

This a well written, “Real World” SAMPLE- Dharmic Thesis

MY DHARMIC THESIS

I believe that our souls are incarnated to heal certain wounds, and share their gifts with this world. We are on a journey of awakening to our Divinity as expressions of the Oneness. As I understand my life purpose today it is to heal from self-judgment and the belief of separation and to share that healing with others. It is to experience my Being in this present moment – free from judgment. In order to do that my journey has been to unmask and acknowledge all of the self-judgment and negative beliefs and ego identifications that have blocked me from my own Light. My family’s history of addiction ends with me. I am enormously grateful for the tools and support that I have been given - and the healing that I have done. I am also thankful for what I have experienced in my life, even the most painful times. I feel strongly that life has unfolded for me in precisely the way that it has in order for me to awaken and grow.

My commitment to my process and the healing work that I share with others comes directly out of the depths of despair and self-loathing that I lived – that my ego-mind told me was reality. Because of this I am able to connect with people who are in emotional pain in an authentic and empathetic way that resonates more deeply for them. In other words, my work is not theoretical. I am passionate about how this work can help people and that energy translates into hope for those who are truly ready to heal. Having the opportunity to help others on their journey has been absolutely amazing. In Alcoholics Anonymous there is an expression, “In order to keep it you have to give it away.” As this applies to psycho-spiritual healing it doesn’t mean that everyone must become professionalized, but for me it is a calling. I see it as a way that the channel is kept open and is strengthened by offering it to others.

In this Dharmic thesis I will explore my Self from what I believe my soul’s perspective is as of Spring 2008. I offer personal history, insight and understanding as to how the

events of my life have been perfect for my evolution in this lifetime. I will discuss some of the specific healing work that has had a major impact on my journey home to Self.

My path was for much of my life as my beliefs created it was dark and lonely one. That was my experience as my mind created it. Completely convinced of my separateness and ashamed of my brokenness I struggled for years with alcohol and drug abuse as well as depression. A more accurate expression of this would be “*my ego mind* was completely convinced of my separateness and ashamed of my brokenness”. This seemingly small distinction is significant because it identifies my thinking mind as separate from my Being and it specifically names the part of me that held those beliefs. In truth ‘I’ was not broken, but my ego-mind believed I was and because I was not conscious of anything beyond my mind – it was my experience. The use of *ultimate first party* as a practice is helpful in reinforcing my awareness of my thoughts as separate from my Being, it reminds me of my I AM-ness. In the interest of writing style I want to remind the reader that there are times that my use of the term ‘I’ refers not to my whole Self but to my ego-mind and wounded child-self. If you had told me 10 years ago that I had a God-self I would have nodded with understanding and ‘known’ that it simply wasn’t true for me. I had no sense of the Divine Self that is within me. I didn’t know that I had a wounded inner child. I didn’t know that my thoughts were separate from my Being. The wounded part of me believed that I was broken and that the solution lay outside of me in accomplishments, relationships, and material security. I went into therapy at 18 and hoped that I could be turned into someone else. I just wanted to be fixed. Here again is an example of how the word “I” is commonly used. But the truth is in a question... Who wanted to be fixed? It was my ego mind that believed that I needed to be fixed and not my God-Self who knew that as a spiritual Being I am perfect. The various well-meaning counselors that I saw over the next 2 decades nodded and listened to me tell stories about my parent’s divorce, abandonment, drugs and disappointment. My feelings were not released – I was still locked in my head and my mind ran the show. My Being as a child of God was not mentioned or affirmed. My wounded self was not ready to awaken. This is my journey of awakening.

PERSONAL HISTORY

On a sunny afternoon in Santa Monica, California on January 1st 1956 I was the first of two children born to my parents Nancy and David. Astrologically I am a Capricorn. I am a girl with fair skin and blond hair. My younger sister was born fourteen months later. We lived in a little house in the hills of Los Angeles.

