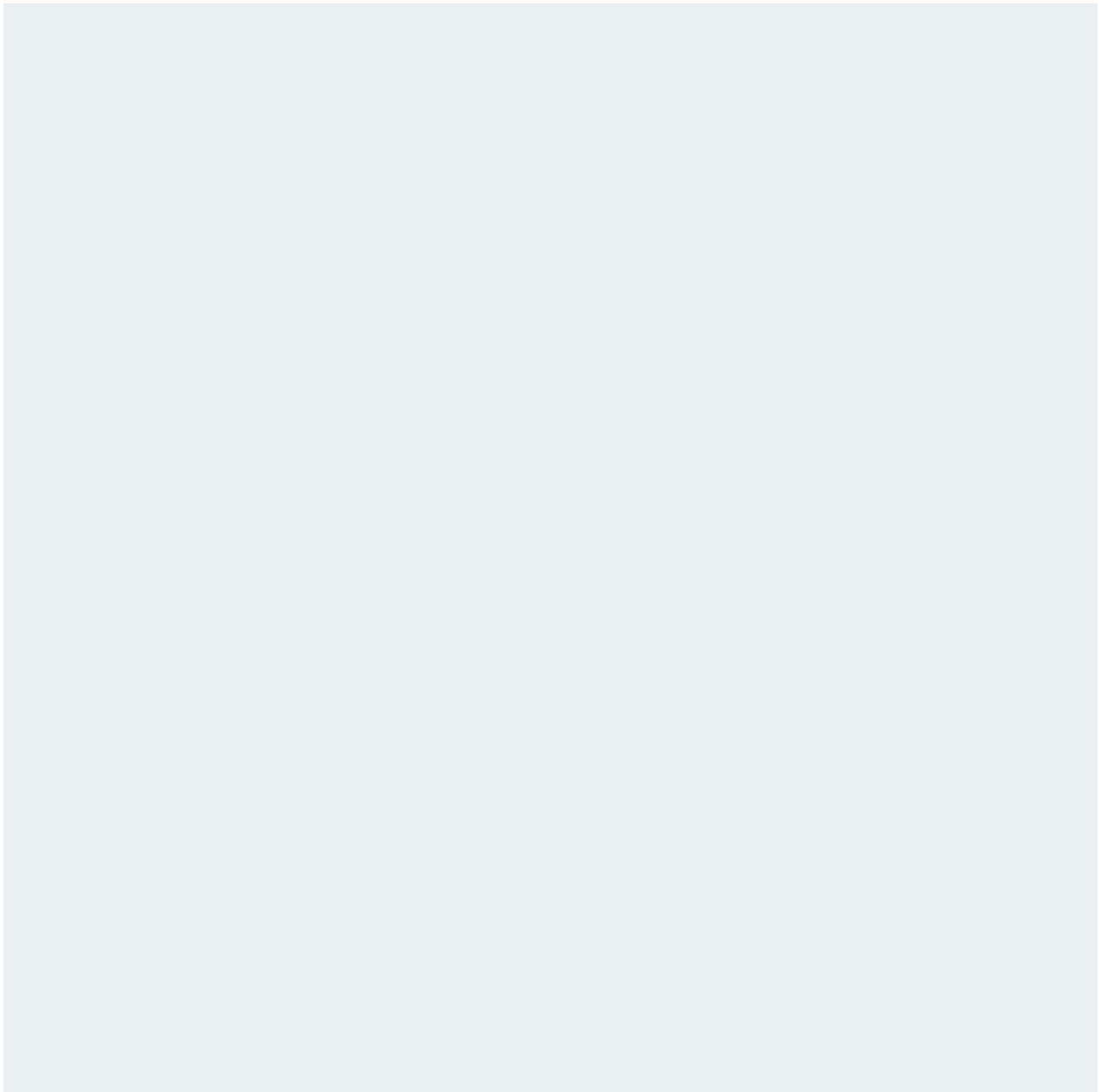
## Closing:

Take a few deep breaths and slowly open your eyes.

Capture your insights and action steps below.

Remember, this is an ongoing process, and you can revisit this exercise whenever needed.

You can use the space below to note down any insights and action steps.



# Self Compassion

Let's dive into the incredible world of self-compassion. Self compassion is like an antidote that doesn't just free you from the shackles of the inner critic and imposter syndrome, but it actually nourishes your soul.

Picture this: You're giving yourself the same pep talk, the same encouragement, and the same TLC that you shower on your closest friends. It's like being your own cheerleader, especially when the going gets tough, the failures pile up, or that sneaky self-doubt creeps in.

