

Starving for the Triumvirate

(Personal Power Warrior Series)

by

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#1 - You Are the Warrior Coming Home?

Recently I overheard a friend of mine who is a proud and well-respected Combat Veteran say to some other Combat Veterans:

“As you were.”

I’m not a Veteran, certainly not a Combat Veteran, so the meaning of this expression was not so familiar to my ears as it was to theirs.

So I think I had a very different, and quite literal, perception of what he said.

I thought about what he said. In fact, I turned it over in my mind several times...

“As you were.” “As you were....” Hmmm... “As you were....”

Okay, I said to myself... “and just what WERE you?” Now you’re apparently being set free to go back to what you WERE before.

When “before?”

Where “before?”

What “before?”

Who “before?”

Normally, when I invite someone to use me as a “tool” to help them resolve their concerns, I’m an Educator.. providing resources and insights and, hopefully, some enlightenment for them to help send them on their journey to achieving their goals.

When I was eleven years old, I knew that some day I would become a Counselor as I discovered that people found it easy to talk to me and they always invited me inside to roam around freely inside them, to nearly become them.. to see the world through their eyes and feel it through their senses.

I think this is some kind of extra-empathy that I have relative to others - as I can often immediately perceive their needs and the best, and most respectful, way of gently guiding and supporting them as they move along the path to fulfilling themselves.

For those who are overwhelmed with pain, I shoulder their burdens until they are back on their feet. Then at appropriate times, I gradually transfer the load back to their stronger shoulders after they feel energized with a good plan for self-discovery, self-empowerment, resolution, success

But, as I contemplate you questioning the command “As you were,” I feel a different kind of distress coming from each of you. I so much want to help you shoulder your burdens... I’ve been struggling for some understanding of just how I can do this so that you each feel my love, my deepest respect, my sincere empathy, compassion, and support for what you have experienced in the days since you have been a Warrior giving all your Love to those who needed it so much they sucked all they could out of you.

You shared nurturing for so long in a private world - a family of comrades in arms - within a Military “family,” performing powerful missions demanding all of your strength and courage, and abiding by a complex set of rules and structures where you learned to function with maximum efficiency – maintaining a balance of give and take.

Each day you faced unknowns unimaginable to civilians like me “back home,” and life was filled with glory and pain only shared and supported by your Combat Vet “family” and the Military “family” above them.

You were magnificent, proud, pulling the best out of yourself, testing yourself for strength, excellence, discipline, and courage... yet, remaining humble...humble about being a “hero,” knowing it, but not saying. Your Combat “family” knew it.. you were all GOOD together.. and that was enough.

Every day you made a huge difference in the world by your presence. The day you shared your rations with a starving dog, the day you pulled a child out of harm’s way, the time you smiled at a village woman and she felt respected for a moment. How many heroic acts did you commit while you were “doing your job” and no one ever saw or acknowledged?

Did you feel them? Did they make you feel good? Will you always remember the power of those heroic acts?

How did your military experience shape you and who you are? How did war effect you? Are you the same person who became “Government Issue” so long ago? How long ago? Were you just a kid starting out in life then or a family person wanting to help out and then return to your family?

Back in the beginning you were you, but then on the first days you were stripped of your unique personhood, reshaped into the uniform part of a Military Machine, sent out to do an important and dangerous job for your country, did that job with expertise and pride, completed your Military obligations....and then you were "saluted," "separated," and sent "home." Thank you very much.....

Wait a minute... Isn’t this “home?” Oh, you mean the OTHER “home!” Oh....

And the last command you heard was “As you were.”

There’s a TV commercial which always makes me cry. A Vet in uniform walks through a

deserted airport terminal. He looks around but there's no one there at all. He picks up his duffel bag at the conveyer system and walks out to a deserted street. There is no sign of human life anywhere.

I cry because it reminds me of the horrible crimes the public committed against our brave returning Vietnam Vets so many years ago. I was a kid but I certainly recall them coming home to no welcome, no gratitude, no respect for their heavy investments and for risking their lives when our country asked them to fight for Freedom.

Proudly they went and gave their love and their lives, and America turned her back and even abused them for their sacrifices. I couldn't stand it then and seeing this TV commercial brings it all back to me. I always cry... I'm crying now just thinking about it. I am always so relieved when the other Veteran comes up to him, extends his hand, and welcomes him home.. and then the world becomes alive with people again.

If you went into the Military to give your love to the world and to make life better for others, and you were bursting with the need to give your all and didn't know just how you would do it, that's how I feel about you right now.

I also want to give you all of my love and share with you anything and everything that I can to give you all of the success and happiness that you deserve. I want to walk out onto the street, extend my hand to you, wrap my arms around you, and welcome you HOME.

From the deepest recesses of my heart and soul I offer you my respect and gratitude for my Freedom, and I praise you for continuing the proud tradition of the brave warriors who were the caretakers of our homeland and bravely fought for the Freedom of our forefathers as you have fought for us. Welcome Home!

The Way of the Warrior

A Warrior knows that knowledge is a full circle.

A Warrior knows that there is a time and place for the use of force.

A Warrior knows that in all skills and abilities there is timing.

A Warrior knows that the way to understanding is through experience.

A Warrior knows that most important is Attitude.

A Warrior knows that he must appreciate an attack and that his Spirit must take on a welcome attitude.

A Warrior knows that when you have become accustomed to something you can see it naturally.

A Warrior knows that killing is the same for those who know about fighting and those who do not.

A Warrior knows that he must change his rhythm sometimes in order to win.
A Warrior knows he must have the Spirit of advancing and engaging.
A Warrior knows the difference between sight and perception.
A Warrior knows that he must keep his Spirit true to realize the virtue of strategy.
A Warrior knows that the strategy will come from his Heart when he has willingness to win.
A Warrior knows that being trapped makes him the pheasant and he must remain the hawk.
A Warrior knows that his experience allows him to teach others, to give them a role model.
A Warrior knows that memory is his foundation for authority.
A Warrior knows that there are two sides to everything.
A Warrior knows that when your thinking rises above concern for your own welfare, then wisdom is independent of thought appeals.
A Warrior knows that he has a compassion born of death.
A Warrior knows that courage is not without fear.
A Warrior knows that fright often occurs caused by the unexpected.
A Warrior knows that a cricket can speak his fate.
A Warrior knows that his greatest enemy is himself.
A Warrior without understanding from his family and his friends the Warrior will perish, without the Warrior, all will perish.
The Way of the Warrior is the resolute acceptance of death.
The Prairie Inst., Casper WY - Author Unknown.

#2 - Dealing With Change and Fear!

You may have already crossed that bridge from your Military Life to reclaim your Civilian Life or you may be just ready to take your first step. No matter where you are in this process, it is going to mean change for you, maybe a LOT of change. In the natural course of being a normal human being, Change is usually paired with Fear. The degree is what determines the outcome.

So, let's talk about Fear before we attempt to move forward....

Don't Let Fear Stop You!

(Taken largely from a post thread written in the ECN in May, 2009 and edited today May, 2012)

If you want to run your own business (or make important changes in your life) and haven't made the move, yet, the biggest barrier is probably your own "Irrational Fear." Let's talk about that and find some solutions...

Did you know that Fear is one of the most valuable tools you will ever have?

That is absolutely correct!

Fear has two vital functions in your life, and without Fear, you would have no tangible way to know which directions you need to take in life.

These are the two vital functions of Fear in your life. How to use them as tools is what you need to learn:

1. Rational Fear tells you when Real Danger is present and that you need to go into "Fight or Flight Mode."
 2. Irrational Fear tells you which direction you need to take to find Success and Happiness in life.
- Learning how to use this vital tool called "FEAR" is what can make or break you.

Old Nikko:

"Fear is often preceded by astonishment, and is so far akin to it, that both lead to the senses of sight and hearing being instantly aroused. In both cases the eyes and mouth are widely opened, and the eyebrows raised. The frightened man at first stands like a statue motionless and breathless, or crouches down as if instinctively to escape observation.

The heart beats quickly and violently, so that it palpitates or knocks against the ribs... That the

skin is much affected under the sense of great fear, we see in the marvelous manner in which perspiration immediately exudes from it...

The hairs also on the skin stand erect; and the superficial muscles shiver. In connection with the disturbed action of the heart, the breathing is hurried.

The salivary glands act imperfectly; the mouth becomes dry, and is often opened and shut."

~ Charles Darwin, "The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals"

"Fear makes the wolf bigger than he is."

~ German Proverb (Has to have been stolen from the Native Americans!)

"What we fear comes to pass more speedily than what we hope."

~ Publilius Syrus (and re-stated by Murphy in Vol. 1 of his Laws)

"Courage is not the lack of fear but the ability to face it."

~ Lt. John B. Putnam Jr. (1921-1944)

Coach Judi:

I was not alive during the "Great Depression," nor was anyone I know personally, but history tells us that there was massive fear in the country, probably on the level of hysterics in those who had the energy for that kind of negative passion, and quiet hysteria in those too low in energy and hope to register more than a resigned apathy. When powerful people, recognized economic and political leaders, reach depths of despair and hopelessness that cause them to commit suicide by leaping from their windows, that is a demonstration of fear to the extreme. When those less powerful see these examples, they feel that there is no one steering the ship and that they are next to crash on the rocks. So, fear can begin as a wave which shudders across an entire population.

The fear that is so pervasive across the nation at this point seems to be very confusing to those who I am counseling these days both related to housing foreclosures and to the breakdown of the foundation of relationships and families. Fear seems to be sitting in a pot on the bedpost for most people.. more like a "still life" than something dynamic because of the confusion and the mixed messages which are targeting the public from the media, from their employers, from bankers, from neighbors talking over the fence.

This is a new kind of fear that might be called a "Tentative Fear" because it began chugging away like a freight train and then, as if in some cartoon, it went off the cliff and was caught in mid-air - and it has stopped before hitting the ground... caught in an unreal world of "freeze frame." People who I talk to seem to be holding their breath... "waiting to exhale" and watching carefully to see if that freight train will plummet to the ground or maybe miraculously get snapped back up to the cliff and be rubber-banded back to the tracks.

This is a new kind of fear that I have not seen in my lifetime... I'll call it "Confusion Fear" or "Freeze Frame Fear." And there seems to be an attempt at quasi-habituation because things are moving so slowly... as this freight train hangs in suspension.

The first challenge which Fear throws at us is to recognize and identify it. Each animal of which I am aware has some sort of fear response. Fear, like pain, focuses our attention on the concrete reality that something has gone wrong, something is out of the ordinary and demands our attention.

If we didn't have pain, we might end up losing body parts, or even our lives, because we would not have our attention focused on some requirement to attend to ourselves to either overcome a physical problem that is confronting our physical health and welfare or prevent further damage which could cost us our lives. Fear gets our attention in the same way.

Even a lowly spider will stop stock-still hoping that you have not seen it as you enter a room and discover its presence. This is a vital part of survival.

I have not made a scientific study of spiders or roaches, but I have noted that they seem to make some decision to either run for the hills or hope to blend into the environment when I have happened upon them.

That translates to Fear where I come from, so I am inclined to believe that we, the highest order on the "Food Chain" are not the only ones who received the "gift of Fear" from our "Creator" as a protection and guideline for the years that we are on this planet. But, I'm going to talk about human beings and how Fear is our "best friend" in a way as we make it through life, and, hopefully, use it to make a very happy and successful life for ourselves.

Whether we are aware of it or not, both Fear and Pain are vital and natural components of our survival. The lowly spider only responds to Rational Fear. As human beings are the highest order of animal on the planet (not including the Dolphin which is our equal in the sea), we are confronted by two types of Fear: Rational and Irrational. They are both a "gift" from our "Creator" and how we manage them will determine our Success or Failure in this life.

I will be discussing Fear and it's double sides of Rational and Irrational elements and how they can and do serve us on a daily basis.

When we are confronted by danger of any kind, the "fight or flight" response, which takes place

in our adrenal glands (part of our Autonomic Nervous System called the "Sympathetics"), triggers a series of hormones prompting physical effects which cause us to ready ourselves to either run like heck, shinny up a tree, or fight like a maniac to defend ourselves from that danger.

Many functions in the body change to give us the best possible advantages to escape or to protect ourselves from an enemy or predator. All the energy which we need gets redirected from other body systems and organs so that our senses become sharper and we have more power in our brains, muscles, and supporting organs, like the heart, to make us as fast and as strong as we need to be to respond to the most powerful instinct that all living creatures share: the instinct for "self preservation."

You have heard of cases where someone in an emergency became strong enough to lift a car off someone who was pinned under it. Normally, they would never have that kind of strength, but this is part of the vital toolbox of advantages which belong to us when we are confronted by the danger which threatens our physical survival and we need to be faster and more powerful to protect ourselves from extinction.

There is a whole set of symptoms (side effects) of these "Fight or Flight" reactions which we are all familiar with:

Our heart races faster to mobilize vital oxygen and glucose to our brains, so that we can think faster, and to our muscles, to take them to the height of strength and efficiency.

The pupils in our eyes dilate (widen) to admit more light so we can see better, and all of our senses become more keen so that we are more aware of our physical environment. Our mouths become dry and our palms sweat because precious body fluids are no longer directed to secondary functions like digestion but are summoned for the higher functions of perspiration to keep us cooler as we are running pretty hot from all the glucose going to our muscles and our heart racing faster than usual.

And we might be running or fighting and need to remain cool, and maybe sweat could even make us a little too slippery for our enemies to hold onto us.

We become more alert and wakeful to stand sentry over our safety so this would not be an appropriate time to become sleepy and lose our concentration.

We might even get knots in our stomach if we try to eat because the fluid productions needed for mastication (chewing), digestion, and peristalsis (moving food along the intestinal tract) have been diverted elsewhere for more life-saving functions.

We might even feel "butterflies" in the stomach as the signals to nerves get short circuited while we are responding to present danger.

When the danger has finally passed and we are safe again, another part of the Autonomic Nervous System called the "Parasympathetics" kicks on and shuts down all of the emergency functions and side effects of the "Fight or Flight" operations and we are restored to "normal" again so we can go about the normal business of our lives without all of the Fear symptoms redirecting our normal life strategies.

I'm sure you have felt these "Fight or Flight" symptoms on many occasions in your life - times when you were in imminent danger of physical harm and times when less physical dangers, like maybe getting ready to take a major exam or begin a job interview or ask someone out on a date, or even get married, were confronting you.

It's these less physical and more "emotional" dangers which we will be discussing here.

While the "Fight or Flight" reaction can save your life when the real physical danger of "Rational Fear" triggers your survival defenses, it can, and will, also be triggered by "Irrational Fear," that fear which lies within your emotions, like:

Fear of Failure,
Fear of Rejection,
Fear of Loss of Control,
Fear of the Unknown,
Fear of Vulnerability, etc.,

These Irrational Fears can stand between you and the achievement of your own Success and Happiness.

Most people who have achieved Success and Happiness in business and in life have done so because they learned how to confront and deal effectively with their Irrational Fears; those who have failed in business and in life, have usually succumbed to Irrational Fear and have run away from their potential road to Success and Happiness and have hidden away in some perceived "safe place" where they felt that nothing could happen to them... and then nothing DID happen to them...

Nothing like Success and Happiness can happen to them when they are hidden away - hunkered down behind a self-imposed protective fortress.

If you want to become Successful and Happy in business and in life, you must make the decisions to Invest, Risk, and Drive persistently toward your dreams, and the only way to do this, and not let Irrational Fear stop your progress, is to learn about these two "gifts" which really are there to guide you, if you know how to recognize, identify, and then respond effectively in confronting them head-on.

You have the opportunity now to listen and learn and put a new set of very effective tools in your toolbox for achieving Success and Happiness in Business and in Life.

I will do my best to teach you and, hopefully, you will learn and these new tools will aid you in embarking on a journey to whatever you consider Success and Happiness both in Business and in your Personal Life, because they truly are one in the same but very individualized.

Since I'm sure that no one really wants me to get into sensitive personal issues, I will approach the business of Needs and Success and Happiness based on the "universal needs" as outlined by Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, which was a theory in Psychology, proposed by Abraham Maslow in his 1943 paper "A Theory of Human Motivation," which has been subsequently recognized as a standard in the Social Science fields which recognize and deal with human Needs.

This also includes the Sales and Marketing fields as they function based on both understanding human Needs and then trying to fulfill them based on the Marketing and Sales of products and services.

"Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs" is depicted as a pyramid, which is also called "Maslow's Pyramid" and it demonstrates that we must first fulfill the needs at the very bottom of the pyramid before we can go on to fulfill the needs on the higher levels.

So, it is vitally important to determine at what level your needs have been fulfilled and then look higher to see what needs remain unfulfilled. This is also true for those who share your life with you, both in business and in your personal life. As the needs are fulfilled higher and higher up the pyramid, the very topmost need being "Self-Actualization," we achieve more Happiness and Success.

Again, only you can define how these universal needs translate and are definable in terms of your personal needs, so look carefully at Maslow's Pyramid and then look at the defined general categories and let them guide you to the contemplation and discovery of your own needs. This is a good way to start on your own personal journey to find your needs and to find how you personally define Success and Happiness just for you.

Give yourself permission now and then begin to examine the "Universal Needs" to see how normal and healthy they are and how you are also normal and healthy - and how important it is to begin to claim these needs as yours and give yourself the FREEDOM which we are guaranteed in our great nation to contemplate and to pursue fulfillment, once we have defined them and made a plan to achieve the Dream at the end of what makes us Happy and Successful:

Abraham Maslow's Pyramid: Hierarchy of Human Needs (Psychologist 1908-1970)

Seeking Comfort vs. Avoiding and/or Coping with Discomfort

1. Living entities try to reach out to pleasant stimulation and to avoid painful stimulation, so we are motivated in our choices at the most basic level of either Avoiding/Coping with Discomfort or Seeking Comfort in the same sense as we pull our fingers away from the heat of the flame but the moth is drawn by its bright light.

2. When we are experiencing Discomfort, we make choices to help us Avoid or Cope.
3. When we are not experiencing Discomfort, we tend to make choices which will help us Seek Comfort. It is as much a part of survival as the leaves of a plant turning toward the life-supporting rays of the sun.
4. In dealing with others in personal or business transactions it is very valuable to determine if others are motivated by a need to Avoid/Cope with Discomfort or a need to Seek Comfort.
5. If you can make these determinations about others, you can be more successful in both your personal and business relationships and transactions because you will understand what needs require fulfillment.
6. In terms of business relationships, being able to determine what motivates the choices of your potential customers/clients is Step One in your attempt to sell your products or services to them.



1. Physiological needs:

Seeking: Oxygen, water, protein, salt, sugar, calcium, minerals, and vitamins. pH balance, normal body temperature, normal level of activity, rest, sleep, expelling wastes, avoiding pain, having sex, food, shelter, and clothing.

Avoiding: Deficiency, Imbalance, Extremes, Hunger, Thirst, Physical Discomfort.

2. Safety and security needs:

Seeking: Safe circumstances, stability, protection, structure, order, some limits.

Avoiding: Fears, Anxieties

3. The love and belonging needs:

Seeking: Friends, sweetheart, mate, children, affectionate relationships, career, sense of community.

Avoiding: Loneliness, social and career anxieties.

4. The esteem needs:

Seeking: Lower Esteem: respect of others, need for status, fame, glory, recognition, attention, reputation, appreciation, dignity, even dominance. Higher Esteem: self-respect, confidence, competence, achievement, mastery, independence, and freedom.

Avoiding: Low self-esteem and inferiority complexes mostly from lack of respect

The first four levels Maslow calls “deficit needs.” If you don’t have enough of something -- you have a deficit – and you feel the need. But if your needs are fully satisfied, you feel nothing at all and have no motivation to seek. It’s like breathing; you take it for granted unless you develop Asthma or Emphysema.

5. Self-Actualization or “Growth Motivation.” (To be “all that you can be,” to “fulfill your potential,” to be “authentic,” to be “your own person.”):

Driving Needs of Self-Actualizers are:

Seeking:

Truth
Beauty
Unity, wholeness
Aliveness
Uniqueness
Perfection and necessity
Completion
Justice and order
Simplicity
Richness
Effortlessness
Playfulness
Self-sufficiency
Meaningfulness

Avoiding:

Dishonesty, Evil
Ugliness or vulgarity
Arbitrariness or forced choices
Deadness or the mechanization of life
Bland uniformity
Sloppiness, inconsistency, or accident
Incompleteness
Injustice and lawlessness
Unnecessary complexity
Environmental impoverishment
Strain Grim, humorless, drudgery
Dependency
Senselessness

Most People are Motivated by Avoiding:

1. Loneliness, not being loved, sexual/sensual deprivation, conflict, chaos
2. Poverty, homelessness, hunger, economic stress, anxiety, and insecurity
3. Lack of power and control, lack of respect and esteem from self and others
4. Physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, psychological pain
5. Fear, worry, anxiety, being overburdened, exhausted
6. Feelings of inferiority, lack of confidence, feeling unattractive
7. Failing health, feeling “old,” pessimism about the future
8. Sense of “emptiness,” lack of outside stimulation and excitement

Now give yourself permission to discover your Needs, to develop a Dream which will put you on the path to your Success and Happiness.

Then devise a Plan and a Strategy to reach that Dream.

The next step is the ACTION part where you begin the Journey to your Dream and at the end of that rainbow will be the fulfillment of your Needs - and you will have found your personal Success and Happiness in your Business and your Personal Life, as they are really one in the same.

Old Nikko:

The Six Human Needs:

Tony Robbins has identified six basic human needs and believes everyone is—or can be—motivated by their desire to fulfill these needs.

You may want to consider these needs when thinking about developing and delivering products and services to people. The question to ask is, "What need or needs does my product fulfill for my customer?"

1. Certainty/Comfort. We all want comfort. And much of this comfort comes from certainty. Of course there is no ABSOLUTE certainty, but we want certainty the car will start, the water will flow from the tap when we turn it on and the currency we use will hold its value.

2. Variety. At the same time we want certainty, we also crave variety. Paradoxically, there needs to be enough UNCertainty to provide spice and adventure in our lives.

3. Significance. Deep down, we all want to be important. We want our life to have meaning and significance. I can imagine no worse a death than to think my life didn't matter.

4. Connection/Love. It would be hard to argue against the need for love. We want to feel part of a community. We want to be cared for and cared about.

5. Growth. There could be some people who say they don't want to grow, but I think they're simply fearful of doing so—or perhaps NOT doing so. To become better, to improve our skills, to stretch and excel may be more evident in some than others, but it's there.

6. Contribution. The desire to contribute something of value—to help others, to make the world a better place than we found it is in all of us.

Action Point:

Evaluate this list to better understand your personal motivations and examine which ones seem the most significant to you. Then, look at what you do to fulfill the needs of others. It will likely make a difference in what and how you do what you do. It also should make a difference in the way you describe and explain what you and your product can do.

Conquering Irrational Fear is a Numbers Game!

If you can do Numbers, you can Master "Irrational Fear" instead of taking a dive and allowing it to Master you.

I've conquered nearly every kind of Fear you can think of and nearly every facet of Fear of

Failure. No one can speak more authentically on this topic than I can. If I can overcome "Irrational Fear," anyone can. I never had support ... EVER... and it always felt like I had everything against me...but I Mastered my "Irrational Fear" of Failure every time and if I can do it, so can you... if you want to. (Anyone wishing to challenge me on any of this, just speak up and I'll be happy to share some "war stories" with you. But, NO, I have not been in Combat in any declared "War.")

I'll tell you how I mastered my "Irrational Fears of Failure and Rejection"... if you want to learn.

"Rational Fear" warns you about real and probably physical danger, so pay attention and protect yourself by taking logical, decisive action. Your first move may be to step back for a few minutes, assess the situation, and then act. Or it may mean immediate Fight or Flight reaction. Or it may mean "pay the rent NOW" so you don't end up on the street tomorrow.

"Irrational Fear" warns you that you may be in imminent danger of doing something which may cause you to fail or be rejected (which I regard as the same thing.) It may be coming at you while you stand still, or you may be considering moving in its direction.

So, "Irrational Fear" points the way to what you could be doing to find Success and Happiness and you only feel Fear because you Fear Failure. That is "Irrational Fear."

When there is no physical danger and you have determined that what you feel is Fear of the Unknown, or Fear of Rejection, or Fear of Ridicule, you're really feeling that this is the right path to take to your own personal Success and Happiness, and it is so important to you that you are feeling the dread of what might happen if you move down that path which is being pointed out to you and you fail to meet your goals. That "Irrational Fear" is pointing out the direction you need to take to reach your dreams.

You can usually test yourself to determine if your fear is "Irrational Fear," if your mind starts buzzing with all kinds of "What If's." If this was just another mundane choice you could make in life, you would not Fear Failing because it would not be that important.

Now I'll probably shock you by saying that your "Irrational Fear" invariably points out the direction you need to take to achieve your dreams and find your heart's delight. It may even be powerful enough to point to your very "Purpose in Life."

Realizing this, and being able to determine which is "Rational Fear" and which is "Irrational Fear," is your first step in Mastering your Fear and turning it into Success and Happiness.

Now, do your research and put your toes into the waters to test them, and as you do so more and more, you will increase the percentage of your possibilities for success.

If you do nothing, you have a guaranteed 100% failure when that "Irrational Fear" tells you

which path to take to reach your goals and your Fear keeps you from taking it, so you just stand still, or, even worse, run and hide.

If you just take the path with no research and testing to prepare you, then you increase the odds to 50-50. The more you research, test, put your toes into the water to prepare yourself for the move, the more you increase your chances of success and you might even increase them to somewhere in the 90% category.

This is the process for how you Master your "Irrational Fears" and actually use them to find your Success and Happiness.

"Rational Fear" is a warning of possible danger but "Irrational Fear" is a warning of possible Success and Happiness. If you pay attention, you will see that it's a signal pointing out the direction you need to take to reach your goals and find your dreams. You will recognize the signal as a quickening of the heart or butterflies in the stomach. Standing so close to you is what you really want... but standing equally close is your Fear telling you that you may fail. Now the choice is yours..

Challenge your Fear and take a "flying leap" and go anyway, or freeze to the spot like a deer in the headlights, or run for the hills?

What will you do? Will you Master the "Irrational Fear" and go forward to reach your goal and realize your dream, or will you allow your "Irrational Fear of Failure" to Master you? This is always your choice.

Do not go at all and you have 100% guaranty that you will NOT reach this goal or achieve this dream of yours.

Go forward and trample your Fear of Failure to get to your goal or your dream and your chances are 50/50 each of both Success or Failure.

Prepare yourself wisely with a strategy and plan and then go forward challenging your "Irrational Fear of Failure" well prepared and fortified and you can greatly increase the numbers to 60, 70, 80, 90% chance of success.

This is why you have a brain... so you can use it to not only survive but to succeed.

Using it wisely means determining the warnings you feel inside as depicting Real Danger or Fear of Failure? This will always be your challenge in life.. and it has always been the challenge for all successful people who have gone before you and who will come afterward.

Let's discuss why...

Think about which kind of fear you are feeling. Once you have it figured out, then make the

logical moves. Move out of danger in the face of "Rational Fear." But see "Irrational Fear" as the signal that there is opportunity afoot and if you can recognize it and move logically toward it, then you can use that opportunity to find your dreams and achieve Success and Happiness. Your intelligence and courage will help you decide.

Fear is a major part of survival. It both protects us from danger and points out opportunity. Learn to listen with your brain and then take the most appropriate action. If you run away from both Rational and Irrational Fear without discriminating between them and taking the logical appropriate actions, you will have defended yourself both from danger and from golden opportunity and then you will have sabotaged your own dreams and will have claimed failure by default by "self-fulfilling prophesy of failure."

Take control and use these valuable survival tools to your advantage. It is your birthright as a human being.

Please pay close attention to this statement because it is one of the most important statements you will ever have to contemplate in your life:

"When you feel fearful, you are being directed either away from something which could harm you or you are being directed toward something which could change your life in unimaginable ways and bring you the greatest success and happiness. Knowing the difference is what is important and will determine whether you are a success or a failure. As in all other things, it's knowing the difference which counts and, also, as in all other things, it's both knowledge and action which give you the power."

I'm thinking about "Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood."

I wonder how many people know that "Mr. Rogers" was a Navy SEAL. When you looked at him and saw what a kind and gentle man he was.. so sensitive, soft-spoken, and understanding of children... you forgot what he was in his other life and what kind of abuses or injustices might have put enough motivation (or anger) into him to become a SEAL.

I think maybe that is a way for a victim of abuse to kill his abusers over and over until he defuses his rage. Could he have suffered abuses as a child, gone to war to defeat them, and then come back to protect and support innocent children - maybe even the innocent child that he once was? I don't know, but as a professional, that seems plausible to me.

Really, I know nothing more about this kind and gentle man who won the hearts of Americans, adults and children alike, but I would like to slip another mystery person into his persona costume and discuss how fear could work both as the Master and as the tool of Mastery.

Let's say this hypothetical person in his costume was abused as a child (and I'll let you assume whatever abuse you like here). Let's say he went to war so that he could legally kill the "enemy" which represented his abuser, or maybe even abusers. Even in the act of Combat while he was

"killing" his abusers he was still the frightened child, reacting over and over to the "Rational Fear" remembered of an adult abuser and an innocent child desperate to be safe, desperate to protect himself.

Here we are talking about REAL DANGER, "Rational Fear," but carried into adulthood and onto the battlefield in real battle.

So, now we have a much more complex situation because it has been incorrectly assessed. The "Rational Fear" in the battlefield in combat certainly would be a justifiable "Fight or Flight" reaction but once the real danger was over, the fact that the person was still carrying the "Rational Fear" with them when there was no longer any Real Danger, was based on an incorrect assessment because it had then turned into the "Irrational Fear." And the response to that was not appropriate.

The child still residing in the adult has carried the abuser into the present and it still resides inside lying to the child still partnered with it that he is still in danger. The real abuser may be long-dead by this time but the child still residing inside the adult is continuing to allow the "Irrational Fear" to be his Master and the result is that all he does ends in Failure. The abuser remains with the child-adult telling him that he is inadequate and all that he may want to do or achieve will end in Failure so he defeats himself over and over again by never challenging the "Irrational Fear" - so he remains standing still or he runs and hides.

What do I mean by this? Let's go back to our borrowed person's costume now.