A little background on my parents: My Dad started out his working life as a teacher but switched to television and advertising and Mom worked as a secretary. They had both grown up in New Jersey where they met. They went to college, got married and moved west. They are intelligent, attractive, middle-class folks. They liked cocktail parties and avoided conflict.

My parents divorced and Dad moved out when I was three years old. The hurt of this was overwhelming. It was never discussed why Daddy was gone. I missed him very much and looked forward to the Sunday visits. My experience of his leaving was that I was abandoned, my original wounding. This was the source of the original wounding to my sense of self worth. It was the beginning of my ego mind's creation of my core negative belief that there was something wrong with me; that I wasn't worth staying for. My little ego was desperate to understand what was going on and it decided that it had to be my fault. My experience of abandonment was the root of many unconscious recreations that would surface once I hit my adolescence. And so it begins; my mind created a belief that if I was really good maybe he would come back.

Mom went to work for 10-12 hours a day and I was left with strangers to baby-sit for me. Some of them were pretty scary and I can remember feeling afraid. I did not feel safe. None of them are the person I wanted, my Mom.

I was sad, scared, angry and confused but I kept it all inside. I didn't have the capacity and it wasn't my family's culture to tell anyone how I felt. I was funny and cute and acted happy because it made Mom feel better. My ego-mind intuited my job – to take care of Mom and cheer her up. My mind wanted to make sure she didn't leave like Dad.

I was desperate to feel loved and safe. I remember longing for my mom or dad to be with me, feeling hopeless and lonely. My feelings were overwhelming but I seemed fine. On an unconscious level my ego was creating beliefs to protect me ... *I am unlovable, there is no one there for me, life is disappointing, there is something wrong with me.* I learned later that this is part of the normal childhood instinct to idealize one's parents. This survival strategy was a core ego defense that protected me by having me believe that the loneliness and neglect that I was experiencing was my fault – I couldn't see the truth of my parent's maturity or abilities as parents being the cause of my unhappiness. Because of parental idealization it was not possible for me to see it any other way. My little ego, like all little egos, did whatever it could to survive within the family system. Beliefs were formed and roles were established.

As a little child the role and human identity I took on was to cheer up Mom and be her friend. This was the nature of the over-connectedness, or emotional enmeshment that I experienced. Rather than mother me, she was unconsciously using me to fulfill her needs for companionship. Of course I liked this very much because as a child it felt like I mattered. I became very responsible and grown up in order to cement this relationship. My mind could only see my value if I was mature, advanced and had it all together. Complete shame and remorse would result if I showed up like a kid. On Saturday she would sometimes bring me with her to run errands and hang out like pals. Just the two of us! She was gone a lot but when she was around she was so nice, she treated me like a friend. She never told me what to do, she never got mad or yelled, and I was never given consequences. I really wanted her attention. My wounded child-self dropped being a little kid like it was an old shoe.

We moved when I was six years old to a neighborhood where there were kids. A few of the kids seemed okay but there were these scary boys who wouldn't leave us alone. They would chase and torment us, throwing things at us and at our house. No one stopped them or kept us safe. I was terrified and I really wished Mom could be home. Balta (our new sitter) was a lovely and caring woman but she couldn't really protect us. She was not legally in the country so I actually felt protective of her. I even called the police but

they said that since I was a kid they wouldn't come – that an adult needed to call – and that didn't happen.

At school I was the new kid and I felt very alone and scared. That feeling lasted long after the newness wore off. During recess I could be a 'play leader', helping the younger kids play kickball. Sometimes I could stay in and help my teacher where I felt safe and got attention. Either way I successfully avoided the pain of not feeling liked by other kids – successfully avoided being a kid. I would have done anything for some friends but I didn't feel like I fit in. At that time most kids had Moms who were home and came to school events. I remember feeling embarrassed that my Mom wasn't with me. On the way home from school a man exposed himself to me – I never told anyone. I was very scared walking to and from school. Where was my safe space? I started having nightmares.

