

Radical Self Value: Live Beyond Fear - Know Your True Unlimited Self

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Part One: The Unlived Life

1. What We Truly Long For

“God is not found in the soul by adding anything, but by a process of subtraction.” —Meister Eckhart

The most important thing you will ever learn in this life is that you are loveable and worthy, exactly as you are. We are all completely loveable for who we are. We all have value for who we are. This is the blessing we share with each other. There are no exceptions to this. This blessing cannot be undone. It is a gift offered to all of us—without struggle or the need to earn it. Being unaware of this or not believing it doesn't stop the truth from being true.

Many of us equate our self worth with our accomplishments. We feel worthwhile as long as we have successes. Acting on the notion that something is wrong or missing within us, we believe that if we just keep improving ourselves, working on our issues, and overcoming our faults, then we will eventually get to experience the happiness and worthiness we so desire. But it doesn't actually work out like that.

No matter how many credentials and titles we earn, or how much we achieve materially or how long we sit in meditation, it never quite brings the fulfillment we are looking for. At some point we suspect that we can go on improving and fixing forever, and we will only have a nicely polished, highly functioning ego.

Knowingly or unknowingly, what we all long for is to manifest the truth of our essence, which is love. When we are allowing the fullest expression of our true selves—the love that we are—we experience the deep and causeless joy of our own being, or unconditional happiness. This happiness does not depend on external conditions of any kind. It is not the result of attaining something. It does not come through struggle and strife, and it cannot be earned. It is the true nature of reality and of the soul.

When we let go of our masks, personas, and defenses, this reality becomes obvious and self evident.

The story of the creation of Michelangelo's masterpiece, David, is a perfect metaphor for the True Self that is waiting to be set free. Of his famous sculpture, Michelangelo is quoted as saying: "I saw the angel in the marble and carved until I set him free." He also said, "I have only to hew away the rough walls that imprison the lovely apparition to reveal it."

Michelangelo saw that David was trapped inside that block of marble, waiting to be released. In the same way, our true being is imprisoned. But instead of being trapped in stone, we are trapped in fear, doubt, and limiting beliefs that create a distorted reality and image of who we are.

We feel as though we are wearing shackles throughout our day. We can feel the weight of these shackles restricting us, just as David was imprisoned in stone. The masterpiece that is inside of you is literally dying to be freed. It's pleading with you to allow the Real you to be released from its prison of amnesia.

Author Parker J. Palmer writes that we are subject to powers of deformation, ". . .that twist us into shapes alien to the shape of the soul. But the soul never loses its original form and never stops calling us back to our birthright integrity."

What Palmer is saying is that even though our self-perception may become distorted, our original divine form never stops calling us back to our birthright integrity. We are here to reveal the very heart and image of Divine Presence, inner spirit, or divine spark buried within us. The Greeks speak of it as the inner daimon, an inner spirit or divine spark.

2. Chicken or Soul Bird?

An old fable tells of a man who found an eagle's egg and put it in a nest of a barnyard hen. The eaglet hatched and grew up thinking he was a barnyard chicken. He scratched the earth for worms and insects. He

clucked and cackled. And he would thrash his wings and fly a few feet into the air.

Years passed and the eagle grew very old. One day he saw a magnificent bird above him in the cloudless sky. It glided in graceful majesty among powerful wind currents, with scarcely a beat of its strong golden wings.

The old eagle looked up in awe. “Who’s that?” He asked.

“That’s the eagle, the king of all birds,” said his neighbor. “He belongs to the sky. We belong to the earth—we’re chickens.” After the eagle saw the magnificent bird above him in the cloudless sky, he was never again content to live out his days as a chicken. So he made a decision. The eagle stared skyward into the bright sun, straightened his large body, and stretched his massive wings. His wings moved slowly at first, then surely and powerfully. With the mighty screech of an eagle, he flew.

Most of us don’t know we are in a state of sleepwalking, like the eagle who lived his life believing he was a chicken. We can become so distracted with our heads down, clucking and scratching in the dirt, that we forget our true nature. Restoring our being to its true dominion and sovereignty is what the spiritual journey is for. It’s about awakening from the dream of smallness and separation created by the egoic mind. It’s the realization that our habitual, learned, Conditioned Self, which has been formed out of our “barnyard” beliefs, is not who we really are.

