

# **Alcoholic to Alchemist**

## **12 Step Philosophy**

**(Workbook)**

**A Journey from Enslavement to Enlightenment**

by

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The course is designed to run in conjunction with the book  
**'Alcoholic to Alchemist: the art of transforming wine into water'**.  
Ensure you received a copy with this workbook.

Within these pages you will find some references to religious text. These citations are used for their practical psychological value only. The Alcoholic to Alchemist philosophy is not religious based; it does, however, utilize various teachings from spiritual literature to support its philosophy.

**About the Author**

After a life-threatening battle with alcohol in the 1980s, Paul Henderson developed a deep interest in the workings of the human mind. Subsequently, he qualified as a clinical hypnotherapist and psychodynamic counsellor, before embarking on a Bachelor's Degree and specializing in Child Development and Social Psychology.

Dedicated to promoting diversity and flexibility in the field of applied therapy, Paul recently founded the United Kingdom Association of Integrative Therapy (UKAIT), and its Associated Training School - the United Kingdom Academy of Integrative Therapy.

In addition to teaching psychology, Paul travels the country conducting workshops and speaking on a wide array of subjects, including Vedic Science, the Mechanisms of Consciousness, and Past-Life Therapy. His interest in the transpersonal led to his first novel 'Spirit of Adventure,' a compelling read which combines psychology, philosophy, modern science and spirituality in a way that is inspiring, challenging and transformative.



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## Introduction

Welcome, my name is Paul Henderson, founder of Alcoholic to Alchemist™. I once drank two bottles of spirits a day, plus anything else I could lay my hands on. As my habit progressed, this included surgical spirits, methylated spirits, and after shave.

Homeless, penniless, and desperate, I spent my nights on a rat-infested railway embankment. The extent of my deterioration was shocking: emaciated body, yellow complexion, eyes sunken, jittery and unkempt. At twenty five years of age, the former fun-loving entertainer resembled an old man - bereft of meaning and emotionally bankrupt.

My constant battle with alcohol and the fear, futility, guilt, and paranoia it evoked, finally became too much. I took a lethal cocktail of painkillers and alcohol, only to have my life saved by the swift response and expertise of hospital staff. Death seemed imminent: almost welcoming. The destructive force that possessed me was relentless, intent on propelling me towards a liquid last supper.

Today, I am an inspirational speaker and author who embraces the infinite possibilities that life has to offer. At fifty years of age, I am in the pinnacle of health. On reaching rock bottom, a powerful force emerged from the depths of my psyche and led me on a journey of radical transformation: this force I refer to as the *archetypal alchemist*. Alchemy is the art of transforming one's mental and emotional debris into the invaluable treasures of insight, inspiration, motivation, direction, prosperity and abundance: Alchemy promotes life.

As a result of implementing this programme, I experienced a radical shift in consciousness: a profound awakening. Subsequently, I pledged to develop and document my powerful antidote to alcoholism. Eighteen years of work and continuing development on a personal and transpersonal level has culminated in this philosophy.

The information herein is not designed solely to liberate you from the clutches of alcoholism, although it will certainly do that if you work through the course with an open mind, determination and courage, it is designed to enable you to reach your true potential and transform your life beyond recognition.

Alcoholism is a *mind-set*; a destructive way of thinking, the answer to which is a profound shift in consciousness. The Alcoholic to Alchemist philosophy combines ancient wisdom, thought-provoking philosophy, and practical psychology in a way that educates, inspires, encourages, enlightens, empowers and evokes an incredible shift in thinking. If you are struggling with alcohol and seek answers, then it is time to join the ever-growing number of people who have transformed their lives the Alcoholic to Alchemist way.

# **Phase One**

## **Acceptance and Awareness**





## Step 1:

**Admit having developed a destructive alcohol habit as a consequence of attempting to escape the curriculum of life.**

Abandoning our defence systems and moving away from the belligerent denial that has kept us imprisoned is liberating. We no longer have to scheme to get the money to feed the habit. We no longer have to lie and deceive to defend the habit. We no longer have to expend vital energy on suppressing the truth: it is out in the open – what a relief!

Prior to admitting to having an alcohol habit, our minds were constantly preoccupied with *living a lie*. Every day was Groundhog Day; the cyclic repetition of life denying behaviour: lies, deceit, scheming, manipulation and blame – all designed to feed a habit that was destroying us! Although we constantly reassured ourselves that things would get better, they never did. The spiral was unidirectional: downward.

**'Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results'**

Albert Einstein

On accepting step one, we are no longer prepared to delude ourselves. We no longer subscribe to the belief that alcohol is a magical panacea for the dissolution of all problems. We recognise it for what it is: the fuel that ignites mental turbulence and leads to persecution.

Alcohol kills our conscience and renders our memory inactive. Consequently, we lose control of our faculties and become unpredictable menaces. Our normal standards, morals, principles and ethics disappear as Dr Jekyll turns into Mr Hyde, and off we go on a trail of destruction. On emerging from the drunken escapade we are aghast to be told of our antics during black-out. Highly embarrassed and often guilt ridden, we reach for the bottle to obliterate the memory and the whole destructive cycle starts again.

What a shambles! What an utter waste of a life! And people exclaim that they can't give it up! By quitting alcohol the only thing you're giving up is: ***destruction, anguish, despair, embarrassment, guilt, and remorse: life-denying behaviour.***

Accepting step one reveals the willingness to change and a longing to live. Committed to transforming the mental and emotional debris that has warped our minds for years into psychological and spiritual nourishment from which we will grow and flourish, we awaken the Archetypal Alchemist.

**By taking this step we acknowledge two fundamental truths:**

- Our primary problem is a refusal or inability to embrace the challenges of life.
- A destructive habit has been nurtured as a consequence of repeatedly using alcohol as an escape vehicle.

Here, we acknowledge that abstaining from alcohol alone will not alleviate the problem; ***alcohol is a symptom, not the cause.*** Just as weeds grow back if we don't remove the roots, so our destructive alcohol habit will return if we don't address the underlying issues that provoke escape. Relapse is a consequence of unresolved issues surfacing and disturbing our equilibrium. The subsequent mental anguish heightens to such an extent that we seek escape and like lemmings throw ourselves back into the abreactive abyss.

**Alcohol is an escape vehicle – if we  
remove the need to escape, the vehicle  
becomes obsolete**

Before embarking on this journey we didn't understand the true nature of the habit that was destroying us – but now that has changed. Step one sees our power return. No longer do we blame others for our dilemma; no longer do we subscribe to the belief that we have contracted some unfathomable disease or personality disorder: we place the locus of control firmly within ourselves. With complete abandon, we accept that addiction is not something that has been unwittingly thrust upon us: it is a HABIT. By definition, a habit is something that *we* have taught ourselves to do; taught ourselves to do so expertly, in fact, that it is now second nature. Even our brain has re-wired itself in support. But once we intervene and consciously break the destructive patterns that underlie our alcoholism, the supporting neural networks disband and make way for new, life-enhancing ones. By consciously breaking the chain of automatic responses that disable us, and replacing them with strategies that enable us, we rewire the brain in a way that gives rise to a radical new way of being.

**Break the chain, rewire the brain**

***Step one declares us powerful beings who became temporarily detached from our power source. The rest of the steps are designed to reconnect us to our power source and bring about the radical shift in consciousness needed to embrace our true potential.***

## Exercise One

### *Inventory of issues*

- With the aid of your therapist, identify and make an inventory of all the issues from which you seek escape (actual or imagined).
- Prioritize the list (start with the most pressing issue, then work downwards).
- Work through the list with your therapist, processing and resolving each issue until the list is exhausted. **(This exercise will be on-going; it may take several weeks)**

### Homework

- Read the book *Alcoholic to Alchemist* from the beginning up to (and including) chapter 5.
- Contemplate the information and how it applies to your life.

NOTES:

## Step 2:

Having crossed the Abreactive Threshold, we need to abandon the idea that alcohol provided a means of escape and supplant it with the following belief:

***The most effective way to escape our problems is to solve them***

**Step one** put the problem into perspective, highlighting the fact that we'd *taught* ourselves to drink with such expertise that we had *habituated* the process. The objective of this exercise had been to escape our problems.

In the formative stages of alcoholism, our mind tricked us into believing that alcohol was the great enabler: calming our fears, instilling us with confidence, and inducing feelings of ecstasy and euphoria. With hindsight, however, we can see that this was just a seductive ploy which hooked us and reeled us in. Alcohol doesn't improve or alleviate our problems; it simply disables our memory and renders our conscience inactive, giving rise to a whole new batch of problems.

Alcohol once acted as a suppressant - a damn holding back a reservoir of unresolved issues - which presented the illusion that our problems had vanished. As our consumption escalated, however, the pressure built to such an extent that this damn cracked and our unresolved issues came bursting from the unconscious to the conscious with the might of a tsunami.

Once our unresolved issues overwhelm the suppressant effects of alcohol and force their way into our conscious mind, alcohol ceases to offer us even temporary relief. Subsequently, all drinking bouts lead to abnormal reactions that manifest in a multitude of menacing guises: severe mood swings, paranoia, neuroses, psychoses, guilt, remorse, nausea, violence, agitation, delusions of grandeur, depression, and so on.

**Step two** warrants an acceptance of having crossed the Abreactive Threshold. Once the threshold has been crossed, you and alcohol become incompatible for life. *To accept this with complete abandon is the key to your freedom.*

## Exercise Two

### *Determining whether you have crossed the Abreactive Threshold?*

Sit somewhere quiet and contemplate the occasions when you have consumed alcohol lately. Decide whether your experience was normal or abnormal. Abreaction can manifest in innumerable ways, sometimes it is very subtle. Below is a list of examples:

1. **Craving to drink more**
2. **Memory loss**
3. **Irrational behaviour**
4. **Aggression**
5. **Nausea**
6. **Shaking**
7. **Convulsions**
8. **Paranoia**
9. **Deceit**
10. **Neurosis**

This exercise should take very little time. Most people don't need to contemplate their drinking escapades to find the answer. Once you have crossed the Abreactive Threshold, determining whether your reaction to alcohol is normal or abnormal is usually startlingly obvious. If you come to the conclusion that you *have* crossed the Abreactive Threshold, then the rest of this book will reveal a philosophy for life that will propel you into a fourth dimension of existence. This exercise runs in conjunction with the next. Utilize what you have learned to compile a list of things you want to *move away* from.

## Exercise Three

### *Motivation: The Force that Directs Our Behaviour*

Motivation can be defined as a driving force which initiates and directs behaviour; it is an intrinsic energy that propels a person to take action. Motivation is directional; it either propels you **towards** what you *want*, or **away from** what you *don't want*.

To override the rigid conditioning of your unconscious mind, you need to fuel your will-power with both **toward** and **away from** motivation. Most people who pledge to give up drinking utilize *away from* motivation only; that is, they want to move away from hurting their loved ones; or they want to move away from constantly feeling ill; or they want to move away from being constantly broke. But *away from* motivation alone is rarely enough to sustain sobriety; at best, it may produce some short-term success. When the family has been appeased or good health restored, then lack of direction normally results in stagnancy - and stagnancy and futility are invitations to relapse. They have *moved away* but they have nothing to *move toward*.

The following exercise will help you to establish direction and purpose; a plan for the future that will provide the motivation to propel you forward:

- Take a pen and paper and make an inventory of all things you will move **away from** when quitting alcohol. For example: hurting your family, embarrassing yourself, feeling ill, unpredictable behaviour etc.
- Repeat the process above, but this time list everything you want to attain, or move **towards**, in sobriety. For example: a new career, a happy family life, improved self-esteem.
- When you have finished, read through the lists. Acknowledge the things you want to move away from, then place your attention on the things you want to move towards.
- Expand on the items in your *towards* list. Add some specifics. For example, I want to become a professional author and provide abundantly for my family, doing something I'm passionate about – writing.
- It is not productive to dwell on the things you want to move away from as it often instils guilt. Most people are well-aware of what they want to leave behind. So concentrate on your towards list. Read it every day and imagine yourself achieving the things listed. Let your imagination expand until you totally believe you can achieve your objective. Keep your mind focused and allow the energy evoked to fuel your will-power to reach your optimal potential.

*(Keep this list as you will revisit it throughout the course)*

## Homework

- Read chapters 6 to 10 of the book *Alcoholic to Alchemist*.
- Contemplate the information and how it applies to your life.

NOTES:



### Step 3:

**Come to accept that the locus of the problem is a mind infected with fear, futility, guilt and pain – the answer to which is a profound shift in consciousness.**

Now we have accepted that our alcohol habit does not provide an escape route from the vicissitudes of life, we need to employ a different strategy to deal with our problems. Step three is designed to bring our awareness to the underlying psychological mechanisms which distort our view of reality and give rise to the Sobriety Saboteurs.

Before embarking on this journey, we tried to eradicate alcoholism by removing the symptom, but our efforts were to no avail: *removing alcohol alone is futile*. Our answer lies in eradicating the **cause** not the **effect** - the **catalyst** not the **symptom**. To sustain sobriety and embrace our true potential, we must identify the psychological mechanisms that give rise to our destructive drinking.

By identifying and processing the underlying patterns which give rise to the **stinking thinking** that fuels **destructive drinking**, we release the need to escape. Once we eradicate the need to escape, alcohol becomes redundant.

**Stinking thinking gives rise to destructive drinking  
Change your thinking - end your drinking**

The greatest obstacle to the successful implementation of step three is lack of awareness. We need to accentuate our awareness to such an extent that we can discern that which is an actual problem and that which is a negative construction of the mind. Majority of our *perceived* problems exist in our minds only. They may masquerade as some person, place, or thing in the external world, but, in actuality, this is often an elaborate decoy created by our mental filtering systems: *the real problem lies within us*. A recent survey conducted with my clients found that a staggering ninety-two percent of the problems attributed to abusive drinking were actually phantoms - distorted interpretations of an adversely conditioned mind. These findings reveal unequivocally that our mind is the primary problem. The amnesic effects of alcohol become so alluring because they present the illusion that we are *getting out of our minds* and escaping our problems, but this is simply a delusion born of desperation.

**People attempt to *get out of their minds* since that is where most of their problems exist. Step three is about getting *into your mind*, dissolving the catalysts that give rise to abusive drinking, and tapping into the well-spring of inspiration that is buried beneath them.**

#### **Don't Blame, Reframe**

We exert so much energy on misguidedly trying to solve our problems by attempting to manipulate and control other people and external situations, that we become depleted, frustrated and disillusioned. When others don't conform to our whims and demands we revert to blame and resentment. But blame is simply

an argument against growth; it does nothing other than disable us. By placing the locus of control within ourselves, step three is empowering. We may not always exercise control over external events, but we reign supreme over the inner kingdom of our mind. We have the power to change anything we choose in our internal dominion, and since the external world is a direct reflection of our state of mind, self-mastery holds the key to a life beyond our wildest dreams.

**As within, so without**

## Mastering the Mirages of Our Mind

**‘There is not one big cosmic meaning for all,  
there is only the meaning we each give to our life,  
an individual meaning, an individual plot,  
like an individual novel, a book for each person.’**

Anias Nin

All problems transpire from the meaning we assign to external events. Rather than deceiving ourselves into believing that other people, places and things are the cause of our problems, we need to examine the internal mechanisms which distort our view of reality. Firstly, we must recognise that meaning is not a product of the external world – it doesn’t exist *out there*: it exists only within us.

**All problems transpire from the meaning we assign to life’s events. As meaning is subjective - it does not exist in the external world; it exists only within us – then common sense tells us that all our problems must reside within also. Anything that is intrinsic is under our sole jurisdiction; therefore, we have the power to change it.**

Each of us has a unique perspective on life. For one person an event may be considered uncomfortable, whilst for another the very same event may be deemed pleasurable. How is this possible?

As light changes appearance when passed through a coloured filter, external events are coloured when passed through the filter of our memory. Consequently, internal representations and external events are often highly incongruent. Our memory doesn’t simply duplicate what’s *out there* and store it away; it modifies what’s *out there* with previous memories and stores a distortion. Let’s take a simple example:

### **Example: Robert - Fear**

*John and his girlfriend, Jenny, ambled through the park. Jenny veered off to a nearby stream. When John looked around, she was taking delight in playing with a Labrador which was passing by with its owner. John broke out into cold sweats, his heart started to pound rapidly, and he walked briskly in the opposite direction. John was petrified of dogs ever since being badly bitten when he was six years old.*

This example shows that external reality, the dog, was not the problem. It became a problem only when John added his negative memories to the experience. The same event had contrasting meanings for John and Jenny. For Jenny it was pleasurable; for John it was traumatic. This discrepancy proves that problems have a tendency to arise from the internal disposition of a person, rather than being a direct result of external events. John was not afraid of what was *out there*; he was afraid of what was *in here* (within him). Removing the dog wouldn't have alleviated the problem, processing the original trauma held the answer.

