



The Role of Dreams in Self-Cultivation

Discovering mental blocks
by in-depth dream analysis

True Alchemy of Mind Purification

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“But how are you to see into a virtuous soul and know its loveliness?”

Withdraw into yourself and look. And if you don't find yourself beautiful yet, act as does the creator of a statue that is to be made beautiful: he cuts away here, he smooths there, he makes this line lighter, this other purer, until a lovely face has grown upon his work. So do you also: cut away all that is excessive, straighten all that is crooked, bring light to all that is overcast, labor to make all one glow of beauty and never cease chiselling your statue, until there shall shine out on you from it the godlike splendor of virtue, until you shall see the perfect goodness surely established in the stainless shrine.”

Plotinus

PREFACE

May this demonstration of mind purification and self-discovery serve as an inspiration to all sincere seekers of the truth. The original purpose of the notes that preceded these writings was to record my dreams, their analysis and conclusions, utilizing the method taught by Pierre Grimes Ph.D.

Pierre's wisdom deeply inspired me. His approach to dreams and his profound understanding of Platonic genius became the guideline for my new way of life and my spiritual development. I've learned, implemented and confirmed Pierre's theory in practice. As I was exploring the subconscious content of my mind, constantly revising and adding further insights, I was noticing somewhat independent functions of the mind. The idea that I was in control of my life was shattering in front of my eyes as I gradually recognized the web of beliefs - the real fabricator of my existence. I was witnessing how this preconditioning was the very cause of repeated failures and cycles of misfortune. Eventually, I decided to share my discoveries with others. It is my sincere aspiration that they will serve as an example how to regain the conscious way of life. I hope that the reader will focus on the process and the importance of the conclusions, without judging the individual, personal, and in some cases shameful problems. Listing all issues as they occur is a crucial factor in mind exploration; it has to be attended with complete honesty and integrity, no matter how exposing and embarrassing the details are. As I understood the source of my thinking, I noticed a gradual disassociation from the personality, which I previously considered to be Me. My life started to resemble the role of a character in a world drama, and my real Self was only a provider of a life force for that character.

My journey of self-discovery started in 2008 after a devastating event – the loss of my mom. It was a tragedy which I wasn't ready to deal with, needless to say, accept it. I was emotionally lost, and if life didn't make much sense to me before, this time, I completely lost the sight of it. However, it was this profound emptiness, which led me to the greatest discovery – my own mind. Ironically, while I was looking for my mom's soul, I've found my own.

Before this incredible shift, my life – as I used to think – was a simple, and an ordinary existence with its ups and downs, instinctively filling in the space between birth and death. I would never assign any significance to events I encountered, neither would I look for a reason of their occurrence. I only recognized that all the circumstances were similar and headed for the same defeat and that these failures ran in endless cycles. I never thought that they could be the result of my doing. I was too ignorant to see that they were in fact the consequence of the assumptions, which I have concluded from my family's way of life. Then, I discovered and applied, the spiritual practice, teaching and philosophy of Pierre Grimes Ph.D.; Pierre, having no knowledge of it, became my teacher, guru, and my metaphysical midwife. In the beginning, I came across a few video recordings of his lectures, which, at first, I had a difficulty comprehending fully. Nevertheless, there was something very intriguing about the ideas and

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methods presented by him. Particularly fascinating was the dream analysis conducted during his lectures. Perhaps, it was a divine influence, that kept bringing me back to these videos. Finally, after few months of hesitation, I purchased a collection of his DVDs and his written works and dove into the Platonic metaphysics – the treasure of knowledge, which soon brought an incredible change into my life.

Much of the misery, which I had been experiencing in the past, could have been avoided if my parents or I asked the right questions many years ago. There was enough suffering to push me over the edge to seek the answers, but I didn't find any effective way until much later, when I came across the path of mind purification – the “study of music,” in Platonic terms.

I often wondered about the timing and other factors that led me to Pierre's work. If it wasn't the misery alone, then what was it that helped me to bypass my ego, and look at my own mind? What was the power which humbled me sufficiently to turn my gaze on flaws, not in the external world, but in myself? Perhaps, the hardship in our lives is only the initial spark, and our eagerness or sincere longing to find the truth is the fire which burns the ego and provides light for the journey through the darkness of ignorance.

False Beliefs

One part of Pierre's practice is a Metaphysical Midwifery. By Platonic definition, it is the practice of 'assisting man with giving birth to ideas.' Even though his definition is the most suitable description of its method and process, this statement may sound strange for yet uninitiated. Therefore I offer the following explanation: “philosophical midwife guides a man from the realm of ignorance and opinion into the realm of understanding. The goal is to lift him from the world of Appearance into the world of Reality, by contemplation, dialogue, and self-examination. It is turning one's mind upon itself. It is the knowing and self-cultivation which Plato has been encouraging us to do for centuries.”

So what? And why would it be so important?

To give a brief overview about PM (philosophical midwifery) counseling, I have no other choice, but to use the ideas and terminology of my teacher: “the primary target of PM counseling is a belief. To be precise, it is a false or sick belief.” What Pierre refers to is the subconscious programming, or the preconditioning, of the mind. There is nothing more dangerous and damaging for a man than his false beliefs. What we think that 'we are,' is, in fact, merely a collection of ideas that run the course of our life. A few, positive beliefs, can benefit us, but the chances are that the majority of this conditioning is harmful to our everyday existence. They are the pathologos – sick beliefs which we have mistaken for the truth, and so with great power, they direct our thoughts and conduct, keeping us in constant cycles of misery and conflict. To free ourselves from this destructive power and to attain a more meaningful life, it is essential that the mind is 'purified' of these false beliefs. To redeem the mind means to recognize and

disable the delusions by finding their source. It is certainly easier said than done. The process of a constant revisiting one's past is emotionally draining and mentally exhausting. Nevertheless, the end results are astonishing, and the benefits exceed all the effort, emotional pain, and labor.

And why would this be so important?

There is so much more to say about the process alone, but one of the most amazing features, which I have personally experienced, is that it is assisted by a higher intelligence – the Divinity itself. The most incredible form of this guidance is a dream. If the dream is correctly analyzed, it will provide answers not only to the recent, but also the lifelong struggles. The undertaking of analysis – the contemplation alone, is the collaboration of reason and intuition. I understand these phenomena as man's participation in the Universal Mind or the Providential power of The One. No matter how abstract it sounds, it is REAL. Bottom line, once a person undertakes the exploration of a dream or a problem, he/she will be led to those recollections and ideas, which are most appropriate in finding the false belief associated with it. As long as we are willing, the guidance is provided for us. To express it in another way is that we are given the assistance to the degree in which we are willing to participate in it. Dream analyses of these works are the very proof of this providential function. All it takes, is determination, integrity and willingness to accept the accountability for one's actions and circumstances. The appropriate question is: "What did I do that got me here?" rather than "Why did it happen to me?". When the ego is suppressed, the mind is open to those ideas which emerge from the greater, more intelligent source which is beyond the limit of our individual mind.

Recording my original thoughts into written notes, enabled me to return to older material, and add new discoveries. It also allowed me to complete missing pieces, that I initially neglected or failed to bring to final conclusions. I discovered that many of the false beliefs supported each other, and that a few of them were united by a grand misconception, the deceiving image of my mother. I accepted it as an absolute truth, and I would never question it, needless to say, to seek source of its falsehood. It was the biggest block that kept reoccurring in most of my dream contemplations. The details will become apparent to the reader by the end of this work.

Reviewing material would always bring me further insights and new revelations. Each discovery was incredibly exciting. Overwhelmed with all of the revelations; eventually, I felt a need to 'sort' the findings, and to look at the habitual patterns from more of an 'overview' perspective, and so I created a 'map' of all so-far-recognized beliefs. It including the choices, actions, behavior dictated by beliefs, and the pre-determined outcomes. It allowed me to see their interconnection more clearly. I've also noticed that, occasionally, the same event was the initial cause of a few different beliefs, yet the beliefs complemented each other. It was an eye opener – it was a chart displaying lifelong pain and hardship which I unknowingly imposed on myself.

The chart also disclosed an incredible phenomenon about dreams – they were connected to each other, filling in the information and prioritizing the order of topics. They were guiding my

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contemplations and awareness to specific ideas as if the dream was saying: “Hey, that was good, but pay some attention to this!”.

I sincerely hope that my experience will inspire others who seek to live a more meaningful life, and who yearn to free themselves from destructive cycles and to achieve higher states of mind. Anybody is capable of discovering their false beliefs. I alone haven't been previously exposed to any metaphysics, psychology or sciences related to the psyche, before finding Pierre's material. As a matter of fact, after immigrating to Canada, I held occupations such as a day-care worker, later on as a dancer and then a graphic designer. By looking back, I recognize that even these choices were subordinate. They reflected the mediocracy I settled for, being directed by countless preconceptions.

During the 'purification' process, I became aware that I have been recreating the same life scenarios and connecting with the same type of people. It was an echo of my beliefs, keeping my reality the way I was familiar with it. But, at the same time, these occurrences provided lessons by mirroring the unfavourable outcomes into my awareness. The Divinity was provoking me to notice and examine my actions. The misery alone urged me to pay attention and understand, instead of acting habitually.

When some negative event transpired, it always left me in despair and somewhat puzzled. I had no understanding why certain outcomes were recurring. Over the years, I have created cycles of similar misfortunes. However, I haven't paid attention to the problem that caused them, nor attempted to find its source, and so I unknowingly assured, that the scenario, or the variation of it, would repeat itself. Without an intervention of an intentional thinking, the customary reaction always took place. Just like I was breathing without being aware of it, so I was acting habitually based on subconscious beliefs.

DREAMS

Dreams are messages, brought to us in the form of an allegory, and crafted individually for each person by the providential power of the Divine, which Pierre calls the Dream Master. The purpose of the dream is to provide us with clues for our development. Besides the dreams, which warn us about our destructive patterns, there is another group of dreams – prophetic. As their name suggests, their purpose is to give us a brief look into the future. It is unfortunate that in many cases I wasn't able to understand the message of a dream, at the time when it was presented. However, after the predicted event took place, the meaning immediately unfolded itself.

I admit that it would be a great benefit to understand prophetic dreams right at the time when they occur. But even their full understanding would have a limited effect on our future. Their in-depth analogy would not reveal facts about the future if the knowledge would interfere with the opportunity to 'know thyself.' I may be repeating myself here, but I could not stress enough that the benefit of knowing our mind is profound. It is the purification process, through which we find

mental blocks that cause hardship and suffering in our lives. These are the blocks that prevent us from living out our full potential. In a spiritual sense, purifying the soul of all false beliefs allows the mind to reach higher states, leading to the enlightenment.

But, why is this learning alone so important?

The answer to this question requires a brief look into the purpose of our existence. Here is somewhat a hypothetical idea: according to many spiritual teachers, there is one basic theory about God's Will to Experience Himself. His desire is the principal cause of the physical creation. The Universe is a manifestation of God's thinking. I can't contribute more to this theory, as I don't have sufficient knowledge. This view, however, resonates with me intuitively and by its logic as well.

The part of the creation called the Soul (All Soul), or Consciousness, multiplies/divides itself into many different forms. One of them is a human soul which creates and cares for all human existence. Each individual soul contributes to a great collection of experiences that can be shared through the universal consciousness.

I believe that there exists a hierarchy in the realm of Reality, and when an individual soul reaches more advanced states of mind, it is simultaneously exposed to a wider scope of experiences, without being a direct subject of that experience in the material realm. This means, that the closer the experience of the soul/mind is to its ultimate source, the wider is the access it gains into the whole of the Universal Mind. The last stage of the development is the complete assimilation with IT.

People are born into the corporeal realm to mainly 'experience' life and use this experience as a spiritual lesson. Stating that, it is then naturally given, that even prophetic dreams will not reveal an individual's life destiny, as it would interfere with the purpose of an incarnation. The challenges we encounter in earthly lives lead us to a valuable knowledge and this knowledge is crucial in reaching our destiny.

Nevertheless, our future is predestined only to a certain limit, and we can modify it by an objective knowledge. Then our will becomes the powerful tool with which we override our subjective perceptions and false opinions. The key in reaching the destiny is to shape our life according to the highest virtues, and to develop the eagerness for inner change. The beginning of this transformation is when we take the full responsibility for our lives. We fearlessly admit that all events are the result of our own thinking and doing, It is very courageous step when we look for the flaws in our psyche, but it will be generously rewarded.

