

Training the Ego

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Introduction

Welcome to Training the Ego. This is your simple guide to understanding and becoming the person you want to be – your true self. I’ve made it simple, so that anyone can read and understand it, yet the concepts here are incredibly powerful. And if used correctly, can lead an individual to true self-transcendence, where they have complete mastery of self in all its guises.

What I suggest is that you read it one section at a time, and afterwards spend time thinking about what you have learnt and how it applies to you.

This is not a grand thesis on psychology, it’s just the basics of understanding and gaining control of your own thoughts. I hope you enjoy it.

George Chaplin

1. What is the ego?

There are number of interpretations regarding what the ego is, so I am going to tell you my own interpretation, which I find easy to understand and useful.

“Ego is an intelligent part of our conscious and unconscious mind that connects us to all self-learning functions, be they physical or mental, both simple and complex.”

There are many interpretations of ego that are too simplistic (just the “bad” bits) or too complex – breaking ego down into sub parts and going into lengthy detail as to what those bits do, but as far as I am concerned the simple one line description above should allow you to understand how important and integral to self the ego is.

Ego is a self-learning system, it observes the world around us, including inputs such as TV, parents, friends, teachers etc. It also learns from books and other media, for all of our waking hours it is constantly observing, cataloguing, analysing and storing the behaviour of others for future reference.

Whenever we come across a situation that we have not dealt with before, ego will predict it and will find information within our memory relating to possible ways of responding, and it will suggest what it considers to be the best possibility through internal thoughts. Ego will choose this "best" option based on its knowledge of "self" - behaviour patterns that we have found acceptable in the past.

Thus, it can be seen that our thoughts are not always ours and that the pattern of behaviour that we establish for ourselves determines future thought flow. This is why it is important to surround yourself with positive role models and sources of information. It is also why we need to understand that the thought flows that we have need to be monitored and modified, even rejected; they are only suggestions and it is up to us to observe and to teach ego the sort of person we wish to be.

For most people that do not understand this, who have negative role models around them it means they themselves will also become negative by unwittingly copying the behaviour of others.

This is the basis as to why we need to be mindful - we need to hold in our mind a strong concept of who we are and want to be and we need to make sure that all thoughts reflect that understanding of self.

Ego also has the function of hiding from us aspects of self that we find distasteful, frightening or painful. In other words, what we can't accept. Those aspects of self which are hidden from us by ego are often called “Shadow” aspects, and its widely accepted that whilst we can be blissfully unaware of their existence, they still impact our ego, and therefore our thoughts.

2. Training your Ego

The first thing to understand is that your ego is quite complex and therefore there is a lot to learn.

This means that although I will tell you here the basics, there are more advanced aspects of your ego that might lead you to think that the training is not working. Also, some aspects of ego are easier to train than others. The key is to stick with it, and to realise that with the right mindset, you will come to know that you already know those advanced aspects, as it was you that “wrote the program”, so to speak. Self-introspection will ultimately reveal all.

A key aspect of training your ego is that you must do it with the understanding that the goal is to create an ego that you love, and that the primary aim is for you to become a loving person, one who loves all of self, including ego. If you try to avoid this intent then the training will become problematic, and you will find yourself unable to make progress. This is one of the secrets of ego – it is there to allow us to become all that we may be - which is a truly loving person, and it will fight against training that is non-loving.

The first task is to train ego to be silent. This is often called “Quieting the mind”. Like most of what I will discuss, this takes practice, and at first appears to be almost impossible to do. The idea is to stop ego from making suggestions for things to think about.

Quite simply, you ask ego to be silent; to not try to find things to think about. This can be very hard at first and therefore what you might like to do initially, is to choose to focus on something that does not require thought, such as listening to music intently, without allowing your mind to drift into other thoughts. This is something most of us can do for a little while but as a beginner you should practice doing it for longer and longer periods until you can do it for 15 minutes or longer.

On paper, this sounds simple, but in practice, what you will find is that you have trained your ego to constantly suggest things to think about. You will have dominant recurring thoughts, worries and random distractions. The idea through this exercise, is to gradually leave those behind.

Something you will realise about thought, is that prior to actually having a thought, ego will warn you about it with what I call a “pre-thought”, this is like a summary of the thought that is to come. The trick is to spot that pre-thought and tell yourself that you don’t want the thought now, if it’s important you will think about it later, but right now, you need silence.

