

The Method

Your perception will only become clear when you can look into your soul.

—Carl Jung

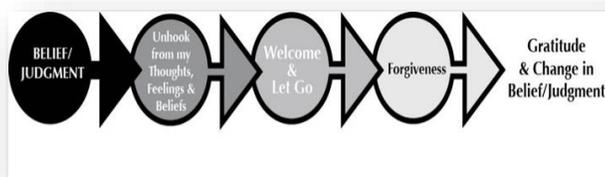
A big part of my healing has come from doing what I call The Method. I developed it from a hodgepodge of different ideas from many people, including Richard Rohr, Byron Katie, Desmond Tutu, Hale Dwoskin, Gay and Katie Hendricks, Jett Psaris, Pema Chödrön, and Thich Nhat Hanh. Steve and I have completed a worksheet on thoughts and beliefs that hurt us every morning for years. I appreciate both his help in seeing my blind spots and his willingness to do his own work.

The Method can be done by using a single guide that is designed to provoke self-inquiry and unhooking from thoughts, beliefs, judgments, and feelings. This, in turn, creates room for forgiveness and gratitude in your life.

Some of this has been addressed already in this book. I am repeating some principles to show you the way I brought them all together into a worksheet that works for Steve and me. It has helped my clients in their own healing process. My hope is that the format will help you too.

The guide works in the following way:

1. Form a statement about yourself or another person (what are you working on?). Tell both the old and new story you are working on.
2. Feel the feelings, and unhook from the experience that comes up in association with the statement and the stories. Unhook from specific thoughts, feelings, and beliefs about the story.
3. Welcome the feelings, judgments, resistances, stories, feelings, thoughts, and beliefs and let them go.
4. Give forgiveness to yourself and others.
5. Look for the gratitude you have for this experience, which changes your beliefs/judgments and the way you experience the story.



The Method is designed to help you make friends with The voice and shine a light on your shadow self. The voice likes to point at others and blame them for how you feel, think,

and judge. It uses your shadow (the unknown part of you) to convince you that you are a victim. Once you feel like a victim, The voice wins. This, remember, is called projection.

The shadow contains the discarded parts of you that you have hidden from yourself. The more you are aware of these parts of yourself, the more you can also be in contact with your true self, the part of you that knows true peace and joy, and stand in uncomfortable and difficult emotions without disconnecting from yourself.

With The Method, you can be present in your life no matter what is happening at the moment. Pain is going to occur in life. Suffering is optional. Joy is also going to happen in life. You can embrace all of life.

I recommend daily meditation in addition to The Method. As I said in an earlier chapter, I try to meditate both in the morning and in the evening. Even if you start with just five minutes twice a day, I encourage you to start. By training your mind to not grasp at thoughts, meditation will help you to not grasp onto your thoughts throughout the day.

The ten areas of unhooks in The Method are designed to provoke self-inquiry, and for this to be most effective, you need to settle into an environment with few distractions and time constraints. This is a meditative practice, not a test with right and wrong answers. It is an unhooking of your thoughts and feelings.

Everything discussed in this book comes together in The Method. The Method gives you a straightforward way of using the tools in this book.

How to Complete The Method

Take a few moments and pay attention to what you are feeling right now, at this moment.

Belief/judgment. Think of an experience you had that pains you and that you have judgments about. Go to where it really hurts: Who did that to me, who brought me to that, who showed me that? To develop a judgment of another is to be as judgmental, childish, and petty as you were in that situation. Don't try to be wiser or more spiritual or kinder than you were originally. This is a time to have a tantrum, to look within yourself, to look back at that specific situation and be honest and uncensored about why you were hurt and how you felt when the situation occurred. Doing The Method from this perspective gives you an opening to see yourself as others do. As the old saying goes, "If I have my finger pointed at you, there are three pointed back at me." This is a way to use your projections to help you.

If you want to do it on yourself, you can do it either as a judgment or a belief. This way of unhooking with The Method has some pitfalls, which you should be mindful of. This is not meant as a way to shame yourself. This is meant to help you hold your thoughts and feelings with a lighter touch. If you find that you are shaming yourself, go back and try it again as a judgment of another person.

Allow your feelings to express themselves as they arise, without any fear of consequences or threat of punishment.

How to Write a Belief

What is your most stressful thought? What is your mind's favorite thing to beat you up with, and why? Allow yourself time to meditate on your answer.

