

**Stress Management
For
Teenagers,
Parents
And
Teachers**

A Breakthrough Approach
To
Get Rid Of Stress
At Its Roots

Sarfraz Zaidi, MD

Stress Management For Teenagers, Parents and Teachers

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Note from the Author:

In order to get the most out of this book, please read it cover to cover.

I dedicate this book to all those teenagers, parents and teachers who are open-minded, courageous and independent thinkers.

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Section 1

Chapter 1

Everyone Is Stressed Out

Being a Teenager is a time of excitement, but it also brings on an *endless* list of *demands*, *challenges* and *uncertainties*. It's a time when your body is going through dramatic *physical* and *hormonal* changes. It's also a time of utter *confusion*: you are *not* a child any longer, but you're *not* an adult yet either. No wonder most teenagers feel *pressured*, *confused* and *stressed out*.

Teenagers feel their parents don't have a *clue* what they're going through. On the other hand, parents feel their children don't listen to them. Teenagers and parents feel so *apart* from each other. Parents don't understand what happened to their *innocent*, *loving*, *cute* little child, who used to *listen* to them, *respect* them, *love* them and *play* with them.

Parents wonder, "How did this *monster* get in our child? They no longer respect us, don't want to talk to us, play with us or associate with us. They have no respect for authority figures, get in trouble in school and the neighborhood. Where did we go wrong?"

On the other hand, teenagers feel their parents are too *demanding*, too *controlling*, and too *intruding*. Teenagers think they know how things are these days and their parents don't. Their parents are *outdated* and *embarrassing*. They want to be

independent, have their *privacy* and encounter no *interference* from their parents.

Parents feel the responsibility to *discipline* their children, and teenagers *hate* it. Teenagers usually *rebel* against any disciplinary actions. Often, they can't wait to get out, be on their own and leave the *prison* of their parents' home.

Most teachers find their jobs to be *overly* demanding, *least* rewarding and *hugely* time consuming. Every day they have to deal with distressed, troubled, rebellious teenagers; selfish, demanding, hypocritical principals; and aggressive, rude and accusing parents. Some days they are so stressed out that they even start to question their choice to become a teacher in the first place.

Sadly most teenagers, their parents and teachers feel stressed out at each other, which usually culminates in a series of *emotional* outbursts. It is *hard* to be a teenager, say the teenagers. It's *hard* to be a parent, say the parents. It is *hard* to be a teacher, say the teachers. The fact is *everyone is stressed out*. Let's take a close look and *figure out* what's going on. Why is everyone stressed out? How does one *deal* with stress *without* running to *escapes* or causing stress for *others*? Is it possible to live a *stress-free* life?

Chapter 2

Teenagers' Stress

The annoying sound of the *alarm* wakes you up. "Oh, no! I don't feel like getting up so early." So you hit the *snooze* button a couple of times. Finally you get out of bed *grudgingly*. "Why does school have to start so early? I can't wait till the weekend arrives. Then I can sleep till noon." "Hurry up or you'll be late again!" Your dad's nagging voice *irritates* you. You *hurry* up. You try to remember a *never ending* list of the things you have to do before you are ready to leave. While loading your back pack, you also answer several *text messages* from your friends. "But you have to eat before you go," your mom *annoyingly* points out. You *grab* your breakfast and *shove* your food down while your dad drives you to school.

The day has *barely* started and you're already in a *bad* mood. So you decide to use your iPod and listen to your favorite music. In the distance, you hear your dad cursing at the heavy traffic. "It is all your fault. If only we left a few minutes earlier, we wouldn't be in such a jam." You hear him *yelling* at the top of his lungs at the other drivers. Finally, you arrive at school. As you *jump* out of the car, the *bell* starts to ring. You *run* to your classroom. Once again, you made it in the *nick* of time. You exhale a deep sigh of relief.

At school, classes are fine, but the real *fun* is during *recess*, when you hang out with your friends, check out girls/boys and try to get their attention. If they *look* at you or say something *flattering*, it

can really make your day. Sometimes, you run into some stuck up person and their remark infuriates you. Some people just *annoy* you for no particular reason.

At times, your teachers are so *annoying* as well. They constantly keep reminding you how hard it is to get into college. Then the counselor takes his shot and advises you what extra courses you need to take to get into a good college. The P.E. teacher stays in a constant *nasty* mood. Any little *innocent* remark and you have to do *extra* push ups. Finally, school ends. You get a ride back with your mom who keeps *irritating* you by asking "So, how was your day?"

At home, you rush to the computer to *decompress* by watching videos, chatting with your friends and listening to your favorite music. "What would I do if there was no computer?" you wonder. Then suddenly, you remember the huge load of home work you need to do. It simply *depresses* you. You barely start getting at it when your mom announces, "It's time for dinner." You *rush* through dinner and get back to your homework. But now, your younger sister wants to play with you. Then, your older brother decides to *insult* you one more time. "Once I leave this home, I'm never coming back," you promise yourself one *more* time.

It's quite late before you finish your homework and decide to go to bed. But then you start thinking of *everything* that happened during the day and *what might* happen tomorrow. You have so *much* on your plate, but *no one* seems to understand. The *never ending* burden of home work, the *constant* challenge to get good grades, the *high* expectations to always win games, the *constant* pressure to earn extra money, the *annoying* stories at school, the *fear* of losing your girlfriend/boyfriend. Then you start to *worry* about your future. "What if..." "What will I..." "What could happen?" Your mind continues to *run* at *zillion* miles an hour. Sleep is *far* away. At some *imperceptible* moment, you fall asleep, only to be awakened by the *annoying* alarm clock again.

Teenage Stress Comes in Many Forms

The Teenage Years are one of the most challenging times in your life. You face *academic challenges*, *peer pressure*, *future uncertainties* and a lot of *insecurity* and *confusion*. Parents' behavior usually *adds* to your stress tremendously. Sometimes teachers, siblings and bad characters in school also stress you out. A lot of teenage issues are also centered on *sexuality*.

The pressure of academics is *unrelenting*: the class work, the homework, the projects, the tests, the grades. And after one *semester* ends, it starts all over again. It seems like a *never ending* maze. Often, there are *deadlines* which push your stress into *turbo* charge. Have you noticed the word "*dead*" in deadline? Sometimes you encounter a *demanding teacher* who simply *intensifies* the magnitude of your stress. The *pleasure* of learning gets replaced by *rigid* worksheets, *boring* homework and *lengthy* projects. There is no time left for *fun*.

The pressure of college preparation and career planning *adds* another layer of stress. Instead of true learning, all efforts are geared towards college preparation and career planning. Teachers and counselors keep reminding you how *difficult* it is to get into a good college. At home, your parents may also push you to "go to a prestigious college." You're only a fourteen year old 9th grader, but your teacher wants you to write an essay about your *career* choices. Isn't it a *bit* early? It seems "getting into a good college and career planning" becomes the *ultimate* goal of your high school. As *if* nothing else matters. You feel like being pushed into a *race* all the time.

The pressure of sports is huge. It takes all the fun *out* of the game. The rehearsals, the *pressure* to win the game, the *humiliation* of losing a game, the *yelling* coach, the *disappointed* fans and parents.

Everyone wants to be a winner. Even the thought of "loser" makes you quiver inside.

The performing arts are supposed to be fun, but they also bring on a lot of stress. The *pressure* of auditions can be nerve wrecking. Then come rehearsals, which further *strain* your time for homework and upcoming tests. Sometimes, you have to *swallow* the stress that your *agitated* director *spews* on you.

The **peer pressure** is *unbelievable*. It *dictates* how you *dress*, how you *talk*, how you *walk*, how you *behave*, what you *do*. Everyone tries to *fit in* and no one wants to be a *reject*. You end up doing a lot of things under *peer pressure* that you wouldn't do otherwise. Often, you *regret* these actions later on, because they create a *lot* of stress for yourself and others who care for you.

The pressure of boyfriend/girlfriend *adds* more emotional stress. Often, you're under peer pressure to get into a *romantic* relationship. Raging hormones work as a *catalyst*. Initially, it all sounds pretty exciting, but soon the relationship becomes *demanding*, adding stress to your already stressed out life. Sometimes, there is *cheating* involved which utterly *devastates* you. Break-ups are common for one reason or another. It is especially stressful if you get dumped. In a nutshell, you have stress if *don't have* a girlfriend/boyfriend and you have stress if you *have* a girlfriend/boyfriend. Amazing! Romantic relationships usually lead to *sexual* activities, which *may* end up with a *pregnancy*. Sometimes, you may *contract* a sexually transmitted disease. Now, you're in a huge mess!

The pressure from parents is a big one for most teenagers. It comes in *many forms* such as:

Controlling Parents:

Many parents continue to treat their teenagers as if they were still *little* kids. They want to continue to *micromanage* your life. It is so distressing for you. These parents think you're *not* capable of handling *anything* on your own. They *stifle* your freedom in the name of *caring*. It's so *humiliating* when they *treat* you like *kids* in front of your friends. They want you to live according to their wishes. They try to exert their power by saying "You will follow my rules while you live under my roof." Or they make you feel *bad* through the guilt-laden remarks. Obviously, you can't wait to leave this kind of home.

Demanding Parents:

Then there are the *demanding* parents with *high* expectations in academics, sports, performing arts, etc. Nothing is ever enough: *no* trophies, *no* medals, *no* prizes ever satisfies them. They can absolutely drive you *crazy*.

Annoying Parents:

Often parents say or do things that simply *annoy* you big time. For example, you get tired of listening to their old stories over and over again. Sometimes, it seems they say things just to *irritate* you. Sometimes you get into huge arguments with them which make you completely stressed out.

Divorced Parents:

Divorced parents can cause a *huge* amount of stress for you. Most divorces are quite *ugly*. The custody *battle*; the emotionally charged verbal *fight*s; seeing your parents *suffer*; It is so hurtful that words cannot accurately describe it. Often, they *unleash* their own anger and frustrations on you. Some divorced parents become *control freaks*. They can *choke* you with their own emotional baggage.

Usually, one of the parents moves out of the house and lives far away from your original neighborhood. In the case of shared custody, you have to *split* the time you spend with each parent: This means you spend half of your time in utter *boredom* in a new neighborhood, far way from your friends.

Once your divorced parents start dating, your stress gets into high gear. Now you feel like a *thorn* in the pursuit of their rosy dreams. They often *dump* you at your friend's house for *extended* sleepovers. Or they don't want to spend any *quality* time with you. This type of *abandonment* is so hurtful. Now you clearly see the *selfishness* in your parents who you thought loved you unconditionally.

Sometimes, your parents end up marrying someone else. This *can* make your life a living *hell*: *Mean* step-parents..., *Annoying* step brothers and sisters..., A lack of attention from your *own* parent... Now you have to share *everything* including your mom/dad with your step parent and their children. How stressful!

Sometimes your step parent tries to *win* your affection. To you, it's pretty obvious he/she is trying to compete with your own natural parent. You *hate* it and it reflects in your actions. Often, you are *reprimanded* for your rude behavior.

The pressure from your siblings can further *add* to your stress. Your siblings may be *insensitive*, *selfish* and *jealous*. It can make your life more miserable, even in your own home, where you are supposed be at peace.

The pressure from teachers can be overwhelming. Some teachers give you *too* much home work, love to *humiliate* you in front of the class and are very *strict* with their rules. They may even practice *favoritism* in the class. Sometimes, they appear to be *unfair* and you suffer the consequences of their bad judgment. You may decide to

get even with them, but then you have to face *disciplinary* action from the principal.

The pressure from bullies can be very harmful. All the *humiliation* you suffer at the hands of bullies rips your *self-esteem* apart. You often suffer from the *gnawing* emotional pain *alone*. No one seems to care. You often become *depressed* and *hateful*, which can sometimes lead to violent, revengeful behavior.

Economic pressure at home can be very hard. You may have to find an *after school job* which can be physically, mentally and emotionally demanding. Then, no time is left for your homework or any fun activities. Life becomes heavy and painful.

Chapter 3

Parents' Stress

Parenting is one of the most *challenging* jobs in the world, but it also brings a lot of *joy* especially when *children are young*.

However, parenting causes more and more *headaches* as children become teenagers.

My Baby is Born!

From the first moment you lay eyes on your newborn baby, you fall in love - the kind of *love* you never felt before. You pretty much put your life on hold to raise your baby in the best possible way. You make your baby the top most *priority* in your life. You want to be the *perfect* parent.

You change diapers, prepare special baby food and give baths. You start to understand her needs simply from the sound of her *cry*. You can distinguish her cry for food from the cry when she has too much gas or the cry when she's wet. You carry her in your arms and *walk* and *sing* till she stops crying and falls sleep. Then, you gently lay her down in the crib to make sure her sleep isn't disturbed because you know how easily she can wake up and start crying which means you'll have to walk another half hour.

At work, you proudly talk to your colleagues about your wonderful child. You can't wait to get home and start playing with her. It brings you and your child such sheer joy. You don't mind

crawling on your knees, sitting in *awkward* positions in her doll house and drinking lots and lots of *imaginary* tea. When she gets sick, you feel all of her pains: your chest hurts when she coughs and your heart *bleeds* if she gets a cut.

You *play* with her as well as *teach* her things she needs to learn, such as brushing her teeth, brushing her hair and taking a bath. You help her learn to *walk* and *talk*. You teach her how to play in the park, how to swing, how to catch a ball and how to tie her shoe laces. You read bed time stories to your child and rub her back until she falls asleep.

You buy her toys, movies and video games. You take her to neighborhood parks and theme parks. You want her to have a lot of *fun* as well as *learn* everything that other kids are learning. You don't want her to be left behind. You celebrate her birthday in the best possible way you can. You also take her to other kids birthday parties. You want her to acquire socializing skills.

You also feel an intense desire to protect your fragile and innocent baby from any danger. You do NOT want any bad thing EVER to happen to her. Even the idea of any possible *harm* to your baby keeps you *awake* at night. You know you wouldn't think twice to *sacrifice* your life in order to save the life of your child.

You and your baby get *bonded* together. Then one day, you take her to Day Care. You feel the agonizing pain of *guilt* as you leave her behind as she cries miserably. And this happens every day until she slowly mellows out. Then, one day you have to leave her with a baby sitter. You re-experience the intense pain of *guilt* when she grabs you and begs you *not* to leave *or* take her with you.

Then comes schooling. You happily get involved in her classroom as well as school activities. You help her do her homework, get ready in the morning, drive her to school and pick her

back up after school. You also get her involved in all sorts of after-school and weekend activities such as gymnastics, dance, baseball, basketball, soccer, etc. You may even offer to be the *coach* of her team or the *mom* of her class.

You make friends with the parents of her friends. Now you happily entertain not only your own kid, but also her friends and their families. Then one day, she asks to sleep over at her best friend's home, which you permit. But when you get home after dropping her off and realize your home is so *quiet* without your baby, a shiver of *emptiness* runs through your body. You *miss* your baby, but *manage* to sleep through the night.

As your child grows older, she starts to learn all sorts of *concepts*, good and bad, mostly from her friends. You see her *needs* changing. You continue to provide her with *guidance*. At times, her innocent questions shake up your concepts and beliefs, but you manage to come up with answers that satisfy her curiosity.

At times, she wants things her way and will *not* listen to you. Then, you are left with no option but to *discipline* her. Inside, you don't like to punish your own precious little child, but you have to do it for her own sake, so she grows up to be a better person.

Most of the time, your child provides you with a lot of love. She makes you feel like the *king of the hill*. You feel proud to raise such a happy child. You are proud of her achievements. You are there to provide *support*, *guidance* and *comfort*. You feel so much "in demand."

Then she becomes a *teenager* and with that, *everything* changes. Your *castle* of happiness starts to crumble. Your loving child, who was so attached to you, doesn't want to have anything to do with you any more! No more playing together, no more going to park or to the mall together. No more watching movies together. She

doesn't even want your help with homework. Now, she wants to do everything with her *friends* and you are *not* welcome.

She doesn't even want to talk to you much. Each time you try to have a conversation, she ends it with one or two sentences such as "*I'm not a child any more.*" She sits with you in the car, but *prefers* to listen to her iPod or text her friends. You feel like a *cab driver*. Sometimes, she may even make insulting remarks to you. "*I know everything what I'm doing. I don't need your advice.*" or "*Not again. You've told me this story million times.*" She may even *judge* you to be *outdated*, because you don't know anything about what's going on in the world. Your loving child, who constantly gave you hugs and kisses, now *runs* away if you try to hug or kiss her.

What happened to my loving child? You feel so *bruised*. Your heart *aches*. You are not *needed* any more. You feel *worthless*. You feel like an old piece of furniture, an *invisible* person. What went wrong? You have *no* clue.

Sometimes, your teenager may be nice to one parent and not to the other. Then, you experience the gnawing pain of *jealousy*. The *avored* parent may even take advantage of this *preferred* relationship, which *slips* you deeper into the dark *hole* of *isolation*, *bitterness* and *worthlessness*. "What happened to the *united front* we are supposed to have in front of our children?" you ask. You may *disagree* with your spouse about "how to *deal* with this teenager!" Spousal disagreements lead to frequent *heated* arguments. Your loving home changes into a pit of *hate* and *anger*. You are stressed out at *work* and stressed out at *home*. Life becomes unbearable. You may seek *refuge* in a divorce which, however, brings on its own *demands* and *challenges*.

Your teenager may be doing *fine*, but you are *not*. She may have good grades, a lot of friends, and no trouble with the teachers or police. *She is a good teenager*. So why are you stressed out?

There is no satisfactory answer. You may even find a few flaws in her: She doesn't eat healthy. She doesn't exercise enough. She doesn't clean up her dishes after meals. She doesn't dress up properly for school. However, you know these are minor things. You should *not* be stressed out, but you *are*.

Or your teenager may have problems in school: failing her classes, fighting with other teenagers, breaking the rules. She might even have trouble with law, have irresponsible sexual behavior, alcohol abuse and/or drug addiction and their horrendous consequences. This obviously adds to your *frustrations*. You become a frequent visitor to the principal's office. You may even attend seminars on how to improve your *relationship* with your teenager, how to deal with *alcohol* and *drug addictions* and how to *discipline* your teenager. However, in the end, *nothing* seems to work.

You feel like a *failure*. The more you *try*, the more you *lose* control. You often stay *frustrated* and easily get into a *rage*. You may lash out at your colleagues or customers at work, snap at your spouse, get into road rages, etc. You also have to work hard to fulfill your teenager's financial needs. Often, you have to work long hours and don't have much social time with your teenager except on weekends, but then on weekends, your teenager has his own plans and you're not included. Sometimes, you feel like nothing more than a "financial support system," which makes you *bitter* inside.

At the same time, you *worry* a lot about your teenager's career. You realize that one has to have a college degree, preferably from a *reputable* university, in order to get a *good* job. You also see how *competitive* it is to get into good universities. You feel like you are in a *race*. You feel *intense* pressure inside. In addition, even if your teenager gets into a good university, it is very expensive. Thinking about the *finances* can be *overwhelming* and can *rob* you of a good night of sleep.

The ever increasing *load* of stress often starts to affect your health. You may start to suffer from insomnia, anxiety, forgetfulness, stress eating, weight gain, high blood pressure, diabetes and heart attacks. Your physician may put you on a sleeping pill, blood pressure medicines, diabetes medicines, heart medicines and anti-anxiety as well as anti-depression medicines. Your rising medicine costs, escalating health insurance premiums and unrelenting doctors' bills further *add* to your stress. Now you constantly *worry* about your health in addition to worrying about your family's future. In summary, you are in a big *mess* and don't have a *clue* how to be *free* of it.

Chapter 4

Teachers' Stress

When you decided to become a teacher, you were under the *delusion* that you would have an easy life. Now, your teaching job never ends. You are convinced that nothing is more stressful than teaching teenagers.

You get up early in the morning to be at your school, long before students arrive and then many of them are half *asleep* for your first period. Even later, many of them seem to be half *asleep*. It's pretty clear they are *not* interested in learning. They are in the class because they have no other choice. Out of boredom, they *misbehave*, but you can't punish them. In your personal life, you don't tolerate this kind of behavior, but as a teacher your hands are tied when it comes to *disciplining* students. You have to follow very strict guidelines, which you do *not* agree with and this *infuriates* you. How can you teach if you don't have any *authority* to maintain discipline in the classroom? You feel sorry for those students who are actually eager to learn. You can't spend enough time teaching due to *interruptions* from misbehaving students. In addition, teaching also gets interrupted by the frequent overhead *announcements* from the principal's office.

"How long can I continue to put up with those *lame* excuses students give for not doing their homework? When will they learn?" you ask yourself. You also face a chronic problem of short supplies for the classroom, which *frustrates* you. Sometimes, you even spend your own money to buy necessary supplies for the classroom.

You have a long list of things to *do* in a *short* amount of time, which creates intense pressure for you: teaching, policing, paper grading, emailing, conferences and the list goes on and on. No time to *relax*. You even have to *hurry* through your lunch. At home, you spend your evenings updating your *website* for students, answering any *emails* from *neurotic* parents and preparing your *power-point presentations*. You have no time left for yourself and your family.

You *share* your *frustrations* with the principal who *acts* like a *robot* and *spews* monotonous, predictable, administrative legalese that you are *sick* and *tired* of hearing. It becomes clear that the principal is only interested in his *own* job security and *that's all*. He implements rules and guidelines, however *stupid* they may be, in order to keep his job *secure*. Meanwhile, you get *demoralized*. In retaliation, you decide *not* to attend those *useless* meetings with the principal, but that eventually gets you in trouble. "Why didn't you show up for the meeting?" Your principal grills you like you're on the witness stand. You feel like telling the truth: "Because your meetings are a *waste* of my precious time!"... But you can't. You have to swallow your *pride*, put a *fake* smile on your face and *promise* to attend the next meeting.

You *wish* you could change the *ailing* educational system. You talk to your colleagues, but *no* one seems to be interested. You get *discouraged* and *disappointed*. Every now and then you hear about further "cuts" in the budget for the school. The thought of *losing* your job sends shock waves throughout your body. You end up losing sleep over these kinds of *fears* and *uncertainties*. You also start to indulge in *stress eating* to sooth out your frustrations. Before you know it, you may be diagnosed with diabetes, high blood pressure or cancer. Now life becomes really stressful. Obviously you start to question your choice of becoming a teacher in the first place.

Chapter 5

Symptoms of Stress

Some of the common symptoms of stress in teenagers are:

- Restlessness/Agitation
- Forgetfulness
- Headaches
- Tiredness
- Insomnia
- Anxiety
- Panic Attacks
- Anger/Short-tempered
- Depression/Suicidal Ideation
- Attention Deficit Disorder
- Escapes such as sex, cigarettes, alcohol consumption, and illegal drugs.
- Stress wreaks *havoc* on immune system. Consequently, you become prone to frequent infections.
- Acute stressful situation can transiently stop menses in teenage girls
- Stress also makes your immune system go *haywire*, which increases your risk for allergies, Type 1 diabetes, thyroid diseases, lactose intolerance, gluten sensitivity, asthma, eczema, juvenile rheumatoid arthritis, ankylosing spondylitis and other auto-immune diseases
- Stress often causes over-eating, which leads to obesity and Type 2 diabetes.

- In teenage girls, obesity can lead to polycystic ovarian syndrome, which manifests as excessive hair growth on the face, excessive acne, and irregular, infrequent menses.

Grown-ups also exhibit the same symptoms of stress. In addition, they may also suffer from heart attacks, high blood pressure, chronic low back pain, irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), constipation and Alzheimer's dementia.

Section 2

Stress Management - Level 1

Chapter 6

Stress Management Kit for Teenagers

Emergency Treatment

When you are stressed out, you need to take *immediate* action to get rid of your stress or it will continue to *torment* you. It is an *emergency* that needs to be addressed *right away* or it will have terrible consequences.

Here is a list of things you can do to decompress your stress:

Pause. Take time-out. Don't *say* or *do* anything. Feel the *emotion* rising inside you. Don't *suppress* it. At the same time, don't get *consumed* by the emotion. In stead, start *counting*. See how long does it takes for the *emotion* to subside. Be acutely aware of your surroundings: the *objects* and the *space* in which objects are; the *sounds* and the *silence*, which remains in the background of all sounds. Be aware of your *breathing*.

Once the emotion has settled down, use *logic* and *analyze* the entire situation as a *third party*, from a *neutral ground*. You will be amazed to see how your emotion was way out of proportion to the actual situation. Then, completely *let go* of whatever happened. Be aware

of the nagging *inner voice* that wants you to keep *festering* over "what happened." Simply *laugh* at it and *move* on.

Go for a walk in your neighborhood, park, or even in your backyard. Also, do some jogging or running.

Look at nature: the trees, the sky, the flowers, the stars, the sunset, the sunrise. Also be aware of the *space* in which every thing is.

Listen to nature: the birds, the crickets, the dogs. Also, be aware of the *silence*, which is always there. Sounds come and go, but silence is always there.

Use your sense of *smell* to be aware of various fragrances.

Ride your bike or roller blades/skates or skate board.

Pay full attention to whatever you are doing and pay attention to your surroundings as well.

Laugh out loud. Be silly.

Sing out loud, no matter how terrible it sounds. You are not looking for approval or disapproval. Actually, try to be random, silly and don't follow any rules while singing out loud by yourself.

Dance by yourself, randomly. Do not judge yourself.

Play some music such as drums, guitar, piano or flute. Do not judge yourself.

Lift weights, punch a bag, play some basketball: whatever is available.

Do some stretches.

Sit down quietly, legs criss-cross. Pay attention to your breathing. Count your breaths for about 5 minutes.

Do some deep breathing, but only for a minute or so.

Decompress On A Regular Basis

Do certain activities to *decompress* your stress on a regular basis so it doesn't build up to a *crisis* point. Here are some suggestions:

Do some stretches everyday or better yet, several times a day, just a few minutes of stretches at a time, that's all.

Every now and then pay attention to your breathing, just for a minute or so.

Do deep breathing for a minute or so, a couple of times during the day.

You may want to learn basic stretches, and do them every day for about 15 minutes.

Go for a walk or jog on a daily basis.

Sing and/or dance randomly on a regular basis.

Use Common Sense:

Use common sense and you will realize that **stress appears to be due to this or that, but in fact, it is your own creation.** Most people get stressed out *thinking* about the *uncertain* future and/or *unpleasant* past. Already up to their neck with stress, they overreact to someone's remark and/or behavior.

Use common sense and see for yourself that whatever you are stressed about, is *not* happening right now in Real. It is happening only in your head, but not in front of your eyes. It has either happened or it may happen, but it is not happening at this very moment. In this way, you are actually creating a problem, which in fact, does not even exist at all. How ridiculous!

Worries About The Future

"But it may happen," says your inner voice: *I may not get good grades. I may not get into a college. I may not get a scholarship. I may not become the captain of the football team. I may not get a part in the musical play. I may not become a cheer leader. I may lose again. I may become unpopular again. My girlfriend may dump me. I may mess up my performance.*

Well, the only way you can have any *impact* on your so-called future is by doing the *right* things now. Simply worrying about the future is not going to change it. Therefore, take action *now* in order to *affect* your so-called future: Pay attention to your studies, pay attention to your sport or script lines or musical notes, whatever it may be. *Give it 100% and then do not think about the result.* That's all you can do, right? Then whatever happens, happens. Remember this phrase: *Keep your mind where your body is.* Pay attention to whatever you do and wherever you are.

Pains Of The Past

Sometimes you *fume* over things that happened in the past: someone *insulted* you, *humiliated* you or *betrayed* you. Use logic and see for yourself that no matter how much you think about your past, you can *never* change it. "But I must learn from it so it can never happen to me again," says an inner voice. With this kind of mind set, what people often end up learning is *mistrust*, *jealousy*, *hate*, *revenge*. They also become *fearful* that it may happen again. In fact,

you keep your past *alive* (although it has *died* otherwise) as long as you are in the mind set to *learn* from it. Only when you *completely let go* of your past, you can be *free* of the emotional trauma it caused you.

Emotional pain from the past also comes in another form: *sweet memories*. All the **fun times** you had with your friends, parents, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts or pets. Now they are not around, for one reason or another. And it hurts! Even thinking about all of the good times makes you *sad*. Why? you ask, but there is no satisfactory answer. Intellectually, you know the reason why someone is not around, but it does not heal your *inner sadness*. In fact, the more you think about "sweet memories," the sadder you get. Use logic and you realize those "sweet memories" are nothing more than an *illusion*, a *dream*, a *phantom*. Those events were "Real" when they happened, but now are simply a package of mental *pictures*, *stories* and associated *emotions*. Only when you completely *let go* of your "sweet memories," can you be *free* of the emotional trauma caused by them.

Popular/unpopular

In life, there are a lot of things you have *no* control over, especially how *others behave*. When others don't behave the way we want, we get *frustrated*. So, if you want to be popular, you are actually *expecting* others to *like* you. Deep down, you are trying to control their behavior, aren't you? If they like you, you become *happy*. And if they don't, then you become *unhappy*. In other words, your happiness depends on others' behavior. Can you see that you're putting yourself in such a *vulnerable spot*? Isn't it a perfect *recipe* for *disaster*? If you always try to act in ways that you think others will like, they may or may not like you, but you will have ongoing immense *pressure* and *anxiety*.

Instead, be *yourself*. Then, you will make friends who *truly* like you for who you are. A few *honest* friends are a whole better than a large number of *superficial, insincere* friends.

Boyfriend/Girlfriend

In the same way, be yourself when you are with members of the opposite sex. When a boy/girl, who *truly* likes you for who you are, and you are *attracted* to that person in the same way, you both will be ready for a *stable romantic relationship*. Until that happens, you may go through several *one-sided* relationships: You may be attracted to someone. Someone may be attracted to you. However, if two people are not both attracted to each other, then the one-sided relationship is often short-lived and usually causes some stress. Also remember, you *cannot* control someone's behavior. Trying to do so will only create stress for you. You can express your feelings towards another person and see if that person reciprocates. Otherwise **move on**.

Don't be in hurry to have a romantic relationship. Often, teenagers do it under peer pressure or to be popular and end up getting into a bad relationship, which causes a lot of stress. Usually, this type of relationship breaks up, which causes more stress. Even worse, sometimes partners end up contacting sexually transmitted diseases. Sometimes, these immature relationships also result in a pregnancy, which causes a huge amount of stress for the parties involved as well as their parents.

REMEMBER: AS AN ADULT YOU WILL BE DEALING WITH ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS AND THEIR ASSOCIATED PLEASURE AS WELL AS STRESS FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE.

Homework-Homework-Homework: and No Time For Fun

Homework keeps *escalating* as you grow up. Homework in high school easily *eclipses* the amount of homework you were assigned in middle school which *eclipses* the homework assigned in elementary school. If you don't like doing your homework, you still have to do it, right? By disliking your homework, you simply create stress for yourself and it takes much longer to finish it. On the other hand, if you change your *attitude* and start liking (or at least, not disliking) your homework, you will finish your homework faster and it will *not* be stressful. Then you will also have more *spare* time to do *fun* things.

Manage Your Time: Do your homework soon after you come home. Don't wait until the *last* minute to finish it because then it becomes stressful and takes much longer to finish, especially in the late hours at night, when your mind is *exhausted*.

One Thing At A Time: Whatever you do, give it 100%. So when you do your homework, just do homework, *focus* on it and avoid any *distractions* such as texting, radio, internet, etc. Once you are done with homework, have *fun* 100%. Don't worry about other things.

Focus on whatever you do.

Chapter 7

Stress Management Kit for Parents

Emergency Management

When faced with an acute stressful situation, do the following:

Pause. Take time-out. Don't *say* or *do* anything. Feel the *emotion* rising inside you. Don't *suppress* it. At the same time, don't get *consumed* by the emotion. In stead, start *counting*. See how long does it takes for the *emotion* to subside. Be acutely aware of your surroundings: the *objects* and the *space* in which objects are; the *sounds* and the *silence*, which remains in the background of all sounds. Be aware of your *breathing*.

Once emotion has settled down, use *logic* and *analyze* the entire situation as a *third party*, from a *neutral ground*. You will be amazed to see how your emotion was *way out of proportion* to the actual situation. Then, completely *let go* of whatever happened. Be aware of the nagging *inner voice* that wants you to keep festering over "what happened." Simply *laugh* at it and *move on*. Go for a walk in your neighborhood, park, or even in your backyard. Also, do some jogging or running.

Look at nature: the trees, the sky, the flowers, the stars, the sunset, the sunrise. Also be aware of the *space* in which every thing is.

Listen to nature: the birds, the crickets, the dogs. Also be aware of the *silence* which is always there. Sounds come and go, but silence is always there.

Use your sense of *smell* to be aware of various fragrances.

Decompress On A Regular Basis

Do certain activities to *decompress* your stress on a regular basis so it doesn't build up to a *crisis* point. Here are some suggestions:

Do some *stretches* everyday or better yet, several times a day, just a few minutes of stretches at a time.

Every now and then, pay attention to your breathing, just for a minute or so. Do deep breathing for a minute or so, a couple of times during the day.

You may want to learn basic stretches, and do them every day for about 15 minutes.

Go for a walk or jog on a daily basis.

Use Common Sense

Use common sense and you will realize that **stress appears to be due to this or that, but in fact, it is your own creation.** Most people get stressed out *thinking* about the *uncertain* future and/or the *unpleasant* past. Already up to your neck with stress, you *overreact* to someone's remark or behavior.

Use common sense and see for yourself. Whatever you are stressed about is *not* actually happening right now in Reality. It is only happening in your head, but *not* in front of your eyes. **It has either happened or it may happen, but it is not happening at this very moment.** In this way, you actually create a problem which, in fact, does not even exist at all.

Worries About The Future

But it may happen, your inner voice says. "My teenager may not get into a good college. I may not be able to pay for my teenager's college tuition. My teenager may take drugs or alcohol or have irresponsible sex. My teenager may get in trouble with the law. My teenager may have a traffic accident. My teenager may never have a good relationship with me. My teenager may not be able to live independently."

Well, the only way you can have any *impact* on the so-called future is by doing the *right* things now. Simply worrying about the so-called future is *not* going to change it. Therefore, take action *now* in order to *affect* your so-called future: Get involved in your teenager's homework (but do not try to micro-manage). Save some money on a regular basis for your teenager's college fund. Be an *example* and do not indulge in alcohol, drugs or irresponsible sexual behavior. Be a good driver. Continue to be a caring loving parent, no matter what. That's all you can do, right? Then whatever happens, happens.

Pains Of The Past

Sometimes you *fume* over things that happened in the past: Someone *insulted* you, *betrayed* you, *let you down*, etc. These events of the past are particularly *painful*, especially if your teenager also does those same things to you. Use logic and see for yourself that no matter how much you think about your past, you can *never* change it. "But I must learn from it so it must *never* happen to me again," says

an inner voice. With that kind of mind set, what people often end up learning is *mistrust, jealousy, hate and revenge*. They also become *fearful* that it may happen again. In fact, you keep your past *alive* (although it has otherwise *died*) as long as you stay in the mind set to *learn* from it. Only when you completely *let go* of your past, you can be *free* of the emotional trauma it caused you.

Emotional pain from the past also comes in another form: *sweet memories*. All the **fun times** you had with your daughter/son when they used to play with you, follow you around like a shadow, listen to you, look up to you and openly brag about you. Now, your teenager has pretty much cut you out of their personal life. And it *hurts!* Even thinking about all the good times makes you *sad*. Why you ask? But there is no satisfactory answer. Intellectually, you know he/she is not a child any longer, but it doesn't heal your *inner sadness*. In fact, the more you think about "sweet memories," the *sadder* you get. Use logic and realize those "sweet memories" are nothing more than an *illusion, a dream, a phantom*. Those events were "Real" when they happened, but are now simply a package of *mental pictures, stories* and associated *emotions*. Only when you completely *let go* of your "sweet memories," can you be *free* of the emotional trauma caused by them.

Treat Your Teenager With Respect

Teenagers do not want to be treated like *kids* any more. They want *respect*. Actually, they want to be treated like grown-ups, although they are not grown-ups yet and surely do not act like *adults*. A bit of a confusing and tricky situation, isn't it?

Here is the solution: *Respect* their opinions, their choices and their privacy. Talk to them as you would talk to a grown-up, with respect. It also gives you the opportunity to express your opinions, *but* without the tone of enforcement you used when they were kids.

Give Your Teenager Freedom Which Is Only Mildly Supervised

The teenage years are the *transition* between childhood and adulthood. During this time, one learns how to be an *independent* adult. Therefore, it is *natural* that teenagers want to do things on their own. However, they often do not want *any* supervision. That's where the problem arises. As a *responsible* parent, you are obviously concerned about their **safety**. Some parents go from one extreme to another: Some continue to closely supervise all of the activities of their teenagers, while others just give up and let their teenagers do things completely unsupervised. Well, there is a *middle path*: Give your teenager freedom with a distant *mild* supervision.

For example, if your teenager is going to a party, check out if there will be *adult supervision* there as well as if there will be any *alcohol* at the party. Call the parents of the teenage party giver. If you let your teenager spend the night at their friend's place, make sure you know their friend's parents or at least talk to them.

Have a conversation with your teenager if he/she is *hosting* a party. Set up a rule or two that your teenager clearly *shares* with those invited. For example, "*No alcohol, drugs or rude behavior will be tolerated or else, you will have to leave the party.*"

If your teenager wants to go to a movie with friends, find out who else is going and approximately what time the movie will be over. If your teenager wants to go to a mall with friends, find out which mall and when should you pick her/him up.

Listen to Your Teenager

Teenagers usually do not talk to their parents much. However, when they do, you should **listen** to them carefully. Always have time for your teenagers, as you have always done since they were little kids.

Never Put Down Your Teenager

The Teenage Years are a time of *rapid* change: physical, hormonal and psychological. That's why teenagers are very *sensitive* to their physique, appearance and behavior. Nothing can be more *devastating* to your teenager than your *criticism* of her/his appearance or behavior. Never *compare* your teenagers. It *rips* apart their self-esteem.

