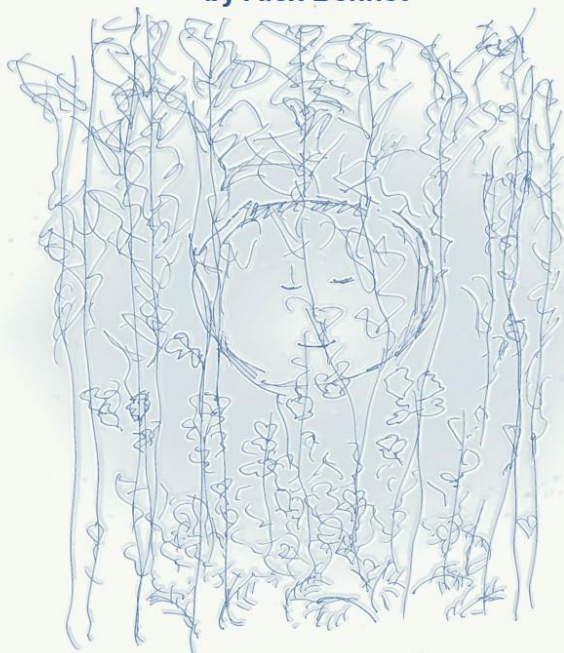


Possibilities that are **YOU!**

**Volume 14:
The Emoting Guidance System**

by Alex Bennet



Mountain Quest Institute

This is 14th in a series of 22 short books, what we call Conscious Look Books, that are conversational in nature, taking full advantage of the reader's lived experience to share what can sometimes be difficult concepts. We live in a world that is tearing itself apart, where people are out of control and wanting to control others, rebelling from years of real and perceived abuse and suppression of thought. Yet, this chaos offers us as a humanity the opportunity to make a giant leap forward. By opening ourselves to ourselves, we are able to fully explore who we are and who we can become. With that exploration comes a glimmer of hope as we begin to reclaim the power of each and every mind developed by the lived human experience!

These 22 concepts are part of the learning journey of which we are all a part, the Intelligent Social Change Journey (ISCJ). This is a developmental journey of the body, mind and heart, moving from the heaviness of cause-and-effect linear extrapolations, to the fluidity of co-evolving with our environment, to the lightness of breathing our thought and feelings into reality. Grounded in development of our mental faculties, these are phase changes, each building on and expanding previous learning in our movement toward intelligent activity.

These little books share 22 large concepts from the Profundity and Bifurcation of Change (which is written from an academic viewpoint). Each book is independent and includes seven ideas offered for the student of life to help us become the co-creators that we are. These books, available in soft cover from Amazon, support idea exploration, class discussion, other discussion groups or can be used as special occasion gifts.

Possibilities

that are **YOU!**

Volume 14: The Emoting Guidance System

by
Alex Bennet



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*Riding the undulating river of emotion
Flowing downward into a collective ocean
Rising above the energy fervor
Becoming a distant observer.
Seeking a reflective thought deliberation
Rising to a higher conscious liberation.*

-Cindy Lee Scott

Preface

This book is for YOU. Regardless of economic success or educational prowess, beyond cultural influences and habitual routines, YOU have been and continue to be a student of life. And since our time in this learning sphere is precious, the challenges and opportunities are both rapid and continuous, always offering new insights. YOU are a verb, not a noun. Forget what you were taught in grammar school!

Now, we live in a world of demanding challenges, where people and systems are rebounding from control, rebelling from eras of real and perceived suppression of thought. With the acceleration of mental development over the past century has come increased awareness of human capacity, with economic success in small bites for many and large bites for the few, and for some coming with an arrogance that says, “Look at me. I’m right, you’re wrong, and I’m not listening.”

Because of our Economy’s focus on the material, economic success begets economic success and the separation of wealth grows larger, flaming the difficulties of surviving in a CUCA world, that is, a world of accelerating change, rising uncertainty, increasing complexity, and the anxiety that comes with these phenomena.

Yet all of this **offers us, as a humanity the opportunity to make a giant leap forward.** By opening ourselves to ourselves, we are able to fully explore who we are. With that exploration comes glimmers of hope as we contemplate the power of each and every mind developed by the lived human experience!

As YOU move through your life of thoughts, feelings and actions—even when you have to repeat things over and over again as part of the experience—YOU are advancing toward the next level of consciousness.

Here's the bottom line. Everything that has been learned and continues to be learned is out there ... and as a student of life, YOU have access to it all. So often it is expressed in ways that don't make sense because of the language and media being used. It just isn't presented conversationally, and you don't have a chance to ask questions from your unique point of view.

So, these little books—which we refer to as Conscious Look Books—are specifically focused on sharing key concepts from *The Profundity and Bifurcation of Change* series and **looking at what those concepts mean to YOU.**

These books are conversational in nature, and further conversations are welcome. We invite your thoughts and questions, not guaranteeing answers because there is still so much to learn, but happy to

join in the conversation. Visit Mountain Quest Inn and Retreat Center www.mountainquestinn.com located in the Allegheny Mountains of West Virginia or email alex@mountainquestinstitute.com

As my partner David reminds us: *Run with the future!*

Our gratitude to all those who take this journey with us, and a special thanks to the colleagues, partners, friends, family and visitors who touch our hearts and Mountain Quest in so many ways.

With Love and Light, Alex and David

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Introduction

Emotions play a powerful role in influencing our perception of reality. Emotions assign values to options or alternatives, often without our knowing it! There is growing evidence that fundamental ethical stances in life stem from underlying emotional capacities. These stances create the basic belief system, the values, and often the underlying assumptions that are used to see the world—our mental models.

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INSIGHT: Emotions assign values to options or alternatives, often without our knowing it!

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Emotions are a familiar subject to each of us, and a critical element of personal, team and organizational performance. As an operational definition of emotions, we consider emotions as “a mental state that arises spontaneously rather than through conscious effort and is often accompanied by physiological changes; a feeling.”¹ However, we add the caveat that the various peripheral characteristics of emotions noted in this chapter may also apply, depending upon the author, context, and content of application. For example, Candice Pert, a neuroscientist and pharmacologist, speaks in broad terms, including the familiar human emotions of

anger, fear, sadness, joy, and contentment right along with basic sensations like pleasure and pain, and drive states such as courage, hunger and thirst. Pert focuses on the biochemical substrate of emotion. As she forwards, "Neuropeptides and their receptors thus join the brain, glands, and immune system in a network of communication between brain and body, probably representing the biochemical substrate of emotion."²

On the other hand, Antonio Damasio, also a neuroscientist, separates emotions and feelings. As he describes, "The term feeling should be reserved for the private, mental experience of an emotion, while the term emotion should be used to designate the collection of responses, many of which are publicly observable."³ Thus, emotions are externally focused and feelings are internally focused.

I like this differentiation. Yet, for the focus of this little book, both emotions and feelings are part of our internal guidance system. This is not to say that we should "follow" our emotions! Absolutely not! Emotions are telling us how we "feel" about something, and we have to know what we don't like to help understand what we do like. Further, sometimes emotions are very much the result of energy patterns or chemical imbalances.

And then there's nightmares. Pretty much everyone has had at least one of those! Now, we understand a lot more about nightmares than we used

to. Dreams, whether positive or negative in terms of our perceptions, can be purely physiologic and psychologic phenomena. They are often used by the body to release emotional and/or mental tensions accumulated during the day. So, thank you, body, for that. However, when you awaken and then continue *thinking about and feeling* a nightmare and the emotions attached thereto, you are quite literally anchoring it into your neuronal pathways, making additional connections to past similar thoughts or events, and helping ensure that nightmare will come up again and again, perhaps even larger, in the future!

This follows the same path that early psychiatrists used to insist was the way to move through past traumas. They would have a patient “live” through the events again in order to “release” them, only, in reality, “living” through them again just anchored them more tightly into memory! So, today we know better. First, just acknowledging an event (at the surface level), then choosing to release it is a good starting point. Second, focusing on a new similar event (or person, etc.), something positive that’s important to you to replace the past event, builds new connections. And, the more emotion around that new event (or person), the easier it is to trump the old event. For example, the best way to forget an old emotional relationship is to have a new positive relationship come into your life!

4 | Emoting Guidance

Let's dig a bit deeper into our emotions as a guidance system.

[Your Thoughts]



Idea 1: Emotions and feelings serve as a guidance system for living.

Our emotions are a building block of consciousness⁴, with both emotions and feelings serving as a guidance system for survival and the pain and pleasure portals of personality. Indeed, emotional content is almost always present in verbal and non-verbal communication. As Henry Plotkin—who brings together evolutionary biology, psychology and philosophy in his writing—describes, "Normal human life is lived within a sea of experienced and expressed emotions."⁵ I really like that analogy. Reflect on a past experience where your emotions have taken over your thoughts, and perhaps your actions. We have all had this experience, which helps us to recognize just how powerful our emotional system can be!

Drawing on neuroscience findings, we know that emotions play a strong role in learning. All incoming signals and information are immediately passed to the amygdala, where they are assessed for potential harm to the individual. The amygdala places a tag on the signal that gives it a level of emotional importance. If the incoming information is considered dangerous to the individual, the amygdala immediately starts the body's response, such as

pulling a hand away from a hot stove. In parallel, but slower than the amygdala's quick response, the incoming information is processed and cognitively interpreted.