Once you can listen to music for extended periods of time without thinking about anything else other than listening, you will find it a lot easier to simply think of nothing without concentrating on anything.

Mastering this process, what I call the “no-thought” filter, then you will be able to filter your thoughts, meaning that over time, you will have less thoughts. Automatic thoughts will stop, and the thoughts that remain will be easier to work with. The idea is to free your mind of the “Ego chatter”, and to leave room for more subtle operations of the mind, such as intuition.

This is not so much about having no thoughts. It's a clear the mind from constant chatter which obscures deeper and more self-relevant thoughts that will help you understand self, better. This is the basis of self-introspection. Where you analyse your thoughts, a process that can't be done if you are dealing with a constant barrage of thoughts.

Ego is actually a quick learner and is always looking for opportunities to improve to help you, but it is critical that you work with ego by being mindful, so what is mindfulness?

Mindfulness

Mindfulness is the process of watching your thoughts. A mindful person is aware that thoughts can be incorrect, not true to self and therefore that person watches their thoughts refrains from acting on them until they are right for them.

There is actually more to being mindful than might at first seem, it is a skill that must be learnt.

Pre-thought

Pre-thought is a precursor to the actual thought that is coming into your mind, it is like an intuitive clue that the thought is coming and what it will be about. It is in the pre-thought stage that a mindful person finds it easiest to stop or change the thought that is coming. It takes practice to feel the pre-thought coming, most people are hardly aware that it is there. But if you pay attention you will tune into it relatively easily so long as your mind is not cluttered with other thoughts.

Mindfulness is something that takes time to develop. You should make sure that you practice mindfulness on a daily basis and be aware that the aim is to achieve mindfulness full time, but initially it is exhausting and you need to develop the skill by taking "baby steps" – short periods of mindfulness at first that lead to longer and longer periods of mindfulness until you find yourself being mindful 100% of the time.

This leads to the basics of training your ego:

1. Inspect with your mind the pre-thought
2. Decide if the thought should be allowed, modified or dropped
3. Allow only thoughts consistent with your concept of self

Ego will learn from this very quickly, it will stop presenting thoughts that will be dropped and it will increasingly present thought suggestions that are in tune with your instructions.

It should be noted that becoming a mindful individual with an ego that is in tune with self takes time and patience. Do not expect an overnight success but be confident that if you stick with it, you will gain mastery over your ego and it will become a friend that you will love.

3. Working with Ego – A mind without thoughts

Now that I've laid out the basic principles of ego management it is probably wise if I look into the practicalities of working through this process, to give you an idea of some of the activities that you can do as practical exercises to help you master your ego quicker.

The first task is to quieten the mind. This is perhaps the hardest task, since it is the first task and the concepts that I have introduced may be unfamiliar to you.

There is also a caveat: Not everyone will be able to quieten the mind by following these steps, some people have ego challenges that run deeper than simply learnt behaviour that can cause intense obsessive thoughts that are seemingly impossible to stop. I will be covering these issues later, so be assured if you find it impossible to quieten the mind at this stage, there are other solutions coming. Also be aware though, that there's always something that can be done. For example, automatic thoughts can be stopped, even if the obsessive thoughts can't at this time.

One of the bad habits the ego can pick up is that it can constantly keep you thinking about things. This is often picked up from school where it can be seen as beneficial to have an active mind, however when this habit carries over into adult life it can cause significant problems.

For example, you can find yourself unable to "switch off", interrupting sleep, it can also mean you constantly worry about things; projecting negative outcomes into your future is a serious cause of depression and it can actually help manifest these negative outcomes into your life.

It also means that you can be easily distracted and unable to concentrate on anything other than the simplest of tasks.

There are a number of techniques you can use to stop these thought patterns, often people defeat worrying thoughts by holding a simple logic to defeat the thought, for example, remembering that any general worry, or even a constant hope can cause problematic outcomes for the future. Because they get in the way of living in the "now", in short by thinking too much about the future, or of other people's actions you sacrifice your attention on what is important – the "now".

So many people faced with anxiety caused by over thinking at first defeat those thoughts by finding solid logical reasons as to why those thoughts should not happen, and they work hard to make sure that every time the mind slips into those thought-patterns they stop them with the defeating logic.