The totality of our life's experiences are internalised to form a mental filter through which all subsequent experience is processed. This is often referred to as our *frame of reference*. By virtue of processing the world through our frame of reference, our perception of life often becomes twisted and warped. Old wounds reopen and give rise to emotionally charged responses which breed disharmony. Subsequently, corrosive inner-dialogue unleashes the Sobriety Saboteurs and we misguidedly seek sanctuary in alcohol.

**Negative inner dialogue transpires from a mind-set that is preoccupied with the problem, instead of focusing on the solution that is always available**

**Example: Robert - Abandonment**

*Robert lived a relatively happy life until he was eight years old. During this period his parents started to argue and fight frequently. One day he returned home from school to find his mother had left; he has never seen her again to this day.*

*Today, Robert's relationship with his wife, Angela, is fraught with problems. He tends to be smothering and reluctant to let her out of his sight. Two weeks ago, she was late home from work due to stock-taking. When she failed to show at the normal time, Robert felt an inferno of fury building up inside and started to pace up and down the hallway. The corrosive inner-dialogue then kicked-in: 'she's having an affair', 'she doesn't care about me.' When Angela finally came through the door, she was met with a barrage of abuse. Robert venomously accused her of abandoning him. Angela was astonished and frightened by the intensity of his reaction.*

The underlying process in this example is transference. Robert unconsciously experienced his wife as the mother who'd abandoned him many years ago. He was not disturbed by the current event; he was disturbed by his *interpretation* of it. John was traumatized by the meaning he assigned to the event, which was grossly distorted by negative memories. When viewing this innocuous incident through his *frame of reference*, it became a major problem: one that eventually threatened his marriage.

Filtering systems often lead to irrational responses such as these and put severe strain on our cherished relationships. A loved-one or friend inadvertently makes a comment or performs an action that taps into our negative memory bank and we strike out like a viper, leaving the unassuming person (and often ourselves) perplexed and upset. This is a prime example of acting unconsciously: being propelled by psychological mechanisms which lay beyond the conscious threshold. The underlying mechanism in these cases is also the biggest cause of relapse - *resentment*. Many people return to drink because of some indignation felt as a result of some grievance or other, but the object of their grievance is very often an innocent bystander who inadvertently opens up an old wound (as was the case with John's wife above).

The word resentment means to *re-feel*. When we re-feel old wounds, we hurt and are temporarily knocked off balance. Our pain generally flares up in reaction to something someone says or does, and we erroneously perceive them as the *cause* of our problem. But the true cause of our pain lies buried deep

within our psyche; the words or actions of these people are merely triggers. By making other people scapegoats, we remain ignorant and static.

There is another major psychological mechanism at work here too: *projection*. Projection is the unconscious process whereby we project the contents of our psyche onto other people or events and distort them out of all proportion. The process is similar to watching a scary movie and becoming frightened by it. In actuality, what stands before us is a rather harmless blank screen. Fear arises only when scary images are projected onto it. Similarly, many innocuous life situations are transformed into traumas or dramas as we unassumingly superimpose our negative memories over them. As with resentment, this mechanism sees us inadvertently placing the responsibility for our problems with other people. By projecting the shadow elements of our psyche – our character defects, short-comings and negative memories - onto others, the world is perceived as a hostile place. This delusion gives rise to victim mentality as we believe everyone is conspiring to upset or harm us. As a consequence, we become consumed with paranoia and ‘*pour me, pour me,*’ soon turns to ‘*pour me another.*’

Projection and resentment are prone to present the illusion that others are responsible for the way we feel. How often do you hear yourself saying ‘*She made me feel like this,*’ or ‘*he made me feel that way?*’ But, in reality, no one can take a feeling and put it inside of us, only we can do that. Eric Berne, founder of Transactional Analysis, put it this way:

**‘No-one can make us feel any way.  
The way we feel is determined by virtue of how we process the world.’**

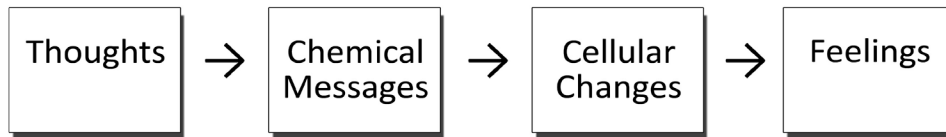
This statement reinforces the fact that feelings are generated by the meaning we assign to external events. As our self-awareness heightens, most problems are exposed as mirages of the mind evoked by distorted interpretations of external events. These psychological apparitions are commonly responsible for the manifestation of the Sobriety Saboteurs. **F**abricated **E**xperience and **A**rtificial **R**easoning – **F.E.A.R** - underlies most instances of guilt, futility and pain.

**Fear is a Phantom**  
caused by  
**Fabricated Experience & Artificial Reasoning**

Over ninety percent of our perceived problems occur in the dominion of the mind only. The mind is prone to fabricate experience and support it with artificial reasoning. Take the example of Robert above. His fear of losing his wife had materialized as a result of projecting memories of his relationship with his mother onto his current relationship. Consequently, his perception had become severely distorted. The real-life event and his internal representation of it were in stark contrast. Robert’s wife had simply been working late, but his mind had **F**abricated the **E**xperience of abandonment and supported it with the **A**rtificial **R**easoning that it had happened before, so it would inevitably happen again.

Most manifestations of the Sobriety Saboteurs are based on this illusory mechanism. As *‘fear makes the wolf appear bigger,’* so our filtering systems create problems out of nothing. Ultimately, what this suggests is that our destructive drinking transpires as a result of running away from something that doesn’t exist – a fabrication of the mind! Furthermore, as these imaginary grievances give rise to the way we feel, and most people who abuse alcohol do so in order to *‘feel better,’* then it is imperative that we wake

up and resume control of our mind. Remember, feelings arise from the chemical messengers that our dispersed throughout our body and change our cellular structure, and these chemical messengers are derived from our thoughts. Consequently, if our thoughts are constantly corrupted by negative memories, the subsequent feelings are going to be distressful and warrant escape. Step three urges us to intervene and end this facade.



**Awareness is the key that will set us free.**

Each time you experience a symptomatic manifestation of these mind mirages: mood swings, over-sensitivity, jealousy, neediness, the need to control and so on - **STOP!** Put the following sequence into operation.

- Stall:** Refrain from reacting
- Think:** Become aware of the underlying mechanisms that promote conflict: projection, transference, re-sentment
- Observe:** Allow any bodily sensations to arise; don't respond, don't judge, simply observe. Centre yourself in your higher awareness and watch as the perceived problem magically dissipates.
- Proceed:** Carry on with your day

Every time you intervene in this way, you interrupt the brain processes that propel you to **re-enact** old destructive patterns. Consequently, the supporting neural networks disband and you gradually resume conscious control of your life. The simple but powerful message of step three is:

**Don't blame - Reframe**

The following exercises are designed to heighten your awareness and encourage you to develop different views of your problems. By taking a different perspective and placing the locus of control within yourself, rather than in some other person, place or thing, you pave the way to the next phase the journey: invoking the shift.

## Exercises

These exercises are based on Chapter 23 of the book *Alcoholic to Alchemist*, which contains the Alchemist's journey from enslavement to enlightenment. Each stage is represented by an archetype or a power animal, which, when evoked, will have a profound effect on your unconscious mind. In this section we will concentrate on one power animal (Native American *medicine*) and one archetype.

Before we begin, let's clarify what is meant by the terms '*medicine*' and '*archetype*'.

### *Native American Medicine*

To understand the concept of Native American medicine, we must redefine the term *medicine*. In this tradition, medicine can be defined as anything that improves our connection to the underlying principle of life - The Great Spirit - as the Native Americans call it. This includes anything which strengthens our connection to spirit, heals our body, purifies our mind, and brings personal power, strength, and understanding.

According to the Native American tradition, all of nature is connected at an unseen level (note the similarities to the findings of modern-day science). The animals, plants, and rocks all have lessons to impart. Throughout the ages, these messages have helped humanity to survive, providing us with direction, protection, and healing principles.

The animal kingdom is the primary source of these messages. By studying the animals in their natural habitat, we elicit their teachings. The essential nature of each animal embodies a lesson. For example, the message of the eagle is freedom, vision, focus, power and spirit.

Assimilating the attributes of the animals and applying them to our lives, is a powerful and exciting way to evolve. Animals constantly teach us novel ways to reach our true potential. Each lesson they impart is based on one major idea or concept. When we call upon the power of an animal, we are asking to be endowed with the strength of that creature's essence – or in Native American terms, its *medicine*.

### *Archetypes*

According to eminent Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung, the psyche consists of various layers, including the *personal* and *collective* unconscious. His theory of the *personal unconscious* is similar to that of Freud's in that it is assumed to be a region of the mind which contains a person's repressed experiences - normally feelings and perceptions appertaining to significant people or events in the person's past. Jung, however, claimed there was a deeper layer of the unconscious, which he named the *collective unconscious*. Unlike the personal unconscious, which is unique to the individual, the collective unconscious is a layer of the mind common to us all.

The collective unconscious houses *archetypes*, which Jung believed to be innate, unconscious, universal patterns of psychic energy. To state it in simple terms, an archetype is a pattern of energy which embodies a particular theme e.g. the hero or the clown; it is an original model or prototype after which other similar things are patterned. For example, Superman and Batman *are the archetypes that have influenced many other hero-type characters which followed - Spiderman, Daredevil, and Iron-man, etc.*

Archetypes are said to ***provide the deep structure for human motivation and meaning. You may view them as imprints hardwired into our psyches which evoke deep feeling and propel us in a certain direction. When we contemplate an archetype and allow its essence to pervade our mind, we assume its attributes and characteristics. For instance, have you ever been to the cinema and become so engrossed in the movie that you have felt yourself become the hero or the lover? This is due to that particular archetype being activated within your unconscious and emerging to dominate your being.***

Other examples of archetypes can be seen in the Major Arcana of the Tarot deck (e.g. the Fool, the High Priestess, and the Devil). The Fool archetype embodies the themes of innocence, simplicity, beginnings and faith; it portrays the youthful exuberance we possess when starting out on a new adventure. The fool makes no plans, nor gives thought to possible complications along the way; he takes joy in doing something different and will willingly go where others fear to tread.

The Tarot deck portrays the Fool's Journey through life. Each Major Arcana card represents a stage in the journey and imparts wisdom and guidance that we can assimilate in order to reach our true potential.

Read and study the following information on the *Owl* and the *Hanged Man*. Allow the essence of each teaching to permeate your unconscious mind and contemplate the lessons it relays. For example:

- Is this lesson revealing insights into yourself?
- Is it providing direction?
- Is it highlighting your strengths?
- Is it offering healing?

Allow the answers to emerge from the depths of your unconscious without force. Remain relaxed and open minded and watch *as your comprehension of the forces of creation accentuate to produce amazing results in your life.*

## The Owl

The Alchemist comes to know his hidden aspects through the archetype of the owl. Owl sees and knows the truth. His ability to navigate through the darkest night and bring back nourishment for himself signifies our ability to explore our unconscious (and use our findings to enhance our lives). Owl's message is one of awareness, mindfulness and vision. His ability to see through 360 degrees means nothing goes unnoticed. In Greek mythology, Pallas Athene, the Goddess of wisdom, had an owl sit on her shoulder to light up her blind side.

**In what ways are you deceiving yourself?  
In what ways are you *allowing* others to deceive you?  
Would you like to illuminate your highest path?**

Owl medicine enables you to see that which others cannot, which is the true essence of wisdom. When this energy pervades your inner world, your Higher Self is awakened and provides wise counsel on every situation. Your Indwelling Divinity (Higher Self) is the light that expels all darkness.

Those with Owl Medicine can see that which is concealed, intuit what is not spoken aloud, and read between the lines. They move swiftly and silently through life's shadows using transpersonal knowledge and wisdom to light up their path. Owl will illumine your blind side making self-deceit impossible.

## The Hanged Man



The term '*Hanged Man*' can be off-putting, and has a tendency to make us uncomfortable. However, if you look at the Tarot card depicting this character, he shows no sign of struggle on his face. In fact, he oozes serenity. The Hanged Man's expression is one of complete composure. He has no expectation, and all actions have been suspended. The Hanged Man is in a state of purposeful contemplation, aligning his mind and body to the natural rhythm and flow of the Universe. The keywords here are yield, suspend, sacrifice, non-action, and submission,

When we evoke the Hanged Man archetype, we become open to new perspectives. We look at our challenges from different angles. From his unique vantage point he counsels us to look at situations in a new way, suspend judgment and enjoy generating new alternatives. The Hanged Man advises us to stop *doing* and simply *be* for a while. When we withhold action and observe the events in life, we allow things to flow more easily. If, on the other hand, we struggle, fight, and insist on control - we are met with restriction and pressure every step of the way.

*Don't just do something, sit there!*

Sacrifice is a facet of the Hanged Man. He instructs us to give up things that do not serve us. By suspending our actions we are able to identify the path of least resistance: our highest path. The hanged man urges us to remain calm in the face of adversity, step back and deduce the best course of action. He is the epitome of calmness and the embodiment of wisdom.

**Instead of acting impulsively and erratically – can you simply pause for a moment?  
A single problem has numerous solutions – would you like to discover them?  
How would simplifying things enhance your life?**

- Step back and evoke the Hanged Man Archetype.
- Assume the position of observer and simply watch your thoughts.
- Focus your attention on a situation requiring a solution.
- Look at it through different frames of reference.
- Consider every alternative and widen your options.
- When you have exhausted every possibility, allow the situation to dissolve back into consciousness.
- Allow the solution to arise naturally – without force.
- Now let another challenge arise and repeat the process.
- Refining your mind in this way will reveal your true potential



## **Exercise Four**

### *The Owl*

- Meditate on the Owl archetype and absorb its attributes. Owl has 360 degree vision and can see in the dark, making him an expert in surveillance. He is highly alert and quick at identifying potential threats. He sees that which others cannot, which is the true essence of wisdom.
- Develop Owl's skills and watch your life transform. Use Owl energy to go deep into the dark recesses of your unconscious and identify the negative patterns which distort your view of reality. Remain forever vigilante and be prepared to break the chain of conditioned responses that promote disharmony in your life.

~

## **Exercise Five**

### *Hanged Man*

- Meditate on the Hanged Man archetype. Although hanging in a compromising position, he oozes serenity. Hanging from a tree, upside-down, he is suspending all action whilst taking a different perspective of the challenges that lay ahead of him. By looking at the world from a different angle, he identifies new options.
- When you are faced with a challenge, temporarily suspend any action while considering alternative explanations. Take different perspectives. Challenge the beliefs which underpin your negative interpretation and review your choices. Look through another frame of reference and describe what you see. In practicing this procedure you will find that very often the meaning you originally derived is reversed, and:
  - A problem becomes a challenge
  - A challenge becomes an opportunity
  - A weakness becomes a strength
  - An impossibility becomes a probability
  - Fear becomes an opportunity to display courage
  - Unkindness becomes a lack of understanding
  - A deficit becomes your greatest asset.

~

## Exercise Six

### *Water*

- When you encounter an authentic problem - one that is not a distorted invention of the mind - meditate on the element of water and apply it to your situation. Allow your mind to become fluid-like and flow around the obstacles you encounter. Like water, allow your mind to adapt to whatever route proves possible. As water develops power by merging with other rivers, allow your mind to merge with other positive influences. With persistence, water can cut its way through the largest of obstacles; an extremely focused mind can do the same. As a flowing river never stagnates, futility never arises when we flow with the infinite possibilities of the Universe. Ultimately, the intention of water is to return to its source: the ocean. You, too, are bound to return to your source and assume your rightful heritage as co-creator of the Universe.

**Whereas an alcoholic sees a problem,  
*The Alchemist sees an opportunity to evolve***

~

## Exercise Seven

### *Reframing*

In many cases, the way in which a problem is framed or perceived actually constitutes the problem itself: many problems are spectres - distorted interpretations of a negatively conditioned mind.

*The way we look at a problem is often the problem*

Our **frame** of reference, or simply - **frame**, is a lens through which we interpret the world; a filtering system comprised of our ingrained beliefs and values. Rather than assigning meaning to events impartially, we make interpretations based on our life's experience.

*We do not see things as they are  
We see them as we are  
The Talmud*

In light of this fact, it is rational to assume that if we redefine our beliefs then our frame of reference must change i.e. we have **reframed**.

Viewing the world through different frames of reference is similar to viewing it through different coloured spectacles: *each lens changes our perspective*. Take the following example from my own experience:

## Example: Paul's Alcoholism

In the early days of sobriety, I moped around, contemplating the years I'd wasted through drinking destructively. I was jealous of everything and everybody. Many of my friends had bought houses and nice cars, got married and had children, but alcoholism had deprived me of all these niceties.