Dad visited on Sundays and we had a lot of fun as a family. This was something I really looked forward to. He was a very funny guy and would tell stories. I wished he would stay. No one is ever mad! We didn't have much structure at home. I had no official bedtime – my favorite program was Johnny Carson (which came on at 11:30pm) and I adored him like a surrogate father figure. I got away with stuff like climbing on the roof and rearranging the furniture and was never given guidelines or punished. Mom didn't want to offer discipline or be a Mother, she wants to be my friend. I learned how easy it was to fool her. Sometimes even I was surprised at what my Mom said yes to. On occasion she would try to say no but I could easily talk her into a yes. As I tested the limits to see how far I could go before she would try and stop me I found that there were none.

When I was ten years old my Dad moved across the country to Manhattan for a new job so now I would only see him twice a year. I was very sad and angry but did not let anyone know. I was starting to shut down my feelings even more. I learned later that he often had trouble at work. He was a heavy drinker, though I almost never saw him drunk. What I observed of my parents drinking and the drinking of other adults it looked

wonderful and fun with lots of laughter. I couldn't wait to be included in cocktail parties.

I entered my pre-teen years desperately seeking something outside me to tell me I was okay. I was finally making friends and I was finally feeling a little bit comfortable. I was doing well in school. I watched the other kids closely and my emotional state could be determined by whether I thought they liked me or not. While gaining a small amount of popularity I recall that I lived in my head; judging myself and everyone else and making comparisons constantly.

My sister and I went to a church with some neighbors (Mom didn't go). I had this experience in church of wanting to feel like what I saw on the faces of the people there. I got interested in 'letting Jesus into my heart', interpreting this as something that would 'fix' me. Based on my expectations it didn't work. I felt exactly the same as before. My ego-mind created a negative belief that this was God's direct rejection of me as not worthy of his love, acceptance and inclusion. I didn't talk about my misunderstanding and I held the shame of this belief for a long time.

When I was fourteen years old my mother informed us that our little family was moving from Los Angeles, California to Woods Hole, Massachusetts. Within two weeks of her announcement the house and most of our belongings were sold and we were gone. There was time for only a few goodbyes. This move was extremely painful for me. The little bit of 'okay-ness' that I had gained in my social scene was erased. I was now the new girl in an environment where the kids had all known each other since kindergarten. In my new provincial setting I stuck out like a sore thumb. Now I was 'the girl from LA' according to my classmates, and somehow this meant to them that I was sexually promiscuous (though I wasn't). It was that summer that I met my cousin, David, who became my first real boyfriend. He was 5 years older than me, a sophomore at the University of Virginia. Had my family stayed in Los Angeles my relationship would have ended with the summer vacation, but since we were moving east it was possible for us to pursue it. My parents did not prohibit David and I from dating over the next two years. He was dad's sister's son, actually named for my father. Mom actually allowed

me, at fifteen, to travel by bus to Charlottesville to spend spring break with David in his fraternity. Yeah, I can see you shaking your head. Talk about obvious! He was a very kind and sweet person who cared about me – that was the good news. But, he was my cousin and he was too old for me. I would have done anything to hang on to him during our two years together. I was prepared to abandon myself in whatever way necessary so as not to lose David. He invited me to take drugs with him and my mind wouldn't allow me to say 'no'. On an unconscious level my mind believed that saying no to him would have meant risking him rejecting me. The mind is all about its own definition of safety. I'm sure he had no idea what this introduction would lead to for me. I had now discovered a way to numb my pain and my involvement with drugs escalated quickly. Within six months I was taking hallucinogens, pills and had begun intravenous use of primarily crystal methadine. My use of drugs and alcohol continued over the next fifteen years.