If this child-adult still fears his abuser as if he is still there, the "Irrational Fear," then he can remain with children as an adult because they are smaller than he is and they are no threat...he feels safe now. Or he can see them as his child-self and realize that he is older and bigger now and can remain with the surrogates of his child-self to guard and protect himself symbolically by guarding the children.

In any case, the "Irrational Fear of Failure" is still the Master of him instead of the reverse. The most common, and controlling lies, that abusers tell their victims is that they are unlovable and they are inadequate - so no one will ever love them and they will always fail at anything they try to accomplish.

Let's take this to a really harsh degree now.

Let's say that in the years between the abuses and his years in the military and his experiences in combat, he has spurts of maturity and he realizes that he has been killing his abusers over and over.. and he reflects back on the "enemy" and realizes that he made them pay the price for his own personal abusers... Even though they are the official "enemy," and it's his job to overcome them, he may still get confused and start to feel guilty, so that at the end of combat, when many of his comrades are experiencing PTSD, to one degree or another and trying to cope and overcome, he holds onto his because now his Fear has become so familiar to him that he feels

safer with it than with his Fear of the Unknown, and he also has a need to punish himself for taking the lives of those who were not his real abusers.. and he is still believing the lies of his real abusers of old that he is not worthy of love and success and happiness. Again, all abusers tell these lies to their victims so they can control them.

So, now we have an "Irrational Fear" which is doing more than preventing a person from moving forward to reach their goals and realize their dreams. We have an individual who is being controlled and abused by abusers of old which Master him using his own "Irrational Fears" against him ... These are Fear of Failure and Fear of Rejection.

Yes, this is an example which may seem extreme, but, as a professional who has helped victims work their way past these horrible abuses, I know quite a lot about it and I can tell you that the way to deal with this and recover from such abuses lies in the direction of Mastering "Irrational Fear."

Let's define those Irrational Fears again in case you've forgotten:

- Fear of Failure
- Fear of Rejection
- Fear of the Unknown
- Fear of Vulnerability
- Fear of Feeling Foolish or Incompetent
- Fear of Loss of Control

Really, you can make a long list of fears and if you look at them hard enough, they all boil down to only two fears: Failure and Rejection.

The preceding hypothetical is an excellent example of the depths of self-imprisonment that fear can cause and how a person can trap themselves in a prison of their own making which they could so easily kick open and escape if they just knew how.

Fear is as powerful an emotion as Love... and they are at opposite poles. People think that Love and Hate are opposites, but that's not true. Love and Fear are opposites... both edges on the same sword.. one which kills and one which cures.

That's how powerful fear can be if a person chooses to develop a Romance with their fears and embrace and hold onto them as some false "safety net" because they are so familiar, and they have developed skills for enduring them. This is the usual scenario for an abused wife who remains in a marriage where she is beaten senseless every day but won't escape because she fears the unknown outside more than she fears the familiar abuser inside... They can sell their souls to the Devil like Faust out of pure "Irrational Fear."... and then they abdicate their FREEDOM and cease to belong to themselves.

And that's how the Evildoer abusers control their victims with "Irrational Fears," to protect

themselves from exposure to the authorities and to bind their victims to them until they are ready to throw them away, which they invariably will do. They are skilled purveyors of lies... lies which promote the "Irrational Fears" of their victims. No one understands or exploits "Irrational Fear" more than an abuser.

The way out is to become the Master of those "Irrational Fears" and realize that they are pointing the way to your FREEDOM, first, and then your goals, and then eventually to your Success and Happiness.

If you understand the difference between "Rational Fear" and "Irrational Fear," you can respond to them appropriately.

In the case of "Rational Fear," you need to take action to protect yourself. In the case of "Irrational Fear," you need to step back and determine what it's telling you. If it's pointing you to what will mean Success and Happiness for you, but you're becoming overwhelmed with your Fear of Failure, and self-doubt is setting in, then you need to have a talk with yourself before you decide to run and hide and complete a Self-Fulfilling Prophecy of Failure.

Call your "Irrational Fear" the liar that it is and take back control so you can follow your Dreams instead of running away from disguised opportunity. Your "Irrational Fears" will point the way to what you really want and need but are fearful of not achieving. You wouldn't feel any fear at all if it was not something you desired and was important to you.

We never fear the loss of something which isn't important to us and we never fear the failure of something we are not interested in achieving.

Please read the story below and then the lyrics of the song and ask yourself how it makes you feel. It's never too late to learn how to Master your "Irrational Fears" and go after what you really want in life. Ask yourself if this reminds you of something else you might want to do but too many "What Ifs" were standing in your way.

Note: We'll talk more about this at another time and discuss good strategies for success.

"THE ROSE"

The first day of school our professor introduced himself and challenged us to get to know someone we didn't already know. I stood up to look around when a gentle hand touched my shoulder. I turned around to find a wrinkled, little old lady beaming up at me with a smile that lit up her entire being. She said, "Hi handsome. My name is Rose. I'm eighty-seven years old. Can I give you a hug?"

I laughed and enthusiastically responded, "Of course you may!" and she gave me a giant squeeze. "Why are you in college at such a young, innocent age?" I asked. She jokingly replied,

"I'm here to meet a rich husband, get married, have a couple of children, and then retire and travel."

"No seriously," I asked. I was curious what may have motivated her to be taking on this challenge at her age.

"I always dreamed of having a college education and now I'm getting one!" she told me. After class we walked to the student union building and shared a chocolate milkshake. We became instant friends.

Every day for the next three months we would leave class together and talk nonstop. I was always mesmerized listening to this "time machine" as she shared her wisdom and experience with me. Over the course of the year, Rose became a campus icon and easily made friends wherever she went. She loved to dress up and she reveled in the attention bestowed upon her from the other students. She was living it up.

At the end of the semester we invited Rose to speak at our football banquet and I'll never forget what she taught us. She was introduced and stepped up to the podium.

As she began to deliver her prepared speech, she dropped her three by five cards on the floor. Frustrated and a little embarrassed, she leaned into the microphone and simply said: "I'm sorry. I'm so jittery. I gave up beer for Lent and this whiskey is killing me! I'll never get my speech back in order, so let me just tell you what I know." As we laughed she cleared her throat and began:

"We do not stop playing because we are old; we grow old because we stop playing. There are only four secrets to staying young, being happy, and achieving success...

- You have to laugh and find humor every day.

- You've got to have a dream. When you lose your dreams, you die.

We have so many people walking around who are dead and don't even know it!" "There is a huge difference between growing older and growing up. If you are nineteen years old and lie in bed for one full year and don't do one productive thing, you will turn twenty years old. If I am eighty-seven years old and stay in bed for a year and never do anything, I will turn eighty-eight. Anybody can grow older. That doesn't take any talent or ability.

- The idea is to grow up by always finding the opportunity in change."

- "Have no regrets. The elderly usually don't have regrets for what we did, but rather for things we did not do. The only people who fear death are those with regrets."

She concluded her speech by courageously singing "The Rose."

She challenged each of us to study the lyrics and live them out in our daily lives.

At the year's end Rose finished the college degree she had begun all those years ago.

One week after graduation Rose died peacefully in her sleep.

Over two thousand college students attended her funeral in tribute to the wonderful woman who taught by example that it's never too late to be all you can possibly be.

THE ROSE

Some say love it is the river, that drowns the tender reed.
Some say love it is the razor, that leaves your soul to bleed.
Some say love it is a hunger, an aching endless need.
I say love it is a flower and you, its only seed.
It's the heart afraid of breaking, that never learns to dance.
It's the dream afraid of waking, that never takes a chance.
It's the one who won't be taken, who cannot seem to give.
And the soul afraid of dying, that never learns to live.
When the night has been too lonely, and the road has been too long,
And you think that love is only for the lucky and the strong,
Just remember in the winter, far beneath the bitter snows,
Lies the seed that with the sun's love, in the spring becomes the Rose.

#3 - If You Suffer Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD):

Among the horrific War Injuries affecting millions of our brave Combat Veterans has been PTSD.

If you are a Wounded Warrior struggling with this powerful Combat Injury, it is vitally-important that we stop at this point and address it head-on so that you can overcome the barriers of your PTSD symptoms and clear the path ahead of you to begin your new Journey into a happy and successful self-discovery which will lead you to the Personal Power you will need to achieve your goals of personal and professional Success and Happiness. At this moment you may not, yet, believe in Dreams, but with the stress, anxiety, and nightmares cleared away, you may find that dreams CAN and WILL come TRUE for you.

I'm now going to introduce you to something wonderful called "**Emotional Freedom Techniques**" Therapy for Wartime Trauma. We will shorten the name to "**EFT.**"

A group of highly-respected professional medical practitioners have been using it very successfully to overcome the PTSD symptoms of not only recent Combat Veterans but also with Combat Veterans who have suffered symptoms for several decades.

It has been spectacularly successful, but, I will warn you that it does look quite strange to the average person who has never seen it before. Therefore, I'm going to give you my personal and professional assessment of it and why I urge you to investigate and try to become a participant in the program.

I can tell you absolutely that I BELIEVE IN IT!!

I will give you my rationale and I hope that, as the intelligent and logical person who you are, you will be both convinced and encouraged to not only consider it, but to make all efforts to give it a try. If you can dissolve the often-debilitating symptoms of this dreadful injury, then you can turn your attention to making positive strides in your life to reclaim what has always rightfully been yours and which your heroism in fighting for Freedom has cost you. You are certainly worth fighting for and I believe that EFT is the best weapon we have to start this battle. So, let's get started!

Please, just relax, open your mind - and allow this healing knowledge to gently pour in....

PTSD - Post Traumatic Stress Disorder #1

Let's discuss Post Traumatic Stress Disorder - "PTSD."

Here is a very good link to a plethora of information on this topic presented by the National Institute of Mental Health:

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/post-traumatic-stress-disorder-ptsd/index.shtml>

When I discuss anything, I like to present a definition so we can all agree that we are talking about the same thing:

What is post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD?

PTSD is an anxiety disorder that some people get after seeing or living through a dangerous event.

When in danger, it's natural to feel afraid. This fear triggers many split-second changes in the body to prepare to defend against the danger or to avoid it. This "fight-or-flight" response is a healthy reaction meant to protect a person from harm. But in PTSD, this reaction is changed or damaged. People who have PTSD may feel stressed or frightened even when they're no longer in danger."

Now, please let me park this for just a moment and come back to it...

Almost everything I've read or heard, mostly in the media, tells the public (including me) that the main challenge facing returning Combat Veterans is PTSD. They also tell us that the government and Veterans Administration (VA) have really let our returning Combat Vets down badly by either not diagnosing PTSD when it was present so the Veteran can get some helpful counseling and other supports, or not having the resources, such as counseling and/or financial supports, available to the Vets who have been diagnosed as suffering from PTSD because of lack of resources. Many who have been deemed eligible for counseling have been on waiting lists for a long time with no end in sight.

Others have been left to find private counseling on their own, but they can't afford it.

Those of you who have suffered, or are now suffering from PTSD have no doubt read the above definition and sneered at it for being way too "watered down." I've used this one because it's the official one the highest authority in the land on "Mental Health" issues has put forth for us to use. Does it mean that I agree with it, or that you do? No, but it's a very basic, one-size-fits-all definition for a condition which is different for each sufferer. But, let's go with it as just a very basic foundation for discussion. Okay?

Am I going to cover this topic as an "Expert" in the field of counseling suffers of PTSD? No. Certainly not! Why? Because I'm not and I don't think that there are many "experts" in this field because from what I've heard, even last night on CNN, after one soldier went berserk from stress and assassinated 16 innocent villagers as they lay in their beds in Afghanistan, even the top brass among the military psychologists admitted that "they" are just now getting a better grasp on how the combat experience and environment effects military personnel and how it creates challenges for Veterans as they try to assimilate back into life at "home" again. So, maybe I'm no more or less "a qualified expert" than they are.... Maybe.....

You're the ONLY ones who can make this determination.

However, I have suffered PTSD many times in my own life, have counseled those who have suffered it from other causes, not necessarily Military experience, can look at it Biologically and Psychologically but using a "common sense" approach.

So, I'm going to continue to the next post and offer you my "common sense" viewpoint and try to contribute what I can to help make sense of this very serious and painful challenge which you or someone you care about may be suffering. My deep and sensitive empathy for my clients, and some of my friends who have come to me for help, and my own personal experience and professional knowledge combined I think give me some resources I would like to put on the table for your consideration....and perhaps you will contribute, as well, and we can make some practical progress to help each other understand better and find some workable solutions.

Deal?

Okay, I'm going to end this post and move on to a continuation of this topic on a more specific bases..

Please read on ...

PTSD - The Conflict Begins #2

When it comes to anything related to Human Beings, including how we deal with PTSD, one size does NOT fit all!

When I was an undergraduate in school one of my professors made a statement that hit me hard enough that I'll never forget it. He said that "Human Behavior will never become a science."

Maybe we have to loosely define what "science" means here. Just loosely, "science" is made up of a set of universally-accepted rules that enable us to "PREDICT" something. Scientists all over the world are trying to find paradigms (models) which they can build by a set of components which are tools and rules to predict all sorts of things so we can prepare for disasters and such and reduce our losses. One such area of science has to do with weather and natural disasters. Scientists try to predict earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, etc. They are working hard at it so they can find finite answers. To find finite answers you must prove that if you put 2 together with another 2, you will always come out with 4. That's Science. As long as you can find a 2 and put another 2 with it, you can predict 100% of the time that you will come out with 4.

Of course, this is very simplistic, but human beings have been trying to understand and control their environment ever since they were aware of it. The Greeks, being such profound thinkers, were so intent in understanding and controlling their environment that they made up "myths" to explain everything they wondered about, and then found strategies for enlisting the help of their mythological figures to control the environment for them. To the Western World in the 21st Century that may seem childish, but to them it made perfect sense. Humans feel more secure if we can predict events which effect our lives, for good or bad, so we can maintain control of what might otherwise be uncontrollable. We hate to find ourselves blindsided by the unexpected. And so "Science" is born as we continually pursue trying to control the world around us, Beyond what drives us by instinct for "Self-preservation" and "Survival of the Species," many human beings are driven by a lust for Power and Control.

That having been said, beside wanting Power and Control over the environment, we also would like to have Power and Control over other Human Beings. So, the same paradigm has been attempted over and over again.. trying to find the 2 plus 2 that equals 4 in Human Behavior, so we can predict it 100%.

For those who think they have achieved that, I'm sorry to say that this is only a "Myth" in their minds because Human Behavior can NEVER become a Science unless we all become robots, and I doubt we will ever see such a thing in our life times.

So, we could say that the field of Psychology will never become a Science. I, myself, am in the "field of Psychology," but I like to think I have too healthy a sense of self and too much common sense to think for one minute that I can predict what any human being will do at any given time... and that might even include me. Until someone finds a way to turn us all into robots, it just "ain't gonna happen."

The best way we could define Psychology in terms of "Science" would be to call it a "Soft Science." It has been said many times in my profession that if you put 100 Psychologists in a room, you will have 100 different diagnosis for the same case which might be submitted to them for a diagnosis. The ones who realize that their view is only an "educated opinion" are the only ones I would consider going to if I needed counseling. The others can't get out of the way of their own egos....

Now, speaking of "egos".....

Each of us is made up of so many variables that to even attempt to predict our behavior would be always comparing apples to oranges.....

Regarding PTSD, I'll give you a personal example. I give many examples from my own life experience because I've had way more than my fair share of extraordinary experiences and the only way I can validate having lived through so much is to use it to teach others in the hope of helping them... Life lessons learned are useless unless they can be used to help others.

Several years ago I was date raped. I had suffered many occasions where someone attempted to rape me and I had fought my way out of the dangerous situation. In fact, once someone broke into my home, picked the lock on my bedroom door, and pounced on me in the dead of night when I was fast asleep. He startled me so much that my dog ran under the bed and fell totally silent for fear of being hurt, herself. (That was well beyond what I might have predicted for a large dog who I thought would protect me.. but that's another story for another time.. maybe...)

I valiantly fought off my attacker who broke into my home and attempted to rape me and was stunned by how I went from sound asleep to at full prime to protect myself.. Good old "Fight or Flight Sympathetic Nervous System." Don't ever knock it.. I learned by necessity that it REALLY is there for you when you need it.

Unfortunately, it is not always enough... Several years later I thought I was semi-invincible and that no one would ever get their grubby hands on me again. I was way too tough.. Wrong! I was no match for a professional football player who had so big an ego and was so arrogant that he couldn't believe that there was a woman anywhere on the planet who wasn't just dying for him to "have his way with her." He did and all my efforts to fight him off failed me

Okay, let me park this story for the moment and remind you that I have not forgotten that we're talking here about PTSD. I'm telling you this story for a reason...

After I had survived these, and other attempted rapes and abuses, I counseled several women who had been victimized in similar ways. One of them really stands out for me.

She was an RN Nurse who worked in "Premie" Intensive Care units. She had become very irrational and seemed by her supervisors to be too rough with the premature infants and finally had gotten to the point of being hostile. Finally they feared for the safety of the babies and they

fired her. She came to me for counseling.

In the course of treatment, she finally revealed to me that several years before she had been Date Raped by a very popular attorney in the upscale town where she had grown up. As she told me her story, I kept reflecting back on my own experiences, even to the most popular attorney in my own town where I had grown up and how he had dared to make a "pass" at me, but finally backed down when I rebuffed his advances. As she continued sobbing and raging, and demonstrated that, even though it had been years ago, she was just unable to resolve it and leave it in the past and go on. She clearly demonstrated symptoms of PTSD over this one, and only, negative incident in her life and how it had completely overtaken her.

In the time that I worked with her, I began to question why I had been able to resolve all those experiences that I had suffered and had put it all behind me and she was completely unable to move beyond her experience and maintained many triggers for her PTSD and responded to them in such a way that she actually began to rage irrationally and become dangerous to those less physically powerful than she was.

As I worked with her and became aware that the more I tried to help her get past it, the harder she fought to hold onto it. It finally became apparent to me that she didn't want to let go of it.. and I began to realize that she was using this one event in her life to "define" herself... Maybe she had no other better definitions of herself than being a "victim" and her ego needed to hold onto this event to cut her from the herd of others and make her "special." That was the only conclusion that finally became part of my "common sense" assessment of her behavior... and I finally discharged her as she really seemed to "need" that "victim role" from her rape so she could feel "special" and also... maybe... to justify some of her other rather hostile behavior toward others.

After that experience I began to see that when it comes to PTSD, there is no such thing as "one size fits all" and there are no "experts." There are only really good, common-sense and caring counselors who can look at the whole human being and understand them in a totally unbiased way, not trying to take what they think they "know" about PTSD and make it some kind of Science Paradigm (model) and build cause and effect and predictability around it..

PTSD is different for each of us who have suffered a painful life experience which has left scars on our bodies, hearts, souls. Each of us deals with our PTSD in as individual a way as we are individuals. We each have different egos, intelligence, personalities, strategies, education, life experience, etc. There are too many variables to have a simple $2 + 2 = 4$.

This is my common sense approach to the subject, and dealing with the symptoms of PTSD has some purely scientific foundations, which we should learn so we can understand the basics... which means understanding how the "Autonomic Nervous System" operates (which we'll discuss at another time), and the rest has to do with us each as individuals and how we cope or can learn to cope with abuses and victimization.

This client had PTSD from one rape. I will not reduce the impact of this experience for her, but I also could see that she was not able to move on in life and find any form of happiness or success because of it. I know that the only way to move on in life is to let go your abuser or they will continue abusing you all your life. I think that my work with adult survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse (CSA) helped me understand this the best and helped me understand myself and the strategies that I've learned to use.. and that I have successfully taught to many others.

I've suffered much sexual abuse in my life (not incest, thankfully). Mostly I've been stereotyped and punished as a surrogate for someone else who hurt the person who then took it out on me. I've suffered two break-ins to my home, a major robbery, a major fire... and many others too numerous to mention. I've managed to resolve them and put them behind me, but there's still some unresolved PTSD which sends up caution flags for me, but to Protect me, NOT to Disable me.. I've learned to turn my PTSD to my benefit instead of allowing the abusers to live on inside of me to keep abusing me. You can learn to do that, too, and I will certainly do all I can to help you learn.

For instance, I won't live in a home without a fail-safe, monitored security system with ALL the bells and whistles. I always sleep facing the main entry into my room, be it door or window. Until it was stolen recently, I always kept a stun gun in my car. Now I have two cans of wasp spray, one by my bed and one in the car... and so forth...

My point is that my PTSD keeps me on my toes to protect me, but it's not irrational.. It has become my best friend. It lies beneath the surface, too, and triggers an alarm if I find myself in a situation which experience has told me puts me at risk.. My PTSD is very "Rational." It doesn't make up things that can't really ever happen. That would be "Irrational Fear." It sends me little pulses of "Rational Fear" to protect me... so I regard my PTSD as a "friend" who protects me all the time.. It's called "experience" with lessons learned but it does not continue into my present and future as an abuser who keeps on abusing.. There's a very good reason for that....

I know from my experience that an abuser can only control you through lies.. The Power and Control thing which some humans attempt to assert over others is administered through Lies... It becomes the silent Demon inside which is constantly sending false "what if" signals and they are all lies, but they can keep their victim abused and imprisoned for a lifetime unless we learn how to evict them...

There's only one way... We stop listening to the "what if" voices of our PTSD Demons and stop them dead in their tracks with TRUTH... Once we see the TRUTH and stop responding to the lies, they must leave us because we have deactivated them.

Good old Sigmund Freud found the answer to this challenge through his "talking cure." When we talk it out until we are gagging at the very thought of opening our minds and lips to push those repeated words out again, we can then put the burden down, kick it to the curb, step over it and keep going down the road on our "Life's Journey" and just leave it behind....

But we take the "Life Lesson" with us.. and I'll call that the part of our PTSD which has become our friend, who tells us the TRUTH, and keeps us aware of the valid protection we must have.

I'm going to give you one more example and then I'll finish this post and continue to the next one... as soon as I have the emotional energy to resurrect these lessons so I can share them with you.. Yes, of course, they do bring back bad memories for me, so they do take a little time to bubble up to the surface... But I would hate to think that I have gone through so much in my life for nothing and that all of this will just evaporate from my coffin after the Grim Reaper comes for me.. Truly, I do hate waste... and I can't think of any worse waste than that...

Last Example:

I know a man and I know his wife, also, but I don't know them together because she left him a year ago.

He is very fixated on his material worth and his toys. He has a beautiful home and many "toys." But he leaves his home opened all the time. He loves to go into his computer room and lock the door and be in there for hours on end.. often well into the early morning.. maybe 2 am or even 3 am. The whole time he is locked in there, he leaves his front door wide open and the two large patio doors to the back of his house... Oh, did I tell you that he is hard of hearing due to the years he spend in rock bands.. or that he's 66 years old? In any event, he has very valuable contents in his home, including some irreplaceable antiques.. But, when he is home, and locked in his computer room, anyone in the world could just walk right in from his front door or the two sliders in the back and just help themselves. He wouldn't hear them so they could just take them all. If he did hear them, or if they decided to break through his door, they could do countless more nasty things to him.

I asked him once if he knew that his insurance company wouldn't pay if his house was robbed and there was no evidence of a break-in and he just nodded that he knew and looked at me as if I were nuts. Once he even told me that I was paranoid.

I decided to ask his wife about this. She lives in another house nearby. She said she also leaves all the doors open in her house until she goes to bed at night. She just got used to it, she says. When I told her some of the things that have happened to me and warned her that the crime wave in her area has exploded since the bad economy... that criminals are now gutsy enough to commit break-ins and murders in broad daylight, and in their general vicinity, her eyes widened and she said that neither of them had ever had anything bad happen to them so they couldn't imagine that this was even possible!

Ah!! I reflected back on my good old friend "PTSD" and was grateful that I had little triggers inside which warned me when I might be in danger so I would close the doors and do my best to keep the Good me inside and the Bad "them" outside.

Experience IS the best teacher. What caused our PTSD has been a major teacher... I don't say

throw it out... I say fully understand it... Learn to flip it over and resolve the Bad parts and keep the Good parts to protect us...

I will leave you on that note to think about it until I write the next post...

I don't think anyone else will have even thought that PTSD could be our "friend." It's a matter of Power and Control. You can challenge it's lies with Truth and take over the Power and Control yourself - and then you become the Master and it becomes your Servant...

If you are a returning Combat Vet, this may seem like a very strange way of thinking about PTSD, and I'm sure you won't hear any other "professionals" addressing it this way. Maybe some of them only see it as a "Theory" instead of a "Reality" because they have been like the guy leaving his door open all night. Or maybe they have struggled with resolving their own PTSD. Just like you, I can only be the unique person that I am, but I do believe that you can help more when you've walked a mile in the other guy's boots... regardless of the size differential of the boots.

I also don't think that slim people make good weight loss counselors, or male Ob Gyns can really empathize with women in labor, or that priests make good marriage counselors... but that's just me.

I know that all the abuses I've suffered, as painful as they were for me, can't add up to what might have happened to you in Combat. But, as I've said, we are all different and our PTSD is no more "one size fits all" than we are as human beings.

I also know a LOT about abusers, and I know they love to hide within our "Irrational Fears" and continue abusing us for the rest of our lives. They hope to "win" by exerting Power and Control over us. I also know their secret! They maintain Power and Control by telling us lies.. IF they can keep scaring us with irrational "What If's."

I also know that the ONLY antidote/weapon that works against their lies is TRUTH.

So, I would challenge you to "think outside the box" on this subject of PTSD and let's see how far it takes us.....

It is our Perception which becomes our Reality! Well, discuss Dreams and Nightmares at a later date.

PTSD - The Bio-Mechanics #3

The REAL DEAL:

I believe there's REAL help for "diluting" or even "re-directing" the effects of PTSD so that it can become a "part" of life experience instead of always taking "center stage." I also believe that we have a fabulous tool to share with you that may be life-changing in the most positive way.

Okay... I know you want to just fast-forward past all this rhetoric and read the "last page of the book" next. Please be patient just a little longer, because my goal here is to prepare you before putting in your hands a powerful new tool and to demonstrate how you might use it... or even IF you will use it at all.

We are each unique human beings.. BUT we do have some vitally-important commonalities... Two of them are how we operate based on the schematic Mother Nature used to design and "imprint" on us and how we have continued to operate from birth based on "free will." Painting with a broad brush, we can categorize these within "Intelligence" and "life experience."

From this point, think of yourself as a mechanic standing before a car which is miss-firing. Soon you may reach inside a new tool box to get it tuned up and running smoothly again. So, just sit back and relax, maybe a nice cold glass of lemonade would do the trick.. and just open your mind to a new experience... and a wonderful new tool.

Prologue:

Recently I was contacted by someone who claimed to be a distant relative of mine looking for more information about "our family." I didn't know she existed and I considered carefully what I would or would not tell her. We had some pretty amazing secrets in my family... both bad and good. The "good" was truly amazing. After a few emails back and forth, I decided to just go ahead and tell her the secrets.. both "bad" and "good."

Amazingly, after I told her the "bad," she sent me hugs of understanding and compassion. When I decided to go ahead and tell her the "good," that was the end of our correspondence. She apparently decided that I was "nuts" and I never heard from her again.

What you believe really has a lot to do with both your "intelligence" and your "life experience."

I'm thinking that the media has a lot to do with "educating" and "desensitizing" us regarding the "bad" in human life and human nature. But they don't spend much time telling us about "good," especially that which is so amazing that it might even border on "miraculous."

Only the most naive would believe that the media is impartial. We all know that they sell

sensationalism and get paid tons of money to shock the nerve endings of the viewing public. Have they created the need for shocking stories of crime and violence or are they feeding a need which already exists? This is chicken and egg stuff and I don't think the answer really matters anymore. We can go all the way back to the arenas in Ancient Rome and see how the public thirst for "blood" was cultivated and exploited. My life is already exciting; I don't need roller coaster rides to shock my nervous system out of the boring existence of mediocrity.

So, if a person has lived a life of boring "mediocrity," and has depended on TV for the shocking "immorality" of soap operas and images of crime and violence for stimulation (keeping in mind that the brain requires some stimulation for us to thrive even to a limited degree), I suppose they've had some vicarious "life experience" in the worst that human beings can dish up (thanks to the media)... and they may have become desensitized in all manner of violence and "immoral" human conduct....

They might also regard something which **seems** "miraculous" on the Good side of the human ledger as being the stuff of fantasy... something dreamed-up and put in books and the movies for entertainment. Or, maybe they don't read Stephen King novels or go to fantasy movies, so maybe even their vicarious "life experience" might be too limited to even "go there" mentally... so they might consider that anyone who paints a picture of "Good" which seems to verge on the MIRACULOUS is just plain NUTS and certainly someone to be avoided.

(This scenario sure wouldn't describe you or me, would it?)

Okay... I do get it! I'm NOT "plain nuts" and "someone to be avoided." But I certainly have a clear understanding of the person who now thinks this of me.. She is telling me about herself, not reflecting me. Sadly, she is also a prime example of typical American life and attitudes. Obviously, my life has been extraordinary, so I can't expect myself to fit into those typical patterns or attitudes.

Neither can you!

Of course, I'm telling you this story for a reason... an important reason... because I'm now going to point you toward something which might "seem" so GOOD as to be MIRACULOUS!!

Keep in mind now.. you are the "mechanic" standing before a car which is miss-firing... Don't lose sight of that.. You are NOT the car... You are outside the car and you are going to EMPOWER yourself with new tools to get the car running smoothly again... in fact, better than it has ever run before!

Get your hands ready to reach into a brand new tool box...

I'm certain of three things here:

You **DO** have the "**intelligence**," and because of your extraordinary "**life experience**" and abundant "**courage**," I'm sure you'll be able to wrap your hands comfortably around this GOOD new tool ... and create your own MIRACLE!

Now, please click the link below to watch this video and think about it for a while. I'll continue to write my views on how this works and how I think you can make it work for you. Remember, you are the Mechanic, NOT the Car!

Please turn up the sound on your computer:

<http://video.google.com/googleplayer.swf?docid=6887426238803490578&hl=en&fs=true&autoplay=1>

PTSD - EFT: Let's Cure The Symptoms First #4

Dealing with Definitions First:

Warning: Reading the material in this post **MAY** cause some triggers and could be disturbing. The antidote will be coming soon, so it won't last long. It's all a matter of definitions which may be very familiar to you. If we are going to overcome the "enemy," we must first understand it!