To help with discovering and understanding self-beliefs, write on a separate piece of paper about the following unhooks:

- When was the last time you had that belief/judgment?
- What were you afraid of not getting or of losing?
- What could be worth getting, to do a full-on assault to yourself?
- Who needs you to be _____?
- What's not okay with _____?
- Where's the problem with/when _____?
- Who would agree with you/who taught you that in the first place?

For the final statement on your belief/judgment and feeling sheet for The Method, go to where it really hurts and then ask yourself the following: Who did that to me, who brought me to that? Who taught me _____? And this means _____? (Sometimes without this question, I will stay stuck.)

Unhooking Step 1: What is the story behind this belief/judgment?

This step is where you briefly tell the story about your belief/judgment. What happened from your perspective? What is the story behind the belief/judgment? Give as much detail as possible. Do not edit or sort, just write.

Unhooking Step 2: Are you sure it is true? (yes or no). Would everyone agree with your belief? (yes or no).

These two steps are not meant to be shaming, but are about opening yourself to the possibility that there might be more than one way to see your belief/judgment. There is a way to ask your mind, is there another way of seeing this belief/judgment? It is the first crack into what The voice is telling you.

Unhooking Step 3: Take a moment to feel. What is the feeling associated with this thought? Describe it in physical and emotional detail.

This step is about tuning in to and being present with yourself in this very moment. What do you feel at this moment? This is a time that you are going to start being with your feelings around the belief/judgment. This is the time for courage. Let yourself be aware of what you are feeling *now*. Close your eyes and invite yourself into your body, into the stressful situation. Let your "voice" drop into the specific situation, then notice any physical sensations. Notice as much detail as possible of both the physical and emotional aspects of what you are experiencing. Welcome the feeling. To welcome the feeling, feel the pain of the offense the way you first felt it or feel it at this moment. Feel the hurt in your body. Feel the pain, grief, and anger, but do not create the usual win-lose scenario. Identify yourself with the suffering side of life, how much it hurts to hurt. Hold this in your heart space, your body space, instead of processing it mentally or creating a story line. Welcome and allow the feelings that are associated with the belief/judgment.

Unhooking Step 4: Think back in time. Is there an even older story that goes with this belief/judgment or feeling?

After you have allowed yourself to feel the feelings, it is time to tell the story of your past.

Based on the story and the feelings, is there an older story that goes with this belief/judgment? The earliest memory you can find that matches this story/belief/judgment/feeling is what you want to open up to. It is helpful to focus on the message and feelings, not the details of the story. Even when you start out vague, you can attach to an early story or belief that opens up to even deeper healing.

Unhooking Step 5: What does holding on at this time mean for you? What would you lose (approval, control, or security)? You want to go back to the body and pay attention to your experience in the present moment. Pay attention to your feelings and answer, what do you get out of staying in resistance? Write it down. There are three payoffs to pay close attention to. They are the need for approval, control, and security. Are you trying to hold on to one of these needs/wants?

Unhooking Step 6: What feelings come up for you? Welcome them.

Pay attention again to your feelings and welcome them. Have they changed from doing this process thus far? There is no right or wrong answer. Welcome your feelings again. Take your time and pay attention to your body sensations. Identify the feeling state.

Unhooking Step 7: Unhook from the thoughts.

Disconnect from the belief/judgment: How is the opposite of your statement just as true? Come up with specific examples of how the opposite is just as true.

This step is where you cognitively unhook your thoughts. This is important to be able to help with letting go. When you are stuck in your belief about being a victim of yourself, others, or the world, you have to unhook. You can be figurative or literal in your unhooks. So really think outside the box. You want to see if there are other ways of looking at this issue that might be just as true. Recognize what The voice tells you. What might be just as true? Do you do the same thing that you are judging another about? Do you do the same thing to yourself? Do you do or think the same thing about that person?

Unhooking Step 8: Allow yourself to welcome any residual feelings. Allow yourself to feel all the feelings associated with this story of your belief/judgment. What are the feelings that are left over?

What does holding on at this time mean for you?

Could you let go of your story and the feelings about your belief/judgment? Will you let go of the story and the feelings about this experience? If not now, would you be willing to in the future?

We go back to our body and pay attention to any residual feelings associated with our belief/judgment. We take notice of them. Could you let your story go? Again ask yourself, do I have any resistance? Write it down. There are three payoffs to pay close attention to, the need for approval, control, and security. Am I trying to hold on to one of these needs/wants? How does my belief/judgment affect my need/want for approval, control, or security? Then

work on the letting-go process. If I can let it go, am I willing to? And when? Does this affect my need/want for approval, control, or security? Can I let go of this need/want? Am I willing to let go of this need/want? When?