Do Not Compete With Your Spouse for Your Teenager's Affection

Some parents, especially when they are divorced, get in *competition* with each other in order to win their teenager's affection. That's a recipe for disaster! Your teenager will likely use your emotional *insecurity* and *manipulate* you to do things that you wouldn't do otherwise. They become *manipulative*, *devious* and *self-centered*. Later, they may use these *traits* in their dealings with teachers, friends and boyfriends/girlfriends. This creates a huge amount of stress for themselves and others.

Do Not Set High Expectations For Your Teenager

High expectations are a perfect recipe for *high* stress. If you set high expectations of your teenager, he/she **may** or **may not** be able to achieve those goals, but surely will stay under *tremendous* pressure. This is how:

If the expected goal is achieved, there is a momentary *thrill* and *excitement*. However, soon afterwards, another goal is set and the pattern continues. In this way, your teenager stays under *constant* stress to achieve *more* and *more*. Often, it becomes a lifelong pattern. Your teenager may achieve a lot, but will also be an *emotional wreck*.

On the other hand, if your teenager fails your expectation, he/she will feel *worthless*, a *failure*, a *shame*. You will feel *annoyed*, *frustrated* and even *angry*. In the heat of your emotions, you may say things that will further *hurt* your teenager. A repeated pattern of this kind of behavior often leads to a break-up of the *teenager-parent relationship* with enormous emotional consequences: Anger, depression, high blood pressure, emotional overeating, obesity, low back pain, memory loss and even heart attacks and strokes for the parents. In teenagers, it can lead to depression, a weak immune system, stunted growth, irresponsible sexual behavior, and even addictions to illegal drugs. A deep sense of failure may push some teenagers to commit *suicide*.

Do Not Try to Control your Teenager's Behavior with Reward and Punishment

Often, parents try to control the behavior of their teenager with a "reward and punishment" strategy, which they used when their teenagers were kids. Usually, teenagers *outgrow* it and *resent* it when parents continue to use this strategy. Consequently, teenagers become *rebellious*, which often results in a big emotional *show down* when parents announce certain punishment. Some teenagers may even become *manipulative* and *deceitful*. They figure out the ways to get rewards and avoid punishments.

All of this learned behavior helps teenagers to "survive" their parents' prison of discipline. Naturally, they utilize these "survival techniques" a lot and continue to use them in their adult life. In this way, they continue to create a lot of stress for themselves and the others.

Don't Discuss your Teenager's Problem with a Sympathetic Ear.

Often parents discuss their teenager's problems with a sympathetic ear. They may call their close friends or family members

to tell them what their teenager *did* and how they *reacted* to that behavior. Close friends and family members would usually *agree* with you, (*or* they would no longer be *close* to you). It simply *reinforces* you "being right" and *perpetuates* or even *worsens* the problem.

There are always two sides (sometimes even more) to a story. Only a person on *neutral* ground can truly see different sides of a story. This person obviously cannot be your close friend or a close family member. Such a person can be a psychologist or a counselor. Therefore, do not discuss your teenager's problem with a *sympathetic* ear, but with a *neutral* ear.

Chapter 8

Stress Management Kit for Teachers

Emergency Management

When faced with an acute, stressful situation, do the following:

Pause. Take time-out. Don't *say* or *do* anything. Feel the *emotion* rising inside you. Don't *suppress* it. At the same time, don't get *consumed* by the emotion. In stead, start *counting*. See how long does it takes for the *emotion* to subside.

Be acutely aware of your surroundings: the *objects* and the *space* in which objects are; the *sounds* and the *silence*, which remains in the background of all sounds.

Be aware of your *breathing*.

Once emotion has settled down, use *logic* and *analyze* the entire situation as a *third party*, from a *neutral ground*. You will be amazed to see that your emotion was way *out of proportion* to the actual situation. Then, completely *let go* of whatever happened. Be aware of the nagging *inner voice* that wants you to keep festering over "what happened." Simply *laugh* at it and *move on*.

Go out for a walk in your neighborhood, park, or even in your backyard. Also, do some jogging or running.

Look at nature: the trees, the sky, the flowers, the stars, the sunset, the sunrise. Also, be aware of the *space* in which every thing is.

Listen to nature: the birds, the crickets, the dogs. Also, be aware of the *silence* which is always there. Sounds come and go, but silence is always there.

Use your sense of *smell* to be aware of various fragrances.

Decompress On A Regular Basis

Do certain activities to *decompress* your stress on a regular basis so it does not build up to a *crisis* point. Here are some suggestions:

Do some *stretches* everyday or better yet, several times a day, just a few minutes of stretches at a time, that's all.

Every now and then pay attention to your breathing, just for a minute or so. Also, do deep breathing for a minute or so, a couple of times during the day.

You may want to learn basic stretches, and do them every day for about 15 minutes.

Go for a walk or jog on a daily basis.

Use Common Sense

Use common sense and you will realize that **stress appears to be due to this or that, but in fact, it is your own creation.** Most people get stressed out *thinking* about the *uncertain* future and/or the

unpleasant past. Already up to their neck with stress, they *overreact* to someone's remark or behavior.

Use common sense and see for yourself whatever you are stressed about, is *not* actually happening right now in Real. It is happening only in your head, but *not* in front of your eyes. **It has either happened or it may happen, but it is not happening at this very moment.** In this way, you actually create a problem which in fact, does not even exist at all.

Worries About The Future

But it may happen, your inner voice says. "I may lose my job. I may not get my promotion. I may not know the answer and humiliate myself in front of my students or their parents."

Well, the only way you can have any *impact* on the so-called future is by doing the *right* things now. Simply worrying about the so-called future is not going to change it. Therefore, take action *now* in order to *affect* your so-called future. For example, don't do things that may potentially *jeopardize* your job. Love your job. If you don't like your job, find some other job. Until then, try to love your job. There was a reason you decided to become a teacher. Keep that *passion* alive inside you. There is no job or profession that does not have its challenges and problems. Here is the secret for how you can be happy at any job: Simply point out the problems in a non-confrontational tone. Then move on and focus on the good side of your job. Instead of being *consumed* by the challenges that your students/colleagues /principal/parents may bring, stay focused on *teaching* and the *gratification* you get from it.

Pains Of the Past:

Sometimes you *fume* over things that happened in the past: Someone *insulted* you, *betrayed* you, *let you down*, etc. These events

of the past are particularly painful if your student, colleague, principal or a parent does this to you. Use logic and see for yourself that no matter how much you think about your past, you can never change it. "But I must learn from it so it never happens to me again," says an inner voice. With this kind of mindset, what people often end up learning is *mistrust, jealousy, hate* and *revenge*. They also become *fearful* that it may happen again. In fact, you keep your past *alive* (although it has otherwise *died*) as long as you stay in the mindset to *learn* from it. Only when you completely *let go* of your past, you can be *free* of the emotional trauma it caused you.

Emotional pain from the past also comes in another form: *sweet memories* - All the **good times** you had with your previous students/colleagues/principal. But now things aren't the same. You *miss* those good old days. In fact, you feel *sad* inside. Intellectually, you know that times have changed, but it doesn't heal your *inner sadness*. In fact, the more you think about "sweet memories," the sadder you get. Use logic and you realize those "sweet memories" are nothing more than an *illusion, a dream, a phantom*. Those events were "Real" when they happened, but are now simply a package of mental *pictures, stories* and associated *emotions*. Only when you completely *let go* of your "sweet memories," can you be *free* of the emotional trauma caused by them.

Section 3

Stress Management for Teenagers, Parents and Teachers - Level 2

You may already know some of the *advice* I have given under Stress Management - Level 1. It does work, but only *temporarily*. Often, you continue to struggle with *stress*.

In this section, we take a *deeper* look at *stress*. We investigate what stress really is, what is its root cause and how you can be free of stress, once and for all, in three steps.

Step 1

Chapter 9

What is Stress?

You need to fully understand stress before you can be free of it, right? Stress comes in many forms. For the sake of discussion, we can divide stress into two types:

- Outer stress
- Inner Stress

Outer Stress

Outer stress is what we generally refer to when we talk of stress. This is the stress due to an *external* factor, often out of our control, such as deadlines, demanding teachers, romantic break-ups.

These are basically situations which keep happening, one after another. There are *brief* periods when we get some relief from them. You may think, “Ah! Finally I have no stress,” but before you know it, some other stressful situation arrives.

Inner Stress

Inner stress, on the other hand, is a *different* animal. It’s there all the time! With few exceptions, everyone is suffering from it. It stays with you wherever you go.

What is this inner stress? It's the feeling of restlessness, pressure, agitation, emptiness, worthlessness, sadness, boredom, frustrations, annoyances, anger, hate, jealousy, guilt, fear, nervousness and anxiety.

Where does this inner stress come from? If you pay close attention, you'll find that this inner stress comes from your own *inner voice*, the voice in your head that never stops even though you have nothing to solve. Often, you're completely *unaware* of it. It's like your mind is on *autopilot*.

Some Examples:

- You often hear these kinds of nagging voices in your head: *what if, what will I, this should not have happened, why did this happen, why me, why not me, why didn't I, or why did I...*
- You are afraid of losing your friends and becoming unpopular again.
- You think to yourself: "No one, even my parents, understands me. No one really cares about me."
- You *feel* like you're in a *race* all the time and you have to win it at all costs.
- You find yourself *criticizing* others even though you're sitting alone.
- You're *afraid* of losing your grade point average, your respect, your fame, your credibility, your looks.
- You're *mad* at yourself. "How could I be so selfish, deceitful, immoral, dishonest...?"
- You're still trying to *win* the argument you had with your friend, a week ago... in your head.
- You're *afraid* of being a failure. You feel you may not be able to fulfill all responsibilities at home, at school or in society at large.
- You're *sad* because you've been a failure in life. You have nothing to show for all your struggles to succeed.

- You're *furios* because life has been so *unfair* to you.
- You're *mad* at your mother, father, unfaithful boyfriend, insincere friends, school teacher or principal.
- You are *afraid* someone may *betray* you again.
- You feel *frustrated* you can't kick your habits of excessive eating, smoking, drinking or shopping even though intellectually, you understand their harmfulness.
- You hear a nagging voice in your head saying you're *not* good enough, you're *lazy*, you're a *loser*, you'll be *late* again or you'll *embarrass* yourself.

Up to the neck with *inner* stress, you overreact to *outer* stress. You *blame* outer stressful situations for the *cause* of your stress, but you are not *peaceful* even when everything is going right *for* you. In other words, the real source of stress is inside you, which simply reacts to triggers out there. And blame those triggers for your stress.

Who is this *inner voice* that *torments* you and creates all of your inner stress, even when there's no stressful situation? If we could figure this out, if we could get to the root of it, then we could do something about it, right?

Chapter 10

How You Create Stress for Yourself

There is an inner voice in your head all the time, even when you are sitting by yourself. In other words you think constantly. You have a busy mind that never stops. Thoughts, then trigger emotions and create emotional stress for you. Therefore, it is logical to conclude that thoughts are the root cause of your stress.

Who is Thinking?

In order to be free of thoughts, first we need to find out who is it that keeps thinking all the time? If you pay attention, you realize it is always "I" who is thinking. Who is this "I"? We need to figure this out, if we truly want to be free of stress.

The "I"

Who is this "I" that is constantly thinking? You may reply, "Oh! it's me."

Really?

Let's take a closer look at this "I". Can you show me where it is? It's in your head, isn't it? Its an abstraction, an illusion, a phantom. It is a *virtual* entity in your head that *steals* your identity. It is not the "true" you at all. Why do I say that? Because you are not

born with this. In order to know your "True, REAL Self, the Real I" observe little babies, just a day or so old. I had the opportunity to be in charge of a well-baby nursery in my early career as a doctor and observed about sixty babies every day. Later, I had the wonderful experience of having my own baby. This is what I see in newborn babies.

The True Self, The REAL "I"

When you observe little babies, you see that as soon as their basic physical needs are met (i.e. a full stomach, a clean diaper and a warm blanket), they are *joyful* from within! They *smile* and go to sleep.

They have no *past* or *future*. They are *not* worried if mom will be around for the next feed. If they did, they wouldn't be able to go to sleep. That's why they have no problem going to sleep. They are so *vulnerable*, but *fear* remains miles away. There is a total *lack of control*, but *no fear* whatsoever.

Once their stomach is full, they *don't* want any more food. If you were to force more food than they need, they would regurgitate. They eat to satisfy their hunger and that's all. *Wanting more* does not exist and that's why they are so *content*. You could feed them breast milk, cow's milk or formula. To them, it doesn't matter as long as it agrees with their stomach and satisfies their hunger.

They don't say "I don't like your milk, Mom. I like formula milk better." You won't hear, "Mom, you wrapped me in a pink blanket with butterflies on it. I'm a boy. Therefore, I need a blue blanket with pictures of dinosaurs on it."

Newborn babies don't like or dislike someone because of their color, religion, nationality or wealth. That's because they have not acquired any *concepts* about religion, nationality, history or

money. *Concepts* do not exist at all. *Likes and dislikes* do not exist. There are no *preferences or judgments*. No *embarrassment or shame*.

No fear, no anger, no hate, no wanting more, no prejudices... Just pure joy, contentment and peace. This is the True Human Nature. I like to call it the "True Self, the Real "I", the self that you, I and everyone else on the planet is born with.

Newborn babies are joyful just looking around. They truly *live in the Now*. They do it spontaneously without making an effort to live in the Now.

Why Newborn Babies are so Joyful and Peaceful?

Because newborn babies are *completely* free of thoughts. They don't think. Why do I say newborn babies don't think? Because, you always think in terms of a language. For example, if you know English and no other language, you will always think in English, not in Chinese, French or Hindi. Just observe it right now, yourself.

In order to think, you need to know a language. Therefore, language is the basis of thoughts.

Newborns know *no* language. Hence, they don't think. It is so logical, isn't it? They also don't have any concepts. Why? Because concepts arise out of language. No language - no concepts.

Are Newborn babies Unintelligent?

We assume a person to be unintelligent if he/she can't think, right. So if newborn babies don't think, are they unintelligent? Not at all. Quite the opposite. Put a newborn baby on her mom's chest. In no time, she will find nipple and start to suckle her food. Pretty intelligent!

They will let you know if they are hungry, cold or wet. Newborn babies don't think but are extremely intelligent.

The Acquired Self - the VIRTUAL "I"

Now let's see what happens to this fearless, non-judging, contented, peaceful and joyful baby.

Gradually, another self develops as you grow up in a society. This, we can call the *Acquired Self*. You acquire it as a result of *psychosocial conditioning*, from your parents, your school and then, your society in general.

As you grow, this Acquired Self gets bigger and bigger. It gets in the driver seat, pushing the True Self onto the passenger side and later, into the back seat and eventually, into the trunk.

As a grown up, all you see is this Acquired Self. You identify with this Acquired Self. *That's who you think you are*. This becomes the virtual "I" sitting in your head. Your identity gets *hijacked* by the Acquired Self. Instead of seeing the hijacker for what it is, you think that's who you are. How ironic!

This Acquired Self is the basis for all of your stress. It reacts to outside triggers, which it calls stressors and blames them for your stress. In fact, it is the Acquired Self who reacts to triggers and creates stress for you. In this way, the source of all stress actually resides inside you. It is good to know this very basic fact. Why? Because if the source of stress is inside you, so is the solution.

This Acquired Self torments you and creates stress even when there is no stressful situation. It conveniently creates *hypothetical* situations (the what if syndrome) to make you fearful. I like to call it a *monster*, as it is quite frightening and appears strong, but in the end, it is really virtual.

Sadly, you don't even have a clue what's going on, because you completely identify with the Acquired Self, the mastermind behind all of your stress. You could call it the *enemy within*.

Unfortunately, you're completely out of touch with your True Self, the Real "I", the source of true joy, contentment and inner peace. In the total grip of the monstrous Acquired Self, you suffer and suffer and create stress not only for yourself, but for others as well.

Chapter 11

The Acquired Self

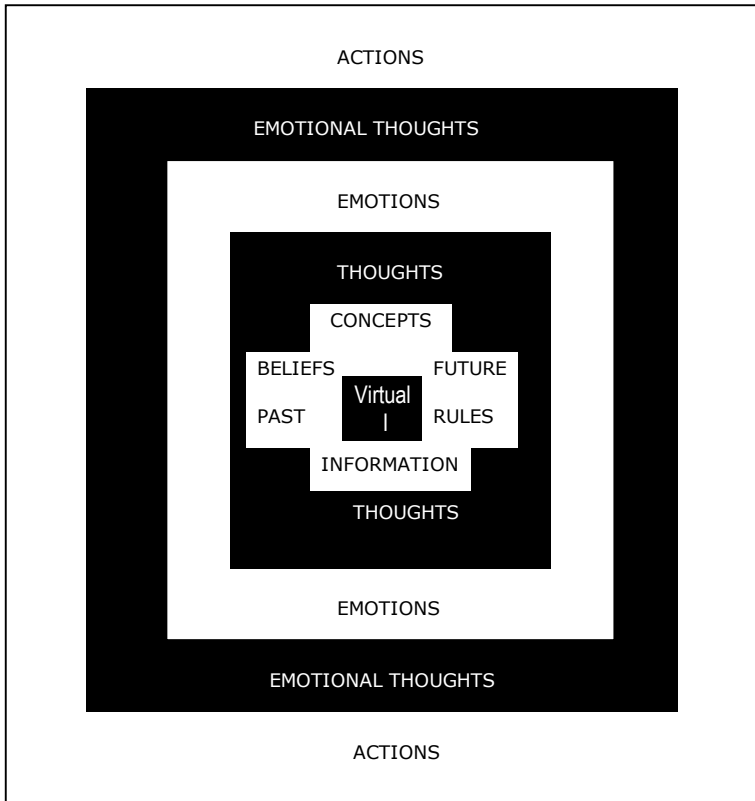
Acquired self is the root cause of all of your stress. Before you can be free of it, you need to see it in detail, in all of its colors: What is its composition, how is it created, where does it come from?

The Composition of Your Acquired Self

At the core of your Acquired Self is the virtual, conceptual "I" you *mistakenly* think you are. Around this "I," there are layers and layers of concepts, information, past and future, downloaded into your Acquired Self, as you grow up in a society.

Some examples: My school, My career, My goals, My car, My house, My beauty, My jewelry, My ancestors, My accomplishments, My failures, My relationships, My values, My culture, My town, My country, My religion, My past, My future.

Based on these concepts, the Virtual "I" *interprets and judges* every event, every person, every object etc. In this way, it triggers emotions, which then influences the thinking process. Emotional thoughts create a huge amount of emotional stress for you. Often actions arise out of emotional thoughts, which cause more stress for you as well as the others.



THE ACQUIRED SELF

The Making of the Acquired Self

Your Acquired Self is a product of your society, which itself is a Collective Acquired Self. You could call your personal Acquired Self as the "baby monster" and the collective Acquired Self of the society as the "papa monster." *I am using the word monster just for the sake of description without any negativity attached to it.*

The main purpose of your Acquired Self is for you to be able to function in a society. But the problem arises when it steals your identity - you start to believe in it to be who you are. Then it becomes a source of never-ending stress.

There are three mechanisms responsible for creating your Acquired Self:

- Psychosocial conditioning.
- Instillation of information.
- Creation of past and future.

Chapter 12

Psychosocial Conditioning

Psychosocial conditioning plays a major part in creating your Acquired Self. It *starts* at home. Parents and grandparents play their role in conditioning your mind. Then, school comes, where teachers sincerely do their share to condition your mind. Later, it's society in general that continues to condition your mind.

Virtual "I"

At birth, your parents put a carefully selected *label* on you. They call it your name, which is basically a sound. Your parents utter this sound as they point towards you. After doing it repeatedly, they finally succeed in drilling into your head that you are indeed Peter, Lisa or Susan etc. This is the *birth* of the "virtual I". At the same time, they also drill in the concepts of Mama and Dada.

Attachments

As a baby, you start *getting attached* to your parents who provide you food, comfort and warmth. It works for a few months, but then they want time for themselves, too. So they look for some *distractions* for you. They find their answer in "toys." Initially, you're curious about these things that look cute and make funny noises. Slowly, you get *attached* to them. "They are mine." The concept of *possessions* is born.

Judging, Reward and Punishment

Now, your parents go one step further. They start to *control* your behavior through these toys: If you do what we tell you (*good behavior*), you'll get more toys on your birthday, but if you don't do what we tell you (*bad behavior*), then you won't get any toys. Sometimes, they even take away your toy to *punish* you for *not* listening to them. The concept of *good* behavior and *bad* behavior, *reward* and *punishment* is added to your Acquired Self.

Ego and Love

The concept of toys soon gets *glorified* into the concept of *gifts*. Now you receive toys *wrapped* up in paper and these are called gifts. The concept of gifts is further refined: you receive a gift because you're *special* and the person who gives you a gift *loves* you. The concepts of "*I am special*" and "*love through gifts*" are added to your Acquired Self.

Excitement and Boredom

Toys, gifts, being special and being loved give you momentary *thrill* and *excitement*. However, that soon *fade* away and you get *bored*. You want more momentary thrill and excitement. You can't wait until your birthday. The concept of gifts is so exciting that you can't wait to count the gifts and open them. That's where you get most of your excitement. You may *not* even be interested in what's inside the package. You develop an *insatiable appetite* for momentary thrill and excitement, which only increases as you grow older.

There are a lot of other ways in which your parents provide you with momentary thrill and excitement. Video games are popular these days. Starting at a very young age, you get your fixes of momentary excitement through these virtual games. Manufacturers

of these games *fool* your parents with sale pitches. “These are great educational tools.” “This will improve your kid’s dexterity.” “After using our game, your kid will be more advanced than other kids in preschool.”

Reward, Punishment and Judging

Most of these games are built around the concepts of *winning, reward, good and bad*. You have to achieve certain points, usually by killing some object (troll, demon, spy, etc.) called *evil* or *bad*. If you win, you’re the good hero and a reward follows. The concepts of *bad, evil, hero, killing, winning and losing* are added to your Acquired Self.

At the same time, you also start getting exposed to stories, books, movies and plays, most of which further deepen the concepts of *good, bad, villain, hero, reward and punishment*. You get so attached to these concepts that you love to wear T-shirts with pictures of these heroic characters (which cost your parents a whole lot more than a regular shirt!)

You also hear your parents constantly calling some events and behaviors *good* and others *bad*. They also often use phrases such as “*I like it. I don’t like it. I love it, I hate it.*” Soon you start to replicate these phrases.

This *mental labeling and judging* provoke intense emotions inside you in the form of thrill, excitement, sadness, horror and fear. You may have *nightmares* with the random distorted replay of these mental images during your sleep.

ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder)

In some children, this *sensory load* of virtual information from video games, books and movies is so enormous that their developing

brain can't handle it. These children start to exhibit signs of *sensory overload* in the form of *jitteriness*, *disruptive* and *impulsive* behavior and *difficulty focusing*. They become a problem for their teacher, who calls in the parents to have a *session* with the principal of the school.

Upon the teacher's insistence, parents often take their child to a pediatrician who conveniently gives a diagnosis of ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder). The child is then put on a drug to alter their brain chemistry. It's a *band-aid* approach to calm the kid down so the classroom isn't disrupted. Meanwhile, the root cause for the problem, the Acquired Self, keeps getting bigger and bigger.

Abandonment

Your parents, who are so loving and who you are so attached to, one day decide to leave you with a stranger called a *baby-sitter*. You feel intense emotional pain of *abandonment*. You cry and cry and cry! Finally, you are distracted by toys or get exhausted from crying and eventually go to sleep.

Later, when your guilt-stricken parents ask the baby-sitter how things went, she lies with a smile on her face and says that you were no problem at all; "Your baby is an angel and I would love to baby-sit her again," she says as she receives her hourly wages.

Repeated episodes of this emotionally traumatic experience of abandonment keep adding to your Acquired Self. Please be aware it's not your parents fault. They are doing what society's collective Acquired Self has advised them to do. "You should have some private quality time, just the two of you, away from your children to keep your marriage alive."

Competition and Comparison

Sooner or later, another concept is added to your growing Acquired Self: *comparison* and *competition* which often becomes the main driving force behind your upbringing.

At home, you're compared to your brother, sister, or cousin. You remember your dad saying "Why can't you be like your older brother?" Comments like this trigger emotions of *humiliation*, *worthlessness* and *jealousy*. All these negative comments with their associated negative emotions get added to your Acquired Self.

You also hear your parents constantly comparing and judging people, events, objects, etc: "*Better than, the Best, Worse than, the Worst.*" All the comparing and judging keeps adding to your Acquired Self. Soon, you start copying them. "*My best friend, My favorite toy, My favorite uncle. My dad is the best in the whole wide world.*" Your parents keep reinforcing these ideas into your Acquired Self.

Rules and Consequences

When you enter school, the making of your Acquired Self gets into high gear. Soon, you learn you can't be at ease in the morning. Now, you need to be at school on time or there will be *consequences* in the form of punishment. You have to follow certain *rules* in your classroom or there will be consequences. You also hear a lot of *rules* at home. Follow them or face the consequences. Initially, you *resent* these rules and their consequences.

You develop *resentment* against those (parents and teachers) who implement these punishments. Ultimately, you may develop *rebellion against authority*. You may also develop *fear of authority* as you know they possess the power to punish you.

At school as well at home, you also learn the concept of how to be good and receive *rewards* in the form of praise, recognition and even some toys. Your parents may start rewarding you with money as an allowance for your good behavior. These rewards give you *excitement*.

The concept of *punishment and reward* keeps getting deeper and deeper into your Acquired Self.

More Competition and Comparison

At school, *comparison and competition* are the main driving forces. Spelling bee competitions, captain of the football team, student of the month, are just a few examples. Kids are also enrolled in dance, gymnastics, skating, music and speech competitions. Plus, there are all the sports competitions - Little League, soccer, basketball, track, volleyball and football. Then there are local beauty pageants and academic decathlons. You get the idea. These competitions and comparisons are so prevalent in our society.

In teenagers, *competition* for a boyfriend or girlfriend starts to take place. Girls *compare* each other's looks and clothes, while boys *compete* in the sports arena. Often there are verbal as well as physical fights. Everyone wants to be *popular*, wants to be *praised and acknowledged*.

The school often becomes a battlefield. Everyone wants to *win* and *defeat* others. The concepts of *victory* and *defeat* get embedded into your Acquired Self. Everyone wants to be a *winner* and not a *loser*. However, in life, you sometimes win and sometimes lose. It's a *fact* of life.

Each time you win, you're *thrilled* and feel *superior* to others. You receive *praise and validation* from those around you. You feel

you're at the top of the world, *in full control*. But these feelings are short-lived. Obviously you want more of these exciting feelings.

Wanting More kills *contentment*. You develop a chronic *restlessness*. You're constantly looking for more thrills and excitement. You want to be in charge and *in control*. When you don't get your fix, you get *frustrated, agitated and bored*.

On the other hand, each time you lose, you feel *humiliated, inferior, worthless and jealous*; And if you feel that you lost because of unfairness, then you also become *bitter, resentful, hateful, revengeful and angry*.

All of these emotional experiences continue to add to your Acquired Self in the form of *memories* - good as well as bad memories. Over the years, you accumulate tons and tons of emotions triggered by these memories, which is the basis of your *emotional baggage*.

More Judging

You are also *judged* constantly at home as well as at school, in the form of your report card, good behavior, bad behavior, good attitude, bad attitude, good manners, bad manners, polite and rude. Each time you are judged, you feel a triggered emotion.

At some point, your Acquired Self is downloaded with the concept of ethics and morality: how everyone *should* and *should not* behave.

For example, it tells you "*This is how a true friend should and should not behave... This is how a good boyfriend/girlfriend/husband/wife should and should not behave... This is how a good parent should and should not behave... This is how a good child/student should and should not behave.*"

Equipped with this “software of role description,” your Acquired Self constantly *judges* others while they *judge* you. Each time you are judged, you feel a triggered emotion.

Expectations

You also build up *expectations* around this “software of role description,” naively thinking, “If I do everything by the book, then the other person will keep up his end of the deal.” When the other person doesn’t behave as expected, you get *disappointed, frustrated* and *outraged*.

Self - Criticism

In addition, you also *judge* yourself. When you don’t or can’t behave according to the “software of role description,” you *criticize* yourself. This is the basis of *self - criticism* and *guilt*.

I, Me, My, Mine

The concept of “*I, Me, My, Mine*” continues to embed deeper into your growing Acquired Self. *My friends, My school, My teacher, My books, My home, My neighborhood*. The concept of “*I, Me, My, Mine*” is the basis of *selfishness* and psychological *division* from everyone else on the planet.

The Acquired Self Steals Your Identity

The concept of “*I, Me, My, Mine*” creates an *illusion* of who you are. In this way, your Acquired Self *hijacks* your identity. You *lose* your true identity and start to *believe* in this *illusory* “*I*” to be who you are.

An innocent, joyful, contented you is hijacked by an agitated monstrous self who wants to win at all costs. This monster always *wants more (greed)*, is *self-centered*, and carries a huge load of

worthlessness, bitterness, jealousy, hate and anger. It wants to defeat, control and also humiliate others. It wants to take revenge for its previous humiliating experiences. It is always looking for momentary thrills. It is constantly judging others while others are judging it. Often it is judging itself. It looks for rewards, praise and validation. It is afraid of punishment and consequences such as disciplinary actions, bad grades, unable to secure a high school diploma or an admission into a college. It is also afraid of losing its friends, looks and health. It easily gets hurt, frustrated and disappointed. It dwells in its past and worries about its future.

Welcome to the "Real World."

Now this monstrous, virtual "I" enters the so called, real world. *Competition, comparison and judging* get even worse. You see everyone competing for money. Naturally, money becomes your main goal. You do it in the name of career and profession. You fight for jobs. Sometimes you win and sometimes you lose. At the workplace, everyone competes for a promotion. Even when you're at the top, you want more: more bonuses, more recognition, and more fame. Everyone also remains scared of losing their job, promotion and reputation.

There are no true friends, because competition and jealousy kill friendship. You compare yourself to others all the time, just as they compare themselves to you.

Society rigorously continues to condition you through competition and comparison with the help of news media and entertainment. Just see for yourself how often you hear the words *winner, loser, better than, the best, worse than, the worst.*

Your Acquired Self becomes so competitive that even in social discussions it wants to *win* the argument. People don't even completely listen to each other. As one Acquired Self is making its

point, the other is mentally preparing to attack and this goes on back and forth. Two Acquired Selves take mental positions and no one can afford to *lose* the argument.

Everything in life gets focused on winning; and life becomes a battlefield. You see it everywhere - on the freeway, at work, on TV shows. Everyone wants to get ahead. No one wants to lose.

Most men get hooked on sports. By clinging to a team, they are in virtual competition. When your team wins, you get a momentary thrill and when it loses, you feel humiliated and even angry. This cycle continues. You get *addicted* to it.

Others get *addicted* to the win-lose cycle of gambling, horse racing, car racing, etc. Sometimes, emotional pains and desire to have momentary thrills are so strong that a person gets *addicted* to alcohol, drugs or sex.

Many people also get involved in political, social and religious groups and get trapped in the cycle of “win and lose.” They experience all the emotions resulting from this game of win-lose. All these experiences keep adding to the growing monstrous Acquired Self.

While *competition* is usually the main driving force in the making of men’s monsters, *comparison* becomes the driving force for most of women’s monsters. They compare each others appearance, clothes, jewelry, etc. They constantly judge each others looks and appearances.

A nice compliment can make you feel on top of the world: a *momentary thrill*. Then of course, you want more of it. That means spending more time and money on your looks.

A negative comment, on the other hand, rips you apart, makes you *sad and sometimes even revengeful*. You get so attached to your looks that even a slight reminder of reality, such as a pimple or a weight gain of a few pounds, throws you in a downward spin and creates huge *anxiety*.

The Concept of Romance and Marriage

Your Acquired Self also acquires the *concept of romance and marriage*, starting from a very young age. All those storybooks and movies about princes and princesses, and later on, TV shows, movies and books about romance feed into your developing Acquired Self.

You also start to learn about *dating* games in your early teens. To find your mate, you start to compete. In dances and parties, there is intense competition for mates, sometimes resulting in verbal and even physical fights.

Every now and then you get lucky. As a man, as soon as you can get sex, you have conquered, won the game and you are no longer interested. Now you're on to the next hunt while she is chasing you. *You are the winner and she is the loser*. You're feeling high while she's feeling hurt and low. Your excitement is usually short lived. Sooner or later, you fall in *love* with a girl, and now she may *dump* you. *Now she is the winner and you are the loser*.

After playing this game of "win and lose" a few times, people start looking for a serious relationship and eventually, to get married. In some cultures, the Society Monster has given the task of searching for a bride or groom to the parents. Now it's the parents who go through intense scrutiny (comparison) while selecting a bride or groom for their son or daughter.

The Honeymoon is Over

After marriage, there is an initial period of excitement which is usually short-lived. Then the monster in each one of you starts to act out. *All the piled up anger, humiliation, abandonment, sadness, jealousy and “need to win” starts to surface.* Arguments and fights become routine. Romantic love *fades away.*

Self Pity

In the meantime, if you also have a child or two, your *selfishness* may get further enhanced. You may start to feel that you're working hard for everyone else and have *no* time for yourself to do the things that you want to do to have fun. Life seems so *meaningless* and *boring*. You start to feel sorry for yourself.

Working like a Machine

You go to work where everything is *routine* and *stressful*: customers, colleagues and bosses are so demanding. You are basically trying to *survive* all day long. You come home *exasperated* and *tired*, often with a *headache*.

One of you has to get the kids to school, keep house and prepare meals as well. Usually, it's a female, working to be a career woman, raising a family and trying to be a *super mom*.

Morning time is often very stressful because school starts on *time*. Your Acquired Self has learned that there will be consequences if your kid is not on time. Unfortunately, your kid's Acquired Self hasn't *grasped* the whole concept yet. Without being aware, you start *yelling* at your kids for being late, again. Soon, they start to *yell* back. Now, you're really *enraged*. “Don't talk to me in that tone, young lady.”

Then you have to be at work on time. Most people encounter morning rush hour: bumper to bumper traffic. Scared of the consequences of being late (may lose job), you feel *rushed* and *anxious*. You may easily explode in anger if some other driver doesn't behave according to your expectations which arise out of the *traffic rules* embedded in your Acquired Self.

One of you also has to take your kids to *after-school* and *weekend activities*. You feel *obligated* to enroll your kids into these activities because those are good for your kids, says the Society Monster. These activities start on time and often you are *rushed* to make it on time. Often, you and your kids are *yelling* at each other and in a *bad* mood by the time you reach the playground.

If your team loses, the kids feel *sad* and *humiliated* and sometime even start crying. As a loving parent, you also endure all these pains. Next time, when your team wins, it's the kids and parents on the other side of the field who experience *sadness*. However, your Acquired Self doesn't let you think about them. It tells you to celebrate your *victory* and be *happy*.

At home, you get easily *annoyed* at the demands of your kids and spouse. Finally, your inner *irritation* can't take it any more and you yell at them over some little annoyance.

Guilt

Then you feel bad and guilty about it. Why? Because the Society Monster has written a "software of role descriptions." It describes your role as a husband, wife, parent and child and downloads it into your developing Acquired Self at a relatively young age. If you do your role according to the software, society judges you to be a good husband, wife, father or mother. Otherwise, you are a bad husband, wife or parent. Often, there is a conflict between how

you're *supposed* to act according to the *software* and how you *actually* end up behaving in real life. This is the basis of *guilt*.

Emptiness

You can't even tell anyone how you truly feel about your spouse, children or elderly parent because you're afraid how others will judge you. You feel *isolated* and *lonely*. No one seems to understand you. You are constantly *irritated*. You feel *emptiness* inside you.

Escapes

Then you may find *escapes* into excessive work, alcohol, sports, drugs, gambling, etc. Many people pursue more and more money. With money, you can buy expensive presents for your spouse, buy a bigger home, buy a more expensive car or take a trip to an expensive vacation resort. From each thing, you get a momentary thrill and excitement, but it fades away fast. And you return to your chronic state of *unease*, *irritation* and *emptiness*.

To pay for these expensive items, you have to work harder. Often you spend most of your time at work, which you don't like, especially if you're a caring parent and want to spend time with your children. This adds to your sense of having *no control over your life* and deepens your *frustration*. You start to *hate* your job.

On the other hand, some people find relief in being way from their family. It's as if your family is the cause of all of your problems. Often you end up having an *affair*. You find someone who feeds your Acquired Self's *hunger* for praise and validation. Soon, you're in a serious *mess*. The stress of *hiding* the affair eventually implodes into a big blow out when your spouse discovers your deceit. Often, it ends in a divorce.

Blaming

Now the monstrous Acquired Self in each of you comes out with *full force*. It is full of *hate, anger and revenge*. Each one of you tries to cause as much *harm* to the other as possible. *Kids are the one who are in the middle and may suffer the most in the long run*. Each one of you *blames* the other for all the problems.

Blaming others is one of the features of the Acquired Self. Blaming is actually a form of judging others. It doesn't see any problems in itself, but is quick to find someone else's faults. Your Acquired Self has learned to *never* admit any faults, because admitting fault means you're a loser. It may also put you at risk for *punishment* for your actions.

Discipline and Control

Society's collective Acquired Self has taught your personal Acquired Self to treat children in a certain way: "Treat them like a superhero or princess when they are little and as they get older, control their behavior with toys, gifts, money and discipline."

Most parents get *frustrated* and even quite *angry* at their teenagers. On the other hand, teenagers also get very *frustrated* with their parents to the point that they can't wait to leave the *prison* of their parent's house. They get tired of hearing "you have to obey my rules while living under my roof."

Teenagers are in the grip of their own Acquired Self created by society through TV, internet, magazines and video games. Their Acquired Self is taught to *disobey, rebel and not follow rules* under the *illusion of independence and freedom*.