Freedom then, is learning to love our True, Unconditioned Self, the essential image and likeness of the Divine within us. It is calling our Soul Bird out of hiding and into the light. Awakening reunites us with our divine, innocent, luminous self, with all of its wonder, joy and freedom.

3. Behind the Veil of Unworthiness

“Love is a flame that burns everything other than itself. It is the destruction of all that is false and the fulfillment of all that is true.”

— Adyashanti

When we forget the basic truth of who we are, we drift away from the authenticity and uniqueness for which we were created. In turn, we end up looking outside ourselves all our lives, seeking approval and validation from others. In losing contact with our true selves, we cannot access our gifts, our power, or awaken our divine potential. How do I know this? In 2018, I lost my health, home, all material security and self-identity. This crisis culminated in a Near Death Experience or “NDE”.

During my NDE, I pulled back the veil of unworthiness and found one word: *Guilt*. Behind the endless self-judgment, shame, self-doubt, and fear of my own power, I discovered a deep sense of unconscious guilt. Guilt is an attempt by the ego, the mind-made self, to create an identity. The ego doesn't care where it places guilt, whether on the self or others, it only matters that it continues to project guilt, because guilt maintains the illusion of separateness on which its survival depends.

Guilt comes from the ego, not from Source/God. Occupying the mind with guilt, and all the stories produced by guilt, is a distraction the ego uses to stay in control of the mind to ensure its survival. In truth, the ego is empty; it has no center—no reality. All egos, therefore, feel limited, fragile and defensive, causing feelings of unworthiness, lack, scarcity, and separation from love.

As the illusion of guilt was unraveled, I recognized that my natural state is one of uninterrupted joy and innocence. I saw what life would be like, free of judgment, guilt and self-attack. Across time, those who've had spiritually transformative experiences describe awakening as a destructive process. It is the upleveling of all of our cherished beliefs and egoic sense of identity.

Following this archetypal pattern of awakening, my NDE deepened into a mystical process known as the Dark Night of the Soul. This period of darkness lasted for nearly a year. During that time, I was slowly being dismantled. As I came face to face with all my shadows, my illusions and stories were torn down and shattered.

As everything I thought I knew fell away, I discovered what is already present, completely untouched by all my faults, weaknesses, strengths, and other trappings of the mind made self.

In the deepest part of me, buried beneath the layers of armor, defense mechanisms, and identification with my ego's story, I discovered the truth of my being, shining with a love untarnished. I saw that I am already the joy and the love I seek. I only need to let go of my illusions to experience this. And the same is true for each of us. While it may take everything you have, you are here to make this journey—to engage in life from a state of worthiness and value, and to realize your divine destiny.

The purpose of this book is to share with you what made the difference in transforming my life. It is my sincere wish that you will find the wisdom and insights offered here to be as empowering for you as they have been for me; so that you may set your Soul Bird free and find the causeless joy and wellbeing that is your birthright.

May you soar with the eagles!

4. Forgetting Our Innocence

To understand how we lose contact with our innocence and wholeness, it's useful knowing about the two aspects of our being: The Unconditioned Self and the Conditioned Self.

The Unconditioned Self

“Our Unconditioned Self is a consciousness of love that extends from the heart of God into the body of all creation.” —Robert Holden, PhD

We are not born thinking limiting thoughts about ourselves. When we enter the world, we have no masks, no personas, and no armor. We aren't trying to be someone, to be nice, to look good, or to be interesting. There are no pretenses. There is no deceit. We aren't trying to be loveable; we just are. We are still close to the Unconditioned Self or True Self—the

witnessing presence within us. As young children, we may not be self aware, but we still embody the basic truth, which is that we are loveable and worthy. Our Unconditioned Self is always ready to love us and support us and remind us of who we truly are.

The Conditioned Self

Most of us live between two polarities—the ego mind and the True Self. Our ego mind is our false self—the Conditioned Self or learned self—who is not in touch with who we really are. Our Conditioned Self or ego mind resists life as it is. It is always either pushing away or pulling toward. This grasping or rejecting is what forms a sense of self that is separate from Source. Our ego mind sees us as a story of our past. It is only by living in the past that guilt stays alive. Guilt has no life of its own when we live in the present moment.

Our ego is the voice in our heads that tells us something is wrong with us—that something is missing inside us and we have to search outside ourselves to find it. This thought of lack produces the thought of not being enough.

This learned self keeps us trapped in an ego-driven reality of conflict, strife and fear that only seems natural because we have been brainwashed to believe it is normal and sane. When you identify with this learned self, you forget the basic truth: “I am loved and worthy.”