Another approach, one that I encourage is distraction, in the case of my example of listening to music intently, this is a distraction from thinking completely and I find it more beneficial because it avoids the trap of thinking too much about not thinking. Which sounds odd, but it happens.

Training the Ego

It is worth remembering that the ego develops habits, and it finds habitual thoughts easier than non habitual thought. So, what you are trying to do is stop the unwanted habit and develop thought habits that are desirable, in this case the habit of having a quiet mind.

4. Working with ego – Starting to be Mindful

Mindfulness is the process of anticipating and choosing the right thoughts for you. A great many thoughts are learnt from others unwittingly and some of these can cause us to think or behave in ways which afterwards we decide are undesirable.

Some of these thoughts are particularly strong and recurring, these are thoughts that often trigger unwanted feelings such as fear, anxiety, sadness and a lack of confidence and positive feelings towards self.

The process of being mindful is another case of needing to gently work with ego, it is difficult to do at first and needs practice and understanding that every day you should seek to be more and more mindful, rapid success is not common and you should know that this is something that you will take small baby steps towards the goal of continuous mindfulness.

It is also important to realise that some of these thoughts may not be possible to counteract with mindfulness alone as they are triggered from deeper subconscious processes that I will discuss later. However, being mindful of these thoughts will help you understand them and ego will help you by allowing you to “ring-fence” them – you will learn to anticipate them and automatically avoid bringing them to mind by distraction or simply moving into no-think.

However, it is also important to realise that these thoughts are seeking expression as part of the mind's self-healing processes and if you suppress them, they will grow stronger or will find some other route for expression so keep in mind the determination to fully explore them in future when it is more appropriate and this will actually help them be more controllable as you move forward on your healing journey.

Once you are able to quieten the mind you will automatically be more aware of what thoughts ego is presenting to you. An important part of learning to be mindful is that you should try to keep your mind clear of cluttered thoughts that are too complex or chaotic to be able to deal with.

A large part of mindfulness in the beginning is simply listening to self – becoming more and more aware of your own thought processes. You will find that increasingly thoughts can be anticipated, that prior to the thought actually presenting itself in your mind there is a pre-thought stage which is more about feeling the type of thought that is going to come.

Mindfulness is all about working with these pre-thoughts, at that point your thoughts are not strong and can be changed or avoided but in the early stages of mindfulness it seems almost impossible to do that, the time between the pre-thought and the thought is so short.

However, you will find that as you monitor these pre-thoughts and their subsequent thoughts you will start to see patterns in the anticipatory feelings that they inspire and it is these patterns that you will come to use in order to manipulate your own thought flow. You will be able to distinguish just by the initial feeling of the thought what type of thought it is going to be.

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So, this is the first stage of mindfulness, simply taking care as you study your own thoughts and analysing what you detect, learning about how you think and seeing that there is a structure to the way that your thoughts come to you.

5. Living in the Now

An awful lot of people concern themselves far too much with the future or the past.

Dwelling on these things often lead to anxiety or self-blame as one looks at past “mistakes” or future challenges in a negative light. Such thoughts are almost always undesirable and my advice is to avoid such thoughts whenever possible.

Yes, we should learn the lessons of the past, but we should remember that the past does not define or determine how we might respond today. A person living in the “Now” is informed by past experience, but does not think “I always do that”, rather they think “This is a fresh situation facing me, I will choose to do what is best for me, I will dare to be different, I am a different person now, I have learnt and I move on”.

Similarly, it is inadvisable to think too much about the future. Of course, we should have future plans and hopes but spending too much time dwelling on the future, positive or negative means that we are actually building within ourselves a predilection for how we will behave in future, if we constantly worry about possible negative-outcomes we create within ourselves a propensity to move towards that outcome.

Similarly, if we constantly dwell in a positive future possibility then we limit the possibilities of our future by over-defining our expectations. We are also creating opportunities for disappointment when our idealised view of the positive future does not materialise.

And so, we have to be very careful to try to concentrate on the “Now”, and to take time to savour and enjoy simply being in this present moment.

Gratitude

A good way to help you live in the now, is to practice gratitude. For example, take yourself out into nature and really concentrate purely on appreciating the beauty around you. Also, developing an appreciation of art, architecture or other beautiful things. These are accessible and simple ways of focussing on the moment, and I’d recommend you make a point of spending a part of every day being grateful for what you are seeing right now, to the exclusion of all other thoughts.