Meanwhile, *Society's collective Acquired Self tells your Acquired Self to discipline your teenagers with rules. At the same*

*time, it tells teenagers to rebel against the rules. Interesting, isn't it? Society's collective Acquired Self plays the trick of *Divide and Conquer*. In this way, it escapes its own detection and continues to thrive in you and your child. Ironically, neither of you sees the tricks of Society's collective Acquired Self. Your Acquired Self and your teenager's Acquired Self continue to *tangle* with each other, leading to *frustrations, disappointments* and *anger*.*

You may go through a couple of divorces before you settle down in a long marital relationship, which often requires another role for you - the role of being a step-parent. Step-parenting creates a host of new emotional challenges, often centered around *control* issues.

Worthlessness

Then one day your children *leave* the house. Now, you may suffer from what Society's collective Acquired Self calls, the *empty nest syndrome*. What really happened is that you treated your children as *possessions* and now you don't have that *possession* and *control* any more.

Children also serve as a *distraction* from your own deep seated *emotional pains*. With children gone, you're faced with the *demons* stored in your memory box, which is part of your Acquired Self. Children also satisfy your *desire to be needed*. After their departure, you feel *worthless*.

Now you're middle aged. Society's Acquired Self has already downloaded a *bleak* picture into your personal Acquired Self. You're "over the hill" and your looks are fading away. Your children don't *need* you anymore. You start feeling *worthless and depressed*.

Fear

The Society Monster also forecasts a future in which you lose your health. *Fear* of losing your health is immense. Fear of losing your job, your house and your stock portfolio may also settle in.

If your child dates someone you don't approve of, you also develop fear of losing your child.

Anxiety and depression are pretty common at this stage of your life, all created by your own Acquired Self, but you don't realize it. You always *blame* someone else for your emotional problems.

Hope

Your Society's collective Acquired Self also creates a future for you that it promises will be *better* than the present and it calls it "*hope*." For instance, it *blames* most of your stress on your job and promises you *golden years* after retirement. You'll have no responsibilities and can travel and have as much fun as you want.

Bitterness

After your retirement, your dream of golden years is often shaken when you or your spouse is diagnosed with some chronic or incurable illness. You feel cheated. "What did I do to get in this mess and how can I get out of it?" You're a regular visitor to doctors and hospitals. You want your health back, but often the answer is that you *can't*. You get bitter at the system, the government, and even God.

Denial

Now Society's collective Acquired Self tells you to *fight* your body dysfunction whether it be cancer, diabetes or heart disease. So

you put up a wall of *resistance* without realizing you are fighting your *own* body. Society's collective Acquired Self tells your Acquired Self that you can *cheat* death. It implies that medical technology can make you live forever. However, when reality hits and someone close to you dies, you become *angry* at doctors and *fearful* of your own death.

Fear of Poverty, Disability and Death

At this late stage in your life, society considers you a useless, economic burden and even makes numerous jokes about you.

You're probably living on a budget. A great deal of your money is eaten up by the cost of drugs, doctors and hospitals bills. You keep *hoping* for a better future as Society's collective Acquired Self has *trained* you to do. But you are also *afraid* to think that you may *not* have *enough* money left to take care of your needs. You are also afraid of *disability* and *death*. You may read stories about nursing homes and get scared. *What if* you end up in a nursing home? You read a horrible story about someone dying a miserable death from cancer, and you become even more fearful. *What if* that happens to me?

It's your Acquired Self who's *afraid* of dying and wants to live forever. And it continues to generate the *fear of death* for you. Then one day, reality hits and you are gone from this world.

The Acquired Self Continues to Live On!

You are *dead*, but your Acquired Self has skillfully *perpetuated* itself through your children, who behave and carry on, much like your Acquired Self with the special *addition* of their own Acquired Self. Then, they download all of their Acquired Self into their children and those children repeat it in their children. In this way, the Acquired Self continues to *live* on, and the *drama* of stress created by it goes on forever!

Chapter 13

Instillation of Information

Society's collective Acquired Self, also instills a huge load of *information* into your developing monstrous Acquired Self.

This is Your Religion, Culture and Nationality.

Parents and grandparents slowly download all sorts of information into you: their religious belief, nationality, customs, traditions, cultural values, eating habits, their likes and dislikes and their personal stories.

You must Acquire More and More Knowledge.

Society's collective Acquired Self then uses teachers to reinforce information you acquire from your parents. In addition, they download a whole lot more information into you: the information from textbooks, internet, movies etc.

You're forced to read and acquire as much information as possible. Your fun and play time starts to decline as you advance through school. Initially, you don't like it. "What happened to all the play and fun I used to have?" However, teachers and parents, skillfully use the "reward and punishment" strategy to *tame* you and often succeed in their mission.

Don't Blame Your Parents or Teachers.

Don't blame your parents or teachers for instilling all of this information into your Acquired Self. They do so with *good* intentions. In their hearts, they believe they're doing you good. They're *preparing* you to be responsible and productive citizens of the society.

In most cases, your parents also reinforce their cultural and religious ideas by taking you to churches, temples, mosques and celebrating religious and cultural holidays. The idea of nationalism is reinforced by celebrating national holidays.

An Insatiable Appetite for Knowledge.

By the time you grow up, your monstrous Acquired Self has an *insatiable* appetite. It wants to get as much information as possible. It wants to be the *first* one to know the *latest* sensational stories and it doesn't want to miss any *gossip*. So, it starts the day by feeding itself a healthy breakfast by watching TV, browsing the internet, and reading the newspaper. For the rest of the day, it uses TV, the internet and colleagues as a source for its *food*. It continues to add all sorts of information throughout the day. Then, it makes sure to feed itself a good dinner in the form of the evening news or internet updates.

Opinions Become Truth

Information in the form of stories, concepts, ideas, and beliefs becomes an important part of your Acquired Self. Often, you don't even realize that most of this information is actually the *opinions* of others. Often, you start to believe all of this *second hand* information as the "truth." Then you look at the world through the *filters* of this acquired information. Consequently, most of your experiences are *tainted* by those preconceived notions. Hence, you don't have any *original* experiences!

For example, you look at the appearance of someone and based upon the information in your head, you judge that person without even exchanging a word. This is the basis of *prejudice*.

You may hear about some country. Soon, you regurgitate all the information you have heard about that country including its people, culture and history. However, you've never been there and haven't met anyone from that country or culture. Amazing!

Sometimes two people may even take mental positions and start arguing, each one believing that his information is true and the other person's information is not. This can lead to verbal *violence* and sometimes even physical *violence*.

In the same way, people argue about some *figure* or *event* in the collective human past. Everyone believes his information is accurate without realizing that it is simply someone's (the historian's) point of view. Obviously these stories are tainted by the historian's own Acquired Self. That's why there are so many *conflicting* stories about the same *figure* or *event* in the collective human past. Often, one set of stories has been downloaded in the Acquired Selves of people in a group, party or country. Meanwhile, another conflicting set of stories is downloaded into the Acquired Selves of another group, party or country. Collectively, people in each group believe their story to be true because they identify with their group of people and they also see everyone around them believing the same story.

Often these stories perpetuate *hate*, *grievances* and *revenge* and sometimes can lead to verbal or physical *violence* and even battles and wars.

Chapter 14

Creation of the Past and Future

“Past and future” are major components of the Acquired Self. Have you ever wondered what really *is* the past and future? Use logic and you will realize that whatever happened in the past is *not* happening right now. Whatever may happen in the future, of course, is not happening right now. The past is *dead* and *gone* and the future *never arrives*. Hence, both are *virtual* and *unreal*, aren’t they?

Just like a monster, the past and future are *virtual*, but they each have huge *power* over you. It may seem they are real, but in fact they are not. Can you show me your past or future, in reality, right now, *not* as a mental abstraction? Of course not! We cannot see, hear, touch, smell or taste our past or future.

The past was real when it happened, but it is not happening right now. Hence, it is *unreal* at the present moment. The future never happens. When it happens, it happens in the present moment. The past and future are nothing but *mental* abstractions. Both are *created* by the mind.

How Your Mind Creates Your Past and Future

For a while, I used to ponder the question: How does the mind create the past and future? Then one day, the answer just *struck* me, when I wasn’t even thinking about it. I was sitting in my backyard

looking at the sky, clouds, birds, flowers, and trees and feeling the breeze. Then a friend of mine visited me. We had a chat for 15-20 minutes and then he left. About five minutes after he left, I had a flashback of my friend's visit. *I heard him calling my name, then coming and sitting on the chair next to mine. I could recall his conversation and eventual departure.* The whole event was as fresh in my mind as if it was happening right now.

A realization happened that truly transformed me. I realized that my friend's visit was an event, with a *beginning* and an *ending*. However, my mind took a mental picture of it, attached the whole conversation as a story and judged it as a good experience. This triggered a feeling of happiness and the entire bundle of *picture, story, mental judging* and the *provoked emotion* was stored as a sweet memory. Now, my mind can go back to it any time it wants and *experience* the whole event over and over again. That's how the event is kept *alive*, although in reality, the event has ended.

Events happen all the time. The mind continues to add mental pictures of events, with attached stories and triggered emotions, and places them in the memory box and that's how it creates the so called *past*. With this background, your mind also tries to figure out how the next event is going to be Or rather how it should or should not be, which triggers emotions. Often it also creates mental pictures through imagination. The self-generated thoughts and associated mental pictures, it calls the *future*.

The Busy Mind

The "past and future" is all in our heads, aren't they? It's all virtual... an unreal, mental abstraction... an illusion. In reality, neither the past nor the future exists. *However, to the mind they are real.* Why? Because the mind *creates* them. How could it not believe in its own creation?

Since the mind creates these entities called the past and the future, it loves to dwell in them. You could call them its home. That's why your mind stays in the so called past and future.

Medically speaking, the more often this network of memory neurons (brain cells) is traveled, the stronger the network of neurons becomes. Then, electrical impulses can run through this circuit of neurons more easily, without much resistance. This is the basis of the *busy mind*, which runs through the same old events, pictures and thoughts, the so called past, as well as the projected thoughts it calls the future.

Stress Created by the “Past and Future”

By keeping the old dead events alive, your busy mind keeps the *fire* of old emotions *burning* inside you. It calls them “my past” and “my memories.” It judges these memories as either *good* or *bad*, which triggers associated good or bad emotions.

By replaying the *bad* memories, your busy mind continues to trigger the *negative* emotions attached to these memories in the form of *humiliation, anger, hate, bitterness, jealousy and revenge.*

By replaying *good* memories, your busy mind starts to *miss* those wonderful experiences and you become *sad.*

The Mind Wants to Change its Past.

Here's another interesting phenomenon. The busy mind wants to control the virtual world of memories. It is *strongly attached* to sweet memories, but it wants to *run away* from bad memories. Therefore, it tries to modify the stories and events.

For example:

“If I didn’t trust her, I wouldn’t be hurting due to her back stabbing.”

“If my teacher hadn’t humiliated me in front of entire class, I’d be a happy person today.”

“Why didn’t I see the clues? He’s been cheating on me all along! I should have dumped him a long time ago.”

“Why did I become a teacher? My principal is so nasty and demanding.”

“Why didn’t I take an action earlier, as a parent?”

But of course, the busy mind can’t change what has already happened. It feels *annoyed, frustrated, angry* and sometimes *guilty* as well. The *more* it tries to *change* those painful memories, the *stronger* they get. As I mentioned earlier, those networks of brain cells which are traveled more, grow stronger. It is an *irony*, but the busy mind doesn’t know it.

The Mind Wants to Secure a Happy Future

In addition, the busy mind doesn’t want any bad event to happen *again*, ever! It wants perfect *security*. The Society’s collective Acquired Self trains your individual Acquired Self to *learn* from the past. Therefore, it wants to create a perfect world for itself in which there are only good things and bad things do not exist. It wants to create a *paradise* for itself. Therefore, it continues to generate new thoughts along the lines of how to *prevent* bad events from happening again.

The “What If” Syndrome

But then another thought erupts: *“What if I can’t prevent it from happening again?”* That triggers huge *fear and anxiety*.

Caught up in the “what if, what may, what will I do syndrome,” the busy mind creates a virtual *movie* and in this way creates a perpetual *fear* in you. In the pursuit of *security* and *peace*, your busy mind *robs* you of any peace of mind and *torments* you with everlasting *fear*. How counter-productive!

Some examples

“What if I get a bad grade again?”

“What if I get dumped again?”

“What if I get stung by the bee again?”

“What if my boyfriend/girlfriend cheats on me, again?”

“What if my students make fun of me again?”

“What if I lose my friends again?”

“What if I’m late again?”

“What if I miss my flight again?”

“What if no one pays attention to me again?”

“What if my wife cheats again?”

“What if my principle insults me again?”

“What if I become fat again?”

“What if I have an attack of asthma again?”

The Society’s collective Acquired Self reinforces this syndrome of “what if, what may, what will I do” in the form of information conveyed by newspapers, books, TV and the internet. It teaches you to learn from the past. Meanwhile, the busy mind inside you, your Acquired Self, keeps generating huge amounts of *fear and anxiety*.

The Expansion of Past and Future

In addition to *personal* experiences, the busy mind also *borrow*s experiences of others and considers them its own. For example, as a parent you read or hear stories about some teenager who got killed by another teenager or about some teenager who got addicted to drugs and quit high school, or about a teenager who got pregnant and then got dumped by her boyfriend. Your mind creates an image, attaches the provided story, judges it to be bad (which triggers *sad* emotions) and the entire bundle gets stored in your memory box. The mind then generates another thought: “This must never happen to my teenager!” Then another thought pops up: “But what if...?” Before you know it, you are having an anxiety attack.

As a teenager, you hear stories about hardships for people who didn’t go to college. Your mind stores all of these experiences of others into your memory box. The mind then creates another thought: “What if I can’t get into college or what if I flunk out?” This kind of thought creates huge anxiety for you.

Now imagine how often you read stories in books, magazines and newspapers. Add to that the stories you watch on TV, the internet and movie screens. Obviously, these are the experiences of people you’ve never even met. Some stories happened thousands of

miles away or many centuries ago. Many are not even real experiences, but simple fiction. However, your busy mind *clings* to those experiences of others (real or fictional) as if they were your own experiences. Now, can you imagine the *size* of your memory box? That's why you have such a busy mind. The busy mind is your Acquired Self.

Collective Human Past and Future

Your Society's collective Acquired Self also creates its own virtual past and a virtual future. It likes to *dwell* in its past which it calls *history*. It also promises you a future in which everything is good and nothing bad ever happens. It promises you ultimate security.

But then it also gives you "what if, what may, and what we should do" syndrome. It wants you to never forget its past and thus, continues to propagate *hate, grievances and revenge*. It also spreads *fear and anxiety* about the so called tomorrow. It creates *hypothetical* fearful situations for you, and then tells you how to *prepare* to deal with the frightening situations as if they were happening right now. In doing so, it continues to torment you. This is one way the Society's collective Acquired Self keeps you under its tight *control*.

The Emotional Memory Versus the Cognitive Memory

What we have observed so far is what we can call the Emotional Memory. In addition there is another kind of memory, which is cognitive. For example, memorizing information and knowledge such as mathematical, scientific or geographic knowledge. This we can call the Cognitive Memory. This memory is non-emotional. Cognitive memory is useful and helps us to function in the society.

What is the Basis of Emotional Memory?

The basis of the emotional memory is the virtual "I", we mistakenly think we are. This "I" judges every person and event as *good* or *bad*, based upon the concepts already stored in the conditioned mind such as concept of morality, culture, race, religion, nationality. **Judging triggers emotions.** Without judging there are no emotions. Therefore, judging carried out by the virtual "I" is the basis of emotional thinking and emotional memory.

Emotional Memory Causes Forgetfulness.

In addition to all of the emotional stress, emotional memory also causes memory loss. How ironic! Observe yourself. Next time, you are angry or fearful, you may not remember where you put your keys, wallet or cell phone. Emotional memory gradually makes a person more and more forgetful. In this way, emotional memory decreases a person's ability for cognitive thinking and memory. In other words, the fire of emotions slowly burns off the entire chamber of memory. In my opinion, this is the basis of "Alzheimer's dementia."

Chapter 15

The Root Cause of Conflict between Teenagers, Parents and Teachers

If you pay attention, you realize the Acquired Self is the root cause of *conflict* between teenagers, parents and teachers.

As a teenager, your growing Acquired Self gets the "*description of a typical teenager*" downloaded into it by your society. In general, (and especially in the Western world, you are programmed by the Society's collective Acquired Self to be *independent*, to *rebel* against authority figures and to *disregard* rules. You are also supposed to be *adventurous* and *explore* life on your own. In addition, you are programmed to *value* your *privacy* dearly. Obviously, you *do not* want any *intrusion* from anyone.

On the other hand, as a parent, your Acquired Self acts according to the "*description of a good parent*" downloaded by the Society's collective Acquired Self. Therefore, you feel it is your *responsibility* to get your teenager on the right track to be a *responsible, respectable* and *successful* citizen. In that pursuit, you do whatever you have to do: *discipline, spy, punish*. You are also programmed to *protect* your teenager. Based upon your own past experiences, you try to *control* your teenager's behavior. Consequently you *worry* a lot and also feel *hurt* when your teenager *disregards* your advice. The Society's collective Acquired Self also teaches you to be *involved* in your teenager's activities. Meanwhile,

your teenager regards it as an *intrusion* into his/her *privacy* and *resents* you for doing it.

As a teacher, your Acquired Self acts according to the “*description of a good teacher*” downloaded by your society. So you feel it is your responsibility to make sure your students learn mathematics, biology, history - whatever subject you teach. They should also *behave* according to the *rules* of the classroom. If they don't learn what you teach, you do what you have been programmed to do: *judge* them with bad grades, meet their parents to explore what is going on, advise parents to get involved in their teenager's education, etc. Parents have *expectations* that you are supposed to make their teenager learn. If their teenager is getting bad grades, it must be your *fault*. When parents *blame* you for not doing a good job, you feel *infuriated*. If teenagers continue to do poorly on testing, you get *afraid* this will reflect poorly on you as a *bad* teacher in the eyes of the principal, who is in constant *competition* with other principals to achieve better **total** scores for the school, in order to secure his own job. In addition, if some teenager doesn't respect the classroom rules, you are supposed to *discipline* them which obviously, the teenager does not like.

It is pretty obvious that the Society's collective Acquired Self turns teenagers, parents and teachers *against* each other. It programs parents, teachers and teenagers in *opposing* directions: For example, it tells parents and teachers to *discipline* the teenagers and at the same time, it tells teenagers to *rebel* against their parents and teachers. Isn't it obvious the *mastermind* of all the conflict between parents, teachers and teenagers is the Society's collective Acquired Self, playing “divide and conquer?”

Amazingly, neither parents, teachers nor teenagers see the Society's collective Acquired Self as the root cause of their stress. Why? Because they are in the grip of their Acquired Self, which is basically an *offspring* of the Society's collective Acquired Self. In the

grip of their Acquired Self, parents and teachers *blame* their teenagers, and teenagers *blame* their parents and teachers, and often parents and teachers *blame* each other, for all of their problems.

It is interesting to note that teenagers eventually become parents and teachers, and take on the role of the parenting and teaching according to the Society's collective Acquired Self's description of a good parent and a good teacher. Then, they start to *discipline* their teenagers and the emotional *drama* goes on. No one ever identifies the root cause, the mastermind, the architect of this whole drama: the Society's collective Acquired Self, who thus *continues* to thrive.

Chapter 16

Be the Master of Your Acquired Self, Not Its Slave

Now you understand the root cause of your stress actually resides inside you - your Acquired Self. Whether you are a teenager, a parent or a teacher, the root cause of your stress is the same: your Acquired Self.

In summary, your Acquired Self is the virtual "I" you *mistakenly* think you are. It's comprised of "My name, My personality, My concepts, My beliefs, My past, My future, My parents, My children, My teachers, My friends, My students, My school, My career, My goals, My accomplishments, My failures, My culture, My town, My country, My religion, etc. It is a psychological *entity* sitting inside you, but it is not the *true* you. It *steals* your identity. It controls your *thoughts*, *emotions* and *actions*. The Acquired Self is the basis of the "Busy Mind," a *constant* stream of thoughts. Then, thoughts *provoke* emotions, and emotions *taint* your thoughts. A vicious cycle of thought-emotion-thought sets in. This is the basis of worrying, anxiety, anger, frustrations, hate, love, revenge, jealousy, guilt, sadness, depression, insecurity, selfishness, greed, ego, self-righteousness, expectations, judging, hypocrisy, embarrassment, and shame. Then *actions* arise out of these thoughts and emotions, which often cause more stress for you and others. The actions may be verbal, written or physical.

On the surface, stress seems to be due to *this or that*, which are simply the *triggers*. In fact, it is your Acquired Self that reacts to *triggers* and creates stress. In this way, *the true source of stress lies inside you. Therefore, the true solution must also reside inside you.* You don't depend on any *outward* source to free you from stress.

You can be free of stress by freeing yourself from your Acquired Self. It is that simple. Only you can do it. Freed from the Acquired Self, you're in touch with your True Self, the source of true joy and peace. Your True Self is the place where *no* stress ever exists!

How to be Free of the Acquired Self

In order to be free of your Acquired Self, you have to separate yourself from it. Only then you can see it for what it is. However, as long as you *identify* with your Acquired Self, you can *never* see its true colors. As long as you and your Acquired Self are *stuck* together, obviously you can *never* be free of it.

In order to *free* yourself from your Acquired Self, you have to see it in action. When you're in the grip of your Acquired Self, you *immediately* react to *triggers*. These automatic reactions often cause more stress for you and others. Later on, when you come to your senses, you often *regret* what you said or did.

1. Pause!

The *first step* to *separate* yourself from your Acquired Self is to *not* let it automatically control your actions. **Pause!** Don't react to someone's comment or action immediately.

2. Shift Your Awareness/Attention To The Now

In stead of reacting to someone's comment or action, shift your attention to the *Now*. What is *Now*? *Now* is *not* what is in your head, but what is in front of your eyes. It is your **field of awareness**.

Pause for a moment right now and pay attention to what you see, what you hear, what you smell, what you taste and what you touch. Don't think, just observe. Experience what's in your field of awareness.

In general, when we see, we only pay attention to objects without paying any attention to the *space* in which everything is. Without space, there would be no objects. So when you see objects, also be aware of the space which gives rise to all objects.

In the same way, when you listen, also pay attention to the *silence*, without which there would be no sound.

Use your eyes and ears and be aware of space, *silence* and *stillness*, which gives rise to all objects, sounds and events.

In addition to your outer field of awareness, you also have an *inner field of awareness*. This inner field of awareness is your *Original, True, Real Self*.

It is vibrant, full of immense energy, joy and inner peace. No words can accurately describe it... But it can be felt. It is Real and not a concept. That's why your Acquired Self, which consists of concepts, cannot understand it. You can feel your inner field of awareness simply by *shifting* your attention away from your mind and into your chest.

In fact, your outer field of awareness is an extension of your inner field of awareness. It is one field of awareness... And that is

what the Now is! I made this arbitrary distinction of inner and outer field of awareness just to communicate with you. That's all!

Practice to be aware of the Now around you and inside you. Then, you can easily *shift* your attention to the Now as soon as you realize your thoughts and emotions have taken over you.

The moment you switch your attention to the Now, you are free of your thoughts and their associated emotions. In other words, you are free of your Acquired Self. *Instantaneously*, you will feel *relief* from fear or any other stressful emotion. That's how powerful this seemingly simple step is. A moment later, your attention may again be *sucked* up by thoughts and emotion. Simply keep shifting your attention/awareness into the Now.

Your Acquired Self needs your *attention* to survive. That's why it *sucks* up your attention/awareness most of the time. However, you have the power to *switch* gears and *divert* your attention/awareness to the Now. Without your attention/awareness, your Acquired Self can no longer survive. As long as your attention/awareness is in the Now, you are free of the Acquired Self.

Remember this phrase: Keep your mind where your body is.

While fully aware of the Now, watch the emotional drama your Acquired Self creates. Don't run away from it. After a little while, it will settle down.

Example:

You're stuck in traffic on your way to the airport. You start worrying. "What if I miss my flight and then I'll miss my interview for this job I really want and my best chance to get this dream job will evaporate" and on and on. You get so *fearful* from the drama that your Acquired Self creates, that you may end up having chest pain

and find yourself heading to a hospital... Or you can choose to shift your attention from thoughts to the Now: Watch the car in front of you, the cars to each side, the median of the freeway, the electric poles seemingly running backwards, the sky, the clouds, etc. Also pay attention to your breathing, which is a continuous act in the Now. Chances are pretty good that you will arrive at the airport safely, certainly without any fear or high blood pressure. You may or may not be late. If you are late, you will deal with it. Therefore, live in the Now, stay in reality and you won't have any fear.

Caution:

Be careful *not* to confuse *attention* with *concentration*. Attention is simple awareness, that's all! It is there automatically, without any effort. On the other hand, concentration and discipline require a lot of effort and are quite stressful by themselves.

3. Use Logic

Now take the next step: use *logic*, the most wonderful tool we humans have. Why? Because the Acquired Self is always *illogical* and can't stand the blazing *torch* of logic. Therefore, use logic and see the *true colors* of your Acquired Self. See for yourself who is really at the root of all of the stress. See how *illogical* your Acquired Self is.

Caution:

I want to clarify the word, logic, the way I am using it. When I use the word logic, I mean simple logic, the common sense that we all humans are *born* with. We don't learn it from school. Don't confuse it with "rationalization" that people often use to *justify* their actions. Rationalization and justification stem out of the Acquired Self.

In order to use your true, simple logic, you have to be free from any conditioning. Otherwise, it will be *tainted* by your conditioned mind: all the concepts, opinions, ideas, beliefs, knowledge and previous experiences swirling around in your mind, which is your Acquired Self, the monster within you.

When you use simple logic you clearly see your Acquired Self as the mastermind of all of your stress.

Here are some examples:

Teenagers:

- Your Acquired Self may be *worried* about the grade on a test, *after* you've taken the test. At this point, there is nothing you can do to change the grade you will get.
- Your Acquired Self may also be *worried* about the grade on a test, you haven't even taken yet. Crazy, isn't it?
- Your Acquired Self may be *worried* that someone may not like you. Well, you can't force another person to like you, right?
- Your Acquired Self is still *mad* at your ex boyfriend/girlfriend, for *this* reason or *that*. Obviously, whatever happened can't be changed. Above all, you can't control the behavior of others.
- Your Acquired Self may be *worried* about your college admission *after* you've sent in your application. Obviously, at that point, there is nothing you can do about it.
- Your Acquired Self is still *upset* because your *old* friend made an insensitive/insulting remark in the *distant* past. Obviously,

there is nothing you can do to change what already happened. The incident is not happening at this moment, but your Acquired Self keeps it alive. How ridiculous!

- Your Acquired Self may be *angry* and *hurt* over some old friend who *betrayed* you. Obviously, the incident is *dead* and *gone*, but your illogical Acquired Self keeps it *alive*. In doing so, it causes hurt and pain.
- Your Acquired Self gets so *upset* when your parents keep reminding you of your childhood or when they keep intruding into your *privacy*. Just see how your Acquired Self tries to control the *harmless* behavior of your parents.
- Your Acquired Self gets *annoyed* when your parents keep telling the same story over and over again. Your Acquired Self has *no* patience for those *boring* stories. Just see how your Acquired Self keeps looking for new excitements and thrills all the time and how *impatient, self-centered and entertainment-hungry* it has become.
- Your Acquired Self gets *annoyed* and *ashamed* over how old-fashioned your parents are and how they don't have a clue what's going on these days. Can you see how *egocentric, judging* and *society-sensitive*, your Acquired Self is?
- Your Acquired Self feels so *hurt* because your parents are divorced. You *wish* they could somehow get together. Can you see how your Acquired Self is trying to control your parent's behavior for its own *happiness*? They divorced for a reason, whatever that may be.
- Your Acquired Self feels *bitter* inside because it thinks your teacher is *unfair* to you. Isn't your Acquired Self being *self-righteous*?

Parents:

- Your Acquired Self is *mad* at your teenager because they don't *listen* to you. Obviously, you can't control anyone's behavior, including your teenager's.
- Your Acquired Self is constantly *worried* that your teenager may not go to college. Then they will be a financial burden on you forever. Perhaps your Acquired Self is *worried* that your teenage daughter may get pregnant and ruins her life forever. See how your Acquired Self is creating a *hypothetical* situation and reacting to it emotionally? Crazy, isn't it!
- Your Acquired Self *wishes* your teenager would play with you the way they used to, when they were little. Obviously, you have a teenager and *not* a little boy or a girl, right? But your Acquired Self being *illogical* wants to live in the glorious past, it calls "My Memories." It keeps the sweet memories alive and in doing so, it simply creates *sadness*.
- Your Acquired Self is *upset* that your teenager did not behave according to your *expectations*. Isn't your Acquired Self trying to *control* your teenager's behavior in the name of expectations? Where do the expectations come from? The basis of expectations is the Society's Role Description of "how everyone should and should not behave" in the society. You can point it out to your teenager and that's all. Obviously, you can't control anyone's behavior, including your teenager's.
- Your Acquired Self is *ashamed* because *you are* not an accomplished person that your teenager can be *proud* of. Or your Acquired Self is *sad* that your teenager is not proud of your accomplishments. Deep down, your Acquired Self is seeking *praise* and *validation* from your teenager. In other

words, it is trying to control your teenager's image of you. Can you see how *needy* your Acquired Self is?

- Your Acquired Self is *afraid* to say *no* to your teenager's irrational demands. It is *afraid* that the teenager may not like you any more or may like your spouse better. See how *needy* and *competitive* your Acquired Self is?
- Your Acquired Self feels *jealous* that your teenager is so nice to everyone else but you. Again see how *needy* your Acquired Self is?
- Your Acquired Self constantly *pushes* your teenager for that next *competition or goal*, even though your teenager feels exhausted and stressed out. Maybe your Acquired Self is living *vicariously* through your teenager. Whatever your Acquired Self could not achieve, it tries to achieve through your teenager, no matter how much stress it creates for both of you. Can you see how *selfish* your Acquired Self really is?

Teachers:

- Your Acquired Self may be *worried* about losing your job. Can you see how your Acquired Self is creating a hypothetical, virtual situation and reacting to it, as if it was real and happening right now?
- Your Acquired Self may be *fuming* over some insulting/ insensitive remark made by a parent. Can you see how *sensitive, insecure and defensive* your Acquired Self is? At home, your Acquired Self wants to continue the verbal fight even though you are sitting alone. How ridiculous!

- Your Acquired Self may be *angry* at your principal for his/her *hypocritical* behavior. Can you see how *judging* your Acquired Self is? Your anger is not going to change the behavior of your principal, even though you want it to happen so desperately. Can you see how your Acquired Self *wants* to control your principal's behavior? Obviously, it can't.
- Your Acquired Self may feel *sorry* for itself, for all of the hard work it has to do that no one appreciates. Can you see how *needy* your Acquired Self is?
- Your Acquired Self may be bitter over the *unfairness* of the entire educational system. Can you see how *self-righteous* your Acquired self is? There's not much you can do to overhaul the system according to your own *wishes*.

4. Utilize Your Acquired Self To Function In The Society

In order to function in society, you need your Acquired Self. While interacting in the world, you switch gears and shift some attention to your Acquired Self. But when you don't need the assistance of your Acquired Self, switch gears and shift your attention to the Now.

For example, in your classroom, you *utilize* your Acquired Self to learn, to take tests, to follow the rules and to socialize with your friends. However, when you are at home by yourself, you switch gears and shift attention to the Now. It will bring you *inner peace* and *joy* instantaneously.

Another example: While at work, utilize your Acquired Self to deal with the customers, colleagues and bosses. But when at home, shift attention to the Now. That's how you *leave* your work and its associated stress behind.

5. Don't Call Sympathetic Ears

When you call your friend and tell your side of the story, your friend usually agrees with you. Under the surface, what happens is something like this. Your Acquired Self is threatened, angry, sad, bruised and fearful. It wants to feel *secure* again. It wants *validation* badly. It wants to be *right* again. When your friend's Acquired Self agrees with your side of the story, your Acquired Self feels validated, feels secure again, feels self-righteous again. In this way, it continues to *thrive* inside you. It may even get stronger. Your friendship gets stronger as well. After all, your friend was there when you needed him, your Acquired Self concludes.

This is why people shouldn't call a sympathetic ear after a usual *argument* between teenagers, friends, parents or teachers. Instead, they should use the following steps as we observed before: Pause. As you feel the emotion created by Your Acquired Self, shift attention to the Now. Don't let all of your attention be consumed by emotions. Once the emotional drama created by the Acquired Self has subsided, use logic and see the true colors of your Acquired Self. Also, fully realize your Acquired Self is not you. It is just a *tool* to function in society, nothing more!

Caution:

It does not mean you shouldn't inform your friends, parents or teachers, if there is some *serious* physical/ emotional/sexual misconduct or if you feel severe sadness or have suicidal thoughts or if you know someone who is on the *verge* of exploding or committing violence or suicide. In these situations, *immediately* call parents, teachers, friends, counselors, authorities etc.

6. Don't Create Any More Stress for Yourself or Others

When you act under the influence of your emotions, you don't think clearly. Your actions are often illogical, which creates more problems instead of solving them. On the other hand, once you are free of your Acquired Self, you can truly think logically and take action, if necessary. These actions are more effective and don't create stress for yourself or others.

If someone insults you, you immediately fight back by insulting that person. Often the other person fights back and then you fight back, too. Before you know it, this verbal fight escalates into a physical fight. Maybe you don't fight back verbally or physically at that moment, but continue to harbor bitterness against that person and seek opportunities to take revenge. In either case scenario, you create a lot of stress for yourself and the other person.

On the other hand, once you have gained the wisdom of not reacting immediately to remarks, you will pause for a moment. You will feel the anger rising inside you, but you will also shift your attention to the Now. After anger subsides, you will clearly see that it's not the true you, but your Acquired Self who is outraged. With a little more logic, you also see the one who is insulting you is actually doing so under the influence of his Acquired Self. Then you don't hold any bitterness, grudge or hate towards that person.

Once your Acquired Self has calmed down, you may say something or take some action, which will be a whole lot more effective and will not create stress for you or the other person.

7. Don't Be Frustrated if You are Unable to See Your Acquired Self

Sometimes, you may not be able to take a pause and before you know it, you have said or done something under the influence of your Acquired Self. After a while, you'll realize what actually

happened and be able to take a logical look at the whole incident. *And that's okay.* It takes practice to change your life-long conditioned patterns, but as long as you can see these reactions as a function of your Acquired Self, you are getting freedom from your Monster.

For example, someone cuts you off on the freeway. You feel enraged and as a knee jerk reflex, you honk at him or give him the finger. Once your rage settles down, if you can see with logic what really happened, you can be completely transformed. Let's examine this whole drama with logic. It's your Monster and the other driver's Monster in action, isn't it? His Monster wants to win, get ahead and is thrilled at its victory. Your Monster on the other hand, feels like a loser and tries to fight back. In addition, your Monster of self-righteousness may judge the other driver to be a bad driver for not following the traffic rules. Your Monster may also be upset because the other driver got away without any punishment.

If you can clearly see your Monster, the next time, you will relax and laugh at your own Monster. Instead of fighting back, you'll continue to drive on safely. Stress will not even touch you.

As far the other driver is concerned, sooner or later, he will likely get in trouble with the authorities.

8. Stay Alert and Vigilant

Often, your Acquired Self will try to *trick* you back into your old habitual thinking and reactions. Therefore, it is important to stay alert and vigilant. Keep seeing your Acquired Self in action.

You may even be amused or break into laughter when you observe how ridiculous and persistent your Monster is... how it wants you to believe in something that is not happening at all in reality. The moment you can see your Acquired Self as an acquired entity, but not who you really are, it starts to lose its power over you. With

this realization, you'll observe your stressful thoughts gradually fading away. Keeping your attention in the Now is very effective to stay free of stressful thoughts.

Often you will need to see your Monster over and over again, before you are free of it.

9. Do Not Underestimate the Power of your Acquired Self

Do not underestimate the power of your Monster. It has strong roots and will do all it can to continue to control your thoughts, emotions and actions. After all, it consists of your life-long mental habits, ideas, concepts, traditions and belief system, all of which were *bestowed* upon you by your loving parents and society. It also consists of your own experiences which, in addition to psychological pain, also holds *sweet* memories.

“How can I get rid of all of this?” your Acquired Self says and puts up a wall of resistance. “After all, everyone else is like me, so this must be my true nature.” Your Monster tries to convince you and may even succeed temporarily. It's as if you're so used to being in a *prison* that you're afraid to leave it.

However, if you're *determined* and pay *attention* to this Monster rising inside you, you'll be amazed how it starts losing power over you.

10. Compassion Automatically Arises

Except for a few *truly* enlightened persons, the vast majority of humans are *hijacked* by their conditioned minds, their Acquired Self. It's like an *illness* affecting entire mankind. How can you be angry with mentally sick people? You can only feel *compassion* for them and try to *awaken* them from their *sickness* of ignorance. This realization will completely transform you.

But be careful. Your Acquired Self can easily *sneak* back, wearing new clothes, so to speak and tell you to go on a noble *mission* to awaken other people and feel very *special* about this mission.

Remember, your responsibility is to be free of your own Acquired Self and that's all! However, if someone asks you for advice or guidance, you can share information, but stay vigilant and alert so that your Acquired Self does not creep back in the form of a noble *ego*.

In Summary

In order to find a true solution, you have to look at the problem itself and *not* run away from it. Only then is there a real *chance* of getting to the root of the problem and getting *rid* of it forever. To look at the problem, you must use *logic*, the most powerful tool we humans have

Your Acquired Self is at the root of your psychological issues, problems and stress. Freedom from the Acquired Self equals freedom from stress. In order to be free of your Acquired Self, the *Monster* within, you need to be *aware* of the monster, which you can do by taking the following steps:

1. Pause. Don't let the *monster* take immediate control of your thoughts, emotions and actions.
2. Switch your attention from the *thoughts and emotions* to the *Now*.
3. See the *Monster* in action. See the *emotional drama* it creates, but also be fully aware of the *Now*.
4. Use *logic*, common sense.
5. Clearly see for yourself who is at the root of the problem.