Drugs brought new people into my life. Now I had what I thought were friends, but they were actually just drug buddies. The guys were different from David who was now starting to seem boring. I traded this honest caring young man for men who couldn't have cared less about me. The relationship my heart longed for was not what my ego had the ability to create. I wouldn't know or understand for decades that the relationship my heart longed for was with my God-self, with my authentic Being.

On the shaky and leaky foundation of my childhood my adolescence was beginning to take shape. This was a very confusing and lonely time. What I understand today is that not having my emotional dependency needs met in childhood set the stage for the difficulties of my teen years. Having my needs for unconditional love, safety, security and boundary protection would have enabled me to gain healthy self-esteem and independence during my teen years. Mom was oblivious or in serious denial about what was going on in my life. Dad was just not there. On an unconscious level I was re-creating my early experience of feeling unwanted and unloved. My core negative beliefs were creating my reality. The people that I attracted perpetuated my low sense of self worth. I had no idea that I had value as a person - just for being me. In my mind I was

only as good as my grades, whether someone thought I was pretty or liked me, and how hard I worked. In my mind everything was based on appearances and the opinions of others. Somehow I was able to stop using I.V. drugs on my own in about a year. **Note to God-self: (that I was completely unconscious of at the time) THANK YOU.** This very blatant form of self-destruction was over. I believed that I was making a mature decision.... I would do the *adult* thing; drink alcohol. Yep, I was really trading up...won't my parents be proud! I had a job and was on the honor society at school – and inside I felt worthless.

In college I became drawn to helping people. I enrolled in the Human Service department in the School of Education at UMASS and hoped to become a counselor. It would take many years before I would be able to fulfill the dream of helping people in a healthy way. My ego-mind was still asleep. I was just trying to find a way to feel like I was okay, like I mattered – and the only way I knew how to do that was if someone said so. I remember being in a class of Jerry Weinstein who was teaching a humanistic psychological curriculum and a model of self-science that he developed called the 'Trumpet Process'. He had us in small groups discussing patterns that we recognized in ourselves. The design was for each of us to make personal statements in front of the class as the result of these processes. My personal statement was that I deserved happiness. My wounded self was unable to say it. My mind just couldn't make the words come out of my mouth.

My negative beliefs continued to attract unavailable men and be run by a wounded inner child who was just looking for someone who could make her feel okay. After college I got job as behavioral therapist – with assaultive clients. In the jobs that followed a cycle emerged: I would work extra hard in the hopes of being recognized and gaining advancement. My ego-mind really wanted my boss's approval. I'd make major sacrifices in my own life and would then be disappointed because my boss would not show me adequate appreciation. The cycle continued that I would then get resentful for how much I was giving up in my own life for so little reward – either emotionally or financially. I used alcohol during this time as a self-medicating device to keep me from

looking at what was going on. I was skilled as in needs assessment in whatever organization I was working for. My role would often be to mediate between the needs of differing elements of the job – helping one side understand and be better able to fulfill the requirements of the other. But my work was quite unsatisfying. My days consisted of working and coming home exhausted.

STIRRING / PRE-AWAKENING

An awakening began for me when I got sober in 1988, 20 years ago. My drinking and drug use had been a successful means of numbing of my pain for 16 years. Successful in that I survived long enough to recover. Thank God I knew enough that my sobriety was a gift. Without it I would have been unable to move forward in my journey. I was no longer actively self-destructing but my wounded self was still filled with self-loathing. As far as my ego-mind was concerned I was still pathetic and I had no separation between my mind and my Self. Initially the main difference was that I was beginning to actually experience the depths of despair that my substance abuse had masked. This was a painful time that I suffered all the more because I believed my thoughts were real and that I didn't deserve to be happy. It would be some time before my awakening would bring me to become conscious that my thoughts were only part of my BEING – not my identity and not the truth that I had believed them to be. I was sober, but I continued to re-create my childhood wounds.