Nothing, in our existence, is a consequence or a stroke of good or bad luck; everything is the result of our thoughts. The negative thoughts, hidden in our sub conscience (the false beliefs) function as a retention border around our mind and set limits to our freedom. Based on these false beliefs we act and react, and by these actions and reactions, we attract particular

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outcomes, situations or people, who further contribute to the creation of adverse circumstances. To change the course of one's life is to find the source of these beliefs.

“Know Thyself” or “Unexamined life is not worth living” –Socrates

However, digging into one's past and reliving the childhood scenes can be deeply emotional; yet, it is crucial to one's development. It allows us to see the past events for what they were, and it also gives us an opportunity to understand what we assumed to be but wasn't true. This discovery alone sets a person free from the cycles of misery and frustrating patterns. Tearing down these walls is the actual healing of the mind.

The benefits are profound, and they affect all aspects of one's life, whether it is spirituality, wealth or health. Each false belief has a metaphysical impact on the physical body. The healing corresponds to the state of mind, and it can occur spontaneously, just by changing certain thinking patterns. The recovery of health can be brought about by a change in the environment or circumstances, or by the discovery of an effective cure. Changing cause, changes effect.

In my deepest sincerity, I would like to express my infinite gratitude to Pierre Grimes, Ph. D., for making the wisdom of Platonic inheritance accessible to everybody, and for lifting my soul into the realm of Reason.

Thank you!

APPROACH

If the reader is not yet familiar with the works of Pierre Grimes, Ph. D., he will find the following information helpful. The next key features of dream analogy will briefly clarify the process of my reasoning, used throughout this book. They will provide clarity about my practices, and explain why and how certain ideas were shifted from the dream to the everyday-life event, and how can the evidence of the problem be recognized by the correlation of the dream with the event.

Because the dreams are messages brought to us in the form of allegory, the allegory has to be unlocked. When the meaning of the allegory is deciphered, by contemplating its main elements, it serves as a link to a particular issue, the sick belief. The main elements of the dream are similes, symbols, key statements called logos and states of mind, also referred to as feelings or emotions.

Symbols

There is a hidden meaning in each object occurring in a dream. Very often, it carries a complex abstract interpretation; for example, a ride in a car can represent life's journey. It also depicts its entire character: a smooth or harsh journey, full of unexpected calamities. To find the meaning of the object (to discover what the object symbolizes, or in other words, what the object is a representation of), a detailed description of this object is required. Because the symbols are

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personal, (every symbol may have a different meaning for each person), it requires that the description of this object is a subjective opinion, a personal discourse of the dreamer alone.

Similes, logos and states of mind

Similes, logos, states of mind or emotions help to find the correlating event by reasoning until the mind alone will offer the result. Once the recollection of the event occurs, these elements (similes, logos and emotions), can be shifted from the dream to the actual event. This is the stage, during which the complete meaning of an allegory gradually comes to light.

Throughout this works, many of the logos, symbols, and states of mind are placed in quotation marks or bold font, in order to be emphasized in the context.

In the last few years, I also became accustomed to acquiring additional advice concerning the direction of my awareness, from Tarot cards. They proved to be an extremely useful addition to the communication with the subconscious mind. The imagery on the cards and psyche are intrinsically connected.

Repetition

During some of the contemplation, many ideas or events repeat themselves. These repetitions were unavoidable for a couple of reasons; one – they served as a ramification of previous incomplete conclusions, and the second, they render multiple aspects contributing to a complexity of one false belief.

Correlating Events

Accurate dream analogy couldn't be complete without the support of incidents. Supporting events reflect the conflict and the states of mind presented by the dream. They have a few essential functions: the most recent event is the actual trigger - the very reason why the dream appeared. States of mind depicted in the dream, are identical to those in the event. This parallel is a good indication that the correct incident has surfaced to the conscious awareness. The additional episodes provide other valuable information. Most importantly, they further define the belief, and confirm the belief's influence and activity. Then, eventually, the earliest memory presents the crucial scene or circumstance, which most likely took place in childhood, and is undeniably the very birth of the belief.

Chapter 5

Father... (Search for Fundamental Beliefs Connected to Father)

It was an unexpected discovery that my mom was the source of an ultimate delusion and so much agony associated with it. I have always blindly assigned the blame for all my difficulties to my father. Despising him for so many years, I can't even recall having a positive thought or memory of him. In the process of re-examining my past, it became evident that I impulsively created deceitful images of both of my parents. As I was eagerly defending them, the constant obstacles in my life kept pointing out the deception of my views. A recent glimpse into the positive aspects of my father's character is forcing me to re-evaluate my original opinion of him. I hope to pass beyond the surface of appearance, to a place where I can find the correct comprehension of his conduct and his overall character. I sincerely ask the Divine for her assistance. I pray that this exploration would be the journey of truth. May the Divine Providence provide me with strength, for I am now aware how difficult it is to undertake the task of sorting through the trash of the past. I also ask for forgiveness, for I have already partially acknowledged that my ignorance added to my father's pain. The previous contemplations concerning my father have never been complete; they were prematurely inhibited by my deeply rooted hate for him. I failed to pass beyond the dismissive judgment. I also missed noticing the underlying motive of his actions until new dreams inspired and guided the task of getting to know him.

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The symbol, by which the figure of my father has been typically depicted in my dreams, was a big black bird – the crow. The first time I became aware of this representation, was when it appeared in a dream followed by the news of my father's death. It was a prophetic dream, announcing my father's departure from this world by showing a crow with a broken wing flying into my living room. Having no sympathy for it, I picked it up by only two fingers, being repelled to touch it, and then I mercilessly threw the injured bird out of the window. The very next day, I received a call from my mom about my father's death. He died unexpectedly; nobody anticipated that he would not survive simple shoulder surgery. His shoulder, parallel to the wing on a bird, was injured in a car accident. I didn't receive specific details of the accident, only the fact that he was hit by a car when he unexpectedly stepped off the sidewalk with the intention to cross the road.

Another dream, so vivid that it remained in my mind for months, was a dream about another seriously injured crow. This time, I felt compassion for it, but I was acutely aware that his rescue was impossible. The only way to help the suffering bird was to kill it. It was indeed a disturbing thought, but sadly enough, it was the only choice I had. I couldn't save him, but, I could, at least, put him out of his misery. The timing of the dream was puzzling - it came years after my father passed away. Nevertheless, I picked up a stone to execute this atrocious yet merciful idea, but I couldn't go through with it; I didn't have the heart or the courage to kill, even if it meant to spare the creature further suffering.

I didn't pay attention that the dream deserved, at that time. I believe that its appearance followed one of my first recorded contemplations associated with the belief connected to my father. It was my first attempt to tackle the root of this particular problem, and while I successfully discovered its source, I didn't recognize a genuine intention behind my father's actions. It means that even though I concluded the implication of his behavior, I wasn't aware of his real motives.

Recollection - Invaded Space (Recollection Recorded in Past)

There was an interesting issue raised today by a friend of mine, who was lamenting about her situation at home. She was in great distress over 'her space being invaded.' To some extent her concern gave her an appearance of a self-centered whiner. However, it made me realize that I too share the same emotions of distress when the control of my own time slips out of my hands by unexpected visitors or by an extended stay of my guests. I couldn't decide with certainty if we were right to feel hostile against the 'invaders,' or if we were simply victims of some false belief. After all, I do enjoy the solitude and prefer to live alone, finding definite advantages in not sharing accommodation. Freedom is an immense benefit that accompanies solitude. Freedom in a sense that my awkward schedule doesn't inconvenience others, and vice versa, I don't have to feel obligated to limit my activities to certain hours, to avoid interrupting my companion.

I hold a great appreciation for friendships, good conversation, sharing an occasional meal, but the idea of a long-term presence of another person seems invasive. Am I wrong to feel this

way? Is it wrong to be selfish with my time? Why does the feeling of inconvenience and obligation arise?

I believe that the dilemma created by these questions is worth exploring. How should it be approached then? After some consideration, I decided to treat it as a false belief, and as the first step in discovering its possible root, I looked into my past – glancing at the coexistence of my family, the dynamics of our co-living as a multimember unit. Yeah, not so great! What strikes me right away was the very presence of my father, which was indeed unpleasant. No matter what room he would occupy at the moment, a strange intensity filled the entire home. It was like a dark cloud hanging over our heads. Our activities and conversations were limited, or once he entered the room we were settled in, they ultimately ceased. The silence strategy we employed, protected us from his sarcastic comments, ridicules or any other attacks on our debate. His presence was unpleasant – his whole being was unpleasant. I believe that we all felt this way - my brother and my mom, not just me. Friends and family visited us rarely, avoiding my father's offensive presence and only a few brave hearts dared to take a chance. Nonetheless, a handful of family acquaintance were privileged enough to be exempt from his rudeness.

Supporting Incident – Sunday Lunch

Our lives were filled with incidents in which my father showed his inexplicable character. Some were less significant than others, some more dramatic than others, but they all have stained my memory with feelings of despise and rejection. The incident, I'm about to describe, belongs to a book of legendary acts; it counts for one of the most intense episodes of the family drama production. It was Sunday noon, and we were gathered in the kitchen for 'family lunch' which was mainly advocated by my father. I never understood the importance he placed on having a meal together when otherwise he alone practically displayed no interest in his family. That day, my mom and my father were in an ongoing argument since morning, and so by noon, their fight reached the peak of its potency, charging them both with high levels of resentment and anger. As we were sitting at the table with a plate of soup in front of each of us, suddenly my father, in a burst of rage, threw his plate against the wall. I can't recall the exact words which set him off; however, his act was an indication that my mom hit a sensitive topic. I used to consider my father to be the king of verbal cruelty, but this recollection undoubtedly proposes that my mom wasn't a stranger to it either. That day, she claimed victory!. Right after the plate hit the wall, my father flew out of the kitchen, leaving the rest of us glued to our seats in unpleasant silence. A strange stillness imbued the room. We were lifeless - none of us knew what to do, how to react. Frozen by my father's explosion, I kept my gaze on the noodles, observing the ones sliding down the wall and also the ones that remained firmly attached to the wallpaper. The noodle-soup art was displayed for days, even weeks, after this incident. Some unknown reason hindered our willingness to remove it. Perhaps, the greasy stain with noodles represented the essence of our family or the character of my father, and so we felt a need to preserve it for others to see as well.

Supporting Incident – Graduation Poster

Life generously bestowed upon me incidents full of contrasts. They often drove me into confusion. The following one, for example, paints a realistic picture of my father's abstract manners. It took place a few weeks before graduation, the time which was already permeated with other struggles and difficulties. Perhaps, it was the era when my parents were burdened with a realization, that their daughter's liberation from their bond, was about to become a reality. Nevertheless, that evening I had settled in my room, and started to paint a background picture for the class graduation poster. I felt quite honored by being assigned the privilege of creating the artwork for this project. The poster provided the background for the plaque and the photos of all graduates were going to be placed on the top of it. The whole assembly was going to be displayed downtown in our town, for a few weeks. It meant that even my artwork was going to be exhibited in a public place. However, my creative efforts were quickly interrupted by my father. Like he couldn't tolerate that I was enjoying something and, God forbid, it could even be to my benefit. He entered my room, and without any words or any explanation, turned the lights off. Assuming that this was just one of his power trips, I waited in the dark until the door on my parents' bedroom was closed. Then, I turned the lights back on and resumed painting. But my father didn't give up either; he was back in my room in no time, turning the lights off one more time. His second invasion was also accompanied by vocal threats assuring me that I will not win. Negotiation with him was out of the question. A meaningful exchange of ideas, called conversation, was never a possibility with my father. By this point, we were both angry; but I was not willing to give in into his tyranny. I was determined to have this project done that very night.

After my father had retired to the bedroom, I built a light barrier using cushions and blankets. Diligently covering the glass section of the door and the window, I prevented even the slightest ray of light getting out of the room. It worked! I finished the poster after all.

How did it affect my life?

It would be reasonable to assume that this incident, and other, similar to it, were the source of the false belief which brings about the feeling of being interrupted, held away from projects, and which creates the sense of the obligation to yield to others. Feeling somewhat pressured and oppressed, I put aside my interests when in the presence of others and devote my full attention to my visitor. The result is a negative state of mind which overpowers the genuine joy of having company.