How to Let Go Letting Go the Everyday Way

For a minor irritation, it is just a decision to *let it go*. Sometimes just acknowledging something is all we need to do to *let it go*.

This is what I was taught in AA. Just let it go. Someone cuts me off in traffic and I feel angry. I can take a deep breath and tell myself to let it go. It is no more complicated than that. It works well for day-to-day annoyances. I knew I needed more than just this first way, because when it was more than a minor irritation, I would try and try, and my issue or feeling would just stick to me.

Welcome It (by Richard Rohr)

This is sometimes referred to as the “Welcoming Prayer.” It was written by Richard Rohr and is quite beautiful. This is as he wrote it.

First, identify a hurt or an offense in your life. Remember the feelings you first experienced with this hurt and feel them the way you first felt them. Notice how this shows up in your body. Paying attention to your body’s sensations keeps you from jumping into the mind and its dualistic games of good-guy/bad-guy, win/lose, either/or. After you can identify the hurt and feel it in your body, welcome it. Stop fighting it. Stop splitting and blaming. Welcome the grief. Welcome the anger. It’s hard to do, but for some reason, when we name it, feel it, and welcome it, transformation can begin.

Don’t lose presence to the moment. Any kind of analysis will lead you back into attachment to your ego self. The reason a bird sitting on a hot wire is not electrocuted is quite simply because it does not touch the ground to give the electricity a pathway. Hold the creative tension, but don’t ground it by thinking about it, critiquing it, or analyzing it. When you’re able to welcome your own pain, you will in some way feel the pain of the whole world.

I have found this Welcoming Prayer very beneficial, even life changing. Steve and I did it daily for quite a while. It brought peace to us both.

Make It Bigger

(Adapted from work by Gay and Katie Hendricks)

When Steve and I first decided to marry, we studied the work of Gay and Katie Hendricks. We even developed our wedding vows based on their work. When I first read about

making your feelings bigger, I thought it was the craziest thing I had ever read. We tried it anyway, and it brought relief to us both.

In “making it bigger,” you consciously focus on the experience and try to intensify it. You let yourself be completely taken over by the emotions. The story is again to be avoided, and you focus on the feelings that come up. (I usually try to make sure I get quiet and let the feelings wash over me.) You breathe with the experience and focus on your body. Then you spotlight the feeling that you noticed the most. By giving this feeling all of your attention, you can make it bigger. Stay with it as long as you need. Rarely has it taken longer than five minutes for me. Keep breathing slowly and deeply. Try to notice every little detail about the feeling. As you make it bigger and focus on the feeling rather than the story, it starts to change. The important idea to remember about feelings is that they are like a wave. They roll in and then roll out. If they are not moving and changing, it is usually because you are stuck in thought and story.

Back-and-Forth Releasing

(Adapted from work by Hale Dwoskin)

This releasing has brought me tremendous relief. It is one of my favorites when I am stuck in a story I do not want to let go of. It is a dichotomy of opposites.

Beliefs are both jointly connected and mutually exclusive of each other. In other words, you cannot have good without bad, right without wrong, deep without shallow. You usually try to believe life is one way or the other.

With this method, you let yourself feel both sides of opposing feelings and thoughts. Be sure to take time with both sides. Ask yourself, “Can I make this issue as big and powerful as I tell myself it is?” Let yourself feel the bigness and power of your belief. Then ask yourself, “Can I allow this issue to be as ordinary and uneventful as it is?” Allow yourself to feel the ordinariness of the experience. Go back and forth with this while really letting yourself feel both sides. (For me, it is usually ten times or so of going back and forth.) This going back and forth can take the energy out of the issue. I try to notice every little detail about both of the feelings.

After you have a sense of relief, ask yourself, “Could I let this go? Will I let this go? When?” If the answer is no, I could not and will not let this go, that is okay. It is about opening a crack to possibilities, and just by doing the exercise, you open yourself up to possibility. Sometimes for the “when” question, my answer might be “not for a long time.” Just by giving myself that answer, I create an opening in myself that was not there before.

Energy Release

(Developed by Pam and Steve Moore)

This release is more nuanced than the others, so you might not try it until you have experience with the other letting-go processes. This release is based on the energy of the issue and how we hold onto the energy with our bodies. We have to become willing to completely let go of the persona energies we cling to. Hanging on to the belief that we are a victim, villain,

or rescuer tends to keep us stuck. It takes a great deal of courage to let go of these positions. There is security and safety in being in the Karpman Triangle.