Again, it’s a practice that can take some conscious effort, but it’s highly recommended and once developed can give valuable respite from the challenges of the day.

Positive self-affirmations

Whilst I advise avoiding dwelling too much in the future, there is one aspect of future projection that is positive and should be encouraged. This is the positive self-affirmation.

Many people who look at training their ego realise that they have unwittingly programmed their ego to be negative and critical of self, and that this is undesirable since it makes the individual unhappy and less able to step into the future with a positive outlook.

Positive self-affirmations are a way of correcting this negative behaviour by programming into ego your future truth of self. We are all wonderful beings, without exception. We struggle to see this because of the weight of the negative programming that we have absorbed and therefore what is needed is for us to remove the negative self-imagery using mindfulness and also reinforce the positive self-imagery using positive affirmations.

Some good self-affirmations are as follows:

- Everything I touch is a success
- I am courageous and I stand up for myself.
- I radiate beauty, charm, and grace.
- My life is just beginning.
- My nature is Divine; I am a spiritual being.
- I am a powerhouse; I am indestructible
- I am always guided and protected
- I wake up today with strength in my heart and clarity in my mind.
- I am at peace with all that has happened, is happening, and will happen.
- My thoughts are filled with positivity and my life is plentiful with prosperity.
- I have been given endless talents which I begin to utilize today

Other affirmations can be found online, most people find that if they choose to regularly give themselves positive-affirmations they feel an awful lot better about themselves after a few weeks.

Positive self-affirmations can be used as an internal chant that can defeat or distract persistent negative thoughts.

6. Working with Ego – Full Mindfulness

As you work towards quieting the mind and increasingly study your thought processes, you will find that you will automatically start to become fully mindful and will begin to work with ego in the way I am about to suggest.

Ego presents to you thought options, and it does that in a way that is in accordance with thoughts and actions that you have previously found acceptable. So, the more you train ego to reflect positive aspects of self, the fewer negative thoughts you will get.

For every thought that ego suggests there is a pre-thought that is presented and it is at this stage that you get to choose whether or not that thought is acceptable and this is the time to modify or reject that thought.

There is also the case where you are uncertain about the pre-thought and choose to allow the thought in order to see where it leads. Another tool of mindfulness is the knowledge that you can regulate the thought as it comes; you can have the thought present itself slowly, bit by bit so you can more easily understand it and determine if it is suitable for you. This is another aspect of learning about self; thoughts that you are unsure of can be allowed but contained by you choosing to let it flow in a controlled manner.

This allows you to get to know how the pre-thought feels for that type of thought without fully taking that thought on board.

In fact, you will see that being mindful is a way of stepping back from your thoughts and taking control of how you respond to them. Some thoughts can be very destructive and without being able to step back from them we can find ourselves overly affected by them and thrown into excessive emotional and intellectual responses.

Ego presents the pre-thought, you choose to modify it, and ego learns. This is the simple truth of full ego management. It does not mean that all negative thoughts will be removed for as I have said there are other subconscious processes that produce such thoughts, however without mindfulness it is extremely difficult to move to a state of mind where these can be explored and healed.

So full mindfulness is not the total answer to moving towards a totally positive and loving self-image, but it is a fundamental tool that you need in order to progress towards that, and in many cases developing full mindfulness will take you a significant part of the way on that journey.

It is worth remembering that much of the work of a mindful person is about reprogramming.

That often the thoughts one wishes to modify only come when we find ourselves in specific circumstances and often it is necessary to put ourselves deliberately into that type of situation in order to assess our thoughts and modify them.

Also, ego may take its time learning the “new you”, you may have to re-visit some thought processes a few times in order for ego to finally get the message, so repetitive lessons are often needed and you should expect to see previously rejected or modified thoughts re-

occur. This can be disheartening if you are not expecting it, but do not give up; perseverance is definitely the order of the day.

Fortunately, although you will see these re-occurrences, you will also find that each time it is easier to deal with them. It seems that part of the process involves repetition in order to deeply learn the self that you are becoming.

Another aspect of the way ego works is in the label that we perceive ourselves as having at the time of the thought. Ego will collect behaviour examples and will tag them with labels. For example, the response suggestions ego draws upon are different when a person moves from being single to being married or part of a couple. This means that those response memories may not have been worked through at all and you can easily find yourself in a place where you feel you have to start all over again.