I've stated before that each person's PTSD is unique to them, even though there are definitely some universals and commonalities, as well as different degrees of reactions and suffering.

The causes are all unique and some of them were laid down as a foundation prior to the Military Combat experience. In those cases, there might have already been a couple of "cards" there to "draw to" from earlier abusive experiences in life - already there in the dedicated work space in the brain well before the combat experience and it's horrors. (I'll attack this issue later related to Guilt.)

Please allow me to state one example before we go on so that you will know what I'm talking about:

Let's say a young and innocent person of age 18 entered military life and came out of military life a well-seasoned Combat Veteran at age 32. Let's say that at the age of 7 this person was sexually molested and carried a nearly uncontrollable rage with them into combat, looking forward to "killing" the sexual abuser of their youth over and over again on the battlefield. Let's say that with age maturity and after suffering severely traumatizing events on the battlefield they developed a changed value system which led them to see themselves and others differently. Let's say that severe trauma combined with terrible feelings of guilt threw them into an all-consuming PTSD which became unbearable.

How they react to the trauma they have experienced on the battlefield could be far different from how someone else reacts to similar trauma but without that same background of previous trauma and abuse brought with them onto the battlefield.

PTSD is very complex and individualized to each person's experience and how they view themselves and others.

But, for the moment, the urgency is in finding a way to turn what is a "disorder" into a "reaction" so that it can be coped with in a reasonable, productive, way instead of directing life in an unreasonable, destructive, way.

A "disorder" is far more challenging to overcome than a "reaction." Let's define them so we know what we are dealing with.

Please allow me to get more specific here. I've told you that I also suffer some PTSD. That's not exactly true.

Really, I suffer some Post Traumatic Stress "Reaction," not Post Traumatic Stress "Disorder" ... NOW, that is, because I managed to make the transition from "Disorder" to "Reaction."

Or...

Maybe I never made the progression from "reaction" to "disorder" in the first place. (I'll have to think about that.. some other time.. Right now, you're more important.)

You can, too, once you understand the differences and what you can do to make that transition successfully. I know that because I've helped those who have definitely suffered PTSD transition from "disorder" to "reaction" and then we focused on the "reaction" and worked on overcoming it.. also successfully.

What's the difference you say?

Here's a little deeper definition of PTSD which might be of more interest to you:

1. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder - an anxiety disorder associated with serious traumatic events and characterized by such symptoms as survivor guilt, reliving the trauma in dreams, numbness and lack of involvement with reality, or recurrent thoughts and images.

(Please note the use of terms like "reliving" and "recurrent." We'll discuss this later.)

PTSD:

Survivor guilt - a deep feeling of guilt often experienced by those who have survived some catastrophe that took the lives of many others; derives in part from a feeling that they did not do enough to save the others who perished and in part from feelings of being unworthy relative to those who died; "survivor guilt was first noted in those who survived the Holocaust"

Anxiety disorder - a cover term for a variety of mental disorders in which severe anxiety is a salient symptom.

Battle fatigue, combat fatigue, combat neurosis, shell shock - a mental disorder caused by stress of active warfare.

[Based on WordNet 3.0, Farlex clipart collection. © 2003-2011 Princeton University, Farlex Inc.]

Here's the link to this web page in case you want to check it out:

<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/Post-traumatic+stress+reaction>

But, does ALL Post Traumatic Stress result in a "Disorder" or can some of it be reduced to a manageable "Reaction?"

Let's take a couple of minutes to consider the differences:

Disorder:

1) a confused or messy state : a lack of order or organization

- People who witnessed the tragedy describe a scene of disorder [=chaos] as rescuers tried to find survivors.
- The filing system was thrown into disorder [=was disrupted or upset] when the computer program malfunctioned. — often used with in
- His finances were in complete disorder. [=his finances were not organized]
- The clothes/papers were in (a state of) disorder. — opposite order

2) a state or situation in which there is a lot of noise, crime, violent behavior, etc.

- The mayor is concerned that a rally could create/cause public disorder.
- problems of crime and social disorder — opposite order

3) medical : a physical or mental condition that is not normal or healthy [count]

- A dermatologist treats disorders [=diseases] of the skin.
- an eating disorder ▪ a disorder of the blood = a blood disorder [noncount]
- Millions of people suffer from some form of personality/mental disorder.

What Is a Psychological Disorder?

A psychological disorder, also known as a mental disorder, is a pattern of behavioral or psychological symptoms that impact multiple life areas and/or create distress for the person experiencing these symptoms.

Reaction:

An action performed or a feeling experienced in response to a situation or event: "Carrie's immediate reaction was one of relief."

A person's ability to respond physically and mentally to external stimuli.

Stress Reaction:

Acute stress reaction

The symptoms show great variation but typically include an initial state of "daze", with some constriction of the field of consciousness and narrowing of attention, inability to comprehend stimuli, and disorientation.

This state may be quickly followed by either further withdrawal from the surrounding situation (to the extent of a dissociative stupor), or by agitation and over-activity, anxiety, impaired judgment, confusion, detachment, and depression. Autonomic signs of panic anxiety (tachycardia, sweating, flushing) are also commonly present.

The symptoms usually appear within minutes of the impact of the stressful stimulus or event, and disappear within 2–3 days (often within hours). Partial or complete amnesia for the episode may be present.

This will show the progression from Stress Reaction to Stress Disorder:

Symptoms of acute stress disorder:

Common symptoms that sufferers of acute stress disorder experience are: numbing; detachment; de-realization; depersonalization or dissociative amnesia; continued re-experiencing of the event by such ways as thoughts, dreams, and flashbacks; and avoidance of any stimulation that reminds them of the event. During this time, they must have symptoms of anxiety, and significant impairment in at least one essential area of functioning. Symptoms last for a minimum of 2 days, and a maximum of 4 weeks, and occur within 4 weeks of the event.

Diagnostic guidelines

There must be an immediate and clear temporal connection between the impact of an exceptional stressor and the onset of symptoms; onset is usually within a few minutes, if not immediate. In addition, the symptoms show a mixed and usually changing picture; in addition to the initial state of "daze", depression, anxiety, anger, despair, over-activity, and withdrawal may all be seen, but no one type of symptom predominates for long; resolve rapidly (within a few hours at the most) in those cases where removal from the stressful environment is possible; in cases where the

stress continues or cannot by its nature be reversed, the symptoms usually begin to diminish after 24–48 hours and are usually minimal after about 3 days.[1]

If symptoms last for more than a month, then the patient might be instead diagnosed with PTSD.

The above material comes from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acute_stress_reaction

Okay... So why did I bother writing all this stuff about definitions?

It's because there are major differences between how we perceive and react to an event which results in a "disorder" which interferes with how we cope with our lives and that which becomes a "reaction" to the stress of that event and still affects our feelings, thinking, attitudes, and behaviors ... but not to the extent of throwing our lives into any kind of dysfunction.

There is a huge difference here.

I'll give you two examples of someone who transitioned successfully from "disorder" to "reaction."

Example 1:

I was working with survivors of the third major hurricane in South Florida in 2005. A frantic husband came to me in the FEMA Disaster Recovery Center where I was working and told me that his wife had been buried in the rubble of the caved-in ceiling of their condominium. Had her hand not been sticking out so he saw it when he was examining the damages, she would have suffocated to death. As a result she was too terrified to remain indoors and was determined never to return to their condo even when it was repaired and habitable again.

She did come to me and I did work with her for some time. In fact, it was a surprisingly short period of time considering that she was so phobic that she was barely able to function in any part of her life.

Their insurance company had put them in a rental condo while they rebuilt their unit. This woman was even afraid to go inside that rental unit and she was afraid to sleep inside any building. Her husband could barely coax her out of her car to sleep inside the rental condo and in her bed.

Luckily, he had brought her to me before the "disorder" became irreversible and we were able to back her down to a "reaction" instead. When things finally settled, they made an agreement that during hurricane season, he would send her out of state so that she didn't need to worry about her ceiling falling in on her again.

The bottom line is that she was able to finally go back to a normal life, having reversed the "disorder" from the event to a manageable "reaction." Being a highly-structured creature of habit,

it was much harder for her to overcome the chaos in her life, but we were able to get her back to a new routine which she could control and manage and she was able to cope successfully after that.

Example 2:

This was a very sad story... A woman came to me who had lost her husband in Tower II on 9/11. They had been married about three years and she was very much in love with him. She had put an ad in the newspaper looking for a mate and he answered the ad. They had thought it was a sweet but amusing story, but it was a perfect relationship for both of them.

She had been watching television when the plane flew into Tower I. She frantically called his cell phone to warn him and tell him to get out since he worked in Tower II. He said knew about the disaster in Tower I and was getting people out of his office... Then the plane hit his building also. He had been a hero ... saving the lives of his co-workers instead of getting himself out of the building. While she watched in horror on television, his building was hit right at his window. She screamed into the phone that he needed to get out NOW... and that she loved him...

But it was too late... the phone went dead... and he was gone forever. She literally watched the moment of his horrific death on television before her disbelieving eyes.

I've had clients tell me some horrible stories, but this one was in a category of its own.

The survivor guilt that she felt nearly disabled her life on all fronts. It had already been a few years before she finally decided to seek help, so she had had time to maximize the PTSD "disorder" part and the only way that I could find to get her back to her own "ground zero" was to work on rebuilding "self-esteem" from the beginning.

Again, it was amazing how quickly she evolved and got on the road to recovery from "disorder" to "reaction."

Not only is there hope for you, but if you have not watched the video, yet, it's time to do so now. I firmly believe that EFT is the answer and that the faster you can connect with someone who can lead you through this therapy, the faster you will be able to transition from "disorder" to "reaction."

Watch the video, if you have not, and watch it again if you already have. This time observe how these Combat Vets have managed to transition from what had been a debilitating "disorder" which greatly interfered with their lives to a stress "reaction," which they were able to manage and then overcome.

I am going to tell you in my next posts why I fully believe in and endorse EFT. You can choose to go ahead and locate a provider now or wait until I've shared my views with you and then see how they fit you or not..

Based on all of my professional and personal experience I totally believe that EFT is the answer and the cure for the Symptoms.... And my goal for you right now is to cure the symptoms and then we can get more deeply into the other two or more "cards" which might have caused you to "draw" this toxic "disorder."

I draw a LOT of inspiration from J.R. Martinez ("Dancing with the Stars" fame), who has lost almost all of his face in an explosion in combat and has come forward having become the better for it all. Now that's really making the transition from "disorder" to "reaction."

Let's conclude this post by saying that it has to do with "control."

With "disorder" it controls you.

With "reaction," you control it.

The goal here is to control it and the practitioners of EFT know how to help you do just that. I'm beyond impressed with it. I'm amazed by it and extremely grateful for it and for them.

In case you missed the link, here it is again:

<http://video.google.com/googleplayer.swf?docid=6887426238803490578&hl=en&fs=true&autoplay=1>

If you are ready to pursue this help further, go to <http://www.stressproject.org/index.html>

From the reference at the end of the video to this web site, apparently they are in the process of making a tutorial so that you can work with the process from home:

<http://www.emofree.com/>

FYI: For your information, I have no relationship whatsoever with these people or this organization. I see it as the answer that we have all been needing for a very long time and I've had enough experience to convince me that it's as valid as it seems.

So, GO FOR IT!

Again, the next posts will be my reasoning for why and how I think it works!

In case you don't know J.R. Martinez, here is a link to his biography:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._R._Martinez

PTSD - EFT: Learning, Unlearning, Relearning #5

I had never heard the term "EFT" until recently, but I do know the process by another name, and I know from personal experience that it truly does work and that it truly IS a MIRACLE, but it certainly does look to the uninitiated like some form of Voodoo when you see it for the first time. I was lucky that my first experience was with someone I trusted totally and HE told me it was going to look like "Voodoo" to me, so I had no idea what to expect.... What I got was a miracle...

But more on that later. First, I have a goal in mind and I want to attend to that before I go any further..

My goal here is to give you enough practical, scientific, independent information so that you can decide for yourself that you want to try EFT to deal with your PTSD.

There are two things that I can swear by: It most likely WILL help you and it WON'T harm you. So, what do you have to lose? Only that which has been plaguing you for as many years as you've been suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

From my viewpoint, PTSD presents a set of very painful symptoms which I don't think you need to cope with when there are other, more important, matters requiring your attention at the moment... like becoming successful and happy in your personal and economic life. Right now clearing away this very disturbing set of symptoms will relieve you of this heavy burden and give you time and space to spend your time and energy in more positive and rewarding ways.

So, my goal is to educate and support you so you will give this a try.

No, I am NOT in any way involved in this EFT process and I am not a practitioner.. and I have no intention of ever becoming one. It's not what I do.

What I do, is help after the fact of this relief so that the "good life" can be achieved. I sure as heck can't offer anything useful if this huge beast is standing between us... and I sure want to see it go away... which is why I want to teach you all that makes me believe in EFT and why I embraced it to overcome my own problems - and why I believe that it will help you to overcome yours.

Nothing is going to take the painful events away, but if we can help to make the transition from "Disorder" to "Reaction" possible, then we can work together to overcome that and turn all of these life experiences into positive components of the "tapestry" which is you and - use them as a powerful foundation for self-empowerment. After all, you want to be experiencing success and happiness NOT pain and sorrow!

Okay... Let's start now to acquire some education.....

I have a very eclectic education which I've gathered from so many sources that I couldn't even document them all. Having been brought up in the household of a scientist who spent his entire life "outside the box," I've been conditioned to find that the most comfortable (and logical) place to be. So, scientific "Voodoo" would tend to attract me instead of repelling me...

Also, a quick remark which seems to come from "outside the box" may start me on what might look like a "goose-chase" to others but end up a major scientific exploration for me. The bottom line lesson that I'm going to share with you next came from several such sources and all began with a simple remark in passing from my college Biology professor. (Thank you Dr. Crenshaw!)

I hunted down the source of one such remark many years ago and found a Dr. Donald Hebb who put forth a theory about brain function and "neural pathways" back in 1949. I couldn't find much on his work that I could use, so I filled in the blanks on my own, and I established first a research project of my own and then a course on how to study and learn effectively, how to improve grades in school, and how to overcome disabling "Test Anxiety."

In the process, I learned much more from my own experiences and from my students so I could connect the dots and come to some logical conclusions.

No, I'm not going to give you a course on how we learn effectively (which I'll be happy to do at another time if you're interested enough to request it), but I want you to have a layman's knowledge - just enough so that EFT makes some sense to you.

You are a very intelligent person. Our fine Military would not have sent you in to do such an important job if you were not.. So, I know that I can teach you what I think would benefit you for this purpose and that you will definitely be able to learn it.

Learning:

In the truest sense of the word, learning really is "Bio-Mechanical." Don't forget... you're the MECHANIC and your PTSD is the CAR. You are not miss-firing... the car is... You are going to fix the car with this new set of tools so that it runs smoothly. You just need to know about this wonderful new set of tools and how to use it.

Let's pretend you are sitting in a classroom and the teacher is trying to teach you something new.

You have three important jobs to do here:

1. Feed your brain good food so that it functions in the most healthy way possible.
2. Get enough quality rest and sleep so that your brain can remain healthy.
3. Move your brain so that it can perceive the world around it through your FIVE SENSES.

Oh, there's a fourth thing you have to do... It's called "Repetition," but it won't come until a little later.. not much later..but a little later.

Learning takes place in your brain. In fact, your entire world really exists in your brain. Without your brain to make sense of your world, you may as well be just sitting in a pool of slop for all you know.. or in a palace... It's your brain which knows the difference and tells you how to respond appropriately.

You feed information to your brain through your FIVE SENSES. Those senses tell your brain if you're sitting in a pig pen of slop or in a fabulous palace. Then your brain interprets the information your FIVE SENSES sends to it and it then feeds back to you the experience which you will ... hmmm... well, they say never use the same word to describe what you are trying to define... but I can't find another word here.. so let's go with it...

It's in your brain where you are experiencing the "experience" that your brain has interpreted and fed back to your FIVE SENSES again.

If you take a bite of a chocolate ice cream cone, your sensory nerve receptors gather information about it and send that information to your brain from each of your FIVE SENSES.

Your eyes send the image of the ice cream cone as a total picture; the taste buds on your tongue send the sensation of sweet to your brain; the temperature sensors on your lips, lining of your mouth, and tongue send the sensation of cold to your brain; your fingers feel the texture of the cone and send that to your brain; you spoke to someone to transact the purchase of the cone, and you heard their responses, as well. That information gets sent, also.

Each time your face comes close to the chocolate ice cream, you smell it's fragrance.. the sensors in your nostrils send a fragrance sensation to your brain.

So, all FIVE SENSES combined sent a very complete sensory package to your brain for it to make sense of what was happening to you and you experienced it in your brain as it played out.. and then your brain sent back sensations to your conscious awareness so that you could realize the experience.

In reality, all that you've either experienced in the real world, or in your dreams, or in your projective imagination plays out as an experience in your brain and can become a memory of an event which you have experienced... either in the real world or in your imagined world because it is really all happening in your brain.

If you stick your finger in a fire, it sends the sensation to your brain for interpretation and your brain sends the sensation back to your finger so that you experience it in the real world.

It's a mixture of Biology and Mechanics, but it's really very basic and logical.

Let's say you're missing a finger and have a prosthetic one which has somehow wandered into a fire. You won't be able to send the painful burning sensation through nerve endings on your finger to your brain so it can interpret and send the experience back to you in order for you to

respond appropriately. But you have other senses which can make up for this through sight or smell, or even hearing. If you have EVER experienced the feeling of heat related to fire on your finger, the rest of your senses can fill in enough information for your brain to interpret it correctly.

As long as there is some memory stored in the brain of the sensation which comes from a finger placed in a fire and it has at some point been transmitted to the brain as a burning sensation, seeing the prosthetic finger in the fire will tell the brain that there should be a burning sensation in a finger even if the finger is missing. The brain may then attempt to send the correct feedback to the missing digit and pain in that no-longer existing digit will be felt from memory... but in the brain, not the digit. That's where "phantom pain" comes from. Really, it's more complex than this, but we're talking layman's terms, so we need not go deeper here. However, you still must respond appropriately and remove the prosthetic finger from the fire, pain or no pain.

I can tell you that I have a friend who has never walked, or even stood upright, from the day he was born, and he's in his 50's now. Never having had the experience, even imagining it, will not complete the "learned" feedback and may still be an "experience" in the brain from imagining, but it won't compare to one that has been experienced by a person who has ever walked and has a conscious memory of the sensations involved.

Okay.. enough of this... I'm sure you get the idea.. and I don't want to get to the point of being challenged for lack of more well-defined scientific documentation.

But, let's say that in order for you to learn, your job is to keep your brain healthy and then use the means you have for mobility to put your brain where your five senses are able to feed it information. That's why we have arms, legs, hands, feet so we can move our portable brain and five senses to the places where they can connect with the potential for experiences. The brain sitting idly waiting for experiences to come to it will have very limited opportunities to learn and acquire knowledge.

Now, back to the active learning process:

So you're sitting in the classroom and you're ready to learn something.. Right? Right! You're sitting there in your seat with a notebook and pen on the desk in front of you.. ready to learn.

The teacher tells you some information.

You are now connecting your "senses" to that information so you can get it to your brain. That's your job. Right? Right!

But how does that take place?

You turn your ears so they are able to collect the information your teacher is saying. The sensors on the nerve endings in your ears are collecting it and they will transmit it to your brain.

Ah! Now the real fun begins! How is your ear sending that information to your brain?

This is the really powerful part of learning that you can now CONTROL and become its "MASTER" and make it your "SLAVE!"

We are born with a finite number of "nerve cells" or NEURONS. They can and do die as we live our lives from birth to death, but we can't grow any new ones. Drugs and Alcohol usage can kill them, but so far as I know there has not been discovered any "natural" way for your body to make new ones. Some lizards can grow new tails if they lose one but humans don't grow new nerve cells if we lose some. They are made up and used in such a way as to describe our brains as "Plastic." This means that how they are used changes the actual structure of our brains.

Let me explain...

Nerve cells (Neurons) are really not connected in the way you might imagine so they can send messages to the brain. The typical description of nerves is to relate them to electrical wires which transmit electrical impulses. Well, you'll be surprised to learn that between the nerve cells (and let's call them Neurons now) there are little spaces, or gaps, called "synapses."

So, when one neuron needs to send a message (impulse) to another neuron, it squirts a tiny drop of a chemical called a "neurotransmitter," like acetylcholine or dopamine across that little space between it and the next neuron, to transmit, or pass along, the message from one neuron to the next - and then that message continues transmitting from one nerve cell to the next, always squirting the liquid across the spaces between the cells, until it reaches the brain.

To get a familiar visual of this process imagine a long line of people standing. The first person whispers something into the ear of the person next to them, who then whispers it to the next person, who then does the same.. and, eventually, the last person in line finally gets to hear the message.

So, this is the way the sensors on the nerve endings of your FIVE SENSES pass the message of what they have sensed so that it goes from one neuron to the next until it finally reaches the end of the line and is transmitted to your brain.

But wait! I have yet to give you the "key" to your power... Soon...

Three Forms of Memory:

Immediate Memory: You have had a very brief experience and it never gets repeated. It's there and gone in no time flat and forgotten.

Transitory Memory: You're holding something for a temporary period of time and then you dump it. Maybe you're studying for a test and once you regurgitate it onto the test paper, you

never want to think about it again. Or, you just called 411 for a phone number and you're saying it over and over until you can get the coins in the phone and your party answers the call.

Long-Term Memory: When you push something into Long-Term Memory it becomes "Knowledge" and it belongs to you for as long as you continue to support it.

You will hear about "Short-Term Memory" and maybe other terms but this is essentially how they operate, and that's what's important here.

In order for you to CONTROL what you learn and become the MASTER over the process or learning... and turn your brain into your SLAVE when it comes to learning, this concept is very important.

Now, I'm going to introduce that FOURTH job you have, the one I mentioned before...

REPETITION!

Let's get back to you sitting at your desk in the class room:

The teacher just told you something and you heard it. As you heard it, your ears AUTOMATICALLY sent what you heard to your brain for processing and interpreting.

But, the most important thing that happened is that the little droplets of liquid (Neurotransmitters) squirting across the spaces (Synapses) from one neuron to the next to pass the message along to your brain, also left a very tiny "PROTEIN STRAND" behind... so that by the time the message of what you heard gets to your brain, there's a very tiny "NEURAL PATHWAY" of one very thin protein strand which is very delicately holding all of those neurons together in a very fragile chain.

Now your teacher makes a drawing on the chalk board of what she was just saying and you see it with your eyes. Now your eyes send a second message down the very same fragile neural pathway to your brain to add to the information you have just heard. And, guess what? It leaves behind a second tiny protein strand.

Now you pick up your pen and start taking notes in your notebook. You even decide to copy the drawing off the board and put it in the notebook.

You are now REPEATING to transmit more messages about this subject to your brain and, since it's on the very same subject, it also travels down the same neural pathway which you have already established.. But, each time it travels from one of your FIVE SENSES, it leaves behind another protein strand.

If you repeat using this same neural pathway to add more and more input from your five senses on this very same topic, you will keep adding protein strands to it until it might go from something as fragile as the delicate chain you built the first time you collected and transmitted

any data to your brain from one of your five senses to maybe something as complex and strong as a bundle of telephone wires.

The fact of the matter is that the more you repeat information on this topic, the more protein strands you add to the pathway.. and the more protein strands you add to the pathway, the stronger it gets.

When it only had one protein strand, as in "Immediate memory," it wasn't really serving much of an important purpose, so when your brain needed some more protein to build another neural pathway, it just broke that one down and sucked out the fragile protein strand and converted it back to its chemical format so that it could use it again to send another sensory message to your brain on some other topic. The same would be true for "Transitory Memory" (or any short-term memory) which your body was not going to use anymore. The human body has no way to store and use waste products.... as you might image, since it's built an elaborate system to get rid of them. Instead, it recycles what is still usable.

I have just put in your hands the "key" to acquiring KNOWLEDGE. This is the SECRET - and now you own it and can use this secret key to become the Master of your brain and turn it into your Slave because it works for you 24/7 and it never goes on strike.... Make it do what you want it to do.. and build the neural pathways that you want and need..and extinguish the ones you don't want and need... But, we'll talk about that later...

Just FYI: This is how therapists retrain the brains of stroke victims and others whose brain functions need to be rerouted.

The point here is that you are really pushing knowledge from Immediate, to Transitory, to Long-Term memory by your conscious actions so that you learn what you want, when you want, and as well as you want.

Keeping your brain healthy and sound, putting it where it can learn, and then repeating what you can access with your Five Senses on this same topic will enable you to build Neural Pathways so complex and so strong that nothing in the "natural world" will break them down.. or "Extinguish" them. Don't repeat or use them, and in time, they will start to break down so that the otherwise "wasted" protein can be used to build other pathways that you are trying to construct. Mother Nature never tolerates waste!

There is a reason your teacher asks you to read the chapter, make outlines, write essays, study for exams, do more outside research... The students who grumble and never do the work are missing out on the opportunities to REPEAT so that they do NOT add more protein strands to the neural pathways... do NOT learn... do NOT push information into "Long-Term Memory" to turn it into KNOWLEDGE... And, never forget that "KNOWLEDGE IS POWER!!!"

Never forget that the secret is in the Protein Strands and how to build them. Most likely you'll never read this anywhere else, so don't forget it. And don't forget also that this is a major part of

the reason why I believe that EFT works, how it works, and the Bio-Mechanics of how you can use this knowledge to UNLEARN what a tragic EVENT has built into a complex, bundle of proteins as big as cables to haunt and plague you in your dreams, in your daily thoughts, and in your fears.

Ask yourself if you are REPEATING these sensory events over and over in your thoughts and dreams and causing your PTSD neural pathway to become so powerful that it has become a huge and agonizing beast. How often has it been repeated in your mind? How many times have more protein strands been added to the already-huge neural pathway due to repeatedly thinking about it and dreaming about it?

Can your PTSD neural pathway be extinguished and the huge protein strands be broken down by your body and redirected to other projects in your brain so they can be used to "RELEARN" how to turn this "Disorder" into a "Reaction" and then deactivate the negatives and build some positives which will lead to your eventual success and happiness?

I believe that EFT enables you to "recycle" those proteins, after causing the neural pathways to break down.. or "extinguish."

I believe that it is scientifically possible and plausible and that this thing called EFT, which looks like "Voodoo," is actually the tool box that you, the Mechanic, can use to fix this PTSD Car which needs to stop miss-firing and start running smoothly again.

I think this process interrupts the neural pathways and breaks them down because it interferes with the "chunking" process, which is the final process in maintaining the Neural Pathway for this particular Knowledge.

How does Chunking work?

Chunking is the process (again, I'm giving it to you in layman's terms) which keeps taking apart and reorganizing your knowledge as you add more information to it.

Let's say you are studying for your final exam and you thought you understood something very well, but now that you try to write a few sentences so that you can remember it for the test, somehow it no longer makes sense to you. So, you go back to your text book to get a better understanding and it doesn't help you. Next, you start to look things up and do your own research.. and you find out that you thought you understood it very well, but you have picked up some missing piece of the puzzle and now it makes it all clear to you - but it's a bit different from what you originally thought...

So, now you have to go back and re-sort and re-organized, and maybe throw some inaccurate stuff out and add some more accurate information in, and the picture changes a bit, but now you feel certain that you fully understand it - and it makes perfect sense at last.

This re-sorting and re-organizing process to gain better understanding is "Chunking," and it's something that may go on in your brain for years along this same neural pathway for as long as you live and this topic keeps getting broader and more evolved. We see this a LOT in the fields of technology where change happens almost daily and the "experts" in the field must gather new information to well-established neural pathways of knowledge and toss some of the old facts which are now obsolete.. and put new ones in their place, but "re-packaged" into new chunks of information...

This is already in Long-Term Memory as Knowledge with very complex neural pathways containing them in an organized part of the brain... but they remain "Plastic" because they are subject to continual changes through "Chunking." This means that the brain, itself, is also "Plastic" as many, if not most, of the neural pathways which make up so much of brain architecture are also subject to change.. This happens as long as we continue to actively learn.

So, now you have a lot to think about and consider.... as we move on to discuss how to break down "toxic" old neural pathways - which came about under tragic circumstances - and how to extinguish them and harvest the old protein strands for re-use in building more productive pathways.

Read on... I believe the "**Cure**" for the miss-firing Car is **EFT**...

I hope to share with you, the **WHY** and **HOW** parts.....so you, the **Mechanic**, can use this wonderful **Tool** to get your **Car** running smoothly so it can take you to your personal and financial success and happiness.

PTSD - EFT: Let's Get Scientific Now! #6

I literally AM from the "Show-Me State!" No one has ever influenced me into believing or accepting anything just because they "said so." I have to explore things (and people) until I am satisfied that I either understand them based on provable fact or that I can find enough provable facts to develop a hypothesis which holds water for me, at least, and that I can accept as a plausible Theory. If I can work with that Theory extensively enough to turn it into a Reality, then as far as I am concerned, it passes the "Acid Test."

For me, EFT HAS passed the "Acid Test!"

Let's gather some "pure science," provable facts first:

The general public may not know this, but traditional science sure does... What we see in our everyday lives which seems to be solid is NOT solid. All the objects before our eyes, including ourselves, are really a composite of atoms and molecules which are conveniently held together in specific ratio relationships so that as they move through space (which they are doing constantly), they remain tightly bound in the same relationships and all parts remain in the same ratio to all other parts so they appear to be solid matter.. and they continually function as if they are. Actually, I don't know just what the smallest particle of really solid matter is because Science keeps digging away at this very question so it can be determined. I think the jury is still out on this one.

Stop for a moment and look at a hand, yours or perhaps that of someone near you. It looks solid, and it can be moved through the air and made to do all sorts of motions and actions.. and it sure looks solid.... but it is really a very complex composition of maybe millions or more particles all joined together in space like "Tinker Toys" to assemble the structure which we recognize as a hand. There is no other hand like it in the world. If you could disassemble it, you would be amazed at just how many particles are there and how much deeper you would have to dig to get to the tiniest ones making up the superstructure of what is hidden inside that hand. You know how those parts look, too, because you've seen X-rays and MRIs and other high-tech renderings of the macro and micro make-up of various body parts.