So, let's break it down into three components that make up self compassion:

**Self-Kindness:** Imagine giving yourself a warm, loving hug when you mess up instead of beating yourself up like a self-criticising drum. That's self-kindness in a nutshell. It's waving goodbye to harsh judgments and saying hello to soothing words. Instead of giving yourself a hard time for your quirks and flaws, you say, "It's okay, we all have our moments."

**Common Humanity:** Listen up, we're all sailing in the same boat of imperfection. It's like realising you're not stranded on a deserted island of mistakes. Nope, everyone's got their own set of mess-ups, and that's what makes us human. So, please don't feel isolated in your struggles.

**Mindfulness:** Imagine watching your thoughts and emotions go by like a parade. You're just there, observing, without jumping into the circus of self-criticism or exaggeration. Mindfulness lets you look at your experiences with a curious heart, minus all that self-bashing jazz.

# Self Compassion - Visualisation

Find a quiet and comfortable place to sit or lie down. Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths, letting go of any tension in your body.

## Step 1: Setting the Intention

Begin by setting an intention for this meditation/visualisation. You might say to yourself, "I am dedicating this time to cultivating self-compassion and nurturing a kind relationship with myself."

## Step 2: Creating a Safe Space

Visualise yourself in a peaceful and safe place. This could be a serene beach, a cosy cabin in the woods, or any spot that brings you a sense of calm. You could use your healing sanctuary or create a new place. Imagine the details of this place—the colours, the sounds, the textures.

## Step 3: Invoking Self-Kindness

Now, bring your attention to your heart centre. Imagine a warm, gentle light glowing in your heart. This light represents self-kindness and unconditional love.

## Step 4: Offering Kind Words

As you breathe in, imagine inhaling a radiant light of self-kindness. With each exhale, send this light back to the universe or the Earth. As you do this, silently repeat kind and comforting phrases to yourself:

"May I be gentle with myself."

"May I offer myself compassion in times of difficulty."

"I am deserving of love and kindness."

## Step 5: Cultivating Common Humanity

Visualise all the people around the world who are also experiencing challenges

and struggles. Imagine sending your compassionate light to them, connecting with the shared humanity of pain and joy.

### **Step 6: Embracing Mindfulness**

Shift your focus to your breath. As you inhale, say to yourself, "Breathing in love and compassion." As you exhale, say, "Breathing out negativity." Let your breath anchor you to the present moment, away from self-judgment and worries.

### **Step 7: Offering Forgiveness**

Now, bring to mind a mistake or a difficult experience you've been struggling with. Allow yourself to feel the emotions associated with it. As you do this, continue to breathe mindfully.

Imagine wrapping that experience in the same warm, gentle light of self-compassion. Say to yourself, "I forgive myself. I am human, and I am learning and growing."

### **Step 8: Coming Back**

Slowly bring your awareness back to the room. Feel your body resting, and take a few deep breaths. Gently open your eyes when you're ready.

Remember, self-compassion is a practice. Each time you engage in this visualisation, you're nurturing a kinder relationship with yourself. Carry this sense of self-compassion with you as you go about your day.



# The Gentle Art of Blessing

Pierre Pradervand is an amazing man who was working in the field of eliminating world hunger when an unexpected turn of events meant he was forced to resign. This led to him becoming lost in bitterness and resentment.

He eventually followed a nudge of intuition and began focusing on silent blessings as he went about his day. Eventually, he began to bless those who opposed his project and slowly the walls of resentment began to crumble.

One day while preparing a speech he felt inspired to begin writing, he described it as if he was being dictated to (I share his writing below). Later he had a mystical experience on a plane as he witnessed a stewardess showing kindness to a child. He felt an overwhelming rush of cosmic love that transcended the confines of the aircraft. This experience was like a seal of approval from the universe, affirming the power of love and blessing as a force that transcends boundaries and transforms lives.

Please take time to contemplate Pierre's words - let them wash over you.

*On awakening, bless this day, for it is already full of unseen good which your blessings will call forth, for to bless is to acknowledge the unlimited good that is embedded in the very texture of the universe and awaiting each and all.*

*On passing people in the street, on the bus, in places of work and play, bless them. The peace of your blessing will companion them on their way, and its aura will be a light on their path.*

*On meeting people and talking to them, bless them in their health, their work, their joy, their relationship to the universe, themselves and others. Bless them in their abundance and their finances, bless them in every conceivable way, for*

*such blessings not only sow seeds of healing but one day will spring forth as flowers in the waste places of your own life.*

*As you walk, bless the city in which you live, its government and teachers, its nurses and street sweepers, its children and bankers, its priests and prostitutes*

*The minute anyone expresses the least aggression or unkindness to you, respond with a blessing: Bless them totally, sincerely, joyfully—for such blessings are a shield that protects them from the ignorance of their misdeed and deflects the arrow that was aimed at you.*

