

Conversation with the Heart

Conversing with your heart is the most important step you can take if you are interested in experiencing a fulfilling, inspiring life. I like to use the following example to explain the importance of conversing with the heart:

Let's pretend that you are speaking to me but, instead of listening, I am looking around while you talk; it would not take very long before you would start feeling like I don't really care about you. If this was a regular habit in a long-term relationship, you would probably be quite depressed about it too.

Well, our heart is speaking to us all the time but most of the time we are not listening! As a result we end up feeling unworthy, hopeless and depressed.

Now let's say that you are talking to me and not only do I listen, but I also act on some of the things you share with me and desire. For example, let's say that you tell me that you really like Thai food and the next time I invite you for dinner I make a reservation at a Thai restaurant. You will know that I was listening and you will feel like I care. You would feel more important and probably worthier. The same happens to you when you take the time to listen and act on your heart's desires. However, we so often wait for the people around us to make us feel worthy and good; to make us feel amazing about ourselves.

It's like we are still babies waiting for a mom to take care of our every need and tell us how great we are: we get hurt and upset when our lover, friends, family, life, God don't make us feel good. We try to 'fix what is wrong with them' so that they give us what we can only give to ourselves. In coaching terms this is called an unwinnable game. Nobody outside ourselves can give us what only a healthy heart connection can. This brings on good news: we can turn this around. We just need to start paying attention to ourselves!

There are two things that our heart wants from us. 1. Know/find out that we are worthy of love. 2. Pay attention to what we would love to create with our life and act on it.

The thing that we all want to know deep down is that we are worthy of love. That's what makes us feel fulfilled... By taking the time to listen and act on what our heart desires we experience joy.

Most of the time when we are challenged by the world, it makes us feel unworthy when we are not self-aware. Being unworthy is our biggest fear. The illusion that we are unworthy of love begins very early on. As an adult, it's easy to understand that a baby is worthy of love no matter what. It is obvious. But as a child we don't know that. We get convinced that we are unworthy just because something does not make us feel 'good'. For example if your mother or father are not happy, or if your friend takes away your toy, or if you have a brother that does better than you at hockey, than something 'must be wrong with you' and you feel that you are unworthy.

When we feel unworthy of love we disconnect from our heart and we spin in our emotions and thoughts. Even as adults when things don't go our way we often get depressed and feel unworthy. By reconnecting with our heart, these illusions dissolve.

Try the following: close your eyes and recall moments in your life when you felt love, inspired, or in awe. It could be while looking at a beautiful sunset, listening to uplifting music, watching inspiring people in action like loving human beings, athletes, dancers, singers,

acts of kindness, anything that touches you. In these moments people report experiencing gratitude, wisdom, compassion, abundance, confidence, safety, worthiness, fulfillment and love. This is the state of being we have when we connect with our heart. I guarantee you that if you start listening and acting on your heart's desires, your life will make you grateful. Feeling worthy of love starts by doing for ourselves what we would like others to do.

You have more energy and vitality when you are in tune with yourself. You attract people who are more in line with you, who have more energy and unconditional love. You have better job opportunities and more wealth because you put value on yourself, and you have improved health because love heals. You are more willing to take good care of your body, and the world around you.

If you want a fulfilling life, an intense desire to live connected with your heart is the first step. Without it there is no driving energy. Once desire is present, you will attract the necessary support and challenges to help you.

I want to point out something important about this book: it is written from the perspective of spirituality and not from psychology. Spirituality for me is the experience of the connection with 'spirit' that is love, gratitude and wisdom. It has no connection to any particular religion, just a link to a God who is unconditionally loving and wise. It may challenge some of the ways that you look at life. If it feels right then integrating this knowledge will be easy for you. Too many times we hang on to old ideas of what is right or wrong for us out of habit. We have been told to behave or believe in certain ways that are not necessarily in line with our heart. Open yourself up to new ways of living your life in a manner that deeply satisfies you and allow life's experiences to guide you.

Be aware that many times we hang on to beliefs without realizing that they are holding us back. They may be comfortable and 'safe' but they disconnect us from our heart which makes us feel 'unsafe'. I am sure that if you look back in your life you will find things you thought you were going to believe forever. For example, the person you fell in love (in infatuation) with and wanted to live with for the

rest of your life when you were 16 may have been there for three months... but then again if it was a real heart connection it may have lasted 30 years. Maybe it is the tattoo that you got when you were 20 that you thought was going to be the coolest thing ever; now you are trying to get rid of it but can't find a way to do so without leaving a scar.

Deeply embedded beliefs that are not serving us any longer, that are taking us away from our heart, can do the same. Some of these beliefs can be quite resistant to change if they have a lot of conditional love attached to them. We often behave in certain ways so that we can keep conditional love as opposed to unconditional love which is given freely without strings attached.

