

Self-Help Power

By Gary Eby, Master Social Worker

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PREFACE

I turn to focus once again on the infinite, majestic waves. Their surf-music play notes of rushing, slashing, percussive melodies, which mesmerize, hypnotize, and comforts the soul. To be writing on a day like this is a blessing beyond imagination, with memories to treasure and keep alive in the secret place within.

INTRODUCTION

Why is change so difficult? There is a dark secret that tries to hold us back from all the success we so earnestly desire.

We are born with the innate ability to overcome any human hardship whether it be social, emotional, mental, physical, or financial. The key has to be discovered on our own personal journey.

Year after year books are published promising happiness, joy, prosperity, love and health. They just don't tell us how to do it. Oh, yes, they tell us to think positive or forget about the past. They offer us chants and "powers" and even "secrets".

Here's the real secret...As long as your heart or mind or body remembers that negative incident from how ever long ago, your ability to have a healthier life will remain a struggle.

In this article I will show you how my life coaching process will help you have more health, success, and prosperity.

I've been a social worker for 37 years. Most of you think you know what a social worker does. My approach has been different.

Listen for a moment to Kirsten L, a prior client of mine, explain the impact of life coaching:

"I have been visiting with Gary Eby weekly over the last 8 months. During these visits I have learned numerous skills all of which have been life changing."

"Gary is teaching me how to live with my negative side, AKA--the dark secret."

"Everyone of us has a negative side, but through the 'Stop and Think' process I have learned three steps how to control it."

"I have learned how to handle anger, set healthy boundaries, and how to have better relationships."

So, when we are triggered by our negative side or that dark secret, try my stop and think process which includes these following steps:

1. Slow down and take deep breaths: Hold the inhale for three seconds and than exhale slowly for six.
2. Say a mantra of your choosing. (Positive self-talk)
3. Reach out for help to a positive person.

This process that I am calling emotional recovery coaching hopefully will start you on a journey to achieving more health, success, and prosperity. When you can slow down by the stop and think process, you can then make the positive decisions necessary to achieve your hopes, dreams, and goals.

(Mr. Eby is a Master Social Worker with more than 30 years of professional experience. He is the author of *The Eby Way: Challenging, Releasing, Healing Your Painful Past*. His work will soon to be released at Sterlinghousepublisher.Com. He currently works as a therapist and counselor for Options of Southern Oregon, the local mental health agency. He has also provided online life coaching services on eBay for many years. Visit his site at <http://www.squidoo.com/ebyway>.)

Overcoming a Writer's Fear

So I am sitting outside today on our porch in Grants Pass, Oregon. The sky is partly cloudy with enough holes in the white puffy stuff to allow the sun to warm my face. Yeah, I am getting my so called "vitamin D shot".

I understand vitamin D is supposed to be good for you; it fights cancer and other scary diseases. On the other hand, I shouldn't stay too long in the sun, because we are told to fear the beast of skin melanoma.

The good news is my wife and I will be heading to the Oregon coast soon for hopefully five glorious days in a rented beach home located in the town of Yachats. Also, I am appreciating the slight breeze which touches my face as I look out into the distance, past our huge 100 feet Ponderosa Pines, quaking Aspens, and the purple looming mountains on the horizon.

My eyes drift upward to take a scan of the grand, blue heavens, poking through those partially white and gray clouds. And my breath is almost taken away from the sight of the biggest hawk I have ever seen in my life.

You know what? Maybe it's not a hawk. The wing span is so large, I am reminded of those one-man glider kites. I think that awesome, floating bird could be a turkey vulture or maybe even a golden eagle. Wow. Whatever avian creature circles above me, the

message that startles my consciousness today is the importance of rising above all that we fear.

Fear is one of those dark secrets that holds us writers, both young and old, captive from all we deserve to become. As a matter of fact, fear can be a force of self-destruction and negativity no matter what hopes and dreams we want to pursue. Let me present a more personal example of my struggle with this darkness.

Almost a year ago, on July of 2007, I was reading *The Secret*, by Rhonda Burns. She makes the wonderful point about the “Law of Attraction” that what we project out from our minds into the universe, we will surely receive: send out the positive and receive the positive; embrace negativity and remain imprisoned by the negative.

The thought came to me (as I pondered her formula of asking, believing, and receiving), that I had a manuscript collecting 20 years of dust on our closet shelf. What was holding me back from sending that baby out to the universe?

I experienced an unpleasant twinge in my stomach: I was afraid that what I wrote wasn’t good enough; that inexplicably hurt. In a sudden splash of insight, honesty, and openness, I said to myself: “Gary why don’t you use the skills and principles that help your clients overcome despair, mental illness, addictions, homelessness, poverty, and incarceration? Just finish what you started so long ago.” Yet the inner dark side replied, “ Because you are a social worker not a writer.”