I met a man who would become my future ex-husband. I got involved with Scott at this time and we became exclusive pretty quickly. He didn't fit the profile of any of my previous relationships. He was intelligent, honest and sober, and he just wanted to be with me. In the psychotherapy that I was in at that time I was working on being able to trust that something good could actually happen to me, that I could be loved. I began to be able to stop waiting for the impending deception (my experience of the other shoe) and attempt to be in a loving relationship. I didn't realize how my ego-mind's identity was becoming tied to his. I wasn't consciously aware of how much my wounded self needed his approval. And I was under the impression that I had done enough self-

examination to be beyond bringing all of my childhood issues into the relationship. But all of my therapy had been at the level of the intellect and I was trapped in my head, disconnected from my heart. It almost takes my breath away to see how much I didn't see. I had a man who really loved me, we moved in together and after a while he asked me to marry him. In my mind's eye at this moment I picture John Bradshaw's image from his book 'Homecoming' of the two adults with little children strapped to the front of their bodies.

We were two *child selves* trying to have an adult relationship and for a while we were pretty happy. He behaved lovingly towards me and to me that was the definition of happy. The issues of his anger management and my difficulties with true intimacy hadn't manifested yet. Time to have a baby. It took the concerted efforts of eastern and western therapies but ultimately we were successful and our daughter Madeleine Grace was born in October of 1995. The corporate workplace was no longer my badge of human identity. I was now a so-called stay-at-home Mom.

I was starting to notice a gray quality to my life and becoming aware that this had been my condition for most of my life.

AWAKENING

The re-creation that was responsible for my next phase on the journey was a series of losses and experiences that crashed my external reality and moved me into a crisis of healing. Within the span of a few years my daughter was born, I was diagnosed with liver disease, both of my parents died, and my marriage fell apart. I felt destroyed and alone. My parents were gone, my husband was gone and so was his family that I had so happily felt a part of. Without the external identification that my marriage and family life provided my paradigm was officially smashed. During the darkest point of this time I wondered aloud whether my daughter would be better off being raised by someone else who had more to offer. My wounded self could see no value in me. I re-experienced the aloneness of my childhood and my core-negative beliefs were triggered. I was

consumed by feelings of shame and disappointment. I wasn't conscious until later how this all mirrored my early childhood years. I certainly wasn't able to glibly talk about how a paradigm crash can be a gift from the universe that creates an opening for healing and evolving of the soul. I know now - Everything that I experienced was necessary in order for me to awaken.

I became dedicated to my healing and the journey home to my Self. I found phenomenally wonderful agents of change: teachers, counselors and spiritual community. They 'walked their talk' and were prepared to offer tools and support that would allow me to heal myself. Did you hear that? I said HEAL MYSELF!!!! For the first time I was hearing that I didn't need to be fixed. It may not have been the first time someone said it, but it was the first time I heard it. Their approach was nothing like the traditional talk therapy that I had been doing for so many years. One of my teachers is a counselor who helped me awaken to my Being. This was my first real feeling work and gradually I began to connect with my very-protected heart. I had heard about the wounded inner child but it hadn't meant that much to me before. She introduced me to something transformative: having a compassionate relationship with my Self for the first time in my life! She helped me see how my wounded child self was showing up in my life and provided me with an experience and practice of loving my wounded inner child. I hadn't even known that it had been missing. I began to know a new aspect of me - my God-Self. I had heard these terms before but I had never emotionally connected them to ME. My feelings were no longer the enemy and I could validate why, as a child, I had repressed them. Feeling my feelings was a very new experience. Feeling them without judgment would take time. I had spent years using my mind to feel as my ego's defensive strategy.

My self-parenting became a way that my wounded inner child could release repressed emotions in an unconditionally loving and safe space that was created within me by my own God-Self. My counselor modeled compassionate behavior and helped me become more aware of the ways in which I was unkind to myself in word and in my behavior. I learned to observe and identify the wounded child aspects within myself and create

distinction between that energy and the energy of my high self. I immersed myself in dialogue between these parts of self. As I went through the day I often inquired within, “who is it that is showing up here?” I began to notice my thoughts and hear them as separate from ME.