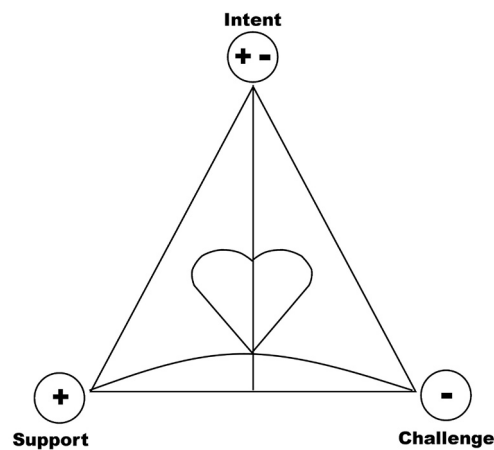
For example, when we grow up we often learn to be passive and give in to our friends, family or culture to keep conditional love. If in order to follow your heart and therefore be more assertive (as opposed to passive or aggressive), you wished to marry someone from a different culture than that of your family, you will need to be quite courageous. This is especially so if your family does not approve and threatens to disown you. It takes courage to live connected to our heart but from my experience we can't escape discomfort anyway: we can either have deep, long lasting pain because we are not taking the time to be true to our heart, or temporary painful transitional adaptation periods (remember that pain only happens when we have not integrated the perfection of the situation) and that it only affects our lower physical nature. We have the choice between chronic or temporary pain. Either way we can't escape discomfort, but when we follow the heart our life becomes more and more fulfilling.

The tricky part is to follow our heart and not some infatuation; learning the difference between both is one of the greatest challenges that we face. It is part of the journey towards enlightenment which, for me, is what happens when we connect with the light of our soul through a solid connection with the heart.

The journey is filled with adventure and, just like with any worthy adventure, we face ups and downs. That's what makes it interesting! But often in the beginning of striving to believe in our ability to listen

and create what we would love for ourselves, we get upset when it does not seem to go our way. We get discouraged by what seems like obstacles and we think “Maybe I am not meant to have this. Maybe this is not right.”

For example, Mary wanted to make more money at work; she decided that she wanted to double her salary within the next few years so that she could do the things that inspired her. She started visualizing and creating this reality in her mind. A few weeks later her boss called her in his office. He tells her that the company needs to downsize and that she will only be working half the hours that she was working before. At first she was upset, feeling that this was exactly the opposite of what she wanted and was discouraged. Then she stopped and started to look at her options. Because she was only working part-time, she decided to go back to school to take the business course that she had been thinking of taking but did not have time for. Once she graduated, she started her own business and within a couple of years had doubled the salary she had been making when she first started desiring it.



This is a good example of how it often goes when you first start creating something new for your life. If we don't know that we always attract both support and challenge to help us manifest our heart's desires, we may get discouraged and decide not to go any further.

We may feel we are not meant to have ‘it’, that we are ‘unworthy’. We may get upset and stuck in our emotions instead of experiencing the awe and gratitude that comes when we see the perfection. Asking ourselves, “How is this challenge helping me get what my heart desires?” helps us gain energy instead of waste it in emotional reactions.

The universe wants you to have what you love the most!! Don’t be fooled into thinking that it is not so when a challenge comes your way. I once went to a seminar where we were asked to sit with a person we did not know and share with that person what we would do if we did not have any fears. People were quite emotional sharing their deep desires and the people that were listening were very present and quiet. When the seminar leader asked the listeners if they wanted the other person’s desires to come true, we all whole heartedly said yes. We felt that we would love to support them in any way possible. The seminar leader then asked, “Do you think that the universe would not want it for you too?” This felt right at a deep level. It does not make sense to me that our creator would want us to be miserable. Everything that happens, both pleasant and unpleasant, is to help us achieve our deepest heart’s desire.

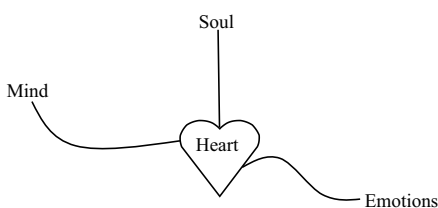
Once you know that all the events that you attract are there to help you, you can start taking advantage of everything that comes your way. You won’t need blind faith; very soon you will have proven to yourself that this universe is a loving one even if sometimes it feels really bad to your senses. As you do, your life will take on a feeling of adventure.

As human beings we experience life through three modes:

1. Our mind
2. Our emotions
3. Our heart

Without a heart connection, it is impossible to experience a fulfilling life even if you have everything needed for one.