Another aspect of the emotional system is the role it plays in individual memory. Situations that have a high emotional impact are much easier to recall, sometimes remembered throughout life, and hard to lay aside even when we desire to do so. From a learning perspective, this means that (consciously or unconsciously) the learner is always evaluating the importance of incoming information, and this process helps the individual to remember the information.⁶

This interplay of the physical and mental with the emotional is going on throughout the body. Candice's study of information-processing receptors on nerve cell membranes led her to discover the presence of neural receptors on most of the body's cells.⁷ This "established that the 'mind' was not focused in the head, but was *distributed via signal molecules to the whole body*,"⁸ with the mind, spirit, and emotions unified with the physical body as *part of a single intelligent system*. In a sense, we have "feelings" associated with all of our other senses, and our whole body has sensory capability!

Feelings such as confusion, or being puzzled, discouraged or distracted represent intellectual emotional difficulties. These may be telling us that

we are out of alignment with our inner self, and it's time to explore our motives and decisions. Drawing on the rich learning of our early philosophers, you can ask yourself: Am I basing my decisions and actions on truth, beauty and goodness? Am I in alignment with my belief systems? Am I fully engaging wisdom and demonstrating love?

As humans, we are prone to attribute various causes to our emotions and feelings. We say such things as: "*He* made me angry" or "I'm upset *because of ...*" or "*That* is frightening." However, these emotions and feelings are our own. To understand this concept, let's look at a few scenarios.

Scenario 1: You are the dad of a 17-year-old son who asks to use the family car on Friday night for a "hot" date. Agreeing, you give him a curfew of 12 Midnight. When Friday arrives, at half past Midnight he is not yet home. You are waiting in the front hall, saying to yourself, "When I know he's okay, I'm going to kill him!" The phone rings. "This is Mercy Hospital; I'm sorry. Your son, John Doe, was in an automobile accident. He died of massive head injuries." What happens to you? Your pulse speeds up, you are sweating, your head is pounding. You may very well have a stroke or heart attack. Two minutes pass, and the phone rings again. "This is Mercy Hospital. I'm sorry, wrong John Doe." And in walks your son, saying "Hey, dad, I ran out of gas, but I did everything you told me to ..." You may be

there lying on the floor ... yet, NOTHING HAS HAPPENED. Your emotions and feelings were a result of your PERCEPTION of what had happened.

Scenario 2: You are a 23-year-old young woman who has just completed a Master's Degree in Marketing. You land an interview for the job of your dreams with the largest marketing firm in New York City! Seven grueling hours of interviews. They look at your layouts, they ask about your photographs, they have you do an instantaneous writing sample. (They do provide lunch, so you're hanging in there.) Then, finally, you are offered the job at twice the salary you ever expected! Floating on air, you exit the building and glide down the stairs to the street. It's dark, and you are parked 20 blocks away, quite close, actually, for New York! As you head toward your car, you note there are two large figures following you. You speed up; they speed up. You turn the corner; they turn the corner. You start to run; they run after you. Catching up to you, one of the figures grabs your elbow, bringing you to a halt. How do you feel? What thoughts and their corresponding emotions and feelings are coursing through your body? The man holding your elbow reaches out his other hand, which has an object in it, and says, "Excuse me, Miss, you dropped your wallet."

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INSIGHT: Our emotions are just that ... OURS. We determine how they make us feel and how we act accordingly.

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As can be seen from these scenarios, your emotions and feelings are very much a product of your personal beliefs, perceptions, thoughts, experiences, and even the newspapers you've read and the movies you've seen.

Fear is a catalyst for many other emotional responses. Using the example of fear, Neale Donald Walsch—who is an actor and screenwriter as well as the author of *Conversations with God*—notes that different people are afraid of different things. He asks the question: So, what *does* produce the fear? Neale then responds, “It’s something inside you. It’s your ideas and your memories and your projects and your concepts and your apprehensions and your understandings and your desires and your conditioning and more. And all of these things fall into one broad category. Thoughts. It is your *thoughts* that sponsor your fears, and nothing else. Thoughts sponsor *all* emotions.”⁹

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INSIGHT: Thoughts sponsor all emotions.

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The two scenarios presented above deal with relative meaning, which is context sensitive and situation dependent. While emotional processing can—and regularly does—take place outside of conscious awareness, once aware of these emotional responses, humans have the potential to consciously observe, influence and shift their emotions.

As a rule of thumb, it takes only 17 seconds of focused feeling to shift from one emotional state to another. How might you do this? You do this through your thoughts and actions. See the Mood Shifting tool below. The body produces complex responses to emotional arousal. There is an electrochemical pathway that moves from the brain through the limbic system and then throughout the body utilizing adrenal glands and the autonomic nervous system. The firing of specific nerve cells forms and release amino acid neuropeptide chains which can activate or deactivate the biological process involved in both emotion and behavior. Our resource Candice Pert calls these chains *the molecules of emotion*.¹⁰

* * * * *

EXERCISE: *Mood Shifting*

Small and large perturbations have a way of working themselves into our lives, interfering with the flow. This is a simple tool that can serve you well. Your thoughts are *quite powerful*. By choosing

our thoughts we can determine or adjust our emotional experience.

STEP (1): Each of us has moments in life that make us feel good when we think about them. We also have special memories that help remind us of who we are, and perhaps why we are here. Take a wallet-sized card and on one side write five things you are, or have been a part of, that you feel good about. On the other side write down five things you have done in your life to serve others. These can be as simple as a well-timed compliment to a loved one, or an act of kindness to a stranger.

STEP (2): Put that card in your wallet and carry it around with you.

STEP (3): Whenever a life perturbation occurs and your emotions tank, recognize your immediate emotional response and honor it, being sure to note any lessons learned. Then, pull out your card and read whichever side is most appropriate for the situation at hand. Spend several minutes (or as much time as needed) remembering and reflecting on the events or situations represented on your card.

STEP (4): When you feel your emotions positively shift, you are ready to address the issue at hand from a different viewpoint.

* * * * *

What is missing from Candice Pert's description of the chemicals and molecules that activate the body's responses to emotional arousal is an explanation of *how* thought activates these chemical messages in the first place. Candice suggests an interesting phenomenon that offers a clue. Building on her work, clinical psychologists Peter Lambrou and George Pratt contend, "The receptor sites on a nerve cell vibrate at a certain frequency. However, when the neurotransmitter locks onto a receptor site, the frequency changes. Something is going on at the energetic, or vibratory, level. Our thesis is that the energy flowing in the meridians activates certain cells to trigger the manufacture of the neuropeptides."¹¹ This means that *the energy of thought interacts with the meridian system*, activating the electrochemical process and sending signals throughout the body.

Quantum theory can help us understand this relationship. Energy fields contain information. The more thought heading the same direction, the greater the potential impact of that thought. Relativity theory tells us that energy and matter are equivalent and interchangeable; energy can exist as either a wave or a particle. Further, we now know that the very act of observing a wave or particle can alter it. At the Quantum level, *when things get smaller, then the observer has a greater influence.*¹²

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INSIGHT: Energy fields contain information. The more thought heading the same direction, the greater the potential impact of that thought.

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William Tiller, an engineering professor at Stanford University, spent 40 years experimenting with the power of intentional thought.¹³ Using a sensitive electrical capacitor, he discovered that by focusing their intent, ordinary people could cause the capacitor to discharge. When the subjects focused their attention on the capacitor, setting their intention, the capacitor discharged during a few minutes. Early experiments involved changing the alkaline/acidity ratio of water. His work is featured in the Conscious Look Book on *Attention and Intention*.

By understanding that emotions can be triggered by perceived external events, yet are simultaneously our creation and an act of will, we can set up situations where external events or internal thoughts provide stimuli to trigger desired feelings.¹⁴ We choose external stimuli regularly when we go to the movies or visit an amusement park, or even when we consume alcohol or stimulate our palate with a gourmet meal! Choosing internal stimuli, we can slip into a daydream of a favorite memory or imagine our perfect future. The bottom

line is that with practice and conviction, we can *choose* to feel a certain way.

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INSIGHT: By understanding that emotions can be triggered by perceived external events, yet are simultaneously our creation and an act of will, we can set up situations where external events or internal thoughts provide stimuli to trigger desired feelings.

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Awareness as feelings often comes in the form of pain and, while this pain can be felt throughout the body, it is often felt as originating in the heart, the perceived center of emotions. Fortunately, thought has the potential to mitigate this pain. As computer scientist and musician Leonard Cooper says, “Many of life’s events can damage a person emotionally. The mind can help the heart overcome its hurt and pain by creating new thought forms that allow a different heart reaction to otherwise traumatic events. In this way, the mind and the heart work together to enact a different perception of traumatic events, allowing love and compassion to remain intact even when one is under attack.”¹⁵

People have a tendency to get caught up in life and not listen to their bodies. When this occurs, the body will eventually manifest pain or physical distress to catch our attention. In the 1960’s,

Professor Eugene Gendlin, a therapist and researcher at the University of Chicago, discovered a consistent difference between successful therapy clients and those who were unsuccessful. This difference could be identified in the client during the first or second sessions. The successful clients had a vague awareness of their bodies, a sense or feeling emerging from their bodies. As described: “[A]t some point in the session, the successful therapy clients would slow down their talk, become less articulate, and begin to grope for words to describe something that they were feeling at the moment. If you listened to the tapes, you would hear something like this: 'Hmmm. How would I describe this? It's right here. It's ... uh ... it's ... it's not exactly anger ... hmmm.' Often the clients would mention that they experienced this feeling in their bodies, saying things like, 'It's right here in my chest,' or 'I have this funny feeling in my stomach.'”¹⁶ How many of you have had that kind of experience?