Take care which labels you adopt, and if you adopt a new label, take care to be extra mindful of it.

Like all aspects of ego management, being fully mindful takes time and perseverance, but the concepts are easy to understand and actually, ego will help you get there by listening to your positive intentions and learning from your decisions regarding your thoughts and feelings.

7. Ego and Labels

Ego works in a similar way with our memories of interaction as Internet search engines do with tags – web pages are tagged with a group of labels that make it easier to seek out common information based on looking up these labels.

The major difference is that with ego this labelling is an automatic subconscious process that we are not aware of, and this means that we can be caught out by the response suggestions ego presents to us due to it seeing the situation from a perspective of the labels it decides apply to that specific situation.

For example, a person driving a car is accessing a major label category of “self” and a subcategory of “driving” as well as others, and this means that ego will find it quicker and easier to access and suggest thought/action responses that are under that category than it would for responses suitable to categories it does not consider to apply to the current situation.

This is part of the reason why we sometimes find it more difficult to remember things in some situations than it does for others. But it does mean that we are able to move through life wearing “masks” that are suitable for any given situation, so is a useful aspect of the way ego works.

However, from the perspective of a mindful person who is trying to establish a consistent and positive concept of self within ego, it does present problems, since you are not aware of the labels that ego is applying at any given moment and the transition from one label to another is usually imperceptible.

This is the reason why it can take quite some time to fully train ego; in order to address the thought responses triggered by the label you need to put yourself into that situation and it will take quite some time to have experienced all of the likely label configurations that life will present to you.

If you think about the various labels that can be applied to self at any given moment then you begin to appreciate the size of the problem, numerous labels can apply as we transition from being at home, alone, with others, driving, being at work, happy, interested, visiting other locations etc. At any one time a large number of labels constitute the available set of ego response suggestions and I like to call the totality of this at any given time the “mask” that we wear in order to deal with the situation.

There are also two types of masks, there is the situation where we find ourselves wearing a new mask, for example in the first weeks of starting a new job, and there are also the established masks; where we have been in the job for a long time for example.

Having a new mask is a dangerous time from the perspective of a mindful person because it means ego may well find options that have never been worked on from a mindful perspective and the individual may well find themselves behaving in ways that they had not planned and are not conducive to their sense of self. Having behaved in such a way it is

vitaly important that you do not fall into the trap of grasping for justification for those actions and instead undergo a thorough self-examination.

Much of this can be avoided by internal role-play, where potential situations that we may come across are imagined and the suitable response determined. In this way we can pre-program our ego with other response options rather than simply having to rely on what has been observed of others or learnt in other ways.

It helps to adopt a humble view also; knowing that we are not perfect and that such experiences are there to help us on our path towards the perfection that is desired.

When we find ourselves wearing a long-established mask there can also be issues, these come down to two distinct areas.

The first, is that long established masks tend to limit the range of expression that the individual can have; once you have mindfully established your boundaries for expression within a particular situational role it is important that you challenge these regularly and also discard old responses that no longer suit.

The second issue caused by wearing an established mask is similar in that we have created established models of interaction with others and often it is these other people that limit our growth in that situation due to their ego seeking to maintain its concept of you. In other words, you may find yourself changing due to your own mindful practices, but others around you will be unable to deal with that changing image of self and they will unconsciously and consciously seek to restrict your behaviour to within parameters that they have deemed to be fundamental to you.

This can be cause of friction between friends and colleagues and needs careful management by you being understanding that they do not share your own inner vision and is best handled by seeking to make gradual changes to the boundaries that others impose on you.

The key aspect here, is that we seek authenticity in everything we do, and this means whichever label we are wearing at any given time. Some say we should discard our masks, and fully expose the authentic self at all times. I partially agree with this, but as I see it, what we are really doing is programming all of our masks to be authentic of self, and so we benefit from the ego's ability to respond to situations quicker than if we had to think about it each time, but with the benefit of that response being true-to-self, because it is the true-self that has programmed the ego.