Supporting Incident - Interruptions

The following incident reflects similar behavior to the one previously described, containing only a slight variation. At the age of 17, I met a guy who became my first boyfriend. At first, I wasn't all that eager to be entering the dating scene, needless to say, signing up for a relationship. The model of my parent's marriage was a discouragement enough. However, I was becoming fond of receiving some positive attention. Likewise, I started to enjoy the short breaks from constant

loneliness. It was an illusion from which I awakened later, but at the time, having 'a boyfriend' was fresh and, in a way, exciting. The time we spent together was somewhat hindered by the unbending rules established by my parents. Bounded by a curfew, I was expected to arrive home by 10 PM every evening. My boyfriend wasn't held down by any restrictions and, sure enough, our 'early' partying started to bother him. Clever as he was, he quickly came up with a solution: "I will go with you!". This terrifying thought left me breathless, as I instantly imagined a horror scene of his encounter with my parents. However, I couldn't explain any of it to him. Instead of trying, I decided to let him get a taste of it, and so I agreed. I was anticipating my parent's reaction with great fear, yet, it was impossible to make any definite predictions. After silently mulling over the worst scenario, I handed the inevitable over to fate. When we arrived home, my boyfriend became the subject of curiosity for both of my parents. My mom took it quite well, and my father... well, he never said much, but once my guy and I settled in my room, he unexpectedly pushed the door slightly open and peeked through the narrow gap to scan the situation in the room. Unfortunately, it wasn't only once he did that; he kept harassing us repeatedly, in about 15-minute intervals. It was evident that he expected to catch us in some forbidden activity. It was embarrassing and incredibly annoying. Why couldn't he just leave us alone?

This desire to be left alone remained with me for good. In the past 15 years, I entirely avoided sharing accommodation with others, and I continuously defended my space and time. Of course, not being aware of it at the time, it too injected venom of suspicion into my relationships. Protecting my solitude made an impression that I wasn't fully committed, and so it had contributed to already existing decay.

Any other accounts of sharing accommodation were mostly the result of convenience for the person I was dating. The urge to live by myself was manifesting the old desire into reality. It was the hope that my father would never come home again. His absence was like a light contrasting the darkness of his presence. There was a different, much pleasant, dynamic taking place at home when my father was not there. Thus, I called them 'good times.' It felt like the cloud of prohibition was lifted; we were free to laugh, joke, talk without fear of censorship, watch TV without being cut off in the middle of the movie. Unrestricted, we occupied ourselves with whatever tasks we enjoyed. It was a time of peace and ease. And so, I wished so earnestly that these moments would last forever.

DREAM 9 – SECRET

DREAM

As I was reflecting on my father's unpleasant presence, I started to be agitated by a slight headache. The pain was interrupting and scattering my thoughts. I decided to lay down, hoping that the short rest will take care of the annoying ache, and allow me to continue the reflection. It didn't take long, and I fell asleep. However, my sleep was cut short by a frustrating dream. Undoubtedly, the dream was the divine assistance to my latest contemplation. I wonder if the headache and nap were also the part of this intervention. Nevertheless, I'm grateful and willing to welcome any form of help!

The dream was taking place in our home. The rooms were arranged in a different layout than in an actual apartment. As I was walking out of my room and entering the living room, I noticed that my father was looking for something in the wall-unit cabinet. As soon as his awareness revealed my presence to him, he panicked and ran into the bedroom to hide. His reaction confirmed that he was caught doing something dishonest. The section in the wall unit, which he was snooping through, was dedicated to some of my belongings. Realizing that he was digging through my possessions, I went into a rage. I ran after him and yelled in front of the bedroom, where he was hiding: "What?! What do you want to find? What do you need to know about me?" I noticed that in a rush to get away he left the door on the furniture opened. It was an invitation for me to conduct an investigation myself and discover what exactly was the object of his interest. However, there was nothing unusual, interesting or even slightly exposing. Without a few school notebooks and a couple of folders with rather meaningless documents, the shelves would be empty. I reached for one of the notebooks, which resembled the one my family kept for years. How rare! It was even placed in the same department of the wall unit as it was in the dream. **It was such an insignificant item**, yet, it left such a vivid memory. The notebook contained notes from math and physics classes, written in my earlier grades. Nothing was revealing or secretive about these notebooks; there were probably another 60 of them filled during my school years. Why did they keep specifically this one? I placed the notebook back and reached for another item; nothing important neither, nothing that would conclude my quest. The curiosity and wondering held me in a particular state of mind: "What was he looking for? What does he want to know? Why doesn't he just ask? Damn, why was he snooping?"

Then, I recalled that the book with recent notes of my recollection was lying open in the next room. It occurred to me, that if my father read those notes, he would certainly find many interesting facts – the insides for which he was eagerly looking. While he was hiding in the bedroom, I saw or perhaps inferred, his face with the expression of guilt and fear on it. It was unusual to see him in defense or retreat. But in my rage and frustration, I was not bothered with his weakness. In an uncontrollable urge to hurt him, I started kicking the door and the wall next to it. **However, no matter how hard I tried, my kicks had no power to them.** I felt as if my leg

was not able to generate the force; it was executing motion, but hitting the target without impact or power. This weakness, this powerlessness was making me incredibly frustrated. I woke up.

The headache was gone, but the frustration and anger carried into my awakened state. I knew that this dream was directing my previous contemplation. Keeping the state of mind as my guide, I was expecting recollection of an incident, which would lead me to an unexamined issue, or further depths of the recent one. But nothing was emerging. My mind was blank. The only thing persuasively striving for my attention was the image of a painting done by my father. It was a portrait of me when I was about seven years old. I couldn't suppress this image, and so the painting itself became the object of questioning. Luckily, it was one of the very few I remember so clearly.

Belief (mental block)

In all honesty, I could never find a way to my father's art. All of his paintings repelled me by certain common features: they were dark, dull, emanating an ambiance of immense sadness and melancholy. The face of the little girl on this particular piece - the dark shadows underneath her eyes – were as well expressions of sorrow and disengagement. The grass, in which she was sitting, had a cold blue tone to it, and the large moon in the background added further to the expression of despair. Everything about that picture was depressing. It was infused with my father's sorrow, unmistakably capturing the state of mind with which he was so familiar. Like he was telling the world about his anguish, proclaiming his life's paradox.

That's it! It is all about communication! Paintings were the only medium through which my father was able to express his true feelings. They were the mirror of his mind and the window to his soul. His world was gray and murky, full of misery. His talent was the only medium through which he was able to express the content of his inner world. He wasn't skilled in other ways of communicating! The question in a dream: "Why didn't he just ask," was the crucial hint, which shifted my hate to curiosity. No power in my kicks meant that there was no justification in my desire to hurt him. To see my father in defense was even more unusual, but, blinded by the hate, I was merely going to dismiss it. However, the dream is forcing a reconsideration: "What if his weakness and despair were genuine? What if he actually felt remorse? What if he kept his emotions hidden 'in the bedroom' – deep inside his mind? It couldn't be more obvious, that my father was a terrible communicator. Language wasn't the means through which he was able to express his intentions, opinions, and thoughts. He didn't know how to 'create' with words, only how to destroy.

Unfortunately, his inability and awkward style of communication led me to an incorrect assumption about the actual purpose of his actions. My disrespect towards him grew like a mould, polluting our relationship, bringing it to complete decay. His lessons could have had value if he transmitted his ideas directly. I considered his behavior and unexplainable actions, to be the power eruptions which rendered him the cruelest and vulgar person. However, my

The Role of Dreams in Self-Cultivation

misconception could have been easily corrected if my father expressed his concerns and intentions with kindness. But he didn't know how to approach people in any other way than with an attack.

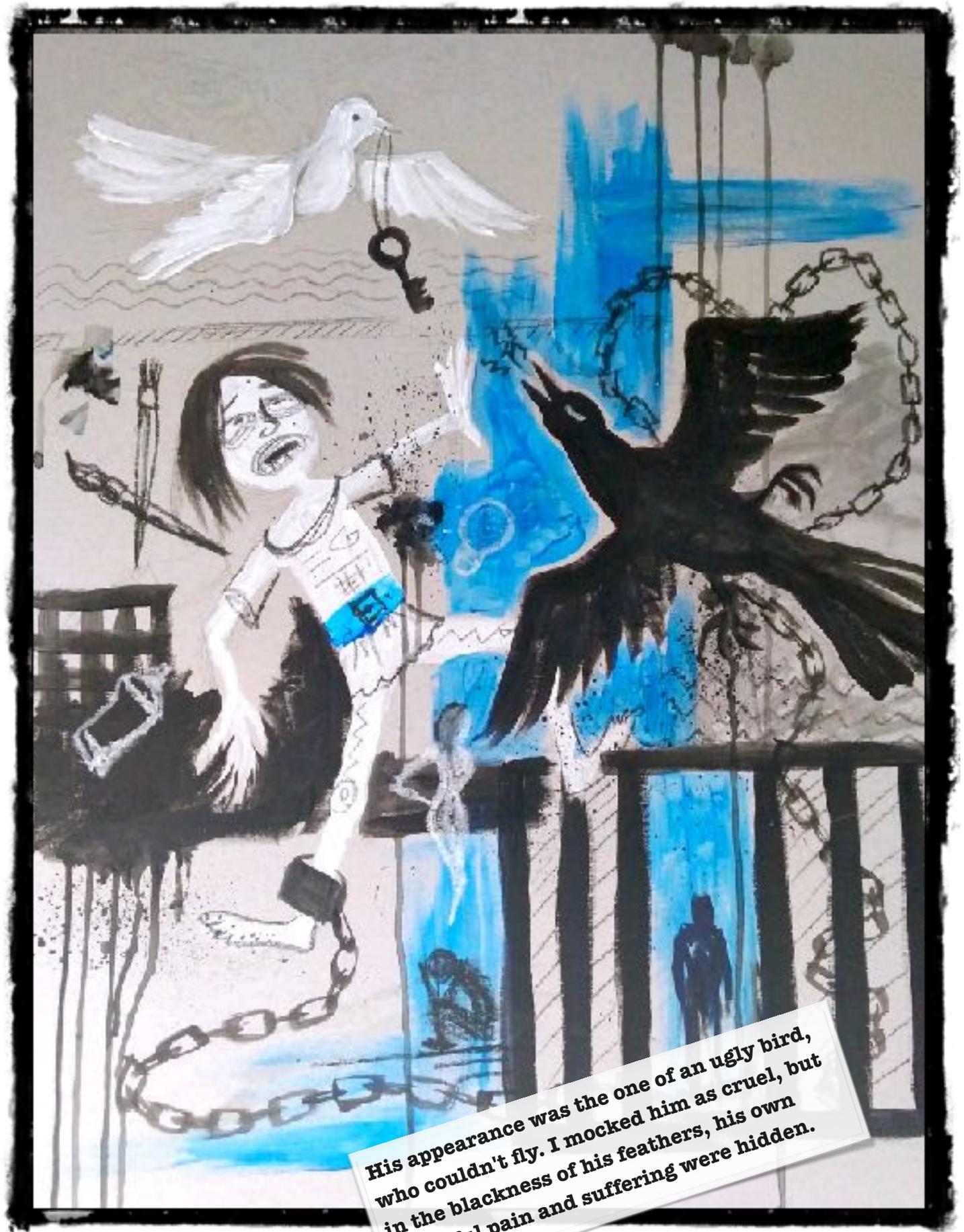
I sense that my mom knew about my father's painful and unjust experiences that marked his character, or, should I say, created his dark beliefs. She most likely knew about the source of his misery, and it allowed her to tolerate him or as she put it in her own words: "feel sorry for him." Maybe it was their secret which held their toxic and insane relationship together like a metal ring holds the wine barrel filled with toxic yet indulging drink. In the dream, my father was searching through a nearly empty cabinet, which contained a few piles of insignificant documents and old notebooks. It was all he could find. School and official data were the only source of information he had about his daughter. There was nothing that would reveal her thoughts, her inner world, which, sadly enough, he lost sight of many years ago.

My anger towards my father became a solid reality without any need to be questioned. It was the by-product of a long term hate to which I clung to in my ignorance. I rejected and condemned what he had done, without ever wondering why he had done so. The bridge between us was cut on both sides; on his end, because he didn't know how to be a father, and on my end, because I couldn't understand his way of trying to be one. This short dream displayed the milieu of our relationship with incredible accuracy.