Many years ago Albert Einstein began to think about such things and he devised a formula for how Energy and Mass relate to one another. He called it his "Theory of Relativity" and it was expressed as $E=MC^2$.

If you are interested in reading more about Einstein's "Theory of Relativity," here's a link.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mass%E2%80%93energy_equivalence

But here's a much easier explanation of his formula expressed by a "regular" person in a Yahoo forum:

E is energy
m is relativistic mass
c is speed of light in vacuum

Now, let's apply this to a person - you and me.

When we look at the hand, we are really seeing Mass with Energy exerting pressure on it at the Speed of Light (squared). I'm giving you this highly-scientific input because I never want to tell you or anyone that they should believe something just because I "said so."

How I operate is that I teach others what I've been able to dig out to explain the world to myself and then they are free to form their own opinions either factoring in that information or discarding it.. That's up to them... So, all that I say I believe is based on the information that I will present - and primarily learned from my own personal and professional experiences. You have Free Will so you can accept, reject, or combine it with other information that you have that maybe I don't already have. And if you would like to share it with me, that would be great for me and for anyone else in the future who I might share it with also.

Now back to the hand....

It is NOT a solid structure. It is a composite of Mass and Energy with the Square of the Speed of Light factored in.

If that is true of the hand, would it not also be true of all the other parts of a person... including all the Neural Pathways which they have constructed in their brain?

Ah.. I think you're starting to see where I'm going with this..

Now for a little personal story:

Several years ago I was practically living in a "bubble" because of very serious allergies which suddenly took over my life. I had never had allergies before but I found myself so sensitized to all forms of sulfur that eating foods that I had not prepared myself, having carefully read ingredients, or taking prescription medications many times put me in the emergency room as hidden sulfur sent me into Anaphylactic Shock.

Additionally, I had nearly equally-dangerous reactions to dust-mites and animal dander to the degree that I had to outfit my bedroom to protect me from my throat closing up on me in my sleep. Even taking antihistamines around the clock, I could not be around dogs, cats, or any fur-bearing animals for more than 45 minutes without my heart racing and my throat starting to close up on me. It was very frightening and dangerous!

These sudden allergies, which came out of nowhere, began to restrict my life and my activities in ways which were devastating to me and effected all parts of my life - personal, social, and professional. Avoidance and antihistamines were the only advice the medical profession could offer me, and allergy shots were not recommended. I insisted on trying them anyway for the animal dander and dust-mites, but the doctors were right as they did me no good at all.

In about 2005 I happened to stumble upon a doctor for a totally different reason for treatment of something not related. He had been a very conservative, Board Certified Ophthalmologist. He was brilliant and forward-thinking, but when his new wife became ill and dragged him to a lecture to learn about some "crazy" alternative medical treatments, he balked but went grudgingly to appease her. He had graduated from Tufts University Medical School, which is renowned for its programs in Holistic and Alternative Medicine, so the concept was not lost on him, but he was still fairly resistant to some of the presentations, mostly the one on NAET Therapy, which is much the same as EFT, but they don't use "tapping" and use "rubbing" instead.

I did say he was brilliant and had a background in Alternative Medicine to draw on, so finally he laid his resistance aside and experimented enough with NAET Therapy that he began using it for treating allergies, and then he took it further and began to treat other conditions - all very successfully. Today he is one of the world's leading authorities and he travels all over the world lecturing and other doctors call him for advice, and also for treatment. He is so busy that unless you've been a long-time patient, as I have been, it's nearly impossible to get an appointment with me.

As I said, he was treating me for something else but I happened to pick up a loose-leaf notebook in his waiting room which contained many testimonial letters from patients of his who were thanking him for NAET Therapy and describing what a miracle it had been for them and how it had literally changed or saved their lives.

When I asked him about it and discussed my impossible allergies, he was confident that he could help me. The sulfur allergy was the one that concerned me the most. He related several success stories regarding peanut allergies. The danger of peanut allergies, especially in children, was pretty much equal to my sulfur allergy. I had to carry an Epi-Pen with me at all times to give myself a shot of Epinephrine and give myself time to get to the hospital in the event of an accidental ingestion of some form of sulfur. That is as serious as it gets.

Because I trusted him and knew how conservative he was and how brilliant, I decided to ask him for treatment. He told me that it would look like "Voodoo" to me and then he began to explain about Acupuncture, Acupressure, Meridians, Gateways, Energy Flow... terms which I'd heard in my lifetime but had not ever paid much attention to since they didn't seem to have any bearing on my life. But, still, I trusted him and decided to give it a try.

It was a miracle that he did cure all of my allergies, but what was more of a miracle is that it only took one treatment for each one. I expected it to be a long, drawn-out, expensive process, but it only involved one treatment for each allergy and then I was totally "cured." I was amazed!

I recall the day that he tried to prove to me that I was no longer allergic to sulfur. I had developed an eye infection and since he was an eye doctor I had asked him for a prescription to treat the infection. When I went to my pharmacy to pick up the drops he had ordered, I read the label (as was my habit) and there was a form of sulfur in the medicine, so I rejected it and handed it back to the pharmacist. I was due to see this doctor again the next week anyway, so I told him about the sulfur and that I had declined the medication and was still suffering the infection. In my mind I was thinking that it was amazing that he of all people would give me a prescription containing sulfur. Actually, I was very disappointed in him for that.

His response really shocked me. He said, "Darn it. I have to find some way to sneak sulfur into you so you know you're no longer allergic to it!"

That REALLY shocked me!

He went on to explain that he wanted to trick me into consuming it unconsciously to avoid the anxiety I would feel knowing I was consuming it. He needed to prove to me that I was now cured. By outsmarting him, I had also outsmarted myself.

So, we had to do it the scary way. He had me order some pure, nasty, yellow sulfur from my pharmacy. He said I had to order it myself so that I didn't think he was using a placebo. I brought it with me to his office, as instructed. He sat me on the treating table and he had two nurses in attendance. One of them had a small bottle of "Rescue Remedy" which he said she would administer should I have any reaction. I didn't know then that Rescue Remedy is a homeopathic made from flowers and might calm down an anxiety reaction, but I knew it wasn't life-saving Epinephrine or Adrenalin, so I was still scared. He was obviously VERY confident!

As I sat on the table he stood before me with his opened outstretched hand. He had me pour from my little bottle a small pile of smelly, yellow sulfur powder into his hand and told me that, when I was ready, I should moisten my finger with my own saliva and then dip my moist finger into the sulfur in his hand - and then put it on my tongue and swallow.

Yes, I truly was scared to death! I had been in the Emergency Room of several hospitals in the past when they had pumped IV Medrol into me to save my life from nearly microscopic particles of sulfur and this was pure and concentrated powder in a large amount going from my finger to my tongue. I really was terrified...

Anaphylactic Shock drops your blood pressure to nil, makes your heart race like the worst panic attack imaginable, makes your throat close up, sucks the life force out of you so you have to forcibly make yourself inhale and exhale, and it feels like it's just too much trouble to keep doing it.. and you know absolutely that you are going to die. No doubt about it!

But I looked at him and his nurses and I went ahead and did it... There was no turning back now! Fly or Die!

Nothing at all happened.. I couldn't believe I was still alive and feeling normal!

And I've had sulfur in many foods and medications since and nothing has happened... And I've been able to sleep in other places than my own bed, like hotel rooms and guest rooms of friends and nothing has happened. And I've been able to visit friends who have cats and dogs which I have petted and snuggled - and nothing has happened.

I believe that was in 2005 and it's now 2012, so my fear of the allergies coming back has pretty well gone away and I do believe that I am really cured. Seeing any form of sulfur on a label still scares me and I usually elect to decline it, but normally I don't read labels anymore.. I don't want to spend my life suffering PTSD over my sulfur and other allergies when I now know they are gone.

The ONLY treatment I've ever had was the NAET, which is the same as what I've seen in the EFT treatments. But he didn't tap.... he rubbed.. and he taught me how to self-treat using the same rubbing routines. In my experience, the rubbing has taken the form of clock-wise circles for five minutes at the points of the web between my thumbs and my hands, the web at the inner crook of my elbows, and then the place below my nose and above my upper lip. The rule at that time was that all metal had to be removed from my body, so jewelry had to be removed along with my watch. At the same time I rubbed, I also was to say, either aloud or to myself some affirmation or instruction, or even have it written on paper where I could see it with my eyes. This was for the purpose of creating the change in energy flow that I was looking to achieve.

The only real explanation that made sense to me was that he was using the Acupressure Meridians to re-direct the energy flow, and by so doing, it changed whatever was causing the allergy, and it did it immediately. I can't say that I really understood it at the time, but I knew absolutely that it was working.

He also talked directly to my brain, but he usually did it silently so I was not influenced by what he said. He would have me hold my right arm out in front of me and keep it very rigid. Then he would silently pose questions directly to my brain which had "yes" or "no" answers. Often he would mutter to himself, and sometimes he would ask the question so I could hear it. It depended on what he was trying to accomplish. Then he would try to push my arm down. If the response from my brain was "No," then my arm would offer little resistance to his push and would go down easily. The degree of "No" response could be felt by how much of a push he needed to exert against my arm before it would go down. If the answer was "Yes," my arm could not be pushed down no matter what kind of pressure he put on it. This is how he tested me and how he knew just how to treat me. He also had to get my permission to treat me at all, so he asked my brain silently and directly at times or at other times aloud so I could hear it.

This concept was not totally foreign to me because my father, a VERY forward-thinking Physician and Scientist had told me when I was a child that "Some day medicine will be practiced by hypnosis with no surgery or medication necessary because the brain knows how to treat all conditions of the body and the body contains all elements to cure itself."

I'll admit that believing this premise made it much easier for me to trust this doctor to use his "Voodoo" on me.

What does it all mean?

I can only speculate on why and how this works, but I based it on my knowledge of Neural Pathways and $E=MC^2$ and the relationship between Energy and Mass.

My thinking is that once a neural pathway has been established and you introduce a new stimulus to it, like the tapping or rubbing, the brain automatically tries to "Chunk" this new information and reorganize the current pathway. Since it makes no sense and is not pertinent to the current theme of the pathway, and can't really be incorporated into what has been learned and saved on this old neural pathway, the brain really can't "re-package" the knowledge on that neural pathway and "Chunk" it into an improved version of the old knowledge.

The new stimulus input of the tapping or rubbing sensation seems out of whack with the current pathway and makes no sense to the brain, which is now trying to interpret it, so it becomes disruptive to the pathway. If it is repeated, the new protein strands, which are now added from the tapping/rubbing stimulus, will also physically disrupt the old pathway, which then begins to fall into chaos and then degrades to the ultimate point of extinguishing the pathway. Then the body will re-absorb the old protein strands and convert them back to neurotransmitters to be used to build new pathways. This is my reasoning.

Once when I was lecturing a college class of students on the subject of how to learn effectively to increase their grades and overcome "Test Anxiety," I did a little experiment, both for my purposes and for theirs:

While I was teaching them something quite simple in the lecture, I watched their eyes, as I always do anyway. They were very attentive and seemed to fully understand what I was teaching them. Without them seeing it, I had held behind my back a small bell, which I gently began to ring at very arbitrary points. They looked at me with question marks in their eyes. It made no sense to them at all. I showed no reactions on my face or body language so the ringing of the bell was purely out of context.

As I saw them fall again into deep concentration on what I was continuing to teach them, I rang it again and watched their expressions change and noted that they were looking at me quizzically, and at one another - trying to understand why this bell was ringing. It just made no sense at all and was fully out of context.

Finally, I brought the bell in front of my body and I rang it again, very gently at first and then vigorously. Then I held it in the air and rang it again as loudly as possible.

Then I asked them if they were wondering why I had been ringing a bell and they all indicated they were totally confused. I asked them then to recite back to me what I had been teaching them

for the last half hour and no one could tell me. They could only tell me about the ringing of the bell and how confused they were about why I was ringing it.

It was clear to me that it had thrown the entire lesson into chaos because it made no sense when connected to the knowledge they had been assimilating from the lesson I had been teaching. No one at all could recall what we had been talking about and what they had learned.

The new stimulus, which was now being associated with the neural pathway they were building from the lesson, had sensory signals coming from first their ears and then their eyes. When the protein strands were added to the pathway for the lesson and the signals were sent to their brains for interpretation, it just didn't make any sense.. The pathway for the lesson lost its integrity, was disrupted by the bell which made no sense, and began to fall apart.... or, at least, this is what I concluded based on what I observed.

So, I manipulated the construction of a new neural pathway and then I intentionally disrupted it and re-directed it. It was the first time that I experimented with building, re-directing, and extinguishing neural pathways, but it was not the last time. It has become a very good tool which I use in my work when I need to re-direct thinking and behavior... and such... As a Cognitive Therapist, I find it to be a VERY valuable tool for helping others who need to change their thinking to improve their lives.

Since we are not solid, and all parts of us are in continual motion, but motion where all components remain strictly in a ratio relationships with all other components of the complex composition which is us, the tapping or rubbing of the Meridians constitutes a disconnect of the relationships in the usual energy flow holding the atoms and molecules together and creates another composite which becomes a new set of relationships between the components. In other words, the tapping or rubbing makes the pathway different, which makes the relationships in the structure different, which also changes the structure of the brain ever so slightly - which is why we call it "PLASTIC."

If we take that opportunity when the old pathway is already disrupted and re-direct the energy to build another neural pathway, and then repeat the affirmations so that new protein strands are continually added, the PTSD neural pathway will disintegrate and can be re-directed to a new one which will be positive and productive - just as the allergy pathway became interrupted and thrown into disarray .. and then was re-built and repeated to make a replacement pathway which accomplished something good instead.

This is the same process we go through when we try to break bad habits and replace them with good ones. It's called "Behavior Modification." But I don't know if anyone has looked beneath it to see the "Bio-Mechanical" make-up and changes.

It's also the same theory which directs all manner of physical therapists who are trying to re-train the brain after accidents to the brain which have caused various losses of bodily functions. Whether or not the therapists are strictly aware of it or not, they are either disrupting and then

re-directing old pathways which have produced bad effects, or they are building new ones to create good effects, or extinguishing old ones which have become dysfunctional and recycling the building materials to be used later to accomplish new pathways in the future.

"Classical Conditioning," as proven by Pavlov, can create neural pathways to pair the cause and effect of events like the sound of a bell with the anticipation of eating to produce saliva. But, that pathway could be disrupted or re-directed and the blowing of a whistle could be paired with producing saliva...or any other action ... maybe sitting up and barking.

As I've said before, the brain is very "plastic." The neurons are the building blocks of our knowledge and our behavior, so if we know how to master them, we can direct them to do what we need them to do for us.

(Just a sidebar here: EFT cannot be employed to violate our morals or principles, just as the hypnotist cannot control us by suggestion to do anything against our principles and morals. We are always bound and limited by our values and cannot be controlled to violate them because no one can bypass our own controls over ourselves.)

Conclusions:

Based on these basic insights regarding knowledge, I am able to sell myself on the fact that EFT really works as it did for me. Curing my allergies was like opening the door and letting me out of prison. Curing your PTSD would also be opening the door and letting you out of prison.

Based on my own experience and the rationales which allowed me to be open to that experience, I believe in the strategy of EFT and I would encourage you to do whatever you can to avail yourself of EFT therapy. In doing so, and based on what I saw in the video, you can experience changing a "disorder" into a "reaction." You will never forget the events which caused your PTSD, but there is no reason for you to suffer debilitation as a result and have them rule your life.

When you consider how learning takes place and that the real key is "repetition" to make the neural pathway as strong and powerful as a bundle of telephone cables, consider how much you have "repeated" the painful event(s) in your life which led to your PTSD as you've dreamed about it night after night and thought about it endlessly. Consider that each time you repeated this experience in your mind, your five senses have built more protein strands. So, instead of PTSD going away after time, all the repetition of the experience in your mind, and even the triggers in your daily life which have caused you to react in some way, have only made the pathway stronger.

It's time for you to disrupt it and re-direct it so that your brain will tear it down and re-use the proteins to make new and better neural pathways which will lead you instead to success and happiness. Tying up so many neurons in pathways that bring you pain makes them unavailable to build pathways which could bring you joy.

Don't forget that the "D" in PTSD stands for "Disorder." Granted, you had a very painful experience, but you have many ways to "React" so you can cope and relegate it to being a part of your life instead of the central focus of your life. Once you find ways of "reacting" which help you cope, and are not destructive to your welfare, they become "reactions" and you no longer have a "Disorder." And, it's still all about CONTROL and you taking CONTROL over it instead of the reverse...

Stress and Anxiety are the result of a person perceiving that they have no CONTROL over their lives or certain events which they face in their lives. If you look down and see your hands and your legs shaking, you are looking at the natural results of severe Stress and Anxiety brought about by your own Sympathetic Nervous System through a "Fight or Flight" response that is stuck in the ON position and needs to be turned OFF! The Tiger is no longer chasing you so you need to stop trying to run up the tree.

Personally, I have many ways that I've converted my Post Traumatic Stress _____ into a "reaction" instead of allowing it to keep repeating in my life by dreaming about it and dwelling on it during my waking hours.

My father taught me once that "A dream is a play which you write, direct, and star in." It took me a few years to understand what he said and to realize that what we cannot resolve in our waking hours we turn over to our unconscious mind and try to resolve in our dreams. Once you have resolved it, you stop dreaming about it.

That, you can take to the bank, my friend.

One of the Laws of Nature is that everything in existence must be in "Balance." That applies to all known existence from the planet and its contents all the way down to you as an individual human being. In terms of Biology the term is "Homeostasis." The body is working all the time to become balanced... in a "State of Homeostasis." When you have unresolved issues, you can't just file them away. Your brain has a duty to resolve them, even if it means interrupting your dreams with "plays" written and directed by you, and where you are the star who is either the "victim" or the "hero" who finally goes through the process to keep running away or overcoming the "beast" which threatens you.

Never forget that everything you perceive around you is really in motion and that it all holds together in ratio relationships. In order to do that, everything MUST remain in balance. If something does fall out of balance, it must find some way to re-balance itself or everything what is connected to it by the forces of Energy/Gravity will also fall out of balance. As the central controller of you, your brain's job is to keep you in balance, and if you fall out of balance, to get you back into "Homeostasis" by any means possible... whether you co-operate consciously - or not!

Stopping PTS _____ at the point of REACTION:

I still recall a big man breaking into my home and jumping on me in my bed as I lay sound asleep. I still recall how scared I was and how shocked I was that my dog was so frightened she hid under the bed.. and how alone I was and dependent on my own personal resources to defend myself. I could have relived that frightening event over and over in my dreams and my waking hours and laid down a huge bundle of protein strands until that Post Traumatic Stress became a "Disorder." But, I didn't do that. Instead, I took action to make myself not only safer but to "feel" safer, too. Sometimes it's only with "smoke and mirrors," that we construct a "reality" of "feeling safer," but, if it works, that's great.

To BE safer I now always have a professionally-monitored security system. But that doesn't always make me "feel" safer. An old friend of mine who was an ex-policeman listed all the ways that my professionally-monitored security system could be sabotaged, so he took away a lot of what I needed to "Feel Safe." (I've never appreciated his input on this score. GRRR!)

My dog was supposed to have been my "monitoring system and protector" and she wasn't either. So much for some "guard dogs."

Since then, I've taken other actions to make me "feel" safer. Where I live now, I no longer have a dog. I keep the TV on at night, and usually also when I'm sleeping, to give me the illusion and comfort of human voices so I don't feel so alone in the house. Pet owners often do that for dogs and cats, and even birds, sometimes when they leave the house, don't they? It IS comforting.

And, this is really silly, but it works for me anyway. I had a set of French doors made for my bedroom. Each door has many panes of glass. Anyone could either kick the doors in or break the glass and open the lock on the inside, so it's just "smoke and mirrors," but it helps me feel safer somehow... so I lock it before I go to bed and I can see through it ... but somehow it gives the illusion of safety and it helps me to keep my Post Traumatic Stress a "reaction" instead of a "Disorder." When there is someone else in the house, I don't have to go through these strategies, but mostly I live alone and they help me cope and they don't bother anyone else. It's a compromise with myself that I can live with and I still feel that I'm pretty "normal."

For a while I did fear that my allergies might not be gone or had returned. A friend asked me to watch her large dog for the weekend about three years ago. I said I was happy to help. But, as I lay on the couch with the dog constantly nuzzling me for attention, and I was too afraid to bring her into my bedroom for fear of contaminating it with dander, a huge anxiety built up inside me that was so strong I really couldn't decide if I was having an allergic reaction or an anxiety attack. I scrambled through the phone book until I found someone who would board her for the next three days until the owner returned. I was so grateful to pay the money and have her gone... and I was embarrassed to explain to my friend why her dog had spent the weekend with a stranger.

In reviewing this behavior, I realized that it bordered on "Disorder" from the Post Traumatic Stress of so many terrifying episodes of Anaphylaxis and that I had to stop it and back it down to a "reaction" instead. It scared me that I might spend my life too afraid to be around animals, even

though I was deemed "cured" by my doctor through the NAET Therapy.. when almost all of my friends have pets. And I love animals, too.

Two months ago another friend asked me to come to her home for three days and dog sit her Italian Greyhound. I said I would be happy to help, but I had a talk with myself before I went and refused to allow myself to fall into that "disorder" mode. I did take one antihistamine just to bolster my courage, and then I was just fine and spend the three days with a very affectionate dog licking me and trying to sleep on top of me... and I was just fine.

And do you recall the woman who had the roof/ceiling of her condo cave in on her? I'll tell you how I helped her to stop the process of her Post Traumatic Stress from becoming a "Disorder" and kept it at a manageable level of "Reaction." I asked her questions about her childhood and found out who made her feel safe and secure as a child. It was her mother, who was long-gone as this lady was in her early 70's. I instructed her to create a "Grandfather Rock," taken from Native American culture.

I had her get a blanket, shawl, or towel that had some positive meaning for her and told her to put it in her bedroom either at the foot of her bed or somewhere in her bedroom where it could stay at all times. I had her decorate it with pictures of her mother and all manner of sentimental objects that either belonged to her or reminded her of her mother. I told her to find a candle that she could put in the middle of the blanket in front of her mother's picture. Then I said to sit on this blanket cross-legged in the dark each night before bed, light the candle, and commune with her mother for a while before going to bed. Maybe she could review the events of the day with her mother to cleanse her mind of her concerns. Before blowing out the candle, she was to ask her mother to please watch over her and keep her safe.

Keep in mind that our **PERCEPTION** truly **IS** our **REALITY**.....

It worked for her like the French doors and TV work for me and she was able to stop having nightmares about ceilings falling in on her in her sleep. The only time she was frightened about it was at bedtime, but she had her "Mother" there to commune with from her "Grandfather Rock" and help her feel as loved and safe as her "Mother" had when she was a child.. Then it was safe for her to lie down in bed, close her eyes - and not think about her fears again.

Since she did not repeat the terror over and over in her dreams and in her waking hours, no powerful neural pathways were constructed to turn her "reactions" into a "Disorder" and she was able to cope. She would certainly never forget. Being asleep and having the roof and ceiling fall in on you during a hurricane and nearly crush and suffocate you, which would have been the case had her hand not accidentally been sticking out above the debris so her husband saw it and dug her out in time, would be enough of a horror to develop lifelong PTSD.

I've had many other disasters in my own life which I was able to reduce to "reactions," which did NOT require any special action on my part as with the one I previously described. I won't list them all, but I can tell you that Murphy's Law has done a real number on me over the years and

this is the only potential PTS event which I've had to manage with strategies to keep it in the "reactions" range so it wouldn't become a "disorder." The rest are memories that I use to teach lessons. But, it does prove that they CAN be managed - and if I can, so can you. It's a matter of wanting to and then learning the means for "how."

My point is that the human mind is a miraculous machine... We are the Master of our Brain and it is our Slave. If we know how to use it properly, we can manage our lives so that painful events over which we have no control can result in "reactions" which we can control through management so they never turn into "disorders." That's what I'm trying to tell you. What happened to you was horrible. Nothing will ever take it away, but, like all abusers, as long as they are allowed to keep lying to us, they can continue abusing us for the rest of our lives. They must be stopped!

But how?

So, what "lie" is your "abuser" telling you? Your abuser is your PTSD and the "lie" it is telling you is that it is your "Master" and you are its "Slave." This truly is a LIE!! You can turn it around.. IF you want to and you know how.

Now I can feel you bristle... "If you want to?"

You are asking yourself why I said that. Like the girl who couldn't let go of her rape event and move on with her life, she needed to hold onto it for her own reasons... Each sufferer of PTSD has their own unique "package" which surrounds their PTSD. In the case of many Combat Vets (returning today or returned decades ago) there is something called "Survivor Guilt." Sometimes they hold onto their "Disorder" to PUNISH themselves because they survived the horror and their buddies did NOT.

When we look very closely at Survivor Guilt, it often turns out to look more like "self-identity confusion"... but this is a whole different issue to be addressed separately (and more subjectively per individual), so we'll just skim the surface at this point...

Suffice it to say that not wanting to let go of self-punishment due to "Survivor Guilt" can be a reason for NOT wanting to get help to overcome PTSD. If you suffer from "Survivor Guilt," it is a private issue which you need to examine and confront in order to get past it and get on to the road to success and happiness. It could be the "demon" standing at the gate to your future feeding you one lie after the other and keeping you from moving forward. This is a time to think about it. It may lie to you and prevent you from seeking EFT Therapy, and it might still be in need of addressing after the symptoms of your PTSD have been vanquished. There is plenty of help for you if you decide to take these steps, but you have to make that decision and ask yourself if you desire success and happiness in your future - or not.

Hint: The first thing the Military does with its new members is strip away individual identity in an attempt to make each person a uniform part of a "Military machine." Let's say you're the

"head" of that "machine" and the "tail" of that machine dies, won't you feel a sense of responsibility and maybe "guilt?"

I would say that new inductees into the Military are conditioned from the start to ultimately develop that sense of "oneness" and it can become the "double-edged" sword that can both save and destroy.. It's a conditioning that needs reconditioning in order to let it go. Breaking free from that "Military machine" and coming back "home" to take your place again as an "individual" in your family and community should be a well-defined and well-supported process - but it's not.

And with the death of loved ones there's always a sense of guilt under the best of circumstances. Part of the process of grieving has to do with dealing with guilt. Personally and professionally, I could tell you a LOT of stories about this, but I'll only tell you one, one which is very typical. Just so you can set your mind at rest.... You can also read about the "stages of grief" as written by Kubler-Ross.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/K%C3%BCbler-Ross_model

I was very close to my father. When he died I was devastated. He died as the result of an accidental poisoning in his lab and it took him ten agonizing years to die. I did everything I could to try to save him and then I did everything I could to try to comfort him. After he died, I had many terrible dreams where he was healthy and normal and in each of those dreams, I was bringing him back to life so I could "save him" because I felt so "guilty" about his death and that there was nothing I could do to prevent it.

It's normal to feel this way after someone who you love or feel responsible for dies... It's a process that we go through if we are loving, caring, responsible human beings... As a process, it has a beginning and an end... which means that we must get through it and then put it behind us appropriately and get past it. In the case of "survivor guilt" which causes the sufferer to hold onto PTSD, the EFT process can stop the symptoms, but there are still some affirmations, self-empowerment, and self-esteem issues which need to be bolstered in order to get past the "Disorder" and re-construct the pathway and transition to the manageable "Reaction" model.

I hope what I've written here offers you some insight and helps to relieve your anxiety about PTSD and EFT Therapy...

You WILL be okay..

I hope that you will make every effort to reach out for EFT Therapy. Everything that I know makes me believe that if you do,

YOU WILL BE OKAY!

Hopefully, you are going to educate yourself and empower yourself with EFT because it REALLY does work! I, myself, am a reliable witness to that fact because it provided me with a

miracle when I sure needed one!

EFT gave me FREEDOM. Everything I know tells me that it will also GIVE YOU FREEDOM from PTSD!

Now, moving along...

I fully endorse this EFT Therapy and I fully encourage you to do whatever it takes to get this miraculous help. If you ARE suffering "Survivor Guilt," that is another bridge to cross after the BEAST is dead and gone ... and not standing in the way. But without the PTSD symptoms, you will have a very clear shot at the rest and be able to kick it to the curb so you can get on with your life in the pursuit of Success and Happiness!

Please Go for it!

This is your key to FREEDOM from the Beast which has been ruling your life - and it's time now that you are FREE to live your life for you, not for IT!!

This concludes the series on PTSD related to EFT. I hope it has helped you to answer some questions and overcome some fear of the unknown. I have no dog in this fight, nothing personal to gain...

For me, IT'S ALL ABOUT YOU!!

I wish you Good Luck and much happiness for you and those who love you.. and those who you love, too...

PTSD Self-Assessment:

If you would like to do a free and private self-assessment of your possible PTSD, there is a web site which offers a simple, 17-question self-test to determine your level of possible PTSD injury, or not.

I did the assessment myself to make sure that it truly is safe and private before recommending it to you and I trust it.

You do not have to register for anything so it is completely anonymous. And the test does not save any information which is input. What it does is score the input and then offer you a print-out of the results with a very brief recommendation.

Please make sure you have your printer turned on and filled with both ink/toner and paper so you can print the results.

Since it's safe and totally private, you may want to check it out at the end of this link:

[https://www.myhealth.va.gov/mhv-portal-web/anonymous.portal?
_nfpb=true&_pageLabel=mentalHealth&contentPage=mh_screening_tools/PTSD_SCREENING.HTML](https://www.myhealth.va.gov/mhv-portal-web/anonymous.portal?_nfpb=true&_pageLabel=mentalHealth&contentPage=mh_screening_tools/PTSD_SCREENING.HTML)

Remember that Knowledge is Power!

#4 - Coming Home - Crossing the Bridge!

Now we've come full circle and we're back at the concept of "As You Were."

You were someone before you crossed the bridge some time ago from Civilian Life to Military Life.

For each of you the time-frame will be different and the "who, what, why, where, when, and how" will be different... but ALL of you did cross the bridge from the person you were before your Military experience (and possibly your Combat experience) and ALL of you came, or will come, to the point where you put your foot on the bridge to take you back to Civilian Life.