8. Recurring Negative Thoughts

Once you have worked at being mindful for some time you will become aware that there are some thoughts and feelings that you struggle to eradicate. These include anger, fear, depression, hate and various other negative thoughts and emotions that you would rather be free from. Note; these emotions are sometimes entirely positive, what I'm talking about here are often called "triggers". Where we indulge in unwanted self-destructive behaviours due to certain external or internal inputs, and those behaviours are not true-to-self.

This is because most of us have subconscious problems that need to be addressed but as I have said, prior to being able to work with these it is important to clear the mind of its clutter in order to be able to focus on these deeper issues.

For a large number of people, these issues stem from past hurts that left deep emotional scars that come to the surface through these thoughts and feelings.

Because we are all individual, there are numerous ways that these problems can be dealt with and my aim here is to give an understanding of the mechanics of how this process works so that you can better understand exactly what is happening.

For a large number of people, most emotional scars happen during childhood. You do not need to have had a particularly traumatic childhood in order to pick up these scars, it seems, that as children we are particularly sensitive and vulnerable to criticism and abusive behaviour and our tendency is to unconsciously blame ourselves for the hurt inflicted on us by others.

It is typical for many children having been attacked or told off for their behaviour (self-expression) to reject that aspect of self in order to prevent that expression from being the cause of such pain in future. The more traumatic the childhood the more times this process occurs, sometimes until the child finds themselves in later life feeling emotionally numb, lacking in emotions and feeling less of a person because of it.

The overall process seems to be that issues caused during childhood will resurface later in life and present themselves as specific negative and often obsessive thoughts, these include self-harm, depression, irrational fears and a range of other negative issues.

Sometimes, these rejected thought-forms present themselves as characters with voices, rarely, they can present as completely different people speaking to the individual in thought.

It is as if the child stores away problems so that later, when older and more mature they can be dealt with.

We are often taught to simply suppress these feelings and yet we are compelled by their nature to express them, and if we do suppress them then they either grow stronger or come out in different more complex ways that can be more difficult to deal with. Obviously, these behaviours can be very self-destructive and control is required, but it should be noted that they won't just go away until they have been dealt with them one way or the other.

When a child rejects an aspect of self, it is often an emotional aspect that is cut off and suppressed by ego, which seeks to ensure the child's happiness by removing the connection to that particular emotion or feeling.

The result is often twofold; the child will grow up feeling disconnected from those emotions and will also develop attachments that will either reflect a need to get that emotion from others or an inversion of that emotion, in other words a person lacking a loving connection with self could either develop a need to feel that love from others or will seek to feel hate for others, this seems to be entirely down to the individual in question, and also, I should emphasise that this is a very simplistic example. The reality is that we see many hurts in many ways and these accumulate to create our own individual expression of that inner pain.

The key thing here is to realise that when we find we have these recurring negative thoughts and emotions, we are seeing the symptoms of a deeper problem and the fact that we see these symptoms, is good news, as it means we have something specific to work with.

In my view all people see these hurts during childhood and most think of their adult expression as being normal, when in reality they are as disconnected from their emotional and true self as an individual who is self-harming due to the same lack of feelings.

The only difference is that those people who perceive themselves as normal have developed an ego that is successful in hiding these problems from self and therefore counter-intuitively it is those people who are having these negative recurring thoughts and emotions that are closer to their own true recovery. Being able to successfully hide from a problem means the individual is not acting true-to-self, and therefore is not healed and whole.

So, if you are suffering from these thoughts, remember that these are clues to knowing self and also, you should know by now that ego will help you repair that past hurt by making the hurt obvious, by way of the symptoms, and by helping to bring about the situation whereby you can heal those hurts. For hurts caused by childhood, the way to healing them is to remember the expression of self that was rejected and to arrive at an authentic and safe expression of that original hurt. Now that you understand how to work with your ego, it is time to also start working with intuition in order to allow yourself to heal.

9. Intuitive Healing Journeys through Meditation

An important skill to develop is to be able to go on an intuitive healing journey whilst meditating. A common issue people face are fears that prevent or interfere with their true expression of self. An example I was recently giving advice about was the case of a person who had an irrational fear of driving, and she was wondering how she could overcome that fear, so I suggested a healing journey.

The first thing to do, is to put yourself into a situation where the fear is resonating within you. This is so you can bring to mind your inner feelings about the issue. You put yourself in proximity to the trigger, just close enough to allow you to access it's "internal signature", so later, in meditation you can bring that signature to mind and work with it.