Conclusion (Graduation Poster)

So, what were his intentions after all? After some pondering, the truth finally appeared to me. The dream led me to one definite conclusion: my father knew what I was working on the evening when he arrogantly shut the lights off in my room. However, his attempt to prevent me from completing my project had a different purpose than to make me fail, as I initially assumed. His aim was to protect me from being taken advantage off, from selling out my talent for free. He didn't see my project as an opportunity to show off my work as I did; I believe, that he considered it to be an unfair act on behalf of the school. Through the mesh of his beliefs he saw the reality in which the school was utilizing a student's ability without financial compensation. There is no doubt in my mind that he alone had negative experiences of this kind, which collected into one sick belief. The attitude emerging from this belief also prevented him from marketing his art. Unfortunately, according to my father, the genuine help, volunteering, or any deed of generosity and grace was an act of degradation of his talent and depreciation of his worth. That too could be a block on his path to becoming a successful artist. I wonder what experiences led him to this belief? I may never know...

However, while I was wondering in a hazy cloud of my father's past, watching out for clues that shaped his view on 'generosity,' I have suddenly recalled an incident, which confirms my previous assumption and, who knows, it may even lead to further insights.



His appearance was the one of an ugly bird, who couldn't fly. I mocked him as cruel, but in the blackness of his feathers, his own dreadful pain and suffering were hidden.

Supporting Incident – Helping Uncle with Bottles

My father and I were visiting his brother. Uncle Emilio and his family lived in a different town, about 70 kilometers distant from ours. Emilio was a successful musician and the music professor at the academy of music. One day, during our three-day visit, we took a trip to the mountain springs, to fill dozens of bottles of natural mineral water, to replenish uncle's diminishing reserves. On top of the beneficial accomplishment, we enjoyed a beautiful summer day in the embrace of nature. Once we arrived back to the house, the bottles had to be transported from the car to the basement. My father stood to the side and watched the rest of us working. When I was passing by him, carrying a couple of bottles, he stepped in my way and ordered me to stop. His request was brief, as he didn't want others to hear him. I didn't understand why I was prohibited from this simple activity. I disregarded his order and went on with my simple but useful mission. I could tell that it was bothering him, but he couldn't use any force as it would make his intent evident to others.

A short objective reflection gives me the confidence to proclaim that the true motive behind his act was jealousy towards his brother, who was so much better off in many ways than my father was. Rejection to help was a manifestation of his refusal to contribute to my uncle's wealth. How petty and low! If this was supposed to serve as a lesson about not being taken advantage of, it certainly wasn't a successful one.

Conclusion

The lessons with the subject “don’t let people use you” were worthless. In fact, being exploited has been a common occurrence in my reality. I can’t even count how many times that other people reaped recognition for my work. In many instances I have willingly performed tasks for others, being aware that I will not receive any credit for it. It started with homework for my classmates and helping them to succeed on the tests. Throughout the years, I had been illustrating the class yearbook in elementary school, and my schoolmate, who was in charge of writing the content of the book, purposely left the principal with the assumption that the illustrations were her accomplishment as well. I was aware of her deceit, but I couldn’t care less. And of course, there were numerous cases, which occurred in my adult life as well. Did my father’s lesson have the opposite effect? If so, I wonder how did it come to transpire; after all, I didn’t even understand what my father’s aim was at that time.

The free service and work, without recognition or benefits, didn’t bother me. Maybe my indifference and lack of ambition for just reward were a result of other beliefs, like the extreme modesty, or disrespect I held for the product of my work.

My father’s failure was also the fruit of his thinking, and in a non-verbal manner, mostly by his actions, he passed his legacy on to the next generation. After all, I have been pushing success away from me as far as he had, killing it by the perceptions, attitudes, manners and, most importantly, by a clumsy way of relating and communicating with people. Yes, I believe, that approaching others in the way my father was accustomed to, I too have been diminishing my chance of success. His concern: “People want everything for free,” was the crowning statement, which subconsciously rendered any intention, aiming for a business venture, to be ineffective. Holding onto the same belief, I have been implementing techniques which keep the legacy of failure alive. But, I suspect, that there is still many other practices to be examined. **One thing is clear: I can see that between my mom's prejudices and my father's legacy of failure, I had no chance to achieve any level of success in my artistic endeavor.** Harsh reality – terrible fate!

PROBLEM 7 – GIVING UP GOALS

The following contemplation is one of the earlier explorations inspired by a particular event. The suspicion, that the issue of giving up goals may be connected to my father, didn’t occur to me at that time; however, it brought definite answers to the question about his and my misfortune.

It was a beautiful Sunday morning, and the warm rays of sun filled my body with energy and my mind with enthusiasm. The day was offering an opportunity to escape the chaos of the city, and indulge in an outdoor activity, and so I decided to venture out to Banff. Without much hesitation,

I gathered a few necessities for the trip and took off to the mountains for a hike. I felt energized and cheerful as I was driving out of the not-fully-awakened city, getting ahead of the crowd, that was about to aim for the same destination. Once I reached Sulphur Mountain, I parked the car and commenced the hike. The tour through nature was rejuvenating, and the physical straining was therapeutic. After a couple of hours, I reached the top of the gondola. Delighted by the achievement, I decided to rest on the patio for a brief moment. While I was quenching my thirst and indulging in the view, my gaze wandered around the magical scenery laid out into a great distance. Filled with the beauty, my gaze then rested on the wooden path, which led to the peak of the mountain. There was something very inviting about the idea to conquer the highest point reachable; after all, it was only a few minutes away. However, a dismissive council in my mind replaced the desire to go, with a discouraging advice: "Ah, just go there next time!" For a moment, I obeyed; but then, as I turned around, I realized that the same advice blocked the hike I took a few weeks ago. I paused and looked at that counsel again: "Why? Why wouldn't I go now? I'm almost here! I am so close to it already!" Why am I being discouraged? Suddenly I couldn't agree with the idea to postpone, and, instead, I decided to go now. It would be incredibly dumb not to! I was only meters away from the summit of the mountain.

Belief (mental block)

I wondered why I was about to give up on taking the hike to its full completion? The discouraging voice was familiar to me. It wasn't the first time I have received the same advice from it; yet, it was the first time I didn't obey. Instead, I consciously ordered myself: "Go now! Get the experience NOW!" Suddenly, I felt the energy, the excitement, and I felt the victory! I was going to do it now! I realized that I have just discovered something big, something important - a barrier that held me from achieving many other goals in the past. I started to feel an excitement about the plan to disassemble this belief, once I returned home. On my way back from Sulphur Mountain, numerous incidents, displaying the same dynamics, were emerging in my mind one after another, like the testimonies to my discovery. The common problem, binding them together, **was the habit of giving up goals despite the indisputable ability to achieve them.** In fact, this awareness, that the goal is within my reach, and therefore clearly attainable, triggers the belief into an action. Then, the amnesia of past failures sets in and executes the typical dynamics in the form of a decision to postpone my effort, sabotaging the given opportunity. Additionally, in the obscurity of an arrogant expectation, I count on a permanence of the opportunity - an assumption that it will always be available.

How did it affect my life?

I became aware that I have a tendency to terminate meditations in the same manner. When I start experiencing a subtle yet unusual state of mind, the identical thought interrupts the experience: "Ah, why don't you get back to it later"; then, I lose my focus, and I switch to a different activity. Why do I give up on my goals, when I get close to them? From where does the assurance, that they will always be there, come?

Supporting Incident – Skipping Items

Next day, I was eager to get to the origin of this problem. I set down to record the past incidents, which contain similar dynamics and the same state of mind. It occurred to me that the most recent incident took place today when I was shopping for groceries. As I was gathering items according to my list, for some unknown reason, I decided to skip one of them and come back for it another day. As the evidence from experience indicates, I would be back in the store to fetch the remaining item, the very next day. Why do I do that? What difference would it make? I realized that it is a habit I wasn't aware of, yet I have been applying it almost daily! Once I get home from the shopping trip, I usually get angry at myself for being forced to make another trip to the store, to fetch the remaining item. It makes absolutely no sense! There is no reason for not getting all the articles at once. It seems that the belief is an enemy to the idea of completion!

Supporting Incident – Talent Exam

The incident from the past, which most prominently exhibited dynamics of this believe, was the skill exam at the University of Arts. Passing this exam could have been one of the highest achievements and the most rewarding goal. Counting on my artistic skills, I dared to believe that my talent alone could overpower the corruption of the communist system of education, and procure my acceptance into the University. In addition to false beliefs that played out in this scenario, other circumstances were also working against me. Perhaps, the goal wasn't a realistic expectation this time, but I clung to, what appears to be a relatively arrogant confidence. Nevertheless, even though my expectations could have been unrealistic, the possibility was present.

This certainty of success seems to be the precursor of the tendency to give up and to waste the precious opportunity. When I entered the classroom, where the candidates were assigned the project, the typical disdain kicked in, and I lost interest. By putting out a little effort, I produced work that was lacking quality and ambition.

So what is the source of this problem?

The resemblance of my approach to this failure, and the exact techniques used by my father to sabotage his success, is like an arrow pointing to the source of my belief. It was the general lack of motivation that secured his imprisonment in failure and took away from him the courage to explore new possibilities.

Besides that, he was known for irresponsibility and a poor work ethic. It was quite a contrast to my mom's dedication to work and family, and her sense of stability. She was the provider and the caretaker. If it weren't for my mother's skills and her devotion, the conditions of our existence would have been frightening. It is highly possible that we would have continued to occupy a one-bedroom suite, cluttered with old furniture and my father's junk, for the rest of our lives.

The Role of Dreams in Self-Cultivation

My father wasn't only passive towards my mom's efforts to improve our living conditions, but resistant. When we were moving to a new, much larger apartment, he refused to relocate with us. According to him, the little apartment served its purpose. His famous phrase: "it is good enough" explained his reason for not moving. He refused to pack or to help carry the furniture and boxes; instead, he was getting in the way, poisoning the air with his negative attitude and remarks. However, to my big surprise, after the most intense labor was over, he showed up at our new home and shamelessly took over the largest room to himself. I couldn't understand why my mom bothered with him. The relocation was the perfect opportunity for her to free herself and us - her offsprings, from the venom of his presence.

As I was recording the particulars about our move, a certain resemblance occurred to me: the parallel between my father's reluctance and my brother's demonstration of modesty in France. They both were unable to accept things that would benefit them, or things they simply desired. They were reluctant to admit to the notion of wanting. Was it pride that prevented them from asking and receiving? It appears to me, that an effort to acquire something would expose their desire to have. Was that the shame they tried to avoid? "One shall not ask or receive!" Oh, my! Not only my father and brother were guided by this principle but even me! Why? Because it would expose the insufficiencies within us. There is something embarrassing about 'not having'. Admitting to any form of a poverty damages the status! Like we were terrified to make the impression of being needy? Interestingly enough, the belief alone assures that exact reality occurring.

Support Incident – Work Ethics

The previous paragraph touches upon my father's work ethic, but it doesn't render the complete picture. By presenting more particulars about his general practices and attitudes, towards work and responsibilities, it may enhance the overall image of his bizarre character.

The last job my father held, was a clerical position in the regional government office. Quite often, he would make a morning appearance at his workplace with only one purpose - to 'sign in,' and within an hour, he returned home without any evidence of guilt. Then, to wrap up the work day, he made an appearance at the office around 4 PM, to record his departure, in other words, to 'sign out.' Perhaps, this was a routine occasionally applied by a majority of the employees; however, my father utilized the trick of 'hidden absence' on a regular basis - at least, twice a week!

Another unethical habit of his was related to short distance traveling, a duty often required by his position. About once a month, he took me for a walk to the bus station, where we would engage in finding used tickets with suitable dates and destinations printed on them. The tickets would then serve as an evidence of his travels, which, in reality, he never conducted. Once he collected a bunch, he would then assemble an expense report and present it to his manager for reimbursement.