The way we do an energy release is to welcome all aspects of the issue, the resistance (the persona or position we are in), wanting to change what we are struggling with, our judgments about it, our feelings about it, wanting to figure it out, and any other related thoughts and feelings. We let all of this come together and then welcome our attachment or aversion to the issue (victimization).

With this release, we start to see that it is the attachment to the energy (the dance around the Karpman Triangle) that is keeping us stuck. We can see that what we are experiencing is just energy. It is not who we are. It is identifying with the issue that is keeping us stuck. We ask ourselves, “Have I made myself suffer enough, or do I need to suffer more? Have I made them suffer enough, or do I need them to suffer more? If they or I have not suffered enough, is there a time when we have suffered enough? Is there a time when I will know the suffering is enough?” The release is in giving up the energy of the suffering.

Bring It On

(Adapted from work by Barry Michels and Phil Stulz)

This release is from a book titled *The Tools*. Lean forward on the edge of your chair and scream to yourself, “*I am an animal!*” Visualize yourself as an animal that makes you feel strong. Tell yourself, “Bring on the pain! I love pain! Pain sets me free!”

Then imagine jumping through a cloud of pain to the other side. Let yourself feel the pain with the power of an animal. By embracing the pain and running straight into it, we free ourselves from aversion to pain. Trying not to feel pain creates more pain.

If you can, allow yourself to forgive yourself or the person you’re judging. This can take around five minutes.

Full Release

(Developed by Pam and Steve Moore)

Full release is a technique where you sit and allow yourself to feel the issue. You welcome it as fully as you can. Imagine it as a river of emotion that is coming from your chest. You see it leaving your body and pouring away from you. I sometimes can feel what feels like a shield in my chest. This is especially true if I am feeling hurt and vulnerable.

With full release, I visualize a metal shield in my chest. I then visualize it melting into molten metal and leaving not just my body, but my presence. It becomes a river of melted metal and flows away from me. I allow myself to visualize a ray of sunshine entering my body. The ray of sunshine represents gratitude for me. I have replaced the negative experience with a sense of gratitude.

Release

I have learned that if we address all parts of who we are, we do find deep healing. It is only through deep healing that we find the freedom we are looking for. As with most things, the more we practice, the easier and more competent we get at welcoming and letting go. Being aware of feeling my feelings and then releasing them helps me know I can stand in my brokenheartedness. By being with my brokenheartedness, I learn that I can stand in my truth. By learning to stand in my truth, I learn how to grow up and know that I do not have to run away from myself any longer.

Unhooking Step 9: Could you allow any forgiveness that needs to be extended? If not now, could you in the future? When?

Who do you need to forgive? (Look back over your sheet for people you mentioned, including yourself.) Can you forgive them now? If not now, could you reconsider in the future?

Steps on Forgiving

To complete the forgiveness process, you might have to go through the steps more than once.

You told your story of pain by doing the previous steps of The Method. You have to acknowledge that a harm was committed or was perceived as being committed (welcoming and unhooking from the emotions). You can then grant forgiveness. This does not mean it will never hurt again or you will not have to do more work on the issue. It means you are consciously letting go of the issue at this time. The last step is to either renew the relationship or release the person. You do not have to hold on to a person because you forgive him or her.

Another way of doing forgiveness is through prayer. The following is a Buddhist prayer of forgiveness that is a very beautiful way of forgiving:

If I have harmed anyone in any way, either knowingly or unknowingly through my own confusions, I ask for their forgiveness.

If anyone has harmed me in any way, either knowingly or unknowingly through their own confusions, I forgive them.

And if there is a situation I am not yet ready to forgive, I forgive myself for that.

For all the ways that I harm myself; negate, belittle myself; or judge or be unkind to myself, through my own confusions, I forgive myself.

Unhooking Step 10: End with gratitude. Allow yourself the opportunity to be grateful for your original belief and what you have learned in this exercise.

This step is to recognize five ways you can be grateful for this belief/judgment. This is a way to end the exercise with gratitude. It is about changing the way we perceive what we walk through in life.

Silently state to yourself specific things you are grateful for, particularly around this belief/judgment. Is there something of value you have learned about yourself or another person? How have you changed your perspective? What can you see that you could not see before? How have you changed for the better? Write down at least five ways you have gratitude for this situation.

After you come up with at least five examples, stop thinking and start focusing on the physical sensation. You should feel it coming directly from your heart.

Connect with the energy of gratitude that is within you. The energy of gratitude is always there for you. The voice does not want you to know that energy is there. As this energy emanates, your chest will soften and open. In this state, you will be filled with the power of love.