From this research Eugene developed an approach he called *Focusing* that became a self-help skill to use instead of therapy, to help make decisions and as an aid to creativity.¹⁷ Psychologist Ann Weiser Cornell says that “Our bodies carry knowledge about how we are living our lives, what we need, what we value and believe, and what has hurt us emotionally and how to heal it.”¹⁸ She sees focusing as offering exciting potential for change. “Focusing lets you form a trusting relationship with

your body ... *let's you listen to the whispers of your body before it has to shout.*"¹⁹

* * * * *

EXERCISE: *Focusing*

We build on Ann's extensive work on focusing to create the process shared here.

STEP (1) Find a comfortable place to sit or lie where you will not be bothered. Now take three or four deep breaths, in through the nose, out through the mouth, releasing your anxieties and any tenseness in your body as you release your breath. Feel your body become quiet.

STEP (2) Continue feeling your body. Take a tour of your body, letting your thoughts roam through your body. Invite something to be felt. *Ask:* "What wants my attention now?" Then listen to your body, *feel* your body.

STEP (3) When something catches your attention, focus on it. Say *hello* to it, then try to describe or name it. Putting it into words focuses it, and limits it. With interested curiosity get to know the feeling better. *Ask:* Is there an emotion connected with this feeling? When you name the emotion, *ask:* Is this the right word to describe it?

STEP (4) Gently, taking your time, invite the feeling to tell you more. *Ask:* Is this feeling

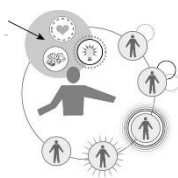
connected to a memory or belief? Then, just put it aside or let it go. Don't deep dive into memory lane. As Ann says, "There is no need to 'fix' or 'solve' the problem. *Acknowledging* [emphasis added] the message, really hearing it, is all that is needed to bring deep relief."²⁰

STEP (5) Go back to sensing your body. *Ask*: Is this a good place to stop focusing for now? If the answer is "no", repeat STEPS (2) through (4). If the answer is "yes", thank your body for sharing this information, say you will be back, and slowly bring your focus back to the outside world. Open your eyes.

HINT: It is not necessary to wait until your body catches your attention through pain or physical distress to use Focusing. All too often we only notice our bodies when something is wrong, yet our bodies are working day and night just for us! Take a few minutes every day to thank every cell—all the healthy ones—for all they do for you; *they are all about you!* Check in with your body daily.

* * * * *

[Your Thoughts]



Idea 2: Our thoughts and feelings are very important to creating our reality.

The emotions we feel—or choose to feel—affect every part of our lives, personal and professional, whether alone or in a group. Leadership consultant and author Faith Ralston discovered unique insights into the way people behave and why they behave that way. She calls these the Principles of Emotion.²¹ This is a good set that warrants repetition here. These are:

1. Emotional needs express themselves one way or another.
2. Anger is an expression of need.
3. Our feelings and needs are not wrong or bad.
4. Emotions are the gateway to vitality and feeling alive.
5. We can address emotional issues and still save face.
6. Immediate reactions to problems often disguise deeper feelings.
7. We must clarify individual needs before problem solving with others.
8. We need to *express* positive feelings and *communicate* negative ones.

I can't think of anything I could add to that list. Can you?

If you've been around in life for a while, you no doubt have heard the expression, and probably felt, *the emotional rollercoaster of life*. This is the up and down ride between excitement and disappointment, emotional highs and lows. Humans seem to have a penchant for living from one extreme to another. One approach to balance forwarded by businessman and author Allan Willis is to lower your expectations as to prevent disappointment. As he says, "To free yourself from the emotional rollercoaster, have an expectation that events will be as they are going to be. Learn to accept things the way they are and do not expect events to be how you want them to be."²²

While this is certainly one approach to achieving a "calm, relaxing and balanced journey through our lives",²³ it also reduces the emotional feelings of vitality and being alive. Further, as we have learned from neuroscience, *our thoughts and feelings are very important to creating our reality*. Since thought forms follow thought, setting intent (through expectations) is a powerful tool of self. When our thought is consistently supported by our emotions, it is like giving gas to our thought, *which increases the force of our thought*. See the Conscious Look Book on *Attention and Intention*.

With this new frame of reference comes the understanding that events themselves, that is, things

happening in the environment in which we live AND in our interactions in that environment, *do not themselves have meaning*. It is our self, emerging from all the experiences of life, that *assigns meaning to events*. There is a Conscious Look Book on *The Emerging Self*, too. A power of emotions is their sensitivity to meaning, that is, to the meaning we have assigned to these types of things or events. Emotions exist to alert and protect individuals from harm, and to energize them to action when they have strong feelings or passions. However, *emotions are concerned with the meaning of the information and not the details*. This is because emotions bypass slower cognitive functions such as conscious thought. As introduced above, all incoming signals and information pass through the amygdala, where they are assessed for potential harm to the individual and tagged in terms of level of emotional importance.²⁴ Thus, the body is responding before the incoming information is processed and cognitively interpreted, and prior to conscious awareness or thought. Feelings trump thoughts.

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INSIGHT: Emotions exist to alert and protect individuals from harm, and to energize them to action when they have strong feelings or passions. However, emotions are concerned with the meaning of the information and not the details.

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Sometimes it's difficult to value something that is part of everyday life until you don't have it anymore. When going through the hormonal changes that come with aging (okay, I admit it, I'm aging!), I lost my emotions for a period of a year. While the mental faculties were still fully functioning, life felt flat; there was less joy and excitement with the discovery of ideas, and less desire to take what was learned and write a book or share it with others. Gosh, I didn't even cry at sappy movies anymore! Fortunately, as the body adjusted to new chemical levels, emotions slowly returned and my tears came back, and even simple emotional responses to everyday activities, whether negative or positive, brought with them *the happiness of feelings*. I was living again!

As another example, when a family member died, I went through the five stages of loss detailed in Elizabeth Kubler-Ross's work on death and dying. Even as these strong emotions came forth, they were accompanied by laughter, what I refer to as *joyous grieving*. I simultaneously felt sorrow and joy, for the deep feelings associated with the grieving process were a reminder of the love I felt for this family member, and triggered gratitude for knowing and feeling that love so deeply. These are both human and material reactions to our internal psychic climate interacting with the external environment.

As can be seen, our emotions can—and if we choose do—add a richness to life, but are always in service to the mental faculties. *How we express and respond to our emotions is a choice.*

As the guidance system which punctuates the positive and negative aspects of our lives, our feelings and emotions need to be honored, and, as appropriate, considered in the making of our day-to-day decisions. Positive emotions such as love and joy make our lives more meaningful. While we may choose to hold on to strong negative emotions to purposefully create a force to propel us on a course of action, once they have been honored in terms of recognition and understanding, it is indeed a good idea to release emotions no longer needed. This will be discussed further in the following idea dealing with stuck energy.

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INSIGHT: Our feelings and emotions need to be honored, and, as appropriate, considered in the making of our day-to-day decisions.

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The Dalai Lama uses the term *emotional hygiene* to describe the necessity for each of us to bring destructive emotions under control before going out and acting in the world. Otherwise, these emotions can, and most likely will, cause harm to ourselves and others. This is a good practice to

remember, and where perhaps the Mood Shifting tool in Idea 1 and the Releasing Emotions exercise at the end of this Idea can be of service. Daniel Goleman, the science journalist who published the bestselling book on *Emotional Intelligence*, suggests that having calm, clarity and compassion as we act on the world will result in the greatest good.²⁵ With reflection, no doubt we all agree.

A few words about emotional intelligence.

Emotional intelligence is the ability to sense, understand, and effectively apply the power and acumen of emotions as a source of human energy, information, connection, and influence. It includes self-control, zeal and persistence, and the ability to motivate oneself.

Daniel identifies four components of emotional intelligence at work: self-awareness; self-management; social awareness; and social skill.²⁶ Since the publication of his first book, there has been much research in this area, and today EQ is recognized as a basic requirement for effective use of the intellect. As can be seen, emotional intelligence is both a personal tool of self and social engagement, managing ourselves *and* our relationships.

To understand emotional intelligence, we study how emotions affect behavior, influence decisions, motivate people to action, and impact their ability to interrelate. Emotions play a much larger role in our

lives than previously understood, including a strong role in decision-making. For years it was widely held that rationality was the way of the executive. Now it is becoming clear that the full spectrum of what it is to be human—including the rational and the emotional parts of the mind—must be engaged to achieve the best performance in our personal lives and in our organizations.

What is really exciting in our current reality is that *the contagious nature of emotions can be both transferrable and beneficial to the virtual world!* Today we have developed technology systems that are intelligent emotional systems that integrate distributed cognition, social competitive gameplay and game-based learning experiences, and entrepreneurs are fully engaging these opportunities. Now, it's just up to each of us—and to humanity at large—to achieve emotional intelligence in our interactions with others in business, politics and our personal lives.

* * * * *

EXERCISE: *Releasing Emotions*

STEP (1): Recognize and name the emotions you are feeling, fully acknowledging their presence.

STEP (2): Put your arms around yourself and, rocking in a motion from left to right and back in a

self-embrace, and with gratitude for these emotions, *say out loud* "I am having a human moment."

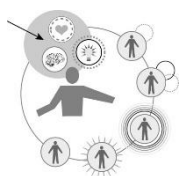
STEP (3): Ensuring that you have learned all you need to learn from their presence, thank your emotions for existing and for this learning.

STEP (4): Using your creative imagination, choose to release these emotions, visualizing them floating away in a balloon, or imploding into the air, or sending them to a junk yard for potential reuse. Have fun with this. The only limit is your imagination.