• CONVERSATION WITH THE HEART •



If we are stuck in our mind, we are trying to escape feeling our emotions because we are uncomfortable with them. We are trying to figure out ways to feel how we would feel if we were in our heart, but we are using our mind instead: a total impossibility. Our mind can spin around and around trying to figure out how to be 'happy', never succeeding until we allow ourselves to feel with the intent to enter the heart. Data of Star Trek would be an extreme metaphor; he is nice enough but he does not have a connection to his essence and therefore he will always remain a robot that can never experience love. When we are in our head, we can suppress the pain of sorrow but we can't experience the joy of love. Difficulty feeling emotions is often connected with men, especially the older generations of men. Naturally some women also have a similar challenge but not as often as men. It is getting more accepted now for men to experience their emotions but for a very long time, 'real' men were not supposed to experience 'weak emotions' like grief or fear. Anger was an acceptable emotion to express but not the others. Remember this, if the males in your life mainly express anger, I don't know about you but that would have made me angry too.

Some people escape into their head because they have a sharp intellect that brings them a lot of validation and makes them feel safe and powerful. Because they feel inadequate while dealing with emotions, especially when they are in a relationship with someone who is really emotional, they tend to move in their head even more to get a sense of security. It is very polarizing and it can create big tensions that are more challenging to manage.

However, the opposite is also true. When we are in an emotional storm, we are unable to access the mind which would bring some balance and help us enter the heart. Deep emotions can take over

our life, spinning us out of control. This has been more traditionally the realm of women except for anger as mentioned before. Without the ability to centre ourselves, we get disconnected from the heart. Engaging the mind to see the perfection of the circumstances of our life and/or doing a centring practice like ‘Quick Coherence’ from the HeartMath Institute, allows us to use the mind with the intent to balance the emotions to enter the heart.

The heart is the connection to our soul which is the source of love. Our soul does not experience human emotions. When we are experiencing emotions, we are not in our heart, because we only have emotions when we don't see the perfection. When we live in our heart we experience 'heaven on earth'. When connected, we experience love, gratitude, abundance, compassion and wisdom which is often how heaven is described. We don't need to die to live in heaven; we have access to it every time we are grateful. Heaven on earth = being grateful; Hell on earth = being ungrateful.

We are ungrateful when we see more negatives than positives in a situation, and we are elated when we see more positives than negatives. Emotions are the result of being unable to see the perfect balance in every situation; for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. We get stuck in our emotions because we are not using our mind to get the bigger picture. By seeing that each event of our life had/has an equal balance of pros and cons, positive and negative, support and challenge, we rise in consciousness and have access to the bigger picture. It is like being in a helicopter looking down into a forest versus being lost in the forest below.

The bigger the picture, the easier it is to find our way. Einstein said that the only way to solve a paradox is by transcending it, that a paradox cannot be solved at the level it was created. When we rise in consciousness and look for perfection in the events of our life, we are removing ourselves from the emotional state that created the crisis and we enter the inner peace of the heart.

To heal the connection to the heart I find that there are three necessary steps:

1. Spending time looking at “the big picture of your life” so you can experience gratitude for the perfection of the supports and challenges of your life. When we are grateful, it is easy to be present and experience the heart. Without this presence you spin out of control in your emotions and thoughts and feel dissatisfied with the moment. You know that you are free and have fully integrated your life when you would be willing to do it all over again the same way because you know how perfect it was. You know that all the supports and challenges were there to help bring the qualities and talents that make your personality.
2. Engage your ‘female principle’ and have the courage to listen to your heart.
3. Engage your ‘male principle’ and be willing to do whatever it takes to get what your heart desires.

When you do this, you experience fulfillment, love, gratitude and success.

When we act on all three components, we heal our connection to our heart since the only way to experience all three components is by paying close attention to the heart by being present. And when we do this, it brings an amazing sense of being fully alive. When we heal the connection to the heart, we are guided and feel safe and secure. Life is filled with joy and even though you still face challenges, they don’t get you the same way anymore. You know that you co-create everything that comes in your life to help you learn more about loving yourself and others.

From my experience, these three steps are the most efficient ways to get you connected with the heart. The female principle is very important, otherwise success is often defined by outside achievements. In North America, success is often described with a display

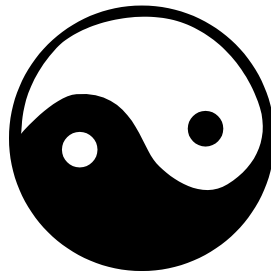
of wealth, family, beauty, fame, fast cars, and great clothes. Is success any of these or all of these? We have all heard of people who seem to have it all who end up committing suicide. Obviously a sense of success does not come from public accomplishments. It comes from connecting to our heart and knowing what is important for us and being dedicated to making those things come alive.

When we are not connected to our female principle and are just busy doing, we burn out. When we are not connected to our male principle, we know what we want but we don't act on it and we feel depressed; we feel like life is unfair.