In the safety and love created by my high self my child self was able to grieve the abandonment and the love that she longed for but didn’t receive from her parents. She (my child self) had deep shame, sadness and fear that she could now begin to share, bit-by-bit, layer-by-layer. I began to work with multiple inner children: a very scared & hurt little girl, a shamed child, a caretaker and people-pleaser, a perfectionist, a victim, a self-destructive rebel and a punishing controller. They were different ages and they had different motivations and agendas. I can’t understate how helpful it has been to work with them in the third person. In this way I affirm that for example the negativity of my shamed inner child is hers – her beliefs and ego defenses. They are something my inner child experiences but they are not the truth of who I AM. Actively self-parenting by writing and reading loving affirmations on a daily basis became a practice for me. How truly exquisite that the mind can’t distinguish between the real and the imagined! This means I was able to go back and emotionally adopt my inner child and fulfill her emotional dependency needs that were not met when she was a child. Gradually I experienced the opening of my heart.

I want to be clear here that at this point my ego mind still believed that I would find joy by changing my external circumstances. I was dedicated to my healing. I wanted to feel better. But my mind had the understanding that I would feel better as things on the outside were better. It was a while before I could see that I could be in a joyful state regardless of what the external circumstances were – and that my life would begin to shift from the inside out. I had never before had the belief that things were evolving perfectly.

An old calling was stirring - to be of service and help people heal. The wounded part of me had a lot of self-doubt. With all of the work I had done in my own healing I

continued to feel inadequate to help anyone else. I began the Self-Mastery program at Holistic Learning Center (HLC) to continue my own journey and to see if this would possibly lead to counselor training. Self-Parenting and feelings work were incorporated in a structured program using psycho-spiritual tools and a format designed to bring this training into not only my personal practice but potentially into a practice that I would share with others. This gave me an opportunity to see that learning and healing could be effectively broken down into curriculum elements that I would be able to internalize and emotionalize. This became the study of ME. Not a study as in 'analysis'. This was my conscious choice to heal, integrate and *know* my authentic self - using psycho-spiritual tools for transformation and transcendence.

In the area of self-parenting for example there were exercises that gently drew my awareness to my minimizing, repression and disassociation ego defenses so that I could begin to heal the wounded child within that created them. I was re-parenting that part of me - creating unconditional love, safety, security and boundary protection from my Divine Self. I identified personal PERMISSION RULES: giving myself permission to value and nurture my own feelings and desires, accept that it wasn't my fault, want what I want, do the work I love and truly enjoy life. Nightly self-parenting affirmations brought my God-self into the role of fulfilling my emotional dependency needs and validating my experience. I did exercises on EMOTIONAL HEALING OBJECTIVES that helped me own and validate my childhood wounding, and assisted me in creating intentions for my healing that were clear and specific. The truisms that resonated most with me were written down and I elaborated on their meaning for me. And then I had to ask myself what the negative consequences were for each of these items. Now I was bringing my awareness of parental neglect, emotional wounds, lack of self-worth, ego defense mechanisms and repressed feelings into full view in terms of their origins and consequences and also my commitment to heal them. My conscious BEING was expanding and becoming strengthened through my own practice of love and validation and at the same time I was able to look at destructive patterns and the root causes of those patterns.