STEP (5): When a negative emotion departs it leaves a clear space that needs filling. To fill this space, spend a few minutes thinking about some happy memories, or engage in an activity that makes you happy.

NOTE: It's useful to create a small card (wallet-size) with happy thoughts. This card can be used to spur happy thoughts in the technique above, or can be used to raise your vibration anytime you feel an emotional low.

* * * * *



Idea 3: Fanned by emotions, anxiety is playing a large role in our everyday lives.

As the old systems break down, people are being stripped of their comfort zones and filled with anxiety, often accompanied by anger, fear and even despair. From the heads of government to colleagues in the workplace to children playing on the street to your own family, there is great uncertainty of what tomorrow will bring.

In her forward-thinking book published in 1996, business lecturer Jennifer James said: “The profound changes we are facing today would normally take two or three generations to be assimilated. We are trying to make the stretch in a decade. No wonder the result is anxiety and even chaos. We face a depth and breadth of change unparalleled since the Industrial Revolution. The old values and institutions are breaking up, and we are unsure what will replace them.”²⁷ Indeed, they *have* broken apart and continue breaking. Jennifer’s words seem even more appropriate for today.

A 2012 research study at the University of Queensland, which involved 91 countries and more than 480,000 people, showed that globally, one person in thirteen suffers from anxiety. While anxiety disorders were found to be more common in Western societies, depression was found to be lowest

in North America and highest in some parts of Asia and the Middle East, *suggesting that depression is more prevalent where conflict exists.*²⁸ As political attacks continue to create divisiveness and fear, followed by a steady increase in violence across the society, this is no longer the case in the United States. The National Institute of Mental Health estimates that 19.1% of U.S. adults had an anxiety disorder in the past year (that's one person in 5), and that an estimated 31.1% of U.S. adults experience an anxiety disorder at some time in their lives.²⁹

Little wonder this is occurring. Research in neuroscience is validating that the human mind/brain co-evolves with its environment, "endowing it with the flexibility to adapt to the environment it encounters, the experiences it has, the damage it suffers, the demands its owner makes of it. The brain is neither immutable nor static but is instead continuously remodeled by the lives we lead."³⁰

This is required for human survival. The changes in the structure of the brain that need to occur in a changing, uncertain and complex environment are not a new phenomenon. This concept, called neuroplasticity, can be found not only in the history of the evolution of man, but also in the current maturation of the individual. Neuroplasticity is the ability of neurons to change their structure and relationships according to environmental demands or personal decisions and

actions. The brain maintains a high degree of plasticity, changing in response to experience and learning. As Dean Buonomano, a neuroscientist and psychologist, and Michael Merzenich, a neuroscientist and Dean's mentor, explain, "The brain has been shaped by evolution to adapt and readapt to an ever-changing world. The ability to learn is dependent on modification of the brain's chemistry and architecture."³¹

Let's use stress as an example. High stress can be quite dangerous to human systems. There are two possible responses to this danger: either *eliminate the cause* of stress, the situation at hand, or *change your perception* (thought) about the cause of stress.

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INSIGHT: To change a situation, you can either eliminate the cause of stress, the situation at hand, or change your perception of the situation at hand.

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A cognitive approach such as a simple thought tool can help in this regard. For example, if you are in a job where you are continuously unhappy, you might have this conversation with yourself. *Why am I still in this job? Because the paycheck is regular and good, and I don't have another job to move into. Because there is some potential for advancement. Because I like the idea of this type of work. Because*

I am learning. Because ... because ... because ... The idea here is that there ARE reasons why you have *not* left this job, regardless of your emotions/feelings *about* the job.

Fill in a two-column list, capturing on one side the reasons you are still in the job and on the other side the things you don't like about the job. Now, look at this list closely. In your judgment, at least unconsciously, the positive elements currently outweigh the negative elements, *or you would choose to leave*. Acknowledging this—that currently staying in this job is a choice—you can shift your perception and, perhaps, develop a timeline or a list of actions you will take to move yourself into (1) a better position in the company, or (2) a better position to move to another company. While this shift of perception can help unblock emotions and move you back into the flow of life, simultaneously, appreciate your emotions! They are providing input, that is, letting you know that you need to stay open to the potential around you; in this case, the opportunity for a new job that is a closer fit to who you are and who you want to be.

Daniel Amen, a medical doctor, says that physical exercise, mental exercise and social bonding are the best sources of stimulation of the brain.³³ Complex levels of self-awareness, those that involve higher brain functions and potential changes in neural networks, *cannot be accomplished when an*

individual feels anxious and defensive. Specifically, a safe and empathic relationship can establish an emotional and neurobiological context that is conducive to neural reorganization. This relationship “serves as a buffer and scaffolding within which [an adult] can better tolerate the stress required for neural reorganization.”³⁴ Kathleen Taylor, editor of *The Neuroscience of Adult Learning*, explains, “Adults who would create (or recreate) neural networks associated with development of a more complex epistemology need emotional support for the discomfort that will also certainly be part of that process.”³⁵ In other words, the more troubled the times (in terms of change, uncertainty and complexity), the more necessary it is to have a *balancing emotional safety net*.

Kathleen’s co-editor, Sandra Johnson, agrees. Referring to recent discoveries in social cognitive neuroscience, Sandra says that educators and mentors of adults recognize “the neurological effects and importance of creating a trusting relationship, a holding environment, and an intersubjective space,”³⁶ where such things as reflection and abstract thinking can occur. I’m really glad the idea of trust has come into this conversation. When we can trust others, we feel safe and there is more joy in our lives.

The irony of stress is that some stress can be beneficial. There is an optimum level of stress for

each individual that *facilitates learning*. Excitement can serve as a strong motivation to drive people to learn, but cannot be so strong that it becomes high stress moving to anxiety. For example, Uri Merry, professor and educator, sees adaptation not as a basic transformative change, but as having a new range of possibilities. When people face growing uncertainty and stress, their resilience allows them to find novel forms of adaptation to the changing conditions.³⁷ In other words, with a stressful external environment, people will naturally tend to find ways of reacting and adapting to that environment.

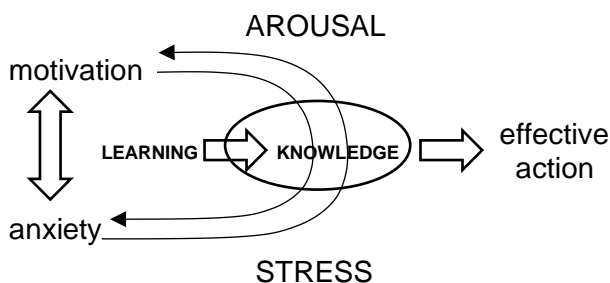


Figure 1. *An optimal level of stress facilitates learning.*

Learning is highly dependent on the level of arousal of the learner. Too little arousal and there is no motivation, too much and stress takes over and reduces learning. Maximum learning occurs when

there is a moderate level of arousal. This initiates neural plasticity by increasing the production of neurotransmitters and neural growth hormones, which in turn facilitate neural connections and cortical organization.³⁸ That's a whole lot of learning.

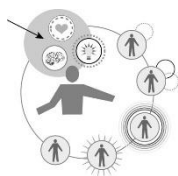
Since stress is a result of the perception of an individual in a given situation, an individual can learn to control or minimize it. One approach is to perceive things from a different frame of reference, which was introduced in Idea 2. Is it indeed possible to harness the energy of anxiety? As shown in the discussion above on stress, the evidence would suggest yes, to a certain degree.

Another way to reduce stress is to not judge a situation by the possibility of its outcomes. In other words, *most stress is caused by anticipation of future events* that offer a perceived threat of some nature.

Researcher Joseph LeDoux says that, “Bodily changes follow directly the PERCEPTION of the exciting fact, and that our feeling of the same changes as they occur IS the emotion.”³⁹ This is what happened in our two stories in Idea 2. The PERCEPTION of events (thought) triggered emotions. Joseph also believes that “once emotions occur they become powerful indicators of future behavior.”⁴⁰ He considers emotions higher-order states. Hmmm. I’m just remembering that there is something about emotions being part of the soul.

Let's see. The soul represents the animating principles of human life in terms of thought and action, specifically focused on its moral aspects, *the emotional part of human nature*, and higher development of the mental faculties. Wow! Our emotional system is a special gift. I sure am glad I have emotions and feelings.

[Your Thoughts]



Idea 4: Strong emotional responses can emerge from the unconscious.

Knowledge is situation dependent and context sensitive. We are continuously associating the current circumstances of life with what has been previously learned in order to take effective action in the current situation, the NOW, the instant at hand. We live in a continuous flow of NOWs.

Recall a time when you were thrown into a situation, perhaps unpleasant, where you shifted your internal thinking—and therefore your external actions—to an entirely different way of perceiving. For example, perhaps you were called upon to comfort a friend who has just lost a loved one. Your thoughts, feelings and actions are different than the norm, filled with love and compassion that preempts all other areas of thought and feeling, often accompanied with a knowing of what to say, or what not to say. In short, for the moment you are a different person, that is, conveying a different personality than the perceived “normal” you, and flowing with feelings and emotions. From this short example, it can be seen that the individual personality adapts to the context and situation of the moment.

The personality is a psychological system which displays a unity and continuity in terms of past, present and future both as perceived by the individual and as the individual is perceived by others.⁴¹ Note that this definition lets us view the personality from the perspective of the individual (a collection of attributes and inclinations) as well as the perspective of the observer (a social construct based on a set of perceived differing psychological characteristics).