Support Incident – Eiffel Tower

While I was puzzling over my father's disengagement from work, a new memory emerged. I was about ten years old when this incident took place. It occurred during the same trip to France, mentioned previously. This time, my parents planned out a trip to the capital with the intention to spend one full day sightseeing Paris, and its most well-known, historical sites. The first destination, most suitable for a family with two artists, was the Louvre Museum and Gallery. What an incredible place! What an experience! Standing only a few meters away from the most valued painting – Mona Lisa – was an unforgettable high even for a 10-year-old, not mentioning being physically present near hundreds of other masterpieces I recalled from my father's books of art history. We spent the majority of the day in the museum, which left us with not enough time to visit the other locations that we had intended to 'conquer' initially. There was no other choice, but to plan another trip. However, my mom insisted that, under no circumstances, we were going to miss the tour to the Eiffel tower that very day. As usual, my father's resistance charged against her determination. He was fighting her enthusiasm with an array of condemning reasons. Luckily, she didn't give up. When we arrived at the tower area, she purchased tickets, and the fight was over; we were about to see Paris from the heights of the Eiffel tower. It was exciting for all of us, except my father. When the elevator door opened, he was taken by a suspicious weakness. He started to stumble like he was losing his balance, and he slowly backed up further into the elevator, where he remained leaning against the back wall. His face was pale, and his breathing heavy. He was blaming his heart for the unexpected condition, of which credibility I was quite doubtful. I suspected that it was fear that didn't allow him to step out of the elevator. Perhaps, it was a common fear of heights, but my father would never admit to any weakness, not alone to a fear. After a few moments, with my mom's support, he slowly moved out of the elevator. Holding his arm, she seemed to be sincerely concerned about him; however, she couldn't hide the fact that she was also entertained by his act of withering.

How did it affect my life?

Returning to the belief which stops me from attaining feasible goals, I must conclude, that its source indeed was founded by the undertaking of my father's fears and views, and subconsciously establishing them as my beliefs. On the other hand, the successful undertaking and executing of my ventures is the aspect that reflects my mom's enthusiastic approach. It is the initial stage, filled with energy and a positive state of mind. It permeates with effort and the excitement and provides the power which successfully carries me through the activity. **Then, before I reach its completion, the very peak of my pursuit, my father's resistance sets in, and the conflict occurs. It brings the moment in which I give up, postpone or find the grounds to consider the activity or its product to be trivial.** And so, these simple dynamics of the belief, keep me in the same zone of failure as they kept my father. No matter what he intended to teach me, his actions were communicating different lessons. They were the teachings I adopted without being aware of it.

DREAM 10 – TOWER / FEAR OF HEIGHTS

The morning, after the contemplation about my father's resistance, I woke up to a dream, which could not be more apparent in communicating that I have inherited the same fears that held my father in defeat. In a previous investigation, I didn't search for particulars about the fear, and so the dream is now urging me to do just that.

The content of a dream was brief, and the story was short, but it upheld a very distinctive state of mind – fear. I was living in the space, which resembled a modern, spacious apartment, situated on the top of an incredibly tall tower. The interior of this apartment had a circular shape, and its walls were fabricated out of transparent glass, allowing for an incredible view. The floor was constructed as two separate circles: inner and outer circle. The material of the inner-circle surface was solid wood, and the outer one was assembled from the same glass squares as the walls. The transparency of the floor was the cause of my fear. I was terrified to come close to it, and even more terrifying was the thought to walk on it. The height, in which this living space was placed, was incredible. Standing inside felt like viewing the world from a circular spaceship, positioned above the large city, above the population. I was impressed and simultaneously scared by the beauty of the view. Threatened, I crawled into the middle of the interior, where the wooden floor was giving me an impression of safety. My limbs were tucked in, and my head pushed between my shoulders. In a fear to look around, I pulled my gaze away from the glass. I clung to the hope, that over time I will adjust to the height and be able to move freely. The high place, I was presently occupying, was rather new to me.

Analysis

The theme 'fear of heights' is quite evident in the dream. The living space is a representation of my conscious mind - a reoccurring symbol in my dreams. The 'height' represents the positive state of mind, judging by its equivalence to the expression "feeling high" or "achieving mental heights." However, the problem appears to be the immobility. The restriction to freely move around and enjoy the view, suggests that I can't function in this high state. I am 'mentally stuck' on the solid floor. The flooring represents the 'base' a 'foundation' of the 'mind.' It is that primary, immediate or underlying thinking. The opaque quality of the wood carries the safety feature, and also introduces the term "traditional"; it is the material I am 'familiar' and 'comfortable' with, enforcing the meaning that I am complacent with the old way of thinking. The glass floor, on the other hand, is 'novelty' to me; it suggests that "I have no previous experience with a glass type flooring". **After shifting this idea from the dream into an everyday reality, the key message presented itself: "I am being introduced to a new way of thinking. But, not being familiar with it, it creates fear which forces me to shift to old beliefs." To explain further: I am particularly concerned about the durability of the glass, not trusting its strength and permanence.**

Belief (mental block)

My fear is that 'walking on the glass' may rupture it and I'll fall through. The assumption of fragility and the expectation of misfortune are two key ideas defining the false belief. The misguided thoughts and the expectation of an adverse outcome are the inhibitors of success. In other words, the freedom of movement (free thinking) and the positive consequences of it, are limited by the fear which streams out of old and confining assumptions, thus forcing me to anticipate the worst scenario. I am suspicious of a transparent material and expecting it to be insufficient. Could my assumption be justified? Could the construction of the tower, be built out of the insufficient material? The reason would suggest 'no.' My fear, however, contradicts the logical reasoning, and instead of relying on reason, I am being guided by suspicion and fear - preconceptions assimilated into one false belief. They are the core components of the belief which operates in higher states of mind. However if positive thoughts prevailed in this state, the freedom would be attained.

How did it affect my life?

What are the specific ramifications of this particular belief, afterall? The allegory of the dream can be summarized into the following idea: "the expectation of an undesirable consequence prevents me from 'moving freely' - from making free choices, from being curious and daring. Instead, I **curl in and stay rigid in one area**, the place with which I am familiar and which I considered to be safe; implementing the habit dictated by the belief."

Curiously enough, even the position, in which I held my body in the dream, reminds me of my father's natural sitting posture. It was distinctive of him to pull his head in between his shoulders like he was protecting his neck, or as he was afraid to "put his neck on the line." The meaning of this phrase defined by Cambridge Dictionary fits as the most appropriate description:

"To do something that you know might fail and spoil other people's opinion of you or cause you to lose money."

Wow! Curiously enough, the wise definition brought my awareness back to the previous phrase, used in dream description: 'walking on the glass.' It is a term for chance taking or being daring. Yes, it is very much true for both of us - my father and me, that we have always been reluctant to take chances, even the most trifling ones. We would never allow the unpredictable current of spontaneity carry us into the sea of unknown.

The past alone is a witness to numerous incidents and occasions in which my father gave into this belief. He had a tendency to make the goal appear not to be worth his effort, or he would find something negative about the goal alone. This way he would cover up his fear of a possible negative outcome. Killing the venture outright before it takes-off, was a cowardly move to save himself from the risk of potential failure in the future. Like the idea, that people want everything for free, was a validation which discouraged him entirely from marketing his art. My father lead

an existence seized by countless misconceptions: he refused to participate in society, and, like a monk, he renounced the material goods of this world. He always longed for a better life and better circumstances, but he grabbed only those opportunities to improve it, which didn't require him to leave his comfort zone, and which didn't demand his contribution and effort. While he longed for many goods, his beliefs were in the way of attaining them. I subconsciously followed my father's path of self-abnegation.

Support Incident – Early Relationship

According to my mom, my father and I had a good relationship, during my early childhood. She used to express this idea by occasional and rather sarcastic comments. However, I can't confirm their credibility by specific recollections. Perhaps, there was some truth to them, or they were a creation of her insecurities, as she viewed our relationship through the screen of her prejudices. The sarcastic tone of her remarks, aiming at some privileged position, I held in the eyes of my father, was sufficient evidence of her jealousy. If my father did, in fact, show signs of attachment to me, she found a way to make the advantages, that sprang out this bond, work against me. Intentionally or not, she damaged whatever good there was between my father and me. Her most vicious maneuver was pairing me up with him while she and her son took off to attend real fun activities. They would often go to the movies or different places of excitement. The 'quality time' with my father had a different flavor, a rather sorrowful taste of an adventure. If we were not stuck at home, I was accompanying him on his job-related trips, visits, or other boring and strange events. Quite commonly, he would abandon me for long periods in places, where I was safe, but I wasn't not comfortably familiar with them. On one occasion, he left me at a smaller concert, another time at a gallery admission desk, and countless times I had to wait for him in secluded places of restaurants and bars, where he was 'taking care' of his affairs.

Even though I couldn't call time spent with my father 'adventures', they certainly left me with 'unforgettable' memories. There was one specific trip – by far worse than any other I can recall. It took place during his employment as a restaurant inspector. To my understanding, his duty was to conduct an audit in restaurants or pubs, randomly selected out of all the establishments spread over the region of the whole county. For a child, being present at these audits was an unnecessary hardship. It was a long-lasting boredom saturated with silent monitoring of my father's drunken stages.

The management of the hospitality institutions always displayed extreme generosity, in order to influence my father's final report. Sometimes the audit would extend into the late evening; the darkness outside the windows was a clock I could understand. In most cases, it was a very late night when we would finally leave. I despised these trips so much! During one of the audits, when I was about six years old, my father was more intoxicated than any other time. On our way home from the train station, the walk took considerably longer due to his staggering around and occasional breaks to regain his balance, as I was leading him home. At some point, he misjudged the edge of the road and fell into the ditch. I jumped in as well, to rescue my father, however, being so young and petite, I was too weak to help him back on his feet. Even pushing

him to crawl out of the ditch was impossible. His weight and drunkenness were powerful forces working against me. As the hope to succeed was vanishing, frustration and fear took hold of me. I couldn't stand the idea that we are going to spend the night in the ditch. I couldn't hold the tears any longer, and the misery, I endured throughout the day, climaxed into the rage and resentment. I started kicking my father's useless body and yelling at him. It was an act of desperation, and without a doubt, the birth of the hate for him - the resentment that has been burning my heart from within, ever since. Somehow we made it home that night, but the memory of our arrival, or any discussion about it next day, is entirely indistinct to me.

Digging even further

As the years passed by, being pushed into my father's presence was giving me an impression that it was a form of a punishment delivered by my mom. Could it be an operation of her jealousy? Forcing me to accompany him, seemed like a deliberate act to ensure that I gain enough negative experiences. Like it was supposed to open my eyes to his shortcomings and make me ultimately dislike him. She succeeded! And if these events weren't painful enough, she salted my wounds by bragging about the amazing adventures she and her son collected that day. It was her cruel need to rub it in, like being in the hands of my father's inscrutable character, wasn't an amercement atrocious enough! She knew what my father was about, and yet she purposely threw me into the assured misery of his 'care'. Did she really hate me that much?

Support Incident – Spy

It just occurred to me that there was a secondary purpose she had in mind, besides her compulsion to annihilate the favorable position I had in my father's heart. By leaving me in his presence, she was able to carry out yet another agenda: making me function as a spy. I served as the source of the information about my father's activities during her absence. I suspect that my mission was to provide her with exhaustive facts, or at least possible clues, about his misconduct or adultery. In fact, they both used me for that purpose. They often asked questions about the ventures and activities done with the other parent. I always answered in the honesty of a young age naivety, being fooled by the impression that their questioning was a sincere curiosity and interest in sharing my experience. How mistaken was I! The participation wasn't the aim of their discourse! Instead, they used the information against each other in arguments, pulling out newly extracted facts like aces during the card game. There was an unpleasant by-product of this game, which affected me directly: the value of the material revealed about one person, was equivalent to a condemnation by the other.

As I was finishing the sentence about the by-product, an anger got hold of me: "How fucken clever they were! What a brilliant reason for conceiving a child. Do also other parents get to know things about each other by manipulating their children!?"

It was a nasty game. The most hurtful part was that a few days after the argument, no matter what the transgressions were, they forgave each other, but kept the resentment towards me. **My already well-known companion - rejection, initiated me into a new role, the role of the black sheep or the scapegoat.** Now I could deliver my parents from the misery, the inability to communicate, and to respect and trust each other. They also placed the burden of blame on my shoulders, assigning me the role of a devil who snatched the courage from them to separate them from each other. Most importantly, eventually, I couldn't be trusted by either of them; and therefore my mom would set me up with my father, rather than taking a chance and letting me witness her conduct. However, my father too became quite canny: being aware of the conspiracy, he made sure that I didn't hear or see anything that could incriminate him.