However, I took a deep breath for three seconds, and I slowly let the air out of my lower lungs for six or more. I went through my Yoga, Tai-Chi, and meditation routine. I used the “ask, believe, and receive” process. And I added my own prayer of going into the Light within: “Thank you God for all that I have and for all that I receive.”

I completed my book about hope and healing in August of 2007. In December of 2007, I pursued the self-publishing process on Lulu.com. I sold some copies but knew what I really longed for was a legitimate publisher. Again the hydra-head of fear uttered: “The likelihood of a publisher picking up your book is about as good as winning the jack-pot in one of your Oregon Native American Casinos.”

For a while longer, I danced with the fear monger, and I did nothing about it, until three months ago. After completing my same relaxation and meditation routine, this time I visualized sending my book out to a publisher who would appreciate its value and potential.

I also prayed to my sense of Higher Power called the Love-Light. I actually felt warmth, comfort, and the unconditional love of being in the Light. The thought came to me that I needed to send out query letters to established agents and publishers.

I found a service on the internet that would blast out my query letters to 500 agents and publishers. Over the last three months, unfortunately I received 498 rejection notices, but

two positive responses. One was from a publisher in New Mexico, and the other was from SterlingHouse Publisher: <http://www.sterlinghousepublisher.com/newsite/>.

On June 18, 2008, I signed a contract with SterlingHouse. (Thank you SterlingHouse!) But, I have no idea where this new journey will take me. I don't even know what the title will be or how many changes the editor will make. I surely don't have a clue how to do book signings or how to begin the enigma of the marketing process.

I do know the sky is azure today; the sun is still warm on my face; the mountains always lift my spirit; and the eagle rises above the forces of fear and all dark secrets. Wherever your are, whatever you do, refuse to dance with the negative side that holds you back. Learn the skills to face your stressful feelings honestly and openly.

Find a way to enter the Light within. Then your writing will no longer require tedious work or even esoteric craftsmanship. You will find your inspirational voice, and you will rise above like eagles.

A New Way

My wife and I are sitting at the white patio table under the green umbrella at the Riverside Restaurant in Grants Pass, Oregon. We are at the bottom of a three level veranda facing the Rogue River.

The Rogue is one of our few nationally protected wild rivers. I can hear the gurgling flow of the current rapidly moving down stream. The warm sun today hits the rippling water with thousands of light refractions that gleam like tiny, twinkling stars.

Needless to say, we are relaxed; and enjoying our peaceful surroundings accompanied by bird songs and pine tree fragrances. I look across the eighty feet span of this amazing water wonder. There are bluish-green mountain tops looming down stream, and a huge, graceful Osprey circling above us.

All of a sudden, the raptor folds in its wings, dive-bombs into the river in front of us, like a gifted dancer nailing a contorted pose. Then the Osprey victoriously explodes out of the water, flying into the blue sky with a silver fish in its beak. Oh my, I have never witnessed such a raw, glorious, inspiring sight.

My mind flashes back to a similar, awesome and equally inspiring human experience that occurred several nights ago at our local Unity Church. I facilitate a support group there on Thursday evenings that we call Positive Life Changes.

We are sitting on the wood and aluminum church chairs arranged in a circle. I am in the middle of the group with Kathy, Fred, Tom, and Shawn on the left half of the circle; and Doris, Anne, and Fred on my right.

Fred begins the meeting by reading from our Mission Statement: “We are meeting here today to discover positive ways of having a healthier, happier, more balanced life.”

Fred, (who is 85-years-old, bent over from back problems, with a bald head, white moustache, and a pervasive twinkle in his eye) hands off the Mission Statement sheet to Shawn, our newest member.

She reads the three pathways to emotional recovery, beginning with, “#1. We will practice ways to limit and control negative thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.”

Shawn, (in her early 40’s, a single mom, with page-boy styled brunette hair) passes the sheet back to me.

I further explain, “There are eight actual steps to positive change, but first we will begin our discussion with the word of the day entitled ‘A New Way’.”

Each member eagerly took turns explaining how to embrace a new way of living despite the inevitable setbacks, challenges, and life stressors that appear to block our progress at times.

Fred delighted in describing his “kick-the-bucket” list: “I made a commitment to take note of all the things that have displeased my wife, and I will try to do better.” In the last year he has many physical challenges that have included one heart attack, crippling back pain, and two strokes.

Kathy, (37, very slender, wearing her brown hair in a pony tail) proudly explained that she is in recovery from her alcoholism after getting out of prison recently for multiple DUI convictions. She went on to attest, “My new way is moving into a women’s half-way house in town, which will support my recovery, and help me get a fresh start on life again.”