Is Our Ego Our Inner Child?

Our ego is not our inner child. It is the part of us that has formed as a defense mechanism to avoid going inwards to heal our inner child. The ego is an imposter, and its purpose is to keep you separated from healing your inner child and becoming an integrated and whole Self.

The inner child holds the data or memory “storage” that includes all of our experiences across time. For this reason, the inner child is often referred to as the subconscious mind. It stores negative programming that

manifests as difficult life situations. The ego prevents us from clearing or healing that data. If your inner child feels safe, cherished, protected, loved, accepted and worthy, it comes out to play. As a result you feel creative, expansive, generous, loving, and joyful. You know how to grant and receive God's love. You also know how to speak up, value yourself, and be authentic.

If your inner child feels unsafe, dismissed, rejected, abandoned and unworthy, it is terrified of coming out to play, and instead will desperately try to get your attention in order to heal itself. The way the inner child does this is through crying out in pain – which is exactly what painful triggers are. If this doesn't work, then the inner child manifests nervous system disorders such as severe depression. If this is not enough to get us to turn inwards to help, the inner child creates physical issues which often escalate into serious ones.

When the inner child is acknowledged, seen, and heard, we are able to expand into conscious connection with Source / Life / God – sourcing self authentically.

When the inner child is contracted, fearful, self-protective, and damaged, we are disconnected from the field of Source / Life / God – living the illusion of separation and ruled by our egoic fearful self. We feel unloved, unacceptable and unsafe in life, and we treat and maintain ourselves accordingly. The inner child keeps calling out and the cries get louder, and if unattended to, inevitably there is a greater need for ways to try to manage the pain.

5. Shadows of Guilt and Shame

From my earliest years, I knew that I was made of that vast presence of God or what the yogic tradition calls Absolute Reality—that pure beingness, present everywhere and in everything. I experienced the joy of seeing the Infinite everywhere and in everything. I had a rich and vivid inner life motivated by an experience of a world already divine, innocent, and whole—a secret I carried in my heart.

Growing up in a traumatizing and chaotic environment, I came to believe I had done something wrong, and that punishment was imminent. A pervasive sense of threat was always near. Over time, I no longer knew myself as innocent. A background sense of guilt, shame, and fear became wired into my system.

I had a feeling of being wrong on a fundamental level, not for anything specific, but wrong in my core, as if my very nature was at fault. As the knowledge of my divine innocence was buried, the shadow of “I am not enough” became my truth. It followed me everywhere and was behind everything I did or said. It shaped my words, my life choices, and ate away at the security of my being.

The root of the word shame is “to cover.” It makes us want to hide or disappear. In front of others, I often felt exposed, as if they could see my flaws. I felt I had to constantly compensate for who I was with apologies and clarifications for my actions, as though I always owed other people explanations.

I spent the majority of my life dwelling on events from the past and choices I made that caused me to feel ashamed. I obsessed about what I should have done, what I should not have done, and how everything would be better if I could just go back and change it all.

Guilt and shame kept me locked in a prison of self judgment, hiding, inactivity and insecurity. By identifying with the ego mind and its story, I could not recognize and receive my deepest desire—to know myself as love, and to enjoy being this love

6. Leaving Ourselves

The experience of guilt and shame—feeling fundamentally flawed—is so painful, that we will do whatever we can to avoid it. Rather than feel the rawness of it, we develop life strategies to cover and compensate for its presence. One of the most common ways that we try to numb and escape painful feelings is through “splitting off” or leaving our

bodies. This process is referred to as disassociation. It's a universal coping mechanism for detaching from our feelings.

When there's an acute overload to the system—when physical or emotional pain is more than we can process, we shut off, and it stays locked in our nervous system. Animals in the wild can shake off stress from their nervous system after a life threatening event, yet humans don't have a way of doing this. So we split off and numb parts of our body that would otherwise put us in touch with our wounding.

Any trauma trigger or memory would cause me to go into a fog that made it difficult to function or think clearly. I would be torn out of the centrality of my body and disconnect mentally and emotionally. When we disassociate, we disconnect from our authentic self, from truth, and from our wholeness. We fragment, leaving those painful feelings unprocessed. When there's un-lived life, we're not living from a fullness of being.