In those days, I viewed alcoholism as the *problem* that had *destroyed* my life. On many occasions this poverty thinking drove me back to the bottle. Then, in 1996, after a few years sobriety, I had a profound spiritual experience that radically changed my way of thinking.

Rather than viewing my drinking years as a waste of life, I recognised the potential benefits of my unique experiences. The experience I gained from my abusive drinking enabled me to understand, first hand, the depth of the problem facing people with an alcohol habit. Subsequently, I became extremely curious and developed a thirst for literature of a psychological and spiritual nature. In addition, I attended workshops all over the country, took a degree in psychology, and trained for many years in different aspects of therapy. My primary objective was to investigate the causes of people becoming destructive and devise an antidote.

Suddenly, a great sense of purpose was injected back into my life. As I applied all that I'd learned psychologically and spiritually to my own life, I grew from strength-to-strength. I became enlightened and fulfilled. Every day was a welcome adventure. I documented the techniques I'd used for self-development and the benefits I'd received - and my work culminated in the material you are reading right now.

Today I travel the country giving talks and holding seminars; I also travel to write in exotic places which fill me with inspiration. I am now a contented human being who views life as a field of infinite possibilities.

So what changed – what brought about this radical transformation? The answer can be summed up in one word: *purpose*. I realised that my perception of the past was impeding my life, but this perception was only an interpretation and therefore open to change. I had a choice:

**Continue to believe that my drinking destroyed my life,  
or, re-interpret the experience and view it as the catalyst that defined my future fulfillment.**

I chose the latter and viewed my trauma as the springboard that hurtled me into a fourth dimension of existence. The valuable lesson I learned from this experience was as follows:

*The way in which we view a problem is often the only problem.  
Redefining the nature of our experience is all that's needed to remove  
what we perceive to be great obstacles.*

The core belief that gave rise to my initial frame of reference (i.e. my negative outlook), was that there was a critical period in life in which people secure employment, buy a house, find a partner and have children. If you miss this window of opportunity then you are destined to fail and suffer - the opportunity will never re-present itself. The unspoken assumptions here are:

- Life is preordained to follow a rigid curriculum and if you fail to grasp the window of opportunity then you are doomed to a desolate wasteland of despair.
- Getting a job, finding a partner, buying a house, and having children is the only way to gain happiness and contentment

When I revised my beliefs and values and reframed the situation, I realised that happiness and contentment came in a multitude of forms. The way my ultimate happiness eventually manifested was through my connecting with my life's purpose. If I hadn't experienced alcoholism, I probably would never have found my purpose. By reframing my past in this way, I transformed my *perceived* misfortunes into my greatest assets and heeded the words of George Bernard Shaw!

*People are always blaming their circumstances for what they are. I don't believe in circumstances. The people who get on in this world are the people who get up and look for the circumstances they want, and if they can't find them, make them*

**George Bernard Shaw**

- To reframe any given situation, dissociate, step back and become aware of all facets. Take note of what is being said and done. Take the position of observer. Consider the beliefs and values that comprise the frame through which reality is being created. Understand the unspoken assumptions.
- Consider alternative lenses; take different perspectives. Challenge the beliefs that underpin the negative frame. Look through another frame and describe what you see. Change the attributes of the frame to reverse assumed meanings. For example:
  - A problem becomes a challenge
  - A challenge becomes an opportunity
  - A weakness becomes a strength
  - An impossibility becomes a probability
  - Fear becomes an opportunity to display courage
  - Unkindness becomes a lack of understanding
  - A deficit becomes your greatest asset
- Evoke the archetype of the 'Hanged Man.' This character is sometimes depicted in the Tarot deck as Odin, who hung on the living World Tree – Yggdrasil – and received the Runes (ancient alphabets often used for divination). Although he appears to be in a compromising position (upside-down), he oozes serenity and revels in the opportunity to view life from different perspectives.
- Hold counsel with the Wise Witness Within you. Allow other frames to unfold from the wisdom of your Indwelling Divinity. Harness your true potential. Like water, become fluid and flexible and find the easiest route around any obstacles.

## Exercise Eight

### *Changing beliefs*

From childhood onwards we internalise ideas about ourselves and the world in general; these ideas come from various sources: parents, siblings, clergymen, teachers, and so on. Some ideas we reject and they have no further influence on our lives; others we accept and hold to be true - the latter form the basis of our belief system.

Beliefs form the foundation of our life's directional guidance system: *they literally determine the course of our lives*. Therefore, if we want to realise our true potential it is of vital importance that we frequently examine and revise our belief system. The beliefs that served us yesterday may no longer be viable today. We need to challenge them and jettison the ones that impede our growth. Limiting beliefs such as *'No one will employ me now I'm 63'* place unnecessary boundaries on our potential, whereas empowering beliefs such as *'I'm a boundless bundle of potential that can manifest anything I want in life'* propel us to success and abundant living.

*A belief is simply an idea we consider to be true;  
it is neither right nor wrong; good or bad;  
it is either inhibiting or supportive*

I once believed that I was inflicted with an incurable disease and compelled to drink alcohol until I keeled over and died. I didn't realise that I drank alcohol abusively to escape the exaggerated and distorted interpretations of my mind. Today, *I use my mind – my mind does not use me*. I believe that the world is a field of limitless possibilities and I am capable of achieving literally anything. This profound shift in my belief system has produced remarkable results and continues to do so on a daily basis.

**Whether you believe you will succeed;  
or whether you believe you will fail;  
on both accounts you will be correct.**

Henry Ford

To radically change our life, we need to re-evaluate our belief system. Asking ourselves the following questions will aid the process:

- *From where did these beliefs originate?*
- *Are they really my own or did I inherit them?*
- *Were they passed on to me by my parents, my siblings, clergymen or teachers?*
- *Do these beliefs support me currently? If so, in what way? If not, what can I replace it with?*

Take a piece of paper and label four columns as follows:

Belief	Origin of Belief	Empowering or Limiting	Substitute with

In the first column, write down the nature of the belief. In the second write down its origin – was it your own or did you inherit it? In the third, acknowledge the beliefs effects on you. If it is limiting, then in the fourth column, devise a new belief to replace it. Do this for every single belief you can think of.

***Successful completion of this exercise will pay large dividends. On completion you would have completely restructured your life’s directional system, removing all limitations and paving the way for the life of your dreams.***

**Homework**

- Read chapters 6 to 10 of the book Alcoholic to Alchemist.
- Contemplate the information and how it applies to your life.

NOTES:

## Summary of Phase One (Steps One, Two and Three)

### Phase one embodies the themes of *Acceptance* and *Awareness*.

- **Step one** asserts that the catalyst of alcoholism is an inability or refusal to meet the curriculum of life. On encountering a problem, we revert to the amnesic effects (memory loss) of alcohol to provide escape.
- **Step two** reminded us that alcohol did not provide an escape route; it simply masked our problems in the short-term. Continually banishing our problems to the realms of the unconscious has grave consequences. Unresolved issues amass in the unconscious until they gather enough force to break down the screen of alcohol that masks them from our conscious awareness. When this critical event occurs we are overwhelmed by a backlog of problems which come flooding from the unconscious to the conscious to disorient us. Again, we reach for the bottle, but this time it is to no avail. Having crossed the Abreactive Threshold, alcohol is ineffective. Adding alcohol to the maelstrom of mental mayhem that now pervades our conscious mind is akin to throwing petrol on a fire. Each time we drink, our problems flare-up and we become dysfunctional, unpredictable entities.
- **Step three** provides education in the psychology behind our problems. In essence, most of our problems arise from distressing circumstances in the past. Negative memories are projected onto current circumstances and they severely impede our perception of life. Believing the whole world is against us, we succumb to victim mentality; but blaming others only breeds stasis. Step three urges us to refrain from blame and take sole responsibility of our lives. It encourages us to be flexible and consider alternative explanations for any given problem. Alchemists transform obstacles into fuel to propel them forward. Whenever we spontaneously erupt or feel a constant irritation gnawing away at us, we need to recognise it as an opportunity to heighten our self-awareness and learn something about ourselves. See it as an opportunity to break free of rigid conditioning. Instead of misguidedly blaming the nearest person, place the locus of control back within yourself and recognise these people as much-needed triggers. Given that they have disturbed our unconscious mind in a way that has caused it to present an unconscious issue for resolution, mentally thank them. They have done us a favour. Remember, we cannot disarm an adversary we cannot see; only when our issues become conscious can we process and release them.
- On mastering the skills and developing the attributes outlined above, you will have laid a firm foundation on which to build the rest of your life. The next phase, *Invoking the Shift*, will expand the teachings of phase one and introduce a transpersonal aspect which will enable you to realize your true potential and grasp the infinite possibilities that life has to offer.



## **Phase Two:**

### **Invoking the Shift** (Steps Four-to-Nine)

As stated at the beginning, this course has no religious affiliations, but certain comparisons are made for their metaphorical value. In this respect, phase two embodies the teachings of the parable of the prodigal son. The symbolism of this tale hides a deep philosophical meaning that has been passed down from generation to generation. Appearing in many cultures, the story portrays the Soul's search to return to its original Source.

*And he said, "There was a man who had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.' And he divided his property between them. Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything.*

*But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.'"* And he arose and came to his father. *But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'* *But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.'* *And they began to celebrate.'* **(Luke 15: 11 – 32)**

This story informs us that our true home is a state of being in which we experience unconditional love, bliss, ecstasy, wholeness, abundance and spiritual nourishment. Our true home has no physical location; it is a state of consciousness in which we are all one.

At our most primordial level, we are all part of a sacred singularity - sometimes called *God* or the *Universe*. Rather than being pious, someone who is truly *holy* has their being grounded in the *whole* or the Source. Only in this undivided state can true richness be found.

Initially, unity-consciousness is our natural state. Like the prodigal son, when we're connected to source (*home*), we inherit all the riches of heaven (within). Then we succumb to the hypnosis of social conditioning and misguidedly believe that true wealth is found only in other people, places and the acquisition of things. Our pursuit of these things, however, results in disillusionment: despair, jealousy, greed, insecurity, and conflict. Our initial unified state of mind has been traded for poverty-consciousness. Bereft of meaning and emotionally bankrupt, we seek refuge and a longing to return to our true home transpires. This desire is accomplished through meditation – *being*, not *doing*. In silence, the voice of our Indwelling Divinity (higher essence) is heard with great clarity.

As well as relaying the importance of returning to Source (home) for spiritual nourishment, the other profound message of this parable is ***forgiveness***. Although we are apt to feel self-disdain, unworthiness and disgrace for the transgressions we carried out whilst inebriated, the Universe (Father) lovingly awaits our return. The Universe understands that we are not '*bad*' people; we were simply blind and unaware of our errors whilst drunk. Hence, another phrase from the bible becomes apt:

**'Father forgive them  
For they know not what they do.'**

Rising above our conditioning and embracing our rightful heritage is the essence of phase two. Being part of the Sacred Singularity we are all creators, capable of creating the reality we truly desire. However, to do so we have to enter an altered state of consciousness in which we transcend the hypnosis of social conditioning and reconnect with the power of our Source. Meditation, self-love, and forgiveness, hold the keys. Everything we long for can be found in our true home: ***phase two is your homecoming.***



## **Step 4:**

**Aspire to invoke a major shift in consciousness by allowing life to unfold from the wisdom of your Indwelling Divinity (Higher-Self).**

**You are a distinct portion of the essence of God in yourself.**

**Why, then, are you ignorant of your noble birth?**

**Why do you not consider whence you came?**

**Why do you not remember when you are eating, who you are who eat; and whom you feed; do you not know that it is the divine you feed?**

**The divine you exercise?**

**You carry a God about with you.**

Epictetus

There's a facet of your being which knows the right response to every conceivable situation. Your Indwelling Divinity is a part of the phenomenal intelligence responsible for all creation: omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. So, *why, then, are we ignorant of our noble birth?* Why do we discard the God within, in favour of a self-seeking, subordinate, pseudo-self?

The simple answer is that life has duped us into identifying with an imposter: our ego. At birth we enrolled into drama school and learned to play the role of Mister or Missus Mortal, a reactive being, programmed to conform to the strict limitations of society. We immersed ourselves in the roll with such fervour that we forgot our true identity.

**Man has falsely identified himself with the pseudo-soul or ego.**

**When he transferred his sense of identity to his true being, the immortal Soul, he discovered that all pain is unreal.**

**He no longer can even imagine the state of suffering.**

Paramahansa Yogananda

Step four urges us to reacquaint ourselves with the immortal aspect of our being. By allowing life to unfold from our Indwelling Divinity we can be absolutely certain of meeting every situation with confidence, understanding, forbearance and wisdom. This step encourages us to allow our Indwelling Divinity to become our closest advocate, guide and teacher.

**Once you reunify with the immortal essence that dwells within, you will optimize your potential in every area of your life**

## Exercise Nine

### *Daily Declaration*

At the beginning of every day, make the following declaration:

**Today, I allow every situation to unfold from the wisdom of my Indwelling Divinity. In doing so, I rest assured that I will meet every situation in a way that enhances my life and the lives of all those I encounter.**

Let this statement be emblazoned in the forefront of your mind throughout the day. This step is about trading conditioned responses for optimal living and this declaration reinforces your intent to succeed. Whenever you encounter a challenging situation, refrain from reverting to conditioned responses and striking out; instead, stay centred in your higher awareness and mentally affirm the following declaration:

*‘I allow this situation to unfold from the wisdom of my Indwelling Divinity.’*

Now reconsider the testing situation. Recall step three and evoke the Hanged Man archetype. Look at the situation from different perspectives and identify your options. In silence, await intuitive direction from your Indwelling Divinity and act accordingly.

**Intuition is the direction of the Soul**

Continually practicing this process will initiate a shift in consciousness that will propel you into a higher dimension of existence: your life will change beyond recognition. Paradoxically, by relinquishing control to your Indwelling Divinity, you become master of your own destiny.

### Homework

- Read chapters 11 to 13 of the book *Alcoholic to Alchemist*.
- Contemplate the information and how it applies to your life.

NOTES:

NOTES:



## Step 5: Live Life Consciously

This step is comprised of three parts: *awakening, discerning, choosing.*

### Part A: Awakening

**When one realizes one is asleep,  
at that moment  
one is already half-awake.**

P. D. Ouspensky (1878-1947)

There are two ways to live: consciously and unconsciously – awake or asleep. When we live unconsciously we are entranced by conditioning; oblivious to the reasons why our lives aren't working. We repeat the same routines day-in, day-out; make the same mistakes over and over again; and **re-act** to the same situations time and time again - but we never ask questions. *Why is life this way? What am I doing wrong? What can I change to progress?* We never consciously challenge our actions. We carry on oblivious, regardless of the consequences.

People imprisoned in this mind-set adhere to beliefs that breed stasis: *'life is already mapped out.'* - *'That's just the way it is.'* What a defeatist attitude! Wake up! Life is not preordained: *it's 'just the way it is'* because you haven't changed anything in years! Such people are **effects**, not **causes**. They are constantly buffeted about by the whims of other people. They are REACTORS, not CREATORS. Yet to change a REACTOR into a CREATOR we just have to put 'C' first. If we 'SEE' first the unconscious patterns which drive our repetitive behaviour before acting on them, we resume conscious control of our lives.

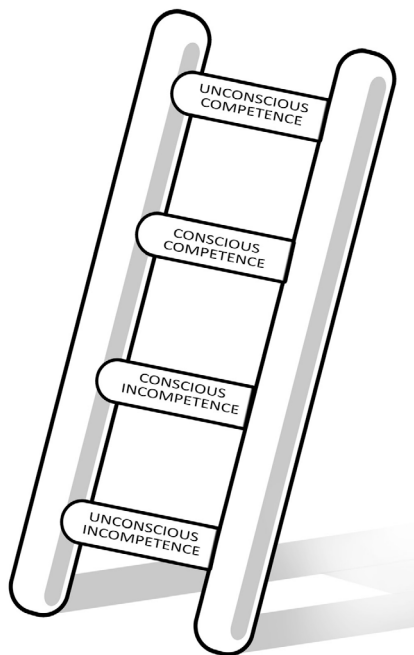
Behaviours indicative of reactor mode are: *sulking, blaming, seeking approval, condemning, insulting, bad-mouthing, adopting victim mentality, seeking vengeance, calculating your responses to suit the company you're in, agreeing with the majority just to fit in, unhealthy competitiveness, bullying, and jealousy.* Every time you revert to one of these effects, let an alarm sound off in your mind and bring your attention to the fact that you're giving your power away. To live consciously we must heighten our awareness and catch ourselves in the process of **re-acting**. Every time we interrupt a conditioned response, we break a shackle that binds us and move one step closer to our true potential.