Doris, (short, with thinning reddish-brown hair, in her late 40’s) has been married and divorced three times. She is living with her elderly mother and her alcoholic brother. She shyly shared, “My new goal is to change my life by going back to college and majoring in career development.”

Tom, (47, brain-injured, with Schizophrenia, wearing a light pencil thin beard on his jaw line) is applying for Social Security Disability. He softly described his new interest in writing poetry, and he wisely pointed out to the group, “A new way suggests a willingness to be more open to positive thoughts, feelings, and actions.”

Anne, (53, short blond hair, speaks with an Irish accent) came as a guest of Kathy’s. She related to Tom her ambivalence about being on Social Security Disability. With passion in her eyes she stated, “My new way is to look for part-time work because I am not crippled enough to stay at home all day.”

Pete, (62, fully bearded, grey haired, and a combat Vietnam veteran) is going through a terrible divorce. He painfully described his grief over his separation from his wife of fourteen years due to her unmanageable Bipolar Disorder and alcoholism.

Tearfully he stated, “How do you move forward to embrace a new life when negative thoughts and feelings keep taking you back to the old pain and suffering?”

I took this opportunity to recommend my stop and think process to positive change.

When we are faced with hardships, adversity, or triggers to engage in self-defeating behavior (I call our dark secrets), I suggest we try the following emotional recovery system:

#1. Take a deep breath by inhaling for three seconds, and slowly exhale for six or more. This will slow down the temptation to stress-out or impulsively dance with negativity.

#2. Practice the skill of positive self-talk. For example, repeat affirmations like, “I refuse to beat myself up with things I can’t change.” Or, “I deserve to have a better life today.”

#3. Most importantly, when stuck and unable to see a new way, pause, and reach out for help to a positive person.

Pete graciously thanked me, smiled, and exclaimed, “Sounds good Gary, but where do I find positive people to talk with?”

I hesitated, and said, “Look around Pete, all the positive people you need are in this group today.”

We then laughed, smiled, and mysteriously connected in a special way; as majestic and uplifting as the Osprey who in full view dove into the water, and flew back into the blue sky victorious.

Startled from my muse by the waitress, we ordered from the menu. I look again at the mighty Rogue, and recount my experiences about the support group to my wife Susan.

A Writer’s Secret Place

On the first morning of our vacation to Yachats around 6:45 A.M., I am still drowsy while I curl over in bed taking dim note of our surroundings. Our bedroom faces East with a wall to wall picture window protected by a panel of hanging canvas-like shades. The rising sun is streaming through those vertical panels, illuminating a picture of

Martha's Vineyards on the opposite wall, and an adjacent beach painting called "By the Sea."

I hear my wife Susan in the kitchen probably making coffee. Every so often there is a cracking boom from the surf outside, crashing against our rugged, rocky Oregon coastline.

I am more awake now, but I close my eyes to move myself deeper into the spirit of relaxation. However, I do commence to stroke Silas, our twelve pound poodle and Pomeranian mix, who is snuggled besides me. Slowly, I become aware of and more sensitive to the outside chatter of birds commingled with the cackling songs of some crows.

Woven within the cacophony is the mysterious and melodic flute-like song of an unknown avian creature. Whatever the nature of this species, I am convinced it is a virtuoso. Such sweet, soothing refrains, flash me back to the Native American music, Susan and I became so exquisitely familiar with when we lived in Albuquerque, New Mexico in the 90's.

The flute notes continue with a slightly reedy resonance, accompanied by three staccato whistles at the end of the bird song. I know in my heart, as a few tears of joy land on my face, that I must have arrived in heaven.

As I record these precious moments in my journal, I would like to say a few words of encouragement to aspiring writers. First and foremost, start writing your own journal. There is something healing, therapeutic, and thought provoking about the whole journaling process.

Next, while you journal, pause to slow the pace down. Review the written passages and look for word gems or thought jewels to further refine and appreciate. This form of writing then becomes a kind of cognitive meditation, which facilitates peace of mind and limitless creativity.

For example, I am sitting now in a comfortable lounge chair located in our beach home living room. I have rewritten my entry at least 10 times or more, which is the third thing I want to suggest to all those who want to get published: keep polishing your work.

The more I focused on describing my immediate environment, the more receptive I became to free flowing, relaxing thoughts. I noticed the whole West wall of our living room consists of four, tempered glass windows, about five-by-five square feet each, and a matching pair attached to both side walls. The observation area presents a panoramic view that is unbelievable, humbling, and awe inspiring.

Our rental home actually rests on a grassy cliff overlooking and facing the Pacific Ocean. The spectacular water images hypnotize by the undulating motion of the waves, caressing

the huge, oddly shaped, black, barnacle covered, volcanic rock slabs, jutting out in the shoreline.