7. Masks of the False Self

"The ego is the false self-born out of fear and defensiveness." —John O'Donohue

Each of us carry wounds from the past. From a young age, we learn to protect ourselves from hurt by developing a false self, a mask that we present to the world. We use these masks to cope with stress and anxiety, and to protect and shield parts of ourselves we fear being exposed. We're afraid that if someone laughs at us, that's death, or if someone disagrees with us, that's death, and so we sacrifice our opinion. We become actors in the theater of life, performing for the acceptance and validation of others.

There is a child inside us who will do anything to win love and approval, or, simply to stay out of trouble. Being "good" is just one act.

Other acts we learned to play as children to win love or affection or security include

- being strong (“brave little soldier”),
- being helpful (“my little helper”),
- being nice (“my little angel”), and
- being a little adult (“a big girl/boy”).

More acts include:

- being an invisible child,
- being the family hero,
- being a scapegoat,
- being a problem child, and
- being the entertainer.

Whatever act we choose, the act by its nature causes us to feel estranged from our basic goodness. At the heart of these roles lies the basic fear: “I am not loveable.” This fear then morphs into the belief that in order to be loveable, “I must deserve love, I must earn it.” When we identify with this erroneous belief, love ceases to feel natural and unconditional. Instead, love is a prize that must be earned, deserved, and achieved somehow by proving our worth and value.

While most of us do pick up and take off masks to accentuate parts of our character, the problem occurs when over time, we can’t tell the difference between what is true, and what is a protective shell or armor.

As an energetically sensitive child, I believed that keeping my True Self safe and hidden was the only way to stay alive. Being my unique, flawed self in full view of the world around me seemed too great a risk. Sadly, the false self or ego can stifle the growth of a conscious, authentic self. When this happens, the True Self gets suffocated and sent into hiding.

By the time I entered college, staying safe, being liked, and “looking good” became of paramount importance. A master of social chameleons, I could present different “versions” of myself to adapt to any situation. All the while, I feared rejection and hid my true thoughts and opinions as a result. I felt the pain of betraying myself each time I looked to the world for

approval; each time I sacrificed my true feelings in order to be liked; each time I suppressed my own intelligence and creativity to please others.

8. Living Under the Radar

I was born with natural intuitive/healing abilities, yet because my core belief was that something was wrong or lacking within me, I felt I had to constantly learn more and acquire more training or certifications before I had the right to step out into the world with my gifts.

I set up endless criteria I thought I had to meet before I could recognize my own value, and before I had the right to see it. This meant that despite achieving some amazing things in many areas of my life, including speaking on stage to many hundreds of people at major conferences and collaborating with well known thought leaders, these accomplishments did not provide me with any feelings of self value. My wounded inner child's internal belief system sabotaged any chance of feeling worthy. She did not believe that this 'earned' her love or belonging.

Passionate about helping others, I was genuinely thrilled about being able to co-create breakthroughs in people's lives, yet I struggled to assign any of my own worthiness to it. I much preferred to live under the radar. I always wanted to hide under a rock when people asked me what I did.

My lifelong pattern of hiding my True Self and compensating with a mask prevented me from owning any part of my success, and from claiming my divine and rightful place in life. The result was that I did not have contact with an integrated, whole sense of being. I carried the burden of an unlived life.

9. Out of the Nest

"To be fully alive, fully human, and completely awake is to be continually thrown out of the nest. . . To live is to be willing to die over and over again."
—Pema Chödrön

When we're accustomed to feeling guilty or ashamed, we don't feel worthy of attracting our desires and living the life we truly want. We also tend to end up in love relationships which mirror the amount of love we can allow or feel we deserve.

I reached mid-life and could no longer deny the reality that I was in a marriage that was not satisfying to my heart and soul. For several years, that "still small voice" had whispered that it was time to make a change. I felt the call of a greater, more spacious life, yet I was terrified to leave the "nest." I also knew I would be hurting my partner deeply. The desire to stay safe kept me paralyzed, afraid to step into my power and circulate my gifts. My pattern of hiding kept me financially dependent upon my husband, which further ate away at my confidence and self worth. This inner conflict caused chronic stress and anxiety.

The time came when the risk to remain stuck in the same place was more painful than the risk it took to step out into the unknown. When I finally gathered the courage to speak my truth, my husband cut off all support, and gave me a deadline to leave our home, with or without a landing place. Overwhelmed by guilt, I left with no money, no car, and no safety net. Fortunately, a dear friend across the country opened her home to me during this transition. I took a leap of faith and moved in with her temporarily. I was unaware that I was about to experience an even greater upheaval that would alter the course of my life.