Implications – Spy Role

Being a source of insights about each of my parent's conduct and simultaneously a premise of many of their arguments, **I have finally learned, that to keep silence and carefully reconsider my answers, were options more profitable than speaking the truth.** This liaison has become a reality I live up to this day. Two tactful pillars are supporting this choice: one is protecting me from offending people, and the other holds me back from revealing unnecessary information, which could be eventually used against me. **I have always functioned in a belief that holding people in oblivion, avoids conflicts, and strengthens my chance of being accepted.** However there is a negative repercussion of this belief: it fortifies the distance between the other person and me in personal relationships; it plants a mental and emotional block, setting the conditions for decay.

Support Incident – Visiting a Friend

How did my father feel about dragging me with him? He acted like he didn't mind during most of these occasions. In fact, I wasn't in his way as much as my mom preferred me to be. He had plenty of freedom for all the activities he chose to attend, including the 'forbidden' ones. His tactic to secure his secrets was simple, all he had to do was to occupy me with a little exciting activity in a safe place, and he was free to leave. He knew well, that after his return, he would find me in the same place where he left me.

Following is a short incident and another unpleasant memory of the times I spent with my father. I am not quite certain why my father took me with him on this specific occasion as he was not obligated or forced to in this case. He could have left me at my grandma's dwelling, who lived only a few houses away from the person we visited. Nevertheless, I have never met the guy before, but I did hear his name being occasionally brought up in my parent's arguments. He was a strange man. The place in which he lived, was dingy, dark and dirty. His bed was supported by books instead of the standard wooden legs. More books were spread all over the room serving a variety of purposes: trays, coasters, table support and so on. His habitude implied randomness and insanity. Perhaps, he possessed a highly intelligent mind, and didn't want to degrade himself by organizing the frivolous corporal mess that surrounded him. However, I couldn't fight the impression of coldness and misery emanating from our host. Once we settled

into his space, he bluntly uttered the disapproval about my presence: “Dulo, why are you bringing these kids here?”

My father seemed to be embarrassed to some degree, but he didn't say much in my defense.

Not wanted, not cared about and now not even welcome; what a special child I was! Life couldn't give me more lessons of rejection, in number nor bitterness. What other choice did I have, but to accept it as my reality? I have learned that my fate was not to be ‘included in,’ and not to ‘belong to.’ In summary, I essentially didn't ‘fit in’ anywhere. It became a supporting fracture of a super-belief of inadequacy. However, it had a particular effect – making me feel socially incompatible. Yup! The way it still plays out is that it awakens a feeling of awkwardness during social events or encounters with people whom I subconsciously assign seniority or superiority. In fact, who do I not put on a pedestal?

Support Incident – Promise

The following incident is about another, not very positive attribute of my father's character, his cold disregard for my love of animals. I suspect that I brought this love with me into this world. Nevertheless, every moment in the presence of animals has always been a time of joy. The summer holidays spent at my aunt's house, in a small mountain village, felt like a paradise. Wild or domesticated, each creature was a part of the real-life sanctuary, where peace, mutual respect, and innocence held man and animal in a harmonious unity of nature.

During the school year, the interaction with animals narrowed down to an occasional meeting with a stray dog. When I stumbled upon one on my way to school, I fed it my lunch. If the encounter took place later during the day, when I had no food to offer immediately, I took the friendlier dog home, providing room and board in the hope that he will stay. Unfortunately, within a day or two, one of my parents would let the dog return to the streets. Finally, when I reached the third grade, longing for a pet companion was boosted by my father's promise of a puppy. His promise was conditioned by the requirement that my report card will contain nothing but a grade "A." His inquiry seems now ridiculous and suspicious; in all honesty, it wasn't necessary at all. I didn't dare to receive anything less than “A” due to already existing fears and beliefs. The confidence, that the condition was easy to fulfill, held me in excitement, and I was eagerly awaiting the end of the school year. When the day arrived, I placed the report card on the table, full of the expectation to see the puppy in return. However, nothing about my reward was said that day. Soon, I started asking and reminding, hoping that my father had some legitimate reason for delaying it. A few days later, around bedtime, my father handed me a small toy - a stuffed dog, and added with a sarcastic smirk on his face: “Here is your dog”! I was stunned! Is this it? I realized that his promise was just a joke. He didn't treat me, nor my wish with sincerity at all. How cruel! That hurt! It would have been so much easier to accept the immediate refusal, to hear an honest ‘no’ when I was pleading for a pet, rather than being held in a false promise. How degrading it was, to realize that my own father is taking me for a fool. It didn't even cross his mind that this disappointment could reflect on my grades next year. He didn't seem to be

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concerned about the consequences at all, only about momentary triumph - the success in misleading me. After all, the deception and lies were the only kind of victories he was capable of - a twisted kind of wins: cheating the system, scamming his employer, deceiving the people and betraying his daughter.

His treachery made me aware of my dependence on my parents; it spawned a new longing for independence.

Many years went by, and my wish was partially granted to me. Once I started to earn money, my years-old desire to have a dog surfaced again, and I turned it into a reality. However, I forgot to count-in the fact that I was still occupying my parent's house. Whether I was paying the rent or not, the many rules remained. However, the idea to have a dog was at hand, and all I had to do was reach for it. The excitement didn't allow any negative thoughts or worries to crumble my determination. Nothing was going to stop me now! Sure enough, I brought home a little white puppy of the purebred Kuwatz dog. Resembling a little cute polar bear, he was the sweetest thing in the whole world. As he was growing up, my daily routines were gradually changing, presenting me with the ultimate challenge: how to synchronize work and dog's needs. I was committed to him more than to my family or friends. Even Renata was very disturbed by my new life. As months went by, and my dog started to resemble his parents not only by appearance but also in size, my father launched a new campaign of complaints; this time about keeping a 'horse' in the apartment.

Falco, my dog, was accustomed to an apartment; he was calm and passive. On top of his quiet nature, I always made sure that we spent as much time outside as was possible. Nevertheless, the constant pressure, which eventually derived from both of my parents, forced me to search for an alternative accommodation, at least for the dog. It didn't take long, and a new opportunity emerged - a space in a kennel, owned by a distant friend of mine. I was thrilled, expecting that the kennel would eradicate further attacks and dog prohibitions. I walked Falco to the kennel like to a daycare, in the morning, and from there I took a bus to work. In the afternoon, the order of the trips was reversed: bus to the kennel and the walk home. Walking home was the highlight of my day. We usually took the long path across the park and the tree hill, avoiding the city streets and postponing the arrival home. Every step of our afternoon journey was a step of delight; time seized and everyday problems drifted away. Unfortunately, the kennel wasn't the solution my father was content with; he still couldn't bear the dog sleepovers at the apartment. His constant complaining eventually forced me to relocate my dog further away, where I wasn't able to interact with him daily - the house of my aunt. She lived in a small village, about 38 km from the city. In the beginning, I visited him as often as I could, but the inconvenient travel by train gradually lessened my visits first to fewer trips, and later on to rare occasions. After a while, I accepted the fate and stopped fooling myself that I am a dog owner. Finally, I handed all the responsibilities over to my aunt. I missed spending time with him, but the physical distance took its toll. I gave up. There was nothing else I could do, but to let go, abandoning something about what I genuinely cared. A few months into his stay with my aunt, my cousin (her daughter)

brought sad news to me about some unknown person poisoning my dog. Only years later, I found out that the killer was the guy I was dating at that time. Could I surround myself with more selfish and savage people than that? Were my parents not enough? Years went by, and eventually, I understood the reason why he committed such a cruel act. My boyfriend simply needed me to emigrate with him. As long as I had the dog, I refused - I chose to stay in my home country, being loyal to my pet. I couldn't depart from him entirely.

Long and painful was my journey to freedom!

How did it affect my life?

So my father won again. He and my mom took away from me the most precious thing I have ever had, **making me assume that it was me who failed to keep it**. The people who were closest to me continued to take away things I valued, things that were dear to me. In the name of this tradition, I continued to surround myself with the same type of companions.

There is a simple, but significant belief – the false reality, of course, which I concluded out of these two incidents: I can't have what I want. As a matter of fact, the notion of wanting alone appears to be pointless. Any longing is doomed by an expectation of disappointment, just like it happened before, it must happen again and again. Could this subconscious assumption be also the source of the fear experienced in 'the tower'? Secondly, the outcome in these incidents rendered me incapable of maintaining things and caring for them - it made me irresponsible. **This failure served as a verification of a newly attained attribute of the overall inadequacy, which I subconsciously included in the nature of myself. Misunderstanding of the last incident had far more reaching consequences: fearing that the failure and disappointment may occur again, I avoided any future accountability.** Not only that I never acquired another living creature, but I escaped all forms of ownerships and relationships altogether. A long-term commitment was not a game in which I would participate willingly.

There was one exception - a cat I received against my will. The manager, at the company I worked at one time, plainly forced the kitten on me. Her argument was that if I don't accept the cat, it will be put down. First, I rejected, but she ignored my refusal, and one day, she showed up at my place with a kitten and complementary cat food. How could I resist? The food didn't taste good, but the little kitty was adorable. However, the bond, like the one I had with my dog, was missing. Taking care of the cat didn't require any sacrifices. Keeping the cat alive and healthy for 16 years could serve as sufficient evidence, that I was capable of providing for and protecting other living creature. Nevertheless, I continued to live by my previous assumption, and I let the false belief of incompetence and inadequacy manifest itself. **I followed my parent's doctrine, which I didn't allow me to realize any of my dreams and wishes.** It didn't even occur to me before how, as a child, my family prevented me from having and doing

things that were meaningful to me. However, these restrictions were making me aware of a growing desire for independence. I anxiously anticipated the day when I would at last leave the nest of limitations and ascend into the realm of freedom. Ironically, when I finally departed, I left with all the mental chains which were constraining my mind. How could I ever find the freedom, when instead of being in control over my life, I continued to surrender to the deceitful pre-conditioning that were firmly established in my subconscious?

Support Incident - Chocolate Bait

There was yet another mind game found amusing by my father, and which fully supports the 'You can't have ' teaching. Once in a while, he bought a piece of cooking chocolate and left it in a pantry. So far, it doesn't seem like anything strange, does it? But he rarely ate the chocolate himself; neither was he planning on doing so. This chunk of goodness had a different, very unusual, purpose.

He placed the chocolate in a visible spot in the pantry and occasionally inspected if there was a piece of it missing – yes, it served as bait. I loved that chocolate, and my father knew it so well. And even though I was already familiar with his idiotic game, I couldn't resist an occasional bite. While giving in to the craving, I already saw what will follow. Sure enough; as soon as he noticed, the investigation took place, delinquent was found, and punished by a wearying lecture with the familiar topic: "Don't touch what belongs to others." In other words: "You can't have; it is not yours, and it never will be."

The game went on for years; as long as I was a student, having no earnings, no pocket money. My parents were the only members of the family with an income, and therefore with the power. They were the only providers and the only indisputable lawmakers. The game, my father, created, allowed him to show his authority. He set up a scenario in which he anticipated my misconduct because that was just what he needed. It was the crucial part of his game, the key act which made him appear esteemed, and which assigned him a rare role of a possessor. In fact, he didn't just own something, but the commodity which another person found desirable!

Labelling things, 'mine' and 'yours,' was a ridiculous custom I couldn't relate to, and so it brought all kinds of afflictions upon me. I'm willing to change my position on this matter if a reasonable argument comes to its defense, but otherwise, I strongly doubt that assigning ownership of food to individuals in the family, where children are financially dependent on parents, is a common practice.

But, I suppose, it did give my father an absolute feeling of importance which he would not attain otherwise. It is a shame that he never looked into his mind and sought the roots of his ridiculous behavior. Only one such curious objective peek, and our lives would have been substantially improved.



DREAM 11 – HIDING FROM MY FATHER

The night after the most recent contemplation about my father, I woke up to a disturbing dream. Because I was already aware of the deliberate timing of dreams, I was quite sure, that this dream came to direct my awareness to an important issue tied to the recent exploration.