It takes courage to engage the female principle. For example, it takes courage to listen to your heart that is not whispering anymore but screaming that you need to quit your job. It is scary to leave security behind and follow your heart. Similar fears can be found about getting into a relationship or leaving one. Whatever the heart is guiding us to do, when we have the courage to listen and act we feel instant joy. It is challenging, it is often scarier than bungee jumping, but the contentment lasts a lot longer than a passing thrill.

The effects of following the heart are cumulative. Each time you follow your heart and act, you create more self-esteem and self-worth as you are putting value on yourself. People come to me and tell me that they want more self-esteem but they think that it can just happen by some magic. Self-worth is something you do for you by paying attention to yourself and having the courage and the dedication to do whatever it takes to be true to your heart.

The female and male principles are beautifully represented by the traditional yin and yang symbol:



This symbol can be really useful when someone is in the midst of an emotional storm doubting what to do next. A symbol that wisely engages the mind to balance the emotions can help enter the heart and bring resolution much faster. The yin and the yang can represent the entire score of polar opposites that exist in life: positive and negative, support and challenge, dark and light. When we have integrated that nothing can happen to us without an equal and opposite reaction, we can start playing in the game of life with more wisdom.

It is so very important to know that a life will never have more support than challenge. If you don't challenge yourself, the world will challenge you. If your parents did not challenge you either consciously or just by the situations they brought in your life... you have been challenged either by yourself or by someone or something else! One of the biggest challenges that I see with people who say they want a great life is that very often they are not willing to take on the challenge of getting into action. They choose the pleasure of the familiar and non-threatening over fulfillment of their heart. They then just condemn themselves to a life that is depressing and unsatisfying: We make constant choices in our life over which kind of pleasure and pain we want. The pleasures of our senses/emotions with the pain of being unfulfilled or the pleasure of fulfillment that comes with pain of facing challenges. We can never escape the polarities between pleasure and pain, support and challenge. *You can't escape challenge because if you are too supported you will weaken and that will become your challenge.* An interesting by-product of this law is that when you challenge yourself by following the values of your heart you get equal and opposite support.

This is one way of activating the principle of attraction: admit an inspiration that has a purpose greater than yourself, which creates a great challenge, and watch the support you get.

Full self-expression comes from engaging our female principle which is passive, receptive, intuitive and in charge of listening to our wisdom / intuition / inner voice / heart. To activate it, we must be present. It also needs our male principle which is active, assertive and in charge of taking action steps to make sure that the female principle

is satisfied. I believe that a great life is as simple as that; the more we deeply pay attention to our female and male principles, the more love, fulfillment and true sense of success we experience. And by the same token we increase our sense of self-worth.

Sometimes I give my clients the following image to help them engage with the female and male principles: the female principle is like a beautiful goddess who is really in tune with who she is and what she wants in life. The male principle is her knight in shining armour who is ready to do whatever it takes to make sure that she be satisfied: he will slay any dragon that stands in the way. Whether you are a woman or a man you have access to both.

Gratitude for all the events of our life is also very important for increasing our self-worth and experiencing a fulfilling life. The worthier we feel, the more we have the desire to listen to ourselves and act on our desire. When we don't feel so worthy it is harder to get ourselves motivated to activate the female and male principles.

Most of us have had our self-worth challenged by what I call the Santa Claus syndrome (even if you did not grow up believing in Santa Claus you have most likely been affected as well), which is the unconscious belief that good things happen to good boys and good girls and that bad things happen to bad boys and bad girls. If we were good we got rewarded and if we were bad we got punished. The problem with believing this, is that every single one of us has experienced challenges—things that we would consider 'bad', giving us the illusion that we are unworthy. When we feel unworthy, it makes it much more difficult to have all that our heart desires.

The worthier you feel, because you have a solid connection with your heart, the easier it is to engage yourself into action and the more vitality you have. The female principle wants you to stop and listen to find out how worthy of love you are and what your heart desires to create with your life. These are the first things that your heart wants and they dissolve depression, anger and sadness. Emotions that may be giving you the opposite message are important clues as to where you need to go to dissolve an illusion that somehow, somewhere you were unworthy. All the emotions that are related to feeling that

life is not treating us fairly are actually connected to not listening to ourselves and not doing whatever it takes to make what our heart desires happen. If you feel that the world is not treating you fairly, it is because you are not treating yourself fairly; you are not taking the time to find out about how great you really are and what it is that your heart desires.

At the time of writing this book, there was a lot of discussion about the principles of attraction. What is important to know is that we attract towards us what we believe deep down. It is not what we think about that we bring about it is what we believe in: *What we feel shows us what we believe.*

You know what you really believe when you see how well you match your thoughts with actions and behaviour. Let's say that your heart tells you that you are ready for a relationship but in the past you have not had too much luck in that area. You pick up a book and learn about the power of your mind to create your life. You start to affirm that you are ready for a consciously loving relationship and that you are certain that it is coming your way. But at night when you get home you sit on your couch eat bonbons and cry because you feel despair. What do your actions and behaviours prove? What is your belief?