Part Two: Birthing God

10. Waking Up From “Me”

Starting over in a remote and unfamiliar place was disorienting on all levels. I often felt ashamed of my dependence on others, and tried not to take up too much space in my friend’s small home. Over the next two months, as I took small steps to advance my career, I began experiencing bizarre physical symptoms, including hand tremors, difficulty breathing, heart palpitations, dizziness, and numbness in parts of my body.

One day while home alone, I suddenly became so fatigued that I collapsed and nearly lost consciousness. I somehow managed to crawl to the phone and dial 911. As I lay on the floor, unable to move, I considered that I might die without having lived the life I intended to live. The thought of leaving this world with my “music” still inside me was terrifying. I had never experienced such fear—a sense of doom closing in.

When the medics arrived, I was in a panic and begged them to keep me alive. They administered emergency oxygen and rushed me to the ER. While in the ambulance, I was afraid of going unconscious and used all my strength to stay awake. I tried to answer the EMT’s questions as he continually tracked the cardiac monitor. I felt intense pressure in my chest and wondered if I was having a heart attack. Then, very clearly, I heard a voice that seemed to be mine, but was much bigger than my own voice, speaking a line from a poem I read years before:

“The Beloved, with His own hands is tending, raising like a precious child, Himself in You.”

This poem was written in the thirteenth century by the Sufi mystic, Hafiz. I was drawn magnetically to the words, “. . .raising like a precious child, Himself in you.” As I repeated them to myself, they turned into a

melody that caused a wave of love and bliss to wash through me. I felt myself drawing upward, as though spinning out from my body, becoming completely open and vast and free.

I use the term Near Death Experience (NDE) or Out-of-Body Experience (OBE) to categorize my experience. Although I did not experience a tunnel of light as others have reported, I did shift into an expanded awareness—a state of profound clarity and “wakefulness” that was familiar in essence, and made everyday waking consciousness seem like a dream. I was conscious, and my experience was a confirmation of truths I had always held.

I was in touch with an all loving presence for which the word God was way too small. I knew beyond any doubt that I was infinitely loved and cared for. There was an underlying joy of being that seemed so fundamental and familiar, that I recognized it as our natural state.

It was known that physical reality is a temporary, creative exploration, and the real being, our true selves, are eternal and can't be harmed or injured in any way. From this perspective, there was no judgment about anything that was done as part of this experiential adventure.

I felt a sense of connectedness—of mutual identity and intimacy with everything and everyone. I saw everyone in my life as characters in a movie—embodied reflective aspects of each other. Any sense of “otherness” and “separation” from each other and from Source was merely an illusion of the egoic mind. To understand something, I had no need to think about it, but could simply “become” it.

This recognition of the dreamlike nature of reality dispelled all fear. I realized very clearly that I am not and have never been limited to the small sense of self I thought I was. And it was not my ego that had that realization. Rather than “me” waking up, it was the true nature of all life and all beings waking up from “me”—from the hallucination of being a separate self, apart from Source/God.

I popped back into physical consciousness several times. Each time, I felt instantly contracted, small, and isolated from that great love and

belonging. I cycled back and forth several times. But by remembering the musical notes and words, I could re-enter that expansive state and feel the tender reassurance of unconditional love. Like a lifeline, all I had to do was remember the melody and words, and I would spin back up into that higher realm—my gateway and portal into infinite love.

11. Overcoming the Fear of Love

In that exalted state of knowing and being, I saw that guiltlessness is the necessary condition by which we know our true selves, and by which we know God. The ego literally disappears in the face of love. That is why it needs guilt. It uses guilt to deny love and to resist innocence. This insight allowed me to see my ego's story of guilt for what it is: *an unrecognized fear of love itself*. When the ego disappears, the divine presence and magnificence of who we really are appears.

To know our guiltlessness is to allow who we are. When we allow who we are, we allow love to flow. Healing is a release from fear and the allowing of who we truly are. It is liberation from a false image or identity, to a correct perception of ourselves. With true perception, I saw myself honestly. I accepted my divine innocence and worth as a spark of God / Source.