While each of you looked forward to that day, and probably counted down the months, days, hours, minutes, seconds... most of you found that the transition back across the bridge was fraught with some kind of difficulties.

Here's another old expression to contemplate in addition to "As You Were."

Let's contemplate "You Can't Ever Go Home Again!"

Now, there's a scary thought but what does it really mean?

"As You Were" assumes some kind of rip in the fabric of a "time warp" where you can pull the edges apart and simply step through the opening - and just have everything as "it was" back when you transitioned into Military Life.

"You Can't Ever Go Home Again" seems to say the complete opposite.

Which one is true? What do they really mean?

If you're attempting to be "as you were" before and also "trying to go home again," what kind of confusing mess are you really facing? This is something you really need to know and then have some control over... hopefully BEFORE you attempt the walk over that bridge.. but you may have already made that walk and found that you got stuck in the time-warp and the only question in your mind now is:

"Is This the Planet Earth?"

No, I haven't walked over the same bridge, but I've walked over similar ones and found it very tough to take off the costume I was wearing and put the old one back on. For some reason, it never seems to fit.. and you somehow feel very "naked" and have a distinct need to run and hide, but you can't.. and you wouldn't know where to hide anyway.

So, you find that you have to somehow sort through all of this and get a firm handle on it.

You start asking yourself questions about who you were before so you can go back to being that person again.

But there's a big problem now... Actually there are two major problems with this question....

1. It's rare that anyone really knows who they are. If they "find themselves" by the time they are "old" or "mature," whichever comes first, that is rare.

2. And because everything in our known universe is always in motion (remember Einstein's $E=MC^2$?) there was no force that put it's finger on the "pause button" and held things in life totally motionless so you could come back and just step back into the picture "as it **was**" and then continue "as you **were**."

So, let's stop for a moment and take the "path of **MOST** resistance."

You were some age then, however many years ago that was.

You were someone's son, daughter, sister, brother, husband, wife, father, mother, student, employee... The possibilities are nearly endless in this category.

You were working, going to school, just goofing off, getting married, building a business.... what were you doing? The possibilities are nearly endless.

Human beings are social animals and life, itself, is dynamic... so whoever you were and whatever you were doing, you were no doubt functioning in conjunction with someone(s) else in pursuit of something...

Maybe you were married and had young children. Maybe you left and your spouse was in charge all that time when you were gone and the dynamics of your marriage, your home environment, and the shaping of your children has all changed. Do you suppose they have all stood still in time like a freeze-frame waiting for you to step back onto the page in the picture book and resume your position again? Not likely...

And if you assumed that and attempted to just step back into the picture, you have already discovered that there are sour notes now instead of the beautiful music that once was played in that sweet environment. If you haven't been there, yet, you may have this to look forward to...

The reason you can't be "as you were" is because you aren't that person anymore... and chances are you didn't really know who that person was anyway, so the way back would be impossible to find.

The reason you "can't ever go home again" is because "home" has changed since you've been gone and you find yourself trying to pick up your instrument to play as you once did, but there's been a new concert written and you don't know the notes so how do you just step in and flow

evenly with the rhythm? The answer is that you really can't...

Now I don't mean to paint a difficult or impossible picture for you, but I do mean to point out what you either will encounter or have encountered. There are no "faults"... it's just life going on as it must.

But you want to go "back home" and you want to "pick up where you left off." Is that even possible now?

Yes, of course, it is, but everything has changed and you need to seize those "Changes" as "Opportunities" and make all things better than they were in the past. With time things should get better. We don't really want to go "back" anyway... We all want to go "forward."

Okay....

I talked about taking the "path of MOST resistance." That would be a huge waste of precious time and the only thing that you could find would be you back then and what was back then.. That's not what you want now. You will derive no benefit to you or those who you wish to keep in your life by trying to reclaim the past. It's the present and the future which hold the opportunities for Success and Happiness for you and those you care about and love.

So, logically, what's in your best interests is to take the "path of **LEAST** resistance" and begin the process of taking a Journey into yourself to find out who you are **NOW** and dig out the personal resources which you have always had in the past, but have added to that treasure trove over the time you have invested in your Military Life.

In all the years of counseling I've done there are two questions which I have always asked new clients and I've never had anyone ever able to answer them... and that also included yours truly.

1. Who are you?
2. What would make you happy?

They are simple questions but ones that people never think about so they have no answers for them. Actually, the more you think about them, the deeper they really get.

Just as an example:

100% of the time if I ask a new client to make two lists for me and bring them back for the next session - one a list of all the Good things they can list about themselves and one a list of all the Bad things they can list about themselves, they ALWAYS have a long list of the "Bad" and maybe one or two things on the list of "Good." Sometimes the "Bad" list is long and there is nothing at all on the "Good" list.

If we're talking about someone else, you could easily say that this person doesn't know themselves very well, if at all... But, what if these are your lists? Ah.. yes, that's another story... one that bears some further inspection. That's what I'm talking about.

There's only one way that I know of to answer these two questions. It's the same way that I answered them for myself, and I've helped many others answer them the same way.

Several years ago I took myself on what I now call a "Personal Self-Quest" during which I found myself. Yes, I was pretty much "up in years," but I can tell you that most people never find themselves... never find who they really are... and have never even considered such an option.

You might never have thought of such a concept either had you not found yourself standing on the bridge ready to come back to who you thought you were and the "home" you left behind.

When you became that new "Government Issue," they took your clothes from you and handed you a uniform so you would look nearly exactly like everyone else. They cut off all your hair, so you would look nearly identical to everyone else. They gave you a set of rules to follow and made the point that you were to function like everyone else by the same set of rules... thinking and acting on your own was not going to be tolerated... or something like that.

So, you assumed that your old "clothes" would still be waiting for you on the other end of that bridge... and you got there and were so happy to see them, but when you tried to put them on, they didn't fit anymore...

Scary? Maybe... But also maybe not! Maybe exciting! Maybe a new set of clothing will be just what you really need.. and will help you find your own personal Success and Happiness...

Here's a new question to ask yourself, after you finally let go of the old ones:

"Are You Who You Really Are?"

Time to answer this and start your own "Personal Self-Quest."

Remember that Change can bring Fear... Fear of the Unknown... Fear of Failure.. Remember we already discussed this.. Remember it's called "Irrational Fear." Remember that it always points the way to your Success and Happiness.... if you only have the intelligence and courage to open that gate and begin to walk that path. Remember: "The Fun is in the Journey!"

Let's start now....

Now please complete the following "Self-Assessment" to prime your pump and get your juices flowing. This is private so only you will see it, unless you wish to share it with another.

The Fun Starts Now.... You will never find anything or anyone more fascinating than YOU!

**Personal Self-Quest & Relationship Negotiations
1 – Pre-Assessment - Warrior Series**

This “Pre-Assessment” is a valuable tool reserved exclusively for you. No one else will see it, unless you wish to share it. It will help you give yourself Permission to focus ONLY on you and those issues which are of interest and concern to you, temporarily exclusive of the responsibilities you normally assume for all others in your “world.” This is all about YOU.. and only YOU... and it is NOT “selfish.” It is healthy! You MUST come first right now, be the “center of your universe” and take the time for your Journey into You.

This will be the starting point for your “Personal Self-Quest” and will guide you along the way on your new journey to find **Who You Really Are**. You'll be asked to think about things you may never have thought about before. This may seem more difficult than you expect. Your ultimate goal will be to answer the question: **Are You Who You Really Are?**

Please write down your answers as they represent a commitment to yourself, which is a vital part of this process. You will have to dig deeply for some of them, and it won't be easy. I'm sure you will be both surprised and delighted with what you discover about yourself. You may wish to share your Journey with a partner or significant other, or not. That is totally in your control. This is the beginning of a life-long Quest to continually discover that magnificent human being which is you. This Assessment will serve to guide you and show you how far you have come... and how much farther you wish to go.

Enjoy yourself as you will soon discover that “The Fun is in the Journey” and this is the greatest gift that you will ever give yourself... now and hopefully for the rest of your life.

The Journey Starts Now. Seek the answer: **Are You Who You Really Are?**

“Coach Judi” Stifel. Life & Relationship Coach and Crisis Counselor

Who You Are Today:

Today's Date:

Status:

Age : _____

List Your Strengths	List Your Weaknesses	List Your Needs	Lists Your Resources
Please interpret questions as they are meaningful to you, not what you think I mean. Use additional paper if needed.			

Your (*-*) Gives You:	Your (*-*) Fails to Give:	Your (*-*) Needs:	Your (*-*)'s Strengths:
These answers apply to your Mate, Significant Other, Friend, Parent, Child, whoever applies here.			
List Your Dreams:	List Your Goals:	What Do You Have?	What Do You Want?

Describe who you are now:

Describe who you were as a child:

Describe who you want to be:

Describe what means "Happiness" to you:

Describe what means "Success" to you:

Describe how others see you:

Describe what you think it means to "Negotiate" a relationship:

Describe what you hope to get out of this Journey into Yourself:

Describe how you have been feeling lately:

Describe what you think would make you feel happy now, in the short term, and in the long term: (Space here may seem too small, so try to simplify and hit a well-defined bottom-line target.)

Today's Date:

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#5 – How Connected Are You?

Human beings are “Social Animals.” We are NOT the ONLY Social Animals supported on this planet by “Mother Nature.”

Note: I will state now that I do NOT debate Religion. Your religious beliefs belong privately to you – as do mine. I regard them as sacred and private, a line never to be crossed. When I refer to matters of a “Higher Power,” on a “spiritual plane,” I am referring only to “Mother Nature.” Feel free to substitute whatever is more comfortable for you. As a “Social Scientist,” I’ll share with you my view of the world based on Science and my professional experience, but you’re free to interpret it any way that it works best for you. I teach facts as I see them, and sometimes my theories based on facts as I see them. You’re free to process them in any way that makes sense to you and provides you with some good tools to build a more Successful and Happy life. This constitutes the sum total of any statement I plan to make regarding Religion.

I’m no expert on other animals, but I can tell you that it’s the Thinking and Feeling functions of Human Beings which compel us to become “Connected” into social groups, starting with the smallest of the social groups known as “Pairs.” The most productive relationship being “Mates.”

As we move along, I’ll have a great deal to say about this “Mate” relationship, but for the moment I want to say that the means for “Connecting” ONLY takes place through “Communication.” In order for one Human Being to “Connect” our Thoughts and our Feelings to another, we must “Communicate.”

Note: There is both Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication, which I’ll explore with you later.

As I’ve mentioned earlier, divorce lawyers know full-well that the break-down of marriages is usually based on lack of “Effective Communication.”

As you come across the “bridge” from your Military Life, hoping to resume your old persona in your Civilian Life (or if you made this journey across the bridge in the past and have been struggling to find your persona since that time), you may find that this challenge to “reconnect” lies on a continuum from Easy to Difficult. You may or may not discover that your success will greatly depend on the Effectiveness of your Communications Skills.

You may or may not know where you fit on a “Communications Continuum,” so let’s start with a little “Self-Test” which is directed more toward Males than Females for reasons which I will explain later. Just like the general public, even though this is a generalization, “Female Vets are still more from Venus and Male Vets are still more from Mars!” The cultural influences toward your gender are not necessarily or significantly altered by Military Life.

Now, don’t get your drawers in a bunch... Please, just be patient and keep an open mind. There is no gender bias in what I am going to say, but there will be education based on the usual facts:

Relationship Health Test for Men

Men and Women are Both from Earth,
but we still can't understand each other!

**100% of women and 1% of men “get” this joke.
But, what about the other 99% of men who don't “get it?”**

- How "connected" are you and your partner?
- Do you know that Communication is the ONLY glue that holds any and all of your relationships together?

There is a major “communication gap” between men and women in America.

In John Gray's book "Women are from Venus and Men are from Mars" he documents his observations about the lack of understanding and cooperation between men and women because of communication disparity. He does not explain how this all came about.

I assure you that "Mother Nature" intended for male and female humans to fully understand each other and to effectively communicate, and co-operate in all aspects of life together, especially those necessary for their survival and for the survival of the species - which means being able to bring forth the next generation and acculturate them to survive and prosper in the natural social/cultural order which is all part of being human.

As we look at the state of our crumbling nation around us, we really can go right back to the most basic of relationships to see what went wrong and then work from that point forward to find solutions. When mating relationships and families crumble, so goes the nation.

Oh, you don't believe me? You are the skeptic? Well, take the test and see how well you "score" and then read on....



**It started even
before this
awkward time...**



**Here's a "joke" which all women "Get" and few men "Get."
Read it and then I'll give you the answer.**

A newly-wed couple arrives in their honeymoon hotel suite. The bride goes into the bathroom and returns a few minutes later wearing a rather flimsy nightgown.



Her new husband says, "Honey take that off." She replies "No". Again, he says, "Come on honey, take that off." She replies, "No". A third time he says (quite angry), "Take that off". Again she replies, "No". He stands up, and says very angrily, "If you don't take that off, I'm leaving." She replies "No."

He storms out of the room and proceeds to the hotel lounge. After about an hour and a few drinks he feels quite remorseful about having had an argument with his new bride on their wedding night. He returns to their room only to find the door locked and bolted.

He knocks lightly. She says "Yes, who is it." He replies, "It's me hon' open the door." She replies, "No." He says, "Honey, I'm sorry, please open the door." She replies, "No."

A little angry, he says "Look I'm really sorry, open the door." She replies, "No."

His full anger has returned as he says "Look if you don't open this door I'm going to knock it down."

After a brief pause she says, "Knock the door down? When did you get so strong? An hour ago you couldn't pick up a night gown!"

Answer:

As every woman knows, the man was supposed to gently, lovingly remove her nightgown, not demand that she take it off. A woman wishes to start off her marriage by being shy and demure on her wedding night. She wants her new husband to know that he is the one-and-only and that she has had no "experience" before him.

For her to blatantly disrobe before him would make her look "experienced," like a vamp or a stripper, and feel "cheap," too. He needs to help her preserve her shyness and innocence by very gently, sensitively ... tenderly ... slowly... and respectfully removing it from her... kind of unwrapping her like a pristine and delicate wedding present.

Had she enthusiastically taken it off in front of him, as he demanded, he might have reflected back on her behavior and thought it seemed too easy for her (as if she had done it before with others), and he might have suspected that her morals were not so great after all, despite the fact that he had demanded it himself.

She was waiting for him to be sensitive and understanding of that and help her past her shyness and ease her through the new experience - supporting her all along to preserve her dignity and ladylike innocence.

If she is destined to become the "whore in the bedroom" and the "lady in the parlor," she may be more than willing as her comfort level increases and her "innocence" has been well-established. Whether or not she is a virgin, this ritual is still vitally-important in establishing the tone of trust and intimacy in the new marriage. Exploring and sharing new sexual experiences requires that respect and trust are mutually-established before vulnerability can take place for either partner. The man, in disrespectfully trampling her boundaries of vulnerability, also forfeits any intimacy that he may hope to have for himself in the future of this new relationship.

With his boorish behavior he also transmits to his new mate that maybe she didn't choose very well and that life with him might be more of a dictatorship than a partnership. Also, he displays a lack of upbringing and values... and that maybe he has not had much experience in dealing with women who share her value system. What kind of husband will he be? Even more.. what kind of father and role model will he be?

Is this the tone he wishes to bring to his new marriage and the foundation he wishes to lay? Would he really prefer that she accept him as an insensitive, self-serving tyrant or a considerate, co-operative life partner? Maybe he was all candies and flowers while he was courting her and now the "Moment of Truth" has arrived and he has suddenly given her a "snapshot" of her future, and it's not very pretty!

This "Joke" is not so much a "joke" as a very good lesson... and a **WARNING!**

She was Pitching a message and he was not Catching it. Sadly, it is typical in our culture and no one is at fault. But if we are to survive as both a species and a culture, education is what is needed - and both the man and woman must learn "Effective Communication," preferably together, or relationships are destined for failure.

~ Love and Intimacy ~

**We all need love and intimacy, but none of us can have it
if we can't develop "Effective Communication."
It needs to be a priority in our lives and that will take education.
You CAN learn how to communicate effectively
and form Successful & Happy Relationships.**



"Hey, we really just need to talk!!"

In the course of my very extensive and in-depth research I've discovered the missing pieces of the failed communications puzzle. And I know how to successfully remedy this terrible situation, which has destroyed couples, families, and has left us in much worse shape than even you suspect at this moment.

The "Cure" for this tragic dysfunction is purely Educational, NOT therapy.

No one is at fault here. We are all innocent victims. But there is work to be done and it all starts with learning the facts and then applying them to well-planned solutions.

If you wish to improve the health of your relationships to bring you and your loved ones Success and Happiness, continue reading and you'll learn the facts and how you can apply them to building powerful relationships which work for you and those you care about.

We all need love and intimacy in our lives but we can't have it if men and women can't work together as cooperative life partners. They can't be co-operative life partners without "Effective Communications."

I have NOT "invented" anything here, but what I have done is uncover a "SECRET" which I will be happy to share with you. The "inventor" was none other than "Mother Nature," Herself!

As your "Partner in Education," I'll share the SECRETS with you. Then you'll be empowered with insight and skills to build the successful relationships you'll need to sail smoothly through the rest of your life.

We have work to do and it starts NOW!

Truly, "no man is an island." Your entire life is made up of relationships with others. Now make them work for you, and for them, and achieve the "Win-Win" to ensure the mutual benefits of

whatever you call "Success" and whatever you call "Happiness!"

Always remember that "The Fun is in the Journey."

And, as my father taught me: "Life ain't worth a damn unless you can share it!"

"Love - The Prophet"
by
Kahlil Gibran

When love beckons to you follow him,
Though his ways are hard and steep.
And when his wings enfold you yield to him,
Though the sword hidden among his pinions may wound you.
And when he speaks to you believe in him,
Though his voice may shatter your dreams as the north wind lays waste the garden.
For even as love crowns you so shall he crucify you.
Even as he is for your growth so is he for your pruning.
Even as he ascends to your height and caresses your tenderest branches that quiver in the sun,
So shall he descend to your roots and shake them in their clinging to the earth.
Like sheaves of corn he gathers you unto himself.
He threshes you to make you naked.
He sifts you to free you from your husks.
He grinds you to whiteness. He kneads you until you are pliant;
And then he assigns you to his sacred fire,
that you may become sacred bread for God's sacred feast.
All these things shall love do unto you that you may know the secrets of your heart,
and in that knowledge become a fragment of Life's heart.

But if in your fear you would seek only love's peace and love's pleasure,
Then it is better for you that you cover your nakedness and pass out of love's threshing-floor,
Into the seasonless world where you shall laugh, but not all of your laughter,
and weep, but not all of your tears.
Love gives naught but itself and takes naught but from itself.
Love possesses not nor would it be possessed;
For love is sufficient unto love.
When you love you should not say, "God is in my heart," but rather, I am in the heart of God."
And think not you can direct the course of love, if it finds you worthy, directs your course.
Love has no other desire but to fulfill itself.

But if you love and must needs have desires, let these be your desires:
To melt and be like a running brook that sings its melody to the night.
To know the pain of too much tenderness.
To be wounded by your own understanding of love;
And to bleed willingly and joyfully.
To wake at dawn with a winged heart and give thanks for another day of loving;
To rest at the noon hour and meditate love's ecstasy;
To return home at eventide with gratitude;
And then to sleep with a prayer for the beloved in your heart and a song of praise upon your lips.

#6 – Telling It Like It Is!

I've never been a warrior in combat. I've never been on the battlefield fighting for my country or for my life. As highly-empathetic as I am and as highly-imaginative as I am, and as much as I want to help, I can't slip into you being in that situation, nor can I slip into you suffering the aftermath of that situation. I wish I could because maybe then I could do a better job of offering you some tools to help you heal yourself.

But when I boil things down in my logical thinking process, I understand that all pain is subjective anyway and there isn't anyone who can feel the pain experienced by another person.

When I lay on the operating table so many years ago enduring the agonizing, much-too-slow, piece-by-piece cutting away of a life-sucking, grapefruit-sized cancer from my right thigh, and 21 attempts to numb my leg had utterly failed, there was no one else who could feel the mind-boggling pain that I was experiencing.

My decision permitting the doctor to continue cutting after I made it clear that I was still feeling everything was really to prove to my father how brave his first-born, 19-year-old daughter was. I was supposed to be a son... and many times he had called me a “coward” for no reason at all. Maybe because girls cry sometimes.... maybe...

But I had seen him cry once when I was 7 and had helped him euthanize his favorite guinea pig and remove its adrenal glands as part of his lab experiment. I even heard him crying when he went to his bedroom and closed the door behind him... We all cry when we're in pain!

Lying on that operating table, having made my decision, I had no idea if I was brave or not - but I sure was about to find out.

My father, a physician/research scientist, was in the room observing and assisting his colleague who was doing the cutting. They both thought it was a “fatty tumor” at the start, and no one expected that it had become a wild mass of hyper-extended, super-sensitive nerves which were not supposed to be there - or that it was the most aggressive cancer on Earth, invading all tissues and systems in the body... and totally non-treatable and incurable.

I, for one, had been very nervous about having surgery of any kind and had been thanking my lucky stars that I didn't live in the medieval times of Hippocrates when there was no such thing as topical anesthesia. I sure was wrong about that...

All was **NOT** going well! They didn't believe me that I was **NOT** numb. To the mind of a modern doctor it was inconceivable that 21 shots of Procaine didn't do their job of numbing my leg... or that a 19 year old girl could be courageous enough to endure unimaginable pain to prove to her father that she was as brave and tough as she wanted him to acknowledge....

He never did recognize it and always assumed that my description of experiencing the pain was an “hysterical female reaction” because what I was describing was “medically impossible.” In his mind, had I “really” felt the pain, I would have fainted, thrown up, been screaming my head off, or jumping every time the scalpel cut another chunk of the tumor. So, my courage **masked** my courage ... to all but me!

I lay there still as a corpse, willing all of my muscles to be soft and relaxed, having made the decision to continue the surgery - and I concentrated on not crying out, not passing out, not vomiting, not moving so the doctor might accidentally cut through some vital nerve, artery, or tissue other than the Synovial Sarcoma which had finally rendered me in too much pain to walk – so it had to be removed.

When the last stitch was mercifully in place and they pulled me up to a sitting position at the end of the operating table, I sobbed like a baby for a long time....and was totally unable to use my leg - also for a very long time.

Forget the fact that post-surgically I had been given 6 months to live after the lab at the hospital reported to my father that what I had no one had ever survived, not even with a “radical hind-quarter section of this patient's lower extremity and up to the pelvic area.”

It was so unbelievable that the specimens were sent to Columbia University in New York, the authority in the country at that time on cancer, and they sealed my fate by confirming the diagnosis of the rare and fatal “Synovial Sarcoma.”

Miracles that I am not at liberty to discuss even today took place and all these years later I am still alive and healthy. I still have the report from Columbia and if I need a “Reality Check,” I read the words: “In our experience we have not found that amputation gives and better chance of survival than wide and complete local excision. If there is any question about the second removal, the outlook is so serious I think it would pay to re-excise the wound once more.”

These dire words still make me shudder and my blood run cold. Only a miracle could save me, and one did!

Since I wasn't expected to live after they put me to sleep to do the recommended second surgery, the surgeon went back in to take as much healthy tissue as he could without making me totally disabled; and he made no attempt to do a neat or pretty job. My father had refused to authorize the “hind-quarter amputation.” He decided he would kill me himself before he would allow that to happen.

Recovery was a nightmare. I hoped every morning that I would wake up and find my “real life” again... but that WAS my “real life.” I had to learn to walk again. Using the bathroom was nearly impossible. There was a place in my head where I had a tug-of-war between giving up or going on.

I was the girl who loved to dance... who had romantic, idealistic dreams about the future. My father kept a hidden bottle of Morphine to put an easy end to my life if the agony became unendurable and the sand in my hourglass began to run out. He vowed he would steal me himself away from the clutches of the Grim Reaper should it ever come to that.

After the scar tissue formed and some healing had taken place my rehab began. I became my father's patient and he led me through rehab and physical therapy. He didn't know if I would live or die so he struggled with the decision to be hard on me and make me dig deeply inside to find my strength to recover or if he should make the last 6 months of my life as easy and pleasant as possible. He had to decide for me how I should spend what might be the last 6 months of my life.

I was too young to make that decision for myself – and at that point he had mercifully spared me the knowledge of my fate. I will never forget the day when he finally sat me down and told me. And he told me not to waste my life, to always make my decisions “as if you have 6 months to live.” This experience influenced both of our lives and our relationship in many ways...

In taking me through rehab, he wavered between being tough and “professional” and having tears welling up in his hard blue eyes.

When he came into my room to get me out of bed and onto my feet, and I winced with pain as the crutches sunk into my armpits and my leg throbbed so hard that I could almost see it pulsating before my eyes, I was forced to walk to keep the scar tissue stretched and supple and to retrain my brain for the movements which had not taken place for a while and had some missing parts.

The walking began with him forcefully tearing the adhesions which had formed during healing and which became a barrier to free range of motion. It was horribly painful and he set his jaw and his eyes into icy, stoic professionalism in order to do it... which really scared me more as there was no reassuring warmth to be found on his face.

Yes, there was a LOT of pain, before the surgery, during the surgery, and after the surgery. A car crash had caused the cancer to develop, and there was a lot of pain from that, too.

No, it was not my fault. A moving van had run a stop sign and plunged into the side of my mother's little compact car, which I had borrowed.. on my side... the driver's side. I was a new driver, 16 years old. But there was no fault to pin on me. In fact, I saved the life of my passenger because I managed to move forward just enough when I saw him heading for me that he didn't flip the car and cause her to be crushed along with me.

I'm alive today because of eight miracles, but this is the one which I find significant enough to share with you for the purpose of the points I wish to make.

I don't think that everyone contemplates suicide, nor do I think that most people do, but I do know that there are many who do. I will number myself among them.

Life has gotten very hard for me many times and I've sat staring at the wall, sitting inside my own head and contemplating the harshness of life at the moment and trying to decide if maybe I wanted to just give it back, which is how I looked at it.

It was like I would think about someone who was struggling so hard to live... maybe an innocent child... and here I had this useless life which was getting either too hard to endure or too senseless to invest in anymore... and I thought about giving it to them... that person who was so desperate to have life... and here I didn't feel that mine was worth struggling for anymore.

Yes, I considered just checking out... like if I weren't here taking up space and oxygen, I could give my place in line to them and they would have a chance to take the life I was willing to give up and suck it into themselves.

Of course, that was irrational, but when a person is feeling pain they can become very irrational. Sometimes between their irrational thinking and their deep despair and depression it's not even possible to reach them. And I've been on both sides of that one, unfortunately more times than I'd even have the energy to tell.

But every time I was up against that decision, I reflected back to the frightened me that was living in my head determined to cope with the cruel cutting on my leg in the operating room. It was my most defining moment in life.

At 19 I didn't have the life experience resources to fall back on that I have now. I just had who I really was at the core to see me through the disaster as it unfolded. I hadn't even met that person, yet. Luckily, who I was turned out to be a lot more courageous than anyone knew. My father died never believing that I actually felt the horrible pain of that surgery. I was far too accepting and cooperative on the operating table, so he reasoned that I only imagined pain. But I knew!

And I still know!

When I have serious decisions to make, I look at my leg. I've had that ugly dent for so many years now that it just looks "normal" to me and I'm always surprised when I see women in swim suits and note that they don't have a dent in their thigh like I do. When my father was certain that I was going to live, he offered me cosmetic surgery but I turned him down.

Since he never believed me anyway, he didn't understand that my dent is my "Badge of Courage." He probably thought I was just afraid of more surgery.

No... That was not the case. By that time it was just a private matter between me and me.

But I have never forgotten his advice: "Make your decisions like you only have 6 months to live."

We really never know who we are until we test our limits. I would never have chosen to put myself through such a test, but it happened and I “passed” well beyond my own expectations.

So, I learned a lot about myself from this experience, and a LOT about life. More than anything, I learned that no matter how hard life got for me, I was never going to make the decision to throw away the miracle which pushed me beyond the 6 months the medical profession had given me. It was a miracle handed to me which I had not earned, so it was a Gift.

(As I write this now I'm thinking to myself that maybe much of what I've done with my life ever since has been some attempt to earn that gift.... maybe...I'll have to think about that some more.)

When I've looked at my life and considered giving it back... thought I was too exhausted to endure... thought I was in too much pain to continue... looked down the road and saw no purpose ahead to make the struggle worth doing, no light at the end of the tunnel to guide me... I asked myself if it made any sense to throw away such a miracle.

Then I asked myself if I had not proven to myself on that operating table that I was courageous and tough enough to endure whatever I had to do to claim Life and all that it could hold - if I just worked hard and long enough.

Each time I thought about it long enough for the despair to pass and for reason to return. I realized that you don't throw away miracles - that Life, itself, is a Miracle, and that I'm a group of one that I know of who has willingly permitted a surgeon to cut out a large tumor from my body absent any pain relief from anesthesia.

My cancer was one that had unexpected nerves so wildly grown out of control all over it that they couldn't be numbed, and that made the pain beyond what might have even been imagined had it been a “usual” cancerous tumor, rather than one so rare and fatal...

Yet I have found myself drowning in the “Black Pit” of “self-pity” before and have forgotten for the moment my earlier decisions not to throw away the Miracles. That's too rational for the depressed spirit, the sobbing heart, and the sleeping mind.

Maybe curiosity held me back.... Maybe I was curious enough, and tough enough, to give it at least one more day to see what lay around the corner. Maybe it was more curiosity or maybe tenacity... It's hard to say... I know that I'm not the only one. But sometimes we just decide to live day-by-day... just one day at a time.... but we do then choose Life over Death.

Finding myself at times treading water in that kind of decision process, I've had to consider if it was harder to fight for Life or if it was harder to fight for Death. Attempting to give Life back is no guaranty of accomplishing the deed. Sometimes it means a fate worse than it seemed before as dependent disability is the end result. Who would ever choose that? I sure wouldn't and neither would you.

After thinking about it, the only logical conclusion is that it really doesn't matter how “hard” either one is. We, human beings, are hardwired with one overwhelming imperative... the “Instinct for Self-Preservation.” It really does trump every other feeling we have or respond to.