*To bless means to wish, unconditionally and from the deepest chamber of your heart, unrestricted good for others and events; it means to hallow, to hold in reverence, to behold with awe that which is always a gift from the Creator. He who is hallowed by your blessing is set aside, consecrated, holy, whole. To bless is to invoke divine care upon, to speak or think gratefully for, to confer happiness upon, although we ourselves are never the bestower, but simply the joyful witnesses of life's abundance.*

*To bless all without distinction is the ultimate form of giving, because those you bless will never know from whence came the sudden ray that burst through the clouds of their skies, and you will rarely be a witness to the sunlight in their lives.*

*When something goes completely askew in your day, when some unexpected event upsets your plans and you also, burst into blessing. For life is teaching you a lesson, and the very event you believe to be unwanted, you yourself called forth, so as to learn the lesson you might balk against were you not to bless it. Trials are blessings in disguise, and hosts of angels follow in their path.*

*To bless is to acknowledge the omnipresent, universal beauty hidden from material eyes; it is to activate that law of attraction which, from the furthest reaches of the universe, will bring into your life exactly what you need to experience and enjoy.*

*When you pass a prison, mentally bless its inmates in their innocence and freedom, their gentleness, pure essence and unconditional forgiveness; for one can only be a prisoner of one's self-image, and a free man can walk unshackled in jail, just as citizens of a free country may be prisoners of the fear lurking within their thoughts.*

*When you pass a hospital, bless its patients in their present wholeness, for even in their suffering, their wholeness awaits discovery within them. When your eyes behold a man in tears or seemingly broken by life, bless him in his vitality and joy, for the material senses present but the inverted image of the ultimate splendor and perfection that only the inner eye beholds.*

*It is impossible to bless and judge at the same time. So hold constantly as a deep, hallowed, intoned thought the desire to bless, for truly then shall you become a peacemaker, and one day you shall behold, everywhere, the very face of God.*

*P.S.*

*And of course, above all, do not forget to bless the utterly beautiful person YOU are.*

I'd recommend watching Pierre tell his story on YouTube and also his book *The Gentle Art of Blessing*. The YouTube video is titled - Pierre Pradervand - *The Gentle Art of Blessing*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hV9HD73dYWo>

Note any feelings arising as you reflected on this.

# The Secret - Mavis Karn

*I'd like to share another chapter with you from my book 'From the Heart; Explorations in True Nature and Unconditional Love'. In this chapter, I write about Mavis Karn and share a beautiful letter she wrote. (It is written in American English).*

## MAVIS KARN

*"There is no situation that is not transformable. There is no person who is hopeless. There is no set of circumstances that cannot be turned about by ordinary human beings and their natural capacity for love of the deepest sort."*

*Archbishop Desmond Tutu*

When I asked Mavis if she'd like to contribute to my book, she offered to let me share a beautiful letter she wrote titled 'The Secret'. Below, Mavis explains how the letter came about.

On the last day of my two-year project teaching kids in prison about who they really are inside, (full of potential and naturally possessed of everything they need), they had a party for me.

I loved them all so much and wanted to give them something from my heart, so I wrote this letter. The letter eventually found its way to an artist imprisoned in a men's facility who wanted to make a poster out of it to share within the prison community.

## *The Secret*

*Dear Kids (and former kids),*

*I have a secret to tell you, nobody meant to keep it from you...It's just that it's been one of those things that's so obvious that people couldn't see it...like looking all over for the key that you have in your hand.*

*The secret is that you are already a completely whole, perfect person. You are not damaged goods, you are not incomplete, you are not flawed, you are not unfinished, you do not need remodeling, fixing, polishing or major rehabilitation. You already have within you everything you need to live a wonderful life. You have common sense, wisdom, genius creativity, humor, self-esteem...you are pure potential...you are missing nothing.*

*The only thing that can keep you from enjoying all that you already are is a thought. One thought, your thought. Not someone else's thought. Your thought . . . Whatever thought you are thinking at the moment that feels more important to think than feeling grateful, alive, content, joyful, optimistic, loving and at peace. . . that's the only thing that's between you and happiness.*

*And guess who's in charge of your thinking? Guess who gets to decide where your attention goes? Guess who gets to write, produce, direct and star in the moment you're in the middle of? You! Just you. Not your past (stored thought), not the future (did you ever notice that it never, ever shows up?), not your parents (they all think their own thoughts), or your friends (ditto), or school or television or situations or circumstances or anything else. Just you.*