Dream

The location of the dream was our home. My father and I were observing a large painting he had created. The picture was hanging on the wall, framed in a wide wooden frame. I commented on it with a sincere intention to compliment his efforts: "Nice work!". It was my true judgment. The general hatred against my father was absent in the dream, and I truly valued this painting as a product of his work and his talent, without mixing any prejudice in my assessment. He replied: "Buy it!" His blunt sales tactic made me grin. I had no intention to purchase his work. I turned him down with a particular state of mind: "The idea of buying my father's art made no sense to me; why would I spend money on something which stays in the family anyway?" Then the dream took on a different twist. For some unknown reason, my father became angry. It wasn't clear to me why, but I had an impression that I had something that belonged to him, or that he was trying to force something on me, something I wasn't willing to accept. I realized that there was an urgency to get away from him. The calm state of my mind immediately changed into a fear and panic, and I ran into my room as fast as I could. He went after me. I shut the door and quickly looked around for ways to prevent him from opening it, in a desperate need to keep him away. Luckily, I noticed an old-fashion hook and the loop, right on the door frame. What a relief! I pushed the hook into the loop securing the door and returned to the state of calmness again. However, the feeling of safety lasted only for a brief moment, when suddenly his hand squeezed in through the tiny gap between the door and the frame, as he tried to undo the hook. The struggle with the hook continued for a while: I was trying to keep the door secured, and he was striving to open it. I felt threatened, frustrated, but I knew that I couldn't let him win. I woke up.

Analysis

I started to puzzle over the meaning of this dream, but nothing was coming to my mind that would, at least, set the direction of my exploration. Useless milling over the logos and states of mind forced me to switch to a different approach of interpretation. As I concentrated on the symbols primarily, I achieved the clarity for which I was looking.

Door - it was an old fashion heavy door, painted white. I didn't expect the hook to be there at all, and therefore seeing it brought a great relief. It gave me the temporary comfort that I will be able to keep the door shut.

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Hand - when my father's hand slipped in through the tiny gap, it was a sudden and unpleasant surprise accompanied with fear, that I am losing the battle. I was solely relying on the hook at this point, in the state of mind: "The hook will not allow him to open the door!" However, it was a great struggle to fight against my father's hand. His hand was large and vigorous, and it seemed like he knew exactly how the hook functioned and how to operate it without even seeing it. By touch alone, he was able to decide where to push or pull, to disable it. It was a long, disturbing and nerve-wracking struggle. I suspect that the hand represents the power of the belief by which the old habit overrides the rational mind. It is the force that pulls the idea of preconditioning from the subconscious to execute the action and feelings associated with it.

Hook - it was an ordinary and simple-shaped, commonly used hardware for keeping the door closed, back in the country of my origin. It was often used on property gates or the gate which separated the garden from the yard. It was a simple but a thick metal rod shaped into a hook which then was inserted in the other part – a circular loop. When my father was trying to push it open, it looked like there were few of these rods mingled together, what made his attempt more difficult. All of the rods were connected to the same source - to one screw which held them all together.

The latch seems to be a security apparatus. It is preventing the belief to launch or emerge, but it doesn't provide a permanent safeguard. 'It is not only the latch but also my constant effort which keeps the door closed.' The device alone is weak and easy to 'manipulate.' Even a child can effortlessly push the latch opened like we've done a dozen of times during the day, frequently moving between garden, front yard and the lot separated for animals at my grandparent's property. **That would suggest then, that the belief the dream is pointing to is the issue I am already aware of, but I struggle to eradicate . I have sufficient power to suspend it temporarily, but it requires an enormous effort to keep it disabled. It feels like the latch is a symbol of will, the force which holds a person from falling into a habitual act, like in the case of craving for food which is evidently harmful.**

Room – my conscious mind

Father – false belief connected with my father

In the previous exploration, I was able to recognize my father's shortcomings as a result of his false beliefs - the result of childhood experiences he endured and misunderstood. The comprehension of his deficiencies is the path to forgiveness and opportunity to discover flaws in my thinking. 'Knowing' doesn't mean to make excuses for actions, it means accepting them as a product of ignorance - a sort of a genuine blindness to one's conduct and feelings. My father, just as everybody else, had been a bearer of his parents' mental inheritance. While hidden and unknown, they were dictating the course of his life – fulfilling his fate.

This acceptance was elegantly depicted in the first part of the dream: the picture was 'framed,' meaning that his work ('his doing') was discovered and pointed out. I was not interested in

purchasing it. "I didn't buy it" is a statement with two possible meanings: one is that I no longer hold the particular belief, and the second meaning is that I no longer have to 'pay the price' for the habitual action dictated by the false conviction. In either case, there is a confirmation that I don't fall, anymore, under the spell of a belief born out of my father's actions. However, the conflict, in the second part of the dream, is the carrier of the powerful message: 'The fear is not letting me eradicate a significant problem permanently!' The dream exposes my ongoing battle in which I hold the revival of a belief under control, but the fight alone is draining and frustrating.'

Support Incident – Criticism of a Physical Appearance

What is this belief that I'm so reluctant to face? After all, it is always painful to scabble the past and find nothing but lies, illusions, and incorrect assumptions. Well, the first incident that surfaced after a brief review of a dream, was the event targeting physical appearance. It happened when I was about nine years old. My mom, my father and I were walking down the street which stretched itself on the medium steep hill. My father was strolling a few steps behind; it was a strategy that gave him a full view of the remaining members of his family and allowed him to observe and criticize whatever he could find wrong with them. This time, the subject of his commentary was the way we were walking. I always carried the impression that I was one of the targets of his aggression, but, as a matter of fact, his comments were addressed only toward my mom. Nevertheless, his cruel words struck the very core of my insecurity, bringing my awareness to our appearance. It was the moment when his remarks revealed the imperfections of it for the very first time: "I am pushing my belly forward and walking like an elephant."

It was an unbreakable custom for my parents to fight every time they left the house together, like some ancient rite, whose purpose was long forgotten, but the ritual was kept alive. This time was no different. My father was throwing offensive criticism at my mom, and she, armed with skills acquired from frequent practice, was bouncing equally nasty comments right back at him. I was accustomed to these scenes; however, this one had far more damaging consequences than others – I took their criticism upon myself. To make the argument stronger and more hurtful, my father was also pointing at young females passing by, using them as a model of a physical perfection. The comparisons and demeaning games were magic weapons in the hands of my father. If I held to some traces of confidence before that moment, it was trashed entirely by the venom of my parents' merciless confrontation. I was now burdened by a big belly and by my full-blown monstrosity: "I am so ugly! I am doomed!" The assumptions I made were the birth of a new belief. I blindly accepted a new image of myself, without taking into consideration that the belt on my coat was too high and that the slope of the hill required the body to be shifted, to fight gravity. The evil words of my father marked the end of the era of acceptance. The concern about appearance, escalated in my teenage years when it became an obsession. It was an idiotic constant worry which turned into an extreme dieting, starving and exercising. To deny myself food wasn't strenuous, as I was already familiar with the notion of not allowing myself to have what I desired; and now, I took it to a new level and turned down the bare necessities, the



The Pain and Misery where my close companions on my journey through life.

nourishment essential for health. The goal was to achieve the perfection of the model my father set out that day.

A few years later, cigarettes and coffee replaced most of the regular nutritional meals, which had long-term consequences on my health: I became anorexic and bulimic.

How did it affect my life?

It would not be an overstatement to say that this belief had the most severe effect on my existence. Depression, physical discomfort, and pain were affecting every aspect of my life. Despite their constant occurrence, I managed to keep the conditions hidden as my deepest secret. They interrupted my social life, relationships, and work as well. **My father's criticism forced me to believe that it is only the physical perfection which brings people love and admiration from the opposite sex.** It explained why he couldn't love my mom. Even though she was a beautiful woman, my mother was certainly not perfect. After two children, a few extra pounds filled her waistline, making it the target of my father's criticism. And so the most destructive habit was born and the life mission defined. The mission to attain and remain the physical perfection. It is the belief which is painful to face and incredibly difficult to conquer. It has been taking an enormous amount of energy and force to fight it already. How much more will it take to repair all the damage it had done over the years? Is the recovery even possible?

FINAL CONCLUSION

The recent look into my father's character made me wonder about the possible circumstances in his childhood, which took the courage away from him and replaced it with a diversity of fears. The fear of physical heights, displayed during the Eifel tower incident, had its parallel in his thinking, The subconscious beliefs persuaded him to retract from the heights of accomplishment and personal fulfillment. Despite the constant yearning to become a prolific and recognized artist, he sabotaged every chance that presented itself to him. What he thought he was, he became - doomed. Perhaps, his parent's too exercised the comparison tactic, aggravating him with a success of his siblings. Maybe he was never respected and appreciated for his abilities, being a victim of his parent's biases and prejudices. The feeling of unfairness and incompetence grew into a resentment and contributed to his resistance, and the refusal to benefit others. It was the way my father conducted his life, and it was the legacy he passed on to his children. I suspect that he too had never experienced any encouragement or words of appreciation from his parents. His family rendered him incapable, incompetent. He accepted their verdict and lived up to their judgment. Was my father the black sheep of his family as well? Interestingly enough, all his three brothers were rather successful in their careers. However, their deficiencies transpired in different aspects of their lives: the oldest of the brothers, uncle Ludovic, held a highly respected profession of a lawyer, but the least respected reputation of an alcoholic. The second brother - uncle Emilio – was a musician. I used to see him as a manifestation of a perfection: talented, handsome, wise and very fortunate. There was nothing negative in his life, except his rather controlling wife. It was much later in his life when rumors about his adultery circled our family, when my favorite uncle found himself a younger companion. The consequences and the finale of that drama were not known to me. Then, there was my father. The last of the brothers, the youngest, was my uncle, Oscar. Oscar was supposedly loved dearly by his mom; however, goddess Luck failed him in a cruel way. She burdened him with a force that repelled the female gender away from him, leaving him to a fate of a lonely bachelor, constantly longing for a companion. His position on a job was a secretary to the director of communication in a large company - the title which represented a significant accomplishment.

My father appeared to be the only one cursed by failure in all aspects of his life. Luckily, my mom made up for it to the family. She was a caretaker and a provider; she was the one in charge of the household. This statement is nudging me to consider an interesting idea: perhaps, to find at least some initial conditions from which my father assumed his incompetency, it may be beneficial to examine the relationship between him and my mom in more detail. After all, we all have the tendency to fill the role of our parents by choosing a spouse with similar characteristics, securing the role in an already familiar family game. One of the primary dynamics between my parents, as I have described previously, was, that my mom had achieved what my father couldn't, further accentuating his incapability, and simultaneously supporting the negative image of himself.

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Another definite pattern in their relationship was that both of my parents had affairs. My father didn't hide them, quite contrary, he purposely displayed the incriminating evidence for others to see. They were supposed to serve as a testimony of his value. Awaking his confidence, they assigned him an extraordinary rank: "desired". My mom's affairs, on the other hand, were few, and she kept them unexposed. My father suspected her cheating, and it must have damaged his confidence even more. Most certain, then, the scenes in which he criticized her appearance were nothing other than the cry over his inadequacy. It was an attack therapy through which he balanced his smallness and his wife's greatness. It is no surprise that my mom, being 14 years younger than her husband, and being a beautiful woman with no shortage of male attention, wasn't affected by his attacks. However, her adultery could have added to the notion of guilt, which undoubtedly permanently tied her to him.

There is another side to their cheating contest: one of the methods how my father disclosed his affairs to his wife, was that he freely exposed the nude photos of his female friends. Once he was confronted, his defense stood on a claim that the photos were taken to serve as a reference material for his new painting. No wonder my mom associated art with reprobate evil, and blamed the artist for being the instigator of adultery. Unfortunately, the consequences of her resentment affected me as well. The knowledge that I had not even the slightest chance to gain my mom's recognition, affection, and support, could have spared me much of a misery and many heartbreaking disappointments.

Recent recollections led me to a conclusion that my father cared about me a great deal, and that he sincerely willed for me a better life than he was capable of achieving. His aim was to prevent me from making the same mistakes he made. However, his inability to properly communicate his intentions turned his lessons into demented actions, which separated us to the extreme extent: by my teens I refused to acknowledge him as a father altogether.

It is possible, that because he never showed any affection towards his wife, his rare display of the fondness for his daughter provoked her to jealousy. Her insecurity was eased by the decay of the father-daughter alliance. When I openly showed my dislike and anger towards him, she didn't correct me, but left me in my assumptions, like she was consciously encouraging widening the distance between my father and me.