To have my feelings and experience them as messages from my spirit -without judgment- is an amazing gift. This area required much attention as I had been so disconnected from them. Validation is one of the key processes in working with my feelings. Practicing validation helped me integrate my experiences and my feelings as normal, natural and necessary. I had to grieve my childhood experience and be with whatever was there. I also did re-birthing type processes to release repressed emotion. I am so grateful for the support, love and encouragement that I had through this. The shift that was occurring was that feelings could come up, even very painful feelings, and I would be in some way pleased – or at least accepting. I knew that this was crucial to my healing. It felt like progress. I imagined the stuck energy that was being freed as I could now cry. My ‘disturbing feelings’ were now part of my soul’s evolution and not signifying that I was falling apart my ego-mind had once believed. This transformative work with feelings encompassed cognitive learning and integration into my life as an ongoing practice. I say this in the past tense but I by no means am suggesting that this work is complete; this was peeling more layers of the onion. My feelings and emotions are an integral part of my true self. They are not only intuitive messages from my spirit but they are a way that I can know if I am in tune with my spirit. Big A HA here. What I had known, what my ego mind had devised in defense of me was overwhelm, depression and judgment. Really powerful to see that there were actual feelings - healing energy trapped under these emotional blocks.

I was practicing something new in my life: directing my ego-mind to pay attention to what I wanted it to pay attention to. I was interrupting its life long habitual pattern. My thoughts and behaviors were being connected to the real-life consequences of my life. I started to see ‘my story’ in a new way. I had mentally understood that thoughts create reality but I was becoming aware the realities that my own thoughts had manifested. Now I was seeing many aspects of my life as re-creations of my childhood. I began to work on the core negative beliefs that made up much of my thinking and behavior as a step towards dis-creating those beliefs - beginning with Mom and Dad. Throughout this time I focused heavily on the power of my thoughts and beliefs.

CREATION AND DIS-CREATION

My Dad's abandonment of me was the original wounding and the initial source of my core negative beliefs. My ego-mind had a deep sense of shame, felt unworthy of love, and believed that the only way I could be loved was to work hard and be perfect. My wounded inner child judged herself harshly, struggled to begin things, was lonely, and in relationship after relationship I was abandoned physically and emotionally as both my father and husband did. These beliefs prevented me from having a compassionate relationship with myself. They also blocked me from having a loving intimate relationship with a partner.

The new empowering affirmations that I created through this process were: "I am so grateful to God that I have awakened to loving myself. My love is demonstrated in the nurturing words I tell myself and the caring way I treat myself". "Thank you God for the amazing gift to know that I am loved. As a child of God I know that I am loved unconditionally. I share my life with loving supportive people". "It feels absolutely fabulous dear God to be my true self, where the opinions that matter are mine and yours! Thank you God!"

As a child my Mom was gone most of the time and was not emotionally mature enough to fulfill my emotional dependency needs. Being a little child I had no understanding of why this would be except to believe that I must not be lovable. Through the dis-creation process I connected this belief to the consequence of my pattern of attracting people into my life who didn't treat me with love and respect. I also got that having that belief was standing in the way of me attracting people into my life who love me as I am. I created a new self-empowering belief: "It fills me with joy to feel the unconditional love I have for myself and for the people in my life who love me exactly as I am, a precious child of God.

Through this work I also uncovered that it had been too painful for me to feel as a child. This belief caused me to live my life in a way that was disconnected from my heart –

stuck in my head. It also led me to years of alcohol and drug abuse to numb my feelings. Without that belief I would be able to feel my feelings and unblock that energy - trusting that they were a message from my spirit. The belief that I created to fill the vacuum after this dis-creation exercise was: "I am so grateful to feel my feelings and heal my heart so that I now exist on this human plane with abundant love and compassion".

How many times had I reinforced these negative beliefs on an unconscious level? Of course they had manifested earth plane experiences for me. Each was an opportunity – like a nudge from the universe – to wake up- to heal that part of me. And these tools are available at any time I recognize that I have slipped out of the present moment. Another of my core beliefs was that I was not deserving of good things. This was what I came to call the 'there is nothing in the bag for me' belief. I had a lot of sadness around this belief system. The consequences of this belief included not enjoying life, and struggle in both personal and professional life. Having this belief prevented me from living a full-of joy life and from receiving or letting in and holding onto the good things that were waiting for me. The new belief that came out of this process was: "With every cell in my body I feel such happiness and I am so grateful to God for giving me a life filled with such abundance".