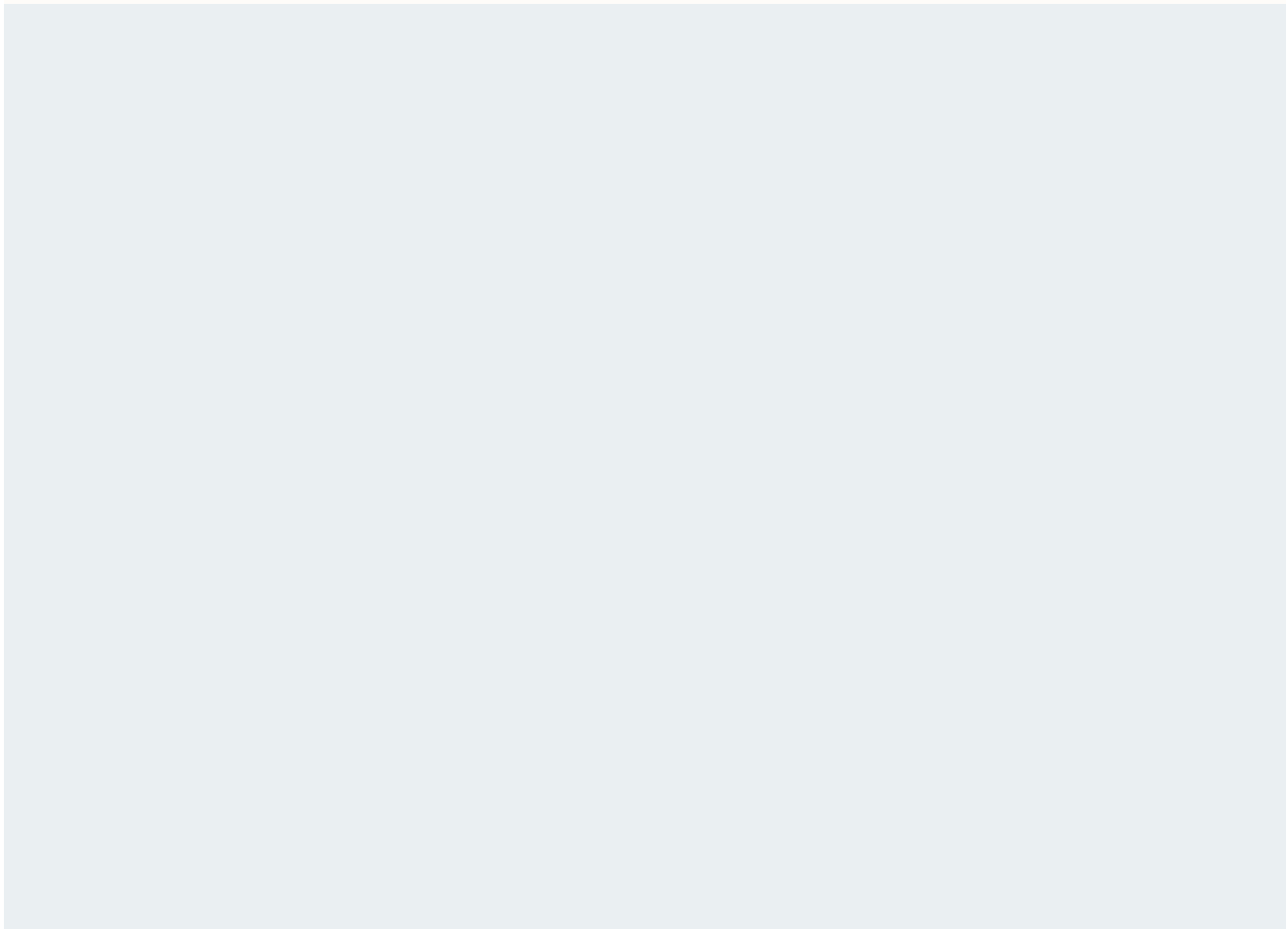
*Thinking is an awesome capability. Like any capability, it can be used either as a tool or as a weapon against ourselves and others. And just like with any other tool, we can tell whether we're using it for or against ourselves by how it feels. When we think against ourselves or others, we get in trouble. When we don't, we usually stay out of trouble.*

FEELINGS EXIST TO WARN US AWAY FROM USING OUR THINKING TO CREATE TROUBLE IN OUR LIVES AND TO GUIDE US BACK TO OUR NATURAL, HEALTHY ABILITY TO LIVE OUR LIVES TO THE FULLEST.

*So, please remember that your thoughts are not always telling you the truth. When we're in low moods, feeling down, our thoughts are not be trusted...our IQ drops. When our thoughts pass and we lighten up, our thinking is once again creative, positive...our IQ goes up. The only way you can feel badly about yourself and your life is if you think badly about them...it's up to you, every single minute you're alive. It's always up to you! This is the best, most liberating secret I ever learned, and I want you to know it too.*

*With love,  
Mavis*

Use the space below to reflect on Mavis' letter



# True Nature Practices

There are three helpful practices that you can do in combination to help you deepen into your true nature.