As I write about the power of journaling, the surf roars with breaking whitecaps, spiraling around and splashing between the rock formation fingers. Sea gulls fly low over the waters, sometimes diving in to feast on sea bounty.

Write about what you hear, feel, and think. Know that there is a creative force within all of us. Practice accessing this inner Light that overcomes all dark secrets, which mysteriously threaten to hold us back from the good we deserve. Let your writing take you to the place of silence deep within our subconscious mind some appropriately call, “The Secret Place of the most High.”

Furthermore, listen to the spirit music of your surroundings and observations. Allow your mind, body, and soul to dance to the rhythmic pulse of inspiration and bliss. Give yourself permission to free associate with your creative strengths, talents, and abilities.

So, let’s take a deep breath together and revisit one last time the sparkling, gleaming, life images that stand before me today. I look out at a mauve sky on the ocean horizon. At times, the sun turns the sea into millions of glistening diamond lights. A partial cloud-drape extends over the bluish green waters as far as the eye can see. Gulls and water fowl are bobbing in clumps, speckling the ocean with white feather squares like enormous nature-made patch quilts. The fishy, salty, seaweed smells permeate the air.

I turn to focus once again on the infinite, majestic waves. Their surf-music play notes of rushing, slashing, percussive melodies, which mesmerize, hypnotize, and comforts the soul. To be writing on a day like this is a blessing beyond imagination, with memories to treasure and keep alive in the secret place within.

The Power of Word Pictures

This is an article about the love of writing and the power of positive images. It also contains more advice to aspiring writers.

It is the last full day of our vacation in Yachats, pronounced “ya-hahts”.

This amazing place was named after the Yachats Native Americans who were hunters and gathers in the 1500’s. There are several translations of the word, but the one I appreciate the most truly characterizes the environment here: “as far as you can go along the beach.”

I am in our living room, nestled up in the lounge chair, looking at the omnipresent ocean through our panoramic view windows. The sky is cloudy with streaks of powder blue on the horizon, hinting of a possible clearing.

Ocean waters appear foamy, grayish-white, but they play surf music with wave cymbals and splash drums. Sometimes they erupt into blow-hole spectaculars-actually shooting spray twenty or more feet into the air between the volcanic rock fingers.

In this article, I want to provide more advice to aspiring writers, and some energetic support to all who delight in the healing power of words.

First idea, I think writers should capture images that inspire and connect emotionally with the reader. For example, the last two sunsets here were an almost out-of-body experience for me. We can all relate to sunsets, right?

Along these lines, I recall the sun sphere presented its magical illusion of disappearing into the ocean horizon. The sky became a radiant portrait of pastel colored ribbons, gleaming with flame red, tangerine, soft pink, and all shades in between.

Such a vision was accompanied by a sea chorus, singing to all of us about the mystery and wonder of life.

Next idea, I suggest writers read their material out loud. The sound of words casts a rhythm of sentences, which comfort, inspire, and reveal pathways to better stories. Or, they can even point the way to emotional healing.

To illustrate this, I remember the hike I took yesterday with our son Jason and our 14-year-old granddaughter, Kaidyn. I experienced considerable comfort and pleasure from reading out loud the following passages:

We started at a place called Cape Perpetua, high in the mountains off the Highway 101 South, heading out of Yachats towards the quaint town of Florence. The ocean view from the roadside observation station was enough to take our breath away.

In the distance was the pine tree covered peninsula that formed one arm of the U-shaped bay. Pulsating, whitecap waves, in parallel lines rolled endlessly up and over the volcanic rock slabs below. The rocks appeared to look like gigantic, distorted, black and white checkerboard squares.

This scene compelled us to move down the hilly hiking trail, which descended through ferns and Queen Anne's Lace fauna to explore the rock formations at the oceans' edge. These ancient protrusions, we soon discovered, kept hidden wondrous tide pools, stocked with fishy sea smells of anemones, multicolored star fish, and purple and pink sea urchins.

We laughed and shouted to each other when making new discoveries, played out against a background of surf timpani and blow-hole eruptions. The water spray, sea energy, and excitement underscored the incalculable value of family love, and the awesome glory of life itself.

Last idea, whether you are a writer or not, I can't emphasize enough the importance of slowing down to stop and breathe. When you live more in the moment, your positive inner voice will guide you to achieve whatever you seek—published books or healthy lives.

I believe we move too fast in American culture, or we just numb ourselves out with mind altering behaviors, distractions, and electronic devices. Let me share with you how I slowed down on my vacation.

Now the clouds have moved out; the sun is gloriously back, framing the sky with a collage of deep blue, baby blue, and pale pinks on the ocean horizon. I walk outside to the grassy cliff behind our rental home, and simply pause to listen.