12. What You Seek is Seeking You

“Not only the thirsty seek the water. The water as well seeks the thirsty.”
—Rumi

It was known that God/Universal Spirit is always creating, always extending itself, and we are part of that. We are co-creators with life for the purpose of expanding or evolving consciousness and being. God/Spirit needs us, just as we need it. As philosopher Rudolph Steiner wrote: “Spirit is Never Without Matter, Matter Never Without Spirit.” We are each a

completely unique way in which the divine is being expressed and individualized.

Philosophers and scientists over the centuries have acknowledged that we are individual cells in the body of God. A cell is not merely a small part of a larger being. A cell, whether it is a brain cell, a liver cell, or a heart cell, has within it the DNA of the entire body. In the same way, we contribute to the awareness of the whole, and yet we maintain our own unique identities. We are not just a drop in the ocean, as Rumi famously wrote. We are the entire ocean in a drop. The whole is in the part, and the part is in the whole.

The yearning we have to unfold the truth of who we are, belongs to life itself, wanting to be fully conscious and to know itself. The impulse that drives and inspires us all forward into greater states of being comes from the Infinite seeking to become as self-aware as it can.

I was aware of simultaneously having other lives in other worlds or planes of existence. I saw that my experience was important to the expansion and awakening of the whole, and added to the awareness of all life. My experience was valued and celebrated, and was part of shaping and creating new levels of experience for the whole. It encompassed my experience through the physical world, across time and space, and into other non-physical realities as well.

13. Love and Responsibility

I seemed to be accessing a vast amount of wisdom and knowledge all at once. This awareness allowed me to take in the meaning of the verse, *“The Beloved, with His own hands is tending, raising like a precious child, Himself in You.”*

Hidden in plain sight, I understood that the “precious child” is the Divine Image or spark within each soul—the seed of co-creative potential that lies dormant in us all. It is that intersection between human and divine which gives birth to something new. The “precious child” is being “raised” through the process of spiritual maturation. The maturation of the soul is a

journey from a self-centered relationship with life—an unrealized, sleep state in which we are held captive by the ego mind—to the awakened state of serving all of life as a co-creator with Source.

I saw that there is no real difference between love and responsibility. Once we touch into real love, we have to serve it, not because we are told to, but because what we serve, we cannot lose. What we serve, we become. So if we want to experience love and to live it, then we must serve it. We must answer this most essential call by becoming a fully realized self. We cannot serve life if we are asleep to our divine worth and value—if we are hiding from ourselves. This is why awakening from the illusory self requires so much courage.

Part Three: Finding Freedom

14. False Belief #1: It is Selfish to Love Yourself

"The greatest form of medicine is to be love and to express it in all that you do."

—Serge Benhayon

FACT: We've been taught that taking care of our own needs first is selfish. But truly loving yourself is the most selfless thing that you can do for the world. Not loving yourself is actually selfish and egotistical.

Self Love is Not Just About You

One of the accusations of self love is that it's selfish. Yet the exact opposite is true. During my NDE, I realized that by feeling unworthy, I was denying God from loving a part of itself. This is essentially saying that Source/God is not worth loving. We can never give others more love than we can accept for ourselves. So by not allowing the divine to love and express through me, I saw that I was actually taking from life.

The Heart Doesn't Sacrifice Itself

Self-love implies taking responsibility for our own wellbeing and happiness. It means taking care of our own needs and not sacrificing our well-being to please others. Biology shows us that the heart doesn't sacrifice itself. Before it sends blood to the brain, lungs, or anywhere—it feeds itself first so it's able to keep pumping, no matter what. It has its own private supply of oxygen-rich blood which it circulates back to itself. Its #1 priority is to take care of itself, so as to have the strength to send blood to the rest of the body. It makes perfect sense and is a powerful metaphor to describe the importance of taking care of ourselves first before we can

adequately take care of anyone or anything else. It's not selfish; it's common sense and divine design.

If we don't take care of ourselves, we become needy. And needy people tend toward selfishness. What does it look like if we don't love or value ourselves? We feel unworthy, undeserving and unlovable, and the person we become is one who is needy, with a void that we believe needs to be filled by others because we believe that it's selfish to fill it ourselves. Needy people need the validation of others in order to feel worthy. However, when we love ourselves, we don't need the approval of others in order to be who we are. Instead, we are able to bring our fully realized, joyful self out into the world, instead of a self that is needy, with a hole that needs to be filled by others.

15. False Belief #2: Your self worth and value must be earned

FACT: Your self worth and value is within you. It is not something to be acquired. All that is necessary is to accept it.

"No amount of self-improvement can make up for a lack of self-acceptance." —Robert Holden.