Or maybe you start affirming that you are worthy of a great loving relationship. You pick the first person that comes your way, even though deep down you know it's not the right fit, because you are afraid that there will never be someone 'out there that will ever love you'. What is the truth? Is it that there will never be anyone out there to love you? Or that because you don't love yourself enough to wait for the right person, you keep proving to yourself that there is no one out there?

People like the idea that you can just think about what you want and believe in it to create it. However the principle of attraction also demands that you act on what you desire. Even if the actions you take are not the ones that will directly bring you the results you are after, they create an energy that will attract more powerfully. When you are willing to act on your desire it is the proof that you really want what you say you want.

If you don't act, you will never get something that you are not willing to give to yourself or if you do, you won't be able to keep it. Once you are actively engaged in manifesting your life through desire and action, you attract the people / events / ideas / things to challenge and support you and help you get what you desire. Attraction therefore is passive and active. Even if you don't know how you are going to get what your heart desires, start acting on what you can do now. Often that is all you can do: do your best everyday to follow your heart and it will lead you to places you would not be able to conceive on your own.

I was reminded of the resonance principle in an interesting manner at a conference I was attending. One presenter, who is an amazing musician and singer, plucked the string of a guitar; it resonated and made a note, which is to be expected. Afterwards he just sang the same note which made the string resonate and again created the sound in the guitar.

Our voices have frequencies and our thoughts also have frequencies that, when matched with others, create resonance. The people, events and opportunities that we attract in our life are in resonance with our inner thoughts and feelings. If you love yourself you attract more people to love you; if you beat yourself up you attract people to beat you. When we don't like what the outside world reflects to us we need to examine our thoughts and feelings about ourselves. One of my patients told me that he had been in seven car accidents that had "never been his fault."

Some people seem to attract people to beat them up all the time while others go through life making friends wherever they go. It has been my experience that when we don't resonate with something we either don't attract it around us or if it is around us, it does not affect us. It's like it does not speak the same language. It's not that someone is worthier than another, it's just that when we don't need to learn that lesson, that we don't resonate with it, we don't attract it around us.

*You attract the people and events that resonate with you.
What is around you is always a reflection of who you are. If*

you don't enjoy what is there, it is a clue that something within you is not in line with your heart.

Look at your overall life. Is it a life filled with joy, loving people, inspiration, and success? What do you need to do if you see a reflection that you are not living up to your full potential? What if you realize that you are not fully enjoying who you are? This is when you need to become a 'detective' and figure out what's in the way of creating a fulfilling life. It is kind of a game where the goal is to remove as many veils as possible that are in the way of your heart. Each veil represents an illusion that you are unworthy of love. This unworthiness will show up as you not listening or acting on what is important for you.

If the natural state for a human being is to experience fulfillment, love, gratitude, wisdom and abundance because that is how we feel when we are connected in our heart. Any time we don't feel like this, it means that we have disconnected. When we get out of the heart, we experience emotions: positive and negative emotions. *If you feel lonely, sad, angry, afraid, low self-esteem, betrayed or any other emotions, it is because you are not in your heart. You have not seen the perfect balance of support and challenge and you don't have gratitude.* You are seeing more negative than positives in the situation: you don't have the big picture otherwise you would be grateful. The same goes when you experience 'positive' emotions like excitement, infatuation and elation. This happens when you see more positive than negative which again comes from not seeing the full picture.

As human beings we often like experiencing intense emotion. We may want to feel anger or sadness for example as we consider them 'normal' or 'righteous'. They feel good to the ego but not the heart. They get us to feel empty in the long run. There is nothing wrong with wanting to experience big highs just as long as you know that sooner or later you will experience big lows. When you come from the heart, it is centred—it's calm and joyful but without a big high. You feel grateful even when life sends you challenges because you know that they are there to bring the best out of you.

I know that it is not obvious right now how you can transcend these emotions, but I will expand a lot more on that later on in this book. I don't want you to think that emotions are bad, especially the negative ones. In fact, I find that in order to move forward in our life we often need to pay attention to them. They are clues that somehow, somewhere in our psyche we got hurt by the illusion that we were not loved.

If you allow yourself to first feel the emotions, with the goal to dissolve them from your physiology, (you may have heard of the old "what you resist persist") and then use your mind to find the perfection in having had them you will then easily enter your heart. You don't want to wallow in your emotions however because then you will just anchor them deeper in your physiology. You need to stop and feel them with the goal of finding the truth about them. We don't have to feel the same old emotions forever. We can deal with them once and for all and choose to experience gratitude and love instead.