I become more aware of the sea concert carried on a salty, windy breeze that embraced all of my senses. I assume the crouching Tai Chi position, taking a deep breath for three seconds, exhaling slowly for six; and float my arms up like the extended wings of a great swan.

As I went through my healing ritual of breathing, stretching, dancing, and affirmations, I noticed my son and granddaughter observing me through the windows. They were laughing and copying my various closed-hand prayer positions. I smiled back, gave them a thumbs up, and finished the process of standing still in the blessed moment of the now.

Oh yes, the message (my inner voice spoke to me) was about the acceptance of humility and gratitude that comes from writing about these precious moments; and the joy of sharing them with all who find comfort from a writer's word pictures.

How to Overcome Emotional Suffering

I used the following emotional recovery tools to treat the most chronic, psychologically disabled, homeless clients, and miracles happened. These clients practiced the Five Steps repeatedly until they acquired the confidence necessary to overcome any unanticipated problem or stressful event.

Caring deeply about ourselves (self-worth) despite the omnipresent negative side, is the first piece of three types of mental equipment needed to produce any form of internal change or recovery—the armor, shield, and sword.

Armor metaphorically speaking, is a pervasive and positive attitude of caring so much for ourselves that we refuse to hurt ourselves or others, even when tempted by the cravings of the old ways, negative habits, or the influence of negative people.

The shield (called the Emotional Recovery Card) is used to stop and think about alternative ways of coping with pain, pleasure, and conflict. The sword, symbolizes our

spiritual connection, which we can use to slay any internal or external dragons or monsters that so often return to us as the negative mode of living.

Many years ago, it dawned on me that the same Five Steps used to help homeless clients at Transitional Living Program in Battle Creek, Michigan can also serve as a framework to help anyone solve personal problems, or even mold our “armor” to focus on broader social reform issues.

For example, I can see reform applications of The Five Steps to school issues, prisons, reduction in the welfare roles, relief for step-families and dysfunctional relationships, treatment for all addictive behaviors (including losing weight), hope of recovery for emotional illness, and even relief from serious physical illness or injury.

For now, let us learn how to apply The Five Steps to make and improve our own self-esteem, and self-caring attitudes. Once we accept the importance of wearing our protective mental equipment, the dark secrets can’t touch us; and our healing and personal freedom begins.

STEP 1: ADMIT THE PROBLEM.

To honestly face a problem, or admit a weakness is something we all find very difficult to do. If we over work, eat, drink, and smoke too much, take too many medications, or have sex that is harmful to others, we probably have a problem. But we don’t like to admit this, and that’s called denial—part of our dark secrets.

Our response is to get so caught up in day to day survival that we easily forget about our own personal problems—the only things we can really change. Everything becomes basically—the other guys fault, right?

Healing and recovery begins when we are honest and open enough to say, “My life is a problem; there are serious problems in this country too; and I am willing to look at what I can do to change things.”

Maybe individually we can’t change society or the “system” but we can change ourselves. If enough of us make these personal changes, from the leaders of corporate America to the every day person on the street, then social conditions will change too.

We can begin this process by working on one personal weakness or character defect at a time. As weakness is overcome and transformed into strength, then we can turn our attention to improving the social conditions around us.

I suggest you try to begin this process of change today by simply choosing one problem to work on that is particularly bothersome for you.

STEP 2: MAKE A PLAN.

Getting honest about our own weaknesses is only the beginning. After we face one problem, we must make a plan to do something about it or nothing changes. There are four basic parts to a good plan: set goals; anticipate steps necessary to achieve the goals; face barriers to the goals; and develop a game plan to get around the barriers.

Goals define clearly what we want and when we want it. Focusing on steps, help us to see the importance of anticipating what we need to do to obtain the goals. The term barriers, brings us again to our dark secret side.

Inside barriers are those things within that stop us; like anger, sadness, fear, doubt, false beliefs, rationalizations, justifications, guilt, and shame. Outside barriers, refer to lack of resources, opportunities, environmental, and situational problems that our dark secret uses to try to convince us to give up.

The term game plan refers to formulating the strategies necessary to overcome the dark secret whether inside or outside of us. Game plans include facing feelings, thinking positive, and using appropriate recovery tools to facilitate success.

Let us begin this process today, by making a plan to do something positive about a problem, and then change one weakness into a strength by accomplishing an important goal.

STEP 3. REACH OUT FOR HELP.

Now, sometimes despite our best plans, our lives can get stuck or the unexpected happens. When life hurts and nothing seems to work, it's time to reach out for help. Yes, this can be hard to do.

I know it can be difficult to trust another person, or a group, or a church, or even God, because most of us have been let down by other people, groups, church, and even our belief in God.