The following recollection may confirm my speculation about my mom's contribution to deepening the gap between us. When I was about 14 years old, during one of my parents' arguments, I took my mom's side once again. I decided to revenge her by not doing my father's laundry. I separated all his dirty clothing from the rest and put it aside. Doing laundry, in those days, required much more time and physical labor than it does today. When my mom walked into the bathroom and noticed father's pile, she looked somewhat embarrassed, implying that I went a bit too far with the revenge. Right away, she prompted me to include his pile and wash it with the rest of the laundry. However, she didn't include the 'why' in her order! When I stood up to her and explained my objective: "If he is so smart, he can do his laundry too!" she plainly

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dismissed it and walked away, purposely withholding the information that could have changed my attitude and dispelled my anger. What was she hiding? Why did she remain silent? The answer was written on her face, in her gestures and her reaction, however, I couldn't interpret it then. I suspect that if she defended him, she would have to do so by sharing the knowledge which most likely jeopardized her innocence and exposed something negative about her - something she knew well, was not right. Many things were falling into this category, things that my parents kept hidden from us – their children, and only a few of them occasionally surfaced during their arguments. I recall one comment about my father paying a certain sum to my mom on a monthly basis. It sounded almost like a rent payment. Yes, I believe that was the arrangement, and the laundry was most likely part of this agreement.

Strange arrangements, strange family and the most strange were our lives. Was my mom putting up with him for a few hundred dollars? Would not that make her look greedy and controlling? I was blind to the power she had over my father, always seeing her as a victim and my father as an aggressor. Could it be love that trapped me into this fundamental misconception? Perhaps the wrong idea of it...

Out of all of the peculiarities, which I had no way to understand at that time, there was one that took me by surprise – the discovery that my father never addressed his sarcastic and degrading comments towards me. He aimed them at my mom, and occasionally my brother. He enjoyed ridiculing my brother in front of others very much. The two of them were his only opponents. On the other hand, my mom always exalted my brother and rejected me. To make this evaluation of my family complete, I need to add that while my mom encouraged my hatred towards my father, my actions and remarks of resentment magnified his feeling of inadequacy. I wasn't aware how much pain he had to endure by constant humiliation. Yet, he didn't know either that he alone was inviting the misery and anguish to his life.

The final result that emerged from the way our parents treated us, was somehow reversed: I despised my father by the time I hit my teens. And even after all the royal pampering, my brother received from his mother, he held hardly any reverence for her, needless to say, displaying affection to her. In fact, once he started his own family, the primary objective of his interest was her possessions.

Partiality, favoritism, competition for attention, jealousy, and treachery were only a few contributors which gradually disintegrated relations between all members of the family.

It is unfortunate that I never knew my parents the way I got to know them recently - years after they departed this world. Only now, I can finally observe the picture of my family with the clarity, like with a mental sobriety. For many years a strange drunkenness obstructed my observations and created harmful opinions. The lives of my parents were nothing but a drama defined by their beliefs and preconceptions assumed from THEIR parents' verbal and nonverbal teachings. With further alterations and additions of their personal suppositions, they passed them on to next

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generation. I, too, accepted it as my subconscious inheritance and allowed it to define a solid border around my choices, actions, and thinking. In fact, every circumstance, every friendship, relationship, and even the career choices were driven by the complex web of unknown beliefs - the consequences of numerous incorrect convictions.

In the past three years I have been gradually acknowledging the extent of my ignorance, and discovering flaws and destructive patterns in my thinking, to improve my existence, and more importantly, to penetrate into more profound states of mind. I am aware, that this is only the beginning of my quest, and that applying my new knowledge in daily life will be as challenging as was the process of its discovery. Recent time has already provided me with many opportunities to test to what degree I have freed myself from the grip of old subconscious programming. It has been a 'reason-thinking put in action,' and as simple as it may sound, it is not an easy task. There is nothing harder than to change one's own 'mind' or the way of life to which we have been accustomed for years. It is a process which will keep me engaged for the rest of my life; but it, indeed, makes life worth living.

Chapter 6

Karma

The following contemplation is an investigation of the expression 'karma'. My goal is to gain an understanding what this peculiar aspect of our existence is and how it functions. The conclusions are fundamentally influenced by Platonic and Neoplatonic Philosophy, and by works of Pierre Grimes. I firmly believe that Philosophy is a spiritual practice, and its full comprehension is founded on a long-term dedication; however, platonic dialogue is a process of reasoning which every man is capable off. It is the virtue, the divinity within all of us. And the efforts of a mindful contemplation always prove fruitful. If the Reason leads, one is on a good path.

"Platonism is a spiritual discipline. Plato is a Platonic yoga; magnificent, structured, progressive, descriptive, psychologically profound."

Pierre Grimes

BREAKING THE KARMA

One of the most widely accepted explanations of karma is the traditional Buddhist view, according to which karma is a collection of good or bad deeds carried from past life into the current existence. It is a continuous process during which the summary of negative and favorable conditions advance to the most recent life. The process of reincarnation continues until all negative aspects of karma are eradicated. Contrary to the Buddhist view, few of the modern spiritual authors claim that karma is tied only to recent life, having no quality of being continuous. Each lifetime, according to the mystical experience and research of these authors, is a life with new challenges and lessons.

Putting aside the argument of the continuity, the object of the following contemplation is karma within one (recent) lifetime, to stay within the boundaries of the experiences and ideas which can be directly confirmed. By doing so, I do not intend to dismiss the possibility of multiple reincarnations; instead, taking this approach allows me to use facts already known, keeping the argument within the rationality of conclusions that can be proved.

What could be a better place to start than the birth alone? The first delineation of person's character and his or her physical features are defined by the relative position of stars and planets, the technique known as 'astrology.' Despite many adamant disbelievers, with a little research into this science one would be in complete agreement that the 'knowledge of stars' collected over the ages is correct and precise. However, the character, determined by the place and time of birth, is only a blank canvas on which the Fate paints the picture. Perhaps, the fundamental concept for the image alone is pre-determined as well, but the artwork is emerging gradually, as the individual's mentality and physicality are shaped by his environment and family. By physicality, I am referring to the state or the condition of a physical body. It may not be obvious, but many inherited habits affect our bodies and lay the foundation for diseases which will appear in future.

The time of 'growing up' is also the time of 'learning' and 'believing.' The difference between these two is that "learning' gives us an objective knowledge, (for example, such as learning colors, words, language, shapes, etc.); 'believing,' however, is a process of subconscious preconditioning - gaining false beliefs about one's reality and the Universe. The phenomena of false beliefs are in depth clarified by Pierre Grimes, Ph. D. In his publications, books and videos, Pierre has described the function of mind in great depth, with profound accuracy and intellectual beauty.

The false beliefs we acquire as children, function as our fate. They shape our personality, and like masks, they give us specific roles, awaking negative habitual reactions as the necessity requires. Since the very beginning of our childhood, we subconsciously acquire beliefs; they are our own conclusions we derived from the statements or events, which, at that time, we were not

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able to understand. A simple phrase of a parent like “Why can’t you do it like Bob?” can set the child for a lifetime of insecurity, by assuming that he is not good enough. No matter how damaging the results are this person will continue to live up to the belief of an inadequacy, defending it by the perception: “that’s just who I am.”

The collection of beliefs define our fate, it becomes our karma, as it takes over the rational thinking and fills our lives with dramas and cycles of difficulties. Occasionally, we wonder why we are tossed into the same circumstances and problems, but it is more natural for us to blame the outside sources and other people for our misfortune, not realizing that it was US who CREATED the life the way it is. If the karma were the result of good or bad ‘deeds’ done to others in previous lives, then it has emerged as a preconditioning of the mind in recent existence.

This rational perspective on karma gives a person the power to change it by an actual act of "knowing one self," and not by action compelled by fear of consequence. Eliminating Karma (especially bad karma) requires a person to look at himself with great sincerity, examine the habits of his thinking of which he wasn’t aware previously, and to seek the actual cause that keeps him in self-destructive patterns. The earnest examination of one’s mind is an ancient technique to eliminate ‘karma.’

Furthermore, the following are some thoughts on the actual process of mind purification. It is a contemplative meditation or meditative contemplation. The term mediation, as it is promoted by most (not all) of today’s media, has a particular fallacy about it, suggesting to “quiet the mind!”. The complete tranquility of the mind can only be achieved when no ideas or preconceptions reside in it. In order to reach this state of stillness, the psyche needs to be purified off all beliefs; otherwise, the attempt to suppress its activity is artificial and often result in frustration. As long as the person holds onto false beliefs, the providential aspect of the Mind continues to present problems, and emotions associated with the belief, giving him the opportunity to find their source. It does so day and night, in meditation and sleep, and also during daily activities; it does it in the form of random thoughts, dreams, and fantasies. To ignore or fight these ‘interruptions’ of the mind is clearly impossible. The key to conquering the false ideas, habits, and fantasies is to acknowledge them and contemplate their very content until the reason of their occurrence and meaning is understood. The mind can’t be shut off, but it can become the primary object of the awareness. There is no need to stop thinking, but rather start thinking about the mind itself and the ideas it is presenting.

The way that “quieting” the mind can help is when the intention to keep the mind at rest becomes the goal of our activity. Setting up a goal is one of the most efficient ways to bring on the natural function of the mind, that is, opening ourselves to receive the guidance. The higher the goal, the more profound issue arises. This form of meditation can be applied during any activity. For example, if we consider a simple goal such as doing dishes. How many thoughts will surface in mind to justify our decision to postpone this simple chore? Or, the contrary idea

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may occur the urge to get the task done immediately; and as we jump to 'get the dishes out of the way,' we may be jeopardizing more meaningful pursuit. All the thoughts around the goal, which raise even a slight conflict, are manifestations of a false belief.

Paying attention to the 'interruptions' of concentration is the first step to mind purification. The processing of random thoughts, memories, and fantasies leads to a recognition of many habitual patterns and false beliefs, and to a discovery of their origin. Thus, the purified mind can stay still, and higher spiritual experiences can take place; or at the very least it will significantly improve one's life.

To support my theory, I would like to mention few historical figures, whose reflective occupation with the mind alone led them unexpectedly to a 'peak experience' also known as enlightenment: Abraham Maslow (psychologist), Richard Maurice Bucke (psychiatrist), David R. Hawkins (M.D., Ph.D. psychiatrist) and Pierre Grimes Ph.D., (psychologist and philosopher).

Knowing and understanding gives us an opportunity to replace our instinctive reactions with the conduct based on a rational decision. "Man is a rational being; the mind is rational, and the whole Universe is rational" (Pierre Grimes). Karma is based on rational law, and the laws is a divine pre-set, running throughout the entire Universe. To know the mind is to open one's Self to the Mind of the Universe.

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Everything is Mind!

“Clearing mental blocks in one’s subconscious leads to knowing of a Universal Mind. Platonists call this knowledge Wisdom”.

About the author

Born in Europe, the author came to Canada – to the city of Edmonton, when she was 22 years old as a refugee from a communist country (former Czechoslovakia). After several different occupations taken on to provide life’s necessities, she was ready to dedicate herself to more meaningful work. Her interest in art and her admiration for technology led her to the profession of a graphic designer. The completion of a



Visual Communication Course at Grant McEwan College started her in that career that lasted for many years. However, in 2011 she left Canada for a new adventure, and with a freshly-gained TESOL certificate she set out to Latin America. Her passion for sharing knowledge and an admiration for the Latin culture lead her to Colombia. After a year, she returned to Edmonton and her primary profession. Only a year later, her work brought her to Houston. In 2015 however, weary of constant relocating, she decided to return to her homeland, Canada, permanently.

These facts were significant occurrences in the author’s life, yet they provide only empirical data. Behind these simple facts are years filled with struggles, turmoil, disappointments and hardships. The misfortune, which affected her the most, was the loss of her mother, whose departure from this world filled the author with extreme emptiness and confusion. Even though she was often puzzled about the meaning of life, at this time, her existence alone made no sense to her at all.

Nonetheless, this event became the inflection point and it marked the beginning of the quest for the deeper meaning of life. The author’s initial goal was to find the dwelling place of her mom’s soul as she wasn’t ready to let her go completely. Years of digging into religions, spiritual studies and practices shifted her awareness, but her questions were left unanswered. Then she came across the work of Pierre Grimes Ph.D. His profound wisdom presented in tangible ideas, practical methods and empirical lessons were the teachings for which she was searching.

She found the answers, and discovered new questions as well. Despite the fact that there are still plenty of concepts to grasp, Pierre’s Neoplatonic education as a spiritual practice in the form of a platonic counseling has profoundly changed her life already. While she was looking for her mother’s soul, she found her own.