When we don't pay attention to our emotions, many of the actions we take are actually not actions but reactions to past emotions and events. We think that we are coming from the heart but we are not. We confuse what feels good to our emotions with our heart. I believe that one of the most difficult challenges that we face as human beings is to discover the difference between infatuations (with ideas, people and things which satisfy our senses and emotions) and love that comes from the heart. It is a full evolutionary process that takes time and comes from trial and error.

When you look back at your life I am sure that you remember 'falling in love' with someone/something and thought you would die if you lost them only to realize that you had 'fallen in infatuation' with them or it. It is a difficult concept to teach children and young adults that when we first experience pleasure it is not necessarily love. As we get older we have the chance of experiencing situations that felt unpleasant to the senses and emotions at first. But because we stuck with them and worked through them, we discovered a joy and a fulfillment unmatched by anything else.

We all get opportunities to learn about love throughout life. We all have access to experiencing it because each one of us has a heart. It is easier and faster for some because they have less veils and therefore greater access to their heart's wisdom.

The fear of being unworthy of love is what creates the veils. With time this fear can remain conscious and/or become unconscious. Conscious when we are aware of it, and unconscious when it creates Pavlovian reflexes that we are not aware of. When we are disconnected we have emotions like anger, sadness, guilt, jealousy, despair, depression, insecurity, self-doubt etc. With a strong heart connection we are more confident and we have more courage, which gives us energy and determination. We can hear more easily what the heart is whispering and we get into action more easily.

The word courage has the same root as the French word 'coeur' which means heart. Living a life with courage is living a life from our heart. I find this really beautiful and inspiring. Each one of us has the ability to live an inspiring life by being connected with the heart.

When dealing with the conscious blocks or veils, our mind can comprehend why we are reacting a certain way: "I don't want to quit my job because I am afraid that I won't find another one." I have also seen women not pursue a successful career because they are afraid of losing their husband since he may feel threatened by their success. They fear not being able to have both a successful career and a family. In both examples they know they are coming from fear instead of from love but they are not ready to take actions yet.

And then there are the unconscious blocks or veils. These are trickier but we need to be aware that they exist. Otherwise we may take an emotion for the truth when it is only a conditioned response. *We are not aware of why we are feeling the way that we are feeling. We don't know that we are reacting instead of acting consciously* for our highest good. It is rare that we will know things like: "I don't want to quit my job and lose my security because when I was 7 years old, we moved and I lost the safe environment that I knew and all my friends and support system and I hate trying new things because of it." Or "I don't want to put time into my career because when I was

9 years old my mother was fighting with my father because he was always at work and by the time I was 12 they had divorced.”

Subconscious blocks, conditioned reflexes or Pavlovian reflexes were physiological responses studied by a scientist named Pavlov in a famous experimentation. Pavlov would bring food to a hungry dog, the dog would salivate and Pavlov would ring a bell. After a while he did not need to bring food to get the dog to salivate, he only needed to ring the bell.

It is possible to create Pavlovian responses in humans as well. You can experience it right now if you become really present with what you will read. Let's imagine for example that I bring you a lemon. You take it in your hand and smell it. I now cut it in half and you can see some juice squirt out and you experience the stronger smell of the lemon. I cut it in half again and ask you to put the piece in your mouth and bite it... Are you salivating right now? As human beings, we can store conditioned reflexes that get us to react instead of act with decision making as well as physiological reactions.

In 1989 I started studying a mind/body technique called N.E.T. (neuro-emotional technique), which was developed by Dr. Scott Walker D.C. in the early 1980s¹, which aims at finding and eliminating Pavlovian type conditioned responses that fail to naturally fade away. After using this technique on thousands of people, I began to notice recurrent patterns which can decrease our ability to connect more freely with the heart.

Depending on the experts, some say that up to 80% of what we do is not an action but rather a reaction to past events! Talk about not having freedom and being chained to unconscious emotions instead of following our heart and doing what would really be fulfilling! Many conditioned reflexes get stored in our physiology because of intense emotions. I believe that this is what Eckhart Tolle refers to when he is speaking of 'pain body'. However we also have habits that were created by watching our parents as we followed their example. Our parents had different needs and desires from ours they wanted to

¹ For more information, please visit www.netmindbody.com.

manifest. Our teachers, friends, relatives, coaches, movies, books, games may have shown us ways to look at life according to their needs and values. It's important to know that some of the things we are doing are not really what deep down our heart wants us to do. They may be habits or Pavlovians that we gathered along the way.

One of the challenges with conditioned reflexes is that they are 'stored biochemical realities' that bind us to the age the emotion got stuck in our physiology. You can be 40, 50, 60 or 100 years old but if something activates your Pavlovian reactions, you will feel and act at the same chronological age you had when it first got stored in your physiology. So if you were a baby, a toddler, a child or a teenager when your Pavlovian becomes activated, you will react like you were a baby, a toddler, a child or a teenager. You will have the same power, confidence and wisdom: you will feel out of control and unable to cope without knowing why.