Heightening our awareness can be aided by reverting to step three and becoming aware of the covert operations of our filtering systems. Instead of responding robotically and slipping back into somnambulism, STOP - Stall, Think, Observe and Proceed. Don't shrink from your feelings, allow them to expand. Observe the sensations in your body and allow them to peak. Remember the wisdom of the Tao Te Ching:

**Should you want to contain something,  
you must deliberately let it expand.  
Should you want to weaken something,  
you must deliberately let it grow strong.**

In not resisting negative feelings, you weaken and disperse them. In fighting them, you strengthen them. When your feelings have dissolved, revert to step four and ask your Indwelling Divinity for the correct response to the situation. Remember, *every time you interrupt a negative pattern of behaviour, you dissolve the neural networks which support it*. Consequently, you initiate the following four stages of transformation.

### The Four stages of Competence:



#### Unconscious incompetence.

When operating at the level of unconscious incompetence, we are totally unaware of our short-comings. We operate in a somnambulist state: sleep-walking through life, totally oblivious to the underlying mechanisms that wreak havoc in our lives.

#### Conscious Incompetence

On reaching stage two our awareness has heightened. We've identified the underlying reasons as to why our lives aren't working, but we still haven't developed new strategies to implement the needed change, i.e. we are still incompetent.

#### Conscious Competence

At stage three, we have not only identified the reasons why we act in preordained ways, we have devised and implemented new strategies to change our behaviour. At present, however, we have to exert conscious effort in executing the new behaviour - it does not come easy. It requires a lot of energy and conscious thought.

#### Unconscious Incompetence

On reaching the final stage, we have practiced the new strategies to such an extent that they are now second-nature. Each time we are faced with the old trigger, our new way of responding kicks in without any conscious deliberation. When this occurs we have transformed a negative habit into an extremely positive one.

*The four stages of competence can be used to measure the degree of progress in any troublesome area of your life. Let's look at an example:*

#### Example :

*Every time John faced a problem he drank to destruction. This bizarre behaviour continued for many years and often led to him being locked up. He was oblivious to the reasons why he succumbed to his destructive tendencies. [**unconscious incompetence**].*

*After reviewing the situation with a counsellor, he identified that the reason for his abusive drinking was to obliterate his problems. Now he'd developed awareness of the catalyst, but his behaviour had not changed. He still drank to destruction whenever confronted with a problem [**conscious incompetence**].*

*Through the Alcoholic to Alchemist Twelve Step Philosophy for Optimal Living, he finally accepted that alcohol did not provide an escape route from his problems. As a consequence, he refrained from drinking. Initially, it wasn't easy; he had to exert conscious effort in implementing his new strategy [**conscious competence**].*

*Persistence prevailed bringing gradual improvement. After John repeatedly refused to drink his problems away and set about solving them, his desire to drink diminished. Subsequently, abstinence became second nature. On encountering a problem, rather than seeing it as an obstacle, he saw it as an opportunity to evolve. After examining a problem from different points of view, considering his options, and consulting his Indwelling Divinity, he took great delight in solving the problem – this entire process was carried out without any conscious deliberation i.e. it had been habituated. [**unconscious competence**].*

## Live Life: Don't Let Life Live You

### Part B: Discernment

To further heighten your awareness and foster the attributes of serenity, acceptance, courage and wisdom, refer to the words of the following prayer:

**I ask my Indwelling Divinity to grant me  
The serenity to accept the things I cannot change;  
The courage to change the things I can; and  
The wisdom to know the difference**

Recite this prayer frequently. Commit it to memory. Whenever you're faced with an ambiguous or threatening situation, one that fills you with confusion or fear, contemplate the words, slip into a serene state of mind, and deduce whether you have control over the situation or not.

If the answer is *no* then ask for the serenity to simply accept it. Why fret over something you cannot change? Equanimity of mind is maintained in simple acceptance.

If the answer is *yes* but you find yourself apprehensive to take action, then ask for courage. Remember, *courage isn't the absence of fear; it's the ability to act despite fear.*

If you are unable to ascertain whether you have control or not, ask for *clarity*. Again, use step four and hand the situation over to your Indwelling Divinity. This way you are certain of attaining the wisdom to discern the right course of action.

### Part C: Escaping into the magic

The final part of step five encourages you to go into the magical kingdom of your mind and ponder the limitless possibilities available to you. Living life consciously involves *choosing* what you desire and manifesting it.

Your mind is a vast emporium of potential. Sixty thousand thoughts traverse it every single day and any one of them has the capacity to take you on an incredible journey. Select your thoughts carefully; discard the negative and harness the inspirational. When you have chosen an inspirational idea, incubate it in the embryo of your imagination. Feed it with concentration and allow it to become alive in your mind. Enlarge the internal pictures and turn up the sounds until the experience becomes life-like. Immerse yourself in the scene. Feel the wonderful feelings evoked. Watch the scenario grow and grow until it is finally birthed into reality. And don't hold back, remember:

**"The greater danger for most of us lies not  
in setting our aim too high and falling  
short; but in setting  
our aim too low, and achieving our mark."**

Michelangelo

Set your bar as high as possible and live life in the knowledge that you are capable of clearing it with room to spare. To live life consciously is to know no limits!

Your imagination is the gateway to Cosmic Consciousness; therefore, it is your greatest source of inspiration. Whenever you enter the realm of your imagination you become a conduit for the Universal Mind and activate the genius within. As a result, the chemicals released into your body will evoke feelings of elation and bliss - and they are free of charge, with no adverse side effects! Escape into the creative dominion of your imagination every day. Make it a habit. As your agreement with reality changes, you will actualize a life beyond your wildest dreams.

## **Exercise Ten**

### ***Mastering your emotions***

Whenever your emotions become turbulent, adopt the same procedure used with your thoughts. Don't become embroiled in them, simply observe. Don't place value judgments on them: good, bad; right, wrong. Just remain detached and just allow them to be. Place your awareness on the different sensations in your body. Observe the movement of energy. Know that these feelings have resulted from corrosive inner dialogue that depends on your belief in it to survive. Withdraw your belief and they will expire. This powerful exercise has been adopted by our wise forefathers since time immemorial.

## **Exercise Eleven**

### ***Heightening Awareness***

From this point forth, ask yourselves the following questions - frequently:

- How is my external environment mirroring my internal disposition?
- What subtle happenings appear to be providing me with direction?
- What people, places or things am I unexplainably drawn to?
- What is my gut feeling telling me?

## **Exercise Twelve**

### ***Mindfulness***

Throughout the course of each day, become aware of the feelings you experience. Pay attention to the sensations in your body and become aware of the accompanying thoughts. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Am I concentrating on what I *do* want, or what I *do not* want?
- Are these thoughts conducive to growth?
- Are these thoughts reoccurring?

## **Homework**

- Read chapters 11 to 16 and chapter 18 (omit 17 as it is included in this workbook) of the book *Alcoholic to Alchemist*.
- Contemplate the information and how it applies to your life.

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**Step 6:**  
**Develop and sustain self-love through  
regular communion with your  
inner child.**

**In every real man a child is hidden that wants to play.**

Friedrich Nietzsche

The *inner child* is a concept used in psychology to denote the child-like aspect of our psyche; a sub-personality embodying the residual effects of childhood. Alcoholism and the symptoms that accompany it: depression, strained relationships, severe mood swings, emptiness and low self-esteem, often arise as a result of neglecting our inner child.

The adverse effects of deep rooted childhood experiences lay dormant in our psyche until triggered by current stimuli. When ignited, they evoke strong, irrational responses that knock us off balance. Afterwards, we often exclaim, *'I don't know what came over me then!'*, *'I'm not myself today'*, or *'I was like a man possessed.'* These spontaneous, irrational outbursts are often indicative of a wounded inner child rebelling. The powerful practice of inner child therapy can eradicate the underlying issues that give rise to these eruptions and promote harmony in our relationships.

**Like a forgotten fire, a childhood can  
always flare up again within us.**  
Gaston Bachelard

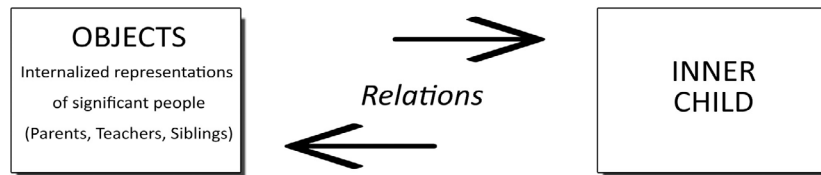
The inner child is the intrinsic embodiment of all our fears, worries, anxieties, and guilt; it is our epicentre of sensitivity. Vulnerability and over-sensitivity are signs that our inner child feels threatened and requires our attention. Ignoring these pleas leads to fragmentation and an underlying sense of dissociation; we feel somewhat distant and detached. But when we listen and act upon these pleas our lives are transformed in miraculous ways.

The feelings of our inner child are not contrived or distorted; they are authentic and need to be acknowledged. Suppressing these feelings puts a constant drain on our vital resources and gives rise to depletion and depression. More importantly, detaching from this authentic source of emotion is a sure way to become lost, confused and totally out of touch with ourselves.

Inner-child therapy helps us de-fuse the explosive source of our destructive tendencies. The unconscious mind presents unresolved issues for resolution via the inner child complex. This can be a highly emotional and disruptive experience, but do not shy away from it; it is a much needed positive development.

Remember, our childhood relationships are not dead and buried; they are buried alive - active in our unconscious. We cannot process and release them until they surface, and turbulent emotions are often indicative of them surfacing. So embrace this turbulence and acknowledge that it is your authentic self trying to break through your rigid defence systems.

The effects of internalised relationships are so important that there is a whole strand of psychology - *Object Relations Theory* - dedicated to them. During childhood we internalise versions of significant people in our lives: parents, peers, teachers, siblings and clergymen, etcetera. Object Relations Theory refers to these introjects as *objects*. The term Object Relations, therefore, refers to the relationships between these internal representations of real-life people and our inner child.



The term transference is used to describe the process of re-enacting these internal relationships with real people in our lives currently: our internalised relationships are mirrored in the external world. Via this mechanism, issues we had with people in our past are *transferred* to people in our lives today and our problems perpetuate. As this is an unconscious phenomenon, it often goes unrecognised and causes mayhem. Let's clarify the process with an example:

#### **Example: Josie's Transference**

*Josie was beaten by her violent father as a child. Subsequently, she'd chosen partners who also administered violent beatings. A pattern emerged whereby Josie would end one violent relationship and enter another.*

*When she came for therapy, I explained to her that we internalise versions of significant people in our lives and the relationships we had with them are on-going in our unconscious mind. **The internal relationship between her and her father was being re-enacted externally.***

*She chose partners of a violent disposition in order to solve the issues she had with her father, but she didn't know it because it was all happening unconsciously. In effect, she was giving her real-life partners the role of her father. However, trying to resolve the issues she had with her father via her current partners simply didn't work. What she needed to do, was work through the catalyst relationship (i.e. the one with her father).*

*After processing and releasing the issues she had with her father in therapy, the destructive pattern of choosing violent partners magically disappeared. She no longer had an unconscious need to resolve issues involving violent men.*

This example shows that the content of our psyche is often reflected externally. *When we harbour dysfunctional relationships within, we tend to attract dysfunctional relationships without.* Listening to the anguish of our inner child is imperative if we want to eradicate this destructive phenomenon.



The importance of childhood experience on our psychological development is further emphasised in Attachment Theory. Through longitudinal studies, John Bowlby *et al*, found that the quality of our early relationships shaped our capacity to enter into successful relationships throughout the rest of our lives. They found that children who had caregivers who responded to their needs and acted as a secure base from which they could explore their surroundings, were able to successfully integrate and form intimate relationships throughout the rest of their lives. Having received love and affection in their formative months, these children developed an internal representation of themselves as being worthy of love and affection. Consequently, they developed self-worth and self-esteem. Conversely, children who didn't have a secure base, found it difficult to integrate. Having not received love and affection as infants, they formed an internal representation of themselves as being unworthy and so developed low self-esteem. So, undoubtedly, the effects of childhood influence on our psychological development are immense. The nature of our experiences in our formative years sets a template for the rest of our life.

*'But what if we didn't have a good childhood – are we doomed?'* I hear you cry. The answer is a resounding NO. Your primary caregivers - parents, foster parents, or whoever cared for you in childhood - may not have acquired the necessary skills to administer love and affection, but you do have such a person in your life now: You!

The child within never ages; therefore, with the help of the nurturing aspect of yourself, it is never too late to have a happy childhood. Remember, *as within, so without*. As you develop a loving relationship between your inner child and your inner parent, the effects will be far reaching and reflected externally. Your ability to form intimate, meaningful relationships will be greatly enhanced, as your self-esteem, self-respect and self-love begins to soar.

### **Three important points to note:**

- If your primary caregiver did not possess the necessary attributes to administer love and affection, do not interpret it as a lack of love. This is very rarely the case. Their disposition is often a legacy *from their own up-bringing*; they feel the love but find it difficult to express.
- If you had a particularly difficult childhood, I would thoroughly recommend that you carry out the following exercises with the aid of a trained professional. Ideally, one of our licensed therapists (see [www.al2al.com](http://www.al2al.com)).
- As these exercises can be highly emotional, a period of approximately six months sobriety is recommended before you attempt them.

## Inner Child Exercises

Before being buried beneath layer upon layer of conditioning, our inner children were playful, spontaneous, creative, and intuitive. The following exercises are designed to uncover that spring of vitality and let it embellish our lives once again.

### Exercise Thirteen

#### *A dialogue between your inner child and inner parent*

*Note: this exercise is greatly enhanced if you have a childhood photograph of yourself to which you can relate throughout.*

- Whenever you are feeling upset, sit down and let your inner child relay its feelings to you. With your non-dominant hand, allow your inner child to transcribe its feelings onto paper. Don't edit the words to make them appear more adult-like, write them down exactly how they are expressed.
- Now allow your inner parent to come to the fore and contemplate the written requests of your inner child. Allow any evoked emotion to arise and expand. Do not judge the emotion: good, bad – right, wrong, just allow it to be, and observe the sensations in your body.
- Still in parent mode, with your dominant hand, write down a response to your inner child. Look at the child's photograph. Really impress upon them how much you care: how much you love them. Tell them exactly how you are going to fulfill their requests. Respond with as much love and encouragement as you can possibly muster.

This is an excellent exercise to do whenever you are feeling discontented or confused. It is often at these times that your Inner Child is feeling ignored or criticized. The benefits are invaluable. Equanimity is attained by countering the negative feelings of the inner child with the loving, parental part of your psyche. The more you activate the nurturing part of your psyche, the more self-esteem and self-love you generate. As your self reliance grows, your neediness will diminish and reduce the demands you place on others. Emotionally nourishing yourself in this way will also enable you to give freely to others and greatly enhance your relationships.

## Exercise Fourteen

### *Inner Child Meditation*

Note: it helps to either record this meditation, leaving pauses at appropriate times to assimilate and process pertinent information, or have someone read it to you. Alternatively, there is a recording on our website.

Find a quiet place where you won't be disturbed. Relax and concentrate on your breath... Notice the gentle rise and fall of your breath... notice how this is reflected in the rise and fall of your stomach as it inflates and deflates... As you breathe out, let go of any tension, anxiety and stress... as you breathe in, inhale a sense of lightness and peace. Repeat this procedure for five minutes – in, out. Allow yourself to attune to the rhythm and flow of your breath.... Become one with it... slip into the space between your thoughts... and sink into a beautiful, deep state of relaxation.

Now, allow the following scene to come mind... You are in a ward of a maternity hospital... a nurse passes you a beautiful newborn baby.... Embrace the child and look deeply into its sparkling eyes. .... Feel the child's warmth as you cradle them. Rock them gently back and forth.... notice how their eyes are filled with wonderment and they're eager to embrace the adventure of life .. this infant is special: extremely special... Become aware of this specialness. The child's eyes emanate a deep need for nurturing love... look into their clear, sparkling eyes and vow to fulfil this need...whisper into the baby's ear 'I love you', repeat this phrase over and over again... 'I love you.... I love you.... I love you'...

.....This child is a bundle of pure goodness – a reflection of the pure goodness within you.... YOU ARE PURE GOODNESS.... Feel this goodness building up within you, NOW ....let it pervade every corner of your being... look deeply into the baby's eyes and see this goodness shining back at you....

.... Allow it to expand.. feel the goodness within you multiply - one hundred fold ... one thousand fold.... Feel yourself becoming a beacon of love, an emanation of goodness that illuminates all you come in contact with... notice how people respond to you as you emit this light... it brings out the best in them... they smile and are totally at ease with you... on noticing this, your self-worth heightens: rising, rising, rising.. feel your worthiness expand, and know that you are deserved of the best life has to offer.....