Why We Cannot Become Worthy

To our ego mind, it's hard to imagine a life that has no struggle to earn love and acceptance in it—no sense of angst or unworthiness. Yet what I learned from my NDE is that our self worth and value cannot be acquired. Why? Because we have it already. This is the truth of our being. How can we acquire what we already have?

We don't have to add anything in order to experience our value; we have to drop something. Our struggles come from having identified with the ego. Waking up is about dropping our false identifications and coming back to our true nature.

Do You Enjoy Being You?

During my NDE, I heard a voice ask, “Why don’t you enjoy being you?” The question struck me like a jolt of electricity. As I looked at my life, I wondered why in the world I was always so hard on myself. Why was I always beating myself up? Why was I always shrinking myself and hiding my intelligence and creativity? Why was I always forsaking myself by seeking approval from others in order to be okay with me?

In a moment of incredible clarity, I saw exactly what had brought me to where I was, and why I never allowed myself to deeply experience the wonder and joy of being me. I saw that the whole premise upon which I based my life—this belief that something was wrong with me—that I was flawed, deficient, and in need of fixing—was false. The “self” that I was always trying to improve was a fiction, an invention of the ego.

By identifying with this fictional self, I believed that I needed to earn the right into that joy of being. I only allowed myself moments of joy once I felt I had earned it or met enough conditions. In this way, the doing was a way of paying off the worthiness to just be. I saw that we can never do enough to earn our right into that joy of being, because it is our natural state. There is nothing missing and nothing wrong with us. We don’t need to change anything about ourselves in order to be in our natural state.

Awakening to our true worth and value is a remembering. It is not becoming something that we are not. It is not about changing or transforming ourselves. It is a remembering of what we are, as if we’d known it long ago and had simply forgotten.

With this realization, I saw that I could let go of all the struggling and striving to be someone, to get somewhere; to know enough, learn enough, be enough, so I could finally relax in the state that is already my true nature.

I saw that I could let go of all the coping and survival mechanisms based on a belief that I must drive myself forward so I can one day get to my worth and value. This is the great cosmic truth: We are not on our way

to self worth and value. We are that treasure already! We are simply on our way to an ever greater expression of who and what we already are.

16. False Belief #3: The Stories You Tell Yourself Are True

FACT: You are not your story. The latest research in memory says that 50% of what we refer to in our past isn't actually true. In addition, 98% of our thoughts, feelings and emotions do not belong to us!

Empty Your Cup

During my NDE, I glimpsed what life would be like, free of judgement and self attack. This meant the undoing of my perception that I had ever been guilty of anything, and the acceptance of my innocence. I saw that the state of nonjudgement is only possible when we let go of our stories. The ego needs stories in order to keep itself alive.

The ego tells us that safety and fulfillment are outside or separate from us, in either the future or the past, but never in the present moment, where it can truly be found. We forget the truth that we are always safe. It is judgement that keeps us locked in a story of the past. There is no freedom within the confines of judgment. It is a prison the mind devised in order to feel safe in what it perceives as an unsafe world. Judgment keeps the True Self repressed and the ego alive.

Kenosis is a Greek word meaning “emptying.” Similar to the Buddhist concept of no-self, Kenosis is the “self-emptying” of one’s personal will to become entirely receptive to the divine.

This self emptying is a form of forgiveness. We forgive everything. We forgive ourselves so that we can stop defending a false self. We empty ourselves so we can be filled with truth and open to Spirit. As long as we are protecting a false self, securing our own image and identity, trying to protect our power, then our ego remains full of itself—the opposite of Kenosis. True forgiveness is a state of non judgement. When we empty our

cup, we move away from any need to protect our own power. We have all the power we need; it always overflows.

17. Dropping the Mask

For too long, we tell ourselves a story that the mask that we've been wearing is more powerful than us, more beautiful than us, more desirable than us, more interesting than us. But in reality, the mask that we've been wearing on the outside will never compare to the true beauty, light, and magnificence within us.

A mask is any protective shield we wear habitually because we're afraid of who we really are underneath, or what will happen if that self is exposed. While my mask seemed to shield me from hurt, it also shut down my vulnerability. For most of my life, the vulnerable self underneath the mask was dying to be freed, but the mask wasn't letting me out.

During my NDE, I experienced a flash of reality or truth that was life altering. That moment of awakening began the dissolution of my false sense of self and, subsequently, the dissolution of my entire perception of the world.