The aim of the healing journey is to intuitively locate the source of the fear and to try to resolve that issue. Resolution may not happen in a single journey as these journeys are gentle bouts of self-exploration and the cause of the issue is often uncovered little by little, rather like peeling the skins of an onion.

Also, a fear may have multiple causes, so stick with it and try to use intuition to know the right time to journey again. Have patience and be gentle with yourself.

Next set an intent that you will be successful with your journey and ask the universe/self/ego/intuition to help you on your journey in order for you to gain a better understanding of the issue.

Take yourself to a quiet place where you will not be disturbed, away from any distractions. The whole concept with a meditation is simply to allow you to focus more clearly on this self-introspection journey.

In your quiet space, make yourself comfortable. The journey may last quite a bit of time, sit or lie in a comfortable position, so that you will not feel physical discomfort while on your journey. Note it is not important to adopt any special meditation position.

I usually lie down for my meditations, the only danger here is that of falling asleep while meditating, but so long as you are not too tired to begin with you should be ok.

Also note that it takes practice to get to the right relaxed state during meditation, so you may need to do this a few times in order to gain success.

Now that you are comfortable, allow yourself to relax. The aim with meditation is to try to get as relaxed as possible without falling asleep, and to empty your mind of any other thoughts, which at this point are only distractions.

Allow yourself to relax quietly for 5 to 10 minutes until you intuitively know it is the right time to begin your journey within, and then begin by asking yourself about the problem.

Listen to your intuition and try to verbalise in your mind the response and in this way establish a dialogue of self-exploration within your mind.

The path that this journey will take is up to you. Have no preconceptions as to how it will turn out, have a completely open mind and follow the journey that intuition sets out for you.

In my case, I usually ask to speak to the aspect of self that is causing that fear/thought etc., to come forward and speak. I ask why I'm getting that thought, and what can be done to help myself so that future responses are in line with true-self. But, I've had many years practice at this, for the beginner it is more likely to be an intuitive feeling that comes forth initially. Continuing to work with that intuition, often makes the connection stronger, until you are able to have an internal discussion.

Sometimes intuition will take you on another journey to that which you were expecting, do not dismiss this, the chances are that the journey is needed prior to venturing into the problem at hand.

A journey can be short or long, normally inexperienced people journey for shorter periods. Try to take note of every thought that you have, sometimes even apparently distractive thoughts are important.

The more you listen to self, the more successful you will be in your journeys.

Remember, use mindfulness so that you are not judging or responding to the thoughts you are getting. The goal here is to end up in a loving, integrated relationship with the aspect of self that was once rejected. Initially they may say some harmful things, they may seem frightening or overwhelming. Be firm with your aim of loving reintegration. Also, be patient, you will probably not solve everything at one. But know this: The key to loving self, is knowing self. Any and all information you glean from your journey is actually going to have some healing effect. You just need to give this aspect of self, sufficient caring attention, so that a bond of trust can be re-established.

10 – More insight on Recurring Negative Thoughts

There can be many sources of repeating negative thoughts, the type I would like to discuss here are those that seem to have their own life and are brought about by severe breakdowns in a person's character, often these seem to be another person talking to you but within your own head, I group this kind of repetitive negative thought as what I call externalised projections of self.

They can also be a more basic obsessional thought flow, usually very negative; hatred of others and or of self, intense depressive thoughts, they can cause dramatic mood swings and often seem to pester the individual to distraction.

Sometimes these thought patterns announce themselves, telling the individual to kill themselves or other people, and badgering incessantly if they fail to comply.

Other times, they are more subtle and only come to light when a person discovers them, as they work through their own mindful practices; As the mind becomes clear of ego chatter it becomes increasingly clear that some negative thoughts cannot simply be re-learnt or un-learnt and as the mind clears these thoughts become the dominant source of self- negative internal expression.

As the individual works on them, rather than fading away, they become stronger, more obsessive and as I say, sometimes taking on a life of their own.

These thoughts tend to be amongst the most harmful of thought processes, they can lead to a person harming self, others, behaving erratically, violently or being extremely depressed or anxious, they can lead to panic attacks and all manner of problems.

I should also say that early life trauma is not the only source of these negative thought processes, there is also a class of issue that is caused by what I call inherited karma which is actually based on the proposition that issues that were caused due to trauma in past lives can come back to haunt the individual and even if they had a wonderful childhood they can still come up against these issues, often no less traumatic in themselves. I will talk about inherited karma another time.