The ability to notice the energetic qualities of my spirit as compared to my ego-mind has been an important part of my education. This practice of distinguishing between these parts of my human existence was quite a shift for me. Initially this was a lot about being aware of the energy of my inner child who would become triggered often. I found that I could detect her presence in many situations. I needed to work on not judging myself when that happened. I found that in stressful encounters, such as in conversations with my former husband, my inner child would jump in defensively and attempt to 'take over'. Gratefully I had some tools now that would help me live a more self-mastered adult life. I worked with some specific guided imagery intending to create a loving safe space for 'little Corey' while establishing that my God-self would be the one making decisions and interacting with others in my life. These were enormously successful and I share this tool with clients when they are struggling with triggered inner children.

I felt the desire to share what I had learned. It was hard for me to let go of my old identity of not being good enough. I can also see that I had an old negative belief that stood in the way of me fully trusting and believing in myself. In this area I get to see so clearly how clearly my karmic challenges are in truth my Dharmic blessings. The self-doubt that has been there with me for most of my life was a deep psychic wound. Having this wound called me to heal and to awaken my spirit. Without this wound I would perhaps never have embarked on such a journey. In this way I have been guided to become 'stronger in the broken places' as Ernest Hemmingway said, and that strength is the gift that I am now able to give to others.

I was stuck about making the commitment to the SPIRITUAL LIFE COACH TRAINING PROGRAM. My old unconscious fear-based thinking was all over this. In an article by Dan Joseph inspired by 'A Course In Miracles' I read about a rock-climbing move called a "dyno". The climber comes to a point when they must let go of all holds for a second in order to move to the next position. I saw a spiritual metaphor in this and the timing was, of course, perfect. I found that I was able to take the important step of becoming a counselor in training (CIT). It was not the end of hearing the internal voice 'how can I help anyone?' but I now had a new answer. I CAN HELP BECAUSE I AM ABLE TO SHARE WHAT I HAVE LEARNED IN MY OWN HEALING.

This decision gave me the opportunity to move into another amazing layer of healing around fear and being a beginner. I had never been so conscious of my fear as when I began as a CIT. Yikes was my mind busy drumming up thoughts. Thankfully I had tools, principally a process called WAIF, What Am I Feeling? This exercise was something I practiced numerous times a day to check in with my self and see what I noticed. Again and again I would find the tightness, the pressure, and the constricted breath that led me to recognize that I was in fear. With this tool I was able to validate that my fear was normal, natural and necessary. Validation is a crucial element in releasing the ego's resistance. OF COURSE I WAS FEELING FEAR! I was in fact starting something new. I acknowledged that my whole life I had never been able to be a

beginner. My ego mind had me believing that I had to show up ‘all together’ and be good at something immediately or not proceed. I now could learn to give myself permission to be a beginner. I really couldn’t believe how often the fear was present. Working with intention and breath I was able to release it. Avoiding the fear and being unconscious of it would have overwhelmed me and sabotaged my training. Instead I have a relationship with it that allows me to feel it without judgment; its power is diminished and it doesn’t happen as often as it did.

I feel so grateful to have the understanding that we are all mirrors for one another. This fits in with the spiritual truth that we have no enemies, only lessons. In this way I feel I am able to reframe any encounters with people that my mind says are challenging to see how this is an aspect of me - to know that we are all God.

I have witnessed and manifested a profound shift in consciousness and transformation of my life. I have been deeply committed in my process of emotional healing. As I healed I became aware of my desire to help others but I thought that I was too damaged to be of service. Gratefully, I discovered that having brought light into my own darkness actually serves as a remarkable resource; it in fact enables me in a more authentic way to help others on their own journey. I have received an amazing gift in being willing to face my fear and uncover and embrace the truth of who I am. And in connecting with my core self I have found my joy in helping people on their own journey to their SELF.