.....become aware that the bundle of joy you cradle in your arms harbours a longing..... a longing to bestow a special gift onto the world... a treasure they hold in their heart: their life's purpose... this tiny bundle of love is a genius in one particular area.... their greatest joy will be to give this gift to their earthly brothers and sisters ... tell the child you will support and encourage them in their quest to fulfil their purpose... you will help them find that which they love to do and immerse them in it....

..... *Now, let the years elapse and notice how the child has blossomed into a joyous, creative infant.... notice how they play freely, enjoying the present moment to the full... play with them, NOW.... join in the fun... let go of any inhibitions and become that fun loving child... let the scene expand in your mind.... make the colours brighter and more vivid... turn up the sound... immerse yourself in the scene... feel those glorious feelings traversing your being. ... bathe yourself in the energy of playfulness... allow yourself to be cleansed and purified by it... remind yourself that life is not a game to win: it is a game to play... allow yourself the luxury of playing frequently....and laugh at the challenges life beholds...*

.....*Let the years progress once again... the child is now a teenager... listen to their values... ask them what they value most..... listen to their answers intently... make it obvious how much you support their aspirations.... What is it they need: love, affection, creative licence, meaningful relationships, abundance, recognition, success, or affluence? Make a mental note of their requests and write them down straight after this session..... Remember:*

**It is the child in man that is the source of his uniqueness and creativeness, and the playground is the optimal milieu for the unfolding of his capacities and talents.**

Eric Hoffer

*...Life's playground is the optimal environment for the unfolding of the child's capacities and talents... look at the teenager again and feel a great sense of pride at the way they're progressing... note how their progress is down to the love and nurturance you have bestowed on them... every child has an innate need to be loved and cared for, and you have made an excellent job of fulfilling this primary need... look at the youth again..*

*.... for a brief instance you thought you saw yourself... look again.... you did see yourself... you are observing a long lost part of yourself.. welcome them back...they have now come home....they extend their arms towards you....you look deeply into their eyes, holding your gaze for what seems a lifetime... you extend your arms towards them.... you slowly move towards each other and embrace lovingly... as you do, you blend into one and become imbued with a sense of wholeness... the child has took their rightful place within you, once again..... from this moment forth, vow to commune with them on a daily basis, ask them what they want or need.... make sure to grant them their wishes.... as you do, watch them thrive... watch them evolve into a wonderful human being... one who will make a difference in this world..*

*.... allow the scene to dissolve now... call your awareness back behind the windows of your eyes, so you are centred in your body... feel the gentle pull of gravity on your shoulders and your feet firmly against the floor.... in your own time open your eyes and familiarise yourself with the surroundings.*

On completion of this meditation, write down the wants and needs of your inner child and vow to honour them.

## **Homework**

- Read chapters 20 to 22 of the book Alcoholic to Alchemist.
- Contemplate the information and how it applies to your life.

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## Step 7:

**Make an inventory of all the kind and caring acts you've carried out throughout the course of your life - and/or – make an inventory of all the future kind and caring acts you intend to carry out.**

As a result of the transgressions we carried out whilst inebriated, most of us developed a propensity to treat ourselves with disdain. Being inherently decent, moral and caring human beings, we find it difficult to accept the wrong-doings we carried out whilst intoxicated and become intent on self-punishment.

Step six began the process of reverse engineering these negative strategies. By nurturing the child within, we develop an internal representation of ourselves as being worthy of love and affection. Consequently, our self-love and self-esteem rise.

Step seven is a logical progression from inner child work in that it is designed to sustain and heighten our self-love and esteem. By reviewing all the good deeds we've performed throughout life, we cultivate an attitude of forgiveness and create a space for love to enter. We are essentially good people who have forgotten our positive attributes. Step seven rekindles our positive memories and gives rise to a shift in consciousness which fosters an extremely positive self-perception.

### Exercise Fifteen

- Take a paper and pen and list all the kind and helpful acts you've carried out throughout life. Make a thorough inventory, listing as many as possible. Next to each inventory item, make a note of the attributes displayed: love, thoughtfulness, empathy, kindness, consideration, etc.
- When it's complete, sit down in a quiet place and contemplate each one. Allow any associated emotions to arise and expand. Immerse yourself in that wonderful feeling of pride that emerges as a result of your accomplishments. Feel your self-worth growing by the minute. Harness that feeling and let it grow...ten-fold; a hundred-fold; a thousand-fold. Shower your inner child with compliments for all the good work they have carried out throughout life. Watch their ever-widening smile as they receive the praise they've always longed for.
- When you have finished, set your sights on the future. Make a list of all the forthcoming kind acts you intend to carry out. Be very specific: to whom do you intend to be kind? In what ways will your kindness manifest? How will your thoughtfulness enhance the recipient's life?
- Again, find a quiet place and contemplate each one. Let the scenarios expand in your mind until you truly acknowledge the inherent goodness within you.

**Note:** if you have difficulty in remembering the good you have carried out in the past, go straight to the second part of the exercise and list all the good you *intend* to do.

Give this exercise the time it deserves. Repeat it periodically. The more you dwell on the goodness within you, the more you will deflect the wrath of Sobriety Saboteurs. Consequently, you will increase your capacity for self-love and attract the love of others.

## Homework

- Read chapter 27 of the book *Alcoholic to Alchemist*.
- Contemplate the information and how it applies to your life.

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**Step 8:**  
**Forgive and be Free**

**The moving finger writes; and, having writ,  
Moves on: nor all the piety nor wit  
Shall lure it back to half a line,  
Nor all thy tears wash out a word of it.**

Omar Khayam (1048 – 1122)

The wise words of philosopher, astronomer and poet, Omar Khayam, remind us of the futility of holding past events responsible for our current circumstances. The moving finger, in this context, may be seen as us. As time elapses and events unfold, we inevitably make mistakes and suffer injustices, but no amount of blame or guilt can turn back the passage of time in order to rectify them.

One of life's greatest myths is the belief that the past is responsible for our present misfortunes. This is a defeatist's attitude. Without doubt, the past does influence our psychological development, but as we gain awareness and insight into ourselves, we come to realize that the past cannot be credited for our present shortcomings without our consent.

Granted, we can *choose* to bond ourselves to the wounds and injustices of the past and allow bitterness and resentment to erode our minds and destroy our lives; or we can choose to turn our anger inwardly, severely berate ourselves for past transgressions, and sink into a morass of melancholy. Either way, guilt, bitterness, or resentment will surely lead to our demise.

There is another option available, however. We can choose to forgive. By forgiving ourselves and others, we free up a vast amount of psychic space for inspiration, creativity, love, joy and life's infinite possibilities to enter. The formula for the successful implementation of this process is written below:

**Forgive us our trespasses, as we  
forgive those who trespass against us.**

These words of the Lord's Prayer are not some pious idealism devised to produce martyrs and angels; they are designed to set you free. Forgiveness and freedom are synonymous. When we blame negative childhood experience, relationship problems, financial hardship, bereavement, or some other calamity for our present misfortunes, we surrender our power to circumstances beyond our control. Subsequently, our minds become infested with negative thoughts which give rise to life-denying chemicals in our bodies that induce bad feeling: depression, fragmentation, lethargy, irritability, paranoia and bitterness. Consequently, we drink and end up back in the abreactive abyss. This whole destructive process is initiated by our refusal to let go of old wounds. But what we don't realise is that by hanging onto past pain, we are continuously wounding ourselves.

**Resentment is a covert method of self-punishment.**  
**The primary objective of forgiving others is to set *yourself* free.**  
**Forgiveness is not an altruistic act: it is self-serving.**

Forgiveness doesn't mean pretending that no wrong occurred. On the contrary, it means that there was wrong (else there would be *nothing* to forgive) – yet, *in order to free ourselves*, we stop feeling angry or resentful towards the person.

In extreme cases, such as abuse, where forgiveness is desirable but extremely difficult, there is an effective process that facilitates release; a process that transports you from hatred to freedom.

Steve, my friend whose story appears at the beginning of the book, initially found it impossible to forgive his foster-father for the sexual abuse he suffered as a child – with good reason, you might say; but let's remember that resentment is self-effacing.

As we worked through his issues, I became aware that love and hatred were fused together, as often happens in these cases. Survivors of sexual abuse are typically reluctant to declare their love for the perpetrator as they think they will be labelled weird – *'how can you love someone after he did that to you?'*

After reassuring him that it was understandable and permissible to love his foster-father, I recommended that he separate his father's disturbing actions from the person as a whole. This enables a client to see the many different facets of a person, instead of just their negative aspects.

On doing this, Steve began to recognise the positive attributes of his foster-father and understood why he'd loved him as well as hated him. At this point I felt a shift in Steve's energy; he had mellowed somewhat. His *hatred* had transformed into *anger*.

For the next few weeks we worked on processing his anger, during which time it emerged that his father had also been sexually abused as a child (as is often the case with perpetrators of sexual abuse). By acknowledging the full impact of his foster-father's childhood experience, another shift took place; Steve's *anger* transposed into *understanding* and *compassion*.

A year later, after continuous therapy, Steve visited his foster-father's grave and forgave him. The experience is best described in his own words, *'I immediately felt a weight had been lifted off my shoulders and knew that I could now move forward.'*

The process of shifting from hatred to freedom outlined above will work for almost any problem. Not many people are able to make the shift in one quantum leap. Many don't even get as far as forgiveness, but once they attain a degree of understanding, their dilemma has a tendency to dissipate.

The logical progression through *hatred, anger, understanding, compassion, forgiveness and, finally, freedom* normally transpires as a result of working with a competent therapist or an excellent mentor. If you recognise a need to undergo this process, see our website for a list of approved therapists and mentors - [www.al2al.com](http://www.al2al.com)

### **Self Forgiveness**

The benefits of understanding and forgiving others will only be felt if we are prepared to forgive ourselves too. Many people who abuse alcohol are so intent on self-recrimination that they feel that turmoil and hardship is all they deserve; plagued with guilt, they become obsessed with judging themselves 'bad' and 'unworthy' and sentencing themselves to a life of misery.

If you identify with this pattern of self-destruction - as I know many of you do - WAKE UP! Recognise it as the work of the Sobriety Saboteurs. Their appearance always presents an opportunity for growth – the

lesson, this time is: LEARN TO LOVE YOURSELF. Guilt transpires from self-disdain, the antidote to which is self-love – *self-disdain and self-love are totally incompatible.*

At this time it may be worth reminding yourself of those famous words of Jesus:

**'Father forgive them  
for they know not what they do.'**

When we were inebriated, we didn't know what we were doing either. We didn't consciously set out to harm anyone; the harm we caused was usually a by-product of our inactive conscience and suspended memory giving rise to Dr Jekyll becoming Mr Hyde.

For blame and punishment to be appropriate there has to be conscious intent to violate another person in some way, and this is very rarely the case with alcoholism. So heed the words of Jesus and forgive yourself for your indiscretions. Instead of whipping yourself and becoming an unproductive member of society laden with guilt, use your past errors as feedback to improve the quality of your life in the future.

### **Making Amends**

This step would be incomplete without addressing the issue of making amends. Making amends to people for past transgressions is appropriate when you feel your relationship with them has been strained. If you feel it necessary and appropriate to make direct amends, then do so – it is a great house-cleaning exercise that fosters humility.

In some cases you may like to make direct amends, but the thought of doing so fills you with reticence and uncertainty. Step nine offers the perfect solution; one that will see many people benefit from your willingness to evolve into a respected, productive human being.

### **Exercise Sixteen**

#### ***Forgiveness***

- With the help of your therapist, identify and process areas of your life where forgiveness is needed (*self-forgiveness or forgiveness of others*).

### **Exercise Seventeen**

#### ***Forgiveness Meditation***

Sit comfortably, allow your eyes to close... notice the gentle rise and fall of your breath... notice how this is reflected in the rise and fall of your stomach as it inflates and deflates... As you breathe out, let go of any tension, anxiety and stress... as you breathe in, inhale a sense of lightness and peace. Repeat this procedure for five minutes – in, out. Allow yourself to attune to the rhythm and flow of your breath... Become one with it... slip into the space between your thoughts... and sink into a beautiful, deep state of relaxation....

Now, focus on your heart centre, your centre of affinity with everyone and everything... feel the underlying oneness which connects us all. Breathe deeply in to your heart centre and let this feeling expand. Now, bring to mind the words of Jesus – *'father forgive them for they do not know what they do'* – and remember, Jesus used these words to exonerate people for their wrong-doings, based on the understanding that they did not understand why they acted in such bizarre ways.... unconscious forces propelled them.... Also, remember that ***when you forgive someone you set yourself free***.... breathe deeply into your heart centre again... bring to mind someone for whom you have a resentment...

de-personalize the scene, know that it wasn't particularly you this person wanted to hurt, their behaviour was a by-product of internal forces, life experiences, which propelled them to act irrationally... let your being fill with the energy of forgiveness... let this energy extend to encompass the object of your thoughts.. forgive this person and set yourself free..... *forgive this person and set yourself free...*

**[Repeat this process with other people. By forgiving each one, you release the burdens you have carried for many years, freeing up space for love, creativity and inspiration to enter]**

When you have exhausted the list of people you wish to forgive, turn your attention to yourself.... Again, breathe deeply into your heart centre... allow the energy of forgiveness to expand... picture yourself as a child in your mind's eye... realised that this child is punished every time you treat yourself with disdain... now is time to release any sense of self-recrimination and replace it with self-love. Forgive yourself for the transgressions you committed in the past and vow to use that energy to pursue your life's purpose... bestow your special gift onto the world... when you do, know that you are making amends for the wrong-doings of the past... forgive yourself... *forgive and be free...* repeat to yourself, 'the wrong-doings of the past were fuelled by fear, pain, futility and guilt, I now release them and forgive myself, I forgive myself.. and, as I do, I become free and expend my energy on positive pursuits...

Focus on the mental image of you as a child and repeat.... I love you, I love myself... **I love you, I love myself.....**

**[repeat this process for a couple of minutes]**

.... allow the scene to dissolve now... call your awareness back behind the windows of your eyes, so you are centred in your body... feel the gentle pull of gravity on your shoulders and your feet firmly against the floor.... in your own time open your eyes and familiarise yourself with the surroundings.

## Homework

- Read chapters 28 of the book Alcoholic to Alchemist.
- Contemplate the information and how it applies to your life.

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**Step 9:**  
**Identify Your Life's Purpose**

**'Don't ask what the world needs.  
Ask what makes you come alive, and go and do it,  
because the world needs people who have come alive.'**

Howard Thurman

Steps one to eight are primarily focused on house-cleaning – clearing up residual negative energy from the past. Step nine moves you into the present, and urges you to find out what you love to do and share it with the world. Optimal living is contingent on you being fulfilled and joyous. Living on purpose is the best way of ensuring success.

When we open to our inner guidance and flow with the current of divine intelligence which floods our being, our purpose is illuminated and our lives change *forever*.

Your life's purpose doesn't have to be some monumental feat. It may simply be a series of small things carried out with much love. But one thing is for certain - it will fill you with inspiration, enthusiasm and delight. Once you're on purpose your life will change forever. The essence of this step can be summed up in the following statement:

**Love what you do, and do what you love.**

Your life's purpose is relayed through the language of the heart. So feel your way into it, instead of thinking. Identify what excites and stimulates you; identify what sets you alight inside. Maybe your purpose will reveal itself in a number of stages, as it did with me – but every stage will be inspiring and stimulating, I guarantee you.

*Your life's purpose is a desire of the Universe waiting to manifest through you.* I cannot think of a more befitting way to relay the joys of this step other than reiterating those magnificent words of Pantajali:

**“When you are inspired by some great purpose,  
some extraordinary project,  
all your thoughts break their bonds:  
Your mind transcends limitations,  
your consciousness expands in every direction,  
and you find yourself in a new, great, and wonderful world.  
Dormant forces, faculties and talents become alive,  
and you discover yourself to be a greater person by far than you  
ever dreamed yourself to be.”**

-Pantajali

## Making Amends through our life's Purpose

In step eight I discussed the importance of making amends for the transgressions we carried out whilst intoxicated. Bestowing the gift of your life's purpose onto the world is a magnificent way of achieving this. Not only will your work benefit many people, but you will grow closer to God or the Universal Mind in the process. The practice of unifying with the Source of all creation through our life's work is called Karma Yoga.

### Karma Yoga

The Sanskrit word *Karma* means **to do** or **action** - *Yoga* means **union with God**. So the practice of **Karma Yoga** is unifying with God through selfless action. Since all living things are God manifest, then Karma Yoga may be defined as the selfless use of our unique gift in service of the highest good of all we encounter. Rather than working simply for money or personal gain, a person practicing karma yoga has the well-being of others at heart. Through this service they find union with God. Let me relay my current thoughts on the subject to you:

*As I write these words, I sit in solitude in the quiet ambience of the English Lake district. Although I'm alone, I am not lonely – I am intimately connected to the divine inspiration which dwells within me; I am a channel through which the Universe can express itself. In silence, I commune with the divinity which occupies my body, and realise the truth in the saying that **sometimes silence has the loudest voice**. As silent knowing is translated into the words which I impart to you, I am filled with passion and purpose. My enthusiasm levels are peaking because the God within is consuming my ego and all negative interference is being expelled. I am at one. As I bestow my unique talents on the world, I strengthen my intimacy with God or the Universe. I allow the dreams of God to be expressed through me.*

### Exercise Eighteen

#### **Life's Purpose**

Take a pen and paper and answer the questions thoroughly. Give the exercise the time it deserves.