We hunger for Life, so at times like that, we just need to give ourselves permission for a “pity party” and some R&R, and then when we feel strong enough, we can get back in the “ring” again and fight our Demons until we have run our spear through them and have our foot on their chest – making it clear that we are the Victor.

Along the way, personally and professionally, I've picked up some tools and devised some strategies to help make the necessary decisions and then find a better path to take.

And it's been my experience that pain is purely subjective and there is no one who can really “feel” your pain and no one who can logically say with any kind of Truth that one pain is worse than another.

My pain was horrific for me. It was unexpected in modern times. Modern medicine said that what I experienced was unheard of since the days of Hippocrates.

Yet, there are warriors who have endured the amputation of a leg on the battlefield with no anesthetic even available. Whether they were given the decision to go on or come back later under general anesthetic, the option I had been given, or there was no decision to be considered for them, they had to dig deeply inside for the will to continue and for the courage to endure.

But the pain is still subjective and only we can feel it and no one else can climb into our bodies with us to share the load.

The fact remains that if you can find a way to get rid of the Pain in the first place, which means to defeat the Demon, the whole picture changes and no escape is then required. So, we will spend the rest of our time together doing just that.

We will get to the root of the Pain and take control of the Demon and make it go away forever. Yes, we can do that, if we WANT to...

I sure wanted to and I'll take you down the same path that I took to cure my pain.... if you want to go.

NB: Many dentists and endodontists since that time in my life have nearly had to scrape me off their ceilings during 9 root canals and other drilling procedures when local anesthetics didn't work on me... Thoughts of going to a dentist today turn my blood cold! I recently had dental surgery and they put me to sleep, which is the only way anyone will ever come near me with a drill again!

And just as a point of interest, several years ago I saw a full body scan of myself which was only my skeleton front and back. It's really weird viewing your own skeleton, but mine was even more weird because there was a large, dark, and very visible scar on my right femur (thigh bone).

It made me shudder because they told me that Synovial Sarcoma is fatal because it invades all systems of the body and all tissues - so there's no stopping it. I had no idea that it had already gone beyond the muscle, fat, and nerves and had already invaded my bones. It takes my breath away today to really think about what a miracle my life since that time really has been.

Pain is subjective!

Only you can feel it. But you can't feel anyone else's pain. As you read, you might empathize with my pain, but you can't ever feel it... But you have your own pain and you may be feeling it now. I can't feel it, but I can “relate” to it given my own experiences with pain of all kinds. But I don't need to feel your pain nor you mine. What we DO need to do is **Acknowledge** the pain, not try to sweep it under the rug, face it head-on, and then find the strategies for taking its control over us away.

So, the idea is to get rid of the **source** and then we no longer have to deal with the **symptoms**.

This is going to be our goal.

When you're in pain, you're in there all alone having to confront it by yourself. You want to escape it, but you can't. You want someone to come inside with you to help you shoulder the burden, but they can't.

Ultimately, it's just you and the Pain.. and the Pain is your Demon! This is totally unacceptable!

You have a major decision to make. Will you let it control you, or will you choose to control it?

Pain can wear you down so much that you think you're too weak to do battle with it again. But, you can find the strength and you can find the strategies, if you know how and if you can find a Good reason to take back Control.

This is where tools and strategies will help and where someone can be there to help shoulder the burden. No one can share the experience of pain with you, but someone CAN and WILL share the battle for Control over the Pain with you. You're a Warrior and you understand the battle against the “Enemy.” Now we are about to enter your “comfort zone.”

We can give your Pain a name to acknowledge it. We can call it “Survivor Guilt, PTSD, Fear.”... If we name it “Survivor Guilt,” we know it is a common enemy of many Combat Veterans. It pretends to be a motivator, but it's really a punisher. If Survivor Guilt is your pain, we will take control over it, disable it so it can no longer cause you pain. As we go along, find a name for your pain so we can recognize the face of the enemy and destroy it.

#7 – A History Lesson of the Human Social Animal!

Call me what you will, I've been in the pursuit of helping myself and others for a very long time. Let's just leave it at the term "helping," because the areas of need for "help" are nearly endless, but the basics are so simple that they just get lost in the complexities of how we view them.

Okay, I'll admit that what I just said made you cock your head to the side and maybe scratch it a little. Maybe you even have question marks for eyes right now. What did I just say?

I'm going to go around my elbow to get to my nose for just a minute and then we're going to do what my father taught me to do: "Boil Truth down to its simplest common denominator."

Here are a few things I've figured out over the years I've been a professional "Helper:"

1. Risky behavior indicates low self-esteem.. Need for education.
2. Anger is a cry for love. Need for love.
3. Bad behavior is a cry for attention. Need for positive attention.
4. Violence is a cry for physical contact. Need for loving touches.
5. Problems like Abandonment, Attachment Disorder cause most of the problems. Rare Temperament causes most of the rest.
6. Oral Fixation, Denied Gratification, Cookies for Pain lead to substance abuse.
7. Skin hunger leads to "failure to thrive" and either mental retardation or death.

Here are a few things I've invented to cover what wasn't so easy to figure out:

1. "Macho Squashing" and "Femina Squashing/Gristle Eaters"
2. "Are You Who You Really Are?"

Here are a few things which are indisputable "Universal Rules" which I can count on:

1. Human Beings are highly-evolved animals who are mammals.
2. Human Beings are Social Animals.
3. Human Beings are driven by the primary instinct for "Self-Preservation."
4. Human Beings are driven by the secondary instinct for "Survival of the Species."

I'm always searching for "basics," especially when it comes to solving problems for myself and others. In a very strange way this takes me back to Algebra in high school and college. If you have trouble with Algebra, as I certainly did, you probably also experienced the frustration, as I did, of wondering "WHY" we ever had to take it and what earthly good it was anyway.

As a seasoned adult returning to school to advance my formal education, I finally had the maturity to look Algebra in the eye and figure out what it was, what good it had to offer anyone (me, in particular), and how to control it instead of it controlling me. I figured out that it's a tool for problem-solving to find a solution - and the solution just has a name called the "unknown," which it certainly is when you haven't figured it out, yet. They simply substitute a symbol for that unknown by calling it "X."

Of course, the educational institution in this country is so dysfunctional that they don't know how to teach it and end up abusing students instead of enhancing their skills... but that's another topic for another day. (Incidentally, I have written a very simple and free course for Algebra so if you want it, just let us know and it's yours.)

So, using the tools supplied in Algebra to find the unknowns I was searching for to help myself and others find solutions to their human problems, I stripped away everything I could identify as a "known quantity" which I knew and I "isolated" the "unknown" which we can call "X" so I could just go after it alone.

There seemed to be a LOT of "unknowns" in my attempts to solve problems for myself and others. To find them, I first needed to put labels on them. Kipling's "Six Serving Men" really named them all for me:

Who, What, Why, Where, When, How??????

I can't recall a time in my life when I was not driven by the question "Why."

In time I discovered that I really wasn't going to satisfy that question without the help of the other five, so I began to dig for answers.

One of the most important of the "Who's" was Desmond Morris, a world-renowned English Anthropologist. And the most important "What" was his powerful book "The Naked Ape." It was first copyrighted in 1967. The old tattered paperback which I hold in my hand at the moment was printed in 1981. In my opinion, this is the greatest book ever written concerning Human Beings.

Three other "Who's" were teachers. One taught a class in Women's Studies which taught me human evolutionary history which filled in many answers I sought. One taught me two courses in Sociology which covered Social Change concerning women and one was on Human Sexuality which taught me about the powerful connection between food and sex.

The third teacher taught me Cultural Anthropology, which was fascinating, but he also asked me to edit a text book he was writing for graduate students, and I was an undergraduate at the time, so while I edited his textbook, I also was learning the material for the class. I learned about the powerful role a Shaman/Medicine Man played in ancient tribes and in some which are still alive and well in remote areas of our modern world today.

As pleased as I am to report that some of what I learned from these formal education sources supplied tools to solve problems for myself and others, I'm equally displeased to report that all the years I spent in formal education in my own Major of "Clinical Psychology/Mental Health Counseling," both undergraduate and graduate level, were an utter waste of time and tuition. In all cases, I knew more than any of my teachers, and I was maverick enough to cross swords with some and just tolerate others. In many cases, this old saying which I've never believed, actually did apply: "those who can, do, and those who can't, teach." I can't claim to believe this because I both "do" and "teach." Of my teachers who actually worked as therapists, I found that many of them were so arrogant that teaching gave them the opportunity to beat their chests and try to impress their students. I was NOT impressed! I also learned too little to justify my attendance.

Remember, I had a father who made most of them look like mental midgets. I was expecting a lot more than learning to say "Oh.. ah.. I see" and "If I understand correctly, you are saying.. Blah.. blah.. blah" and then using a text book like recipe for putting A to B and coming out with C. I used what knowledge I could collect as "tools" only and then did my best research and thinking and hoped that I had acquired enough valuable tools that I could use what I learned and put ideas together so they made sense and so I could use them for productive action.

But I WAS very impressed with what I learned from Desmond Morris, and the history lessons which augmented what I learned through "The Naked Ape," gave me good tools to work with to find the "Why's" I've spent a lifetime searching for.

I'm not going to ask you to read his book, and even I don't remember all of it considering how many years ago I read it, but the bottom-line is what I will present to you for your consideration and it's the foundation upon which much of my own research has been built and many of my own theories have resulted. I can't teach you my theories (maverick that I am) unless I give you the benefit of the knowledge which helped me to form them. Then you can decide for yourself if they make sense to you – but, more importantly, IF you think you can use them for your own problem-solving. I will tell you that you won't find my theories anywhere else. But you can decide if you believe them based on the facts that I will present to you.

Here goes....

When Desmond Morris refers to Human Beings he refers to us as "Naked Apes," as we have evolved from the Apes which went before us who had plenty of hair. Over the years of evolution, we have lost much of our body hair, so in the grand scheme of evolutionary things, we are viewed as "naked." If you are stuck in a time-warp where Evolution flies in the face of your belief system, then you can decide at this point if you wish to continue reading or not, because what I hope to teach you will be based on pure Science.

What Desmond Morris discovered after many intensive years studying our Ape ancestors is that humans, unlike most other animals, have sex for pleasure in addition to sex for reproduction. He also concluded that because the human infant takes longer than any other animal offspring to bring from birth to the age of independence, it requires two parents to nurture, protect, teach, and

acculturate it so that it can go off on its own to produce the next successful generation.

And because the human female is capable of reproducing all year around, and has no specific estrus cycles when she is only receptive for mating, it is possible for her to have many offspring, so it is also necessary for the mating pair to remain together for a lifetime to ensure that the next generation will be successfully produced and made ready to take its place in the chain and then reproduce its own next generation. In this way, the “Survival of the Species” is ensured.

And, because Human Beings are “Social Animals,” there is a lot more to teach the new progeny beyond food acquiring and self-defense. There are so many social rules to be taught, and at so many stages of development. This learning is called “acculturation” and must also be passed on from the parents so that the emerging adult can then fit into the social group for the sake of survival.

This takes many years of devoted training and is essential to survival because the only survival advantage which has put Human Beings at the top of the “Food Chain” is our superior brain. However, our superior human brain is meaningless in a one-on-one confrontation with a creature with sharp teeth or horns, or speed which would put it out of range for a food source. So, the most powerful survival function of the superior human brain is the ability to form cooperative working relationships with other Human Beings. We **MUST** work together to get things done!

So, let's call this what it really is: **Relationships**.

In order for the Superior Human Brain to ensure that our species is successful, we each must learn how to form Successful Relationships with others of our species for the purpose of supplying fulfillment of ALL of our needs. It really doesn't get any more basic than this.

All interactions with others of our species are Relationships and all of these Relationships have specific goals which ensure our survival.

Okay, you don't believe me??

Let's consider the “Hunt.” No Human Being is going to be able to catch a deer alone. We didn't always have guns, or even spears and bows and arrows. We started out maybe throwing stones, but we had each other... so hunters were able to work in cooperation to cause the deer to run in a specific direction so that it could be caught and brought down... and turned into dinner for the group. This took cooperation and this cooperation with other hunts was Relationship.

So, in order for the Superior Human Brain to ensure the success of any given Human Being, that Human Being would need to be accepted by the group in cooperative Relationships for the purposes of providing food, finding or developing shelter, and providing protection against enemies. The Superior Brain of one Human Being alone was not enough. It was the cooperation of many Human Beings which ensured that there would be food, shelter, and protection - and that “insurance policy” was based on forming successful, mutually-beneficial Relationships.

Teaching the rules for forming these Successful Relationships was the responsibility of the “parents” and the “role-modeling” in the home/”family” was for the purpose of teaching the offspring rules for how to form these survival-sustaining Successful Relationships. Because Human Society is more complex than other animal social groups, it took longer for the Human progeny to learn, so it was vital that the mating pair remain together for the lifetime that it would take them to teach each of their offspring to the age of independence and leaving the “nest.”

The next question you might ask is “How do you keep a mating pair together for a lifetime so they can accomplish this very daunting task for each of their children?” The obvious, and most simple answer is to provide them with the pleasures of intimacy and sex that were so rewarding that nothing but death would break the bonds between the mates.

To describe this bonded lifelong relationship Desmond Morris used the term “Pair Bond” and it was intended to describe this lifelong bond between the mating pair. Human Beings are not the only animals which mate for life, but we are the most highly-evolved of those who mate for life, and we accept a lifelong job which is more complex and time-consuming than that of other mate-for-life pairs... and which requires a more complex and cooperative relationship between parents.

Given the fact that “Mother Nature” is NEVER “Capricious,” there are always logical reasons for everything. In learning about the rules and why they exist, how they are implemented, etc., all things are very logical and geared toward the Survival of our Human Species.

Now that you are armed with just this very basic knowledge, look around at all of the broken and vastly unsuccessful Relationships in our “modern world.” Is it any wonder why we are in such a state of chaos and why the “human race” looks like it's on its way out?

The simple answer is that the programming Mother Nature put into Human Beings is still there. We're all still hard-wired to operate the same way. We've not “evolved” to something “higher” or “different.” We've broken all the rules and we have been in a free-fall “devolving” so the human species is no longer being operated by any kind of “Superior Brain”- so we're failing as a species since we've stopped doing what we need to do to provide for the “Survival of the Species.”

If we go back to the two most basic human instincts of “Self-Preservation” and “Survival of the Species,” we can easily see that if the ONLY quality we have which puts us at the top of the food chain is our “Superior Brain,” and the fundamental function of that brain is to develop Successful, Cooperative Relationships with other Human Beings so we can provide food, shelter, and protection, and this is what ensures the “Survival of the Species,” then in losing out ability to form and maintain Successful, Cooperative Relationships, we are in the process of forfeiting our position at the top of the Food Chain and we are rapidly becoming a failing species.

And what is really scary to me now is that instead of shoring up the process of developing Successful Relationships, we're growing even farther apart from one another through the use of Social Media devices so that forming intimate connections with others of our species is rapidly becoming even more broken and impossible... and I see us building our own doom instead of

constructing new ways to repair and build Successful, Mutually-Beneficial Relationships. Needless to say, I'm fighting this destruction to my last breath. I've seen it coming for a very long time and I've been fighting all the way.

What I believe with all my mind, heart, and soul is that YOU, our Valiant Combat Veterans, are the ONLY hope we have for both our country and our species to lead and lift ourselves out of this national destruction and put us back on the right path to good health and success as a species and a nation. With the powerful weapon of Education and your brave hearts and superior minds and knowledge, you can help destroy the enemies from within of Greed and Corruption and help to rebuild a strong Socio-Economic core to restore a balance of Mutual-Benefit for all of us and the generations who deserve the hope of future survival.

You are the ONLY ones who have all the “Right Stuff” to both rebuild a Healthy, Successful Human Species and to rebuild a Healthy new Socio-Economic System in America. Without our Valiant Warriors we are both doomed as a nation and as a species.

I truly believe that you are the ONLY hope we have and that you have the “Right Stuff” to do it. I have so much faith in you that I am willing to stake my life on it.

I believe that when you learn all the facts, you will become the new “Army of Entrepreneurs” who will rebuilt the Economy and re-establish the natural, successful “Social Order” of both the species and the American Socio-Economic System.

To accomplish this we need to go back to the drawing board and re-learn how to build Successful, Cooperative Relationships starting with the Pair Bond and then the Family Unit. From that inner spring board all other things will come. Mother Nature hard-wired us this way, so all of the connections are still right there inside where they can be easily reach them again.

Now I'm going to take you back a little into my own history... After that I am going to take you on a deeper journey into the Anthropology of our own Human History. After that gathering of information, we will move into the present and then into the future. Please, just bear with me. I'm sure you will find it well worth your investment of time. This “War” you can and must win!

For just a moment let's consider what I was telling you before about my own times of despair when I was considering “giving back my life,” “Checking out,” “Suicide.”

I told you that what stopped me was realizing that I would be throwing away the powerful “Miracle” which had been handed me. Well, that was one thought that crossed my mind. But there was a more powerful thought that really made my decision for me and made me go on to see what the next day would bring.. and the next.. and the next....

I have the utmost respect, belief, and faith in Mother Nature. Dealing with Her is so simple. Play by the rules, be Successful. Violate the rules, Fail! There are all kinds of failures around us; they are just too stupid or foolish to see themselves. We, you and I , are much smarter than they are.

We can see them clearly and we know that the unquenchable lust for power through greed and corruption is breaking the rules and all those who have followed that path have failed. They just don't see it. We who have followed the rules can see it clearly. We are the successes!

Are there more of them than there are of us? No.. not really. They just make a bigger noise and they pay the media to make more bigger noises for them. But we have our own minds and we don't listen to the media and believe them. We use our "Superior Brains" to make our decisions.

Okay, I said that I didn't really decide to stay here and fight on another day because of the "Miracle" of my life being handed back to me. So, what made me stay and fight?

The most fundamental Law of Nature is "Survival of the Fittest." When I was very young, my father taught me that "failure to survive" doesn't always mean physical death. He taught me that "Failure to Survive" could take many forms, including living a life of "mediocrity," or of "greed and corruption." Maybe we could call that last one "selling your soul to the Devil." Of course, you know I mean that metaphorically.

So, I learned that having the "right stuff" to achieve Success and Happiness is being "Fit" enough to "Survive." Not having the "right stuff," to achieve Success and Happiness is failing to be "Fit" enough to "Survive."

As I contemplated my own options to "cop out" and just chuck it all or to dig deeper, fight harder, and continue struggling on the path to "Survival" hoping to find some Success and Happiness to justify all the hard work, I really had to ask myself the most important question:

Was I "Fit Enough to Survive?"

Somehow, when I put it that way, there was only one acceptable answer..

DAMN RIGHT!!! BLOODY, FREAK'IN YES!! OF COURSE, I WAS FIT ENOUGH TO SURVIVE!!!

Well, that was settled then....

But I realized that I really had a LOT of unanswered questions and that I needed a whole hell of an education. It all began there... Outside of the book and three good teachers, I really didn't know where else I needed to look to find ME and then find everything else I needed so that I could follow all the Rules and become Successful and Happy myself.

Now I'm going to give you a very basic history lesson based on the wonderful teachers I had, and then after that, I'm going to take you on the same "Personal Self-Quest" which I developed and which enabled me to answer the rest of the questions "Why" which were still plaguing me. No.. I don't have ALL the answers; I have All My Answers. But I can start you on the Journey to find All Your Answers. It will be fascinating and you'll find that "The Fun is in the Journey."

#8 – Where it All Began – Finding the “When, Where, Why, How”!

Goals: Prepare to begin Personal Self-Quest, Fall in Love with Yourself, Find your Greatness, Find out who others are, Better understand Self and Others, Better relationships, Better Communications, Find Success and Happiness – Financially and Personally.

Back to the Beginning of Human Social Groups - (Written by Me)

1. Hunters and Gathers – While the Pair Bond is an exclusive unit upon which the Family is built, human beings are still “social animals” and, as we do not have physical qualities that allow us to outfight or outrun the prey which sustain us or to deal with our enemies, if we are to adapt and survive as a species, we must use what we do have which gives us an edge to help us hunt and protect ourselves from predators. What human beings have is a larger and more highly-functioning brain. Still, one human being alone is not going to succeed as a hunter or a defender, so the larger, more complex human brain enabled us to cooperate with others of our species to become a force of intelligent strategists to both bring down enough game to feed the group, forage for fruits and vegetables growing in the wild, and defend against predators. So, human beings formed small bands of Hunters and Gathers who followed the food sources to sustain the group by killing deer and rabbits and other animals which were life-sustaining and gathering up the wild plants which grew along the way and were also life-sustaining.

As human beings are “omnivores,” eating both animals and plants, the men cooperated in the hunt, using their large brains to make weapons and to strategize for the purpose of catching and killing the prey which would give the group enough meat to sustain its members. In order for the hunt to be productive, it was vital that the hunters were very cooperate. Any man who could not cooperate would not be permitted to participate in the hunt because excellent cooperation with the rest of the hunters as they put a plan in place to track, capture, and kill the prey had to be adhered to second by second or they would fail and that could mean starvation. So, the women had to select mates based on all of their qualities, cooperation being the most important one for the sake of survival.

This might have been a successful social group if human babies could hold onto their mothers as they foraged for fruits and vegetables and as they ran to keep up with the men in the hunt, given the fact that there was no “home” where they would all gather after the hunt, but they followed the game and wherever they landed each day was “home” for that period of time. They kept moving all the time following the game and the game followed its food supply, and much of that depended on the weather.

Each woman had to tend to all of her children, though, as she foraged and as she ran to keep up with the men. She might have an infant at the breast, a toddler, and others of differing ages who she was tending to at the same time that she was trying go gather fruits and vegetables and she could not hold babies, gather plants, and run through the jungles at the same time. She would end up either falling behind, or she would end up with babies and toddlers straggling behind trying to keep up. Often those helpless babies, toddlers, and young children were tracked by predators and

stolen from her. So, the net effect was that in the pursuit of sustenance, they were losing the next generation too quickly to have a positive net growth as a species. Because of this, eventually the Hunters and Gatherers social group failed and had to be replaced by other kinds of social groups.

2. Herders – In the grand scheme of human evolution, the environment always dictates both the challenges and the resources and it is the job of our species to conquer the first and utilize the second if we are to survive as a species. With the large brain of human beings and an awareness that they were dependent on the game animals for survival, human genius devised a plan to breed the animals and own an entire herd of them to kill as they needed for food. That was to insure a constant food supply. So, they captured enough to begin a breeding process to increase the numbers of animals which they owned to feed themselves.

But, the animals had to be fed, so they held the herd together in groups/herds and then followed those animals on their natural migrations to their feeding grounds with the changing seasons, controlling the animals and following the food sources of the herds. They would go to the mountains and then to the valleys with the changing of the seasons and “home” was still wherever they were with the animals. Women still gathered fruits and vegetables along the way and carried their babies, but there no longer was a need to run through the jungles and fields chasing the hunters because the animal food source was being controlled and managed and the pace of movement was much slower and easier to follow. The attrition rate of children was lower than among the Hunters and Gatherers.

It was within the Herding Culture that the Pair Bonds broke down and when the Pair Bonds break and the Family dissolves, the social group also breaks, and the species is in jeopardy of extinction. Where women lose their equal status with men, and cooperation is replaced with self-interest, greed, and corruption, since it is only through the highest brain functions of Cooperation that human beings can claim their superiority with an ability to survive among the other species on the planet. If they forfeit that superior Relationship skill set and lose the larger force of an intelligent, cooperative body, the culture either dies or remains un-evolved and its individual members also tempt the fates of extinction. This is what happened in the Herding Culture and it led to their failure.

In the Herding Culture the herd became the most important element and the competitive nature of the men in the group lusting for their own self-interest overcame the higher intellectual skills for cooperation as greed and corruption took its place. Instead of a cooperative concern for the welfare of the entire group, each man focused on his one selfish agenda and demanded, not an equal share and cooperative participation in a herd owned and managed by the entire group, but the right to own his own herd exclusive of the group.

Then the power struggle and battles began for ownership of the most resources in the environment, regardless of the needs of others, and the responsibility and accountability to the group to balance the power and control went out the window, as the Herding Culture lost the balance and harmony which is the first law of life for all entities residing on the planet. As self-interest and greed became paramount, there was a major shift in values and priorities and wars of ownership, rather than the community-based spirit of cooperative participation, became the driving force as each man became a weapon against all others in the group. With an entire herd

to supply food, there was excess food for the first time and with greed excess becomes power. So, the herd became the most important value to each owner and all energy was focused on protecting it and growing it, and all secondary resources were put into that effort.

With the herd as a priority for each herd-owner man in a time when herds migrated to their food sources, there were no fences to protect a man's herd from straying or from being stolen by a neighbor who might want to add to his own herd. There was no brand on the hides of the animals to identify ownership, and each neighbor was very happy to steal as many of his neighbor's herd as he could if he could do so under the shield of darkness at night or by a show of force and weaponry to steal from a weaker owner.

The new value system and mindset was that whoever owned the most animals was the most powerful man in the community, so each man wanted to have that powerful status and there were no holds barred in his attempts to attain that powerful position. So, private ownership became the most important goal and the battles for ownership of all of the resources, for all the power and control, became the priority as greed and corruption reared their ugly heads for the first time in history.

The animals in the herd became the most valuable asset to each herd owner and, as such, the woman who was his mate was reduced to less status than his animals and soon her job was to produce sons who would then become his "fences" to protect the perimeter of his herd so that they could not be stolen and so that his neighbor would not lead his animals to feed on the land that he had secured to feed his herd. Also, his sons became his means for acquiring more animals by stealing them from weaker neighbors. Here is where "Machismo" was born and the world was forever changed in the most negative ways because of it.

Given the fact that each son was part of the "fence" to protect and add to the herd, he was also both a "weapon" of aggression and of defense. He could not look powerful and formidable if he smiled and was a "nice guy." To stand sentry over the herd and to fight invaders and become an invader himself, he had to look and act ferocious, so each male adult taught his sons from birth how to be as vicious as possible, to be "tough" to frighten neighbors and to steal their herds and their grazing lands so their father, the owner of the herd, could become the most wealthy and powerful herd owner in the group and hopefully own ALL of the resources. The fence around the herds was made of snarling "Machismo" fences with angry, fierce faces warding off anyone who would dare to approach. The "Macho fence" had a nasty face and an even nastier disposition to go with it.

The role of women diminished to nothing more than slaves and brood mares to produce more "Macho fences" for their men. Women became targets of abuse by their mates and their sons to practice their "Macho" cruelty and flex their egos to show their power to the rest of the community and to reassure themselves that they were "tough" enough for the powerful ownership that they wanted because they also had to compete with their brothers for their father's herd when he died, so they would eventually pit themselves against their own brothers and possibly even kill their father at some point to own his herd exclusively.

"Tough" was the byword for the "Macho fence" and any sign of humanity or sensitivity was seen as weakness and was disallowed, much as was the case in Sparta, a purely warrior state which was to come of age in early pre-Greek times. It would be interesting to delve into the ancient

herding culture at the foundation of Sparta to watch that evolution, too. Sparta was the quintessential Macho state of all time. It also failed, as do all cultures where women are not equals and there are no Pair Bonds successfully built. There are warring cultures in the Middle-East who were the arch enemies of Sparta and they also are failed cultures, but Western oil dollars have forced them into the Modern Era. Their women are tortured slaves below the covering garments which hide the scars and wounds of their abuse.

Needless to say, the role of woman diminished to slaves whose duties were producing sons, nursing them until they were weaned, and then they had to provide fruits and vegetables as they always had, and do the other chores of making clothing and serving as receptacles for their abuser's sexual demands.

As there was no longer any value in exclusive relationships and the Pair Bond was broken, the men would take as many women as they could steal from the other men so they could produce as many "Macho fences" as possible. With no further need for cooperation with the rest of the community and no need for cooperation with women, language died in favor of "Macho" displays of power, be it real or imagined, and the Herding Culture died as it self-destructed for loss of values and cooperation, as it is only through cooperation with others of our species that the human being can use the only quality, its larger brain, to achieve superiority over the other animals and the elements on the planet. Barring the use of the higher intellect for a force of cooperation, the Herding Cultures died. No culture where women are second-class citizens can be successful.

In viewing the Herding Culture, it is easy to see what is happening in our world today. The same mentality which caused that culture to fail is destroying ours for the same reason. Where the human brain is used only for self-interest and the acquisition of power through greed and corruption, and women are second-class citizens and targets of abuse, and men see themselves as "Macho," self-focused power figures instead of as cooperative communicators in partnership, cooperative relationships, with their Pair Bond, their Family, and their neighbors, human beings can no longer consider themselves the superior species and they are no longer "fit enough to survive."

3. Farmers - In the Agrarian Culture of Farmers we see the highest skills of human beings working together in full cooperation in an organized community within a community as the family becomes a very successful community business based on the power and success of the Pair Bond relationship between the man and woman and they are equal partners in the success of both the family and the family business of the farm.

We have a large family, with a "division of labor" invented for the first time in history and each person has an equal share of both power/control and responsibility/accountability in doing their part to make both the family and the business a success. It is the most perfect cooperation and takes the highest order of intelligence and skills to be successful.

We have "surplus" now instead of "excess" and that enables a larger cooperation which extends beyond the family to the larger community of local farmers and even beyond to outbound areas

where trade of the “surplus” takes place and there is an exchange of goods which increases the success of the farming family and community by bringing in tools and resources which would otherwise not be available to them.

The Farming Culture has been so successful, that it is still with us today and it is still the foundation from which have differentiated offshoot businesses which have become “Merchants” and other “Professionals.”

I speak here in the present tense because this culture was so successful that it is still the foundation for how the successful countries in the world still live. And within the Agrarian Culture was born the work ethic of cooperation and delayed gratification as the farmer learned, and taught the rest of the world, how to patiently plant, nurture, and then harvest the crops, which has become a very value system by which to live called “The Protestant Work Ethic.”

This was the prevailing cultural standard for our country for many years until “delayed gratification” was replaced by the “Me Generation” who decided that they didn’t want to work hard and patiently save and wait for the harvest. They wanted it “Now” and the “Fly Now and Pay Later” plan was devised by greedy opportunists who saw a great profit for themselves in giving it to them “now,” in the form of credit cards and bank loans pandering to their impatience. We currently see the socio-economic devastation of the world as a result.