6. Realize your Acquired Self is a *tool* to function in society. But it is NOT you. Put it to *rest* when you don't need it.
7. Don't *hate* or *love* your Acquired Self. That simply strengthens its hold on you.
8. Stay *aware* and *vigilant*.
9. Don't get *frustrated* if you fail sometimes. Don't be afraid to leave the life-long prison of the Acquired Self.
10. Your *responsibility* is to be free of your own Acquired Self. Don't go on a *noble* mission to enlighten other people, unless they ask for guidance. Beware of the noble clothes that your Acquired Self can hide under.

Q: Why Do we have Acquired Selves?

A: The Acquired Self is a tool to function in society. Without it, we wouldn't be able to operate in society.

Q: How can I live in society and not be stressed out?

A: To live in a society, you need to learn its basic rules, laws, ethics, concepts, etc. In order to learn these, first you need to learn the language of your society. In order to make a living, you also need to learn some skills. Some of these skills are primarily mental skills such as mathematics, science, computers, communication, while some are primarily physical skills such as athletics, sports, carpentry. For most people, all or most of this learning takes place in schools.

The stress arises when you get *emotionally* attached to these concepts. Then, concept is not a concept any more, but becomes part of your "Acquired Self." For example, a school itself is a place to learn, but when it becomes "My school," it becomes part of "My Acquired Self." Then "I" feel excited when "My school" wins and "I" feel sad when "My school" loses. You can obviously learn in a school,

without being emotionally attached to it. Then, your school may win or lose, but you will not go through the emotional roller coaster ride of *excitement* and *sadness*.

Use logic and clearly see concepts as concepts and that's all. Then you can live a stress free life, while living in society.

Step 2

Chapter 17

How the World Creates Stress For You

Your Acquired Self creates a conceptual world in your head. It is *virtual, unreal, an illusion*. With few exceptions, every person on the planet stays in the prison of their conceptual, virtual world. In this way, we humans collectively create a *conceptual, virtual* world. So, there is a virtual world in your head and a collective human virtual world out there. Both are *interconnected, feed* each other and *amplify* each other.

An example of the conceptual, virtual world we live in:

You're watching a film awards show on television. Through the *goggles* of the conditioned mind, your Acquired Self, you see five actresses nominated for best actress. After a few moments of *agony*, they finally announce the *best actress of the year*. She obviously is *thrilled* and *excited*. Meanwhile, the others feel *defeated*, though they try to force a *fake* smile. For the winner, the *moment* has finally arrived, the moment for which she waited for years. The winner gets *overwhelmed* with emotions, but manages to deliver an emotional speech. Then her moment is over. In a few minutes, there is another winner (and losers) going through similar emotions.

If you're a serious moviegoer, you have your own opinion as to *who deserves the best actress award*. If the winner is the same as

your choice, you're also *thrilled*, but if your choice loses, you're *disappointed*, sometimes even *angry* and *bitter* about the *unfairness of it all!* You sit through the lengthy show to get several moments of *excitement* and *disappointment*.

You and the world call it *entertainment*. You want *more* of it and the world is well *equipped* to provide you with *more!* Over the next several days, you enjoy reading *more* about the whole event on the internet, newspapers and magazines. There are stories from behind the scenes: walking the red carpet, before and after parties, who wore what, who said what and on and on.

For the next few days, you even talk to your friends about the whole experience and have *more* fun. Actually, the *more* you know, the *more* you can impress your friends and the *more* special you feel about yourself.

Now, let's look at the whole event from an *unconditioned mind*. What you observe is a human being coming on stage to receive a shiny peace of metal. Holding that peace of metal, this person starts to cry, her voice choking. Why, you wonder? Then, this person utters a few sounds and then, everyone starts clapping. Why?

Obviously, a person whose mind is already *conditioned* sees the entire event completely differently. That piece of metal has a huge *concept* attached to it. The human being appearing on stage is not just a human being, but has a huge *concept* attached. The whole event has a huge *concept* attached to it which reverberates with the concepts in your head (and in everyone else's head), about success, achievement, fame, wealth and glamour.

In other words, your Acquired Self, the baby Monster, gets fed by the papa Monster of society! That's why you enjoy it so much. For you and everyone else, it becomes real. Actually, you don't even

question whether it is real or not. You watch it and talk about it as if it was real.

It is interesting to know that you may be able to see the superficial, virtual nature of the part of the conceptual world that you are not attached to. For example, if you are attached to *sports*, but not to *movies*, you may not be interested in watching film award shows. You may even recognize their superficial nature. But you won't miss the Super Bowl, the US Open, the World Cup, the Olympics or whatever sport your Acquired Self is attached to. Each of these sport events have a huge concept attached to them - the concepts of *victory, achievement, fame, wealth and glamour*.

If you use logic, you realize that most sports are about a *ball* that is kicked, thrown, carried or hit. However, the conceptual world doesn't see it that way. It sees these sports as a matter of *competition, victory, achievement, fame, wealth and glamour*.

By now, you may understand the virtual, conceptual nature of these events. However, you think these are occasional events in your life. Well, take a closer look at the usual activities of your daily life. *Most people spend most of their life in the domain of the conceptual, virtual world.*

More examples of the Conceptual, Virtual World:

(Let me first clearly state that I make these observations using simple logic. I am not criticizing, putting down or making fun of any of these concepts.)

The Internet, TV, newspapers and magazines obviously take you into the virtual, conceptual world. Many people start their day reading the newspaper or watching the morning news. Then, they glance through magazines and surf the internet during the rest of

the day. In the evening, they usually watch TV, play video games or *surf* the internet.

It's interesting to see some older people complaining about young people *wasting* too much time surfing the internet, playing video games or texting on their cell phone. Meanwhile, these "oldsters" waste their time reading newspapers or books, watching TV and talking about politics or religion.

Everything you read in newspapers, magazines or books as well as what you watch on TV or the Internet is conceptual and virtual, isn't it?

Everything you see in movies, stage shows, museums and art galleries is conceptual, isn't it? All pictures, paintings and statues are obviously conceptual.

All knowledge, whether history, mathematics, science, medicine, arts, geography or business is virtual and conceptual, isn't it?! In this way, all of our *educational* system is conceptual.

Language itself is conceptual. Observe how every *word* carries a *concept* with it. A few examples: Love, hate, romance, good, bad, beautiful, ugly, peace, war, cancer, death. In reality, spoken *words* are no more than *sounds*, but of course, each word has a concept attached to it. You can easily appreciate it when you listen to a language that you do not understand. Obviously what you hear is sounds and that's all. You do not understand the meaning, the concepts attached to these words.

How about political systems? All are conceptual, aren't they?

How about religious establishments? They are all conceptual, aren't they?

How about cultures, traditions and values? They are all conceptual as well.

In reality, you see mountains, land, buildings, roads, trees, sky, clouds and water. However, on a map, you see continents, countries, states, provinces and cities - all conceptual.

How about marriage, romance, engagement, divorce? All are concepts, aren't they?

How about time? Seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months and years. All conceptual. Different cultures have created different calendars.

How about national, religious and cultural holidays? All conceptual.

How about money? This concept is so overwhelming that no one ever thinks of it as conceptual. Give a 100 dollar bill to a one year old kid. That kid will probably put it in their mouth and chew it or rip it apart. Why? Because infants have no concept of money. However, give the same 100 dollar to a teenager. That teen will be thrilled to have it. Why? Because teenagers have acquired the concept of money. In reality, it's only a piece of paper, but there is a powerful concept attached to it.

Teenage is a Concept:

Have you ever asked yourself what teenage really is? It is actually a *concept*, isn't it? In reality, there is a *straight* line between *birth* and *death*. However, the *collective conditioned human mind* divides this straight line into several segments: infancy, childhood, teenage, adulthood and old age. It calls these fragments stages of life and attaches a concept to each stage. Hence, teenage is nothing but a concept. Once downloaded into your Acquired Self, this

concept affects your *thoughts, emotions* and *actions*. In this way, it creates a tremendous amount of stress for teenagers, their parents and teachers.

Chapter 18

Freedom from the Stress of the Conceptual World

As long as you are in the grip of the conceptual world, you will experience stress, in one form or another. That's why there is so much stress in the world.

In order to be free of stress, you need to be free of the conceptual world, but how? If you want to be free of concepts, you first have to understand the true nature of concepts. Use logic and you will realize that *concepts are not reality and reality is not conceptual*.

Concepts are acquired from the society you grow up in. They become part of your Acquired Self. They are downloaded into your Acquired Self from the collective Acquired Self of society.

You are not born with these concepts.

With this realization, you are immediately free of these concepts. You rise above them. Then, you are no longer attached to concepts. *You neither love them nor hate them*. You see them exactly for what they are. They help you to *function* in the Conceptual world, that's all! Then you simply *utilize* these concepts to *function* in society. However, you do not get *overtaken* by them or start believing in them as the *absolute truth*.

Examples:

You follow the *rules* of your school, although some of them may not make any sense. You realize these are simply the rules - virtual, conceptual, not an absolute truth. No need to fight them. If you follow them, you will have less stress, that's all!

All the knowledge you obtain at school is conceptual, but it helps you to advance from elementary school to middle school to high school and college, and eventually helps you to be able to make a living.

You follow *traffic rules* as these help you to drive safely, but you don't believe in them as some kind of absolute truth. Therefore, you don't get *angry* if some other driver is not following the rules.

You also use *language* to talk to other humans, but you don't believe in every concept attached to words. You know what concepts are attached to words, but you don't believe in them as absolute truth. In the same way, you don't feel *superior* or *inferior* because you *can* or *cannot* speak a certain language, in a certain accent.

You use money to buy a car, but you don't get attached to the concept of "prestigious name car." A car is used to go from point "A" to point "B." That's all. Then you don't spend a large sum of money on a prestigious name car.

You start *dating* to comply with the rules of society, but you also understand that suddenly you don't own that person you call "My boyfriend/girlfriend." You continue to see them as another human being. Since you don't *own* them, there is no *jealousy* and *ego*. In addition, you don't lose them when the relationship breaks up. How can you lose someone that you never owned to begin with?

Q: How can I live in this world without concepts?

A: If you use logic and common sense, you realize that concepts are concepts, nothing more. They are not real. With this realization, you are free of concepts. Once you rise above concepts, life gets simple and stress free without even trying. *However, you utilize concepts to live in the conceptual world, but you are not in the grip of these concepts.*

You make money just to purchase necessary commodities: food, house, clothes, car, etc. That's all. You don't have to pay large sums of money for some prestigious name attached to your car, shirts or shoes. You don't need to purchase items of luxury for ego-enhancement or entertainment. You don't need to have money for a flashy lifestyle. You don't have the psychological *rope* of friends and enemies around your neck. You live a simple, basic life. The stress of "coming up with money to pay for your lifestyle" automatically disappears.

On the other hand, if you *try* to live a simple life as a *concept*, you'll feel *miserable* because you are in the grip of all sorts of concepts. You will constantly be asking, "Why should I live a simple life?" You'll find plenty of concepts about living a simple life and plenty of concepts for not living a simple life. *Remember, a concept can never liberate you from the conceptual world.* It simply adds to the chain of concepts, which are an important component of your Acquired Self. Enslaved in the Acquired Self, you never see your True Self!

In the next chapters we shall *explore* various concepts in depth and look at the stress they produce and how you can be free of this stress.

Chapter 19

How to Deal with the Stress of Education

In the conceptual world, education is extremely important, to the point that people often forget that it is *virtual*. In fact, education is one of the most crucial architects of your individual Acquired Self as well as the collective Acquired Self of the society in which you grow up.

All education consists of concepts, isn't it? In order for you to learn concepts, you have to learn *language* first, which is the *foundation* of education. Every *word* and *letter* has a concept attached to it. That's how *conceptual* language and education is!

How Education Creates Stress for You:

Before you can *deal* with the stress of education, you need to *understand* the root cause of the stress of education. Let's examine how education creates stress for you. Obviously, education helps you to *function* in society. Primarily, it enables you to *make a living*. Unfortunately, students, teachers and parents *forget* this very basic *purpose* of education. Education then becomes a *race*, a vehicle to boost up your *ego*, an instrument to *compare* yourself with others and to *judge* others and at times yourself.

Competition, comparison, judging and learning are the *main concepts* that run the education system as well as the world. There

are athletic *competitions*, academic *competitions* and arts *competitions*, to mention a few. Students' performance and academic as well as social skills are *judged* periodically and *compared* to other students. This is called the *grading system* and is at the core of almost all education systems. Learning is the most fundamental concept of all education systems.

Now let's examine how *competition*, *comparison*, *judging* and *learning* create stress.

As a result of competition, you either *win* or *lose*, right? What happens when you win? You feel *momentary* thrill and excitement. You get *recognition*, *praise* and *validation*, which boosts up your ego. Soon, all of the thrill and excitement *fades* away. So you want *more* of it. You have to win again and again. This is the basis of "wanting more." Most people *want* more praise, validation, recognition, thrill and excitement, which give rise to a constant state of *dissatisfaction*, *agitation* and even *jitteriness*, a state most teenagers and grown-ups suffer from.

What happens when you lose? You feel *worthless*, *sad* and even *bitter* if your loss happens due to *unfairness*.

In life, sometimes we win and sometimes we lose. In addition, for someone to *win*, someone else has to *lose*. Obviously, everyone wants to be a winner, not a loser. However, for every winner, there is a loser. We easily forget this very basic fact.

Comparison and judging in the form of a *grading system* becomes a sword of constant *pressure* for most students. At home and at school, teenagers are constantly reminded that "without good grades, you can't go to college and without a college degree, you can't find a good paying job." Obviously, *greed* is the driving force behind this race to find good paying jobs. Learning becomes

secondary, but getting good grades to get to a good college and get a good paying job becomes *primary*.

Students find themselves in a *never ending race* to outperform other students. Principals, teachers and the rest of the administrative staff try to outperform other schools in order to secure more *money* and prestige for their school.

Learning is the most fundamental concept of all education systems. Now, what is learning? It is to grasp the *knowledge* which *already* exists, isn't it? This knowledge is comprised of a number of subjects such as science, mathematics, language, literature, history, biology, geography, etc. All of the pre-existing knowledge simply gets *downloaded* into the hard drive of your growing Acquired Self. That's all! Later, you may come up with some more concepts based upon the knowledge already stored in your hard drive. This may help you to become a huge success, but it obviously is a *repetition* of what already exists. For this reason, there are rarely any true innovations. The more knowledge you have, the bigger your Acquired Self gets and the bigger your *ego* gets. Then, you stay more and more engulfed in the conceptual human world and the chances of true innovation become bleak.

Knowledge of history is interesting to examine. It downloads the collective human *past* into your growing Acquired Self. In this way, it *perpetuates* all of the collective *prejudices*, *grievances* and *hatred* of the society you grow up in. You forget that history is basically a perspective of the historian. Each historian has their own particular filters/biases when looking at past events. That's why there are *conflicting* stories and opinions about the same historic event or historic figure.

You are also supposed to learn from history. So what have humans learned from history? Aren't humans the same selfish, greedy, violent, angry, jealous, fearful creatures as they ever were?

In the name of learning, what we learn from history is basically how to *conquer* others, how to get as much *power* as possible, how *not* to be weak. Isn't it perpetuating violence, greed, grievances, hatred and fear?

In addition to *scholastic* learning, often there is *artistic* learning, which requires extensive rehearsals. Drama rehearsals, music practice and dance rehearsals are some examples. Often, these rehearsals put a lot of pressure on students to achieve excellence. These practices are time consuming, which puts a huge pressure on already time-constrained teenagers. Most rehearsals have a *rigid* format that usually requires memorizing lines or written music, which adds to the stress of teenagers, teachers and parents.

The pressure of learning creates huge stress for teenagers. Anxiety and sleep deprivation becomes a routine, which causes tiredness, lack of concentration and poor performance, which further aggravates the stress of high achievement. A vicious cycle sets in and there seems to be no way out. A lot of teenagers end up taking drugs. Some become depressed and even suicidal.

The concepts of *competition*, *comparison*, *judging* and *learning* give rise to the concepts of *success*, *failure*, *popular*, *unpopular*, *desirable*, *undesirable*, *fame*, *oblivion*, *pride*, *shame*, *sophisticated*, naïve, *knowledgeable*, *ignorant*, *respectable* and *disrespectable*, which are not only highly prevalent in schools, but also in society. The education system simply *trains* you to enter the world, full of these concepts.

Parents and teachers have already *tasted* the emotional consequences of these concepts. With the background of their own *emotional baggage*, they sincerely try to do what they think is best for their teenagers. However, in doing so, they create a huge amount of stress for themselves and their teenagers. Then, these teenagers

grow up and repeat the same emotional drama for their own teenagers. There is no ending to this emotional drama.

Here is another interesting phenomenon. In the *race* of education, you are constantly pushed towards the *future*, instead of focusing on the Now. For example, during elementary school, the focus is to prepare for middle school. During middle school, all focus is on high school and during high school, all focus is on college. Interesting isn't it? Thinking about the future is the main reason for *worry*, *anxiety* and *panic attacks*.

How to Deal with the Stress of Education

As soon as you realize that education is *conceptual and virtual*, its heavy burden is removed. Then, you *utilize* education for what it is basically meant to do: to be able to make a living. With this realization, the need to boost up your *ego* through competition, comparison and knowledge simply fades away. The pressure of going to some *prestigious* university is not there any more. You choose *subjects* that you are naturally good at. In this way, education becomes *fun* instead of stress. However, you are often required to take some compulsory subjects such as history, mathematics and language. You will be good at some and not at others and that is fine. You give it your best shot and that's it.

Once you realize that history is conceptual and often biased, you read history as a subject and don't dwell on it. In this way, you don't inherit the collective *anger*, *hate* and *grievances* of your society against another society.

You learn basic mathematic skills which will help you function in society. If you are good at it, take more advanced forms of mathematics or any other subject that you are good at. Otherwise, do whatever is minimally required.

You may find you are good at *manual* skills, such as carpentry, welding, cooking or plumbing, instead of mathematics, history and language. You can focus on learning these manual skills through the education system. These skills will help you to find jobs. In the race for college, we easily forget that society also needs good technicians, carpenters, mechanics and chefs.

Once you don't dream of a high paying job, the stress of going to college vanishes. Then, you may decide to go to college if you want, but *not* because of the pressure of having to get a high paying job. Well, a college education may help you find a high paying job, but you might not like what you do. In this way, you could end up a *miserable* rich person on sleeping pills, anti-anxiety and anti-depression drugs, who abuses alcohol and illegal drugs. Also, remember there are a lot of rich people who did not go to college. There are a lot of poor people who are also on sleeping pills, anti-anxiety and anti-depression drugs, who abuse alcohol and illegal drugs. Being *rich* or *poor* is not going to make you stress-free. However, when you are free of the concept of money, you can be free of the stress caused by the concept of money.

Once you are free of the illusion of high paying job, you will find a career based on your natural strengths. Then, going to work every day is not stressful, but fun. You are excited to go to work, because you love doing what you do. It may or may not be very rewarding in terms of money, but you'll be able to make a living and live a relatively stress free life.

Once the pressure of going to college subsides, you also start to focus on your education at your grade level. For example, if you are in the 9th grade, you stay mentally in the 9th grade. Then, you simply deal with the stress of the 9th grade. You do not add an extra load of stress in the form of *worries* about college and extra courses you have to take in order to go to a *good* college.

The Phantom of Goals

As a teenager, you also get conditioned to set up *goals*. By setting goals, you are always pursuing this *phantom* that will somehow make you who you should be and will make you happy. You work hard to achieve these goals, but the game of goals never ends. Once you achieve certain goals, you set up some more goals. In this way, you are always *dissatisfied*, even after accomplishing a lot.

Live in the Now. Learn in the Now. Work in the Now. You will automatically achieve a lot, without being emotionally attached to *goals*. In this way, you will be much more *satisfied* with your life.

Chapter 20

How to Deal with the Stress of Romantic Love and Sex

Pressure of romantic love and sex is one of the most challenging pressure teenagers, parents and teachers face. In school, a lot of *emotional drama* revolves around “romantic love” and sex, such as the boyfriend/girlfriend games, jealousy, verbal and physical fights, breakups, inappropriate sexual conduct and its disciplinary consequences, teenage pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases. Many parents lose sleep over the fear that their teenage daughters will get pregnant, get dumped and end up as a single, teenage mom, ending their promising, bright future. Or even worse, the mere thought of their teenager contracting AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) makes a parent shiver with fright.

Teenagers are *confused* about romantic love and sex. So are their parents and teachers. The whole society is *confused* about romantic love and sex. For example, romantic love is considered to be good, desirable and even necessary, but its natural consequence are fraught with fear. What is romantic love and sex? It’s a concept, isn’t it?

The Concept of Romantic Love and Sex

The concept of romantic love and sex is a very important part of your Acquired Self, the Monster within. You acquire it from the

Society Monster (the collective Acquired Self) as you grow up in a society. Right from an early age, children are bombarded with the concept of romantic love through stories, movies and role playing such as the exchange of love cards and candies on Valentine's Day. Then, if a six year old *acts out* this concept, he/she is subjected to *disciplinary* action, creating a huge amount of confusion as well as stress for the child, the parents and the teachers. However, the system requires that such disciplinary actions must be carried out, so it is carried out.

During the teenage years, a very heavy dose of the concept of *romantic love* gets downloaded into your Acquired Self. Now, you are encouraged to find a boyfriend/girlfriend, which becomes a game of *competition, comparison, control* and *manipulation*. Competing for the most desirable girlfriend/boyfriend is quite stressful by itself. If you succeed, you feel *accomplished, validated and happy*. However, if you do not succeed, then you may feel *sad, worthless* or a *failure*. Often, a boyfriend/girlfriend is used as an *ego enhancer*. But sooner or later, break-ups happen, which result in *heartaches, sadness*, and feelings of *worthlessness* and can even lead to *games of revenge*. The amount of emotional stress resulting from these games of boyfriend/girlfriend is pretty obvious and *plagues* schools and colleges.

During the teenage years, your *hormones* are raging. Sooner or later, the pressure to have sex builds up, especially when you are engaged in a romantic relationship. However, you have also acquired the concept of sex from your society, which tells you *when, with whom* and *under what circumstances* you should have sex. There are some *variations* to this concept, but basically it teaches teenagers to *avoid* the consequences of sexual intercourse, mainly pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. You may be advised to avoid sexual intercourse altogether or to use birth control pills or some other contraceptive method. In any case, you feel tremendous pressure due to the *conflict* arising out of the *pressure* to have the

romantic relationship and the *pressure* to avoid the consequences of sex.

Real Sex Versus the Concept of Sex

Is it possible to be free of stress arising out of "romantic relationships and sex?" In order to find the answer, we need to take a fresh look at the concept of romantic relationships and sex, without any preconceived notions.

Let's first take a fresh look at the "concept of sex" and "sex itself." In order to understand "sex," let us look at nature. Why? Because the collective human mind has created such a *complex, convoluted, multilayered* concept of sex that it is *impossible* to truly understand the purpose of sex if we look at it through the filters of the conditioned human mind.

When I look at sex in nature, I see that *sexual intercourse* is carried out to *reproduce*. **Every living organism tries to reproduce.** This is the law of nature.

In vertebrates such as chimpanzees, gorillas, cats, wolves, elephant's, etc., sexual intercourse takes place only when a female is hormonally ready to reproduce. In other words, she has reached maturity, is in good health and sex-hormone surges have *primed* her for reproduction. In plain language, we say that "she is in heat." She finds a male to have intercourse and reproduction starts.

In Real, humans are also animals and belong to the vertebrate family. Before civilization, most likely humans also behaved like other vertebrates. A female, when biologically ready, searched for a male, had intercourse and reproduction started.

However, with the dawn of civilization, the "concept of sex and marriage" came into being. This concept would change sexuality

for humans forever. Each society came up with ideas that dictate *when*, with *whom* and under *what* circumstances, you can have sexual intercourse. Initially, it was a simple concept with the purpose of a male and a female staying together to take care of their offspring. This concept came into being as a necessity for society to function orderly.

As civilization advanced, so did the concept of sex and marriage. This concept automatically gave birth to a number of other concepts: the concept of infidelity, extramarital relationships, divorce, rape, premarital sex, pedophilia, prostitution and pornography. None of these concepts exists in "Nature."

In recent years, the concept of sex has become even more convoluted. Mostly, sex is carried out for a whole host of reasons *but* reproduction. The concept of sex and reproduction are *two* separate entities now. Typically, the concept of sex has a variety of other concepts attached to it such as fun, happiness, love, lust, ego enhancement, dating, relationship, marriage, etc. The concept of reproduction is often linked to the concepts of "right relationship," "career success" and "financial security." Instead of "nature" *timing* your reproduction, now it is the Acquired Self, the conditioned mind, who is in the driver's seat and determines the *timing* when reproduction should take place. At times, it is *too* late.

Here are some interesting medical facts: A human female has about 6 million eggs at her seventh month of intrauterine life, 2 million at birth, and 400,000 at puberty. Only about 400 eggs achieve ovulation. All the rest go through what is medically called *atresia*. They simply die out.

In each female cycle, several eggs start to mature, but ultimately only one reaches full *maturation* and undergoes ovulation. Here is another interesting medical fact: it is the *healthiest* eggs that ovulate first, during the early reproductive years. With advancing age,

less and less healthy eggs ovulate. That's why a woman's fertility declines after age 31. After age 35, pregnancy rates are only *half* those of women under age 31 and by age 40, only about one third. For the same reason, there is a high risk of genetic *malformation* in the fetuses of women over 30 and this risk *escalates* after the age of 35.

This window of "reproductive life," is automatically observed in nature. Before or after this window of reproductive life, animals do not have sex. However, humans, consumed by their conceptual world, often do not observe this window of reproductive life. Consequences can be horrendous, such as child sex abuse. On the other end, it can cause a lot of stress in a relationship when a post-menopausal woman does not have any more sexual desire or an elderly man cannot *perform*. Many older women and men lose their self- esteem once they lose their desire for sex or their ability to perform and can even become depressed.

Under the surface, this is what happens: The concept of sex becomes part of the Acquired Self: that's who you think you are. Inability to have sex is perceived by the Acquired Self as a sign of loss and/or failure, which can lead to shame, worthlessness and depression.

How to Deal with the Pressure of Romantic Love and Sex?

Once you realize the clear difference between Real Sex and the Concept of romantic love and sex, the huge *confusion* surrounding this subject matter automatically dissolves... And a lot of stress disappears spontaneously. For example, it's okay if you are *not* dating someone. It does not mean you're *inferior* to a person who is dating. You realize it is the Acquired Self who seeks out romantic love in order to feel *special, validated* and *worthy*... And it is the Acquired Self who feels *bruised, sad* and *worthless* when someone *dumps* you. With this realization, you *rise* above this

emotional drama due to the concept of romantic love. The pressure to find a boyfriend/girlfriend simply disappears. Then, you continue to enjoy socializing with boys and girls simply as friends. Actually, it is a lot of fun.

Practical Advice

Now you realize the *concept of sex* was created by the conceptual, civilized world you live in. You also realize what *real sex* in Nature is and what its *real purpose is*. With this understanding, you *respect* the concepts attached to sex in your society. You neither *love* them nor *hate* them. You don't get emotional about them as they are not part of you any more. You treat the concepts exactly what they are: concepts. No more, no less. You realize these concepts are a *tool* to function in society, that's all. But you also remain aware that the *real purpose of sex* is to *reproduce*.

In general, society wants you to become *financially* independent before you start to *reproduce* and have your *own* family. So, if you follow this simple rule, it saves you a lot of stress. You focus on your education as a *means* to find a livelihood. Sooner or later, you also find your mate, with whom you settle down and start having your own family. In this way, you don't end up spending most of your peak reproductive years chasing high goals and ambitions. Instead, you end up having your children at the prime of your reproductive period. You prevent the emotional as well as economic stress of *assisted* fertility in the form of fertility drugs, In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) or artificial insemination. They may be necessary if you keep delaying reproduction for the sake of higher and higher economic and academic goals or if you keep chasing the dream of the Right person.

The Concept of the Right Person

Everyone looks for the Right Person to have a romantic relationship and sex. What is a Right Person? It's a concept, isn't it? Every Acquired Self has a concept about the Right person, which obviously varies from person to person and from society to society. The Right person for you may *not* be the Right person for someone else. You have this concept in your head in the form of an image of the Right person for you, which actually does not exist except in your own head. It is a phantom, an illusion, a concept. As it is a part of your Acquired Self, it may seem very real to you.

Typically when two people start a romantic relationship, each one is on their *best* behavior. That's when you feel you may have finally found the Right person... But soon after the sexual heat cools down in a relationship, the other hidden sides of the Acquired Self in each one of you starts to surface. That's when you may realize it is not the Right person for you. The relationship goes *sour* and you start your next hunt for the phantom of the Right person. Most people continue to go from one relationship to another, looking for this Right person. Sometimes people get stuck in a relationship. Then, they feel trapped and depressed as they can't continue their exciting chase of the phantom of the Right person.

So What is the Solution?

First of all, rise above your Acquired Self. You will realize the true source of joy and peace resides inside you, your True Self. Then, the *neediness* to find the Right person to make you *happy* or *complete* simply vanishes. Obviously, you need a boyfriend/girlfriend (with or without the concept of marriage) to *reproduce* naturally and to raise children in a society.

Whenever you are in a *relationship*, it is your Acquired Self interacting with another person's Acquired Self. When the two of you

have a lot *in common*, you are *not* threatened by each other, you feel *attracted* to each other and *enjoy* spending time together. You may call it "love" and you may think you have found the Right person. However, soon the other aspects of your Acquired Selves start to surface. For example, certain *expectations* are not met, *trust* gets betrayed, *selfishness*, *ego* and *jealousy* surfaces, *self-righteousness* and *judging* leads to heated arguments and the relationship becomes more and more stressful. As long as the two of you are in the total grip of your Acquired Selves, the relationship will be very stressful, no matter how much in love you were in the beginning of the relationship.

For any relationship to be healthy and stress-free, the couple has to be free of their Acquired Selves, even if it is only one person. Only when a person is *Not* in the total grip of the Acquired Self, is he/she able to see the true nature of the *faults* of the Acquired Self. These faults are actually based on concepts, aren't they? For example, you may be annoyed/disappointed at the other person or yourself for *not* living up to certain expectations. Where do the expectations come? From the concept of "how everyone *should* and *should not* behave." Once you can clearly see the *conceptual* nature of the faults of the Acquired Self - yours as well as the other person's - you no longer *judge* yourself or the other person, because you are not attached to those concepts as some kind of Fundamental Truth. This is how *judging* ends. With that a lot of emotional drama dies out.

Seeing concepts as concepts is enough to free you of your *negative* attachment to these faults. Then you realize the so called bad and good qualities of a person are all conceptual, virtual. However, the actions arising out of these conceptual qualities are, of course real. If actions of another person are harmful to you, then you leave that person.

After the break-up of a relationship, you feel relieved of the stress arising out of the "bad" behavior of the other person. But you also *miss* the good qualities and actions of that person. Often you end up getting together or find another "right person" with qualities similar to the one before. Soon you start to experience the same annoyances and frustrations as you did before. In this way, you remain trapped in the "cycle of love and hate."

Once you realize the conceptual nature of the good and bad qualities of the Acquired Self, you are not attached to them. Only then you rise above the emotional neediness to be loved or to love others. You also rise above expectations and stop judging yourself or the others.

Remember it takes two Acquired Selves to fight. If only you become **free** of your Acquired Self, the fighting ends. Interestingly, your partners' Acquired Self gradually stops to fight as well. In other words, it starts to shrink once it does not get fed by your Acquired Self. This phenomenon is different from the usual *mantra* of "love begets love," which means you have to love the other person to get love in response. In this way, you actually remain stuck in the concept of love and expectations. It's like rearranging the furniture of a room. But you remain stuck in the prison of the room. Realize that room is the problem. Simply get out of it. Don't try to change yourself or the other person. It *not* only doesn't work, but it also creates more stress for you and your partner. Simply rise above your Acquired Self. That's how you get out of the prison of the room - your Acquired self.

You must always be aware that you are Not your Acquired Self. It is simply a *tool* to function in society and it is full of good and bad qualities. Your True Self, on the other hand, is free of any qualities, good or bad. It is the everlasting source of inner peace and joy.

Chapter 21

How to Deal with the Stress of Peer Pressure

Teenagers are under a tremendous amount of *peer pressure*. They want to *blend in*. They would go any distance to seek *validation* and *praise* from their peers. This often leads to *irresponsible, irrational, reckless* and even *dangerous* behavior, which creates a huge amount of stress for everyone involved. Why are teenagers so thirsty for *praise, validation* and *recognition* by their peers?

The Root Cause of Peer Pressure

If you look closely, you realize that the *Society Monster* (collective Acquired Self) starts to condition you since your early childhood. *Competition, comparison* and *judging* are three of its main tools of conditioning. Starting with your early childhood, you are subjected to competition, comparison and judging, all of which get in high gear as you enter school. It continues to get into higher and higher gear as you advance through school. By the time you are a teenager, you are well groomed. By now, your Acquired Self has accumulated a pile of emotions as a consequence of *competition, comparison and judging*: such as moments of “*winning*” when your Acquired Self was praised, recognized and validated and these moments gave you “*thrill and excitement*.” Obviously, you want *more* of these moments. Your Acquired Self also remembers the moments

of “losing” and all of the *humiliation, worthlessness* and *embarrassment* that came with it. It remembers the emotional pains of *loneliness* and *rejection*. Obviously, it wants to *avoid* these painful emotions at all costs.

By the time you’re a teenager, your Acquired Self is well established and has a good hold on you. You identify with your Acquired Self: *that’s who you think you are*. In the grip of the Acquired Self, you develop an *insatiable* appetite for *praise, validation and recognition*. You want to avoid *humiliation, embarrassment, worthlessness, rejection and loneliness*. You also become *afraid* that others may not praise you or even worst, may even criticize you. These kinds of thoughts make you *shiver* inside.

In the grip of a strong **attachment** to *recognition, validation and praise* as well as a strong **avoidance** of *criticism, humiliation and rejection*, your Acquired Self caves into peer pressure and creates a lot of stress for you.

Us Against Them

Every Acquired Self is very *insecure*. Why? Because it is virtual. In Reality, it does *not* even exist, but it wants to. Perhaps now you can understand the depth of the insecurity Acquired Self is in. Consequently, it tries to find *virtual security* by associating with people who have the same or similar ideas, concepts and interests as its own. The Society Monster downloads into your Acquired Self a never ending list of concepts such as sports, academics, certain symbols such as school mascots of your school, certain interests such as debates, drama, music; certain social, religious and political ideas. You are even encouraged to join the clubs and organizations with interests similar to yours.

In a group of people who have the same/similar concepts and ideas as yours, your Acquired Self feels it has found its *place*, it feels

connected and it knows where it *belongs*. In fact, your Acquired Self gets stronger through the collective Acquired Selves of a group, gang, club, organization or association.

You consider those who have ideas and concepts similar to yours as your *friends* and those who have opposing ideas and concepts as your *enemies*. This *mental* division can lead to verbal arguments or even physical violence in schools and neighborhoods.

The concept of “us against them” takes root and continues to grow stronger as you go through high school, college, university and your adult life. This is the basis of the *clannish/group mentality* that causes a lot of stress for you and others. This is also the basis of *fight*s between various political, religious, cultural and racial groups.

What's the Difference Between Friendship and Peer Pressure?

Both friendship and peer-hood are concepts. They are similar to each other, but are distinct from each other if you look closely.

Peer-hood is centered on a certain *common idea* and *unites* a large number of Acquired Selves. In this way, it influences a large number of people. For example, being a teenager is a concept and it obviously unites and affects a large number of people. Similarly, people may be united around their school, their class, their science club, etc.

Friendship is more of an interaction between two Acquired Selves. It is a one-on-one relationship, although its *basis* is the same as peer-hood: *common grounds*. Two Acquired Selves make each other feel secure because they have some of the similar ideas, concepts and interests.

Betrayals

Since early childhood, your Acquired Self is *downloaded* with the concept of *friendship*. It gets a strong foothold by the time you are a teenager. The Society Monster creates a *description of a good friend* and then downloads this concept into your Acquired Self. This *concept of friendship* creates certain *expectations*. Now what happens when those expectations are not met? Obviously, a lot of *hurt* and *sadness*. For example, a close friend you thought was a *true* friend says something or acts in some way that *betrays* your *trust*. This experience would create a lot of *hurt* and *sadness* for you.

Your Acquired Self may even decide to *learn* from this experience. In doing so, it keeps the painful experience alive. And what does it learn? To *never* trust anyone again. In this way, the Acquired Self puts up a strong wall of *resistance* around itself and lives in this self-created prison of suspicions, fear and loneliness. What a shame!

How to Deal with Peer Pressure

It is important to realize that it's your Acquired Self who is *thirsty* for praise, validation and recognition by your peers and *afraid* of any criticism or rejection. Also, realize the fact that the Acquired Self is *not* truly who are. Why? Because you were not born with this. You acquired it as a part of growing up in society. It was supposed to be a simple *tool* to function in society, but it has taken you over. It has stolen your identity!

At birth, you were *joyful* from within, like all other babies. You were in touch with your True Self. You did not need any praise, validation or recognition to be happy *nor* were you *afraid* of any criticism, rejection or betrayal. None of these emotional needs existed in your mind. You had no friends and no enemies, because

the concept of friendship did not exist. You interacted with everyone with an *open* heart.