The complex system of structures and processes that is personality emerges from multiple subsystems, specifically involving interdependencies between the person and the environment. This complexity is not surprising. Humans are complex adaptive systems and the development of neurological structure is dependent on both genetic programming and personal experience.⁴²

An exciting, fairly recent discovery in neuroscience is the concept of plasticity, the result of the connection between neural patterns in the mind and the physical world. We introduced this in Idea 3. This plasticity is not limited to single thoughts; in reality, there is no single thought, since every aspect of a thought is connected to hundreds of other aspects of thought, including previous patterns, emotions and context. Thus, related thoughts in terms of specific or similar situations are triggered

when there is a reoccurrence or a perceived reoccurrence of that type of situation.

As an aside, I'd like to introduce the concept of *chunking*. The way people become experts involves the chunking of ideas and concepts and creating understanding through the development of significant patterns useful for solving problems and anticipating future behaviors within their area of focus. For example, master chess players, or experts, examine the chessboard patterns over and over again, studying them, looking at nuances, generally “playing with” and studying these patterns.⁴³ In other words, they use long-term working memory, pattern recognition and chunking as a means of understanding and decision-making, all of which over time becomes embedded in the unconscious.⁴⁴

Well, similar to this example, groups of thought (as knowledge) are connected in the unconscious. As similar situations emerge, based on feedback and response and particularly when strong emotions are involved, more and more neuronal connections are created relating to how to effectively handle these situations. Embedded in the unconscious—waiting to be triggered—these chunked groups of thought come to the fore when they are needed. The more times a person experiences similar situations, the stronger this pattern of thought becomes, eventually quite capable of driving actions, which we may be unable to

change by a conscious decision or an act of will! This is an experience of being “taken over” by a part of ourselves, which “lasts as long as the situation lasts—perhaps a few minutes, perhaps an hour, perhaps a few hours—and then changes by itself when we leave this situation and go into a different one.”⁴⁵ This is consistent with the psychology textbook concept that an individual is not a single self, but rather many selves, which shift and change as the individual moves from situation to situation.⁴⁶

This concept is not new to the field of psychology. And while it has been called by many names such as ego, archetypes, subregions, identity states, self-schemas and more, we choose to use the term sub-personalities to represent this concept. Sub-personalities are “patterns of feelings, thoughts, behaviors, perceptions, postures and ways of moving which tend to coalesce in response to various recurring situations in life.”⁴⁷ They are “a semi-permanent and semi-autonomous region of the personality capable of acting as a person.”⁴⁸

Chunking has occurred to create these sub-personalities—or patterns of knowledge—that are perceived critical to address and handle certain types of situations. As layer after layer of these chunked knowledge patterns are added through related experiences, the sub-personality increases in complexity, and can take on a life of its own. Quite

unconsciously, YOU have built an “expert” to handle a specific type of situation!

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INSIGHT: As layer after layer of chunked knowledge patterns are added through related experiences, the sub-personality increases in complexity, and can take on a life of its own.

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And there is the crux of it ... WHY we sometimes have immediate emotional reactions and responses in specific situations. In our earlier example of comforting a friend, this was most likely a desired outcome. However, remember a time when you snapped out a rather dramatic negative response to a friend or loved one, and then spent the next few days trying to figure out WHY you had that response.

A single past event with a large emotional impact can cause dramatic responses in the NOW. Imprints of emotions can get “stuck” in our subsystems, emerging when triggered and often leaving us as stunned as the person we are addressing! Of course, we can attribute some “raw” emotional responses to being tired or having a bad day. But, generally, there are other things involved, deeper things, perhaps even things that we have consciously long forgotten. For example, when threatening negative events have not been fully

processed, emotions can be triggered by a simple facial expression or other body language, or a perceived attitude, or a similar phrase of words that sparks something from the past.

A threatening or anxiety-provoking event perceived as negative can be handled in three ways. See the figure below.

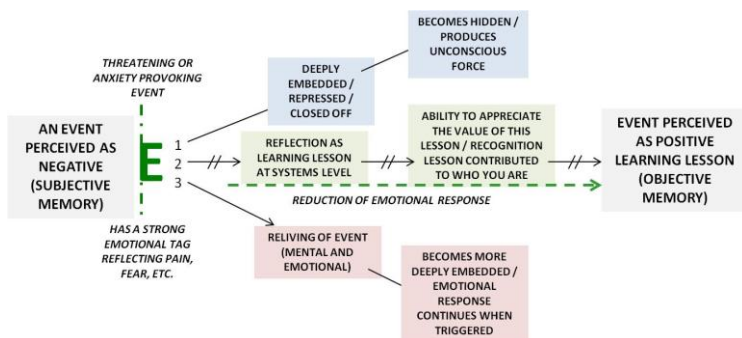


Figure 2. *Learning Cycle for Threatening Events.*

As represented on track #1, an event can be so deeply embedded that an individual is in a state of denial regarding the importance or impact of the event. The event itself may have become “hidden” such that an individual cannot bring it into conscious recall. Conversely, as represented on track #3, an individual could be so caught up in *reliving* the event over and over again that there isn’t any space to separate from the event and reflect. And the pain of the event remains in conscious awareness.

My poet laureate Cindy Lee Scott wrote a poem that reflects this approach called *Prisons of My Mind*.

*Meandering on my journey through life
Upon this unbridled anthropic plain
To so many evils vulnerable
Offering a life of consuming pain.*

*Playing the victim, befriending torment
Knowing this familiar spirit so well
Then one day awakening in a dark place
Drowning in my very own man-made hell.*

*Struggling in vain, stifled thoughts reach out
A passage through suffering I must find
Ensconced in battle I could not perceive
I'd become a prisoner of my own mind.*

*Playing the victim persona so well,
Living it over and over again
Bathed in sorrow, with anger lashing out,
Beckoning battles I could never win.*

*Relentless pleading for someone to help
Wallowing in pools of paralyzed fear.
Telling of anguishing, upending tales
Which my deafened ears could no longer hear.*

*Embracing and facing my deepest thoughts,
My inner eyes opened and I could see
The role of victim would dwindle away
By giving release to those who hurt me.*

*I must also forgive myself for pain
Which I've caused as I journey down the road
Judgment gives way to compassion and grace
That unburdened and lightened my load.*

*And with this release the answers grew clear:
To cultivate love and learn how to give
So now this worn body began to heal
And my burdened Soul was set free to live.*

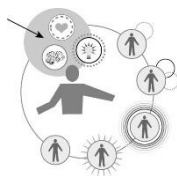
*As I go on through this journey of life
With its numerous lessons left to find.
I sing! I soar! I've empowered release
And freedom from the prisons of my mind.*

There is, of course, a third approach that can be chosen. As represented on track #2, as you move further away from an event, and process the subjective memory in a variety of ways, you can begin to reflect on it from a systems viewpoint as a learning lesson. Then, over time, you can begin to appreciate the value of this lesson, and with that appreciation comes the realization that this lesson of the past has contributed to who you are today. You can potentially reach a point of gratitude, that is, being thankful for the learning experience. The word gratitude has Latin roots from *gratus*, meaning pleasing or thankful, and *gratia*, meaning favor or thanks, and in Spanish and French it translates as *gracia*. When used as a name, made popular by 17th Century Puritans, Gracia means “inspired by grace,”

with grace representing beauty, kindness and mercy. During this process the emotional tag becomes less and less prominent, diminishing altogether as the event is perceived as a positive learning experience, occupying a place in objective memory. As new learning lessons emerge and take center stage in terms of focus, the event may disappear entirely from memory, although the lesson as a pattern remains available as needed.

As a final thought, it is important to note that we are holistic beings, with the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual all intertwined in a dance of existence and experience. We are very much electrically and chemically controlled, still animal-like in our common behaviors, and emotional in our reactions. Yet we are mental beings with the prerogatives of will and the power of choice. And within we have an incessant longing and unquenchable yearning that propels us to discover who we are and what we are capable of being, opening us to our spiritual capacity and urging us to develop our intellectual capabilities. As all seasoned lovers in the journey of life know, the road is not easy. It is full of ego and arrogance, injured pride, ruffled feelings, foolish animal fears and childish anxieties which, when recognized, can be diminished and released. We can indeed be masters of our ship, sailing through the rocky shores of life with peace of mind and tranquility of spirit.

[Your Thoughts]



Idea 5: Cognitive conveyors connect—and move us to act on—our thoughts, emotions and feelings.

Cognitive conveyors weave their way throughout these modalities of change, supporting both development of the picture of the future and the actions necessary to achieve that picture. Cognitive conveyors are a subset of words that represent concepts filled with a combination of thought, emotion and feelings. While emotional arousal plays an important role in these concepts, affecting mental activity and having a physiological effect on the body, they are not identified specifically as emotions.

These words are very much in support of our thought. For example, consider the concepts of desire, drive, courage and intent, each representing different combinations of emotional and mental activity, with different levels of emotional content supporting mental thought and related physical action. The mental activity of "wonder" would also fit into this set.

Conversely, there are also words that potentially represent cognitive impellers; an example is procrastination. There are also concepts, such as persuasion, that can be either a conveyor or impeller,

dependent on the situation and context. Thus, again, we are reminded that it is *how* we use our feelings and *how* we use our emotions that makes a difference in our actions, which are, whether conscious or unconscious, a choice. There are also conditions that *represent* emotional states but are not the emotions themselves. For example, claustrophobia is a condition that generally involves fear.

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INSIGHT: It is how we use our feelings and how we use our emotions that makes a difference in our action, which are, whether conscious or unconscious, a choice.