How much maturity and sense of power does one have at these ages? It can be really scary for people to feel that they are unable to find a solution out of their emotions. Even though they have knowledge, they are unable to use it. They feel like the emotions are taking over them and no matter how much they 'should know better' they are still stuck. This compounds the problem. People can experience great anxiety over this because they feel out of control. The more they know and the less they are able to help themselves, the more anxiety they experience.

One of the places where I see the effects of this very intensely is when someone is going through romantic relationship challenges. The obsession over the situation, the sense of loss, the intensity of the pain is a pure Pavlovian. I have experienced this in my own life and I have helped many free themselves from these emotions. Most often it all starts if, as a newborn or very young child, the bond of love with mother got threatened. As an adult when we face challenges in intimate relationships, we may end up re-experiencing feelings of extreme grief and despair if we thought that we were going to lose mom. When the bell rings we end up feeling as powerless and scared as a child would be. It can become an obsession. I wrote mother because often

these emotions got stored at birth and in very early development but it could be any caregiver who was very important in the child's life.

The feeling that one is going to die from the pain is not the reality of an adult but of a child. We would naturally still experience distress if we were going to lose someone we love as an adult. However, the intensity would not be the same if it was not a Pavlovian response. It would be more mature, less out of control and once integrated in the heart transcended into gratitude and love more effortlessly.

A conditioned or Pavlovian reflex is stored in our physiology more easily if the emotion is really intense and if we are in a weaker physiological or emotional state. One of life's very intense vulnerable moments is birth. It is so traumatic on most babies for two main reasons: the feeling that we are not going to make it as we transition in the birth canal; and second, because often we were not allowed to be comforted by mom right after this petrifying experience.

From the 1950's up to not that long ago, babies were whisked away from the mother and were put on a feeding schedule regardless of their emotional needs. Can you imagine how you would feel if you went through one of the most traumatic experiences of your life, and the person you need and trust the most is not there to comfort you? Well that was very likely your situation. This deeply impacts our sense of worthiness. It makes us feel like we are not good enough, that we are unlovable right at the beginning of our journey: it makes us feel depressed, unloved and desperate. I am convinced that many of us are on anti-depressants because of a similar story. But the good news is... it is not true!!! As an adult it is easy to know that a baby is precious and worthy of love and that mom loved us even though she did not respond to us.

The fear of transition in the birth canal is deeply embedded in many. Whenever we are about to make a major transition in life, whenever we are about to go out of our comfort zone to follow our heart, the 'bell rings' and we are brought right back to the petrifying transitional moment of birth. This fear also shows up as inner conflicts or 'self-sabotaging' mechanisms when we know that we are about to reach

some important desired goals. Reaching these goals unconsciously brings us back to the womb.

When the Pavlovian bell rings, it is not about making a nice transition towards something we have been working really hard for: it is a flashback to the petrifying experience of leaving the too small womb for the needed bigger but unknown world that almost cost us our life. It does not make sense on the outside that reaching some important desired goals would cause fear, but it makes sense if you understand this mechanism.

When we are heart driven it is easier to reach great heights. When we are totally inspired or when we have something bigger than ourselves to aim for, it gives us courage. It allows us to face fears and walk right through them which we would not do only to satisfy our senses. If you have a bigger fear to stay stuck in the little and unsatisfying world that you are living in than to face the fear of transition, you will get into action.

Another common source of veil creation is when a sibling is born stealing away the special place the oldest siblings had. Often we are not aware of this consciously—these feelings are often unconscious. We don't know why we feel unworthy, we just do. Again as an adult, I am certain that you know that the oldest sibling is just as worthy as the younger one. What a relief it is for someone to let go of these feelings that are based on an illusion. To feel unworthy of love because we thought mom did not love us because she was not there at birth or because she had a new baby is a 'normal' reaction for a child, but it is *not* the truth. Feeling unworthy, not good enough or unlovable, because of such normal life events occurred is so easy to dissolve. It is worth taking the time to do.

The bond with mother has a deep impact on our worthiness. However, it is important that mothers do not become totally paranoid that they can 'damage' their child if they are not 100% aware of their baby's need. What they did or did not do was perfect support and challenge for their child. They don't have to be sweet and nice all the time for fear of upsetting their child because that does not serve either. Remember that we need challenges to make ourselves stronger and ready for life.

Just like your parents were on an evolutionary path towards understanding how to better love themselves and others and challenged and supported you along the way, you are doing the same thing for your children. Just like your parents were perfect to supporting and challenging you, you are perfect for your own children. If you don't see how the challenges you gave your children provided them with support, you will experience guilt. Guilt is a common emotion that gets us to compensate or be nice instead of loving. When we love, we support and challenge; when we feel guilty we tend to support out of insecurity.