Once you are free of the Acquired Self, you get in touch with your True Self - the self you were born with. Then, you will realize that someone's *action* or *comments* have *no* impact on your True Self. You will still be you whether someone validates you or rejects you. It really does not matter. With this realization, the grip of peer pressure is *not* there any more. You feel such a freedom that no words can describe it. Free of the *neediness* to be praised and free of the *fear* of rejection, you are like a *free* bird enjoying its own flight, no longer in the cage of Peer Pressure.

You realize it is your Acquired Self that keeps past events alive. In Reality, those events are dead and don't exist any longer. Then, you are no longer afraid of betrayals. You realize the true source of joy is inside you, your True Self. You don't need anyone to make you happy. Then, you still socialize, but *not* under *peer pressure*. You still make friends, but *not* for any emotional *neediness*. You are *joyful* when you are around your friends and *joyful* when you are alone.

You also realize that Us against Them is a product of the conceptual world. In Reality, everyone is a human being. There are no Us and there are no Them. With this realization, you are free of the *clannish* mentality. You also realize that all life forms - animals or plants - have the *same* life flowing through them. This is the Real Connectedness. In this way, you are never alone when you are in touch with your True Self, the life within you, the joy of being.

Chapter 22

How to Deal with Demanding Parents, Insensitive Siblings, Inflexible Teachers and Tormenting Bullies

Home is supposed to be a place where you can relax completely, but usually, it is a *stressful* place. Often, stress comes from *demanding* parents and at times, from *insensitive* siblings. School is supposed to be *shrine* of learning, but usually, it's a place full of *chaos* and *stress*. While stress comes from different aspects of school such as pressure from education, peer pressure and pressure of dating and sex, one major stressor can be an unreasonably, inflexible, demanding teacher. Another source can be a tormenting bully.

The Root Cause of Stress at Home and School

Before you can deal with the stress at home and school, you have to figure out its cause, at its roots. When you interact with your parents, siblings, teachers and bullies, it is basically your Acquired Self interacting with their Acquired Selves.

Every Acquired Self is a *compulsive* thinker. It is always working for *itself*. In this way, every Acquired Self is *selfish*. It loves *praise* and *validation* and hates *criticism*. It constantly *judges* others, while others *judge* it. At times, it *judges* itself. It has huge

expectations from others and from itself, too. When those expectations are not met, it feels *annoyed*, *frustrated* and at times *angry*. It is *competitive*, *self-righteous* and *jealous*. It is often lost in the *past* and keeps *memories* alive. By keeping painful memories alive, it keeps the fire of *hurt*, *worthlessness*, *betrayal*, *unfairness*, *hate* and *revenge* alive. By keeping sweet memories alive, it feels *sad*. In the pursuit of learning from the past, it creates more thoughts it calls "My future" in which it tries to *prevent* any bad event from happening again. In this way, it creates the "What If" syndrome and a lot of *fear* and *anxiety*. Deep inside, it is very *insecure*. It also takes its role, such as a parent or a teacher, *too seriously* and enjoys the authority and power a bit *too much*.

Perhaps now, you understand why your parent pushes you to be in *honor* classes or to be the *captain* of the football team. It is the *competitive* part of their Acquired Self. You can understand why your parent or teacher is so strict with rules. It stems out of *fear* as well as the *lust for power* and *authority*. You can understand why your parent loves to argue, which comes from *self-righteousness*. You can understand why your sibling is *competitive* and *jealous*. You can understand why someone tries to bully you: it stems out of their own *insecurity*.

Freedom from Stress at Home and School

Remember, it takes two to fight. It is only when two Acquired Selves *engage* that a verbal or physical fight takes place and that's where you have the *power* to stay away from stress. **Don't let your own Acquired Self engage with others' Acquired Selves.** Then, there will be *no arguments*, *no fights* and *no psychological drama*. However, don't try to *discipline* or *push down* the emotions triggered by your Acquired Self. Simply rise above your Acquired Self, by realizing you are NOT your Acquired Self. It is just a *tool* to function in society, that's all.

When you don't let your Acquired Self engage, the other Acquired Self may be utterly *surprised*. It wants you to fight back, but you don't. How come? The other Acquired Self is totally confused. It may *poke* you harder to get some response. When it doesn't get any response from you, it feels *frustrated* and may eventually *give up*. That's how the other Acquired Self automatically stops its demanding, unreasonable, tormenting and insensitive behavior. Remember, for the other Acquired Self to be *effective*, it has to be *fed* by your Acquired Self. Once it does not get its feed from you, it starts to *die* out. That's how you can *transform* others without even trying to change them. It is so *amazing* when you see it happening.

Also, watch out for another *tricky* way your Acquired Self may thrive inside you. Your Acquired Self may not *argue*, but may continue to *fume* over the comments of others for days such as an insensitive remark by your sibling or your teachers' nagging comment. This inner voice is *no* more than a voice echoing what happened a while ago, but *not* happening at this moment. Your own conditioned mind, your Acquired Self, keeps it *alive* and *torments* you. Realize at this moment, it is *not* your sibling or your teacher who is tormenting you, but your *own* inner voice. How ridiculous! This is why we can call this inner voice the *enemy within*.

Once you clearly see this inner voice no more than a voice, you will feel *relief* from stress instantaneously. Soon, you may hear another inner voice. "What if my sibling or teacher says something nasty *again*? How can I fight back?" Actually, it is your Acquired Self creeping back in different clothes, disguised as a friend. In this way, it keeps you *trapped* in the *dungeon* of somebody's negative remark, its associated negative emotion and the fear that it may happen again. Clearly see the entire *trap* and get out of it, by simply taking your *attention* away from these thoughts. *Shift* your *attention* to the Now. Be aware what is actually happening in front of your eyes. This seemingly simple *shift of attention* has amazing power to *relieve* your stress instantaneously.

Once you are free of the emotional thoughts that your Acquired Self creates, you can think logically. If you have no choice but to live with your demanding parent, fully *accept* the situation, as long as there is no physical or sexual abuse, in which case you need to involve the authorities such as police. In the same way, do the best you can while in the class of an unreasonably strict teacher. Your grades are just part of the conceptual world. In the overall *big picture*, those grades really don't matter much. Don't lose sleep over them. Don't react to the comments of a bully or an insensitive sibling. They will stop their insensitive behavior once they can't provoke you. In case of bullies, if there is any physical or sexual misconduct, then let the authorities, such as a teacher, principal or your parents, know about it.

Chapter 23

How to be Free of the Stress of Parenting

Parenting is one of the most difficult tasks in the world, especially when children grow up to be teenagers. When they are little, the *sheer* joy they bring makes you *forget* all the hard work of parenting, but when they are teenagers, the *joy* becomes minimal. Parenting teenagers brings a different kind of challenge that you never dreamed of. Most parents feel stressed out. In order to be free of the stress of parenting, you need to get to the root of it!

The Root Cause of the Stress of Parenting

Use logic and you realize the stress of parenting comes from an *endless* list of responsibilities. You acquire the *concept* of these responsibilities as you grow up in society, as a part of your Acquired Self. You try to do *all* the things that your Acquired Self has learned from your parents and society in general. You learn “how to be a *good* parent,” from the book of “role descriptions” written by the society you live in.

A few examples: You shower your children with *toys, movies, books, video games and computer games*. You take them to *amusement parks*. You celebrate their *birthdays*. You teach them your cultural values, including your cultural food. You make sure to download the concepts of your *religion, race, nationality and culture* into your child. You teach them to celebrate certain *religious* and

national holidays, You also teach them all the collective past of your society, called *history*.

You do everything possible to make sure that your child is a *success* and not a *failure*. To accomplish these goals, you send your children to school. Often, you also need to *discipline* them. You also teach them how to function in your society. You feel responsible to make sure that your children *accomplish* a lot, are *respectable* citizens, *raise* a nice family of their own and essentially *repeat* what you have done with them in order to carry on your *traditions*.

Guilt, Disappointments, Frustrations, Anger and Fear

Now what happens if, for one reason or another, you *did not* or *could not* play your role as a parent as described by the “book of role descriptions.” Obviously, you will be *disappointed* in yourself and feel *guilty*. If your child does not turn out as you expected, you will feel *disappointed* in your child.

Many parents end up being disappointed at themselves as well as their children. The emotional pains of these *disappointments* keep adding to your Acquired Self. Disappointments often become *frustrations* and outwardly expressed in an *angry* tone. *Guilt*, on the other hand, you can’t even express. You keep it deep inside and live with the *gnawing* pain it creates inside you.

Stories I Have Heard Over the Years.

Here are a couple of examples:

“My teenage son’s grades in school started slipping and he *misbehaved* at home. As a responsible father, I tried to *discipline* him by grounding him for a week. He *curled* at me. I got *furious*, because I never *expected* that from my own son. I told him he has to follow my rules as long as he lives under my roof. He got *agitated*,

left home and now he barely talks to me. I rarely see him and I *miss* him so much. It *hurts* so much when your own son doesn't talk to you. Where did I go wrong? I have obviously *failed* as a father."

"My teenager daughter won't listen to me. She goes to sleep late, wakes up late in the morning and is always tardy at school. Her grades at school have been slipping. If I tell her anything, she *lashes* back at me. It is so *frustrating*. One day, I got a call from a counselor at her school telling me that my daughter was in her room, crying and asking for emotional help. I was so *upset*, but also felt *sad*. I feel that I have *failed* as a mother and it *hurts* deep inside and there's nothing I can do about it".

Freedom from the Stress of Parenting:

It is obvious the concept of "what you should and shouldn't do" to be a good parent *is the cause of your stress of parenting*. Where does this concept come from? From the conceptual world you live in, right?

Once you clearly see the conceptual, virtual nature of the world, you become free of the attachment to the "book of role descriptions." Then, you no longer have any *expectations* of yourself or your child. You are free of the *compulsion* to *discipline* your child. You no longer *fear* failure as a parent, nor do you *expect* a reward for your success as a parent. With this insight, you can be free of your huge burden of the *stress of parenting* in a moment.

Once free of the conceptual world and free of your Acquired Self, you connect with your child at a much deeper level: human to human. This is your True Self and it is the same in every human being. Then, you feel a true love for your child and every other living being on the planet. This love never changes into hate. *Unconditional love can only come from an unconditioned mind.*

There are however, some responsibilities as a part of your True Self. Responsibilities may not even be the right word. These are more of an *instinct*. As a parent, you feed your baby, you stay with them to protect against any real danger (not an imaginary one). You keep them warm, provide them with a shelter and assist them with self-cleaning and grooming. As your child grows older, you teach them how to earn a living. When your child has grown into an adult, physically speaking, you let go of them. They leave you to live independently on their own. You don't *wiggle* them with the *rope* of expectations.

What Do You Do When Your Teenager Hurts Your Feelings?

Often, your teenager will *hurt* your feelings. For example, they don't have any time for you. Their response to your initiation of conversation consists of one or two words. They don't want any advice from you. They may not even want to sit on the same sofa where you are sitting. They may insult you through their body language, words or actions.

You feel a rage of *hurtful* feelings and you want to act out, but this is where you *must* stop. Pause. Remember it takes two to fight and everyone *loses* in a fight. However, do *not* suppress your sad, hurtful or angry feelings, but *do not* get *consumed* by the feelings and all sorts of thoughts rushing through your head.

Shift your attention to the Now. Be aware of the space, silence and stillness around you and inside you. Be aware of your breath, the objects around you and the sounds you can hear. Also, remain aware of the rush of painful feelings. The moment you are in the Now, you start to feel an inner space. Then, you can see things clearly and *think* with logic. Then, you realize it is your *attachment* to your child that is at the root of your stress. You expect certain behavior from your teenager. You may also be lost in the past when you and your child were so close. You may even think of the future

where you and your child are so apart. Attachments, expectations, past and future are all components of your Acquired Self.

Continue to be there for the needs of your teenager. It is part of parenting, but stay in the Now, where there is never any stress. Ironically, you may be *grateful* to your rude, thoughtless and selfish teenager whose actions force you to get into the Now to find peace. Thanks to their behavior, you are able to see the true colors of your Acquired Self and be free of it.

Q: “But How Will I Function as a Parent if I am Free From My Acquired Self?”

A: Once you realize that you are playing the role of a parent according to the “book of role descriptions” written by society, you have risen above the level of Acquired Self. *You play your role as best as you can.* But if you fall off the wagon for one reason or another, you do not have any *guilt*.

You are also *not* seriously attached to the *expectations* which arise out of the “book of role descriptions.” So whatever your child turns out to be, according to the standards of the conceptual world, you accept it.

You also become fully aware that the *past* does not exist except in your head and of course, you cannot change it. You also realize that it is your Acquired Self who keeps events alive as your *past*, tries to change them and that’s how it continues to *torment* you. With all of this realization, you simply drop this whole burden. Then you look at your child without the filters of any prior events. You no longer *judge* yourself or your child. Then an immense love, true love, flows between you and your child.

Once you are free of your Acquired Self, you become a living example of a *stress free* person for your child, who *sponges* it off you. *As all parents know very well, it's not what you say, but what you do that has an immense impact on your child's behavior.* In this way, you teach your child what no school, no institution, no society could ever teach. You become the most effective parent for your child without creating any stress for yourself or for them. In this way, you truly make a difference in the world.

Chapter 24

How To Be Free of the Stress of Teaching

Most teachers feel stressed out at one point or another. In order to be free of the stress of teaching, you have to look at it, instead of running away from it by seeking easy solutions, which are often superficial and serve only as a bandage.

The Root Cause of the Stress of Teaching

Let's take a new, fresh look at the root cause of the stress that teachers' experience. When you say, "I am stressed out," who is this "I" who is stressed out? It is your Acquired Self, isn't it? The Acquired Self feels *frustrated*, *disappointed* and at times *outraged*. At other times, it feels *insecure*, *afraid* and even gets *panicky*. It wants to *discipline* the kids, *change the behavior* of parents, colleagues and the principal and even wants to *correct* the entire educational system.

What is a Teacher?

Teacher is obviously a concept. Every society writes down a description for the role of all of its members. We could call it the "book of role description." Like every other role, it describes the *role* of a teacher. Based upon this description, everyone in the society has certain *expectations* of teachers. Even teachers themselves

have expectations of themselves and other teachers. This is the basis of *judging*. We judge whether a teacher is *good* or *bad* based upon the description of the role of a teacher. A conscientious teacher judges himself/herself, too. This is the basis of *self-criticism*.

When you become a teacher, you *assume* this **role** of a teacher. However, soon you forget this is just a **role**, based upon a *concept*. Often, you get *emotionally* attached to being a teacher. In other words, "teacher" becomes part of your Acquired Self. That's who you think you are. You easily forget that you were *you* before you became a teacher.

When you are in the total grip of your Acquired Self, you are in the total grip of you being a teacher. You think as if it is something real. Then, you experience all of the *emotional* stress your Acquired Self creates for you.

Freedom from the Stress of Teaching.

Once you understand that teacher is a concept, you will lose *emotional* attachment to it. Don't worry. You will still be able to teach, but you will not *suffer* from the emotional torment that your profession brings on you. Then, you will be able to clearly see that it is your Acquired Self who is still reacting to some comment made by a parent, teenager, principal or colleague, although *none* of them is there and you are sitting *alone* at your home. You will see how your Acquired Self keeps a situation alive, although in reality, it happened a day, a week or a year ago. You will see how your Acquired Self *stirs* up the emotions of *anger, frustration, disappointment, revenge* and *fear*, over a comment, situation or action that happened, but is *not* happening at this very moment. In this way, your Acquired Self gives so much power to another person's comment that you lose sleep over it. Is it worth it?

Use logic and see how your Acquired Self can be your *worst* enemy. For example, someone made some insulting remark and now your Acquired Self keeps *steaming* over it, although that person is not there any more. Wake up and clearly see it is your Acquired Self that is actually hurting you, not the person who made a comment. That's why we call it the *enemy* within.

With the *realization* that the source of stress is actually your own Acquired Self *reacting* to triggers, you will be free of your Acquired Self. The trigger may be a situation, some comment or action that is *dead*, but otherwise, *alive* only in your head. Switch *gears* and pay attention to the "Now" instead of being lost in your mind. Then, you will see for yourself there is no trigger of stress in the "Now." Remember "Now" is not what is in your *head*, but what is in front of your eyes, in REALITY. Feel the *peace* that arises inside you the moment you switch your *attention* away from the thoughts in your head to the Now in front of you.

Once you get in touch with your inner peace, which is your True Self, there is no need for *escapes* such as stress-eating, mindless entertainment, alcohol or drugs. You sleep better. Your body becomes restful. Free of the constant emotional torment of your Acquired Self, your mind and body starts to *rejuvenate*. In fact, you become an even *better* teacher, a *better* person once you are free of the emotional burden brought on by your Acquired Self. Your *memory* gets better. You stop *disliking* your work. Your interactions with other people including students, parents, principal and colleagues become *peaceful*, automatically. It is different from the *usual* politeness when you try to be nice and fake a smile in front of others but dislike them as soon as they leave. You become a peaceful, joyful person *inside* out.

Chapter 25

How to Deal with Rebellious Teenagers

Many teenagers *revolt* against the rules of society, including rules at home and at school. In this *revolt*, they also *rebel* against all those who *enforce* these rules. That's why many teenagers *rebel* against their parents, teachers and even society in general. In this way, they create a huge amount of stress for themselves and those around them.

The Root Cause of Rebellious Attitude

In order to deal with rebellious teenagers, first you have to look at the root cause of it. Who is rebellious? It's the Acquired Self, isn't it? And what is it rebelling against? It rebels against the rules. Most of these rules are centered on morality. What is morality? Let's take a close look at it.

What is Morality?

Morality is a concept isn't it? You do not find morality in other Life forms except in human beings. Humans are the only life form that has created concepts as well as a collective Conceptual world, it calls the world. Newborn babies do not have "the concept of morality" or any other concepts, for that matter. Concepts come later on.

Society downloads the concept of morality into your growing Acquired Self. Your Acquired Self may *like* this concept of morality (positive attachment) and judges itself and others accordingly, creating a lot of stress ... Or it may *dislike* this concept of morality (negative attachment), *rebel* against it mentally or even in its actions and create a lot of stress for itself and others.

What is the Basis of Morality?

Every society comes up with a *description* for how everyone living in that society *should* and *shouldn't* behave. This description is the *basis* of morality for the given society. Within a given society, various groups form their own *brands* of morality, usually along religious, cultural, social or political lines.

The Basis of Rebellious Attitude

In addition to *restrictions* in the form of *morality*, the Society Collective Acquired Self also downloads the concepts of *independence*, *freedom* and *self expression*. Obviously, these concepts *contradict* the concepts of restrictions of morality. No wonder so many teenagers *get confused*. Many see the *hypocrisy* in these concepts and *rebel* against society. The *revolt and anger* becomes part of their Acquired Self. Then, they create a lot of stress for themselves and others.

Perhaps now you understand the basis of rebellion among teenagers. It primarily stems from the *contradictory* messages that the Society Collective Acquired Self delivers.

The Game of "Divide and Conquer"

In addition, the Society Collective Acquired Self also plays the game of "divide and conquer." It tells parents and teachers to *mold* teenagers into *morally* responsible individuals. At the same time, it

tells teenagers to be *free, adventurous, independent* and rebellious. Obviously, parents and teachers are on one side of the *battlefield* and rebellious teenagers on the other side. Amazingly, no one sees the *mastermind* of this conflict, the Society Collective Acquired Self, which therefore continues to *thrive*.

What's the Solution?

Once parents, teachers and teenagers can clearly see the real *architect* of the conflict between them, they are *not* in its tight grip any longer. Freed from the grip of the Society Collective Acquired Self, parents can learn to *relax* and be free of the *compulsion* to enforce various rules on their teenagers. Now think for a moment. The *rebellion* is against the rules. So what happens when rules are gone? The rebellion goes away. No rules - no rebellion.

"But how will teenagers learn responsibility, if I don't enforce rules?" argues your Acquired Self. Your teenager will learn responsibility if you give them the *freedom* to learn it, instead of *enforcing* it on them. The first method is *without* stress and the second method is *full* of stress. The choice is your!

As a teenager, can you see the *trap* of the concepts of independence, rebellion and adventure created by the Society Collective Acquired Self? Can you see how it turns you against your own *loving* parents and *caring* teachers? You can have *fun* without breaking the rules. Actually, when you break the rules, no one wins. It creates stress for you, your parents and teachers. When you break the rules, you are actually *negatively* attached to the rules. In fact, you take them too *seriously*. You give them too much power. How about treating rules exactly what they are? They are simply concepts, nothing more. Then, there is no need to *rebel* against them. On the other hand, parents and teachers are *positively* attached to these rules and forget that they are simply concepts. Some rules can be broken as long as breaking the rules does not harm anyone. For

example, etiquettes at dining table, dress codes, language morality standards etc.

Parents, teachers and teenagers need to understand the true nature of rules as concepts, without being positively or negatively *emotionally* attached to them. Only then, there is *no* conflict and with this, rebellious attitude *dies* out on its own. Then, teenagers can have *fun* on their own but also be *free* to learn responsible behavior on their own. Parents and teachers can *enjoy* seeing their teenager *blossom*, instead of being *stressed* out.

An Example:

One day my friend asked for my advice. His teenage daughter had left home to live with her boyfriend's family. As a loving father, he was devastated. In stead of being a sympathetic ear, I asked my friend bluntly, " Did she leave to rebel against the rules in your house?" He admitted, " yeah! But those are good rules." I gave him the insight that she was basically rebelling against the rules, no matter how good they are. He understood and was able to convey to her daughter that there would be no more rules in the house. "No More Rules, I told her", he was almost shouting when he saw me next time. "And with that she came back and every thing is fine now."

Q: My teenage boy has a rebellious personality ever since he was a kid. Luckily, he has been attached to me which has kept him relatively trouble-free. A couple of years ago, I went through a divorce. Since then, he has been angry at me. About a year ago, I started dating which has driven his rebellious attitude into a high gear. Now he disregards all the rules and gets into drinking alcohol excessively with his buddies. Now he also holds his own driver's license. As a father, I am very much concerned about his safety. I tried to discipline him by taking his car away from him, but it did not work. I am willing to do whatever it takes to stop my teenager's reckless behavior. But I don't know what to do?

A: First of all, can you see how your and your sons' Acquired Selves are tangled? The more you try to discipline him as the Society monster has taught you to do as a parent, the more he is rebelling against you. His Acquired Self is mad at you for dismantling the castle of love, attention and comfort he was used to. He got mad at you because he was attached to you. He had certain expectations from you. And you let him down. Perhaps he thought he is the most important person in your life and you will do anything for his sake. But in the last couple of years, you are doing what your Acquired self thinks is *right* for you. Your actions are for *yourself*. Your teenager sees your selfishness. He is disappointed and therefore angry at you. He also wants to punish you, as well as get your attention. That's why he is into a reckless behavior.

Now Your Acquired Self wants to continue to enjoy its independence and also wants your teenager to listen to you, follow the rules and be a responsible person or else you will discipline him. You also see his manipulative behavior how he is trying to bet even with you. And you are not willing to cave in. Do you see how your and your son's Acquired Selves are at a battle? You both want to win and none wants to lose this battle. For a battle to continue, it needs two sides to fight. Now what happens when you are free of your Acquired Self? You stop fighting. With that the battle comes to an end right away, isn't it?

The big question is how do you rise above your Acquired Self? Can you see that the society monster has created the concept of romance and marriage? In Nature, every life form tries to reproduce. That is the purpose of life: reproduce so life can perpetuate. On the other hand, it is humans' collective Acquired Self that has created the concept of sex, romance and marriage, which has resulted in the concepts of divorce, dating, affairs, prostitutes, pornography and child sex abuse, all of which DO NOT exist in Nature. You have fulfilled your purpose of life by reproducing your teenager. Once you

are free of the concept of sex, romance and companionship, you rise above the need to date. You will stop dating, not as a compulsion but as a choice. This alone will have a huge positive impact on your teenager's behavior.

Sit down with your teenager and admit that you have been selfish. Promise him that you will not be selfish any more. Tell him, he will be Number 1 priority in your life, because that's how you see it. Obviously it is against all of the usual teachings of the society monster, who wants you to continue to discipline your teenager and somehow you have to win this battle against your own teenager. Once you are free of your Acquired Self, you realize how society monster turns you against your own children in the sugar-coated concepts of "independence, responsibility, maturity, morality, competition, comparison, success, failure, etc."

Once you are free of your Acquired Self, you realize the True source of Joy lies inside you, not out there in the form of a person, possession, money, success, accomplishment, life-style etc. In this way, you discover the *fountain of joy* inside you. Then you don't need any person, possession or accomplishment to make you joyful. In the end, you are joyful and your teenager is not mad at you any longer. Isn't that what you really want?

Step 3

Chapter 26

Live in the Now

You may have heard “live in the Now” and you won’t have any stress. Well, it is true that there is no stress in the Now. Then, why don’t you live in the Now? What prevents you from living in the Now?

What Prevents You from Living in the Now?

Pay attention and you will clearly see it’s your *busy mind* that prevents you from living in the Now. As long as you are in the grip of the busy mind, you are not in the “Now.” “Living in the busy mind” and “Living in the Now” are mutually *exclusive*.

In order to live in the “Now,” you need to be free of your Busy Mind. In order to be free of your Busy Mind, you need to look at the *dynamics* of your Busy Mind. Observe your Busy Mind and you will see that it is *lost* in the past or the future. It tells *stories* of the past, *promises* or *fears* of the future. It talks about *concepts* and *opinions*. It judges itself and others. Often it talks to *imaginary* people, expressing *anger*, *frustrations* and *concerns* even when no one else is there. That’s how your mind stays busy.

The Busy Mind consists of your *past*, *future*, *concepts*, *ideas*, *knowledge* and *information* that you acquire from society as you grow up. It’s your Acquired Self, isn’t it? In other words, it is your

Acquired Self that keeps your mind *busy* and thus, *prevents* you from living in the Now.

Your Acquired Self keeps you in the past and/or the future. Why? Because it is the one who *creates* the past and future. Otherwise, they do *not* exist. The past and future are *virtual*, created by your Acquired Self, who itself is *virtual*. So your Acquired Self resides in its *self-created* home of the *past* and *future*.

In addition, your Acquired Self keeps you in the world of concepts, ideas, beliefs, opinions, judging, interpreting and labeling. Why? Because these are various components of your Acquired Self. As long as you identify with your Acquired Self, you will stay in its grip and your mind will stay busy.

On the other hand, your True Self is real and it lives in the Now, which is the ultimate reality. In the Now, there is *no* emotional burden of the past or *worries* of the future. In the Now, there are no concepts, no ideas, no beliefs, no customs and no traditions. *In the Now, everything is real*. The present moment is always *fresh, pristine* and without any stains of *stress*. Therefore, live in the now and be free of all of the stress created by your Acquired Self.

In order to live in the Now, be free of your Acquired Self.

CAUTION!

Your Acquired Self loves to acquire more and more concepts. “Living in the Now” often becomes a concept. It simply *adds* to your Acquired Self and in this way keeps you away from living in the Now. Ironic! The more you remain in the *concept* of “living in the Now,” the further away you will be from the “Now.”

Don’t make living in the Now a *goal*. That’s what your Acquired Self loves to do. In this way, it creates a future and

therefore, keeps you out of the present moment. The Acquired Self is very treacherous!

Live in Your “Field of Awareness.”

So, how do you live in the present moment? We humans are equipped with five senses: *sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch*. These five senses create an *outer field of awareness* for you.

Live in this field of awareness.

Pause for a moment right now and pay attention to:

- What you see
- What you hear
- What you smell
- What you taste
- What you touch

Don't think. Just observe.

Experience what's in your field of awareness.

In general, when we see, we only pay attention to the *objects* without paying any attention to the *space* in which everything exists. Without space, there would be no objects. So when you see objects, also be aware of the space which gives rise to all objects in the universe.

In the same way, when you listen, also pay attention to the *silence* without which there would be no sound.

Use your eyes and ears and be aware of *space, silence* and *stillness*, which give rise to all of the *objects, sounds* and *events* in the universe.

In addition to your outer field of awareness, you also have an *inner field of awareness* that you can access by paying attention to it.

This inner field of awareness is your *True Self*. It is vibrant, full of immense energy, joy and inner peace. No words can accurately describe it... But it can be *felt*. It is a *direct experience* and *not a concept*. That's why your Acquired Self, which consists of concepts, cannot understand it. You can feel your inner field of awareness simply by *shifting your attention* from the busy mind to the inside of your *chest*.

In fact your outer field of awareness is an *extension* of your inner field of awareness. It is one field of awareness. And that is what the "Now" is!

Q: How Can I Live in the Now if My Now is Awful?

A: This is a wonderful way for your Acquired Self to *justify* why you shouldn't live in the now. In this way, it keeps you enslaved.

Pay attention and realize there is a "**conceptual Now**" that your conditioned mind, your Acquired Self creates. In this conceptual Now, you may find a lot of *undesirable* things such as lack of money, lack of health, lack of romantic relationship, etc. Of course, this conceptual Now may be awful and you want to run away from it by escaping into a *fantasy* land, called the future.

When I refer to the Now or the Present, I am referring to the Now in REAL, *not a concept, but a reality* - what you actually see, hear, smell, taste, touch and sense. Stay in this real "Now" without any *interference* from your conditioned, busy mind. Be aware that your conditioned mind loves to *interpret, judge and conceptualize* every thing that it sees, hears, smells, touches, tastes or feels. For example, you see a sunset. For a moment you are in awe (the real Now), but the next moment your conditioned mind *hijacks* your

attention and you find yourself interpreting, comparing, describing or even taking a picture of the sunset. All of these mental activities create a “conceptual Now” for you. You are no longer in the real Now.

In the real Now, there is *never* any stress! The *real Now is not a concept*. It is *reality* around and inside you and you can be aware of it any time you decide. It is your *ultimate* choice! Unfortunately, most people are not even aware of this ultimate choice and therefore, continue to suffer in the grip of their conditioned mind, their Acquired Self.

Chapter 27

Practical Suggestions: How to Live in the Now

Your Acquired Self, the conditioned mind, keeps you away from the *Now*, because the *Now* is *real* and your Acquired Self is *unreal*. Your Acquired Self creates an *unreal, virtual* world of its own and keeps you *trapped* there. The Past and Future are part of this virtual world.

Because your Acquired Self has been in the driver's seat since your early childhood, you keep going back to your past and future, despite *trying* to stay in the *Now*. Here are some practical ways to stay more in the *Now*.

1. Keep Your Mind Where Your Body Is

If you pay attention, you realize that your mind is almost always out of sync with your body. While your body is in the car, your mind may be *miles* and *years* away, remembering what you did on your last *vacation*. Maybe it's still trying to win the *argument* you had with your colleague a week ago. If you have the radio on, it will further *facilitate* to keep your mind away from the present moment.

What is the present moment? For you, the present moment is where your body is, isn't it? So if you can you keep your mind where your body is, you will be in the *Now*.

For example, if you are driving, can you keep your mind on the road? Pay attention to the other traffic, the trees, electric poles running backward, the clouds swirling in the sky, the birds, the buildings and everything else you see or hear. While in parking lot, pay attention to other cars, the warm or cold air and everything else that you see and hear.

When you are at *school*, pay attention to whatever you do in classrooms, the cafeteria, gym, etc. Don't gossip or chit chat about what you watched on TV or internet last night. When you are at *home*, keep your mind at home by paying attention to everything that you do as well as what happens around you. While you eat, pay attention to your food by tasting every bite of it and also pay attention to your surroundings. Pay attention to the *texture* of the chair you are sitting on.

No thinking about what happened at school today or yesterday or what is up coming, which the busy mind *loves* to do. Be aware of this tendency of your mind to *stay* in the past or *jump* into the future. Each time you see it away from the present moment, gently bring it back to the present moment - the physical surroundings of where your body is.

Just keep your mind where your body is by paying attention to your five senses: **what you see, what you hear, what you touch, what you taste and what you smell**. Also, sometimes pay attention to your **breathing**, which is an act in the present moment.

It does not mean you can't *refer* to the past or future to find out your homework or to schedule a date or organize a get-together with your friends over the weekend. The *key* is not to stay *lost* in the *past* and *future*. Utilize the past and future when you have to and then *switch* your attention back to the *present*.

2. Frequently Ask Yourself These Two Questions:

A. Is it happening now, at this very moment, in reality?

Often the answer will be “NO”. The thoughts in your head often create a picture which looks very real, but in fact is virtual, an illusion in your head. For it to be real, you should be able to sense it with any of your five senses.

B. What is happening at this very moment, in reality? Use your five senses to observe what is happening now, in reality.

3. Beware of Your Acquired Self:

Your busy mind, the Acquired Self is very treacherous and will try to *trick* you into its own virtual world. It will do everything possible to keep you away from the *Now*. It may creep in as a doubting inner voice with excuses like, “Easier said than done,” or “Well, it makes sense, but it’s so hard to do.”

With these types of comments, your Acquired Self is coming up with clever *excuses* for not changing your old habits and that’s how it keeps you *trapped*.

Now use logic and ask yourself, “How hard can it be to be mentally present where you are physically present?” It is so logical and so easy. Initially, your busy mind will keep *pulling* you back into its grip and you will *wander* off into thinking about the past and future and that’s OK. Simply *observe* this activity of the Acquired Self and shift attention to the present moment. That’s all. Stay alert and beware of your Acquired Self’s sneaky, clever and treacherous ways to keep you away from the *Now*.

4. Beware of "What's Next Syndrome."

With few exceptions, everyone is suffering from what we can call, "What's Next Syndrome." Observe yourself and see how frequently you as well as everyone else suffer from this syndrome. In the grip of What's Next, you are *never* in the Now.

This is another clever way that your conditioned mind, your Acquired Self, constantly keeps you away from the *joyful* reality of Now. In addition, "What's Next Syndrome" gives you a *rushed* feeling, which is quite stressful.

Next time you find your Acquired Self asking "What's Next," simply *laugh* at it and ask, "What's Now?" This awareness will put you in the Now right away.

5. Don't Over-commit

When you take too many courses, or get involved in too many social or sports clubs, you have *no* time left to *relax* and be yourself. Obviously, you get stressed out.

All of our *activities* keep us in the grip of the conceptual, virtual world, far away from the reality of Now. For example, when you're in a sports club, you're in the grip of the *concept* of that game and the *concept* of winning and losing and the *concept* of praise and recognition. All of the *learning*, all of the *information and knowledge* and all of the *socialization*, keeps you in the conceptual, virtual world, away from the reality of Now.

Therefore, don't over-commit, which will *spare* you some time to be yourself. Use this spare time to *immerse* yourself in the *bliss* of Now.

Q: “I get so frustrated that I still cannot control my mind. What should I do?”

A: You get *frustrated* because you have set up a **goal** of *controlling* your mind. Whenever you have a goal, you have built-in *expectations*. When you cannot meet those expectations, you get *frustrated*. Setting up goals is an *activity* of the Acquired Self, a habit that you learn as a result of psycho-social conditioning. *If you have no goal, then there is no frustration*. Please don't make “living in the Now and watching your Acquired Self” a goal that you will *achieve*, one day.

Also it is *not* about *controlling your mind*. It is about *paying attention* to your mind *without* condemning it. It is *simply* observing your mind. *Control* of any sort is an activity of your Acquired Self.

You simply keep your mind at the *physical* surroundings of your body and that's all. Often, you will find that your mind has wandered off and that's OK. Simply realize it and bring it back to the present surroundings. Don't judge or condemn yourself. *Judging* is another *trick* your Acquired Self loves to play. It may say, “See, you can't do this. It's so hard. You failed again. You didn't achieve what you were supposed to. You are not good enough. You need special training for this. May be you need to find a teacher, a guru, or attend a workshop.”

Beware of all the tricks your Acquired Self plays. Observe your Acquired Self in action as an inner voice. Just observing it will *free* you of it.

Q: “But Living in The Now May Affect My Abilities, Right?”

A: Yes, indeed, living in the Now affects your abilities, but in a *positive* way. When you pay attention to whatever you are doing, you get *better* at it. Your memory gets sharper. For example, you don't

forget where you placed your phone or keys. You no longer *lose* time or your temper trying to find them. You also *learn* faster and you finish your tasks, such as homework, in *less* time. Actually, you become more *proficient* and more *productive*.

I know I have become a better driver, a better doctor, a better boss, a better husband and a better father.

You may be surprised to find some of your hidden talents. Until a few years ago, I had no idea that I could be a painter, a gardener, a cook, a writer and a poet. These talents simply sprung up after I started “living in the Now.” Instead of *wasting* a lot of time watching TV, reading newspapers and magazines, surfing on the internet and gossiping on the telephone, which I used to do before, I simply keep my mind where my body is. It has freed up a lot of time that I used to waste before. I never feel rushed. I enjoy whatever I am doing in the present moment. Living this way is so full of fun and joy, but it can’t be put into words. You have to experience it for yourself.

Just Do It and Don’t Give Up

Just start living in the Now, right away. Don’t think why, how and when you’ll be comfortable with the idea of living in the Now. These are clever *hindrances* your Acquired Self puts forward in order to keep you in its trap.

When you live in the Now, even for a moment, you are free from the emotional burden of the past and the anxieties of the future. In that moment, you experience inner peace and joy.

As you recall from an earlier chapter, your mind creates the past and future for you and then it lives in it. The more it stays in the past and future, the less it stays in the present. The reverse is also true. The more it stays in the present, the less it stays in the past and the future. The past and future are store houses for all your stress.

Living in the past creates frustrations, anger, bitterness, revenge, grievances, jealousy, worthlessness, shame, and depression and living in the future creates fear, restlessness, insomnia, anxiety and panic attacks. Most people live in the past and the future most of the time and that's why they have so much stress in their life.

When you start living in the Now, you will immediately find relief from stress. A moment later, you might be in the grip of the past and the future and their associated stress... And a few minutes later, you may become aware that you were lost in the past and the future. With this awareness, you are back to the Now. You go back and forth between living in the present and living in the past or the future. As you continue to live this way, you spend more and more time in the Now and less and less time in past and the future.