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Cognitive conveyors support modalities of change. Modalities are specific ways of doing things, that is, forms, protocols or conditions that surround theories and methodologies, specific ways of thinking, feeling and acting as we move through continuous waves of change in our everyday lives. For example, from the earliest forms of humans we have been in a continuous cycle of experiencing and learning, irrevocably interrelated, and both of which can be considered modalities of change. More recently, inclusive of neuroscience findings occurring since the change of the century, the experiential learning model has been expanded to include the mode of social engagement built on a

model of interacting with self and co-evolving with our environment.⁴⁹ Social engagement, which could also be considered another modality of change, also relates to learning. Note that experiencing, learning and engaging insinuate *movement toward something*.

Visioning, imagining and conceptualizing are additional modalities of change. These modalities insinuate creating a picture of the future, with experiencing, learning and engaging actively moving you toward that picture. See the figure below.

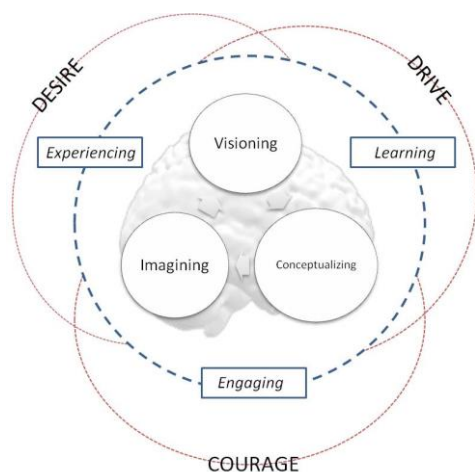


Figure 3. *Cognitive conveyors can be harnessed to support both creating the picture of the future and taking the actions to move toward that picture.*

Cognitive conveyors weave their way throughout the modalities of change. For example,

experiential learning covers much territory from living in a certain environment to a direct interaction with another person, to a frightening event, to the internal experiences of dreaming, meditation, reading or reflection on action. In early human development, this experiential learning loop was intertwined with fear driven by the need/**desire** to survive. Learning from personal experience or the experiences of others would promote change in behavior. While survival today is rarely a matter of being eaten by a tiger, nonetheless fear and desire often remain in the learning loop related to financial success, saving face, bullying, personal desires and selfishness, and even an arrogance of personal entitlement. What is interesting is the shifting levels of emotional and mental content in cognitive conveyors. For example, desire has a larger emotional component than intent. See the figure below.

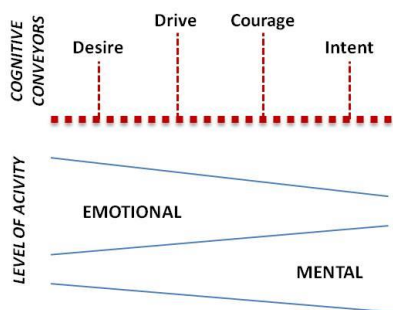


Figure 4. *Examples of concepts that are cognitive conveyors.*

We will briefly focus on desire, courage and drive as cognitive conveyors.

Desire. As used here, desire is the expression of a feeling, to want or wish for something.⁵⁰ As such, it is closely related to intention. There is a Conscious Look Book on *Attention and Intention*. Desire is a sustaining life force, indeed, an animating, *continuously expanding* life force which is unstoppable as long as we live and breathe. Of desire, mathematician/philosopher Bertrand Russell said: "Desire is a subject upon which ... true views can only be arrived at by an almost complete reversal of the ordinary unreflecting opinion."⁵¹ What he means is that desire is occurring without our conscious awareness, a bedfellow driving our thoughts and actions, a cognitive conveyor!

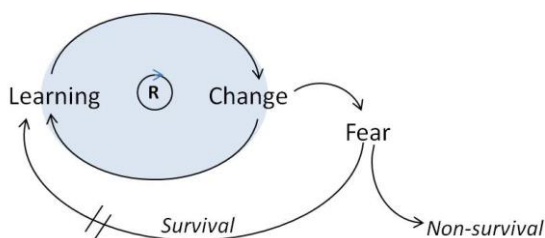


Figure 5. In early human development, the experiential learning loop was intertwined with fear driven by the need/desire to survive. In the initial stages of life, the focus is on survival, avoiding pain, eliminating fear, and pursuing pleasure.

Desires can be rational or non-rational. Philosopher and educator William Irvine says that, “many of our most profound, life-affecting desires are not rational, in the sense that we don't use rational thought processes to form them. Indeed, we don't form them; they form themselves within us. They simply pop into our heads, uninvited and unannounced. While they reside there, they take control of our lives. A single rogue desire can trample the plans we had for our lives and thereby alter our destinies.”⁵² An example that many people are familiar with is falling in love.

At the deepest levels of our being, there is a burning desire to be Godlike, to be all we can be, which is often associated with a willingness to do all that we can to achieve this perfection. This is where desire and drive, discussed below, cross paths.

An interesting aspect of desires is that they can change with time as one desire replaces another. This makes sense when we understand ourselves as verbs, forever experiencing and growing and expanding. Further, when we understand that we are social creatures, we recognize that our desires often flow with what is currently popular or what we perceive will help others admire or respect us, or separate us above the crowd.

People can be caught up in their desires for physical possessions. Though we are all materialists to some extent—since that is the world within which

we perceive our existence and interactions—when the desire for material goods becomes primary, energy is focused inwards, not only limiting learning but limiting creativity and reducing consciousness. This is when our material goods own us instead of us owning them! See the Conscious Look Book on *Grounding*.

Courage. To be involved in change means dealing with the unknown at some level, and the unknown is the foremost object of human fear. Courage is about choices made and actions taken in an uncertain environment, the courage to think and act. This does *not* mean there is a lack of fear. As psychologist Rollo May said, “Courage is not the absence of despair; it is, rather, the capacity to move ahead *in spite of despair*.”⁵³ In the latest *Green Lantern* movie,⁵⁴ our hero is a test pilot. Following a near fatality, the hero's young nephew asks, “Were you afraid?” The hero's answer is a response heard earlier in the movie from his father, “It's my business not to be.” He sits with his nephew and explains that while fear is always close at hand, *courage is a choice*.

Prentice Mulford, a leader in the New Thought movement, said that courage and presence of mind have the same meaning, with presence of mind implying command of mind.⁵⁵ Conversely, cowardice, or lack of mental control, is rooted in the habit of hurry, a lack of repose. Underlying this

hurried mental condition and the acts it promotes is *fear, another word for lack of power to control our minds*. Mental or physical courage determine the degree of success; and the degree of failure is based on timidity, or fear. Further, because fear can become a habit of mind, built up over time, it can become a conditioned response emerging from the unconscious, setting off small and large panic attacks from the smallest emotional perturbation. Living in a continuous environment of the unknown, it is easy to perceive how this could occur.

Opportunities—and change itself—involve risk, often including the letting go of old habits and ways of thinking. *For the human mind focused on the past*, the concept of risk brings to mind trials and tribulations resulting from similar situations or circumstances, often events perceived out of your personal control. *For the human mind focused on the NOW*, the instant at hand, risk may involve the unknown dangers of change, or even the risk of NOT taking action or NOT exploring an opportunity. *For the human mind focused on the future*, there is the risk of mis-anticipation or false prediction, the risk of fantasy versus factual creative imagination, or the risk of under-resourcing, that is, carrying too much baggage from the past and present to attend to the future.

Courage is required at all levels of change, from the recognition of choice (and responsibility) to

understanding the context, and to taking action in a complex situation. There is a paradox here. In order to act, we must be fully committed to a reality while simultaneously recognizing there is uncertainty in that reality. As our psychologist Rollo May described, “Courage is not a virtue or value among other personal values like love or fidelity. It is the foundation that underlies and gives reality to all other virtue and personal values.”⁵⁶ The more recognition of choice, the greater the courage required to act. This is why soldiers and emergency response personnel are trained to act unconsciously. When they do not need to consciously consider alternatives and choice, when the required response to specific situations has been embedded in their unconscious, less courage is required to act. However, as Admiral Hyman Rickover recognized, “Good ideas are not adopted automatically. They must be driven into practice with courageous patience”⁵⁷ Because moral courage is a perceptual courage,⁵⁸ highly dependent on an individual’s ability to perceive through the eyes of another, **moral courage requires a higher level of courage.**

The good news is that courage can be cultivated and increased at any time through deliberation. As Prentice, our New Thought leader, said: “You can have the satisfaction of knowing that in everything you do you have accomplished two things—namely the doing of the thing itself and by the manner of its doing, adding eternally to yourself

another atom of the quality of courage. You can do this by the cultivation of deliberation—deliberation of speech, of walking, of writing, of eating—deliberation in everything.”⁵⁹

Deliberation and deliberate action deal largely with the little acts of life, sending our thought and subsequent actions in the same direction. Our conscious mind is linear, connecting one thought to the next, and in acting we take one step at a time, a single transaction at a time. Thus, in the material world in which we live, we can deliberately deal with one force at a time, and through repeated deliberation and deliberate action create this behavior pattern as a habit, learning to keep our mind present with us at all times.

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INSIGHT: Our conscious mind is linear, connecting one thought to the next, and in acting we take one step at a time, a single transaction at a time.

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When an individual is deliberate, the mind is trained to take the time to think and concentrate on that thought, providing time to explore opportunities presented by the situation at hand. We have learned from neuroscience the power of mirror neurons, that, under certain circumstances, anything done in the mind has the same pattern of neuronal firings and as

much force as if done with the body. "To train then for courage is to train for deliberate movement in all things, for that is simply training to mass and hold your force in reserve and let out no more than is needed for the moment ... No quality of mind is more needful to success in all undertakings than courage."⁶⁰

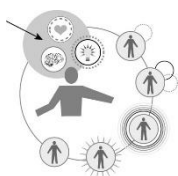
Drive. "Drive" is to move toward or through something with mental or physical force, to cause something to happen. While it is often urged forward by our desires, it can also become an automated process or an unconscious emergent force, sometimes beyond our control.