You may ask, "How can God help when prayers remain unanswered, and I still feel defeated, sick or miserable?" I believe the answer is, we can't heal until there is a letting go of that dark secret—ego, that stops most of us from reaching out for the help that is always available. Others know this beast as false pride.

We can not always do it alone. We must reach out when we are hurting and draw strength and love from others who are around us. If we do, the healing begins; if we don't the suffering continues.

Stop putting off asking or reaching for help. Reach out today, and let the healing process begin.

STEP 4: CELEBRATE STRENGTHS

The greatest pain of all is to feel we are not good enough. Before we can effectively celebrate our strengths, we must face that pain. Some of us feel we are not good enough for love, so we hurt ourselves or we strike back at others.

This dark secret can carry over into the work place, where we settle for dead-end, low-paying jobs, instead of going for our wonderful dreams.

Sometimes, we might not feel good enough for this society or culture, because of physical appearances; so we isolate our engage in violence, rather than learning to love ourselves more.

And then there are those who have been abused and neglected by parents, a spouse, society, or war; when this happens, some of us run from one town to another, never looking in the mirror, never finding better ways to handle hate and despair. We can also relate to getting super stressed out, and worrying excessively or obsessively.

We can worry about not enough money, not enough clothes, not enough leisure time, little recognition, fleeting love. So, some of us work our lives away, and too many of us die lonely in sterile hospital wards, nursing homes, prisons, jails, or homeless shelters.

Take the time today to celebrate who you really are. Find the positives about yourself, and shout to the world, “I am always good enough and more!” Look at your strengths, talents, and abilities.

Strengths are the good qualities you like about yourself. Talents are your special abilities to do something better than others. Abilities comprise your potential to be better at something if you work harder at it.

Proclaim your positive side daily for this is your Light within. Recognize the weaknesses and the dark side, but build health on what you like about yourself; that’s a recovery attitude built on a rock hard foundation.

Affirm your uniqueness, when the negative thoughts, feelings, and experiences begin—called “stinking thinking” the wisdom of the 12 Step Programming. Strive to sense the Love inside of you; feel your Light.

Then, let this inner Light grow where you can actually start giving It away to others. The more you give, the more you receive. This is our Love-Light, and It forms the corner stone of all prosperity principles—even The Law of Attraction.

Celebrating ourselves in an open and humble fashion is probably the true measure of success. We have a right to feel good about ourselves despite our weaknesses, disabilities, or limitations.

For me, real success is not just about making more money—it's about being happier, having more good ideas, and showing more love and compassion. Success is all about living in the moment, and appreciating the joy of life all around us. Of course we deserve to have wealth and prosperity too.

It's finding the comfortable balance between the mind, body, and soul. Let us find this balance daily before we slowly harm ourselves with negative feelings, thoughts, and self-destructive behaviors. We can begin today by celebrating our strengths, talents, and abilities, over all the illusions our dark secret tries to send our way.

STEP 5: BELIEVE IN THE POWER OF THE POSITIVE.

We can no longer survive in a society, culture, or world without having a practical and workable value system—let us make it our Truth within. Every day we make choices about ourselves which impact on the lives of others.

There is a purpose in living, and it has to do with reaching our true potential. I think this actual purpose is a spiritual transformation. But, you decide what makes sense to you.

Let us believe in the power of Good, and life will improve. Just test it out for yourself today.

The Power of Letting Go

Today, I am worrying about getting my retirement pension finalized through the National Guard. Negative thoughts are challenging me. This article is all about the process of gaining freedom from oppressive thoughts and obsessive thinking.

Actually, I am also parked in my Hyundai with the windows down and the top portal open, looking at the ocean from a roadside turn-off in Crescent City, California. I just had a marvelous lunch at the Harbor View Grotto. So I pop a huge Seattle Chocolate Toffee in my mouth, savoring the crunchy, milky sweetness of the candy. And, I let myself slowly recover from the two cranberry vodka cocktails I consumed at the Grotto.

The ocean is calm on this early afternoon. Small white cap waves roll in over the cream colored sandy beach, which kisses the crescent shaped, green peninsula framing the bay area. Scattered cotton-ball clouds hover against a baby-blue sky. A slight mist-blanket dances in slow motion over the pine tree covered mountains nearby.

Some people are walking along the surf line. A few are flying multi-colored kites. Others are playing with their dogs. Several couples lovingly stroll hand in hand.

The message I have decided to focus on for you is all about the power of letting go. This process isn't as easy as it seems. For example, the paper work for my twenty year military retirement has not been cleared by the National Guard Headquarters in Santa Fe, New Mexico. They acknowledged receiving the forms I mailed them, but they haven't returned my last four phone calls to confirm the status or progress of my pension.