Q: How can I stop the Chatter in my head?

A: The chatter in your head needs your attention, in order for it to continue. Shift your attention away from the chatter and into the Now. Instantaneously, chatter in your head stops. That's how powerful this simple step is. Think of your attention as the power cord which is crucial for the chatter to continue. You pull the plug out by taking your attention away from the busy mind. That's how you stop the chatter. A moment later, your attention may drift back and spark the chatter again. You simply keep taking your attention away from the chatter and into the Now. Gradually your attention will start to be in the Now, more and more.

Chapter 28

Discover Your Inner Peace and Joy

In the grip of your Acquired Self, you suffer from tons of emotional pains. To find some peace you turn to the Collective Acquired Self of Society, which conveniently teaches you a number of ways to *escape* from your emotional pains. Drugs, alcohol, entertainment, vacations, staying busy, and positive thinking are some of the examples, which provide only temporary relief from emotional pain. Collective Acquired Self of Society also teaches you how to replace your sadness with happiness, replace your boredom with thrill and excitement, replace your hate with love etc. You try hard but you continue to suffer from emotional pains, restlessness and agitation.

In contrast, the true source of *everlasting* inner peace and joy lies inside you. It is always there. You are born with this. However, your Acquired Self eclipses it. Then you try to find it in the domain of the Acquired Self and can never find it, as it lies outside the domain of the Acquired Self.

You can find this everlasting source of inner peace and joy by shifting your attention from your busy mind into the Now.

Meditation

Meditation is a great way to shift your attention away from your busy mind and into the Now. Every day, spare at least 15 minutes in the morning and 15 minutes in the evening to do some meditation. Morning meditation prepares you to start your day with a fresh mind. Evening meditation helps you to wash away all the emotional burdens you may have collected during the day. It also prepares you for a restful sleep.

The Art of Meditation

You can do meditation in a sitting position or a lying down position: whatever is comfortable for you. For most people, sitting in a chair works well. If you are more flexible, then you can sit on a mat in a more traditional lotus or half lotus position with your legs crisscross.

Be in a quiet area away from phones and other noises. No music please. Sit or lay comfortably. Close your eyes.

There are several types of meditation. You can do them together in sequence or separately.

Body Meditation:

Pay attention to your body parts, starting with your feet. Feel the weight, pressure and sensation in your feet. Now move your attention to your legs, knees, thighs and pelvic area. Mentally feel each area for a minute or two. Then move onto the lower back, middle back, and upper back. Stretch your entire back with your imagination. Then focus on your neck and skull. Then bring your attention to face. Soften the muscles and come down to the neck, arms, chest and abdomen, spending few seconds at each area, mentally feeling and softening each area.

Breathing Meditation:

Bring your attention to your breathing. Observe how your chest expands with each inhalation and retracts with each exhalation. Just feel the movement of your chest. Stay focused on the movement of your chest.

No thinking, but just paying attention to your breath and the energy flowing inside your the body. If your mind runs away with some thought, do not get upset. As soon as you realize that your attention was distracted, bring it back to the movement of your chest with each breath. Your chest movement becomes the *anchor* of your attention.

Initially, you will find that your mind is as busy as a bee, but gradually, it starts to calm down. You gradually start to feel a pleasant *spacious* feeling in your chest. You may also see some shapes, usually purple colored, in front of your closed eyes. Don't get involved. Continue to pay attention to your chest movements and *spacious* feeling in your chest. Every now and then you feel intense vibrant sensations running throughout your body.

After a few minutes, pay attention to the *energy* running through your body. Observe how with each inhalation, this energy rises up from the base of your spine to the top of your head. And with each exhalation, it flows down into your chest and abdomen.

Continue to be the observer, paying attention to all that's happening in your body. You may be amazed to discover the *energy*, *joy* and *peace* that you never experienced before.

Walking Meditation:

As you get tired of sitting, get up and start walking. Pay attention to each step. Realize how right arm and left leg move

forward and backward together (and left arm and right leg move forward and backward together). To keep it simple, just pay attention to one set of arm and leg. I use right arm and left leg. Also pay attention to your breathing, the space in which your body is moving forward. You can sense the walls of the corridor moving backward, if you are walking in a corridor, of course.

Meditation All the Time:

Keep your mind where your body is. Then you meditate while carrying on your daily activities. While driving, pay attention to space and every thing in it: electricity poles, traffic, trees, birds, sky, clouds etc. In the parking lot, pay attention to space and everything in it: other cars, lines, concrete, signs etc. In your office, be aware of space and every thing in it: desk, computer, chair, walls, people etc. In the grocery store, be aware of space and everything in it: the aisles, items on the shelf, people, carts, lines, clerks, machines etc. In a restaurant, pay attention to space and everything in it: chair, table, items on the table including your food, walls, other tables and chairs, people etc.

Every now and then also pay attention your breath. Feel how with each inhalation, energy rises from the base of your spine to the top of your spine and then into your head. With each exhalation, energy flows down from your head into your chest and abdomen. You may be sitting alone in a restaurant or driving your car and feeling peaceful, and joyful with this energy flowing up and down your body. It is such a great feeling. Words cannot describe it. You have to experience it yourself.

Imagine next time you are in a traffic jam, or in a line at the airport or grocery store, you will be joyful, and peaceful in your meditative state, in stead of being stressed out. This is the key to stress-free living.

Meditation in Social Setting:

It is relatively easy to stay in the meditative state while you are alone, even if you are in a social setting such eating alone at a restaurant or waiting in a line. But it is quite challenging when you are in company and you have to participate in a conversation. As soon as you engage in conversation, you easily get taken over by your Acquired Self. Then you are not in the Now.

However, you can master the art of paying attention to your surroundings, the space around you, and carry on conversation. It is useful to remember to come to a *full stop* after expressing your opinion and to know that it is your opinion, not the ultimate truth. You don't need to defend it. Every now and then, you will be taken over by your Acquired Self. But soon you will realize it and get out of its grip.

Meditation Can Enlighten You

After few sessions of meditation, you may start to re-experience your past experiences. This time you see them as an observer. You see how your Acquired Self and Acquired Selves of others were at each others throat in those experiences. You do not judge. You just observe.

Then you may have a new realization about your past experiences. For example, in the past, you got upset with your brother, a friend or a parent who let you down. They did not behave in the manner that your Acquired Self wanted. You carry all of that psychological pain with you all time. Imagine over your life time, how many times others, especially the one you had expectations from, let you down and caused emotional pains. Imagine the amount of pain you are carrying.

Can you fully realize that your relatives or friends did not meet the expectations of your Acquired Self? It's your Acquired Self who is hurting and holding on to all the pain and bitterness. Only once you fully realize it, can you let go of it. You will truly be amazed how transforming this experience can be. You feel a huge weight lift of your chest. This is true forgiveness with tremendous healing power.

Compare it to the usual concept of forgiveness: You forgive someone because you're a better person or you must forgive otherwise you will be punished. This actually nourishes your Acquired Self and that's why it has no healing potential.

Section 4
Dealing With Stressful Situations

Chapter 29

How to Deal with Divorced Parents

Teenagers suffer a huge emotional trauma when their parents go through a divorce. Family counseling may help temporarily, but emotional pain continues to *smolder* under the surface and negatively affects teenagers' thoughts, emotions and behavior. Is it possible to get rid of the emotional trauma of a divorce completely, once and for all?

The Root Cause of the Stress Resulting From a Divorce

In order to be free of stress arising out of a divorce, we need to look at the stress itself, at its roots. Who gets stressed out when your parents gets a divorce? It's your Acquired Self, isn't it? Your Acquired Self has sweet *memories* of your childhood, when parents were together... And it *misses* those days. It wishes those days would come back. It wishes parents would patch things up and become a happy family again. When it realizes its wishes are *not* coming true, it feels *sad*. Then, it *blames* its parents for its *sadness* and gets *angry* at them.

It also may experience *unfairness* and may even become *hateful* and *revengeful*. It may *blame* itself for the divorce and fall into the dark hole of *guilt*. At times, it also starts to take sides with one parent versus the other. It can even become

manipulative and take *advantage* of the emotional fight between its divorcing parents.

Sooner or later, your parents start dating others. Now, you have to put up with their "significant other," who may have their own children who you also have to put up with. Your Acquired Self feels *jealous* and builds all sorts of walls of emotional resistance. In a way, you want to get even with your divorced parent by playing *tough* and *unyielding*. Obviously, you also *compare* these significant others to your own mother or father. Often, they don't come even close. Sometime, the significant other tries hard to *win* you over, but behaves in a very *childish* way, which you don't like. At times, they may even want to *discipline* you, which you *hate*.

Freedom from Stress from Divorced Parents

The moment you can clearly see that it is your Acquired Self who creates stress for you, you are free of it at that moment. You can be free of emotional thinking. Instead, you start to think logically. Emotional thinking is very illogical and happens when you are in the total grip of your Acquired Self.

Use logic and see for yourself the *drama* of divorce your parents are going through. See for yourself that it is two Acquired Selves *engaged* in a fight: verbal, emotional and often financial as well. See how each one is in the grip of their *self-righteousness*. Each one feels like a *victim* and *blames* the other for their *emotional* sufferings. Then, *actions* arise out of their Acquired Selves and these actions are *selfish*, *hurtful* and even *revengeful*. Often, these actions don't even make any sense.

Interestingly, each parent wants custody of you and often fights over it, as if you were some kind of possession. Actually,

they do it for a variety of reasons. Often, it is a combination of *responsibility*, *guilt* and *emotional attachment* to you.

Once you are free of your own Acquired Self, you *neither* love them *nor* hate them for what they are doing. It's their life and they're making a *mess* out of it due to their *imprisonment* in their own Acquired Selves. It is really no one's fault. They are both acting under the influence of their Acquired Selves, that's all! It also shows you how so called *love* can readily change into *hate* in the conceptual world.

If you could be free of your own Acquired Self, you'll easily stay *focused* at school, have *fun* with your friends and won't get in the middle of a messy divorce. You'll see the fact that two Acquired Selves can't stand each other and that's why they are getting divorced. Obviously, it is *not* your fault. That's how the *fire* of your guilt will *die* out.

Once you are free of your Acquired Self, you won't get stuck in *thoughts* of the *past* or *worries* about the future. No more wishing for your parents to get together again. This is how your *sadness* simply evaporates. You will also realize your parents did not divorce in order to hurt you. They are simply *mad* at each other, that's all! There is nothing you can do about it. You should stay clear of their *insanity* or it can easily *infect* you.

Keep *shifting* your *attention* from your thoughts to the Now, the Reality in front of your eyes. Beware of the conceptual Now that your Acquired Self may skillfully create. In the conceptual Now, your parents are going through a divorce, but in the Real Now, you see what is in front of you, without any concepts. In the Real Now, you see each one of your parents as a *life form*, just like yourself as well as every other life form on the planet. You can clearly see how each one of us is connected through *life* and this *connectedness* is above and beyond any divorce.

Chapter 30

How to Deal with Addictions

Addiction affects most of us to a more or less degree. It is only when it becomes *excessive* and *undesirable* that we as a society calls it an addiction. Addictions can take various forms: excessive internet use, excessive TV watching, excessive video games, compulsive eating, smoking, excessive work, excessive golfing, excessive vacationing, excessive partying, excessive alcohol, excessive gambling, excessive illegal drugs, etc.

It's interesting to note that the Society Monster has *singled* out certain excessive behaviors as *addictions* and others as *accomplishments*. For example, a CEO seeking *pleasure* in making more and more money and not spending time with his wife and children is called an *accomplished, honorable* person. He may have an affair which leads to divorce and huge emotional pain for his family, but he is still an accomplished person. On the other hand, a person seeking *pleasure* in drugs is considered a *failure* and a *bad* person. If you think logically, they are both addicted, one to *money* and other to *drugs*.

The Root Cause of Addiction

If you want to be rid of any addiction, first you need to find out the root cause of your addiction, don't you?

In most cases, *competition, comparison, judging and guilt* are at the root of addictions.

In the game of *competition*, you either win or lose. If you win, you get *momentary thrill, excitement and pleasure*. What happens if you lose in a competition? It leads to emotions of *unworthiness and sadness*. At times, it also causes a sense of *unfairness, self-pity, bitterness, anger and jealousy*. You also want to win next time. You want to take *revenge and humiliate the other person, party or team*, etc.

Comparison always makes “someone better” or “someone worse.” Judging is based on the concepts downloaded into your Acquired Self, such as the concepts of beautiful and ugly, intelligent and stupid, good and bad, knowledgeable and ignorant, right or wrong, rich and poor, etc.

Now, what happens when you’re told that you are “better than” or you are “the best” or “the most beautiful?” Obviously, you feel praised, validated and special. You want more of these compliments.

What happens when you are told that you are “worse than” or “the worst” or even “dumb and stupid?” Obviously, you feel worthless, humiliated and sad. You definitely do not want to hear those kinds of comments!

Judging also gives rise to “*guilt*.” The root cause of guilt is self-criticism, which is the result of the “software” of *values, traditions, morality and ethics* downloaded into your Acquired Self, all of which are concepts created by your society. You judge yourself (and everyone else) through the filters of these concepts. What happens if on some occasion, or in a certain situations, you can’t live up to these concepts? Obviously, you feel *guilty* for the rest of your life.

In life, we sometimes *win* and at other times *lose*. Sometimes, we are *praised* and at other times *criticized*. Sometimes, we can *live up* to the standards and expectations and at other times, we *fail*. In

this way, we accumulate a huge pile of emotional burden through the game of competition, comparison and judging as we grow from childhood to adult life.

Victories, accomplishments, praises and validations bring momentary “thrill and excitement” to your Acquired Self... *And it wants more of it.* It becomes *addicted* to moments of thrill and excitement. The pursuit of *more* makes you greedy and you are never satisfied. It may be greed for money, power, success, fame etc. Therefore, you live in a psychological state of *dissatisfaction*, *agitation* and *nervousness* even when you are winning. Consequently, you may seek out **more** and **more** momentary thrills and excitement through recreational drugs, alcohol, gambling, prostitutes, pornography, excessive vacationing, etc.

On the other hand, your Acquired Self also holds on to the psychological pain of humiliation, worthlessness, unfairness and guilt. Your Acquired Self holds onto your experiences of the past as if they are happening right now. This keeps the *fire* of emotional pain burning. As this pain becomes *intolerable*, you seek *pleasure* by **running away** from it. You seek **escapes**, by trying alcohol, recreational drugs, excessive internet and TV, over indulging in your favorite foods, excessive work, watching pornography, chain smoking, etc. However, this pleasure is *short lived* and soon you are back to your usual state of sadness, unworthiness, jealousy or guilt. Then, you run back to seek **more** pleasure. The more pain you have, the more you are going to seek pleasure. This obviously leads to *addiction*.

Running away from emotional pain to find some peace and/or seeking momentary thrill, excitement and pleasure is the basis of addiction.

It is interesting to note that some addictive behaviors are conveniently *ignored* by society and not called addictions. For

example, in order to run away from the pain of negative comments and search for pleasurable positive compliments, you may stumble into an area that you are good at. Let's say you are made fun of because of your looks, but you are good at mathematics. There, you receive praise and validation. In order to earn *more* and *more* praise, you work hard on your education and end up achieving a lot. In a strange way, the negative comments become your *driving* force to be *successful*. In fact, you become *addicted* to your work, although society does not call it addiction. In fact, it validates you as an accomplished, hardworking, successful person.

The outwardly manifestations of addictive behavior vary from person to person. Addiction to alcohol, drugs, food, work, sex, gambling, partying, vacationing, pornography and smoking are some of the manifestations. The consequences can be horrendous and obviously, cause huge stress for you and those around you.

When this monster of addiction acts out through you, you lose all control. Intellectually, you know that excessive food, cigarettes, alcohol, drugs, sex, etc. are damaging and you should not indulge in them, but you feel *helpless* in front of this Monster. It's as if you have been enslaved by this Monster. You feel this *helplessness* inside you, which causes further emotional pain, which makes you want to escape more and the vicious cycle of addiction continues.

Often, you try to keep your addiction to yourself and hide it from others. Why? Because there is a *stigma* of failure and bad behavior attached to it. You feel *ashamed* of yourself. So you continue to suffer in isolation. You realize no one really understands your pain. *Shame* and *Loneliness* get added to the *heap* of your emotional pain.

Sometime you get courage and consult your doctor for help, who conveniently prescribes an anti-anxiety or an anti-depression drug. These medicines provide you with another *escape* and often

people get addicted to them. These medicines often have serious side-effects as well.

However, the root cause of addiction - *competition, comparison, judging and guilt* remains undiagnosed and untreated. Besides, how can it be diagnosed when doctors and drug companies also suffer from the same illness of competition, comparison and judging?

Everyone around you is in the same boat. That's why you believe this is how life is. You see competition, comparison, judging and guilt at the root of the problem, but you *presume* this is human nature. "Everyone is doing it, so it must be human nature" you convince yourself. The Society Monster validates your conclusion.

Some people *suppress* their emotions so deep that on the surface, they feel fine. Usually, they don't even see their addictive behavior as an addiction. For example, a person may not see his excessive working, cigarette smoking, excessive partying, alcohol consumption or vacationing as a problem, although people around him can clearly see the problem.

True Freedom from Addictions

What happens when you get an insight into the root cause of your addictions? The moment you realize that you were *not* born with these addictions and these addictions are the result of your psychosocial conditioning, your Acquired Self, the monster within, you can be *free* from the tight grip of your addictions.

Once you realize that the game of competition, comparison, judging and the "software" of morality, ethics, traditions and values are created by society, the collective human mind, you start to see the true face of these concepts. You realize these concepts are part of the "nature of the Acquired Self," but *not* the True self. You realize

these concepts are part of the conceptual world, *not* true human nature.

You see True human nature in newborns. When you observe newborns, you see *no competition or comparison, no judging, no morality, ethics, values or traditions.*

You realize that goals, achievements, failures, fairness, criticism, morality, ethics and obligations, are all concepts drilled into your Acquired Self by the Society Monster. Thrill, excitement, unworthiness, sadness, bitterness, jealousy, guilt, loneliness and shame are consequences of these concepts, nothing more! These *emotions* become part of your Acquired Self. As long as you are in the grip of your Acquired Self, you will continue to hold on to them, no matter, how destructive these emotions are.

You were *not* born with any of these concepts or emotions. This *logical insight* is the beginning of your breaking away from addictions.

Each time you have the urge to run for your escape in order to seek pleasure, to kill your sadness, jitteriness, emptiness, guilt, shame, loneliness or boredom, **pause**. Shift your attention to the Now: what you see, hear, smell, taste and touch. Once your emotion has calmed down, use *logic* and realize it is your Acquired Self *luring* you into these escapes. With this wisdom, you will be able to rise *above* the urge to escape and addiction will loosen its grip on you.

Each time you are free from your Acquired Self, you will feel true peace and joy - your True Self, which is always there inside you, but gets eclipsed by the Acquired Self. The more you stay in touch with your True Self, the less often you will fall into the *trap* of addictions.

Alertness and awareness about the *sneaky* nature of your Acquired Self is extremely important. It is not *discipline*, but simple *awareness* about your Acquired Self, the Monster within.

Discipline makes you feel like you are trying to control your addictions. Sooner or later, it *fails* or you are *afraid* of it failing or it may surface as another addiction. On the other hand, simple *awareness* of the root cause of addictions will *free* you from addictions with a sense of release and Aahhh!

Wake up and Realize the World is Conceptual

As we observed earlier in the book, the human world is conceptual, virtual. Money, beauty, success, fame, glamour, failure, colleges, universities, friendship, animosity, history, religious and political organizations are all concepts. Trophies, medals, and TV interviews are all conceptual. They enhance your ego, which itself is virtual. Even the diplomas, certificates and degrees are conceptual. They do have some functionality in the conceptual world, as they can help you find a job to make a living, that's all. It still does *not* make them real.

Thoughts arise out of concepts and trigger emotions, which you feel. In this way, emotions are real, but concepts where they originate are obviously concepts, not real. Now you understand the root cause of all of your emotional stress is the conceptual world, in your head as your Acquired Self as well as the collective human world out there.

Once you realize we all live in a conceptual, virtual world, you are free of its tight rope around your neck. Then you live a simple life, not as a compulsion but as a choice. With that a lot of emotional drama dies out. For example, once you realize accomplishments, trophies and medals are all conceptual, virtual, you automatically stop to chase them. Once you know the ego is virtual, you are free of

the compulsion to make more and more money to enhance your ego. Then you make money to take care of your basic necessities - food, shelter, clothes, transportation etc and that's all. Once you realize sex in Nature (the Real World) is to reproduce, but in the conceptual human world, it has become a tool to have fun, a means to enhance ego and an escape from emotional pains. With this understanding the addiction to sex, pornography and sex parties simply dissolves.

Discover the True Fountain of Joy and Inner Peace

As we observed earlier, running away from emotional pain to find some peace and/or seeking momentary thrill, excitement and pleasure is the basis of addiction. Did you know the true source of everlasting peace and joy lies inside you? It does not cost a penny, is perfectly legal and has no side-effects. You simply need to tap into it. The joy and peace you experience is of a much higher quality. There is no hang over or crashing down or jitteriness. It does not impair your ability to function. Please refer to chapter 28 to learn how to discover this true fountain of joy and peace inside you.

Chapter 31

How to Deal with Worrying - Anxiety - Phobias

Most people worry about *this* or *that*. They always find something to worry about. Worrying can lead to anxiety, which can lead to insomnia and panic attacks. Phobias are a manifestation of deep-seated anxiety.

Why do you worry? If you want to be free of anxiety, you *first* need to find out its root cause. What is the root cause of worrying? It is fear, right? What is fear? It is an unpleasant emotion, isn't it? In its mild form, it manifests itself as a sense of *uneasiness* and *nervousness*. In its moderate form, it manifests as *insomnia* and *anxiety* and in its severe form, it manifests as *panic attacks* and *phobias*. With few exceptions, everyone suffers from one or more of the various manifestations of fear.

Most people aren't even aware of the connection between fear and their uneasiness, nervousness, insomnia, anxiety, panic attacks and phobias.

Fear comes in many forms. Some examples:

1. Fear of the Future

You may be afraid something *bad* may happen in the *future*, based upon your *past* experience or the experience of others that you have heard about through chatting, the news media, internet, books or knowledge of history. You *do not* want it to happen to you ever, because it was (or could be) so painful. The mere thought that it may happen *triggers* a wave of fear and anxiety in you. This leads to "What If Syndrome" or "What May Syndrome" or "What Will I Do Syndrome."

Here are some examples:

- What if I lose my girlfriend/boyfriend?
- What if I lose my husband?
- What if I don't get good grades?
- What if I lose my looks/health?
- What if I lose my job?
- What if I miss my flight?
- What if people make fun of me again?
- What if I get stuck in the elevator?
- What if my boyfriend/girlfriend cheats on me?
- What if I have another attack of asthma, colitis or a migraine headache?
- What if Wall Street takes a nose-dive again?
- What if I get stung by a bee again?
- What if I miss my important meeting?
- What if I develop diabetes and die a miserable death like my mother?
- What happens if global warming continues?
- What happens if some bad people come into power?
- What if there is a severe shortage of my thyroid medication, insulin or water supply?
- What will I do if I run out of my retirement money?

- What will I do if my mother/father/children are not around any more?
- What will I do if someone breaks into my house in the middle of the night?
- What will I do if I have no money, no insurance, no friends?
- What will I do if someone tries to rob me or rape me?

2. Fear of Losing

Often, you are afraid to lose what you have. For example:

- Fear of losing your job, business, money, stocks, retirement.
- Fear of losing your spouse, parents, children, siblings, friends, pets.
- Fear of losing your looks.
- Fear of losing your house, car, jewelry, photo-albums.
- Fear of losing your respect, credibility, position, reputation.
- Fear of losing your professional license.
- Fear of losing your power.
- Fear of losing your composure, self-control.
- Fear of losing your No. 1 spot.
- Fear of losing your health.
- Fear of losing your independent living.
- Fear of losing your life.
- Fear of losing your religion, culture, country.
- Fear of losing elections.
- Fear of losing planet earth.

3. Fear of Failure

You may be afraid you won't be able to live up to expectations. For example:

- Fear of failing as a good mother/ father.
- Fear of failing as a good child.
- Fear of failing as a good brother/ sister.
- Fear of failing as a good friend.
- Fear of failing as a good teacher/ student.
- Fear of failing as a good boss /employee.
- Fear of failing as a good doctor, teacher, lawyer, etc.
- Fear of failing as a good guru, enlightened person, yoga instructor.
- Fear of failing as a good driver, pilot or captain of the boat.
- Fear of failing as a patriot, soldier or general.
- Fear of failing as a good citizen, journalist, moral person.
- Fear of failing as a good social, religious or political leader.
- Fear of failing as a nice person, who keeps his/her appointment, commitments, promises, wedding vows.

4. Fear of Social Situations

You may be fearful of humiliation and criticism. For example:

- Fear of rejection, social outcast.
- Fear of embarrassment.
- Fear of shame.
- Fear of insults.
- Fear of being late.
- Fear of premature ejaculation, sexual performance or impotence.

5. Fear of Punishment And Sufferings

Fear also arises when you are afraid of punishment and painful sufferings. For example:

- Fear of being caught: cheating, bribing, stealing, swindling, having sex, being nude, watching pornography, masturbating, living as an illegal immigrant, driving without a license, practicing without a license.
- Fear of monetary penalty.
- Fear of social boycott.
- Fear of imprisonment.
- Fear of torture.
- Fear of deportation, poverty and its associated sufferings.
- Fear of sufferings from disease and disability.

6. Fear of Lack Of Control/Vulnerability

You may be afraid of being vulnerable. Here are some examples:

- Fear of the unknown.
- Fear of the outcome.
- Fear of unpreparedness.
- Fear of lack of knowledge.

If you pay attention, you realize that there are *two* essential components in the *thought process* that creates fear.

1. "I"
2. A hypothetical situation, which "I" perceives as a bad, threat, undesirable, unpleasant or painful.

"I"

Let's take a closer look at the "I." It's the core of your Acquired Self, isn't it? This "I" is very insecure. Why? Because it is virtual. In real, it does not even exist. In seeking virtual security, this virtual "I" *judges* every experience to be good or bad, according to the information and concepts it has acquired as a part of growing up in a society. The experiences could be its own experiences or experiences of the others in the form of stories and opinions in newspaper, books, magazines, TV or internet. Judging triggers emotion - good or bad emotion - based on how the experience is judged. Then the virtual "I" preserve the good or bad experience as a memory where it stays *alive*, even years later. Over a period of time, your Acquired Self stores an incredible amount of memories - good as well as bad.

Experiences which are labeled good, your virtual "I" wants *more* of and the ones labeled bad, it wants to *run* away from. This is the basis of psychological *attachment* and *avoidance*.

Hypothetical Situations

Your Acquired Self, the virtual "I" gets very *attached* to good experiences such as praise and validation as a result of fame, success, victories, money, looks, family, friends, possessions, job, position and power. It wants more and more of these experiences. It does not want to ever lose them. *Even the idea of losing them creates fear.*

Your Acquired Self, the virtual "I" does not *ever* want to *lose* anything or anyone that is "Mine." Losing what is "Mine" is a threat to the Virtual "I." The mere thought of losing what is "Mine" triggers a lot of fear.

The more possessions you have as “Mine,” the more you fear losing them and the more you try to protect them. You may end up living in a gated community to protect your belongings. You may become a frequent visitor to a plastic surgeon to preserve your looks. Then one day, you may notice you’re losing your hair which may push a *panic* button. In my practice, I have had patients wanting to be seen on an urgent basis because they noticed clumps of hair falling out during their morning shower. They act like it’s the end of the world.

In addition, your Acquired Self, the virtual "I" wants to *avoid* bad experiences such as failure, punishment, loneliness, humiliation, poverty and disease at all costs. *Even the thought of such unpleasant experiences triggers intense fear.*

Your Acquired Self, the virtual "I" wants to learn from its past - the stored bad memories. What does it learn? "It must never happen to me again." But then comes another thought: "What If " or "What May" or "What Will I Do," which triggers huge amount of fear.

In summary, your Acquired Self, the virtual "I" reacts to “hypothetical situations” that it creates itself. Pretty crazy, isn’t it? In reality, those situations don’t exist at all. It creates a threatening, undesirable, bad hypothetical situation and then tries to solve it. In other words, your virtual "I" is so *insecure* and *afraid* of its own death that it creates all kinds of dreadful case scenarios to *figure out* how it can *escape* its death in every possible way. In doing so, it creates tons of *unnecessary* fear for you.

Isn't Fear Good for Us?

There is a myth that *“it’s natural to have fear. It may even be good for us. It helps us to survive.”*

From the perspective of your Acquired Self, it is a perfect statement. Since a majority of people are in the grip of their Acquired Self, this kind of statement seems quite reasonable to them.

What happens when you're faced with a threat? Let's say you're walking through a forest and suddenly, you're face to face with a bear. You take immediate action *without* thinking. There is *no* time for thinking. Instantaneously, either you *fight* or *run* away. The *intelligence* residing in your body takes over. It *prepares* you instantaneously by releasing a large amount of *adrenaline* into your blood stream, which raises your heart rate, blood pressure and blood glucose, preparing you to deal with the *threat* immediately. You are physically primed to fight or run away. This is the so called *Fight or Flight* response, which happens *instantaneously* once you are faced with a real threat. With your immediate action, you either survive or die. So far there is no fear. Let's presume you survive the situation. A few moments later, your Acquired Self is in full action and analyzes the situation. "What could have happened?" *I could have died or lost a leg or be limping for the rest of my life.* "If I died, what would happen to my wife and kids?" Now intense fear sets in.

At the time of the real threat, there was no fear, but later, thinking about it creates fear. It's the *action* at the time of the threatening situation *without* any thinking that saved your life. So, it is *not* fear, but your spontaneous *action* to a situation that is *natural*, may save your life and help you to survive.

Fear Actually Harms Your Body

Your conditioned mind's *interpretation and the triggered emotional reaction* to the entire experience of facing the bear, gets stored in your memory box and is added to your Acquired Self, as "My" experience.

Let's say a month later you're telling your story to a friend. It is basically your *memory box* repeating the event stored in it. Even though there is no bear in front of you, your conditioned mind sees a bear and *warns* your body of this immediate threat." Obviously, there is a big *difference* between the real bear and the virtual bear. However, your body cannot tell the difference between a real threat and a virtual threat. It relies on your mind to do so. So if your mind sees threat, so does your body. Therefore, your body responds to this virtual threat the same way as it did to the real threat: by releasing adrenaline. Your heart starts pounding, blood pressure rises and blood glucose rises. In addition, you also think, "What might have happened?" and this thought creates a lot of fear. Of course, your friends also join in to add more thoughts to "what could have happened." They may tell you about another similar incident on TV or in the newspaper. From these collective thoughts, you all build up a *cloud* of fear.

The net result: you have the unpleasant sensation of fear and you have physical symptoms of heart pounding and a rise in blood pressure and blood sugar.

Here is another big difference: Since you can neither *fight* nor *flee* this virtual situation, your body continues to release adrenaline as long as your memory (part of your Acquired Self) and the stories of your friends continue to generate a virtual threat. You will continue to experience fear and its damaging effects on the body as long as you have fearful thoughts. There is no *resolution* of the virtual situation.

After *tormenting* you for a while, your Acquired Self settles down, ready to be *awakened* each time you talk or think about your deadly experience... And each time ,it causes damage to your body.

For example, a year later you read a story on the internet about a father who was killed by a bear and the difficulties his wife

and kids had to face. Suddenly, you get a *flash* of your own experience. You get sucked up in the *tornado* of your fearful thoughts and end up losing sleep.

Fear Causes Chemical Changes in Your Brain

Since your early childhood, your Acquired Self continues to accumulate fearful stories from stories, history lessons and movies. It also tightly holds on to its own fearful experiences and everyday adds more and more fearful experiences of itself and others. In this way, it builds up an ever increasing “tower of fear.”

Over a period of time, the *neuronal* network of fear gets well established in your brain. Then reading, watching or listening to fearful news can trigger this well established network and result in a huge amount of fear, which causes *chemical changes* in your brain.

In the *milieu* of these chemical changes, all of the old fearful experiences become alive, which feed in more fearful thoughts, which leads to more production of fear, more chemical changes and subsequently, more fearful thoughts. Thus, a vicious cycle sets in and you get *consumed* by *fear* and *fearful thoughts*, both reinforcing each other. This is what I call the *tornado of fear*. It *sucks* up all of your attention. The results? Insomnia, anxiety, panic attacks and phobias.

Fear Causes Insomnia

Normally, the human mind and body function in a harmony that sets up your *biologic* clock. At the crack of *dawn*, there is a *surge* in a number of hormones, such as cortisol, growth hormone and adrenaline, all which act to increase your vigor, blood glucose and blood pressure. In other words, your mind prepares your body to go and do physical work, as our ancestors did for thousands and thousands of years.

As the day advances, these hormones, especially cortisol goes down. After sunset, cortisol is at very low level. With these hormonal changes, we feel tired and go to bed for a restful sleep. This is what we endocrinologists call our *diurnal rhythm*. In layman's terms, it is our *biological clock*.

Our modern lifestyle is obviously in *conflict* with our biological clock. Most people don't wake up at the crack of dawn and don't go to bed hours after sunset. In the evening hours, most people watch TV or surf the internet. Most of this "entertainment" activity is centered around fear, sensationalism and excitement, which results in a surge of adrenaline and cortisol. This obviously results in a *wound up* mind that does *not* want to shut up: The end result? Insomnia.

Fear Causes a Constant State of Unease and Nervousness

In addition to neuro-chemical changes in the brain, fear also causes the release of certain chemicals in your body, mainly *adrenaline* and *cortisol* from your adrenal glands.

Your body responds to the *constant* bombardment of fearful thoughts, by causing a release of an excess of adrenaline and cortisol. Consequently, many people get in a *constant* state of *unease, nervousness, hyperactivity, restlessness* and *agitation*. This is also commonly known as *nervous energy*, which can help you to accomplish a lot of tasks. Often, these people can't sit still more than a few minutes. They have to keep moving, keep doing, one thing after another. Sometimes, they are not even fully aware of their movements and actions. In general, they become good workers. Employers love them, but at the end of the day, they are totally *exhausted*. Then, they look for different ways to *boost up* their energy, all of which have their own negative side-effects.

Fear Causes Adrenal Fatigue

Over a period of time, your adrenal glands cannot produce excess cortisol and adrenaline. Also your body may get "used to" to the action of these hormones. Then, you feel *exhausted* all the time. Even *energy boosters* don't work any more. There is even a name for this condition: Adrenal Fatigue.

For help, you see your doctor, who runs a bunch of usual tests and tells you "it's all in your head." This kind of explanation simply *infuriates* you. So you decide to take matters in your own hands and investigate it yourself. You go on the internet (or buy a book) and read about "adrenal fatigue." These websites and books *usually sell* you something, often some *adrenal* concoction from animals' adrenal glands. Now, you are basically on *steroids*, which do give you some energy as long as you take them, but it is a band-aid approach. Sooner or later, you start to experience the terrible side-effects of steroids. Now, you are really in a big mess. Amazingly, the root cause of the adrenal fatigue, your Acquired Self, remains undiagnosed. Why? Because those diagnosing and treating adrenal fatigue are themselves in the grip of their own Acquired Self. That's how Acquired Self thrives: by *hiding*.

Fear Causes Anxiety and Panic Attacks

Excess adrenaline causes symptoms of restlessness, agitation, insomnia, sweaty palms and palpitations. We label these symptoms as *Anxiety Disorder*.

If your root cause of anxiety remains untreated, as is often the case, you start to develop even more severe and dramatic symptoms such as chest tightness, air hunger, heart pounding, lump in the throat, excess perspiration, cold sweaty palms and feeling of passing out. These symptoms, we label as *Panic Attacks*.

As you can see, the symptoms of Panic Attacks are identical to the symptoms of an actual heart attack and some other life-threatening medical conditions such as congestive heart failure or a clot in the lungs. Ironically, knowledge of these serious medical conditions actually *frightens* you even more and worsens your Panic Attacks. Obviously, many patients with Panic Attacks end up in the emergency rooms.

Fear Causes Phobias

Your Acquired Self also thinks like this: *“I must never face this kind of dangerous situation again. What can I do to prevent it from happening again?”*

For example, if you had a bad experience in the wilderness, your Acquired Self may say, *“Well, I’ll stop going camping and avoid going into the wild.”* It leads to “avoidance behavior.” Sometimes, it may *not* even be your own experience. If you hear about a terrible plane crash, your Acquired Self may decide *Not* to take a trip by airplane any more.

Another example: As a child, if your parents tell you about someone who died of a *Bee sting*, you may become fearful of bees and start to avoid the park that you previously used to love to visit. Even worse, if you happened to be stung by a bee and your parents create a huge drama (even though nothing really happened to you), you will likely develop a phobia for insects.

Now don’t take me wrong. Your parents take all of these measures out of their love for you, so *nothing bad will ever happen to you*. Just the thought of *“what could have happened to you”* with a bee sting creates a lot of anxiety for your parents.

Often, these traumatic, threatening experiences get pushed into your *subconscious* or even *unconscious* part of your

psychological mind. Then, on the surface, everything is fine, but you want to stay in *total* control. Certain situations where you don't have full control, such a crowd, an elevator or an airplane gives rise to intense anxiety and even a panic attack. Then, you start to avoid crowds, known as agoraphobia or closed spaces, known as claustrophobia).

Fear Can Express as Anger and Hate

You had a bad experience and your conditioned mind does not want it to ever happen again. Therefore, it wants to stay in control all the time. Even the thought of losing control creates a huge amount of fear. Your Acquired Self wants security at all costs.

It may go an extra step to pursue *security* for itself and its loved ones: For example, after the "bear incident" you may start to think, "Maybe I should also *protect* other humans from these nasty creatures called bears. I should join a group that kills bears and similar beasts, which are a danger to my fellow human beings."