The drive we focus on here is a *choice* connected to desire. Every individual has energy levels that vary with physical health, interest, experiences, age, and so forth. How we focus this energy and the level of energy focused in a particular direction can be a choice. For example, if we get joy out of learning, we can choose to put ourselves in learning situations ranging from the classroom to dialogues with respected and knowledgeable others. In this example, the concept of "drive" would insinuate that we had a goal to achieve and would continue that learning until the goal *was* achieved.

Remember that the same concept can act as a cognitive conveyor or a cognitive impeder. Drive is a good example of that. There is no doubt that the way we have described drive above is a cognitive

conveyor, accelerating movement toward a defined goal. However, drive could also very much get in the way, that is, it might be so strong that an individual fails to take the necessary time to think through actions. In this case, drive would serve as a cognitive impeder. Note that earlier in this little book, our neuroscientist and pharmacist Candice Pert used the term “drive states” for what we refer to as cognitive conveyors.

While this was a very brief treatment of desire, courage and drive, it can be seen that these cognitive conveyors strongly affect our thoughts and actions and weave in and out of the changing dramas of our lives. By understanding their importance and impact—which also applies to other cognitive conveyors and impeder—we can consciously harness their energy to bring about the change we choose.



Idea 6: Love is the highest and ultimate goal to which humans can aspire.

Love first develops through consciousness, generally related by a growing child to the parent or caregiver. Later, the concept takes on different meanings, and during puberty this feeling of strong affection becomes attached to the idea of romance and sexual desire. This strong affection also accompanies developing beliefs; for example, a growing connection to God. The highest form of this love—described as the love of God for man, and the love of man for God—is called agape. This universal, unconditional love that transcends all things is derived from the ancient Greek: ἀγάπη, agápē, which translates as gaping the mouth wide open, as with wonder and expectation.⁶¹

Love and freedom are irrevocably connected. In the Ageless Wisdom tradition, freedom is described as the first part of God's mind, and love as the second part.⁶² This is because without the freedom to choose, love cannot come into being. This concept is critical to our understanding of love. *Love grows. It cannot be created, manufactured, or purchased. You cannot will or demand love.* As Ken Carey, author of *The Starseed Transmission*, reminds us, “The choice to function on the love-centered motivational frequencies, **where you are designed**

to function [emphasis added], is the only choice that brings freedom. It does not limit you to a predetermined script but offers a range of behavior that evokes your fullest potential.”⁶³

Viktor Frankl, who endured three years at Auschwitz and other Nazi prisons, discovered the power of love in the midst of his suffering. The realization came as an image of his wife vividly arose in his mind. I think the only way to even begin to understand what he is sharing is to read his exact words. Imagine the pain and suffering he was going through, and yet he writes: “A thought transfixed me: for the first time in my life I saw the truth as it is set into song by so many poets, proclaimed as the final wisdom by so many thinkers. The truth—**that love is the ultimate and the highest goal to which man can aspire**. Then I grasped the meaning of the greatest secret that human poetry and human thought and belief have to impart: *The salvation of man is through love and in love*. I understood how a man who has nothing left in this world still may know bliss, be it only for a brief moment, in the contemplation of his beloved. In a position of utter desolation, when many cannot express himself in positive action, when his only achievement may consist in enduring his sufferings in the right way—an honorable way—in such a position man can, through loving contemplation of the image he carries of his beloved, achieve fulfillment. For the first time in my life I was able to understand the meaning of

the words, ‘The angels are lost in perpetual contemplation of an infinite glory’.”⁶⁴

As a life of inflicted pain interrupted his connection, again and again Frankl was able to find his way back from the prisoner’s existence to this place of love. He did not know whether his wife was alive or not, but he did know one thing, that “Love goes very far beyond the physical person of the beloved. It finds its deepest meaning in his spiritual being, his inner self. Whether or not he is actually present, whether or not he is still at all, ceases somehow to be of importance.”⁶⁵

There is so much we can learn from this. Love is born of understanding another, truly knowing another, looking within at their motives, sentiments and values. Once you really know who someone is, love is contagious. In *Urantia*, a series of revelations from unknown sources, it is suggested that each day or week we achieve an understanding of one or more individuals. “If each mortal could only become a focus of dynamic affection, this benign virus of love would soon pervade the sentimental emotion-stream of humanity to such an extent that all civilization would be encompassed by love, and that would be the realization of the brotherhood of man.”⁶⁶ What an amazing possibility!

Love, like knowledge, expands when it is given away. When combined with wisdom, good things happen. In our journey in life, as we learn to co-

evolve with our environment, we begin to develop empathy for others. Empathy enables us to experience others in the sense of being them, with a whole new sense of reality emerging with the experience. As we begin to recognize that all things are connected, then that empathy expands to compassion. And we are well on our journey toward unconditional love, which is an attribute of the advanced human. There is no better example than that of Mother Teresa. There is a Conscious Look Book on *Conscious Compassion*.

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***INSIGHT:* Empathy enables you to experience others in the sense of being them, with a whole new sense of reality emerging with the experience. With that understanding comes compassion.**

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Cooperation and collaboration are virtues of the physical plane. Along with gratitude, admiration and forgiveness, love is a hive emotion that supports cooperation, which leads to an edge in survival for that group. It is also the highest virtue on the emotional plane. Drawing on history, researcher and psychologist Martin Seligman explains: “A cooperative group will bring down a mastodon more readily than an asocial group. A cooperative group can form the ‘turtle’ in battle; a Roman offensive formation that sacrifices the men on the outer flanks, but easily defeats a group of selfish-only soldiers. A

cooperative group can create agriculture, towns, technology, and music (singing, marching, and laughing tunes the group). To the extent that cooperation and altruism have a genetic basis, this entire group will pass on its genes more readily than a group that lacks cooperation and altruism.”⁶⁷ Thus, there is the case made for the gradual improvement, through evolution, of the human race.

This has not gone unnoticed in the organization and management literature of this century. For example, in a chapter entitled “The Employee in the Sign of Love,” Niels Andersen and Asmund Born specifically see the phenomenon of love as explicitly cultivated in the work environment as increasingly common in the current age.⁶⁸ Educator Peter Fleming introduced the idea of neo-normative control exhorting individuation and *being yourself*.⁶⁹ Neo-management control, an emergent concept, posits that management through individual freedoms is a defining element of the 21st century workforce.⁷⁰ The freedoms that are encouraged include those of self-expression and discretion.⁷¹

Wow! That was a lot of footnotes, which are not always easy to place! Still, I wanted to make sure you had books to go read if you wanted to know more about this, which is so important to our world!

The three components of psychologist Robert Sternberg’s triangular theory of love are intimacy (emotional investment and closeness), passion

(excitement and arousal) and commitment (relationship over time).⁷² While Robert's model was applied to romantic love, in a chapter with the really long title of "What's Love Got to Do with It? A Longitudinal Study of the Culture of Companionate Love and Employee and Client Outcomes in a Long-Term Care Setting" (that really WAS long!), educators Sigal Barsade and Olivia O'Neill translate this into more general terms, the idea of "feelings of affection, compassion, caring, and tenderness for others."⁷³

In a study on "Love as an Organizational Value" (the length of that title is better), Miguel eCunha and his colleagues related love to what they characterized as virtue-oriented communities, which are strongly tied to the leader's virtue anchored by a personal motivation toward "good" and informed by character strengths.⁷⁴ There is a Conscious Look Book on *Living Virtues for Today*, with one Idea based on good character. By acting in love, that is, by listening to employees, communicating openly, and exhibiting compassion, others are inspired to do the same.⁷⁵ Leading by example starts the process toward a culture of love, then *the energy of love itself continues the process*. As one responder in the eCunha research study described: "[Love] allows for an inner wealth, an insight, greater self-knowledge, self-confidence, and a great strength of character ... a very strong self-awareness. So, I think it is not immediate, it is not only by example ... example

leads people to think about love, to question themselves more, to be more aware.”⁷⁶

It’s kind of strange, yet wonderful, to be talking about love in organizations! I grew up in times and organizations where you were hesitant to have emotions, much less express love to a fellow employee! You just didn’t think about things that way. But, reflecting back, how much better would things have been if we had. We were kind of tied up with competing with each other and making our personal mark, along with pulling in a higher salary. Is it still that way today? How much have we learned?

In an article entitled “Beyond Contracts: Love in Firms,” educator Antonio Argandoña says that love is an organizational virtue. He defines this love as “a habit that facilitates decision-making ... serves to evaluate actions ... and moves the will to act in a particular way.”⁷⁷ That particular way *begins with ethics and is exhibited by honesty, kindness and care*. That certainly is virtuous, and, in today’s world which has gone awry, honesty, kindness and care built on virtue is sorely needed.

[Your Thoughts]



Idea 7: Enabled by passion, flow experiences give a sense of our reason for being.

Flow is that wonderful state in life where we are so involved in something that nothing else seems to matter. The activity is so intense that the normal sense of time and space disappears, and all energy is invested in the task at hand. In a team setting, individuals lose the sense of identity or separateness during the experience, then afterward emerge from the experience with a stronger sense of self.

Individuals involved in this flow state feel a sense of exhilaration and joy. As these optimal experiences are repeated, they develop a sense of experiencing their real reason for being, coupled with a strong feeling of being in control.