I have discussed previously the concept that rejections of self can turn into negative thought processes; early life trauma can cause an individual to suppress an aspect of self and this aspect can invert to become a negative set of thought processes.

These thoughts can run deeper than I have previously explained, they can develop into their own negative character and can present themselves to the individual as a hateful aspect of self, or even a part of the mind that is not recognised as self at all.

Anyone faced with these issues needs to investigate self in a systematic way. Clearing the mind to leave the persistent negative thoughts is the first step, we are now interrogating those persistent thoughts with a view to ascertaining if they are the result of deeper self-trauma. Later I will discuss yet deeper causes of these issues; the onion needs to be peeled one layer at a time.

Dealing with these deeply negative thoughts can be very difficult, my first suggestion is that you seek professional advice. In my view, the best way to re-invert these negative aspects into their original positive traits, is to give them expression, and often that expression can be dangerous and certainly not for public consumption. It is also very troubling and even tiring for the individual concerned and therefore finding the right professional healer will allow that expression to be contained within a safe structure.

A shaman faced with a person with such issues would say they are dealing with a fractured soul and indeed this term is a useful way of looking at it, since you can think of it as the past trauma as fracturing the mind/soul and creating several disparate entities within the mind, and at this stage we have brought them to light through mindful practices. Separated from the core self these aspects have taken on their own personalities or have become very strong thought patterns which have developed separately and unknown to the individual concerned until later in life when they have become apparent.

As I see it, there are two major tasks that need to be completed (1) heal the individual fracture, and (2) re-consolidate the whole. The process is sometimes known as a soul retrieval.

So, an individual may not be dealing with a single negative thought form, they may be dealing with several, and each needs to be healed before the whole can be reconsolidated.

These can be very scary times for the individual seeking to heal self and I would emphasise again the value of seeking the right kind of professional help, you need to go somewhere that you will be safe in order to allow these healing thoughts to express themselves. The object is not to allow them to damage you or anyone else, but to slowly gain an expression that appeases the drama.

I've just mentioned "Drama", this is exactly what a lot of these thought patterns present to you, an internal drama, which has a potential positive outcome and also a potential negative one, in my experience the negative side is brought about by trying to repress and suppress the drama that is being presented, finding a way to safely give it expression tends to diffuse it and allows the individual to come to terms with the thought form.

Drama's figure a lot in many quests for true self. When we go on meditative journey's we are playing out a drama, and many people find that drama's feature highly in their quest for self-knowledge/self-healing.

There will be negative dramas and positive drama's, aspects of self will want to kill you and to have you kill yourself or others or similar. Such dramatic plots will spring to mind, the trick is to be able to explore them without buying into them – to get to the bottom of the reason why this aspect wishes the self to destruct and to engineer the salvation of self by affecting life changes that cause the negative thoughts to buy into the idea of trying to create a new you, one that will have a positive life and be true to the totality of self.

Each step of the way it is a drama that is playing out; self-testing-self with the highest of stakes but have confidence, this is a healing journey. Yes, it can be frightening and risky but

the odds are loaded in your favour, you simply need to be true to self and to hold unconditional love in your heart and you will get through.

A note on False Memories

One of the strange aspects of healing at this level is that some of the memories of trauma that are brought to light during these sessions of self-exploration can be false, so it is important to realise that often it is the emotional expression that is important, not necessarily the actual content.

It seems that sometimes our past traumas have resonance with traumas of other's lives and they can get mixed up. This can be very confusing for the individual concerned and often people find themselves accusing people from their childhood of crimes that did not actually happen.

Some understanding is required here, this is simply a process that brings a person to the right expression of emotional pain, sometimes the details are critically important but sometimes they are less so, it is like ego creates a drama that allows the individual to be authentic and sincere, to allow the right expression to take place. Once that expression is over then it is important to forgive all involved and move on, there is no good in dwelling on bad behaviour of others, this is their problem, no longer yours.

There is also the case where the thought-form of self is too ashamed to tell the truth first time of asking. So, it can make up a tale which gives justification to their action, and saves face. Often it takes several attempts of self-introspection to get to the actual truth, as the trust bond between you and your thought-form develops.