In addition to fear, you have now also developed a *hate* towards wild beasts. You may express this hate verbally, by writing or even physically. *This is how deep seated fear expresses itself as anger, rage and hate.*

Now, imagine you meet a person or a group who due to their Acquired Self, *loves* wild beasts and wants to protect them, even by spending taxpayer (including your) dollars. You start hating these kinds of people and groups. You may even join a group or a party that collectively hates wild beasts and the wild-beast lovers. Now, you have a *mission* in life. Each time you watch a program on TV in which so called experts talk about saving wild beasts, your blood starts boiling. You may even call the TV station and if possible, express your point of view. You may even be invited to one of these

TV shows. You proudly tell your story and argue with the other expert who tells his story and opposes point of view.

Your conditioned mind says “All these people who support my enemy, the wild animals, are also my enemy.” Each time that you have a flash back to your frightful experience as you talk or think about it, your body prepares to fight or flee by producing increased amounts of adrenaline.

Fear Causes Autoimmune Diseases

While there are many reasons for the dysfunction of the immune system, fear wreaks *havoc* on *the immune system* and therefore, plays a major role in the development of autoimmune diseases.

In an autoimmune disease, your immune system goes *haywire*. It starts to attack and kill your own cells as if they are harmful *aliens* and therefore, must be destroyed. But why does the immune system *go crazy*?

Normally your immune system is there to protect you against *harmful germs* such as viruses and bacteria. Let me clarify one point. Not all germs are harmful. Actually, many of them are very *beneficial* for us, such as lactobacilli, which are important for the health of our intestines.

In response to invading *harmful germs*, the immune system gets *activated* and *recruits* an *army* of immune cells, which mounts an *attack* against the *army* of the invading germs. If you *survive* the infection, your army of activated soldiers is *withdrawn* from the battlefield and sent back to the barracks. No more *actual* threat and no more need for the *activated* soldiers.

Now, what happens when a person is fearful due to *hypothetical, virtual* situations, such as the "What if Syndrome?" The immune system perceives this virtual threat as to be an actual threat, because it simply responds to what your mind tells it. If your mind thinks there is a threat, your immune system recruits an army of activated soldiers. These *charged up* soldiers obviously cannot find an enemy. So instead, they start to attack and kill your body's own cells. This is how your immune system turns against your own body and gives rise to an autoimmune disease.

Some examples of autoimmune diseases:

- Asthma
- Eczema
- Lactose Intolerance
- Celiac Disease, also known as Gluten sensitivity.
- Crohns' Disease, Ulcerative Colitis, Irritable Bowel Syndrome
- Type 1 Diabetes
- Peptic Ulcer Disease
- Vitamin B12 Deficiency and Pernicious Anemia
- Multiple Sclerosis (M.S.)
- Chronic Rheumatologic Conditions (such as Rheumatoid Arthritis, Fibromyalgia, Systemic Lupus Erythematosus, commonly known as Lupus and Ankylosing Spondylitis).
- Autoimmune Thyroid Disease, which can either cause you to have *low* level of thyroid hormone (Hashimoto's Thyroiditis) or a *high* level of thyroid hormone (Graves' Disease).

As an endocrinologist, I see a lot of patients with autoimmune Type 1 Diabetes and autoimmune Thyroid Diseases such as Over-active Thyroid (Graves' Disease) and Under-active Thyroid

(Hashimoto's Thyroiditis). These patients often also have other autoimmune diseases listed above.

In these patients, I consistently find a high level of stress, usually a Type A personality (overachiever) and a lot of anxiety and fear. In addition, these patients are also low in Vitamin D.

I vividly remember one particular case: A young female came to see me for an Over-active Thyroid (Graves' disease). She was accompanied by her husband. During my first encounter, I found that her husband answered all of my questions. I didn't make much of it and thought that she was probably a shy person. I started her on a drug to treat Graves' disease.

A month later, on the second appointment, she was accompanied not only by her husband, but her five children. Her husband introduced each child, one by one. When he uttered their name, each child would stand up, step forward, say their name and sit down (only after being told to do so). Somehow, it reminded of the movie, "The Sound of Music" when the Von Trapp children introduce themselves with an almost military precision. Anyway, I thought this family was a bit odd, but didn't think much beyond that. I refilled the patient's medicine and advised her to see me again in two months with a repeat blood test. I did stress that the drug she was taking can cause serious side-effects, so close monitoring was advised.

Unfortunately, she did not show up for her next appointment. I got concerned and tried to contact her by telephone and letters, but to no avail. I kept thinking that without the medicine, she would develop severe symptoms of overactive thyroid and end up in the emergency room at the hospital.

Finally, one day she showed up in my office after about a year, all by herself. During this visit, she couldn't stop talking. She was fluent in English and not shy at all.

She started by saying that her husband had passed away. "How do you feel?" I asked. "Oh! I'm feeling just fine. I haven't taken the medicine you prescribed for nine months, but I feel no symptoms of over-active thyroid." Then, she also explained that her husband was extremely suspicious of her, kept her inside the house and was a control freak. She had been very afraid of him. She said her life was a "living hell on earth."

I went ahead and ordered a blood test to check her thyroid hormone level which, to my utter astonishment, turned out to be perfectly normal. To put things in perspective, Graves' disease usually requires treatment with drugs for about two years or an ablation with radioactive iodine. It does not subside by itself in a matter of months. It is unheard of... And yet, that is what happened when the fear in her life disappeared. This case clearly illustrates the power of fear in causing Graves' disease, an autoimmune disorder.

Fear Can Be Addictive

An adrenaline rush also gives you a feeling of *excitement*, but then this feeling goes away. Of course, you want *more* excitement, so you look for fear. Plenty of fear is available in the form of sensational news. You also get fear by repeatedly talking to yourself or someone else about your bad experiences.

Your *Monster of Fear* also wants to infect others. So, in your social encounters, you love to talk about sensational, fearful stories. Other peoples' monsters readily jump in and validate your stories with their own stories. Soon, you and your friends are sitting in a *cloud of fear* and loving it.

Next time, watch people talking at workplaces or at parties. Notice how everyone joins in as soon as someone tells a fearful story. Everyone loves to talk about fearful stories. Sometimes, people watch scary movies to feed their appetite for fear.

Most people are *addicted* to fear. It is no surprise that we are facing an epidemic of autoimmune diseases.

In summary, fear is the underlying cause of psychological symptoms of uneasiness, jitteriness, restlessness, insomnia, anxiety, panic attacks, phobias, hate, anger, adrenal fatigue as well as autoimmune diseases.

Freedom From Fear

Only if people knew that fear is a product of their own conditioned mind. Then, they would realize that true freedom from fear lies in freedom from their own conditioned mind, their Acquired Self. Since the problem lies inside you, so does the solution. You do not need any outside help.

As we observed earlier, fear primarily arises from attachments of the "I" and "fearful hypothetical situations."

Follow this **5-step** approach to free your self from fear.

1. Freedom from Attachments

Once you clearly see the conceptual, virtual nature of "I, Me, Mine, Mine" you are **free** of it. With that you are not *attached* to your possessions, looks, job, etc. You realize these are parts of the conceptual, virtual world and that's all. They are simply *tools* to function in society, but Not you. Freedom from "I, Me, My, Mine" *automatically* leads to freedom from its attachments. Then, you clearly see those were the attachment of your Acquired Self, the

virtual "I." You are *not* afraid to lose the attachments of your virtual "I," once you know that's Not really you.

Use wisdom and realize you were *not* born with any of these possessions or any concepts such as concept of "I, Me, My, Mine" or the concept of beauty or concept of boyfriend/girlfriend, etc. Your True Self is *devoid* of any concepts, including the concept of "I, Me, My, Mine." That's why newborn babies have *no* fear whatsoever. However, you also need to remember your Acquired Self is a *tool* which helps you to function in society. It obviously gives you necessary information so you don't cause any physical harm to yourself or others. For example, driving rules are part of your Acquired Self and help to function in society and minimize the risk of physical harm to you and others.

Caution: If you try to be free of your attachments while remain stuck in the "I, Me, My, Mine," you will become miserable.

2. Freedom From Fearful, Hypothetical Situations

Use logic and you realize that your own thoughts create a hypothetical situation which can be very frightening. While the triggered emotion in the form of fear is real, the trigger in the form of thoughts is unreal, virtual. The thoughts create a situation which is all hypothetical. It is a ghost, a phantom, a monster in your head - nothing more.

Once you get the *wisdom* of realizing the *virtual* nature of the past, you are free of it. Then, you don't get *trapped* in bad memories. Obviously, then you don't create the whole "what if, what may" case scenario. Sometimes, you may slip back into your conditioned mind, which starts to create these kinds of thoughts, but soon you realize the *treacherous* nature of Your Acquired Self and get out of these thoughts.

You need to *park* your attention/awareness in the Now. Otherwise, it keeps going back to the conditioned Mind, as that has been your (and everyone else's) lifelong pattern.

3. Freedom from Addiction to Fear

Once you clearly see the whole mechanics of fear, you don't have the *urge* to watch sensational TV stories or surf the internet for fearful stories and videos. You don't engage in creating the *cloud of fear* in your social encounters. Instead, you change the conversation to a *pleasant* topic. Try it next time you're at a party or having a conversation with friends. You will be amazed when others follow your *lead* and come up with their own *pleasant* stories. In this way, you can replace the *cloud of fear* with the *aroma of fun*. Notice that someone may pull everyone back into the cloud of fear. That's fine, too. Simply be *aware* of it. Then, you won't get *sucked* into it.

4. Live in the Now

Stay in the Now as much as possible. Keep *shifting the gears* of your attention from the conceptual, virtual world in your head to the reality of the Now in front of you. Once you have tasted the *peaceful joy* of the Now, you no longer *crave* excitement from an adrenaline rush. In the evening, watch the sky, the stars, the moon instead of being consumed by *never ending* mental activities such as watching TV, surfing the internet or chit-chatting. Become fully aware of the "silence and stillness" of the night. Insomnia automatically vanishes. This is how you become free of **insomnia, anxiety and adrenal fatigue**.

Once you have gained the *wisdom* that you are not your Acquired Self and have tasted the *peace and joy* of the Now, you will be able to free yourself of **panic attacks** and **phobias**. As soon as you see the emotion of fear rising, *shift your attention from your thoughts to the Now*. See the objects around you and also be *aware*

of the *space* in which they exist. *Listen* to sounds around you and be *aware* of the *silence* which gives rise to sounds. Pay attention to your *breaths* by counting your inhalation and exhalation. Slowly your monster will subside and be replaced by a *peaceful tranquility*.

5. Don't Get Frustrated. Stay Vigilant and Pay Attention.

Initially, you may be free of your Acquired Self only for brief periods. This is enough. Don't get frustrated. Your Acquired Self may come back in a treacherous way. "Oh! I'm such a failure. I can't stay free of my Acquired Self." Be aware of these inner voices. This is nothing but your Acquired Self, who always wants to *accomplish* something. Don't make freedom from your Acquired Self a goal. Your Acquired Self will likely keep striking back. It is quite persistent, clever and treacherous, but in reality, it is virtual. That's why I also call it the *Monster*. Because it serves no purpose but to hurt you, I also call it the *Enemy Within*. It thrives by sucking up your attention, a *parasite* within.

You need to stay alert, pay attention and clearly see each time this Monster wants to scare you. With time, this Monster will not have any control over you.

Example:

One of my friends asked my advice because she was having a lot of anxiety and insomnia. I asked her what kind of thoughts run through her mind. "I worry a lot and I know that worrying is not good for my health and you've told me that worrying can affect the immune system, but I can't help it. I've tried books, seen psychologists, psychiatrists and am on anti-anxiety drugs, but nothing is working any longer. I think I need another drug to calm my nerves," she replied.

I counseled her about the True Self and the Acquired Self and that freedom from the Acquired Self was the true cure of her anxiety disorder. “But how can I do it? I understand what you’re saying, but I keep going back to feeling anxious.”

I gave her an example. “Suppose you have a five year old child who gets tangled in a thorny bush and starts crying. You rescue her and tell her to not to get tangled with that bush. Five minutes later, she’s back in that thorny bush. You rescue her again and repeat your advice, don’t you? She replied “Yes, of course.” I told her, “Each time you find yourself tangled with a fearful thought, get out of it... And yes, five minutes later, you may find yourself lost in some fearful thought again. Simply free yourself from it again.

Your thought tells you that something bad may happen to you or your loved ones. “But is it really happening at this very moment?” you should ask yourself. The answer will be, “no, it’s not happening right now”. Then, ask yourself, “What’s happening now?” Look around. See what you can see, hear, smell, touch and taste. This is your field of awareness. Stay in it as much as you can and you will be free of fearful thoughts. Once free of fearful thoughts, you will be free of anxiety and insomnia. Once you are cured of anxiety, your immune system will also start to work normal again.

In the meantime, stay on your medications until you start living like this: being aware of your thoughts, not getting tangled in them and living in your field of awareness.” It takes a while before you start to live like this. The more you put it into everyday living, the more and more you will stay in your field of awareness. However, if you just talk about it and don’t put into your daily living, it won’t work. In that case it will simply be information and knowledge that becomes part of your Acquired Self.

After a while my friend was able to be free of anxiety and insomnia and did not need any anti-anxiety drugs any longer.

Chapter 32

How to Deal with Depression

Depression is a devastating condition. It robs you of a good quality of life. You don't feel like doing anything. You simply stay in a *sad* mood, which leads to an overall *negative* attitude and behavior towards life. Your negative behavior often cuts you off from those who truly care for you. This makes you more depressed and works as a *self-fulfilling* prophecy.

Sometimes, people become so depressed that they even resort to *suicide*. Some people go through periods of *low energy* as a part of depression followed by periods of *high nervous energy* due to underlying anxiety disorder. This is called *Bipolar Affective Disorder*.

Most people take medications to treat symptoms of depression. Often, they stay on these drugs forever or their symptoms relapse if they stop. With the passage of time, patients usually need to change their drug or *add* more drugs to combat their depressive symptoms.

Anti-depression drugs have a number of potential side-effects. To deal with these side-effects, you end up on more drugs. Before you know it, you are on a long list of medicines, dealing with their side-effects and become a frequent visitor to doctors' offices.

What is the Root Cause of Depression?

If you really want to be free of depression, you need to go deeper and look at the root cause of your depression by using logic.

Why does a person feel depressed? Sometimes, it's due to an incident, event or situation, such as your girlfriend dumps you, you get a chronic illness or you're stuck in a bad situation at school or at home and there is no way out. Often, you don't even know why you are depressed.

When you say, "I am depressed," who is this "I" who is depressed? This "I" is your Acquired Self, isn't it? So, who is actually depressed is your Acquired Self. As long as you identify with your Acquired Self, you will *continue* to be depressed. It's quite logical.

Your Acquired Self contains a large pile of memories, bad memories as well as sweet memories, both of which may be at the root of your depression. Bad memories obviously create a lot of psychological pain for you. What about sweet memories? Well, sweet memories are the basis of "missing." For example, you love your daughter and have a lot of fond memories of her. Now, she is a teenager and does not want to spend any time with you. You start to miss those good old times and wish those were back. Sometimes, "missing" can lead to depression.

Memories are the root cause of depression. Therefore, let's examine what a memory really is. *A memory is a snap shot of an event, with a story attached, an interpretation/judgment attached and a corresponding emotion attached.* In this way, memories are created by your own conditioned mind, your Acquired Self and therefore, it holds on to them as "My" memories and keeps them alive.

For example, you were *humiliated* in front of your class by your 2nd grade teacher. The event is long *gone*, but you still have a vivid picture of the entire event in your mind. You can still feel the agonizing pain of *humiliation*. In reality, the event has *died*, but it is very much *alive* in your head with all of its *fire* of psychological pain. Amazing, isn't it?

Now consider this. Events are happening all the time. Your conditioned mind keeps making memories out of these events. Imagine the *heavy* burden of memories your conditioned mind has graciously generated for you. Within these memories lie the emotions of *worthlessness, sadness, loneliness, embarrassment* and *abandonment*.

Every emotion you have is generated as a result of *judging* by your mind, of an event, a person or a situation. Your mind judges every event, person and situation according to the concepts downloaded into your Acquired Self such as the concept of humiliation, praise, beauty, success, morality, ethics etc. Watch how your mind keeps judging all the time.

A bubbling *volcano* of these emotions creates *chemical* changes in your brain. This altered chemical environment is *conducive* to more *negative* thoughts. These negative thoughts then *trigger* more *negative* emotions and consequently, even more *negative* thoughts which results in an extremely *vicious* cycle of negative thoughts, negative emotions and associated chemical changes in the brain. **This is what causes depression.** It all starts from negative thoughts of judging, which lead to negative emotions of worthlessness, sadness and loneliness, and subsequent chemical changes in the brain.

Anti-depression drugs work by counteracting the chemical changes in your brain, but do *not* take care of the root cause: the judging machine in your head, your Acquired Self. *It's like going after*

the mosquitoes while the pond continues to widen. That's why, you end up adding more and more drugs as time goes by in order to control your symptoms of depression.

True Freedom From Depression:

Once you fully understand the root cause of your depression is your own Acquired Self, you stop running for escapes. Once you clearly see the architect of your depression is your own conditioned mind, your Acquired Self, you have a choice: Stay in the grip of your Acquired Self and be depressed or be free of your depression by *disassociating* from your Acquired Self. The choice you will make is pretty obvious.

Clearly see the *virtual* nature of your memories. Yes, events happened, but those events are not happening any more except in your head. In reality, *new* events are happening all around you all the time. But you remain so *trapped* in your memories, that you *miss out* on most of the events happening in the *Now* such, as the gentle breeze, chirping birds and twinkling stars.

Pay attention to *real* current events happening around you in your field of awareness - What you see, hear, smell, taste and touch. This will free you from your memories. The more you stay in the *Now*, the more you stay away from your memories.

Every now and then you may find yourself in the grip of your memories, but then you will see the true nature of these memories: They are virtual, illusory, unreal - Nothing more than bundles of thoughts and emotions. Do not believe in any thing these memories imply. Why? Because none of it is happening right now. Hence there is no need to *run away* or give some *rationalization* to those events. Just see them for what they are: Ghosts swirling around in your head. That's all!

That's how your depression automatically ends.

Caution:

For most people, total freedom from memories is a slow process. Therefore, do not stop any medicines that you are now taking. You may need to take some medicine to relieve some symptoms of depression. Use this book as an aid to be free of your memories. Then one day, with the blessing of your physician, you may be able to come off of your anti-depression medicine.

Chapter **33**

How to Deal with Grief

Grief is a deep sense of loss, usually loss of a *loved* one. It is quite painful. Most people can't stand it and end up depressed. Some may try to *suppress* these emotions through *denial* and eventually end up with *emptiness*, *restlessness* and *anxiety*. Some try various escape mechanisms, which are only temporary fixes and often cause more trouble.

What is the Root Cause of Grief?

In order to be free of grief, you need to go deeper and find the roots of grief. Use logic and you realize that grief comes from the loss of a loved one, someone who had become an *integral* part of "you." In fact, what you think is "you" is *not* you, but your Acquired Self. Actually, it is your Acquired Self who is *bruised* because part of it is gone, taken away.

The thought of "loss of the loved one" triggers a sad emotion, which you feel. Also thinking about the *sweet memories* of the loved one makes you sad. Who is thinking? Who is holding on to the sweet memories? Its' your Acquired Self, isn't it? In other words, your Acquired Self creates sad emotions and you are one who end up feeling them.

True Freedom from Grief

As long as you and your Acquired Self are *stuck* together, you will continue to feel the sad emotion of grief. But the moment you can clearly see it is your Acquired Self who is in fact grieving its loss. you will feel relief from grief. *However, do not deny or suppress grief.* It will only make matters worse. Fully feel the pains of grief, but also be *alert*. Don't get *consumed* by emotions. Realize it is your Acquired Self who is hurt at its loss and triggering the emotion of grief.

Pay attention to the *Now* and what is happening in your field of awareness. Experience every moment of life inside and around you. Then, you will realize you are actually part of the *Now*. You will feel an amazing *inner peace*. This is your True Self!

Chapter 34

How to Deal with Loneliness

Most people can't stand loneliness. They feel bored, restless and agitated. They *compulsively* look for activities to stay busy. People run away from loneliness and find *refuge* in socializing, partying, talking on the telephone or staying connected through the internet.

Being lonely *implies* you don't have any friends, that you're a failure. Many also feel sorry for themselves. Some even get depressed.

Is it possible to be free of loneliness without running away from it? If you want to be free of loneliness, first you have to fully understand it.

The Root Cause of Loneliness

Why are you lonely? You probably answer "because I am alone." Actually, what you *really imply* is that someone who was part of you, is not with "you" any more. Isn't that the truth? If you look deeper, you realize that the root cause of loneliness is "I, Me, My, Mine" Syndrome. For example, "I'm lonely because *My* boyfriend dumped *me*," "*My* husband is not with *Me*," "*My* wife passed away."

Many people suffer from loneliness, even though they may have a large circle of family and friends. When you're in the grip of "I, My, Me, Mine," you create a psychological *wall* between yourself and everyone else. You live in a tiny *bubble* of your own and look at everyone else through it. You obviously feel *isolated* and *lonely*, but have *no* clue. You may hear your *inner* voice complaining, "*No one understands me.*" However, you don't understand why no one understands you. Then, another voice chimes in. "Loneliness is not a good thing. It's a sign of failure. I must get rid of my loneliness." Then, you find a way to *run* away from loneliness. The usual escapes include joining a social, political or religious organization, partying, chit-chatting, texting and internet socialization.

If you want to be free of loneliness, you have to take a deep look at loneliness instead of running away from it. Psychologically speaking, when you are enslaved by "I, My, Me, Mine," you're separated from every other human being on the planet and of course, you are lonely.

True Freedom from Loneliness

If you want to be free of loneliness, you need to be free of "I, My, Me, Mine." Only then will you start to see things the way they actually are:

- * A human being, not My boyfriend/girlfriend
- * A human being, not My husband/wife
- * A human being, not My friend/enemy

Then, you realize the next person in the street is another human being, not your friend or your enemy. You sense an inner *connectedness* to every living being on the planet. Loneliness simply evaporates! You don't have to employ certain techniques to get rid of loneliness as the Society Monster teaches you to do, such as "getting involved in social activities." The simple realization that "you are *not* who you thought you were" will liberate you from the prison

of loneliness. The simple dissociation from “I, My, Me, Mine” Syndrome, will free you from loneliness.

For detailed description of “I, My Me, Mine, please refer to Chapter 12.

Q: Some enlightened people live alone. Isn't that loneliness?

A: When a person is truly enlightened, which simply means completely free of the Acquired Self, they may sit alone, but are not bored or unhappy. They enjoy the solitude - the joy of being. They are free from the “I, My, Me, Mine” Syndrome. They are not disconnected from the rest of the universe. In fact, they feel *connected* to every living being. They're in touch with their True Self and realize that every other living being also has the same True Self.

Q: But aren't humans social animals? Don't we need each other?

A: In the grip of the Acquired Self, you socialize with people who have something in common with you, such as culture, customs, beliefs, values, race, religion, political and social ideas. In this way, your Acquired Self relates to another Acquired Self and the two strengthen each other. Even when you meet people with a different type of Acquired Self, you try to find some common ground, so you can then socialize. However, if either of you leaves the *turf* of common ground, the socialization often turns into a verbal battle and occasionally, it turns physical as well.

What we call *socialization* is actually a way for the Acquired Self to feel *secure* by finding similar Acquired Selves and fighting those who are different. In this way, you find and live with Acquired Selves that are similar. Then, you start believing that you *need* each other to survive. It's true that the Acquired Self needs other similar Acquired Selves to strengthen and survive.

On the other hand, when you are free of your Acquired Self, you don't find it necessary to socialize. The *psychological neediness* to socialize is not there any more. When you meet another person, you don't look at him as friend or enemy. You don't judge him based on religion, race, culture, political or social beliefs. The psychological need to seek his friendship or subdue him is not there at all. You have no *selfish* motives. You simply look at him as *another* human being.

The socialization that arises out of the True Self is completely different from the one that arises out of the Acquired Self.

Chapter **35**

How to Deal with Guilt and Self-Criticism

A large number of people carry the heavy *burden* of guilt. Often, they don't even talk about it and suffer in *isolation*. Most think they can't do anything about it and have to live with it for the *rest* of their life.

Some may *decide* to seek help, but often nothing really works and they continue to suffer. Guilt *gnaws* at you like a cancer and robs you of any psychological peace.

Guilt has another angle to it. Some people may try to take advantage of you by *threatening* you with the *punishment* of guilt.

What is the Root Cause of Guilt?

If you want to be free of guilt, you need to understand what really causes guilt. Why does someone feel guilty?

If you use logic and common sense, you realize that guilt comes from the *memory* of some event with a bad *outcome* that you feel you could have *prevented* from happening. In this way, you feel *responsible* for the event.

Now, who is it that feels guilty? It's your Acquired Self, isn't it? Some event *happened*, but is *not* happening any longer. Still, it is very much *alive* in your head. Your mind took a mental *picture* of the event and judged it to be *bad* based upon the conceptual information *stored* in your mind, which *triggered* a *bad* emotion. Then, the entire bundle of the mental picture, the attached story and the associated emotion got *stored* as a memory. It's the *crafty* work of your mind, isn't it? In reality, the event is long dead and gone, but in your mind, it remains alive. Why? Because your mind has conveniently *preserved* it to *torture* you for the rest of your life. Interesting how the mind works!

Why does the mind takes mental pictures, judge them to be good and bad and then preserve them as memory. Because, that's exactly what the mind is *conditioned* to do.

In the real world, events are happening continuously, with each event having a beginning and ending, the cycle of birth and death, one of the *fundamental* laws of nature. However, the conditioned human mind does not like this law of nature. It is conditioned to *dislike* death. It does not want anything to die. Therefore, it creates memories of events and in this way, keeps them *alive* and gives them *virtual* life.

Why does the conditioned human mind judge events as good or bad? Because it is conditioned to do so. As a part of conditioning, your mind gets downloaded with *software* of "role descriptions." For example, it tells you how a good parent, a good child, a good teacher, a good spouse *should* and *shouldn't* behave. These are basically concepts that society has created. They obviously have their place - their *functional* value. But you and everyone else around *believes* in them as Truth. You don't look at them for what they really are: concepts.

What happens if you are unable to behave according to this “software of role descriptions?” You will judge yourself to be a bad parent, child, teacher, husband, or wife. This is the basis of *self-criticism and guilt*.

True Freedom from Guilt and Self-Criticism

Perhaps now you understand you can never be free of guilt and self - criticism as long as you’re in the grip of your Acquired Self, because your Acquired Self - your conditioned mind is the root cause of guilt and self-criticism.

Once you clearly see the whole *mechanics* of guilt and self-criticism, you can be free of it. Simply seeing with *clarity* is enough.

Caution:

Please don’t start to *rebel* against the rules of your society. These rules are made by society as a *means* for the society to function. As long as you live in society, you need to obey its rules, which are basically concepts. Problems arise when you start to believe these concepts to be something more than concepts. Then, you seriously start to judge others as well as yourself. In this way, you create a heavy burden of anger and guilt. Simply see these concepts as concepts created by society. That’s all!

Chapter 36

How to Deal with Embarrassment and Shame

As you grow up, you pick up a lot of *ideas* along the way, including a lot of *manners* from your parents, school, news media, movies, which then become part of your Acquired Self.

What is the Basis of Embarrassment and Shame?

Based on the stored ideas, your Acquired Self tells you what's right and what's wrong, what's desirable and what's disgusting, what's cool and what's nerdy.

Equipped with this information, your Acquired Self *judges* others all the time. It also knows that others judge it as well. If you or someone close to you, say your parent or teenager, fall below the *standards* set by society, your Acquired Self feels embarrassed, which is a feeling of *uneasiness*, *shame* and *humiliation*.

Examples:

- Your teenager daughter doesn't listen to you in front of your friends. You feel ashamed of her behavior, because you *failed* to teach her good manners of the society.

- Your husband gets obnoxious and rude after a couple of drinks. You feel embarrassed and ashamed of his behavior because you feel like you married to a *loser*.
- You went to a fancy party without having proper attire, you feel embarrassed.
- You went to a restaurant or a club by yourself, but felt uneasy, because others might think you're a *loser* with no friends.
- You were late arriving at a party because traffic was horrible. You feel embarrassed and apologetic because you think that others might judge you as *rude* person.
- In a conversation, you didn't know some historic fact. You may feel embarrassed because others might think you're *ignorant*.

Your Acquired Self wants to be *accepted* by other members of the group. The *desire* to be part of the group is to *cover up* a deep rooted sense of *insecurity*. The more the insecurity, the more clinging to manners and standards of the club.

You see it in its extreme form in so called high society country clubs, where you are judged if *you wear the proper tie and shoes with your suit or if you used the right utensils during dinner and if you put each step in certain way during your dance*.

Caught up deeply into your Acquired Self, you feel extremely sensitive to anything *less than perfect* (according to club rules) and you get easily embarrassed.

These moments of embarrassments and humiliations get stored in your memory box and create a huge amount of emotions of shame and unworthiness. This memory box initiates thoughts that

this embarrassment should never happen again. That's why you develop a *fear* of embarrassment as well.

True Freedom from Embarrassment and Shame

If only people knew the root cause of embarrassment and shame, they could be free of it in a moment. Simply realize that *manners* are part of your Acquired Self, not your True Self. Why? Because you were not born with these manners. Then, you can truly let go of them. Just imagine the relief you get just knowing that all the manners and the resulting embarrassment and shame you *harbor* is not the True you. All of it was shoved down your throat in the name of *culture*. This realization is how you get freedom from life-long learned behavior which causes you embarrassment and shame.

Chapter 37

How to Deal with Jealousy

What is jealousy? Jealousy is a *gnawing* emotion. It kills any peace of mind you have. A jealous person is in *constant* psychological pain. Even worse, he can't admit to being jealous, because it's *bad* to be a jealous person. It's a sign of *failure* and *bad* character to be jealous, isn't it?

The Root Cause of Jealousy

Why do you get jealous? If you pay attention, you realize jealousy arises out of your own mind. Watch your mind and you may hear this kind of inner voice: "I *should* have what he has. Why him and *not* me?" ... Or "Why did she get praise and *not* me?" ... Or "I'm the one who really deserves to have a loving spouse, mansion, fame, praise, validation and recognition. Why does that person have everything and *not* Me? The other person is a winner and I'm a loser." There is a deep seated sense of *failure* and *unfairness* when you are jealous.

It's all about "I, My, Me, Mine," isn't it? It's your Acquired Self who is *jealous*. The Acquired Self is conditioned to be *competitive*. It wants to win and never lose. It wants to be praised, validated and acknowledged. Therefore, it *works* hard to win, to be better than others and *expects* praise, validation and recognition. Why? Because the Society Collective Acquired Self promises it success, praise and

validation if it *works* hard, *follows* the rules and is an *honest* person. However, when it doesn't get what it expects, it gets deeply hurt.

In the grip of the Acquired Self, you continue to *expect* success due to your hard work. You *expect* your wife to love you because you love her. You *expect* your children to love you because you love them. When your expectations are not met, you are hurt and jealous of those who *unfairly* get what you *deserve*.

True Freedom from Jealousy

As long as you identify with your Acquired Self, you will continue to *expect* praise. If someone else receives praise, you'll stay in the tight grip of jealousy.

However, what happens the moment you realize that you are *not* who you thought you were? You are *not* your Acquired Self. You immediately become free of the *neediness* to be praised and acknowledged. You realize that your True Self existed before you were lured into the *game of competition and comparison*. You realize the *conceptual* nature of "win and lose, praise and reward." There is nothing *real* in these concepts. You become free of the *neediness* to be praised, loved, validated or acknowledged. That's how jealousy simply ends.

Chapter 38

How to Deal with Annoyance, Frustration and Anger

Annoyance, frustration and anger are basically *manifestations* of the same emotion, only the intensity varies from mild to severe. In its mild form, we call it annoyance and frustration and in a more severe form, we call it anger.

When you are angry, you create huge stress for yourself and everyone else around you. In the grip of anger, your actions are completely *illogical*, but you don't see it that way. However, someone else can easily see it. You lose all *reasoning* when you're angry.

In the heat of anger, you may *spew* out a flurry of insulting, hateful remarks which can *provoke* others. They get angry and return even stronger, hateful and insulting remarks to you. If the drama of *verbal* violence continues, it often leads to *physical* violence.

Later on, when you come to your senses, you may *regret* what you said or did. That creates even more stress for you. "I'm not a good person!" "How could I do that?" "I wish I could take back what I did." "I really didn't mean what I said." Once you come out of your state of anger, you feel *ashamed* and *guilty*.

You may promise (*one more time*) to yourself and others that you will try to *control* your anger. You may even get some counseling, attend an anger management seminar or read books on how to control your anger. You try hard, but before you know it, you lose control *again* and become angry. *You say or do* something that you never intended to... And the whole drama keeps repeating itself.

In a less dramatic version, you feel *frustrated* and *annoyed*. Often, you keep it to yourself. This creates a constant sense of *irritability* and *tension* inside you. Sometimes, you verbalize your frustrations in a “civilized” manner. Often, others don’t seem to care or may even *disagree* with your point of view, which *upsets* you even more. You may promise yourself you’re not going to get into any arguments in order to keep peace. In this way, you *suppress* your anger in order to be *civil* and *polite*. However, you feel *annoyed* and *irritated inside*... And little things make you *more* irritated and annoyed.

You may pick up the phone and tell your side of the story to some *friendly* ears. You may finish a carton of ice cream, a bag of potato chips or a bottle of wine to get some momentary *relief* from inner irritation. In fact, you *stuff* down your frustration and anger with food items... And the drama keeps repeating itself. Actually, you get even *more* annoyed at your weight gain, your drinking or any other addictive habits. *Shame* and *guilt* easily move in. You promise yourself and your loved ones that you will lose weight and be healthy, but keep losing the battle. This *frustrates* you even more.

In some cases, suppression of frustration and anger, especially from childhood, gets so deep that you have no clue where your “comfort eating” comes from. Many people get *depressed*.

The Root Cause of Anger

If you want to be free of anger, you need to take a close look at it, instead of running away from it. When you use logic and examine what *underlies* your frustration and anger, you find that it can be a product of one or a combination of the following *components* of your Acquired Self, the Monster within.

Expectations, Self-Righteousness, Fear, Insults.

1. EXPECTATIONS

One of the basic reasons for frustration and anger is your expectations. You had certain expectations, which did *not* come through and that's why you feel frustrated and angry.

What is the Basis of Expectations?

What do we really mean by expectations? If you look at this question logically, you find that expectations really are a collection of ideas and concepts you acquire during your upbringing. These become part of your Acquired Self, the Monster within.

These concepts revolve around how others should and shouldn't behave towards you and how you should and shouldn't behave towards them. For example, you expect certain kinds of behavior from your spouse, parents, brothers, sisters, friends and colleagues and *vice versa*. In a way, society *dictates* how each one of us *should* and *shouldn't* behave. I call it the "*software of role descriptions*," written by the Society Monster. Each and every person living in a particular society is downloaded with this *software of role descriptions*.

Everyone knows the description of his/her role and also knows the description of the role of others. For example, the software tells you *how a parent should behave, how a friend should behave, how a child should behave, how a wife should behave, how a husband should behave, how a teacher should behave, how a student should behave, etc.* Automatically, this role description creates certain **expectations**.

You **expect** others to play their part right by the book. They **expect** you to play your role right. In other words, everyone *judges* everyone else. This is the basis of *Judging*. **All morality is derived from this software of role descriptions**. If there was no software of role descriptions, there would be no judging. There would be no morality.

Now what happens if someone doesn't play their part? You get frustrated and at times, angry. It's actually your Acquired Self who feels let down, frustrated and angry, because it is the Acquired Self who builds up expectations. Your Acquired Self believes in all of the ideas contained in the software of role descriptions.

The closer the relationship with another person, the higher the expectations... And more emotional pain if someone does not meet your expectations. This emotional pain manifests as annoyances, frustrations and anger.

Examples:

Brothers, sisters and close friends get mad and angry if their expectations are not met and end up losing lifelong relationships.

Kids fail to meet the expectations of their parents and cause a lot of pain and suffering for both parents as well as the kids.

For example, some parents expected their son to become a doctor, but he got poor grades in high school. This caused severe headaches and ugly arguments between son and his parents.

Some parents expected their daughter to marry someone they thought suitable for her, but she married someone else. Another cause for anger and pain.

A girlfriend expected a special present on Valentines' Day and was very hurt when her boyfriend gave her a pair of socks.

A wife expected a birthday gift from her husband, but didn't get anything. The result? Hurt, pain and anger.

A boyfriend expected his girlfriend to be nice to his rowdy buddies, but she called them immature dirt bags which caused a huge argument, pain and anger.

A teacher expected a raise, but didn't get one, which caused pain and resentment.

In addition to personal life, People also build expectations around political figures, religious leaders, movie stars, singers, artists, etc. and get very disappointed and angry if their icon does not live up to their expectations. Some even get so angry that they end up killing their icon.

People also create expectations around political, economic and religious systems and get very upset once their expectations are not fulfilled.

The Society Monster promises you that you will be rewarded if you followed the rules and punished if you don't. Now, what happens if you follow the rules and don't get rewarded and someone who breaks the rules gets rewarded? You get very

upset and angry. For example, you are an honest person suffering economic hardships while some crooked, dishonest liar is rolling in money. "Life isn't fair" you may find yourself saying. You feel very disappointed and angry at life.

True Freedom from Expectations

To be free of annoyance and anger, you need to be free of expectations. You may hear someone advise that "you shouldn't have any expectations." But *why* not, you ask? "Aren't expectations part of normal daily living? How could one even *function* if there are no expectations" you argue.