## Meditation

Sit in a quiet place, in a comfortable position with your eyes closed.

Take three deep breaths, noticing the sensation of the in and out breaths in your nose.

Be aware of the sensation of the chair or cushion, the air temperature on the skin, any sounds, and what it feels like to be present and aware of the body.

Relax deeply and let yourself drop into a deeper sense of openness.

Allow everything to be as it is.

Resist nothing.

Allow thoughts, feelings, sensations or sounds, to arise as 'objects' on the surface of your experience like leaves floating on the top of a still lake – you are the water, you are not the leaves.

When the mind wants to follow thoughts and become immersed in them, simply notice, let go of the thought and relax into the deep stillness.

## Moment-to-Moment Practice

At various times during the day, while doing normal activities, pause and become consciously aware of the present moment just as it is.

Keep your eyes open and go into a meditative state of present awareness while still doing the activity.

Notice any unhelpful thought patterns or habits of mind – see them as old stale habits and sink back from them into the still openness of awareness.

Keep practicing this and increase the time and frequency as it becomes more familiar.

## Self-Enquiry

Self enquiry is a deep spiritual practice which allows an inner exploration. I'd recommend exploring this online for yourself. Rupert Spira has a video I'd recommend that you watch first.

Introduction to Self-Enquiry

<https://rupertspira.com/non-duality/introduction-to-self-enquiry>



## Other teachers

There are many amazing teachers offering free talks on YouTube about true nature and understanding the mind. They all have books too if you prefer reading.

I'd recommend;