But, something much worse happened when the Farmer met the Herder in modern times – but I’ll get to that later.

4. Native American Hunters/Herders/Farmers – We call the cultures which lived here in North America “Native Americans” or “American Indians” and they have been studied as much as materials revealing their history have allowed. From my readings, I have found that the Tribes have much in common, but they also have much not in common as far as the foundations for the cultures are concerned.

In my studies, I have found the Cherokee Tribe the most advanced of all cultural groups and I base that on their means for sustenance, cooperation between men and woman in the Pair Bond and Family unit, and their value system based on community cooperation, sharing, and a balance of power/control and responsibility/accountability. In my brief discussion of this very successful culture I will view it from the perspectives of what I value based on my studies of human beings and how they function successfully and unsuccessfully.

I think that the one basic belief system that prevented the Native American tribes, and especially the Cherokees, from falling into the same self-interest/greed/corruption cycle that has caused the self-destruction of the Herding Culture and those who have unfortunately come behind them is the acceptance that the Earth, and all elements within it, including animals and plants, belong to everyone and not to any one person. They are valued as shared resources.

It is fundamental to all Native Americans that there can be no such thing as ownership of the

natural resources of our planet, so the idea of grabbing resources from others to own them all for the power and status of such ownership simply does not live in the mind of the Ancient Native American belief system.

Sadly, they were not powerful enough to be the protectors of the Earth and all of its natural resources so they were overwhelmed by a greedy, self-interest belief system they could not understand as invaders drove them violently off their land to steal the gold that lay beneath it. Not having any such greedy attitude or sense of self-interest, and being a very successful cooperative people, they were unprepared and blindsided by the self-interest and greed of those who only saw the personal acquisition and power and control that the gold beneath the land would provide for them and they were going to have it at any cost and at the cost of any lives that were in the way, which were millions of Native American lives, and mostly Cherokees.

Greed is not a natural part of successful Agrarian Cultures. The unique culture of the Ancient Cherokees was more advanced than any other recorded successful Agrarian Culture and was in a Human Social Group unlike any other that I've known or studied. I view it as the most highly-evolved, successful, and ideal culture and one to use as a model for values and rules to accomplish a successful and fair Socio-Economic System.

Until this tragic Genocide took place and documented for all time the worst possible elements in human nature attempting to destroy the best possible elements in the human nature for self-interest, greed, and the sociopathic corruption of power, my brief studies of the Cherokee Tribe's culture as it existed successfully from Ancient times, for maybe 10,000 or more years, demonstrated the ultimate in "Fitness for Survival" qualities for the human species that I think our planet has ever seen. In my reading I was shocked to see that from Ancient Cherokee Culture come "The Golden Rule" and the "Serenity Prayer" and many other values based on respect.

As the Cherokee did not have a written language until modern times, it is only through parables and verbal accounts passed down from elders and from visitors who came away with some history to share with the rest of the world in written form that we know anything of their culture as that structure and those values do not exist anymore in the practical sense but only in the cultural memory of the decedents of the tribes. The idea of no personal ownership and the sense of full responsibility to the Earth and all of its inhabitants flies in the face of self-interest, greed, and corruption.

To say that this attitude cannot exist harmoniously in the modern world, is the worst possible description of a species who has been in the process for a long time of self-destruction. It hurts me personally as I see a battle played out which can only be described as one between "Good" and "Evil," but it really represents the best and most successful qualities of a highly-evolved faction of our species and the worst possible segment which would destroy all that stands in the way of its greedy fulfillment of the lust for power and control and the utter failure of any sense of responsibility to others and a total lack of interest in developing any skills which could form bonds of cooperation.

As I watch, I see that the self-interest traits are finally taking down the element of our species which has never evolved beyond that point and I am watching what I hope will be the superior group waiting in the wings to take back the responsibility for humanity. And I also see an urgent need for those of us who are aware of what is happening around us to begin to learn these skills so that we are able to live in the world which to me logically will have to emerge from the ruins and take flight like the Phoenix, IF man is to survive as a species.

And now... What does work? Let's take a brief look at the Cherokee culture as a model:

In the Cherokee culture men and women shared different but equal status, power, and responsibility. The men were both hunters and warriors so they provided meat in a totally cooperative force and they also protected the entire Tribe/Community in a totally cooperative force. The tribe also kept some animals for milk, eggs, and for food, so animal husbandry was part of the economic base but not in the traditional herding sense where they follow the migratory patterns of the animals. They kept goats, cows, chickens, and maybe sheep, but they hunted deer and rabbit and buffalo (which were also stolen from them during the genocide, so they nearly starved and lost much of their means for clothing, tools, and weapons).

They also became farmers and woman and children took this responsibility until male children were old enough to become hunters and warriors. So, the women and their daughters brought fruits of the land to the table to feed the tribe and the family as men and their sons brought the meat from the hunt and defended the tribe against attacks. The products of the fields also fed the domesticated animals. What was owned, the home and its contents, mostly, were included in a matrilineal ownership where owned property was passed from mother to daughter. That way if the husband violated the bonds of his marriage, or abandoned his family, the woman could throw him out and send him back to his mother and the welfare and housing of the children was assured. Also, if he died, his unmarried male relative, usually a brother, was required to marry his widow and to provide for her and the children.

In the Cherokee culture a woman chose the Chief and powerful women sat on the governing Council to make decisions related to war and prisoners. The political structure was very cooperative and democratic and their cultural and religious values were based solidly on respect and "The Golden Rule" way before it ever was incorporated by the European invaders who tried to gut the tribes of their humanity and their survival.

They taught their children about "right and wrong" through parables which were easily understood at all ages. And there was respect for all living things and all elements, and any abuse was dealt with so that it did not continue. There were even those members of the tribe who lived in ways that demonstrated unacceptable behavior as a lesson, or bad example, to children and other members of the tribe of "what not to do."

Medicine was based on plants which are still used today in modern traditional and non-traditional medicine. In Ancient times, it was the most Modern and successful of cultures which incorporated all of the elements of wise and democratic cooperation among individuals extended out to include the entire community.

Without going fully into the details of the culture, this culture, more than any I have ever learned about, had all of the elements of success for the Pair Bond, the Family, and the Community and was profoundly successful for thousands of years until the worst elements in human nature went to war against the best and the best was too naive to protect itself sufficiently to survive as a body and was uprooted from the land which had gold beneath it as the crime of Genocide was committed against them.

We have seen this happen in World History again. Take for instance the 9 million Jews who were marched off to concentration camps as they also were too naive to believe that anyone could be so “evil” as those who perpetrated a Genocide against them and stole all of their acquired resources, as the Europeans raped the lands under the Cherokees.

You may be wondering if I am Native American. The answer is No. I am not! I do not speak so well of them due to any personal bias. I only report what I see, appreciate, and admire. Half of my own ancestors came originally from Odessa, Russia and the other half from Austria... far away from Cherokees. I can't tell you much about my own ancestors beyond the fact that my grandmother's father was a wealthy tobacco farmer and my grandmother told me that as a child she smoked cigars to test them for taste, so she and her siblings, I guess, were their father's “Quality Control Department.” Yes, she was short... whether they stunted her growth or not.

If there's a cultural lesson here related to the Cherokee, it is that with only the best qualities in human nature prevailing, a culture surely will lack the weapons and tools to fight an Evil force capable of taking away from them their very survival. How can any people be prepared for the unimaginable?

The Cherokees and the Jews of old shared the same “deer in the headlights” shock as they stood by paralyzed in their disbelief that such Evil could even exist in the world. To the rest of the world they appeared to just passively watch the Genocide taking place and did not act until it was already too late. I recall when even I failed to understand that no one can be prepared for the unimaginable. It would be like some aliens landing in the backyard with weapons unlike anything we have ever seen and we would have no idea what they planned to do, so we could only try to cooperate, use our own good relationship skills, and hope for the best.

I think there are some nations that still see Israel as passive and unable to act against it's enemies. Anyone who believes that would probably not want to test that theory. That only works when Evil is “unimaginable,” not after it has reared its ugly head and created devastation.

Sociopathic behavior is passed genetically from parent to child. We have an overabundance of them in our culture. I think all we can do about it is let them destroy each other in one huge struggle between Godzilla and Rodan. Logically, after they have sucked “We, the People” dry of resources, and they own it all, they will then do what “herders” do and begin to destroy each other so they can steal ALL of the resources. If we just get busy rebuilding the Socio-Economic System of the nation while they're distracted fighting for all the resources, by the time they've ripped each other's throats out, we'll have things well-organized and running smoothly.

#9 – Naming Solving the Pain!

You're sitting alone with it – just you and the Pain. You look at it long and hard. Up until now you've tried every trick in the book to escape it, ignore it, stick it in one room so you can walk away into another room and slam the door behind you. But, despite all your efforts, it's still there...

From my own personal and professional experience I'd say that the two most prevalent names for Pain are “Guilt” and “Fear.” Yeah, I know.. you think you're the only one. It's almost a smack in the head to find out that you're in company with a huge number of people who have to name the pain one of these two names. We ARE each special and we do feel that what we experience is unique to us... and that we couldn't even find a “support group” for our pain because only we would be experiencing it.

Well, you'd be both right and wrong in this assumption. Our pain is unique, but it's name is NOT!

Now you think I'm nitpicking. What does it matter, huh?

It matters a LOT... because our pain is the PROBLEM and we can't solve a problem without identifying it and then isolating it. Remember our “good friend Algebra?”

So, if we are to tackle it, wrestle it to the ground, and finally eliminate it, the very first thing we need to do is to identify it... and we can't do that until we name it.

Okay... Let's talk real things here instead of hypotheticals. It just so happens that one of my pains from the past, which I thought was long-gone, just conveniently dropped into my lap and now I've had to deal with it again. I might as well share it with you so you know what I mean.

A relative I didn't know I had contacted me from out of the clear blue and wanted information about my parents and grandparents because they were trying to trace the ancestry of the family back to the generations before my grandmother.

I tried to help with whatever information I had. What I never expected was to receive a graphic email attachment the other day of my grandmother's grave.

For me, this was like getting hit by a car or a sniper jumping out of a bush...

Remember I said that our pain is subjective. Yes, I know what a “sniper” is and I'm a civilian, but in terms of the subjective nature of pain, “snipers” can come in all different forms.

Okay... I'll tell you the story as briefly as I can. But, first, let me tell you that I've already identified my pain as “Guilt.” Actually, I've suffered the pain of “Guilt” over three deaths and I'm not in the military and have never been on the battlefield, except for the one that we all call “Life.”

Many years ago the economy where I was living hit the skids as badly as it is now and I was forced to relocate where I thought I could earn a living and provide for my many responsibilities. Among the challenges I was coping with was the very major one regarding my beloved grandmother.

Through very complicated circumstances, she had been abandoned in a nursing home and I was the only one who came to visit her. She looked forward to my visits and was very emotionally dependent on them.

I loved my grandmother very much, probably more than most grandchildren love their grandparents. She was very special to me. When I knew that I had to leave the state, the struggle began for me about how I was to deal with her. I spent many sleepless nights flipping back and forth searching for some creative way that I could take her with me, but no matter what ideas I came up with, I always hit the wall and ultimately I faced the reality that there was no way to take her and that there was no way I could stay and still survive. All the choices were made for me and I would have to bite the bullet and do what I had to do.

The day I went to the nursing home to tell her was very traumatic, but not nearly as traumatic as the day I went to kiss her good-bye.

She was 85 but still beautiful with luscious auburn hair and deep blue eyes. She had had a hard life running with her mother and siblings from the murderous Pogroms in Czarist Russia until her mother had found a way to bring her children to the United States. As had been the way of the times, my great grandfather, the tobacco farmer/cigar maker, had claimed the option of the day and pointed to his wife and spun around three times saying also three times "I divorce thee, I divorce thee, I divorce thee" and she and her three children were on their own to survive somehow as they ran for their lives all over Europe in the late 1800's or early 1900's.

And after my young grandmother arrived at the safety of Ellis Island and become an American citizen, she married a very handsome young ex-soldier from the Austrian Army who gave her one child, my father, and who required being hit over the head with a frying pan once in a while to bring peace to the household and preserve the safety of herself and my father.

Life had been hard from my grandmother, but she had been lucky enough to escape before the insanity of Nazi Germany and she and my grandfather had worked hard and become prosperous Entrepreneurs. Because she loved me unconditionally and many times put her soft hands on my hair to sooth and protect me, I wanted only all good things for her....

As I stood in the doorway of the nursing home so many years ago, having turned back to blow one last kiss good-bye, I saw a tiny woman standing there now totally abandoned and with tears streaming down her lovely but distraught face. She had said to me before I left, "I'll never see you again." I wanted to say those stupid things we say in such awkward moments which cancel out such negative thoughts, but she was right and we both knew it.

As I walked away, the tears were also flowing down my face.. and I felt just as my father must have felt when I was 7 and he had to put our beloved guinea pig, Ike, into that big glass jar, drop a cotton ball saturated with chloroform into the jar, and then put the stopper in the top. He told me he felt like Hitler and then he retired to his room to cry.

That's how I felt but I was a female and it was okay for me to cry in public...

I set my jaw and did what I had to do and finally made the necessary move and arrived in my destination state to re-invent myself and start a new, and hopefully, better life.

That was on March 26th. On September 26th I was in my new office when a phone call came for me. I don't even know how she found me in my office, but it was the head nurse in a hospital back home. My grandmother had suffered a stroke so severe that she was blind and deaf and they didn't expect her to live much past that night. But, she had made it clear to them that she must reach me before she died and she must tell me that she loved me, one last time.

I don't think I need to describe how I felt... nor would you be surprised that I'm crying as I write this now... I asked the nurse to please tell her that I loved her and to hug and kiss her for me.

That was the end of that chapter of my life, or so I thought, until three days ago when my new relative sent me the picture of my grandmother's grave stone and I found out where she was buried and the actual date of her death, because she also send me a copy of her death certificate. She passed on September 29th. She was born October 30, 1890 and she died six months after I left at 85, one month before her 86th birthday...

And I felt that I had killed her...broke her heart...the pain that seized me I can name as GUILT!

What I haven't told you, up to now, is that I didn't leave her behind so I could go off and become a "Flower Child" and find my "heart's delight." I was a single mom with two pre-school age babies, and my 29 year-old husband had just died of alcoholism and left me alone and penniless in the world.

I had just lost my job, the economy had collapsed, as it has now, and I had no money in the bank and no food in the house.. and the "Social Welfare System" which everyone talks about being such a disgusting thing was disgusting enough to discriminate against me since I lived in the more affluent part of town, so they didn't care if my babies starved to death and even denied me the opportunity to apply for food stamps. That was illegal, but I was too young and naive at the time to know that....so I didn't know that I should have fought them. I'm much wiser and more knowledgeable now.... Now my sword comes out immediately and I'm ready to fight!

So, the tug-of-war was between comforting my beloved grandmother or providing sustenance for my babies. Had I been able to split myself in half or clone myself, I could have done both, but there was only one of me and I had to make the only choice that I could make and leave her behind.

I knew I had just killed her and I felt deep Guilt just having made the decision. When she died 6 months later, I became nearly disabled with pain from my feelings of Guilt.

It was easy to name this pain, but not so easy to deal with it.... So, now we come to the hard part... Dealing with the pain of Guilt....

Logically, you'd think that resolving Guilt would simply be a matter of rationalizing it. It was very rational for me to choose the survival of my children over the comfort of my beloved grandmother. I would imagine that my father might have told himself that he had put the benefits to mankind over the simple life of his beloved Ike before he dropped the chloroform into the jar.

But, it doesn't work that way. If you've been trying to resolve Guilt, especially "Survivor Guilt," you already know this. There is simply nothing "rational" about feelings of Guilt. We Good folks know that.. The only ones who don't know that are the "evil" people who actually do commit crimes and truly ARE Guilty and should feel Guilt, but never do.

Only Good folks struggle with feelings of Guilt.

So, let's look at it like an Algebra problem. Let's "isolate" it by removing all those "knowns" and try to "solve for the unknown X."

When we take this logical approach, we immediately are confronted by a simple question which looms up in front of us. It's so large and looms up so fast that it's pretty scary!

"What could I have done to prevent the death?"

There was a movie a few years ago that Meryl Streep acted in called "Sophie's Choice" where she had to choose between her children which one she would sacrifice. Ultimately her guilt drove her to suicide. Guilt!

Recently on the News they described a murder which was finally solved after 30 years where a young girl was killed at work by a robber. Her father committed suicide later because he said it was his job to protect his child and he had failed to protect her. He wasn't even there! Guilt!

And now I am suffering the pain of sadness and depression reflecting back on those times and feel them again as if they are happening now. Leaving Grandma behind to die.. Guilt!

So there's the question again: "What could I have done to prevent the death?"

Is it the irrational answer to that question which fries a person's mind so badly that they need to escape into Death by their own hands?

Or....

Is it that there is NO answer to that question that welds all their gray-matter into a dysfunctional pile of glue so they can no longer function and they must escape?

Logically, I can't see that either option is in any way beneficial to anyone, certainly not to the person experiencing the pain of Guilt, not to those who love or care about the person, and certainly not to the person or persons who lost their lives, or even to the loved ones of those left behind. It's not even logical mathematically because if you take $1 + 1 = 2$ and then you take $2 - 2 = 0$, you have not solved the problem; you have only doubled the losses. It's no kind of solution for anyone or anything. We can do better than that!

If we come to that crossroads between facing our Pain/Guilt or permanently running away from it, there is a much more powerful question to consider:

“Am I fit enough to survive?”

Ah.. That is a rational question to consider and all of the irrational, disabling emotional blindness has been weeded out. Now we are ready to do some Algebra and solve for X - “X” being the unknown solution which we are challenged to find.

I suffered terrible Guilt when my father died right in the middle of my battle to save him. I suffered terrible Guilt when I left my grandmother behind and then the feelings of Guilt doubled when she died a short 6 months later. Then there was my wonderful dog who died within two days of my leaving him with his previous owner because I was so fearful of what I would do with him if I came home and found him dead in the middle of the living room floor.

All three times I was ravaged by feelings of Guilt.

My brain tried to resolve the Guilt regarding my father by nightmares where I would bring him back to life so that I had another chance to save him. Each time I saved him, of course, but then I always woke up and he was gone.

With my grandmother, I clung to the reality that it was a choice which was taken out of my hands because my first duty was to the survival of my children and Grandma had already lived her life and as much as I loved her, I was still not responsible for her life.

With my beloved dog, he was 96 years old in human years and I had promised to return him to his previous owner before he died. I had promised her. I had rescued him when she hit hard times and had to sacrifice him. Lying to myself didn't work though. I was too chicken to deal with picking up his large dead body and digging a hole in the back yard to bury him. I just couldn't cope so I gave him away before I had to face that. GUILT!!

So, I thought that the only pain of Guilt that I was still dealing with was for my dog... But now, thanks to this unknown relative Grandma is back and I have to deal with my Guilt again.....

Algebra problem: $X+1+2+3 = \text{Guilt}$

Lets read that as:

The solution (X) to the pain of my Guilt

Plus

Some other issue I've had to deal with in life

Plus

Some other issue I've had to deal with in life

Plus

If I want to keep the Guilt to punish myself or resolve it to set myself free

Equals

My painful feelings of Guilt

To solve an Algebra problem you identify all the parts of the equation that you can and then take them away from the unknown solution. When you get the unknown solution isolated so that it's not all confused with and clouded by the other issues hanging on it, then that solution will become clear to you and you can pursue solving it because you will have identified the solution. Now you can just take action.

(I'm sure you realize that this is a metaphor and so I'm taking a little "Poetic License" and hope I don't get an "F" on this Algebra exam.)

Life is actually pretty simple. It doesn't get complicated and difficult until we start telling lies.

No, I didn't say that we become "dishonest" or "unethical" or violate our "Principles." I said "telling lies."

I am referring to "telling lies" to ourselves, NOT to others.

We can be honest as the day is long and tell ourselves lies every day. It doesn't make us dishonest, so don't fight the idea if you regard yourself as an honest human being. I don't know anyone more honest than I am, yet I lie to myself all the time.

Oh, you want some examples... Okay... Now.. this is NOT a confessional, but I will still give you some examples.

I woke up this morning and told myself a lie immediately. As soon as my eyes opened, I took out my smart phone and punched into the calendar that I'm going to work out at Curves at 3 pm. Now, that's a lie if I've ever heard one. I know darn well that I'm going to be writing all day and that when 2 pm rolls around I'm not going to want to stop and get dressed and take my rear-end

to Curves and “sweat to the oldies.” Now, I may very well actually do it, but when I punched it into my calendar, I knew darn well that it was a lie.

When I counsel couples who are having relationship problems I talk to them all the time about “telling the truth,” but I mean to themselves in that case. Here's an example I give them:

A husband and wife are having a fight and she finally tells him: “Get out of here; I hate you and I never want to see you again!” About an hour later she sees him at the front door with his luggage and golf clubs and with his hand on the door knob in the process of leaving. She yells out to him. “Where in the hell are you going?” Calmly, he responds, “Well, you told me to get out of here... that you hate me and never wanted to see me again... so I'm getting out of here.”

Now she really goes nuts and has to do whatever she can to stop him because she really didn't mean that and she doesn't want him to leave and never return.

Without realizing it, she had lied to herself about her feelings and thought she was ANGRY when the Truth was that she was Frustrated, Disappointed, Hurt, or anything but NOT Angry. However, her reaction was not in keeping with the Truth of her feelings. It was an Anger reaction, not a Frustration, Disappointment, Hurt reaction. Had she asked herself to find the Truth of her feelings, she could have used the appropriate response and avoided this disaster.

You can't solve a problem if you're lying to yourself. So, in order to solve the Algebra problem, you need to substitute the numbers with Truths.

What do I mean?

Lets solve it for the couple in trouble.

$X + 1(\text{what he did to upset her}) + 2(\text{the lie she told herself so she could react}) + 3(\text{whether she wants to solve the problem or just punish him}) = \text{Her Angry Outburst}$

Let's substitute Truth into the equation now:

Unknown Solution X

Plus

He forgot her birthday

Plus

Her angry lie to herself that he doesn't care about her and did this to hurt her

Plus

Her desire to punish him

Equals

Her angry outburst to hurt him back

Because we're not dealing with any Truth here, there's no real workable solution because the one she chose of telling him to get out sure didn't solve this problem.

A real solution involves telling yourself the Truth. Here's a Real Solution:

Unknown Solution X

Plus

He forgot her birthday

Plus

Her disappointment that he forgot about her

Plus

Her desire to express her feelings of disappointment

Equals

Tactfully telling him she feels disappointed that he forgot her birthday

This is a solution that will most likely get positive results which could be a “win-win” if they work together to tell the Truth and solve the problem. He might feel sad that he forgot her and make it up to her by taking her out to a great dinner in their favorite restaurant and they might make mad passionate love that night. Then she could give him a sweet little reminder, maybe a note on his pillow, each year ahead of time reminding him that her birthday is coming and they might both chuckle over it and have another great dinner out and another evening of passion.

We lie to ourselves all the time.

Still don't believe me?

I lie to myself that when I get to the restaurant I'm just going to get a salad.. Yes.. just a salad.. and maybe just vinaigrette dressing... It's like there are two of me now... the one that's making a path to the restaurant and the one that's going to have the most fattening thing on the menu.

How many times have you told yourself that tomorrow you're going to clean out the garage or clean the leaves out of the gutter... or weed out all the clothes you don't wear and give them to charity... or finally fix that thingamajig that keeps driving you nuts.. or? Well, it's endless....

Sometimes we get too exhausted from just lying to ourselves about how we're going to do it that we don't even have the energy left to really do it.

Here's another lie that we tell ourselves: “I'm God!”

I know... I caught you off guard with this one. You were following along and just nodding your head in agreement and now you just sat up straight and your mouth dropped open...

Let's plug it into one of my Algebra problems and see how it works:

Unknown Solution X

Plus

My father died when I was fighting to save him

Plus

I should have been able to save him because I'm God

Plus

I'm angry with me because he died so I'm going to punish myself

Equals

I'll suffer the Pain of Guilt

Here's one for my Grandmother:

Unknown Solution X

Plus

My beloved grandma died of a stroke because I abandoned her

Plus

I should have found a way to take care of her and my children because I'm God

Plus

I'm angry with me because I caused her death so I'm going to punish myself

Equals

I'll suffer the Pain of Guilt

Here's one for my dog, Magic:

Unknown Solution X

Plus

Magic died of a broken heart because I abandoned him

Plus

Even at 96 I could have kept him alive longer if I had not been so selfish and fearful

Plus

I deserve to suffer because I left him with strangers and he died

Equals

I'll punish myself with the Pain of Guilt

Yes, these feelings of Guilt that I bear are all irrational and they are based on lies I've told myself. My father suffered from accidentally inhaling a very poisonous gas in his lab and it took him 10 horrible and abusive years to die. There was nothing I could do to stop Death and I did everything humanly possible to help him in all ways that I could, even to the point of neglecting myself and even my own personal responsibilities. In no way was I at fault and in no way did I neglect to give my all to making life possible for him. The Truth is that I am NOT God and that there was nothing humanly possible that I could do to stop Death from taking him.

In the case of my Grandmother, again, I am NOT God and I could not choose her over my children. My children were babies and she was 85. She had lived her life and I was responsible to give my children a chance to also live a life. My choice was made for me and I did everything possible to make my Grandmother's life as happy as I could and to give her all my love and all my time, until I had to leave. There has never been any logical reason for me to punish myself with the pain of Guilt.

And my poor Magic. The reality is that when I dropped him off he got to play with two other dogs and have a grand time for two days before his time came and the sand just ran out in his hourglass. I rescued him and gave him a wonderful life and he was still healthy and happy until he just became an old man and died a natural death. There was no reason for me to punish myself.

So, we deal with "Survivor Guilt" by telling ourselves lies. We tell ourselves that we "are God" and that we had the power to save them but we failed to use our power. We tell ourselves that since we are still alive and they are gone, somehow forfeiting our own life will somehow settle the score with our failure for not doing a good job of "being God." And now we consider that taking one more life, ours, somehow would bring "Justice"... that because "we are God" and we failed to do our job of saving those lives, we must punish ourselves for our "failure" and jump on the funeral pyre .. which will somehow make all things that we see as "wrong" suddenly "right!"

None of it makes sense because none of it is based on Truth. There's no way that anyone can add any number of lies together and come up with Truth. It just ain't gonna happen!

But the fact remains that, even though we are honest to the bone, we have still been lying to ourselves all of our lives. We never realized it until now that we are really looking at it, but we have used it as a device all our lives... like some kind of invented stepping stone to get us from one place to another and somehow make it easier... Like me lying to myself that I'm going to work out at Curves or that I'm only going to eat a salad at the restaurant. These are such transparent lies that you have to even ask yourself "why bother?" We "bother" because we've been doing it from childhood and it just seems to come "naturally" by this time in our adult lives.

Lying to ourselves is just so easy that we do it without even thinking about it.

Did you come back from war lucky enough to be alive, maybe without injury or with injury, while some of your comrades lost their lives? Have you lied to yourself that somehow it's your fault that they died and you didn't? Have you lied to yourself that "you are God" and somehow you failed to save them and only saved yourself? Have you lied to yourself that because you are God and didn't save them you now need to punish yourself for your self-rationalized "failure?"

Turn your mental magnifying glass on yourself and search for the lies and then search for the Truth. I'm sure that you will find that they are diametrically opposed. I know that this feels very uncomfortable. You're not used to it. Self-punishment seems much easier and more natural only because you've been doing it for a long time and you haven't really thought about it.

It's like when I pointed out to the woman who nearly ran her husband out the door that her reaction was not compatible with the cause... it surely didn't bring the results she wanted. She felt frustration. NOT anger, but she gave the response that only would go with Anger. She should have given the response which matches logically with Frustration.

You lost your comrade or comrades. The enemy, not you, took their lives. You are NOT "God" so you had no irrational power to stop death from occurring. The response which should match the Truth of what happened and the Truth of your Feelings is Sadness, NOT Guilt.

But, another Truth is that all that I'm saying to you is still logical, rational..and certainly TRUE. But there is one thing missing here and that is that FEELINGS are NOT Rational. And Pain is a FEELING.... and Guilt is a FEELING... So maybe all bets are off on this Truth telling rationale.

Well, what's left than? How do we solve the Algebra Equation to find for X, the Solution for the problem of suffering the Pain of Guilt?

Actually, I do have an answer for that. It's not that I'm so smart.... It's that I received the gift of another Miracle which shined a light on the right path to take.

Of course, I will share this Miracle with you.

I have stated before how much respect and admiration I have for Native Americans and particularly for Cherokee Culture. Well, this Miracle was a gift from a very wise Healer who was a Cherokee Medicine Man. When I told him how much pain I was suffering due to the Guilt over my father's death, he took me on a "Vision Quest" and he reconnected me with my father in the "Spiritual World" and allowed me to ask for and receive forgiveness from my father. When I felt that my father forgave me, I was able to set myself free from the Pain of my feelings of Guilt.

So, I learned that there are three parts to the solution we need to release ourselves from the Pain of Guilt which we do not deserve. We are not criminals. We have never hurt anyone intentionally. We are Good and we are Innocent. And, we are also NOT the lies we have told ourselves. We are NOT "God." We have NOT failed to hold Death back from a life we cherished. There is no Truth to be found in a need to punish ourselves for crimes which we have NOT committed.

So, the three parts to the solution for letting go of the Pain of Guilt or Survivor Guilt are:

1. Tell the Truth to yourself.
2. Choose NOT to Punish yourself.
3. Seek Forgiveness from those loved ones or comrades you've lost.

Can you do all three of these alone? Yes you can, or you can get help and support if that makes it faster, easier, and more effective. The whole idea is to get a good solution which you can live with and which will put you on the path to finding the Success and Happiness in life which you want and which you deserve. You don't need to waste time being fearful or resistant. Do it now!

Telling yourself the Truth might be complicated if you have suffered other abuses, like childhood sexual abuse (CSA), which I would recommend discussing with the experts who have all the answers at their fingertips.

If your Truths are less complex and challenging, then you can decide to tell yourself that you are NOT “God” and don't have the power to hold back Death or restore life when it has been taken... no matter how much you wish you could and want to.