It is true that most of the *conceptual* world revolves around expectations. Why? Because most of the world is in the grip of the Acquired Self, the conditioned mind. That is one major reason why most people feel frustrated, annoyed and angry. Only if people knew that their True Self has no expectations whatsoever! It's the Acquired Self who builds up all of the expectations and gets hurt when these expectations are not met. The True Self is the one you were born with. Newborn babies have *no* expectations. That's why they are *never* annoyed or angry. On the other hand, the Acquired Self, you simply acquired as a result of conditioning of your mind by society.

With this realization, you can be free of expectations, because they are *not* part of who you really are. You can simply let go of the *enemy* within that is hurting you. Once you get rid of the root cause, then frustration, annoyance and anger simply do not arise. Then, you don't have to practice certain *techniques* to be free of anger.

2. SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS

Another common reason for anger and frustration is self-righteousness.

What is self-righteousness? In simple terms, it means “I am right.” It also *implies* that “someone else is wrong.” This is the root cause of all disagreements, disputes, arguments, quarrels, fights, lawsuits, battles and wars, all of which obviously create a huge amount of anger.

With few exceptions, everyone suffers from self-righteousness. Interestingly, people don’t like to be called self-righteous, because it is considered to be a bad quality. They don’t think they are self-righteous, but they readily see it in others. They simply *judge* others to be self-righteous and don’t go any deeper. Actually, they believe they are *right* that someone else is self-righteous. Interesting, isn’t it?

Self-righteousness is an extremely *common* affliction and one of the reasons for all human conflicts. If we want to understand *conflicts*, it makes sense to look at self-righteousness more deeply.

What is the Basis of Self-Righteousness?

If we look deeper at the composition of a person’s Acquired Self, we find the *software of role descriptions* is an important part of it. This software, as we observed earlier, describes how a person *should* and *shouldn’t* behave in a given society. In addition to creating expectations, it also provides a background against which everyone keeps judging the behavior of others. It tells you and everyone else “what is **right** and what is **wrong**,” “what is **virtue** and what is **evil**.” This is the basis of *morality*.

These are basically *concepts* given to you by your Society Monster. Using these concepts, everyone judges others and society judges everyone living in it. Now, if you’re in the total grip of your Acquired Self, you believe these concepts to be the *truth*. You *honestly* believe that you are *right*, because you believe in certain

concepts and those who don't believe in those concepts are *wrong*... which of course, is *self-righteousness*.

In the grip of self-righteousness, you are constantly *annoyed* and at times, *angry* at those who do not believe in the same concepts as you do. Your Acquired Self believes that you are right and others are wrong.

In addition to the *software of role descriptions*, your Society Monster also downloads many other concepts into your Acquired Self. For example, it gives you concepts about "your rights," "human rights," "animal rights," "right of way" and "property rights," etc. All of these concepts become part of your Acquired Self. They give you *more* ammunition to be *right*. These concepts strengthen your self-righteousness.

When you are in the grip of your Acquired Self, these concepts become your *beliefs*. When others do not follow what you believe in, you get *frustrated* and *angry*.

Your Acquired Self also suffers from self-righteousness in another way. Typically, when a person looks at an event, he interprets that event against the *background* of *previously stored* information and emotions in his Acquired Self. This stored information and emotions *vary* from person to person. Therefore, an interpretation of the same event *varies* from person to person. Each one *believes* that he is right and others are wrong. The event is the same, but its interpretations are very different. Obviously, the problem lies in the *interpretations* by the Acquired Selves of different compositions.

In addition, your Society Monster downloads knowledge of history, (which primarily is an interpretation of certain events by the Acquired Self of the historian), into your Acquired Self. That's the reason there are so many different interpretations of the same event

and of course, every historian believes that he/she is right. The interpretation of events by historians becomes part of your Acquired Self and you believe them to be absolutely true (although the event may have happened before you and the historian were even born). Different Acquired Selves with different versions of the same historic event get into *heated* arguments and get *angry* at each other.

With this background, your Acquired Self also judges current political/social events. Usually, it's some so called expert who does it for you on TV, in a newspaper or a book. Acquired selves with different versions of history interpret current events differently and each one believes that they are right. With this background, people get into *heated* arguments and get mad and angry at each other.

It is interesting to note that in a given society, there are concepts about what is right and what is wrong. This creates a *collective self-righteousness*, which gets reinforced constantly by the news-media in that society. *What is right in one society may be wrong in another society*. This creates *conflict* between various societies. That's why people living in one society get *angry* at another society. This is the basis of *collective conflict, anger and violence* between *various* societies.

Within a given society, there are *various* concepts about what is right and what is wrong, depending upon various social, political and religious groups in that society. This creates conflict, anger and violence between *various* groups *within* a society.

Within a group, there are *various* concepts of what is right and what is wrong. Therefore, within the same group, people get angry and fight among each other. Even within a family, there are various concepts of what is right and what is wrong. It leads to conflict, anger and violence (usually verbal but sometimes even physical) between various members of the same family. For example, you may be a strong *believer* of gay rights, but your father

doesn't agree with you. This could lead to a *serious* argument and *verbal* violence. Or you may seriously believe in "abortion rights," but your mother may strongly believe in "no abortions." This *conflict* could lead to *heated* arguments and anger at each other.

Within an individual, there are *conflicting* concepts of what is right and what is wrong. There is one code of ethics for the work place and another one for home, one code of ethics for friends and another one for enemies, one standard for yourself and another one for everyone else.

It all *boils* down to "I, My, Me, Mine" Syndrome. Based upon the concepts attached to "I, My, Me, Mine," you *judge* everyone else out there to either be your *friend* or *enemy*. That's how you perceive other people as either friends or enemies at home, in your neighborhood, at school, at work, in social, political or religious groups, in your country and in the world. You stay annoyed and angry at your enemies, which often leads to violence, verbal as well as physical.

True Freedom from Self-righteousness

If you want to be free of self-righteousness, you need to first *admit* that you suffer from self-righteousness... And here's the biggest dilemma - When you strongly believe that you're *right*, how can you ever admit that you are *not* right? That's why most people continue to suffer from self-righteousness and its consequences of anger and even hate.

If you're *willing* to entertain the idea that you may not be right, then there is a *chance* that you may be free of the *prison* of self-righteousness. If you are willing to use logic (not intellectual rationalization, which is simply a product of acquired knowledge) and common sense, then you will see the root cause of self-righteousness resides inside you - your Acquired Self.

Once you have a logical *insight* into the mechanics of self-righteousness, you *happily* leave the prison of self-righteousness... And with that, anger *automatically* dies out. Once you realize the true nature of concepts, information and knowledge, you are *not* emotionally attached to them any longer. You *neither* love them *nor* hate them. You see them just as a *tool* to function in society, no more and no less. Once *emotional* attachment goes away, so does self-righteousness.

3. FEAR

Another reason why people get angry is their deep seated fear, but they don't realize it. Usually, the *more* short tempered a person is on the surface, the *more* fearful he is inside. Expressing anger outwardly is a gesture of extreme insecurity inside. People try to scare others with their anger, while they are fearful themselves. How ironic!

Most people don't even realize that their "bursts of anger" are actually arising out of a volcano of fear and insecurity.

If you are serious about getting to the bottom of the root causes of your anger, you have to examine yourself sincerely. Then, you will find that you feel quite fearful and insecure inside.

The Root Cause of Fear

Fear actually arises from the memory of a bad event, which has become part of your Acquired Self. Then, your Acquired Self says "it should never happen to me again." Then, another thought arises, "what if..." and it creates a huge amount of fear. In this way, your Acquired Self becomes quite insecure. Therefore, it *seeks* security and in the pursuit of security, it wants to control the behavior of others. When it can't control others, it gets annoyed and angry. Even

a *trigger* in the form of news or stories that reminds the Acquired Self that it *cannot* control others, can throw it into a rage.

Example:

A father sees a program about teenagers who frequently use illegal drugs and how it adversely affects their life. His Acquired Self grabs this story and makes it part of itself. Then comes another thought, “This should never happen to my son,.” He tells his son not to mix with certain kinds of people at school. “In this way, I should be able to prevent my son from taking drugs.” Then one day, he sees his son with a *shady* character which triggers the thought, “What if my son is on drugs?” which creates a huge amount of fear. Seeing that he has no control over his own sons’ behavior makes him very *insecure* inside, but outwardly he has an *outburst* of *anger* at his son.

Collectively, groups of People holding onto their collective past, get fearful with thoughts of “What if it happens again?” Hence, they want to *secure* their future by controlling the behavior of others. Any *reminder* that they can’t control others creates a wave of fear. Outwardly, it can express as anger and can lead to violence against another group of people.

True Freedom from Fear

People often try to *conquer* their fear by one technique or another. It may work *temporarily*, but sooner or later, they are back in the grip of their fear.

Only when you know the root cause of fear can you be free of it once and for all. Then, there is *no* need to learn various techniques to control your fear.

As we observed, fear arises from some bad memory in the past and the mind generates more thoughts in its effort to prevent a

similar bad thing from happening again. Once you realize that the “bad event” is *not* happening at this moment. It happened, yes, but is not happening at this moment. It is being kept alive only through the activity of your mind. Otherwise, in reality, it is *dead* and gone. This realization will completely free you from fear.

Because the memory of bad event does not control your mind any more, there is no need to think that this may happen again. Then, the mind does *not* create more thoughts about how to prevent bad events. That’s how the whole *infrastructure of anger* simply disappears and you get the ultimate freedom from fear.

4. INSULTS

Another reason why people get angry is *insults*. Obviously, you get angry when someone insults you. You *may or may not* express your anger.

Many people *fight* back by returning insulting remarks or gestures. Also, there are those who *pretend* to be *polite* and *civilized* on the surface, while *fuming* with anger underneath. Later, they verbally express their anger talking to their spouse or friends. Some even *suppress* anger so deeply that on the surface, they *manage* to remain polite and civilized all the time. They may even try to *fake* a smile, but deep inside, they feel *irritated* and don’t even know why they feel this way!

What is the Basis of Insults?

Is it possible for you *not* to be insulted, ever? I’m not talking about *suppressing* your anger and *pretending* that you’re not insulted, but in reality, to *not* feel insulted at all, when someone insults you.

In order to be truly free of insults, you first need to figure out, “Who is it inside you who gets insulted in the first place?” Use logic and you find it’s your Acquired Self who gets insulted. Why? A newborn baby never is insulted. You can *try* to insult a baby by *saying* whatever you want to say, but the baby will not be insulted. In the same way, imagine someone trying to insult you in a *language* or through *gestures* that you don’t understand. Obviously you will not be insulted. Therefore, we can conclude that for the insult to occur, one has to *understand* the concepts attached to those *words* and *gestures*. Otherwise, they have no power.

Where do you learn words and gestures and all of the concepts attached to them? You are not born with them. You obviously learn them as you grow up in a certain society. That’s why it is logical to conclude it’s your Acquired Self who gets insulted.

With every word, there is a concept attached. For example, the word IDIOT has a whole concept of stupidity and *worthlessness* attached to it. When your developing Monster learns this word, it stores all of the negative concepts attached to the word. Later, when someone calls you that word, the negative concept attached to that word is activated and negative thoughts trigger negative emotions. You feel worthless, stupid and angry. *You don’t deserve it. How dare someone say that to you!* Actually, the self esteem of your Monster got threatened. Therefore, your Monster fights back verbally or even physically in order to secure its existence, its self-esteem.

Insulting words are created by the Society Monster for individuals monsters to fight with each other.

Society’s Collective Acquired Self downloads the concept of “*insult and respect*” into your Acquired Self. When others *respect* you, your Acquired Self feels validated and when others *insult* you, your Acquired Self feels humiliated. In other words, your Acquired Self is constantly reacting to how others treat you. It wants to be

respected and not be insulted, but obviously it has *no* control how others will treat you. However, it does not know this basic fact. It just keep searching for respect and running away from insult.

It is especially true if, at an early age, you were insulted (teased) a lot. Your Acquired Self felt humiliated and all of these painful experiences became part of your Acquired Self. Then, your Acquired Self found a way to earn respect from others. Your Acquired Self finally got the praise and validation that it was so *hungry* for. Naturally, your Acquired Self works hard on this track and usually ends up being quite accomplished and successful. With each step of success, it got *more* respect, praise and validation and it *loved* it all. *The more it got attached to respect, the more it resented the idea of insult.* A *trivial* teasing remark would upset you for days. Now, you *overreact* to any insulting remark or gesture and get into a *rage*.

You may even burst into anger in a social situation where you didn't get *enough* respect, which you *perceive* as an insult.

True Freedom from Insults

Often, others (usually those who care for you) can see your *overreactions* and suggest anger management. So, you try the usual remedies society offers such as counseling, books, seminars, etc... But nothing really works for you. Sooner or later, you *explode* again in a rage or sizzle inside over some insulting remark someone made days ago. Often, you get even more *annoyed* and even *ashamed* that you *hold grudges* because you know that's a bad thing. Most people stay trapped in the prison of insults for the rest of their life.

Is it possible to be free of insults? The answer is **yes**, but only when you get to the root of the problem. When you realize that it is your Acquired Self that gets insulted, you can be free of insults by freeing yourself from your Acquired Self. You realize that it is your Acquired Self who is holding onto painful *memories* when it felt

insulted. Those painful experiences are not happening in the present moment, but only in your head. This simple *realization* can free you from the huge load of painful memories. You also realize that you don't have to keep *proving* your worth and be praised by others. The *need* for praise simply vanishes away. Then, you don't react to remarks of *praise* or *insult*. People can say whatever they want to - it does not make you *elated* or *angry*.

Free of the Acquired Self, you live in joy, peace and bliss that are never threatened.

Once you fully realize the mechanics of insulting words, you might even be *amused* when someone uses an insulting remark... Because you will see that the other person's Acquired Self is doing what it has been conditioned to do and in reality, it does *not* mean a thing. There is *no* need to fight back.

It is quite likely that even with all this wisdom, your Acquired Self will get engaged and will start to fight back next time you are insulted. However, minutes or even hours later, you may be able to see the "real mechanics of insult." Then, you will see it as "two monsters in action, trying to fight and nothing more."

The moment you see insult in its true colors, you will be *free* of it, instead of *fuming* over it for days. Next time, in the middle of an insult, you may realize it is your own Acquired Self getting engaged and trying to fight back. Simply seeing your Monster in action will free you of its tight hold on you. You may actually *burst* into laughter. With this insight, no one will ever be able to insult you. People may try to insult you, but you won't get insulted.

Q: I can't accept the fact that there are so many bad people in the world. How can I not be angry?

A: If you stay angry because there are so many bad people in the world, you are simply hurting yourself. It doesn't solve any problem, does it? Some people get so angry that they may, individually or collectively, resort to *violence*, but it still doesn't solve the problem. Violence *begets* more violence.

Instead of being angry, isn't it worthwhile to examine what makes people act in a bad way? If you truly want to understand why some people have bad behavior, you have to leave the *usual* explanations for bad behavior *behind* and take a *fresh* look, using your own *logic*, not what you have been told.

If you use logic, you find that the root cause of all bad behavior is in fact, the Acquired Self, individual as well as the Collective Acquired Self. Look deeply and you find that the underlying cause for bad behavior is greed, ego, selfishness, self-righteousness, anger, hate, jealousy or fear. All of these are products of the Acquired Self. Therefore, the world *cannot* be free of bad behavior as long as it is in the grip of the Acquired Self. When you are in the grip of the Acquired Self, you see faults with everyone except yourself. The fact is that everyone who is in the grip of the Acquired Self ends up with the so called bad behavior, whether he admits it or not.

You cannot *force* people to get rid of their Acquired Self. This kind of behavior will be a *desire* to control the behavior of others and it comes out of your own Acquired Self. It is actually *quite* tempting. Once you see that bad behavior arises out of selfishness, greed, ego, insecurity, desire to control others, self-righteousness, anger, hate, bitterness and fear, you get enlightened, but it often lasts for only a brief period. Before you know it, self-righteousness and ego creep in without you being aware of it. Then, you may start to think that you are *right* and the entire world is *wrong* and you become angry at the

whole world. Or you get the urge to *awaken* the entire world from their deep psychological sleep.

Just remember, whenever you think you are *right* and others are *wrong*, you are in the grip of self-righteousness. When you think you have to *accomplish* some heroic *mission*, you are in the grip of your *ego*.

All you should be concerned about is to *free* yourself from your Acquired Self and that's it. Change the world inside you and get rid of your own demons. That's all.

Unfortunately, most people *blame* others for all the problems in the world and want to change the behavior of everyone *except* their own. This is the strategy of the Acquired Self. It does not work, but helps to *perpetuate* and even *worsen* bad behavior.

It does not mean that you can't *stop* someone who is trying to rob you, for example. You automatically do whatever needs to be done when a *real* situation arises. What you need to do is to *free* yourself from all *hypothetical* situations, stories and concepts that your conditioned mind keeps creating for you, which, of course, it does with the help of the Society Monster in the form of the news media, books and Internet, etc.

Chapter 39

How to Deal with Grievances, Hate and Revenge

Grievances and *hate* are very deep seated emotions. Revenge is an action arising out of *grievances* and *hate*. Not only individuals harbor hate, but groups of people, societies and nations also collectively harbor *hate* and *grievances*.

While *hate* creates a constant burning and irritation inside you, *revenge* arising out of this hate inflicts tremendous *sufferings* on other human beings. But you don't look at them as human beings. The fire of *hate* makes you blind. You look at others as your enemies, who must be *defeated*, *destroyed* and *annihilated*. Your actions obviously reinforce *hate* in others, who try to inflict sufferings on you as much as they can and the *drama* of violence continues.

Deep down, you and your enemies are also afraid of each other and the desire to *dominate* and *annihilate* each other becomes more and more intense. Therefore, you and your enemies are constantly at work to develop new tricks, technologies and weapons to dominate, defeat and annihilate each other. This is the basis of the never ending cycle of violence and wars.

Sooner or later, you get tired of the huge stress that *hate* and *grievances* create. You want to find some answers. You turn to your Society Monster for answers. And what does it tell you? "*Hate*,

grievances and revenge are not good. You should be loving and peaceful. You should be non-violent.” which sounds wonderful, but in the next breath it also advises you to *“Fight and defeat your enemies.”* In essence, what the Society Monster is telling you is to *pick and choose. “Be peaceful and loving towards your friends but be hateful and revengeful towards your enemies.”*

Well, as we all know, this philosophy doesn't work very well. That's why there is so much hate, revenge and violence inside you, around you and in the world despite all sorts of social, political and religious preaching for non-violence, peace and love.

Is it Possible to be Free of Hate, Grievances and Revenge?

Is it possible to be rid of hate, grievances and revenge? The Society monster will tell you that it is not possible. It may even tell you that hate is part of “human nature.” *“You fight for your survival. Therefore, fighting is human nature,”* your Society Monster may explain. These *explanations* become part of your Acquired Self, which can therefore, *justify* hate and violence.

If you seriously want to discover if you can be free of hate, grievances and revenge, you will need to keep aside all the explanations you have been given. Only then you can look at the problem with *logic*. You have to be free of all preconceived notions to investigate a problem, like a true scientist.

What is the Root Cause of Hate and Grievances?

In order to cure hate, you need to diagnose its root cause, right? Why do you hate someone? It's because you believe that someone is your *enemy*. Why do you believe that someone is your enemy? Because someone did something *bad* to you in the *past* or you have been told that some one or some group of people did something *bad* to your ancestors in the *past*.

“My” (or Our) enemy and “My” (or Our) past are clearly the root cause of hate and grievances.

“My” Enemy:

Let take a closer look at “My” enemy.” Who is it that is really talking? It is your Acquired Self, isn’t it? “I, My, Me, Mine” Syndrome, as we observed earlier, is at the *core* of your Acquired Self. It *divides* you from everyone else on the planet. Then you perceive yourself as “I” and everyone else as “others.” You look at the world through the window of the religious, social and political concepts drilled into your Acquired Self. Those with similar concepts to your Acquired Self become your friends and those with opposing concepts become your enemies. This is the basis of “My” (or Our) enemies.

“My” Past

Now let’s take a look at “My” (or Our) past. What is the past? Your Acquired Self takes mental pictures of every event and judges it good or bad based upon the *software of role descriptions* already downloaded in it. Judging triggers an emotion and then the whole bundle of “event, judgment and emotion gets stored in your memory. That’s how your mind creates your past. Later, it keeps visiting the stored events (memories) over and over again.

Let’s say you had an event that your Acquired Self judged to be a *defeat* due to *unfairness* and stored it as a *bad* memory. Each time your mind visits this *unfair event of defeat*, you feel a wave of *rage* rising inside you. Unfairness triggers *bitterness, hate and rage*. Now, you want to defeat the person who defeated you. You want to get *even* and cause him as much pain and suffering... And this time around, you will use any means. You will even be unfair. “So *what! I was a victim of unfairness,*” you rationalize. Your Society Monster validates these thoughts. “*There is no fairness in war. Life is unfair.*”

In addition to your personal past, your Society Monster creates its own collective past and downloads it into your Acquired Self as part of your upbringing. This is the basis of *collective grievances and bitterness* against a certain historic figure or group of people. Perpetuation of bitterness and grievances often leads to violence, which *creates* more bad memories and *feeds* more bitterness and grievances. *That's how hate thrives.*

In the grip of hate and grievances, you (and collectively, your group) become so *irrational* that you may inflict pain and suffering on those people who have nothing to do with your past. It is usually people with less power, such as your employees, children, or underprivileged people. You just want to “*give it to some one.*”

True Freedom from Hate, Grievances and Revenge.

Now for a moment consider that you are free of “I, My, Me, Mine” Syndrome and free of the personal as well as the collective past. Do you have any hate or grievances left? The answer is No! When you are free of hate and grievances, you are automatically free of the desire for revenge.

Now the big question is how do you get freedom from the “I, My, Me, Mine” Syndrome? Use logic and you realize that you were *not* born with this. It was given to you by your Society Monster.

How do you get freedom from your personal and collective past? Use logic and you realize that the past does *not* exist except in your head. Of course, it was real when it happened, but now it is a phantom - unreal because it is not happening in the Now.

Once free of the “I, My, Me, Mine” Syndrome and free of the past, you will not have any hate or grievances. Then, you won't have any enemies. Automatically there is no need to take revenge. That's how violence ends spontaneously.

Chapter 40

How to Deal with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)

Many people get the diagnosis of Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) and receive prescription drugs to treat it. Symptoms can be controlled as long as you take medications, but *recur* if you stop the drugs. In this way, treatment is superficial and temporary. Is it possible to be free of ADD without taking any drugs? Before you can answer this question, you need to look deeper at the root cause of ADD.

What is the Root Cause of Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)

The name, Attention Deficit Disorder, basically *describes* the root cause of this disorder: **attention deficit, lack of attention**. The next question is why doesn't someone pay attention? Because he has a *busy* mind. Now, what is a busy mind? It's your Acquired Self, isn't it? Hence, the root cause of ADD is your own Acquired Self.

How does a person develop a busy mind? As we observed earlier in the book, the busy mind is a product of the conditioning of your mind by society, which starts in early childhood (and never stops), in the form of video games, talking toys, books, movies, etc. Your parents are instructed by the Collective Acquired Self of their society to provide you with as much *mental stimulation* as possible,

so you won't be left behind. This *mental stimulation* gets into *high* gear as you enter school and continues throughout your life. Overloaded with all kinds of stories, ideas, concepts and information, your mind gets all *scattered*. It runs in different directions like a wild horse. Your behavior, arising out of *incessant, uncontrollable* thoughts, becomes *impulsive, reckless* and at times, *destructive*. You are easily distracted. Often, you stay in your own virtual world created by your busy mind. This often leads to learning *difficulties* in school.

Behavioral problems and learning difficulties get the attention of your teachers and parents. Typically, your parents take you to your pediatrician, who diagnoses you with ADD and prescribes a drug to control the symptoms. In this way, the root cause, your Acquired Self, conveniently *escapes* detection and you continue to suffer from ADD throughout your life.

True Freedom from Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)

Once you realize your Acquired Self is the root cause of your ADD, you can treat it by freeing yourself from your Acquired Self. Realize that the Acquired Self is *not* who you really are.

Guided Practice

Here is a *guide* you can follow:

- Sit quietly in a comfortable chair and relax. No music, telephone, TV or any other distractions.
- Pay attention to your surroundings: what you see, hear, smell, taste and touch.
- Pay attention to *space* in which everything is, *silence* which gives rise to all sounds and *stillness* in which all events take

place.

- Pay attention to your breathing. Observe how your chest expands with inhalation and retracts with exhalation. Count your breaths.
- Pay attention to your mind. See how thoughts chase each other. Treat them as thoughts and nothing more. They are thoughts, but not *you*. Whatever they *imply* is not happening right now, in front of your eyes. Therefore, it is virtual, unreal.
- Choose to stay out of the virtual world created by thoughts. Instead, choose to stay in the **real** world all around you.
- Feel the *relief*, *inner peace* and *joy* once you are *free* of your thoughts.
- After a few moments of being in the *present*, you will likely be *consumed* by the thoughts again. It is okay. Simply observe how your attention was *hijacked* by the thoughts. Bring your attention back to the *Present*, the *Now*, all around you.
- See how you can *shift* your attention from the unreal world in your head to the real world all around you. With this shift, you feel *instantaneous* inner peace.
- Continue the practice. Don't get discouraged.

Caution:

Please do not stop your drugs without consulting your physician.

Chapter 41

The Choice is Yours

Now you understand that the source of *stress* as well as the source of *joy and inner peace* resides inside you. The choice is yours! This is the most *important* choice of your life. Unfortunately, most people are not even aware of this choice. Stuck in the grip of their Acquired Self, they are unaware of this *vital* choice. Like everyone else around them, they believe that "*stress is part of life*" and not much can be done about it except for medications or other *escapes* discussed earlier in the book.

But after reading this book, you clearly understand that you are the one who is ultimately in the *driver's* seat. This is true *empowerment* and it does not arise out of insecurity. You can choose *not to be* in the grip of your Acquired Self. Why? Because you were not born with this. By *shifting* your attention to the Now, you get in touch with your True Self.

Therefore, at any given moment, ask yourself, "Am I in the grip of the Acquired Self? Am I lost in my *thoughts, concepts, emotions, beliefs, past and future*?" The moment you realize you have been *hijacked* by the Acquired Self, you actually are *no* longer in its total grip. It is only when you are not *even* aware that you are lost in the Acquired Self that you continue to experience *endless* stress.

Awareness is the key. To be aware that you are taken over by the Acquired Self will *release* you from its *prison* immediately. Become fully aware of your surroundings by using your *five senses*. Also, become aware of the *space* and *stillness* in which every thing is. Choose to live in the *bliss of Now*. Choose to be in touch with your *inner peace and joy*. Choose to be your *True Self*. This is the ultimate choice! Don't ever forget it.

Start to implement this very important choice in your life right now and be *free* of stress right away.

In Summary

The *source* of all stress lies inside you. Therefore, the *solution* must also reside inside you. The source of stress is your Acquired Self.

In summary, your Acquired Self is the "I" you mistakenly think who you are. It comprises of "My name, My personality, My concepts, My beliefs, My past, My future, My parents, My children, My teachers, My friends, My students, My school, My career, My goals, My accomplishments, My failures, My culture, My town, My country, My religion, etc. It is a psychological *entity* sitting inside you, but it is *not* the *true* you. It *steals* your identity. It controls your *thoughts*, *emotions* and *actions*. The Acquired Self is the basis of the "Busy Mind," a *constant* stream of thoughts. Then, thoughts *provoke* emotions and emotions *taint* your thoughts. A vicious cycle of thought-emotion-thought sets in. This is the basis of worrying, anxiety, anger, frustrations, hate, love, revenge, jealousy, guilt, sadness, depression, insecurity, selfishness, greed, ego, self-righteousness, expectations, judging, hypocrisy, embarrassment and shame. Then, *actions* arise out of these thoughts and emotions, which often cause stress for you and others. The actions may be verbal, written or physical.

As long you are in the grip of your Acquired Self, you will continue to think that's who you are. Because everyone else around you is in the grip of their Acquired Selves, you think that's normal. Then, you continue to live under stress for the rest of your life.

Realize that you are not your Acquired Self, because you were *not* born with this. With this realization, you are *free* of your Acquired Self.

Once you are free of the Acquired Self, you will feel a huge load lift off your shoulders... *But it does not mean you start to hate your Acquired Self.* This creates *negative* attachment. Your Acquired Self has its place. *Utilize your Acquired Self to live in society.* Be its *master* and not its *slave*. For example, you still make friends and enjoy their company, but you don't *need* their *praise* and *validation* to make you happy. The source of *happiness* lives inside you. You are not afraid of *criticism, embarrassment or insults*, because you know these arise out of concepts, which in reality, do not exist. You wear clothes according to weather conditions and not necessarily according to what's in fashion.

Go to school and get an education, but see it as a *means* to make a living, that's all. You are not seeking yourself in it. Don't pursue education as a means to enhance your *ego*. No need to be obsessed with *goals*. Focus on your studies, sports, arts, etc, instead of being *consumed* by thoughts of goals. In this way, you actually enjoy what you do at the present moment and do it *well*, because you pay *attention* to what you do.

Don't try to jump ahead of the present moment. Instead, know that life is happening right now and start to live it as it is, without running away from it.

Caution: Don't confuse life with life situations. Sometimes, a person may have a situation that needs to be changed. You work at it, take action, but still don't escape into the *fantasy* land.

Live in the NOW. Pay *attention* to everything around you. Remember the two F's: Focus and Fun. In the NOW, there is never any stress., but in the grip of your busy mind, there is always stress.

Most people confuse the present moment to what is in their head. Your conditioned mind always creates a conceptual, virtual world. It also creates a "*conceptual now*." This is not the present moment. The real present moment is: *what you see, hear, smell, taste and touch*. One easy way to stay in the present moment is by *keeping your mind where your body is*. For example, if you are in the classroom, keep your mind in the classroom. If you are at home, keep your mind at home. By living in the NOW, you remain stress free.

When thoughts *hijack* your mind, see them for what they are. Notice that whatever these thoughts *imply* is *unreal*, because it is not happening at this very moment. It has either already happened or it may happen. In either case, it is not happening right now in front of you. Realize the past and future really do not exist except in your head. Then, you are free of the *emotional pains* of the past and the unnecessary *worries* of the future.

Keep shifting attention away from your thoughts into the present moment, the reality around you, where stress never exists.

Dr. Zaidi's Quotes

Keep your Mind where your body is. This keeps you in the Now.

You have two selves: One is Real, True and Original. The other is Unreal, False and Acquired from society. The original True Self is the source of pure joy and peace. The Acquired Self is the source of all of the stress in your life.

You live in two worlds: one is Real and the other is Conceptual. In the Real world, there is never ever any stress. In the Conceptual world, there is always stress.

Freedom from the Acquired Self and the Conceptual world equals freedom from stress.

Realize that you were *not* born with the Acquired Self. It is *not* truly who you are. That's how you *free* yourself from the Acquired Self.

Utilize your Acquired Self to *function* in the Conceptual, virtual world. It is a tool, that's all!

All human interactions arise out of interactions of Acquired Selves. That's why there is so much stress in the human world.

See your Acquired Self in action while you interact with others. See how it *stirs* up your emotions and controls your speech and actions, which causes stress for yourself and others.

Every Acquired Self is highly *insecure*, because it is virtual and does not even exist, in Reality.

Insecurity is one of the main characteristics of the Acquired Self. That's why it quickly *judges* another person as *friend* or *enemy*. It feels secure with its friends and threatened by the enemies. It wants to subdue its enemy through verbal as well as physical fights. This is the basis of heated arguments, physical fights and even wars.

Success, failure, victory, loss, desirable, undesirable, good, bad, beautiful, ugly, hero, villain, honor and shame are *not* Real, but Concepts. In the grip of the conceptual world, they seem real, but they are Not.

Happiness, sadness, excitement, worthlessness, bitterness and jealousy are emotions *triggered* by the concepts of success, failure, victory, loss, fairness, unfairness, desirable, undesirable, good, bad, beautiful, ugly, hero, villain, honor, and shame.

“I, Me, My, Mine” is the *core* of the Acquired Self. That's why it always works for its own interests. This is the basis of selfishness.

The Acquired Self always wants *more*, which is the basis of greed.

The Past and Future are created by the conditioned mind, the Acquired Self. Both are virtual, unreal, and illusory.

Lost in the past, the Acquired Self triggers nostalgia, sadness, guilt, bitterness, anger and hate.

Lost in the future, the Acquired Self triggers fear and anxiety.

The Acquired Self uses its virtual *glorious* past and *perfect* future to *escape* from the stress of the *virtual* now.

Drugs, alcohol, irresponsible sex, partying, vacations, excessive work, gambling and even entertainment such as movies, newspapers, video games and books are all *escapes* from stress. Some are socially acceptable, others are not.

Drugs, alcohol and irresponsible sex are often medically harmful.

Concepts *divide* humans from each other. This is the *basis* of conflict and violence.

Clearly see what is Real and what is Unreal. Do not *confuse* one with the other.

Real is always in front of your eyes, not in your head. What is in your head is always unreal and virtual.

Reality is not conceptual and conceptual is not Reality.

Be aware of space, silence and stillness: This is the Real Now, in which every object *is*, in which events happen, in which sound arises, in which the entire universe *is*.

Stay in the field of your awareness: what you see, hear, smell, taste and touch.

Never lose touch with Reality.

Never get totally lost in the conceptual, virtual world.

Minimize your conceptual world to the bare *necessities*. A lot of stress will automatically disappear.

While anchored in Reality, function in the conceptual world when it is necessary. That's how you can live a stress free life.

It takes a minimum of two Acquired Selves to engage and fight, verbally or physically. If you stay free of your Acquired Self, you automatically stay free of fights.

All human relationships are based upon Acquired Selves interacting with each other. That's why there is so much stress in our lives.

The conceptual world gives *conflicting* messages to parents, teachers and teenagers and turns them against each other.

About Dr. Zaidi

Dr. Sarfraz Zaidi is a leading Endocrinologist in the U.S.A. He is a medical expert on Thyroid, Diabetes, Vitamin D and Stress Management. He is the director of the Jamila Diabetes and Endocrine Medical Center in Thousand Oaks, California. He is a former assistant Clinical Professor of Medicine at UCLA.

Books and Articles

Dr. Zaidi is also the author of these books: **"Take Charge of Your Diabetes," "Power of Vitamin D," "Graves' Disease and Hyperthyroidism"** and **"Stress Cure Now."** In addition, he has authored numerous articles in prestigious medical journals.

Memberships

Dr. Zaidi is a Member of the American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists (AACE). In 1997, Dr. Zaidi was inducted as a Fellow to the American College of Physicians (FACP). In 1999, he was honored to be a Fellow of the American College of Endocrinology (FACE).

Speaker

Dr. Zaidi has been a guest speaker at medical conferences and also frequently gives lectures to the public. He has been interviewed on TV, newspapers and national magazines. Dr. Zaidi is the former director of the Endocrine Clinic at the Olive-View UCLA Medical

Center where he taught resident physicians undergoing training in Diabetes and Endocrinology.

Internet

Dr. Zaidi also regularly writes on websites including:

www.OnlineMedinfo.com which provides in-depth knowledge about endocrine disorders such as Thyroid, Vitamin D, Parathyroid, Osteoporosis, Obesity, PreDiabetes, Metabolic Syndrome, Menopause, Low Testosterone, Adrenal, Pituitary and more.

www.DiabetesSpecialist.com which is dedicated to providing extensive knowledge to Diabetics.

www.InnerPeaceAndLove.com which is an inspirational website exploring the Mind-Body connection.

He regularly writes on his Blog.

www.onlinemedinfo.com/blog/

He has done educational YouTube videos about Vitamin D at www.youtube.com/user/georgie6988

And about Insulin resistance, diabetes and heart disease at www.youtube.com/user/TheDiabetesEducation

His main website: **www.DoctorZaidi.com**

Other Books by Dr. Zaidi

"Stress Cure Now"

In his ground breaking book, Dr. Zaidi describes a truly *New* approach to deal with stress. Dr. Zaidi's strategy to cure stress is based on his personal awakening, in-depth medical knowledge and vast clinical experience. It is simple, direct, original and therefore, profound. He uses logic - the common sense that every human is born with. Using the torch of logic, Dr. Zaidi shows you that the true root cause of stress actually resides inside you, not out there. Therefore, the solution must also reside inside you. All you have to do is see the true root cause of your stress clearly. In **"Stress Cure Now,"** Dr. Zaidi guides you to see the true root cause of your stress, in its deepest layers. Only then you can get rid of it from its roots, once and for all.

"Power of Vitamin D"

In this book, Dr. Zaidi provides a compelling, comprehensive, yet very practical knowledge about vitamin D deficiency, its health consequences, its diagnosis and treatment without the risk of toxicity. Dr. Zaidi illustrates important practical points by including real case studies from his clinical practice.

"Take Charge of Your Diabetes"

Insulin resistance is the root cause of diabetes in a majority of people, yet most have not even heard of it. In "Take Charge of Your Diabetes," Dr. Zaidi showcases his ground breaking *5-step strategy* to treat diabetes. Using this approach, Dr. Zaidi's patients achieve an excellent control of diabetes, prevent complications of diabetes and

above all, do not end up on insulin shots. Those who have been on insulin for years are able to come off insulin.

"Graves' Disease and Hyperthyroidism"

The medical treatment of Graves' disease has not changed in over 50 years. Sad, but true!

Over the last ten years, Dr. Zaidi developed a truly breakthrough approach to get rid of Graves' disease at its roots - autoimmune dysfunction. His revolutionary treatment strategy consists of five components: His unique Diet for Graves' disease (including original recipes), the link between Vitamin D deficiency and Graves' disease, the connection between Graves' disease and Vitamin B12 deficiency, how Stress causes Graves' disease (and Dr. Zaidi's unique strategy to manage stress) and the Judicious use of Anti-Thyroid drugs.