This period of dissolution is referred to as the Dark Night of the Soul. The Dark Night of the Soul is a kind of death. What dies is the egoic sense of self. Of course, while death is always painful, nothing real has actually died – only an illusory identity. It is part of the awakening process, the death of the old self and the birth of the True Self. In the Dark Night of the Soul, the mind-made meaning we have given life collapses. Suddenly it seems you no longer understand anything. That's why it's so scary when it happens to you.

During the months of integration that followed my NDE, my body was still very weak and I had to spend most of the day resting. I felt totally raw, vulnerable, and exposed, as though I had nothing left to hide behind. All my defenses and masks were torn away.

With little hope and no money or home, each day was a test of faith. I endured many difficult transitions. At one particularly low point, I was living temporarily in a ramshackle house and sleeping in a small child's bed with my feet hanging a foot over the end. The house was freezing cold. It was the middle of winter, and I had three dollars left in my bank account.

During this time, my ego was fighting for survival, making up stories about my situation, how dire it was, how far I had fallen, how I had lost all dignity, and how I might never recover. With no more energy for pretense, I stopped trying to be strong. I just collapsed. I decided to just let myself feel the pain and stay there. Then. . .like a miracle, something amazing happened.

When the Heart Cracks Open

I chose to remain fully conscious and present in the face of my suffering. I chose to be fully accepting of it. This meant that I allowed my own sorrow, as well as the sorrow of all beings to crack open my heart. I stopped defending myself against my own pain and allowed the narrative and story about my suffering to open me to a new and higher perspective—one of unconditional love. As Adyashanti writes, “Holding your suffering in love instead of the narrative of ego protectionism is the key that unlocks the door to greater freedom and completeness.”

By being with and accepting my pain without trying to suppress or deny it; without making up a story about it, I experienced a profound freedom I had never known. With no masks, pretense, armor, or hiding, I slowly withdrew from identifying with my thoughts, fears, and shame—a part of the Conditioned Self. I could do nothing but surrender.

I began living out of pure trust, without any assurance of anything. I learned to live from confidence in the ever-present help of the spiritual world. I came to recognize my invaluable nature; to understand that it is safe for me to bring out my True Self, to come out of hiding in order to benefit the lives of others. This acceptance comes to pass when the ego surrenders the conceit of personal power, realizing that it depends

absolutely on that inner, unknown universe, which is the essence of the human soul.

True Surrender

“True surrender is easily misunderstood as passivity, as doing nothing. It’s actually a change in stance, a change in state of being.

It’s a softening, a coming home to. It’s what we receive when we’ve made peace with life, and become its partner, arm in arm.

Before surrender, we act alone. We act because life is an emergency, out of control, vulnerable, worrisome, fear-inducing. We act to fix or control in response to that.

After surrender, we know we are held in a wise and loving embrace. We feel softness, not striving, in our relationship with life.

Bad things still happen. People and relationships deteriorate. Tragedies occur.

We feel the pain in it’s fullness, but we see all the beauty. We see the gifts. We don’t clench our fists against any of it.

From there, when we’re no longer yelling at life telling it how it should be, when we’re no longer rebelling against what is, when we’re no longer fighting reality

then

then

we can take meaningful action. We can find our true role.

We wake up to what it’s all about, what all the circumstances are for: to reveal love, to call us into love, to stretch us to find love in new ways. We begin to see what the real story in our lives, and it’s all about this.

We begin to see how life is releasing exquisite gems to us in every moment, like water dripping from the tap.

Let all the circumstances, all your mental stories about them, all the plans of how it should be or should have been, let it all burn up until what’s at the center of your life is love given, connection realized.

*until your chest throbs daily with tenderness for the faces that grace your life
and the blue out the window is so stunning it brings tears to your eyes.”*
—Tara Mohr

As I matured into this new way of being and relating to life, I discovered that it was actually my vulnerability, my undefended heart that allowed me to access my strength and power. Without the need to shield or hide my true self, my capacity for love, intimacy, and connection blossomed.

Step by step, with the guidance of Spirit and the support of its many channels, I began to rebuild my life from an entirely new foundation based in soul-deep self love, an awareness of my divine innocence, which I call Radical Self Value.

I recovered my health and attracted unexpected opportunities to reach a global audience with my message, programs, and services. Working with people from all over the world, I discovered that each step of our journey is made by following the heart—the temple of the True Eternal Self.