- i. What do you thoroughly enjoy doing? Reflect on your life and identify times when you were passionate, fulfilled and inspired. What were the stimuli? Who were you with?
- ii. What kind of people stimulate and inspire you? Who are your role models? What exactly is it about these people that you admire: their outlook on life? Their values? Their determination?
- iii. If money was no object and you had all the time in the world, what would you do with your life?
- iv. What values are most important to you?
- v. Revisit steps one to four, reflect on your answers, and identify any common threads.
- vi. Complete the following statements with as many answers as possible. Write freely and spontaneously.

*My life purpose is . . .*

*The purpose for which I'm on this planet is . . .*

*The vision I hold for the world is . . . .*



- vii. Write a brief statement about your life's purpose. Notice how you feel when writing it. If you feel effervescent and alive, the chances are you have uncovered it. If not, repeat this exercise periodically.
- viii. Now, find a quiet space where you won't be disturbed. Play some inspirational background music or simply immerse yourself in silence. Allow your mind to open and expand. Feel your ego and all its doubts and insecurities being consumed by your true essence: your Indwelling Divinity. Know that you are capable of achieving anything. Your true essence is the very same omnipotent intelligence which gave rise to all creation. You are creativity itself. Life is a field of infinite possibilities. Allow your mind to drift and locate the genius within.
- ix. Ask the genius what unique gift it has for the world. Each of us is born with a duty embedded in our heart; our life's purpose. Let the genius within reveal this purpose. Make sure that when it is divulged you feel passionate about it - awe inspired. In silence, ask questions – pause, and feel the answers arising from the depths of your soul
- x. Finally, move heaven and earth to manifest it! The results will astound you – I promise!

## Exercise Nineteen

*Values Elicitation: Laying a firm foundation on which you can build the rest of your life*

To embrace your true potential the foundation of your new life must be structured in accordance with the concepts, ideas, notions, attributes and qualities that are of most importance **to you** i.e. **your core values**. Living in accordance with the expectations of other people or adhering to the indoctrinated standards of society is a recipe for discontentment and stagnation.

*Most people are other people.  
Their thoughts are someone else's opinions,  
their lives a mimicry,  
their passions a quotation.*

Oscar Wilde

This planet is full of unfulfilled clones who trudge drearily from day-to-day doing what society expects of them. Like programmed robots they follow the herd, afraid to step out of the confines of 'normality.' They stick at jobs they cannot abide, because 'it pays the bills.' They stay in relationships that have long since stagnated because it's safe and all they have ever known. Their dreams and aspirations have been reduced to distant memories. What a sad way to live! But, more importantly for the person with a destructive alcohol habit, these examples of stagnancy, unhappiness, and discontentment warrant escape – need I say anymore?

**You are unique. Your needs are unique. Your talents are unique.**

When you were young, you were not afraid to dream and aspire to fulfil your dreams. Just the thought of what you were going to do with your life energized you. Remember the magic of those days; that wonderful feeling of exhilaration brought about by contemplating your aspirations. What happened? In short, you became subject to the hypnosis of society; cloned by the conformists. All your dreams and aspirations simply faded into the abyss. Well it's time to reclaim that youthful exuberance. Come on – wake up! Feel that sense of excitement building again! It's time to inject *vibrancy* and *adventure* back into your life!

By allowing your life to unfold in accordance with what truly inspires you, you will start to live abundantly instead of merely existing. You will re-ignite that magical zest you had as a child and be propelled into a dimension of existence in which your dreams and aspirations come alive.

The first step on this journey is to re-acquaint yourself with the things you treasure; things that make your heart leap and your pulse race; things that fill you with joy and excitement; things that are deeply meaningful to you. Such *things* are *core values* and they will lay the foundation for a new life; an era in which you will reclaim your rightful heritage as creator and inventor; an era in which you will express your uniqueness and be joyous and free.

The following exercise is designed to help you elicit your core values. Give it the time and commitment it deserves. Don't forget, your core values are the solid foundation on which your new life will be based.

Take a pen and paper and circle the top ten things you value in life from the table below. Feel free to add any of your personal values that are not listed.

Adventure	Challenge	Learning	Teaching	Intimacy
Diversity	Creativity	Compassion	Courage	Inventiveness
Open-mindedness	Achievement	Knowledge	Fun	Kindness
Wisdom	Social network	Success	Commitment	Health
Family	Support	Love	Humility	Honesty
Independence	Self-discipline	Peace	Silence	Meditation
Pleasure	Sensitivity	Trust	Recognition	Growth
Recognition	Gratitude	Freedom	Integrity	Influence

**Example:**

1. Adventure
2. Intimacy
3. Inventiveness
4. Open-mindedness
5. Diversity
6. Silence
7. Meaningful relationships
8. Knowledge
9. Love
10. Freedom

- Now contemplate your list and be sure it contains the things you value more than anything. If necessary make changes; omit or add items. When you have finished, contemplate the list once again, until you are absolutely certain it represents your core values.

- Now revise the list and prioritize your values i.e. number one is your primary value etc.

*(Note: if certain values are of equal importance to you and you find it difficult prioritizing, indicate it in your list or skip this step completely).*

**Example:**

1. Love
2. Meaningful relationships
3. Intimacy
4. Freedom
5. Adventure
6. Diversity
7. Open-mindedness
8. Inventiveness
9. knowledge
10. Silence

- Again, contemplate the list and revise the priority if necessary.
- Once you are absolutely certain that the list reflects and prioritizes your core values, focus on each one and write a paragraph about what it means to you. Make sure you take your time and allow the essence of each value to permeate your being.

Core Value	What it means to me
1. Love	A state of unity in which I am connected to everything and everyone.

After finding your core values and writing a paragraph on each, you may wish to consider them in different facets of your life e.g. career, relationships, etc. Here are some of my core values. I have concentrated on relationships and careers. For each category I have listed three items e.g. meaningful relationships, intimacy, and freedom for the ‘relationship’ category. I suggest you list as many items as you can. The more time you give to this exercise, the more you will discover the deep meaningful things that truly nourish you. Don’t be surprised if it evokes tears, or sends you dancing around the room with joy: *this exercise uncovers the treasures you buried long ago.*

## Paul Henderson’s Core Values:

### Relationships:

#### 1. Meaningful Relationships

Meaningful relationships are important to me because I like to feel a special connection with the people in my life. I like to surround myself with people who inspire and stimulate me; people who breathe life into me. True friendship involves an atmosphere of trust where I can fully express myself without reservation or fear of being judged. Conversely, I thrive in an atmosphere of light-hearted humour and fun. Laughter is extremely healing. A meaningful relationship, to me, is one which fosters understanding, acceptance, empathy, encouragement, support, love and laughter; one that can traverse the full spectrum of emotions with ease, trust and warmth. Perhaps my idea of a meaningful relationship can be summed up by the following words of Aristotle: ‘What is a friend but a single soul dwelling in two bodies.’ The primary theme of true friendship, for me, is undoubtedly unity.

*[Now I contemplate the above paragraph for 15 minutes, and continue this practice with the following paragraphs]*

## **2. Intimacy**

Intimacy is a process whereby two people relinquish all roles and expose their true nature to each other. For me, there are two key variables to intimacy: self-disclosure and vulnerability. An intimate relationship is one in which I am not afraid to be myself and appear vulnerable in front of someone else. Intimacy involves an atmosphere of caring and sharing. An intimate relationship, for me, is an oasis where I have no need to calculate my responses in accordance with the company I keep; I have no need for defences. I can purge myself of embarrassments, delicate issues, and worries without fear of reprisals. Intimacy and liberation from the vicissitudes of life are inextricably linked.

## **3. Freedom:**

All too often the word relationship can be supplanted by the word possession. For me, freedom is a prerequisite for a happy relationship. A relationship is not two halves coming together to make a whole, that's dependency - it is two whole people coming together to share a special connection. A person must be free to express themselves for who they truly are; to pursue the things that stimulate and excite them. This is what breathes life into a relationship.

By depending on one person as a sole source of happiness, I invite insecurity and jealousy into my life. When my mind is open to everything and attached to nothing, I enjoy the people who enter my life, but I do not tether my happiness to them. Thus I remain open to the infinite diversity the Universe provides; the multitude of people who enter my life bringing with them the wonderful gift of friendship.

## **Career**

### **1. Adventure:**

For me, adventure is imperative for a fulfilling career. I am a person who thrives on new challenges. Life is a quest for new, insightful knowledge. I don't want to regurgitate other people's experiences through vicarious means. I want to break the confines of conformity and be a pioneer. To make a difference in this world I have to break away from the herd mentality and become a shepherd. I have to travel the road less travelled. New adventures stimulate me; they inject a deep sense of purpose and excitement into my life. Whether I hit the deck or soar to new heights, it doesn't matter, I feel alive and filled with vitality. The adventurer is fearless, resourceful and creative.

### **2. Diversity:**

The rich tapestry of life is woven from innumerable threads. Each thread contributes to the richness of the pattern. The more fibres that are intricately woven together, the more beauty is revealed in the end product. Like a finely woven tapestry, I want to weave together the infinite possibilities of life to reveal the beauty of my life's purpose. To me, to embrace the infinite diversity that life has to offer means to live abundantly, anything less is a mere existence.

### **Consistency is the last refuge of the unimaginative**

Oscar Wilde

To date, my curriculum vitae is extremely diverse! I have been a car cleaner, a store man, a milkman, a bum! a student, an actor, a musician, an entertainer, a teacher, an author and an inspirational speaker. But I am still only fifty years old! Like Michelangelo who finished painting the Sistine Chapel in his eighties, the best work of my life lies ahead. I intend to write many more books, become a playwright, write a

musical and make a movie – and that’s just for starters! I have been given this wonderful opportunity called life, and I intend to embrace every gift it presents.

### 3. Inventiveness:

The power of creative imagination is the midwife of all novel ideas. Within each of us lies a genius awaiting recognition; this genius’s workshop is the formless realm of our imagination. Our imagination isn’t some psychic playground where we go to drum up unrealistic pleasantries: it is the womb of creation. Look around you right now. Everything you see was once an idea birthed from somebody’s imagination. Albert Einstein acknowledged the power of the imagination by making statements such as ‘imagination is more important than knowledge,’ and ‘the imagination is the preview of life’s forthcoming events.’ To be unique is to express your individuality in novel ways. To accumulate knowledge is to regurgitate other people’s findings. The imagination is the image-forming capacity of the mind. And whatever you can conceive in the mind, you can achieve in reality. Being inventive, for me, means to stamp my own unique mark on the world.

### Conclusion:

Now that you have identified your core values, it is time to start using them to structure your perfect life and make your world a place of intrigue, fascination and joy. Far too often people identify what they value, and have wonderful ideas of how they would like to utilize and honour them, but that’s where it comes to a sudden halt! They stop right there and never put their plans into action. The following section is designed to help you give structure to your ideas, so you can implement them effectively and birth them into reality.

### Exercise Twenty

#### *Be S.M.A.R.T. Give Structure to your Goals*

Setting and implementing goals that act as stepping stones to the realization of your life’s purpose is a wonderful experience. Not only does it engage your mind and orient it towards your destiny, it breathes life back into the very core of your being. Humans thrive on achievement; it bolsters self-worth and radically increases momentum to achieve other goals. Most of all, it purges the mind of any residual negativity and supplants it with inspiration and enthusiasm.

Giving structure to your ideas is imperative. Vague and abstract notions fade away quickly; whereas a concrete plan gives your mind something tangible to grasp on to. When your mind embraces an idea, it acts as a servomechanism to steer you towards its fulfilment.

Before we look at structuring goals, it’s important to understand the difference between *objectives, goals and purpose*.

- **Purpose** - relates to our overall vision or primary purpose. For example, my ultimate purpose is to conduct inspirational speeches and write books.
- **Goals** - are the individual tasks, stepping stones that pave the way to our ultimate purpose. For example, I became a teacher of psychology and esoteric material in order to prepare myself to talk and write.
- **Objectives** - are the smaller tasks involved in the realization of your goal. For example, my goal of setting up a training company involved the following objectives: writing courses, advertising, finding venues and attracting students. A goal may have one or many objectives that need to be fulfilled for its successful completion.

One of the best methods for setting goals is the **S.M.A.R.T.** system. S.M.A.R.T refers to the acronym that describes the key variables of meaningful goals:

- Specific - concrete, detailed, well defined
- Measureable - how you know you are progressing
- Achievable - feasible
- Realistic - considering resources
- Time-Bound - a defined time line
- Let's look at these characteristics in more detail.

### **Specific**

Specific means that the goal is concrete, detailed, focused and well defined; it highlights the necessary course of action and required outcome. Goals should relay precisely what you intend to happen. To help set specific goals it helps to ask the following questions:

- **WHAT** am I going to do? This is best written using powerful, action verbs such as conduct, devise, build, plan, execute, deliver, etc. Effective language declares your goal action-orientated and focuses on what's most important.
- **WHY** is this important to me? Is your goal in alignment with your core values? Does it breathe excitement into you? Does it carry you in the direction of your ultimate purpose? Does it evolve you as a human being?
- **WHO** do I need to help me accomplish my goal?
- **WHEN** do I want it to be completed?
- **HOW** am I going to implement it?

### **Measurable**

If the objective is measurable, it means you can track the results of your actions. Measuring enables you to identify any glitches at an early stage and readjust your strategy; therefore, it increases efficiency. Most importantly, though, as you witness the fruits of your work, when your results measure up to your expectations and forecasts, you will notice a distinct heightening of your enthusiasm; this powerful motivating force is then fed back into your project and so momentum gathers.

### **Diagnostic Questions**

- How can my accomplishments be measured?
- Does my method of measurement provide a useful source of feedback?

### **Achievable**

Goals need to be achievable. If you over-extend your capabilities and resources, it is very easy to lose interest and deem yourself a failure. Conversely, when you break your goal down into a number of achievable objectives and attain them, you build up momentum and enthusiasm. Whilst being attainable, objectives still need to stretch you, but not so far that you become frustrated and lose motivation.

### **Diagnostic Questions**

- Is the proposed timeframe realistic?

- Do I understand the limitations and constraints?
- Do I have a contingency plan?
- Do I have the necessary resources; if not, how can I secure them?
- Is the project possible?

### **Realistic**

Goals that are achievable may not be realistic; however, realistic does not mean easy. Realistic means that you have the necessary resources to complete the task; whereas achievement is dependent on the demand placed on those resources. Most goals are achievable, but may require a change in your priorities to make them happen.

### **Diagnostic Questions**

- Are you putting an unreasonable demand on your resources to achieve the goal?
- Do you need to revise your priorities to make it happen?
- Do you need to revise your strategy for successful completion?

### **Time-Bound**

Time-bound means setting deadlines. Deadlines create the all important sense of urgency required for the mind to act as a servomechanism. If you don't set a deadline, you will reduce the motivation and urgency required to execute the tasks. Deadlines create the necessary urgency and prompts action.

### **Diagnostic Questions**

- When will this objective be accomplished?
- What is the intended deadline?

**There's a difference between interest and commitment.**

**When you're interested in doing something, you do it only when circumstance permits.**

**When you're committed to something, you accept no excuses, only results.**

[Anon]

To synthesize and assimilate the information presented above, let's take an example from my own experience. Some years ago I held the position of computer engineer at a local University. Although I thrived in the environment and enjoyed the company of my colleagues, my role had become monotonous and unfulfilling. Being a person who needs stimulation, diversity and challenge, I became very agitated and unsettled. As there was no scope for promotion within the ranks, and my interest in I.T. was waning, I had to make a decision: leave - or grin and bear it. Although my career needs were not being met, and the job was not in alignment with my life's purpose, many of my relationship needs were being fulfilled; my colleagues were like family and the working environment was a wonderful social arena. My '*extended family*' and I were able to intimate, confide, support, encourage and laugh together during the working day; so I didn't want to leave. With this realization came a cunning plan!

I decided to set myself a goal. I would pursue another avenue of work that would fulfil the needs that weren't being met by my *day job*: challenge, diversity, and adventure. Just for fun, I decided to add another criteria; whatever I chose to pursue must double my annual salary within twelve months! Already, I felt

the energy and excitement coursing through my veins. I thrive on challenge and this was inventive and exciting: a real adventure!