Ekhart Tolle

Rupert Spira

Michael Singer

Sadhguru

Dr Amy Johnson

Gangaji

Francis Lucille

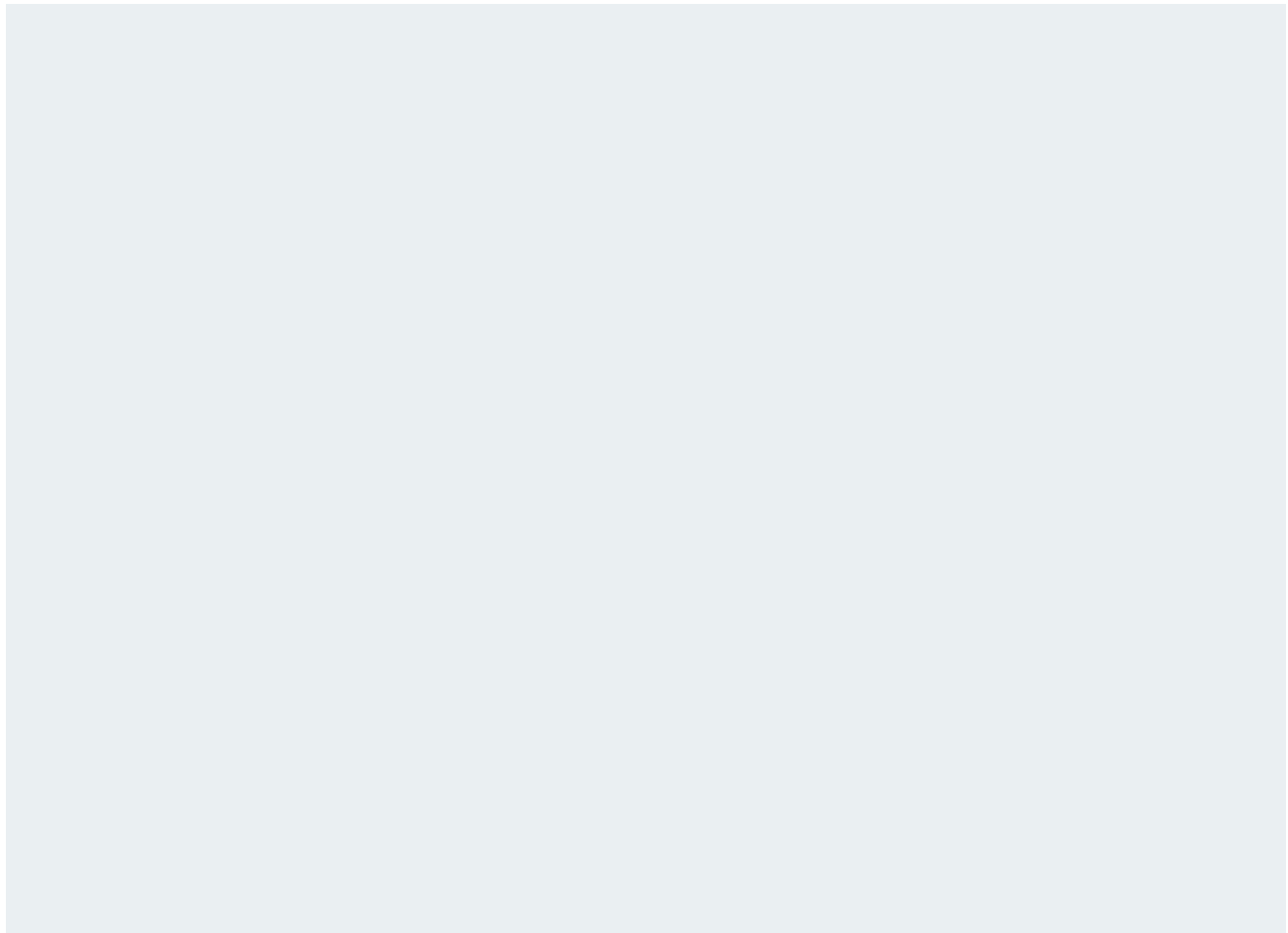
Ilona Ciunaite

Dicken Bettinger

Michael Neill

Adyashanti

**Task** - Make some time to explore some of the teachers and note a list of teachers that you resonate with.



## Energy Healing

Energy work is an incredible way of clearing the old, protecting ourselves from negative influences and opening up to new possibilities.

You can work with me one to one, join the free Facebook Group or buy the online Inner Liberation course. Find out details at [www.afreemind.co.uk](http://www.afreemind.co.uk).

## Nervous System Reset

If you feel that your nervous system could do with a reset please join my free facebook group where you will find a Nervous System Reset - Free 5 day challenge in Guide 5. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/afreemindcommunity>

## Taming Anxiety

If you feel that you are experiencing anxiety please join my free facebook group where you will find Taming Anxiety a - Free 5 day challenge in Guide 7. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/afreemindcommunity>

## Flow State

If you are interested in learning more about the flow state please join my free facebook group where you will find Flow State - Free 7 day challenge in Guide 8. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/afreemindcommunity>

## Art of Appreciation

If you are interested in experiencing more appreciation and gratitude in your life please join my free Facebook group where you will find The Art of Appreciation - Free 21-day challenge in Guide 10.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/afreemindcommunity>

## Energy Alchemy

If you you would like to learn more about transmuting negative energy please join my free facebook group where you will find free resources in the Energy Alchemy Section in Guide 11.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/afreemindcommunity>



## 7/11 Breathing

This is an incredible practice that I use with my clients which I was taught in my psychotherapy training. Here's what the Human Givens Psychotherapy Institute say about it.

*Breathing techniques are not just 'mind tricks', they produce a bodily response that lowers your anxiety in a very physical way.*

*Deep breathing techniques all have one thing in common, they work by stimulating what is known as the Parasympathetic Nervous System. You may have heard of the 'fight or flight' response, the Parasympathetic Nervous System is simply the opposite of that ('fight or flight' is the term for the activation of the Sympathetic Nervous System) - instead of getting you ready for action, deep breathing activates a natural bodily response that can be described as 'rest and digest'. Out-breaths decrease your blood pressure, dilate your pupils and slow your heart rate – lowering emotional arousal in the process. Practising a breathing technique a few times a day will lower your overall stress levels in the long term.*

*It's important to realise that it's the out-breaths that stimulate the response, so it stands to reason that a breathing technique with longer out-breaths than in-breaths will be more effective at lowering emotional arousal.*

*Breathing techniques in which the out-breath is the same length as the in-breath, or during which you focus on your anxious thoughts are generally less effective at quickly lowering the physical symptoms of anxiety, despite being a good way of being mindful or entering into a relaxed state.*

# 7/11 Breathing - Instructions

Here is how you do it, and it is as easy as it sounds:

1 - breathe in for a count of 7.

2 - then breathe out for a count of 11.

Make sure that when you are breathing in, you are doing deep 'diaphragmatic breathing' (your diaphragm moves down and pushes your stomach out as you take in a breath) rather than shallower higher lung breathing.

If you find that it's difficult to lengthen your breaths to a count of 11 or 7, then reduce the count to breathing in for 3 and out to 5, or whatever suits you best, as long as the out-breath is longer than the in-breath.

Continue in this way for 5-10 minutes or longer if you have time – and enjoy the calming effect it will have on your mind and body. An added bonus of 7-11 breathing is that the very act of counting to 7 or 11 is a distraction technique, taking your mind off your immediate concerns.

This 7/11 breathing technique for relaxing quickly is the most powerful we know and has been used for thousands of years throughout the world.

<https://www.hgi.org.uk/resources/delve-our-extensive-library/resources-and-techniques/7-11-breathing-how-does-deep>



## Grounding Techniques

For a free guide all about grounding please join my free Facebook group - A Free Mind Community or go to [www.afreemind.co.uk](http://www.afreemind.co.uk) to download the free guide.