Unless you have had abusers before who told you lies about who you are and made you feel unworthy of love, success, and happiness, and you need to punish yourself because those demons still live inside you and continue to tell you the same lies every day (and you should also speak to the experts who have resources to offer to overcome these lies faster, easier, and more effectively), then you can make the choice to NOT punish yourself. The lie that forfeiting your life, also, will somehow make things right, is a huge lie to yourself and you must call it the lie that it is – unless you have decided to use it to imprison and punish yourself for other issues which were in your life way before you ever went into combat.

Obtaining Forgiveness may seem impossible unless you know a Cherokee Healer/Medicine Man who knows how to take you on a “Vision Quest” and connect you to your lost loved ones or comrades to gain their forgiveness.

Actually, this Forgiveness is very easy to obtain once you have told yourself the Truths you need, given up the self-imposed, irrational needs to punish yourself, and have decided to give yourself Permission to ask for Forgiveness to set yourself Free from the Pain of Survivor Guilt.

These lies have come to you over and over again in the form of nightmares. Once you cast away the Lies, embrace the Truths, throw away the desire to Punish yourself, and then give yourself Permission to seek Forgiveness and be set free from the Pain of your Guilt, you will go to sleep and instead of the nightmares, you will have dreams and your lost loved ones and comrades will come to you in your dreams.

You will then welcome them and ask them for their Forgiveness... They will tell you that you have done nothing wrong.. and they will both thank you for your love and Forgive you.. and you will be FREE once and for all of the Pain of your Survivor Guilt.

This is the path you must take to get there and then you will be Free.

But your “ticket to ride” must be the truthful desire to be FREE. Then you will be FREE. No more Survivor Guilt, no more Pain of PTSD.... no more Pain holding you back. Now you will be FREE to pursue the **Triumvirate**... for which you have been **Starving** for a very long time.

#10 – Back to the Jungle!

We're heading into an early Summer, having already passed through a very early Spring. The weird-looking Muscovy ducks on the lake only about 12 feet from my window have performed their mating rituals, as I've watched and admired their dances, and now the proud mamas are bringing their precious babies by to show them off and to teach them what they need to know to become the next successful Muscovy generation.

As I watch them in fascination, and study their behavior, I see how wise and wonderful Mother Nature is and how perfect her "Plan" is for all of life on this planet. And, I see so clearly the link between Muscovy ducks and Human Beings.

I'll admit that I watch "Mama Muscovy" outside my window daily and with great admiration. She's been leading her 7 babies (2 of them are yellow and 5 are brown) around the small lake behind my abode and up onto the lawn beneath my window since they made their first appearance maybe 2 or 3 weeks ago. She was leading them up to the bushes to the sides of my window twice a day and introducing them to some tiny somethings which apparently are good to eat, and perfectly positioned for their tiny bodies to reach.

I noticed that she had made a small change from leading them right up to the bushes to leading them to the lawn and letting them take themselves to the bushes, while she waited, ever-watchful, at the edge of the lake, watching them and watching everything on the lake. I think she was also watching me through the window.

Yesterday I noticed another small change. Both times they came to feed on the bushes (once early in the morning and once just before sundown), the ducklings led her and she followed them, remaining, again, ever-watchful at the edge of the lawn where the lake begins. Maybe she's loosening up the "apron strings" and teaching them some independence?

When the babies were finished feeding, "Papa Muscovy" appeared at the edge of the lake and Mama gently cruised into the water - her 7 little ones quickly falling in behind her and in a nearly perfect line followed her seamlessly across the lake to the other side, while "Papa Muscovy" kept his keen eyes on her, the babies, everything in the environment – and even me.

I thought to myself at that moment of great privilege that Mother Nature was really good at her job and that the Muscovy species was still following her "rules" and still doing what Muscovy ducks are supposed to do so they can live in complete harmony with each other and with the environment.

Mama and Papa did no battles. No one hurt the other. No one walked away. The children weren't uncooperative, didn't do drugs, didn't drop out of school, didn't do violent crimes... didn't do any of the things that we read about every day in the newspaper or hear about on the News in the world of Human Beings. By comparison, the Muscovy world is well-ordered and peaceful.

What's the difference between the contented Muscovy ducks and the discontented Human Beings?

Well, one very obvious difference is that the Muscovy ducks are still following Mother Nature's "Plan" and Human Beings are no longer following Mother Nature's Plan nor the "Rules" intended to guide us.

Okay... So now you're asking, "What Plan? And what Rules?" And, "How important is it that we follow them?" And, "Isn't it progress to evolve past the basic plan and rules?"

Well, let's go back to the "Jungle" to find our answers.....

First, let's look at the most basic of Mother Nature's Plan and Rules for us:

1. Self-Preservation
2. Survival of the Species
3. Survival of the Fittest

That's as basic as it gets, and it's a matter of Universal Law for all Life on the Planet Earth, so it makes perfect sense and there really is nothing to argue about.

When we consider "Self-Preservation," we focus on the most basic levels that we see on Maslow's Pyramid (See page 11). Because Human Beings are "Social Animals," we have needs on many levels, starting at the most basic of "food, shelter, clothing" and escalating to the ever higher levels of emotional and spiritual satisfaction.

(Yes, you're wondering about the "clothing" part back in the jungle. Well, by the time we reached "Naked Ape" status, we needed to protect our non-hairy, exposed bodies from the elements so we could remain healthy.)

Survival of the Species means that the special of Human Beings flourishes on Planet Earth in harmony with all other species and all existing elements which comprise our environment and the planet, itself.

When we consider the survival of the entire species, it's obvious that we will not have a "species" unless the individual members have been able to "preserve" their own survival, so Mother Nature imposes another rule on us for "Fitness" to survive as both individuals and then collections of individuals so that we have a "community" of those like us, which we can now call a "species."

The criteria which Mother Nature uses to determine our "fitness" as both individuals and a species is our "Adaptability to Change." Those of us who can adapt SUCCESSFULLY to our ever-changing environment as individuals ensure their "Self-Preservation."

Of these successful individuals who come together in a successful “community,” we can say that they form the successful “Species.” As long as the Plan, guided by a specific set of “Rules,” continues to be followed, one generation after another, the “Survival of the Species” known as Human Beings (Homo Sapiens) will continue to flourish – and for as long as the Planet Earth is still alive and healthy, provides a hospitable environment for us, and revolves around the Sun.

As a Social Scientist I'm very familiar with one of the most counterproductive, and dangerous, attitudes which those in my profession try NOT to take out into the field with them and call themselves “Researchers.” It's called “Ethnocentrism.”

Here's the definition:

“**Ethnocentrism**: characterized by or based on the attitude that one's own group is superior.”

This same mind-numbing arrogance that a person, or their group, is “superior” to all others becomes an impenetrable wall to TRUTH. I'd call it “ignorance,” but it most often is “aggressive stupidity.” What is “aggressive stupidity?” It's a term my father coined to describe someone who is not content to just be privately “stupid,” but is compelled to keep forcing their “stupidity” on others.

Human Beings are Animals!

We evolved over millions of years initially from single-cell creatures in the sea. That's about as basic a “simplest common denominator” as we can accept as TRUTH.

Anyone who approaches the study of Self as a Human Being with the blindness of “Ethnocentrism,” regarding themselves as “superior” to the fact that they're a highly-evolved mammal, won't be able to cross the bridge to finding themselves until they change their viewpoint - because they can only find themselves if they're looking in the right place.

I've said this before, and all Scientists (hard science and social science) are fully-accepting of this, that the only reason the Human Species is at the “top of the food chain” is because of our “Superior Brain.”

We have no huge fangs for ripping and tearing, no poison to kill our enemies, no sharp horns for goring, no superior hearing or vision, and we are not powerful runners, climbers, fliers, or swimmers. What we can do, as a member of the species of Homo Sapiens is “out-think” our animal food source and those who would consider us their food source.

But, think about it for a moment. If you see a rabbit or a deer and you're hungry, will you grab it with your superior brain and magically turn it into a lovely fricassee or sausage?

Not even on your best day!

That's not how having a superior brain makes us the superior species. There's one major quality of Human Beings which puts us at the top of the Food Chain.

We are Social Animals with Superior Brains!

Oh.. okay.. you were waiting for me to say this....

Yes, there are a lot of other “Social Animals.” Actually, as I watch the Muscovy ducks, I'm seeing “Social Animals.” And there are other species which are also “Social Animals,” and some of them have very complex societies.

Recent research has even surprised us by revealing how complex the society of Elephants is, even to the point of grieving the loss of a “loved one.” We didn't know that.

We were too limited by our “Ethnocentrism” and assumptions to see past our biases and take a totally objective look at Elephant societies to really discover them. And the lowly farm cow, which seems as dumb as a “cow patty” has been seen going back down a river to help rescue another cow in trouble. Who wudda thunk it, huh? We just see them as hamburgers on the hoof!

So, once you throw away the Ethnocentric biases and realize that we humans are animals, in the first place, that we have evolved by adapting to the changes in our environment around us so we can continue to survive, and that our superior brain has kept us at the top of the food chain, it really does beg some questions and a requirement to take a much closer look at the Plan and Rules laid down by Mother Nature which demand our compliance if we are to continue surviving as both individuals and as a species.

Well, here is the secret to the success of the Human Species:

One human being alone with a superior brain trying to become successful doesn't stand much of a chance – at least, not for very long. It's the ability to multiply those superior human brains many times over into a large, **cooperative community** of superior human brains working in concert which makes both individuals and the species successful.

So, the secret of our success as a species is that we are Highly-Evolved Social Animals. Highly-Evolved means that we have learned to work very effectively together for the benefit of the species and all of the individuals within the species.....

This has served us well for a very long time, but it's all falling apart now... so we need to go back to the “source” and have another “drink” from the “Fountain of Knowledge.”

Now, I'm going to take you back into the Jungle of old and introduce you to the “Triumvirate.” I know you've been wondering about it.... so you'll soon find out.

#11 – We Are Neither Ducks Nor Turtles!

Yesterday Mother Nature gave me another wonderful gift – right outside my window. It was like a movie played out before me and it reminded me of the Ancient Cherokee tradition of designating certain members of the tribe to live life with behavior Opposite of what was expected so they could serve as an example, mostly to the children, of what totally unacceptable behavior was.. how it looked.. and how one was never supposed to act.

Among the ancient Cherokees that was called the “The Rule of Opposites.”

When I first read about this (“Walking on the Wind,” by Michael Garrett -1998), I thought it was interesting and also that as graphic as it was, it must have been an excellent example of how NOT to act. Teaching how to act sometimes is not as effective as displaying how NOT to act. It usually provides more emotional impact. We tend to remember more of how things made us “feel” than how they made us “think.”

Before my recent move, I had a small clay plaque hanging on the wall which said, “No one is completely useless; they can always serve as a bad example!”

Yesterday Mother Nature gave me just such a lesson which was “normal” on the one hand and totally “opposite and unacceptable” on the other – when applied to Human Beings, that is.

Early in the morning I looked out my window and I saw what looked like three dinosaurs on the horizon. The sun had just come up and the three “dinosaurs” were right at the edge of my lawn, about maybe fifteen feet away and right where the grass meets the lake.

These three “dinosaurs” were really rather large turtles. But with the large humps of their shells and their thick arched necks with heads held high, they sure looked like dinosaurs against the shadows of the water with the sun coming up behind them.

It was such an unusual sight that I became mesmerized and I dropped everything and watched them.

There was a very large one, a medium one, and a smaller one. Even the smallest one was about a foot long and I'd say the large one was maybe close to two feet long.

It was odd to see them and I wondered what they were doing and why they were there right in my line of sight...

Suddenly, I observed that while I had looked away for a moment, the smallest of the three had crawled on top of the medium-sized turtle. As the ducks streamed by with their babies and various birds followed the parade, it became obvious to me that I was watching Mother Nature's Springtime ritual to ensure that new eggs would be laid for the season.

The smallest of the three was obviously a male and he was doing his best to father a new set of infants designated as the next turtle generation.

My attention then turned to the other two pseudo-"dinosaurs" standing there almost like they were waiting "next in line" and noted that Mr. Turtle didn't seem at all in need of privacy; even the ducks seemed oblivious. It seemed that only I was paying rapt attention to this ritual which I had never witnessed before - nor ever expected to see.

I wondered if the other two pseudo-"dinosaurs" were waiting to have their "turn" with m'lady after he had accomplished his duties to the species... maybe to insure that there was, in fact, an effective transfer of the genes to the next brood of hatchlings this season. So, I watched to see if this was the reason they all seemed to be "waiting in line."

Suddenly a fourth medium-sized turtle appeared and I was even more mystified. Was this a convention?

As I watched the very long time he balanced himself atop the shell of the medium-sized turtle, the other two turtles stood by patiently only two or three feet away.

I was thinking that we human beings would have found this lack of privacy impossible to cope with - and then I reminded myself that there are tribes still in existence on this planet where copulation takes place openly in rooms where there are many others present, even children, and no one seems to mind or even notice. (Yes, you've realized that I had a sudden attack of Ethnocentrism here and you'd be right!)

I acknowledged to myself that this obsession with sexual privacy is a modern American cultural rule, or maybe a rule for all the Western World, or maybe other Eastern Cultures, as well...

As I considered these ideas, I lost track of Mr. Turtle's having finished "servicing" the first medium-sized female and noted that he was atop the second medium-sized female, while the very large one remained waiting in the wings, now about three feet away.

What I had expected to happen had NOT happened as he was obviously a male servicing two females. I wondered about the very large turtle still at a short distance away...

I left the window for a few minutes and when I returned, I was surprised to find him balancing atop the giant turtle. Every once in a while I saw his front leg jut out for better balance.

Again, in my suddenly-Ethnocentric frame of mind, I expected a fight to break out thinking that one male was attempting to dominate another in a battle for breeding rights with the females. But, once again my thinking was wrong as this giant seemed fully still and cooperative.

Could he be servicing yet another female, but this one four times his size? The answer was clearly before me and it was a resounding "YES."

Next I wondered about the breeding logistics as his smaller frame was dwarfed by this giant. The impossibility of a Chihuahua attempting to mate with a Great Dane came to mind. I'm no engineer, but I could see the challenges presented here in a possibly inadequate delivery system...

Mother Nature is never capricious so how could this even be possible?

Squinting my eyes at the window I observed a long, extended anatomical structure which seemingly allowed him to reach far away from himself and to the place he needed to contact so he could do his job. It was clear to me that Mother Nature had a Plan for this species of turtles and that they all four were playing by the Rules.

Ultimately, it was obvious that he was a male and that these three were females who had presented themselves to him for "servicing" so they could do their duty and bring into the world yet another generation of their species. They were, indeed, "waiting their turn," as it had appeared to me, but it was females waiting for what seems to have been the only male in the territory to service them.

Turtles are NOT "social animals." They are very solitary, so this could be the one time a year they even see others of their species. They don't even socialize their young, but lay eggs in hiding places and then go about their own business leaving the young on their own to learn about the world through their own exploits. They are nothing like us except that they are responsible for copulating and joining sperm to eggs - ensuring that one generation after the next stands a chance to keep their species alive.

As with the Muscovy ducks on this same lake, the turtles were abiding by the Plan and the set of Rules laid down by Mother Nature.

In watching the ducks, I saw behavior that seemed somewhat "human-like" and still falling within the Plan and the Rules of Mother Nature to ensure that each species stands the test of time and keeps the integrity of their species from year to year and as long as possible.

Watching the turtles reminded me of how modern American Human Beings have disregarded the Plan and violated the Rules of Mother Nature for our species... how they have even looked at other species and used their behaviors to justify breaking the rules.

There are males in our human species who would point to this turtle breeding model to justify their own irresponsible behavior as they vow that male humans are intended to "spread their seed far and wide" but they would be wrong...

For Human Beings, this male turtle could serve as a model of "Opposite Behavior" for the Plan Mother Nature set in place for us. A human male who plays by the Rules of the Turtle species is actually jeopardizing the survival of his own Human species.

If he follows the turtle example, he is confused and doesn't understand, so we'll call this what it is, "Ignorance" and we'll now begin to educate..

What is "good for the goose" may be "good for the gander," but what is good for the turtle is NOT good for the Human Being.... The Plans and the Rules Mother Nature set out are species-specific.

NOTE: The only common ground I find here between male turtles and male humans which might be part of Mother Nature's "Plan" could relate to the extended structure in turtles which enables the smaller male turtle to service the larger female turtles.

It could be that in humans extended male structure, while making no difference in what size females he can service, may enable the birth of more sons than daughters. This is pure speculation but prompted by this observation of turtle breeding and connecting the dots of other scientific data stored in my memory banks.

My rationale about "common ground" is based on the fact that the human male determines the gender of the progeny. His sperm bearing the Y-chromosome, which produces male children, is less hardy and dies more quickly, whereas his sperm bearing the X-chromosome, which produces female children, is more hardy and can swim longer distances to reach and fertilize the female's egg.

A more extended delivery system which brings the Y-chromosome sperms closer to the source of the eggs could give them the competitive advantage over the X-chromosome sperm in fertilizing the eggs and producing more male progeny.

A shorter delivery system would require all the sperm (X and Y) to swim a longer, more competitive, distance to reach and fertilize the eggs. In this case, the more hardy X-chromosome-bearing female-producing sperm could stand a greater statistical chance of out-swimming the less-enduring Y-chromosome male sperm and leaving them dead or disabled along the way - and producing more female progeny.

In an environment where survival of the species would be more dependent on its male members, the males from bloodlines which produced more male progeny would tend to be selected by more females and those producing more females might be bred out. In natural Evolution, scientists call this "Natural Selection."

This is just a theory which would bear some extensive research to prove or disprove. But it is such ideas and questions which are behind all Scientific research... It begs the question in my mind related to naturally-occurring "delivery systems" of men in China where female children are so discouraged that they are actually suffering a female shortage now and it would be possible at some point in evolution that they may just breed themselves out of existence by eliminating their potential breeding partners. I'm sure that Chinese men will never willingly allow themselves to be part of any such research survey, so I can only speculate.....

#12 – The Triumvirate and Why You're Starving for It!

You may have wondered up to this point what the “Triumvirate” is, whether you are already supposed to know what this means, and why you are “Starving” for it. If this is true and the question has been sitting there in your mind causing you to feel some frustration and demanding an answer, then perhaps you are ready to learn about it now.

This book has been written specifically for you as a Warrior, not for the self-empowerment of a civilian who has never experienced Military life or War/Combat. Rational people, and you are in that group, attack their concerns by establishing priorities. Then they address what is at the top of the short list before they can focus on matters not demanding urgent solutions... NOW.

If you have come “home” only to find that you and “home” seem to be a “bad fit” right now because of PTSD or other combat injuries, or have been clobbered with the reality that there are no jobs to be had and that you and your loved ones might be one lost paycheck away from homelessness, then you are totally focused on the realities now of Food, Shelter, and Clothing, and your necessary tunnel vision has pretty much put any lesser needs on the shelf for now.

Under those dire conditions, I would not expect to you have read even this far in the book. I would hope that you have pursued the EFT therapy and would have addressed your urgent needs for food, shelter, and clothing first. Then you might be ready to look further down your list of needs and how to satisfy them.

When you looked at the “Pre-Assessment” form, and hopefully filled out at least some of it, my objective was two-fold:

1. To help you sort, list, organize, and prioritize the issues that you need to address short term and long term so you can develop a plan and strategy for attacking and resolving them.
2. To give yourself permission to think about you, your needs, and what resources you could call upon to find solutions for the problems facing you and to put yourself and your needs at the top of your list until you could get on some solid ground.

When I work with women specifically, especially when I'm working with a group of them, I usually give them a scenario and ask them to respond to it:

I tell them that they are a starving mother alone in the jungle with their two starving children. One is an infant and one is a toddler. They have one piece of bread and no other food. Who will they feed with only piece of bread?

Then I go around the room to ask each woman to give her answer.

In all the years I've asked women this question, I've never gotten the right answer. Some will reason why they must feed the infant and some decide that the toddler should get the bread. They give their reasons for those answers and most of the other women in the session agree.

When I tell them that they are wrong, that they need to feed themselves the one piece of bread, they all look at me in total shock and disbelief. Even when I tell them that logically if they nourish themselves they may have just enough energy to go out and find more food for all of them, they seldom see it. But, if they give the bread to either child and allow themselves to die from starvation, no one can really benefit. However, they often choose this answer as a matter of conscience anyway.

Generally, they still don't "get it," even after my logical explanation. So, in this case, a cultural myth has replaced a survival skill as the woman is responding to the myth that she must always be self-sacrificing to even earn her right to breath the air. This is NOT one of Mother Nature's Rules... and it's counterproductive to "Survival of the Species." If the mother doesn't nourish herself, all three of them will die. If she nourishes herself, she may be able to save all three.

When I was leading group sessions for male inmates in two of the local jails, I posed the same scenario to them because I was curious to hear their answers.

Essentially, they also failed to see that the mother should take care of herself first so that she could better provide for her children. But, when I explained my rationale, they "got it" immediately and shook their heads in agreement and then laughed that they had not seen that at first.

In a few cases, maybe one man in the group gave the right answer, but usually that didn't happen.

The REAL ANSWER here is that there's a very excellent reason why "Self-Preservation" is the first Rule Mother Nature imposes on us. If you are thinking that it might be "selfish," then you are thinking the way the women in my groups were thinking.

The reality is that you can contribute no effort at all toward the welfare of those around you if you allow yourself to perish. It does NOT mean that you do all you can to "Preserve" yourself at the cost to others of their own right to "Self-Preservation." This is where judgment comes in and where we get right down to the core of "Fitness for Survival."

Keep in mind that Human Beings are "Social Animals," and that Mother Nature created a Plan and a set of Rules to guide us so that we would become a successful species.

While "Self-Preservation" is the primary Rule (instinct), the real goal is the secondary Rule (instinct) of "Survival of the Species."

As I've stated before, the "superior human brain" is our only advantage over all other species, but that one brain alone cannot survive indefinitely, so it requires the "cooperation" of a "community of brains" to enable us to survive. This is the reason we are "Social Animals" and that we have a Plan and Rules in place to enable us to remain in and flourish in our "Social Groups" which are communities, tribes, villages, cultural groups of our own kind.

The smallest social unit of human “community” is the “pair bond,” or let's call them the “breeding pair” or “mates.”

Thanks to Desmond Morris, we understand that the “pair bond” must stay together for a lifetime since it takes a lifetime to reproduce ourselves and bring our progeny to the age of independence so they can fly out of the nest and begin the next generation.

Desmond Morris taught us that the pleasures of sex and intimacy keep the pair bond together for the lifetime that it takes to nurture and provide for the next generation and that the pleasures and satisfactions of sex and intimacy are the powerful rewards which motivate us to mate and to stay in our pair bond relationships for a lifetime.

This realization is profound and it defines the core of Mother Nature's Plan for our species, but the Plan and the Rules are so hard-wired into us that if we break the Rules, our species finds itself on the path to self-destruction as we lose our “Fitness for Survival.”

Looking around today at the decay we find in our American Socio-Economic System, there is profound evidence of Rules so broken that one wonders if it's even possible to save us as a species anymore.

I see it as “possible.” Whether it's probable, I can't really say, but I do know that it's possible if we can become educated enough to re-learn both the Plan and the Rules because Mother Nature is more powerful than we are and it's our own Fitness or lack thereof which will determine if our species will continue on this planet or if we are about to be replaced by bacteria or viruses... or maybe rats and cockroaches.

We need to go back to the “Fountain of Knowledge” and have a good, long drink and then try to start all over again – if we can and if we are willing.

Personally, and professionally, I regard you, our well-trained Veterans and Combat Vets as being the only ones of us left who have the “Right Stuff” to accept this challenge. So, if you have managed to resolve your most urgent survival challenges to the point where you are ready to go on to the other vital needs on your list of priorities and the higher things on Maslow's Pyramid, then you are ready to learn about the “Triumvirate” and why you're likely “Starving” for it...

Please read on

As a Social Scientist who has been studying this subject for many years, I'm going to present a model to you which is partly known information and partly my own personal and professional research. I won't waste your time and mine trying to document what is known and what I speculate. If it makes sense to you, fine... If not, then who came up with it won't really matter.

I always like to start with definitions so we know we are all on the same page. Let's start with:

Triumvirate: a group or association of three.

Acculturation: the process by which a human being acquires the culture of a particular society from infancy.

Okay.... now let's move on....

“**Triumvirate**” is the term that I use to express Mother Nature's Plan as it is “imprinted” on the newborn human infant by its mother.

“**Acculturation**” is the term that I use to express how Mother Nature's Rules are taught to the newborn infant and through it's period of growth by the mother, the father, and all those in the “social group” responsible for teaching this member how to become a successful contributor and benefactor of the “social group.”

The initial responsibilities fall onto the shoulders of the Human Female as it is her job to select a suitable mate, bond with that mate, and become the Life Partner in the joint pursuit of advancing the species into one more generation of it's successful survival.

Unfortunately, the more the “modern” Human Female has been separated from the duties which Mother Nature conferred on her, the more the bonds holding the human species together have begun to unravel...

No, this is NOT a sexist commentary, but it IS a rational and scientific attempt at education.

Rather than making you wait any longer, I will tell you now what the three parts are to the Triumvirate:

1. **Physical:** To nourish the body with food and water to insure health and physical well-being.
2. **Emotional:** To nourish the feelings with touch, pleasure, contentment, satisfaction, intimacy, security, trust, communication, relationships, self-awareness, awareness of others, and a sense of personal well-being.
3. **Spiritual:** To nourish and teach Love, language, values, character, person-hood, self-esteem, give and take, relationship, responsibility, self-actualization, and personal well-being.

The responsibility falls to Mother in the “bonding” process to “imprint” on her newborn infants this “Triumvirate” of “three” areas of Needs Fulfillment which we are taught from birth to expect and to pursue until they have become fulfilled in our lives. This is Mother Nature's Plan, and the Guidelines which she entrusts to the Mother of the Infant to “imprint” on it for life.

Our job, as that child, then is to follow the imprinted Plan, conform to the Rules, and pursue successful achievement of the fulfillment of all of our needs. (Please note that I said “needs” and NOT “wants.”)

So, our mother's job is to teach us by ***experience*** what it is that we are to eventually go out and find in our lives. We may not be able to name it, but we know how it “feels” so when we feel it, we know that we have finally achieved what Mother Nature had Planned for us.

We recognize all these feelings in ourselves when we ultimately find our mate, who will become our Life Partner and with whom we will build a relationship of “Mutual Benefit” a relationship built on Love and Intimacy, which is so fulfilling that it will hold our Pair Bond relationship firmly together for a lifetime.

We bask in the recognized fulfillment of the “Triumvirate,” which mother taught us to pursue and expect as the “perfect” state of contentment on all three levels of ourselves. We will know our mate when those familiar states of well-being return to us as adults. They will be the “rewards” from Mother Nature for our lifelong investment, hard work, sacrifice, and dedication to bringing another successful generation into the world to keep our species healthy and fit for survival – and we will welcome them and take our place in our “Social Group” as both a successful contributor and beneficiary because mother and our extended “community” has taught us the Rules and we have learned to abide by them successfully.

“Love,” as my father defined it for me:

“Love is the Mutual Fulfillment of needs: The Bee is to the Flower as the Flower is to the Bee.”

When mother fulfills us in our infancy and childhood on all three levels of: Physical, Emotional, and Spiritual experience, she has imprinted on us the blueprint and expectations which will guide us to our eventual mate. Remember that Mother Nature's Plan is for “Survival of the Species.”

We'll know we've found the right partner for a lifetime when we feel ourselves returning to the familiar *** experience *** of so long ago when our daily lives felt so perfect to us on all three levels of: Physical, Emotional, and Spiritual. Those needs are what drive us to finding the “Holy Grail” of fulfillment again. We yearn for it.. hunger for it.. and we **starve** for it if we never find it.

When we find our mate, we know it by how we “feel” inside, not by how things look outside. When we have developed that fulfilling lifelong relationship of “mutual-benefit,” the rewards which Mother Nature has given us to keep us in the Pair Bond for life also provides an “insurance policy” that ensures that if each partner works diligently to both build and support the relationship, that they will, at the same time, insure that their needs will continue to be fulfilled on an on-going basis and that the gift of the “Triumvirate” will continue to reward them for their hard work and efforts. If they break the rules, then they will lose the fulfillment of the “Triumvirate” and they will begin to “Starve” unless they can find a way to regain their position again.

The “Triumvirate” is both the Plan and the Reward for individual members of the Human Species to follow the Rules and invest their all into the “Survival of the Species.” The opposite side of that coin brings “Starvation,” which has many causes, including a mother failing to do her job or a “Social Group” breaking all the Rules.

Looking around us, we see so many broken rules in our “Social Group” and so much “Starvation” on ALL levels.

Mostly those who are “Starving” think that getting more money and more power is the answer, so they knock down everything standing in their way and call that “Self-Preservation.” They have violated the Rules and they will pay and so will the species.

But, they also do not find the fulfillment of the “Triumvirate” and they continue to “Starve.” They know they hunger for something, but they can't name what they need. Calling it Money, Power, Wealth, does not take the hunger away, so they are determined to get get more, more, more.... until they can own ALL the resources of the “Social Group,” but still they “Starve.”

Food, drink, drugs, money, power.... None of these fill that void and the “Starvation” goes on, but they have no idea what WILL fill the void...

They are “Starving for the Triumvirate”.... as are many of us.. The differences are that they are driven to find satisfaction with the Sociopathic lust to destroy anyone and everyone in their way. What they are destroying is themselves and the species, itself.... Sadly, they are taking the rest of us right along with them...

The answer is to learn about the “Triumvirate” and how to achieve it's rewards, which means understanding the Plan and the Rules and learning how to be guided by them to find fulfillment and satisfaction. That's the SECRET!

Now I will attempt to help you find the stepping stones to the satisfaction of your “Triumvirate” so you no longer have to “Starve.” Knowledge is still Power.. and don't ever forget that..

What makes us superior is still our Human Brain.... Now we will use it to our best advantage and so we can contribute to making ourselves and our species strong again and ourselves contented and fulfilled....

Where there's Life there's Hope!

#13 – Mother Nature's Plan for You – Back to the Jungle!

You haven't been born, yet... You're not even a twinkle in anyone's eye. Your soon-to-be “mother” has only recently come-of-age and is ready to look for that human being who will become your “father.”