Drawing on my resources, I decided to set up a training company; a company that would train therapists. Immediately, this felt right – my heart began to smile and my energy field illuminated. Every day I immersed myself in knowledge of a psychological and esoteric nature. Training therapists was the perfect way to integrate my primary interest into a career.

Time to structure my goal! The first step was to draft an outline of my intended course of action, as follows:

**Outline:** my goal is to devise and teach a course in clinical hypnotherapy. The course is to start in September 2006 (it is now January). Whilst devising the course I will seek a professional body to stamp their approval on it, i.e. accredit it. Next, I will approach the venue where I hold meditation classes and negotiate a price for a room in which I will deliver the course. Then I will spread the word via the network of contacts I already have, and advertisements in the local press. In addition, I will expand my website to incorporate my new venture. The name I will use for the training school is the United Kingdom Academy of Integrative Therapy. As this is an umbrella term, it gives me scope to expand into counselling and NLP.

After outlining the objectives of my goal, I made a precise list of activities and deadlines [Note: below I have added the corresponding SMART variable]

- Course is to start 16<sup>th</sup> September 2006 [**specific, time-bound, measurable**]
- Monday night 6 – 9pm [**specific, time-bound**]
- Cost of venue = xxx pounds [**specific, realistic**]
- Cost of advertising: press, prospectus, cards, posters etc. = xxx pounds [**specific**]
- Additional expenses: fuel, office materials, telephone calls etc. [**specific, measurable**]
- Target number of students 12 (minimum) [**realistic, achievable, measurable**]
- Cost per student xxx pounds [**specific, realistic**]
- Course to be accredited by [name of the governing body] [**specific, achievable**]
- Target profit xxx pounds by September 2007 [**specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-bound**]
- Anticipated profit by September 2007 xxx pounds [**measurable, specific, achievable, realistic, time bound**]

When I had completed the inventory of the criteria I needed to fulfil, I got cracking straight away. I surfed the net and contacted a reputable professional body that would be ideal to accredit my course; they sent me an information pack. After perusing their criteria, I devised a comprehensive practitioner level Diploma in Clinical Hypnotherapy. A wonderful by-product of this stage was that I learned so much in the process!

On completion, I sent off the prospectus, which included the course curriculum and specific criteria such as cost, venue, and qualifications of the instructors. Six weeks later, to my delight, I received a letter of acceptance from the professional body. This is where measurability is so important. As I could monitor my success by the feedback I was receiving, I knew I was progressing admirably. The letter of acceptance instilled a sense of achievement which fuelled my motivation and sent my enthusiasm levels rocketing. This energy was then ploughed back into my project and utilized to attain further objectives: momentum was building fast and furiously!

Next, I spread the word throughout my network of friends and found there was a great deal of interest. Within a week, I had eight students – another four and my objective had been met, with another five months still to go! Finally, I placed adverts in the local papers and got an excellent response.



**Epilogue:**

Within a year I had a Foundation Course and Practitioner Level Diploma running in three different locations: thirty seven students in all! I also diversified and delivered transpersonal orientated courses and staged Mind, Body, Spirit fairs. What a year that was! My self-esteem rocketed. I developed a wealth of new friends. I accumulated a vast amount of useful knowledge and I evolved as a person. As for my financial target, well, I far exceeded it: I once lived on a rat infested railway embankment without even my bus fare to my name – now I drove a brand new Mercedes-Benz!

**Summary**

- Eliciting your core values reveals the solid foundation on which the rest of your life will be built. Complete the Core Values exercise and give it the time it deserves. Contemplate each of your values and allow their essence to permeate your being. Calibrate your life in accordance with them. This important exercise often induces a feeling that you have come to know yourself for the very first time.
- Take the time to structure your ideas on paper. Vague and abstract notions very rarely get off the ground. By using the SMART system to solidify your ideas, you engage the mind in such a way that it will move mountains to manifest them.

**Homework**

- Revisit the book *Alcoholic to Alchemist* and read any chapters that you feel drawn to.

Contemplate the information and how it applies to your life

## Summary of Phase Two

- Allow your life to unfold from the facet of your being that knows the right response to every situation.
- Live life consciously
- Love the child within
- Frequently remind yourself of your goodness
- Forgiveness is the key to freedom
- Embrace your life's purpose

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## **Phase Three:**

### **Maintaining the Magic** (Steps Ten, Eleven and Twelve)

The final phase of this philosophy for optimal living is maintenance. Rather than being a chronological process with a beginning, middle, and end, this philosophy is on-going: *it is a way of life*.  
To maintain and evolve your well-being,  
I suggest the following steps:



## Step 10: Daily Meditation

**“All of humanity's problems stem from man's inability to sit quietly in a room alone”**

Blaise Pascal

It is true to say that all of humanity’s problems stem from an inability to sit in silence. Our urgent need to ‘advance’ and fill our minds with unimportant issues has taken away our ability to discern that which is truly meaningful. *Only in silence does pure truth reveal itself. Only in stillness does clarity transpire. Only in quiet moments does our inner genius materialize.*

Withdrawing from the chaos of life to the quiet oasis of your mind is imperative to your well-being. Daily meditation not only prolongs life and radically improves psychological and physical health, but it also strengthens your connection to Source.

**Here are some of the major benefits of step ten:**

- **Reduced Stress**

By detaching from the field of activity – thoughts and actions - we become an impartial witness to life. From this dissociated perspective, worries and anxiety pale into insignificance: we observe them rather than own them. This practice radically reduces stress and promotes harmony and balance.

- **Replenishment**

Spending twenty minutes in a meditative state gives us the equivalent of eight hours sleep.

- **Clarity and Concentration**

Our ability to concentrate is affected by the constant chatter of our inner dialogue. Meditation promotes one-pointed awareness. In our normal state of consciousness, our thoughts are scattered and diffuse, which leads to confusion and irritability. In meditation our awareness becomes laser-like: supremely concentrated on its object of focus. Focusing solely on the present moment clears our mind, increases productivity, improves our memory, and enables us to become effective decision makers.

- **Health Benefits**

Numerous studies have proved that meditation improves our health; for example, lower levels of stress and anxiety due to meditation diminish the probability of heart disease significantly.

Mind and matter are inextricably linked. Emotional turmoil often translates into physical ailments. Meditation promotes equanimity of mind which reflects in a vast improvement in physical health.

- **Control Your Mind – Don’t Let Your Mind Control You**

Man has conquered some of the most difficult terrain: high mountains, the moon surface and the North Pole, to name but a few; but has he truly conquered his inner domain? How many people live life unconsciously, propelled by rigid conditioning? How often do we fall under the spell of social hypnosis?

Meditation presents an opportunity for self examination; a space in which we can review and challenge our thought processes and belief systems. This practice gives rise to the actualization of our true potential.

- **Get Out of Your Mind and into Your Senses**

Being consumed by a chaotic mind often leads to anxiety, stress, insomnia, mood swings, and depression. One method of vacating a busy mind is to concentrate solely on your immediate surroundings: look, listen, smell, taste and feel the world around you. Concentrate supremely on the present moment and allow your senses to absorb the scenery.

Meditation does not necessarily have to be an inert process; it can be achieved in a waking state. If possible go to the country and practice raising your awareness using all your senses in tranquil surroundings.

- **Happiness**

Happiness is the goal of all goals. Whatever people do, the underlying objective is to attain happiness, and happiness is an intrinsic state: we are innately happy. It is our inner dialogue which detracts from this natural state and breeds discontentment. Meditation transports us from cognitive chaos to a spiritual sanctuary that exudes peace. The result is pure, unadulterated happiness and contentment.

- **Creativity**

When our chaotic thoughts abate and silence prevails, we tap into the infinite reservoir of intelligence responsible for all creation. Great thinkers and geniuses have made all their important discoveries in this state. Remember, creativity is not the process of regurgitating that which is already known; it's the birthing of new ideas. In the silence of *non-thinking*, the Universe relays novel ideas. They arise spontaneously and set us alight inside. We experience the joy of becoming collaborators with God (Universal Mind, or whatever other term you prefer). Go into silence, discover your inner genius, and unlock your creative potential.

- **Insight**

During insight meditation we transcend the mask of matter that shrouds the material world and gain first-hand experience of the true nature of reality. To relay this experience using words is impossible, so I'll conclude this step with the following statement from the Tao Te Ching:

**'Those who speak, do not know;  
and those who know, do not speak'**

## Homework

- Revisit the book *Alcoholic to Alchemist* and read any chapters that you feel drawn to.
- Contemplate the information and how it applies to your life.



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## **Step 11: Continuing Development**

This step is comprised of the following five components:

- i. Stay on purpose and continue to utilize our unique talents to serve the highest good of all we encounter.**

**When you work you are a flute through whose heart the whispering of the hours turns to music. To love life through labour is to be intimate with life's inmost secret. All work is empty save when there is love, for work is love made visible.**

The message of this part is simple: stay on purpose. Adhering to your ultimate mission in life is a sure way of sustaining joy, inspiration, strength and meaning on a daily basis. The dark clouds of life come and go but your purpose remains forever present like the clear blue skies above. *Love what you do and do what you love.* Dedicate your finest qualities to the good of humanity.

**To love humanity through our purpose is to be intimate with God.**

- ii. Commune with your Indwelling Divinity on a daily basis.**

Throughout the course of each day, check-in with your Indwelling Divinity. Become aware of the still presence that is the core of your being. Allow life to unfold from this Wise Witness Within. When circumstances arise which knock you off balance, ask for the correct response to be revealed and act accordingly.

- iii. Frequently absorb inspirational literature with the objective of re-programming your mind.**

Reading inspirational literature is one of the best ways to ensure continued success. Allocate at least fifteen minutes every day to reading or listening to enlightening and inspirational information. Constantly replenish your mind with knowledge that will stoke the fire of passion within you; knowledge that will imbue you with wisdom and bring about enlightenment.

**iv. Regularly transmit your intentions**

Practice the following exercise three or four times a week:

**Exercise: transmitting intentions**

Sit comfortable in a quiet room.

Hold whatever you desire in your mind. Energize your thoughts with your imagination. See, hear, feel, smell and taste your desire; - act as if it's already actualized.

Let the energy of success suffuse your being. Imagine concentric circles of intelligence pulsating outwardly from your mind, propagating your request throughout the universe. Double the intensity: treble the intensity. Allow the intensity to increase one-thousand fold. Immerse yourself in the contents of your mind and hold that state for fifteen minutes. Know that the Universe is listening and responding. Your request is being transmitted through a web of intelligence in which everything is connected. Your answers will appear soon. Know, with complete faith, that you are sculpting pure consciousness into the circumstances of your future.

Your mind is the womb of creation, giving birth to your requests. Now, release all attachment to the outcome and allow the universe to preside.

**v. Continually affirm positive statements**

Regularly nourish your mind with affirmations.

## Exercise Twenty One

### *Affirmations*

#### Master Your Mind – Don't Let Your Mind Master You

Every thought we think has the potential to leave an imprint on our subconscious. Self-talk and the continuous stream of messages we internalise from other people, translate to inner dialogue which leaves imprints on our subconscious. Anything that programmes our unconscious mind in such a way is an *affirmation*.

*An affirmation is a statement which leaves an imprint  
on our unconscious mind.*

The accumulation of imprints on our unconscious mind forms the infrastructure of our belief system. Beliefs arise from internalising information that we consider to be true. It is important to realize, however, that truth is subjective and transient; what is true for one person may be false for another, and what you held to be true yesterday may be deemed as false today. As a consequence, our belief system needs to be frequently re-evaluated to see if it supports our current view of life. Outdated and maladaptive beliefs are often responsible for dysfunction.

The repetitious bombardment of negativity on our minds often leads to imprints that promote low self-esteem and pessimism. When internalised, negative messages fuse together, they give birth to a sub-personality which I refer to as the *internal saboteur*; a confluence of thoughts and feelings intent on self-sabotage. However, as speech was the medium through which we originally negatively programmed ourselves, we can reverse engineer the process by using self talk to re-programme our mind. In this way we become better aligned with our true nature.

An affirmation is a positive phrase that is spoken repeatedly until it becomes firmly embedded in our unconscious mind. This practice not only installs new ways of thinking, but it actually changes the structure and functioning of our brain. As the structure of our brain changes, life-enhancing chemicals are released in our body which give rise to feelings of well-being, so our whole disposition changes for the better.

Positive affirmations can be used to challenge and undermine negative beliefs supplanting them with life-enhancing ones. It is a form of 'brainwashing' in which you wash away the mental and emotional debris that constricts your life, leaving only positive energy which propels you forward.

Though affirmations rely on repetition to break through the conscious mind and become embedded in our unconscious, the process can be speeded up by utilizing our imagination as a powerful amplifier. For example, if we affirm: *'I am attracting my perfect romantic partner.'* Imagine her: see the colour of her eyes, imagine the aroma of her perfume, feel the texture of her skin. The more real this mental construct, the greater it will impact your unconscious.

Before we move on to specific affirmations, I want to make one last important point. It is crucial that your desire is affirmed using positive terminology e.g. 'I am healthy' rather than 'I don't want to be sick.' The unconscious mind does not process negatives, so affirming 'I don't want to be sick' translates to 'I want to be sick.' –

# I don't Want to be Sick

## Affirmation One

*Today I will use my imagination to create the future I desire*

Imagine having the capacity to make a model of anything you wished for in life, and after it was completed it became real! Like Gepetto the toymaker you could make a Pinocchio that becomes real! Wouldn't it be wonderful to sculpt your own reality in such a way? Wouldn't it be a crime if you had such ability but never utilized it? - Well, guess what? You do have such a talent!

Your imagination - or image-in-action - as I call it, is the midwife that births ideas from the formless embryo of your mind into the physical domain. Remember, 'Imagination is the preview of life's forthcoming attractions.' Whatever you can perceive in your mind, you can achieve in reality. The brain doesn't know the difference between actuality and imagination. If you repeatedly practice some new chords on a guitar, the part of your brain responsible for processing that function will grow and restructure itself to assimilate the new information. If you simply imagine practicing the new chords, your brain will expand and restructure itself in exactly the same way!

The imagination is the psychic workshop in which we mould our future. Investing time each day to sit down, relax and imagine what you want in life, is an excellent way of constructing your ideal life. The subconscious is a servomechanism which automatically steers towards its target. Paint your target vividly on the canvas of your imagination and your unconscious will move mountains to attain it.

A beautiful derivative of this affirmation comes from a very dear friend of mine:

### **Some things to remember when using image-in-action or imagination:**

- Make your mental picture as vivid as possible and turn up the brightness and contrast.
- If the image is still, convert it into a movie.
- Add sounds to the scene and turn the volume up.
- Rather than being a passive observer and watching the scene, immerse yourself in it; experience it first-hand utilizing all your sense modalities. Bring it to life!
- Feel your emotions building as the scene becomes more pronounced. Remember, emotions are the power source of your desire.
- Imagine concentric circles of energy pulsating away from you, propagating your request out into the Universal network of intelligence.
- Let go and have complete faith that the Universe will respond.
- Be patient. Time may elapse before your desire manifests.
- Be flexible. The Universe is much wiser than any individual. Sometimes the results we receive are not precisely what we asked for, but they will most certainly be for our highest good.
- Spend at least twenty minutes per day imagining your perfect future. Make it fun and enjoy the process. Be very aware of the power of the practice, and rest in the certainty that your highest path will be revealed.

## Affirmation Two

### *Today I Will Nurture the Child Within*

This affirmation is aimed at breaking the ingrained self-punishment mechanisms that sustain low self-esteem. Self condemnation often manifests subtly in the form of corrosive inner- dialogue. Inadvertently, we find ourselves colluding with the internal saboteurs. The following points are designed to heighten your awareness of the subtle manifestations of the sobriety saboteurs.

- **Do you find yourself apologising frequently for things that are not your fault?**

If so, you are condemning the inner child and reinforcing patterns of negativity that were thrust upon him in his formative years. You need to reverse this process. By regularly affirming your intention to nurture the child within, you will eradicate the automated patterns of response that feed low self-worth.

Next time you find yourself apologising for nothing, or trying to please someone who treats you with contempt, let an alarm bell sound off in your mind. Visualize your inner child and tell him how much you love him. As you practice this technique, the neural pathways that promote low self worth will disband and make way for life-affirming ones.

- **Do you find it hard to say no? Are you constantly people pleasing?**

If you find yourself unwilling (not unable) to say no, or constantly seeking people's approval, then you are still identifying with the negative messages of childhood conditioning. To counteract this negative programming, you must consciously stop seeking people's approval and learn to say NO. Both these pursuits are symptoms of a person who has very little self-respect.

Each morning visualize your inner child and tell them how much you love, value, and appreciate them. Tell them that they deserve the very best in life and you are going to ensure that they get it. Assure them that they will be treated with the greatest courtesy and respect. Embrace them and feel their warmth. Look into their eyes and watch their radiant smile as they internalise the praise they deserve.