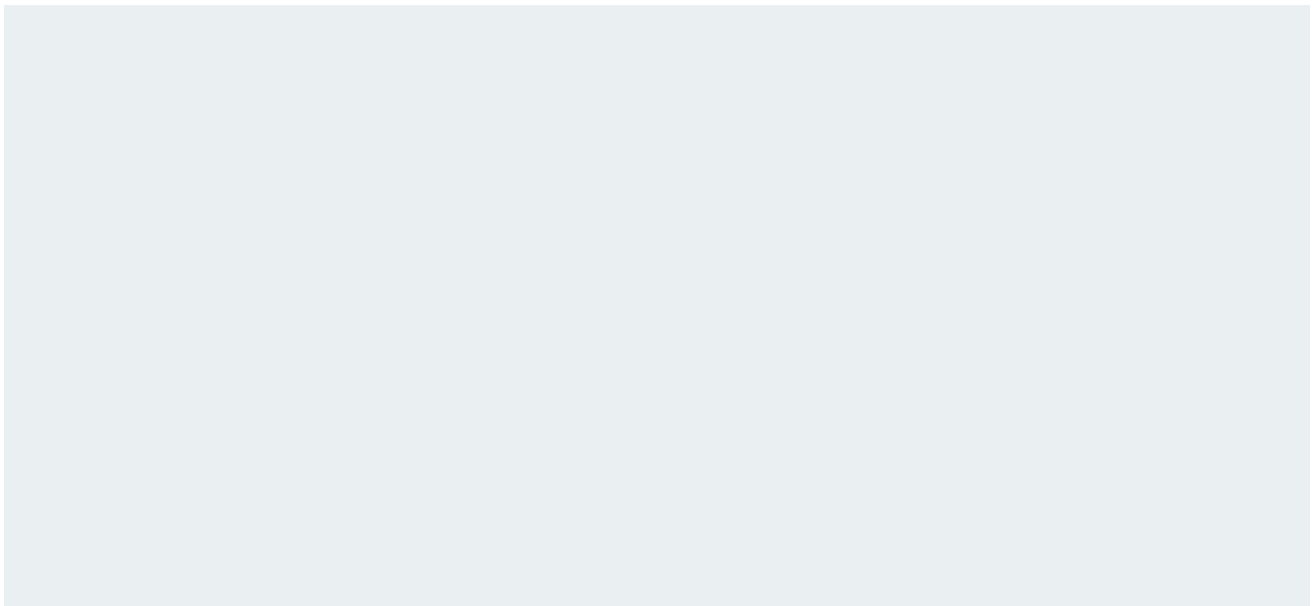
## Emotional Needs Audit

Remember the emotional needs audit earlier in the book? Here's a reminder. Do an emotional needs audit to check that your emotional needs are in balance. If your emotional needs aren't being met in balance it will lead to a feeling of something not being right in life and can start worry and rumination.

If you find any need on the lower end of the spectrum - say a 3 you can coach yourself to consider what a 4 might look like and be open to working towards that change.

<https://www.hgi.org.uk/resources/emotional-needs-audit-ena>

Note which needs you wish to work on below.



## Hobbies & Interests

In my first session with clients, I'm always interested in how they like to spend their time, their hobbies and their interests.

I'm really looking for ways in which they drop out of the problems of the mind and get into a flow state where time just disappears. As you relax you can become more aware of the parrot & the owl. Hobbies can help you get your emotional needs met in a healthy way too.

Things such as mindful walking, gardening, cooking, music, art, jigsaws, exercise, reading, knitting, crafting, a lovely bubble bath etc.

Consider how you spend your time and if you could restart an old hobby, research a new one or simply become more present and mindful in a hobby or interest you currently do. Hobbies and time for yourself are an essential part of a balanced life not just a luxury.

**Reflection** - Make a note of helpful hobbies and interests you have, used to have or are interested in exploring.

# Cognitive Distortions

## The Triple Column Technique (CBT)

The goal of this technique is to develop awareness of your thoughts (especially your automatic negative talk and self-criticism), identify your cognitive distortion patterns, and then talk back to your distorted thoughts to develop a more realistic self-evaluation system. Notice which ones are favoured by the inner critic and imposter syndrome!

Use the Triple Column Technique table on the next page whenever you notice you are engaging in negative self-talk.

Write down your automated negative/self-criticism thoughts.

Watch this video titled - CBT Cognitive Distortions Animation on YouTube

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VI3DgbZc7\\_o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VI3DgbZc7_o)

Identify which of the 10 Cognitive Distortions apply to each thought.