Each of us has experienced flow at times in our lives: playing a good tennis match, meeting a short deadline, or enjoying team camaraderie during an intense task. The flow state is enabled by the strong emotion of passion. Educator Charlene Belitz and journalist Meg Lundstrom identify passion as one of the attributes that create the power of flow. As they contend: “Flow is engendered by passion—passion for life, for knowledge, for a cause, for a relationship, for truth. Passion means caring deeply about something beyond ourselves. It means engaging with it at intense levels. It means letting go

of self-protective caution to involve ourselves wholeheartedly with what we love.”⁷⁸

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INSIGHT: “Flow is engendered by passion—passion for life, for knowledge, for a cause, for a relationship, for truth. Passion means caring deeply about something beyond ourselves.”

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This passion “opens us up to a larger picture.” It is the intensity of flow, the intense desire to be “active and engaged in the course of events” and the intense drive to know truth, “to answer the basic questions of existence: why we’re here, what we’re supposed to be doing, what it all means. Not satisfied with surface explanations, we use every moment as an opportunity to break through to something new, to learn. We fully engage with what comes our way.”⁷⁹

In a historical context, *passions* (in the plural) was used in the work of early Western philosophers to represent what we now call *emotions*. For example, early analysis of emotions using the term *passions* appears in dialogues of Plato and in Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*; as well as in the Greek discussions of virtue and vice. As an aside, according to Lou Marinoff, ancient Greek philosophers had a propensity to indulge both their reason and passions alike, in the hopes of perfecting

the former and outgrowing the latter!⁸⁰ Some of this behavior can still be seen today.

Passions also appear in the moral theology of Thomas Aquinas and in Benedict Spinoza's *Ethics*; and in books of political theory, such as Niccolo Machiavelli's *The Prince* and Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan*. Have you heard of any of those books? And, Rene Descartes' "six 'primitive' passions—wonder, love, hatred, desire, joy, and sadness—are not meaningless agitations of the animal spirits, but ingredients in the good life."⁸¹

Scottish Enlightenment philosopher David Hume insisted that, "What motivates us to right (and wrong) behavior . . . were our passions, and rather than being relegated to the margins of ethics and philosophy, the passions deserve central respect and consideration."⁸² Now, does that mean when we do something that we shouldn't we can blame our passions? Hmmm. Hume also believed that *moral distinctions are derived from passion* rather than from reason. "Morals excite passions, and produce or prevent actions." By contrast, reason is "perfectly inert" and can never produce or prevent an action.⁸³ And, as the philosopher Georg Hegel affirmed, "Nothing great in the world has been accomplished without passion."⁸⁴ In like manner, the term "passions" appears in many historic works of poetry and history.

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INSIGHT: Moral distinctions are derived from passion rather than from reason.

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The meaning of the word passion has shifted over the years. Although the use of the word *passion* to specifically represent a strong emotion or desire is first recorded around 1250 AD, “the generalized meaning of a strong liking, enthusiasm (as in a *passion for horses*) is first recorded in 1638.”⁸⁵ The *Oxford English Dictionary* (updated in 2002) cited 12 different perspectives on the concept of *passion*, with the first presenting it as representing the suffering of pain, specifically the suffering connected to Jesus’ Crucifixion in Christian theology.

Psychologist Nico Frijda saw passions as often extending to desires, thoughts, plans, and behaviors that *persist over time*. “They may lead to performing behaviors regardless of costs, external obstacles, and moral objections. These are the characteristics of passion in the more modern sense—the desires, behaviors, and thoughts that suggest urges with considerable force.”⁸⁶ Thus, passions significantly contribute to achieving personal and organizational goals. As educator and author Peter Senge says, people’s passions flow naturally into creating something that truly excites them. “The passion at the heart of every great undertaking comes from the

deep longing of human beings to make a difference, to have an impact. **It comes from what you contribute rather than from what you get** [emphasis added].”⁸⁷

Further, in a discussion of people skills, Daniel Goleman, who is the author of *Emotional Intelligence*, cited focus and passion as important elements of achieving group flow. “The demands of meeting a great goal inherently provide focus; the rest of life can seem not just mundane, but trivial by comparison. For the duration, the details of life are on hold.”⁸⁸ We’ve gone full circle in our discussion of passion and flow. Passion, driving the intensity of flow, *elevates values and engages reality at all levels* in its search for “what it means to be alive.”⁸⁹ This is also reflected in the spiritual context of passion, *a spiritual freeflow as a strong vehicle for awakening*,⁹⁰ and energy that helps people *speak from the heart*, drawing out other people and engaging them.⁹¹

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INSIGHT: Passion, driving the intensity of flow, elevates values and engages reality at all level in its search for “what it means to be alive.”

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Thus, both as an individual and as a collective, passion acts as emotional super-fuel, propelling us into the flow of life to think and act in a focused

domain of knowledge. *For a fulfilling life, we are asked to live our passion.* It looks like love and passion are interwoven in the expansion journey of humanity.⁹²




Final Thoughts





Emotions are a gift to humanity which, when applied well, add joy and love to our lives, creating great harmony and connecting us in Oneness. However, when mismanaged or out of balance, emotions can create conflict, negativity and war. Once we become masters of our emotional guidance system, love and passion weave their way through all elements of our lives, guiding us toward intelligent activity⁹³ and becoming the co-creators of the life we choose to live.

What does this mean to me?

This is a pretty important topic for all of us. I learned a lot writing it and talking about it with you. Isn't that funny? How does that happen? I guess we don't really know what we know until we share it with someone. Makes that sharing a really good learning experience!

Let's see if we can pull out a few important ideas that might help us live our lives more fully.

-  By understanding that emotions can be triggered by perceived external events, yet are simultaneously our creation and an act of will, we can set up situations where external events or internal thoughts provide stimuli to trigger desired feelings.
-  Emotions exist to alert and protect individuals from harm, and to energize them to action when they have strong feelings or passions. However, emotions are concerned with the *meaning* of the information and not the details.
-  There are two possible responses to the danger of stress: either *eliminate the cause* of stress, the situation at hand, or *change your perception* (thought) about the situation.

-  Past events, especially those having a large emotional impact, can cause dramatic responses in the NOW.
-  Cognitive conveyors act as personal forcing functions to help us move towards our picture of the future.
-  “The choice to function on the love-centered motivational frequencies, **where you are designed to function** [emphasis added], is the only choice that brings freedom. It does not limit you to a predetermined script but offers a range of behavior that evokes your fullest potential.” (Ken Carey)
-  Once we become masters of our emotional guidance system, love and passion weave their way through all elements of our lives

**Perhaps intuitively we all know the power of
our emotions.**

**But sometimes we need a reminder to follow
our passions ...**

**Let's bring more love into our lives—and
into our world!**

This volume of **Conscious Look Books** builds conversationally on the ideas presented in *The Profundity and Bifurcation of Change Part III: Learning in the Present*, largely presented in Chapter 19: “Emotions as a Guidance System”; Chapter 20: “Stuck Energy: Limiting and Accelerating”; Chapter 13: “The New Reality”; and Part II: Learning from the Past, Chapter 9 “Modalities of Change.” Co-authors of the original text include David Bennet, Arthur Shelley, Theresa Bullard and John Lewis. Full references are available in the original text, which is published by MQIPress, Frost, WV (2017), and available as an eBook on www.amazon.com

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⁸⁷ Quoted from Senge, Peter (1990). *The Fifth Discipline*. New York: Doubleday, 62.

⁸⁸ Goleman, 228.

⁸⁹ Quoted from Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2003). *Good Business: Leadership, Flow and the Making of Meaning*. New York: Viking, 60.

⁹⁰ See Gyatso, T. (The Fourteenth Dalai Lama) (1992). *The Meaning of Life: Buddhist Perspectives on Cause and Effect*. Boston: Wisdom Publications.

Also, Walsh, R. and Shapiro, D. H. (1983). *Beyond Health and Normality: Explorations of Exceptional Psychological Well – Being*. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company.

Also, Watts, A. W. (2002). *ZEN: The Supreme Experience: The Newly Discovered Scripts*. London: Vega.

⁹¹ Quoted from Rockwell, I. (2002). *The Five Wisdom Energies: A Buddhist Way of Understanding Personalities, Emotions, and Relationships*. Boston: Shambhala, 52.

⁹² For a full treatment of passion, see Bennet, A. (2005). *Exploring Aspects of Knowledge Management that Contribute to the Passion Expressed by Its Thought Leaders*. Frost, WV: Self-published.

⁹³ Intelligent activity represents a state of interaction where intent, purpose, direction, values and expected outcomes are clearly understood and communicated among all parties, reflecting wisdom and achieving a higher truth.

The Volumes in ***Possibilities that are YOU!***

All Things in Balance

The Art of Thought Adjusting

Associative Patterning and Attracting

Beyond Action

The Bifurcation

Connections as Patterns

Conscious Compassion

The Creative Leap

The Emerging Self

The Emoting Guidance System

Engaging Forces

The ERC's of Intuition

Grounding

The Humanness of Humility

Intention and Attention

Knowing

Living Virtues for Today

ME as Co-Creator

Seeking Wisdom

Staying on the Path

Transcendent Beauty

Truth in Context

Emotions are a gift to humanity which, when applied well, create great harmony and connect us in Oneness. However, when mismanaged or out of balance, emotions can create conflict, negativity and war. Once we become masters of our emotional system, love and passion weave their way through all elements of our lives, guiding us toward intelligent activity and becoming the co-creators of the life we choose to live.