- **Do you constantly allow work to take priority over pleasure and play?**

Your inner child needs to play. Play is the best antidote for stress, and stress is one of the biggest killers in our society today. In one of his poems, William Wordsworth wrote 'Let child be the father of man'. This translates to 'let the Soul child lead the way.' Within us we have two inner children, the adaptive (or conditioned) child, and the free (or Soul) child. The free child is spontaneous, energetic, curious, loving and uninhibited – it's the part of us that thrives on play and pleasure. I prefer to call this the soul child, as it's very close to its spiritual roots.

Secondly, we have the programmed or adaptive child, which is a highly conditioned part of our psyche. This sub-personality develops as we learn to change our feelings and behaviour in response to the world around us. When operating from the level of the conditioned child we often revert to complying, sulking, aggression, aloofness and avoidance in reaction to external demands.

When the adaptive child cries out for attention, it is often a sign that we need to interject some fun back into our life. We can do this by immersing ourselves in the essence of our Soul Child and bathing in the energy of playfulness.

## **Affirmation Three**

### ***Today I Will Stay on Purpose***

The backbone of our sobriety and our evolution as human beings revolves around our ability to stay on purpose. The one common variable evident amongst the most successful, happy and contented people on our planet is purpose.

Each of us is endowed with a unique gift; a purpose designed to enhance the collective consciousness of our planet. It doesn't have to be a major project, it may be a simple activity carried out with much passion and love, but it will be your unique contribution to this world. People who bestow their unique gift onto the world radiate happiness. People who are on purpose are so happy that the need to escape never arises; therefore alcohol is redundant.

At times, however, people become consumed by activities that detract from their purpose and lose the way. When this occurs, discontentment and sterility set in very quickly. If left unattended they can spiral out of control and lead to a need to escape. So, by affirming to stay on purpose each morning, we take out an insurance policy to protect us from regressing to destructive ways.

## **Exercise Twenty Two**

### ***Transmitting Intentions***

Sit comfortable in a quiet room.

Hold whatever you desire in your mind. Energize your thoughts with your imagination. See, hear, feel, smell and taste your desire; - act as if it's already actualized.

Let the energy of success suffuse your being. Imagine concentric circles of intelligence pulsating outwardly from your mind, propagating your request throughout the universe. Double the intensity: treble the intensity.

Allow the intensity to increase one-thousand fold. Immerse yourself in the contents of your mind and hold that state for fifteen minutes. Know that the Universe is listening and responding. Your request is being transmitted through a web of intelligence in which everything is connected. Your answers will appear soon. Know, with complete faith, that you are sculpting pure consciousness into the circumstances of your future.

Your mind is the womb of creation, giving birth to your requests. Now, release all attachment to the outcome and allow the universe to preside.



## Exercise Twenty Three

### ***Pain Meditation***

*Sit comfortably and quietly. Let your body relax. Breathe gently. As you exhale let go of any tension and anxiety, allow past and future to dissipate, and let your plans pale into insignificance. Just be present. Allow your unconscious mind to present any unresolved issues for resolution. Allow the source of the pain to emerge: childhood, relationships, employment or whatever. Focus on the pain. Allow the memories to arise. Feel their energy and become aware of the physical sensations in your body. Awareness is the healing source of all your problems. Don't judge the issue - just observe it; allow your awareness to permeate it. Remain receptive and embrace any lessons. Allow your Higher Self to cradle you throughout. Breathe softly and let the experience expand. Be aware of any aversion or resistance in your mind. Place your awareness on the resistance and just allow it to be. Thank it for its concern and acknowledge that it is only trying to protect you, but know that it has served its purpose and allow it to disperse in its own time. Now notice the thoughts and fears that accompany the pain you are exploring: 'it was their fault', 'it will never go away', 'I can't stand it', and so on. Let these thoughts rest in your awareness. Let your attention penetrate the problem. Bring your attention to the pain and hold it in gentle repose.*

*In your own time, allow your awareness to return behind the windows of your eyes. Centre yourself. Feel the gentle pull of gravity on your shoulders. Ground yourself. Then, open your eyes and familiarise yourself with your surroundings.*

As we gradually bring to our awareness to that which we have previously banished, our mind begins to heal. During this process we must pay careful attention to the sensations that traverse our bodies. We can heighten our awareness and notice the patterns of our breathing, our posture, our back, our chest, our stomach. In all these areas, we can sense expansion or contraction as we release or hold onto our issues.

When you meditate, try to allow whatever arises to move through you until it dissipates - as it surely will. Grief, anger, jealousy, loneliness, and sorrow can all be alleviated with pure attention. Observation can dissolve any issue. Just stay with it. As time elapses, your breathing will soften and you will open to deeper layers of emotion. Let your awareness penetrate these too, until you experience a profound sense of peace.

## Exercise Twenty Four

### *Dreams*

Find yourself a comfortable space; a place where you will be free of interruptions. Relax and focus on your breath... notice the rise and fall of your stomach as you inhale and exhale... feel the warmth of your breath... as you exhale, let go of any tension, anxiety and stress.. let it all dissipate into the ether... and breathe in a profound sense of peace... breath out tension... breath in peace (continue this cycle for a couple of minutes).

Now, let this scene come to mind... you awaken from a drunken stupor, your head feels like home to a swarm of bees, buzzing and pounding..... you're slumped on a settee in an unfamiliar room.... someone put you up last night but you can't remember who..... a feeling of nausea rises in your stomach and you break into cold sweats... you race into the kitchen and throw your head over the sink just in time to throw up last night's concoction of poisonous liquids... the stench of vomit fills your nostrils, it wrecks.... Your body starts to shake uncontrollably and suddenly everything goes dark...

..... you awake disorientated... a friend is standing over you...'what happened?' you ask, sheepishly..... 'I was upstairs and I heard a bang. I rushed down and found you collapsed on the floor, foaming at the mouth and convulsing.' your friend answers...

... Suddenly, you become aware of the stench of urine hanging in the air..... you look down to find your trousers saturated. .... The embarrassment would have been unbearable only for the fact you feel so ill as not to care... ..you're dehydrating so you ask your friend for a glass of water.... when he passes it to you your hands are shaking so much that you are unable to take it off him... he's a true friend, understanding your predicament he puts the glass to your lips.... You gulp down the water with the desperation of a man who has been lost in the desert for months...

..... you're mind begins to drift to your loved ones... they have no idea where you are... their faces drift across your screen of consciousness... their eyes filled with despair as they wander where you are and what you're doing... you become imbued with a deep sense of guilt and remorse... the pain is unbearable... although you are emaciated through lack of food, and your skin has a yellow cast due to damaged liver, you desperately want to escape... you want more alcohol... again, your body begins to convulse and everything goes black...

..... you awake in a strange bed... you can vaguely make out the people surrounding you.. one is a doctor who is talking to your loved ones... one by one you look into their eyes... some are crying openly and need consoling, others are rigid with disbelief... you try to talk to them but you realise they cannot hear you... the doctor pulls the sheet over your head.....

You jump up with a start and realise you are in your own bed... you had just experienced a nightmare.. or was it a prophecy of what will happen if you continue your present course?

... You put your head back on the pillow and drift back to sleep.. another scene materializes... again, you find yourself on the floor of your friends house... an ambulance arrives and you are whisked off to hospital... on the way a wise voice echoes through your mind saying '*you weren't born to be this way - there is an answer*'... this voice has a profound effect on you....

...You are admitted to hospital and given the necessary vitamins and drugs to restore you to good physical health... after a few days your appetite returns and you start to eat again...

...the Sobriety Saboteurs now mount their assault – first, guilt... as you are overwhelmed with a deep sense of remorse the Wise Witness Within speaks once again...

*'the best way to escape your problems is to solve them, dear one... up to now you have known no different, you have felt compelled to drink to destruction... you have acted unconsciously and therefore you can relinquish responsibility for your misdeeds and forgive yourself... love yourself, dear one.. know you are worthy of love... think of all the good deeds you have performed for others during the course of your life... think of all the good deeds you intend to carry out in the future... let that sense of goodness expand within you... let it multiply one thousand fold...'*

Your guilt subsides... you forgive yourself for past transgressions and focus on the good you can do with your life. You vow to take control of your life and accept the consequences from this moment forth...

...Now the second Sobriety Saboteur mounts its assault – pain... your mind is filled with disturbing vestiges of the past: mistreatment, bullying, rejection, abandonment, or some other form of negative experience... you feel the urge to escape arising, but, once again, the Wise Witness Within intervenes....

.... *There are positive aspects to pain that cannot be attained through pleasure, dear one. Pain is a highly efficient warning system, similar to the anti-virus software on your computer, it alerts you of potential problems. If left unattended computer viruses have the capacity to render the whole system dysfunctional... unresolved issues have exactly the same capacity... unacknowledged pain renders the mind dysfunctional and limits your true potential... So take heed of your cognitive warning system and act on its alerts, dear one... transmuting pain often results in a renewed passion for life. As you disperse polluted energy and transform it back into potential energy, you will be filled with great vitality and a renewed sense of clarity. The pain you are experiencing is an invitation to explore the hidden realms of your mind and resolve issues that have impeded your life for years: the process is rewarding, insightful and liberating. ...*

Something in you shifts... you realise that pain is an invitation to evolve... a chance to discover something about yourself... a chance to transmute polluted energy into potential energy and increase your vitality and passion for life... You vow to embrace pain, understand it, and transmute it...

.....Fear and paranoia now try to disturb your equilibrium... memories of the people you insulted or violated in some way begin to arise.... Your mind spins into a paranoid frenzy... you fear people are out to get you... other fears arise too... money, how can I pay my bills; I'm in so much debt?... what will happen when I get out of this hospital and have to face the consequences of my actions?... the Wise Witness intervenes...

... *most fears are fabricated distortions of the mind, dear one.... Fear makes the wolf seem bigger... fear stands for Fabricated Experience and Artificial Reasoning... in most instances it is a spectre.... Don't allow a distortion of your mind to promote stasis and render you inert.... Remember you are a good person and deserved of the best life has to offer....nothing in life is to be feared, just understood....*

Your fear subsides... you accept that most fear is unwarranted... a negative predisposition of a warped mind... you vow to remedy that...

..... The final Saboteur now tries its hand – futility... You are filled with thoughts that life is a barren wasteland having no meaning or purpose.... But the Wise Witness Within tells you otherwise...

***When you are inspired by some great purpose, some extraordinary project,  
all your thoughts break their bonds:  
Your mind transcends limitations,  
your consciousness expands in every direction,  
and you find yourself in a new, great, and wonderful world.  
Dormant forces, faculties and talents become alive,  
and you discover yourself to be a greater person by far than you ever dreamed yourself to  
be.***

*'within your heart, dear one, you hold a purpose... a unique gift to offer the world.. whatever the pursuit or activity, you will find yourself to be an expert in it... this is your ultimate purpose in life and it will bring great joy and fulfilment... open your heart, dear one... discover your gift to the world... do what you love and love what you do....*

You suddenly find yourself five years into the future. After you left hospital someone gave you a book as a gift... a book entitled **Alcoholic to Alchemist**.. you chose the path of the Alchemist... you've spent the last five years turning the base metals of your mind into your psychological wealth: inspiration, creativity, joy, wisdom... a rebirth has taken place... you adhered to the philosophy rigorously and with great enthusiasm and now you glean the rewards.... You found your purpose in life and pursued it... You look into the eyes of each member of your family and notice that the despair that once filled them has been supplanted by radiance... the joy of knowing that their treasured family member has returned

**Allow the whole scenario to permeate your mind for a while, then when you are ready, open your eyes and readjust to your surroundings.**

## Homework

- Revisit the book *Alcoholic to Alchemist* and read any chapters that you feel drawn to.
- Contemplate the information and how it applies to your life.

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## **Step 12:**

**Having radically transformed our lives and actualized our optimal potential, we aspire to assist others to make the journey from Alcoholic to Alchemist.**

Now is your chance to shine. Throughout the world, alcoholism has reached pandemic levels. People are desperate for answers. Having experienced a radical shift in consciousness as a result of assimilating and practicing this twelve step philosophy for optimal living, you are now endowed with the psychological and spiritual knowledge with which to intervene.

You have first-hand experience of the dilemma facing people who have succumbed to alcohol abuse. As a consequence, you are ideally placed to secure their trust and guide them out of the wilderness.

Step twelve encourages you to become a burning candle, passing the flame of enlightenment to others in need; guiding people on the journey from *Alcoholic to Alchemist*.

NOTES:



## On-going support

### The Website – [www.al2al.com](http://www.al2al.com)

**www.al2al.com** is a plethora of information containing guided meditations, twelve-step guidance, interviews, videos, audios, courses, and even a forum where you can share your thoughts and experience with other people following the **Alcoholic to Alchemist** journey.

Early sobriety can be a volatile period in which people are prone to relapse. Support is of the utmost importance. Visiting the site and digesting the inspirational and enlightening material is an excellent way of countering the Sobriety Saboteurs and replenishing your mind with new, life-enhancing strategies.

The site is also extremely beneficial to those of you with long-term sobriety. An eclectic mix of psychological tools will help raise your self-awareness, and the spiritual practices will enhance your understanding of the transpersonal. Your assistance in mentoring new people would also be greatly appreciated.

Most of all, **www.al2al.com**, is an on-line community where like-minded people can share their strength and hope, discuss their problems and successes, further their psychological and spiritual development, or simply relax whilst listening to a guided meditation. **Make it your home.**



**The Book**

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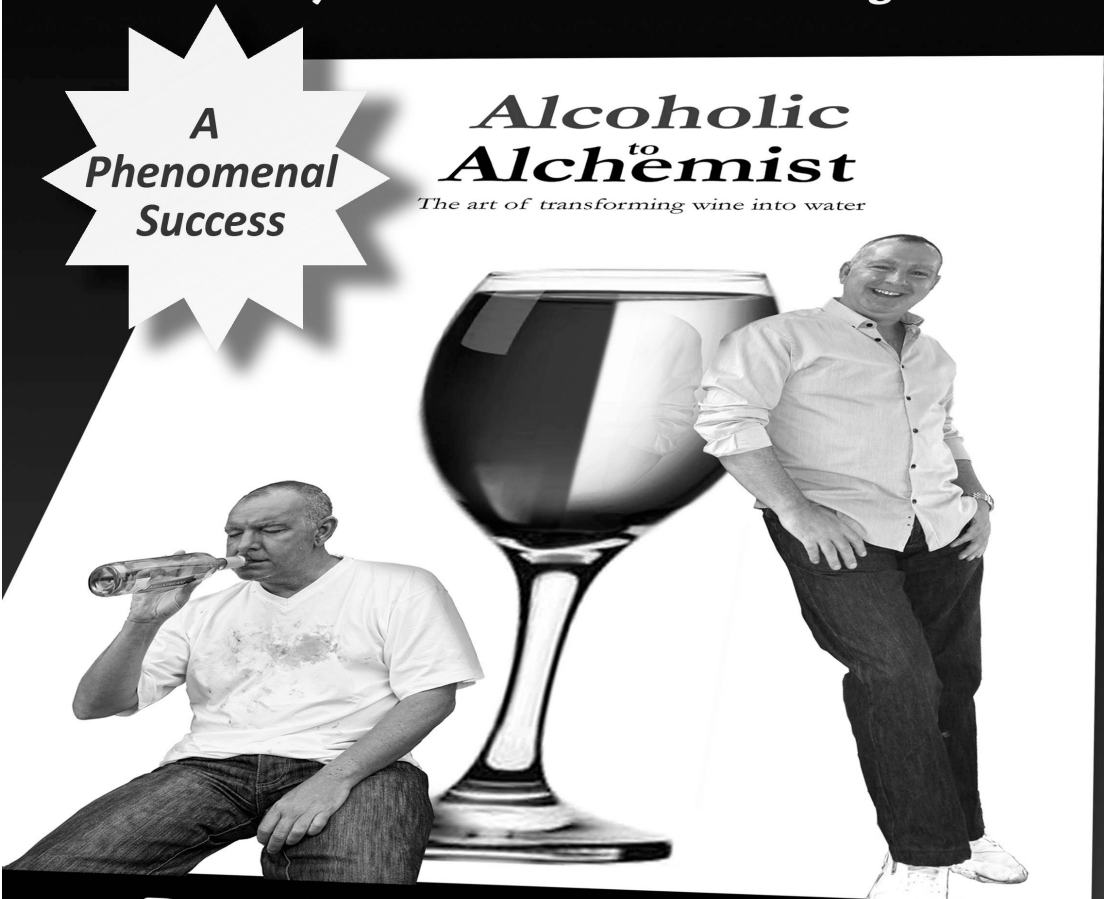
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**Read it Now!**