Children know it when a parent is acting out of guilt instead of out of love. It does not feel right in their heart; they feel unloved. The niceties become the challenge. It has been my experience that some of the least equipped people to deal with real life are the ones whose parents were too nice, sweet and overprotective. Some parents, because of their own insecurities, want to be liked instead of being loved by their child. They remember what they did not like as a child and they want to do the opposite. 'Liked' here implies that one is using their emotions instead of their heart which loves. Remember the lesson I learned with my dog; I wanted to be liked by her and it cost her life.

With the new generation, the black and white roles of mother and father are blurring. The extreme polarities between bread winner and nurturer are not as strong anymore. As a generality though, I have found that our mother prepared us for the world inside the home and with intimacy, while the father prepared us for the outside world and career. Our siblings also impact us: they seem to influence how big we feel we can be in the world. The more we felt liked or disliked when taking our place in the family, the more or less comfortable we are at 'shining' in our lives. I think that the famous quote from Marianne Williamson that Nelson Mandela used in one of his speeches, about being afraid to shine so that we won't make other feel uncomfortable, is a perfect expression of sibling dynamics.

It is so easy to believe that we are following our heart and doing what we love when in fact we are just reacting to old family dynamics

and events. You may be asking yourself “What can I do about this?” “How am I supposed to figure out if what I am doing is really in line with my heart or if it is only a reaction to some events from my past?” N.E.T. and other techniques that demand the help of a practitioner are very effective at finding and dissolving emotions. Through working with such a practitioner you learn the difference between heart and emotions.

There is also support available through learning the Super Conductivity™ method that I helped to create with CoachVille CEO Dave Buck. This method teaches you specific techniques to make you aware of your feelings, thoughts and actions so that you can align them for your highest good without the help of a practitioner. You can learn this method through the DVD available on my website www.thevibrantlifecoach.com or you can learn it through teleclasses at Coachville www.coachville.com. If you take time during the day to stop everything, pay attention and experience your heart, you will notice that emotions feel quite different than your heart. You will sense the difference in your body’s sensations or feelings. Paying attention to the sensations and discovering that different emotions exist in different locations will be an empowering awareness. The more you live, experience and pay attention to the illusions and the truth, the more solid your knowledge of yourself will become. It will allow you to wake up spiritually and to become more aware of your reality. By learning to be self-aware you empower yourself.

Some of my students and clients have described the process of waking up as similar to what happens when we get up in the morning. When they are asleep and dreaming, the dreams happen to them. They don’t do anything, rather they just experience whatever comes their way. When they wake up in the morning they can start willing themselves to have a shower, breakfast, and go to work. They feel they have some control over what happens.

Spiritual awakening is similar; we start to realize that we were really letting life happen to us instead of manifesting it as our heart desires. Yes we were waking up in the morning and getting ready to go to work, but without any real consciousness as to why we were

doing it. What was the point? Why were we doing it? To satisfy our parents? Our spouse, kids, co-workers, boss, society? Without knowing if what we are doing is in line with our heart or is just in line with what is expected of us, we are asleep; we are unconscious. Life happens to us, instead of us creating it as we desire it to be. It is amazing how alive and vibrant we feel when we start to wake up.

The process of spiritual awakening is the process of fully integrating our spiritual nature with our human nature. When we align the personality traits that we developed while unconscious with the values of our heart, we integrate ourselves. As we do this we have a desire to manifest because listening to our heart demands that we pay attention to who we are and what we desire and then act on it. We become active co-creators of our life as opposed to simple creatures.

EXERCISE

1. The better the connection with our heart, the more self-love/worth we have. The more self-love we have, the higher the frequency of our energy, the easier it is to attract and create what we desire in all areas of our life.
2. The following exercise will help you discover what you deep down believe. Since we manifest not what we want, but what we believe, it is a very good exercise to do.

To help you understand the consequences of following or not following your heart, answer the following questions. They will help you have more courage, dedication and facility in overcoming your Pavlovian emotions:

Why do you want to connect with your heart? What would be the advantages?

What would be the drawbacks if you don't?

How would it impact your love life? Your career? Your finances? Your spirituality? Your social life? Your health?

What are your core values?

What makes you feel like you are really alive? Remember and describe times in your life when you felt you were in the flow, alive and grateful.

What was happening that made you feel that way?

What were the common denominators? Was it freedom? Security? Growth? Learning? Abundance? Inspiration?

The following exercise will help you discover what you deep down believe. Since we manifest *not* what we want, but what we believe, it is a very good exercise to do.

*Are you **walking your talk**?*

1. Write down something you really desire but don't have yet.
2. How would someone who knows with certainty that they will have what you want behave? (For example someone who knows they have a mate coming into their life would not sit home crying eating bonbons. They would be busy organizing their life for it. What would that look like in your case?)
3. Are you matching it? Which activities do you need to do or stop doing to match the vibrational energy of a person who has what your heart desires?