Can you relate to obsessing about a person, place, or thing that seemingly doesn't have a resolution?

Presently, the sun is beaming through the top of my car portal. Soon I will need to join the beach walkers. For a few more minutes, I ponder the lunch at the Grotto: fresh baked, beer-battered, cod fish and chips; nippy coleslaw; sour dough bread; and the best clam chowder I have ever experienced.

I think the first step to letting go is to get your mind off the problem for a while. I recall this trip to the Crescent City beach took about an hour and a half drive from Grants Pass, Oregon, on Highway 199 that eventually merged into 101 South.

The one lane highway winds like an enormous African Python encircling ancient, brown and black lava mountains; stretching besides the shallow, clear, stony waters of the Smith River; culminating through an almost endless forest canopy populated by majestic Redwood trees. Easy to pretend I had entered a land of enchantment completed with ferries, giants, hobbits, and wizards.

This experience illustrates my second step to releasing all that is negative. Allow yourself to embrace a form of meditation in motion, which comforts the spirit and releases the mind to embrace a blissful now.

Thirdly, concentrate on breathing slowly in and out. Try to stay with a comforting, life affirming, mind picture. Unfortunately, reality can intervene at any time. For me, I was feeling too hot to remain in the car.

Time to walk the hundred feet forward, and pass the couple on the drift wood log, who are embracing. Also, it's time to get personal with the mesmerizing sea waves.

I set up my little carry on beach chair, admiring for a moment the names people have etched in the sand. The waves drum and undulate white, foamy, turquoise water. A little, dirty-white miniature poodle (the size of my foot) causes me to laugh as it runs through and tickles my legs. His master nervously apologizes by waving the empty dog leash in his hand. I let him know it's okay.

Fourth tip, challenge the negativity with a mighty denial like "shut-the-heck-up!" Lift your head up high; scan the sky.

For me, after sitting in my chair, I spot five hawks circling above. There is a slight, cool breeze in the air; temperature is about 68 degrees. I have on my jeans, and my jogging sweat-shirt, which keep me quite cozy. I notice a sea gull standing in the surf, at absolute peace despite my own personal challenges and anxieties.

Last idea, simply choose to release the pressure within like clenching your fist tight and then slowly opening it. Turn ultimately to your source of faith or Higher Power to handle all fears, doubts, concerns, and obsessions.

Consequently, I physically and metaphysically take up my folding chair, and I put it in the carrying case. With the case slung over my shoulders, I comb the beach in Crescent City, California.

There is still one hawk circling above. The ocean symphony hugs my soul and lifts my spirit. Dogs chase after sticks and balls thrown by their human guardians in the surf. Lovers walk hand and hand at the water's edge.

The problems with the National Guard will get worked out. Today, I choose to be at peace. Today, you have a right to let go, and join me in this special place of serenity by the sea.

Love Life

I've been back from my nature walk for a while near our home in Grants Pass, Oregon. The sky is clear and blue; temperature must be around 83 degrees with a slight breeze.

I wore my straw hat to protect my neck and face from the sunshine. And I always use my black, walking stick; carved with a mysterious sandal-colored, wizard face, who wears a long, flowing beard.

Today, I want to write an article about the power of love, life challenges, and healthy ways to meet these challenges.

My wife and I are looking forward to celebrating our thirty-first wedding anniversary in December. I will be turning 60 on September the 6th. We've made plans to spend a few days at the Mill Resort in Coos Bay, which is on the Oregon coast. This is one of our favorite places.

We have been through much together. I thought I would share with you one of my dark secrets: my beloved Susan suffers from chronic mental illness.

For more information on this significant life challenge, let me flash you back to April of 1987. The struggle with her mental illness had endured over the course of our first ten years of marriage:

The alarm rang: It was 5.45 in the morning; soon I'd have to get up for work. I was feelings rather snug in our warm water bed on this cold April morning in 1987. Susan as usual had rolled over on her side by the opposite end of the bed with her back towards me.

I had learned that I couldn't hug her when she was in that position. If I tried she would usually wake up and shove my arm away.

Last summer, I remembered learning from one of Susan's personalities that Susie had married me not Susan. Susie was warm, sensual, and sexy. Susan, in contrast, was more intelligent, sensitive, and sharing; but had trouble expressing and receiving affection.

As I lay there thinking about our struggle, Susan rolled over facing me. I knew that I could hug her now. I thoroughly enjoyed embracing Susan. With my arms around her, we start to talk:

"Gary, I'm feeling pretty agitated," she said, holding her arms close to her chest while grabbing and letting go of her wrists over and over.

"What's up Sweetheart?"

"Gary, I feel trapped—trapped."

"Trapped?"

"Yes. Marge is going to trap me in my lies. I am making all of this up. I'm a liar."