Talk back to your automatic distorted thoughts with a rational thought

The 10 Cognitive Distortions:

1. Mental Filter
2. Disqualifying the Positive
3. 'All or Nothing' Thinking
4. Overgeneralization
5. Jumping to Conclusions
6. Magnifying or Minimizing (also referred to as "Catastrophising")
7. Personalization
8. Shoulds and Oughts
9. Emotional Reasoning
10. Labelling

## THE TRIPLE COLUMN TECHNIQUE

Automatic Thought	Cognitive Distortion	Rational Thought
	<p>Mental Filter</p> <p>Disqualifying the Positive</p> <p>'All or Nothing' Thinking</p> <p>Overgeneralization</p> <p>Jumping to Conclusions</p> <p>Magnifying or Minimizing</p> <p>Personalisation</p> <p>Shoulds and Oughts</p> <p>Emotional Reasoning</p> <p>Labelling</p>	
	<p>Mental Filter</p> <p>Disqualifying the Positive</p> <p>'All or Nothing' Thinking</p> <p>Overgeneralization</p> <p>Jumping to Conclusions</p> <p>Magnifying or Minimizing</p> <p>Personalisation</p> <p>Shoulds and Oughts</p> <p>Emotional Reasoning</p> <p>Labelling</p>	

## THE TRIPLE COLUMN TECHNIQUE

Automatic Thought	Cognitive Distortion	Rational Thought
	<p>Mental Filter</p> <p>Disqualifying the Positive</p> <p>'All or Nothing' Thinking</p> <p>Overgeneralization</p> <p>Jumping to Conclusions</p> <p>Magnifying or Minimizing</p> <p>Personalisation</p> <p>Shoulds and Oughts</p> <p>Emotional Reasoning</p> <p>Labelling</p>	
	<p>Mental Filter</p> <p>Disqualifying the Positive</p> <p>'All or Nothing' Thinking</p> <p>Overgeneralization</p> <p>Jumping to Conclusions</p> <p>Magnifying or Minimizing</p> <p>Personalisation</p> <p>Shoulds and Oughts</p> <p>Emotional Reasoning</p> <p>Labelling</p>	

## THE TRIPLE COLUMN TECHNIQUE

Automatic Thought	Cognitive Distortion	Rational Thought
	Mental Filter Disqualifying the Positive 'All or Nothing' Thinking Overgeneralization Jumping to Conclusions Magnifying or Minimizing Personalisation Shoulds and Oughts Emotional Reasoning Labelling	
	Mental Filter Disqualifying the Positive 'All or Nothing' Thinking Overgeneralization Jumping to Conclusions Magnifying or Minimizing Personalisation Shoulds and Oughts Emotional Reasoning Labelling	

# MY PERSONAL

## *Inner Liberation Toolkit*

### TOOL 1:

Brief Description:

Good For:

Notes: (Teachers, Websites etc)

### TOOL 2:

Brief Description:

Good For:

Notes: (Teachers, Websites etc)

# MY PERSONAL

## *Inner Liberation Toolkit*

### TOOL 3:

Brief Description:

Good For:

Notes: (Teachers, Websites etc)

### TOOL 4:

Brief Description:

Good For:

Notes: (Teachers, Websites etc)

# MY PERSONAL

## *Inner Liberation Toolkit*

### TOOL 5:

Brief Description:

Good For:

Notes: (Teachers, Websites etc)

### TOOL 6:

Brief Description:

Good For:

Notes: (Teachers, Websites etc)

# MY PERSONAL

## *Inner Liberation Toolkit*

### TOOL 7:

Brief Description:

Good For:

Notes: (Teachers, Websites etc)

### TOOL 8:

Brief Description:

Good For:

Notes: (Teachers, Websites etc)

# MY PERSONAL

## *Inner Liberation Toolkit*

### TOOL 9:

Brief Description:

Good For:

Notes: (Teachers, Websites etc)

### TOOL 10:

Brief Description:

Good For:

Notes: (Teachers, Websites etc)

## CONGRATULATIONS

*You Did It!*

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You've completed the work of The Ultimate Inner Liberation Blueprint and you now have the potential to be on the path to a much more peaceful, happy and fulfilled life! You should be very proud of yourself for pushing through, being open to new understanding and doing the tasks and reflections to raise your awareness. I know I am so proud of you!

## *What Now?*

If you enjoyed The Ultimate Liberation Blueprint, then why not join my free Facebook group - A Free Mind Community. In this community I share about having a free mind, energetics and awakening to your true nature. It includes beautiful guided meditations, free challenges and energy work to help you live a life of freedom and joy.

[A FREE MIND COMMUNITY](#)



If you'd like to work one to one with me or purchase the online version of this course than please check out my website [www.afreemind.co.uk](http://www.afreemind.co.uk)

# Notes & Reflections

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