"Honey, Marge has told you that your personalities are real. You trust her; you love her. She wouldn't lie to you."

"This can't be happening, Gary. I don't believe it. My dad couldn't do those things. I'm making this all up to explain my behavior. I am just crazy."

"I know this stuff sounds pretty bizarre. I believe your dad did those things. I've seen other dads that did it to their children. Honey, you've got to believe this. If you don't, you won't get well."

"I won't get well then. I'll only believe it if my dad confesses."

"Why should your dad confess? He's either a very sick man who will protect himself, or he is blocking all of the memories too."

"How do you know I'm not making this up then?"

“Sweetheart, ask Marge.”

“Yeah, I guess I could.”

“Can you tell me more about your session with Marge yesterday?”

“I was there for an hour and a half. I don’t remember most of it. Marge had me do some mental tests, like figuring out mazes and things. She asked Lois to come but Lois didn’t. I did the test myself then Lois came, but she wouldn’t tell Marge she was here. Marge found out later and had Lois do the tests.”

“What else happened?”

“I don’t know. Gary, I’m sick of all of this.” Then Susan stopped talking.

Susan got up from the bed for a moment and shook her head. She was frowning and her shoulders were hunched over. She looked angry but confused. She just let herself fall back into the bed. I knew she had changed again, and sleeping seemed to help.

So, how did we survive all of this? Well, I will tell you more about it in the future if you are interested.

For now, I’ve decided to go on a walk again. I cut through the path in front of our lovely home that takes me to the nearby golf course. The terrain is hilly with rolling verdant, manicured mounds.

Scattered Ponderosa Pines, mighty Acorn trees, and Blue Spruce decorate my view. A cascading fountain in the middle of the course refreshes my stride. Purple-green colored mountains encapsulate this glorious vision.

My walk takes me to a road behind the golf course that climbs gradually up a 45 degree incline. I feel the pleasant burn in my hips and legs as I dig down with the walking stick to increase the pace.

Before I enter the pine scented woods, twenty-seven wild turkey’s cross my path. The adult birds waddle and bob, protecting their baby chicks by their hyper vigilance.

You might ask, “But what is the first step to handling life challenges in more positive, healthier ways?”

I smile, and take in a deep breath, thankful for love, life, and the omnipresent nourishment of my soul that surrounds us all.

Life Change

This is an article about hope, aging, and coping with our inevitable mortality.

We arrived at the Mill Casino Resort in Coos Bay, Oregon around 4:15 in the afternoon. I am sitting on a brown, pine, folding chair next to a wood paneled octagon-shaped table. A small green iron fence boxes off this outdoor patio area.

The sun is out; temperature is about 65 degrees. There are multi-colored flags flapping in the wind posted on the boardwalk directly in front of the little fence enclosure. Purple, yellow, blue, pink, and white flowers hang in containers from the lamp posts in between the dancing flags.

Most reassuringly, I have a gorgeous view of the bluish-green bay waters. It spans easily more than a mile across. Verdant mountains on the opposite shore project up like a horizontal pod of monstrous Humpback Whales.

To my amusement and amazement, great Pelicans circle in the middle of the bay, sometimes providing gymnastic diving stunts for a fresh fish meal. And, floating, twinkling, ferry lights, hover as the sun refracts off the calm, billowy sea.

I am also enjoying the warm rays of that mighty heat orb that caresses my white tea-shirt, tempting me to utilize my red swim trunks to plunge into the indoor pool. I smile for a moment, and glance down at the front of my shirt, reading the bold, yellow letters: "Author, Life Coach, and Therapist."

Today, September the 6th, is my birthday. I have just turned the big six and zero. My wife Susan is upstairs in our Native American, decorated, third story suite. She is getting ready for the recreational activities tonight.

I have considerable ambivalence about reaching this aging milestone. For the last sixty years, I feel I have been climbing the slope of life with enthusiastic and anticipatory expectations. Now, I sense I am heading down the slope to the inevitable final solution.

In addition, birthdays for me have been bittersweet over the last few years. My mother passed away from a brain aneurysm on my birthday eight years ago. She never regained consciousness from her coma. I didn't get a chance to say goodbye.

These are scary, depressing, and unpleasant thoughts. Can you relate to this somber muse? Here are a few ways I tried to cope with such normal but painful life changes.

First, I became more aware of the two Jacuzzis gurgling back of me in the patio resort area. Country music is playing softly in the background. It's time to try out the Jacuzzi.

Oh yeah; I'm in an 8 feet long by 5 feet wide, hot water massager; looking out at the clear blue sky. In the heavens to my right is a dim white, sliver of a Crescent Moon. The water jets exorcize all tensions and stress from my main muscle groups. My mind welcomes this form of release.

Second idea, the indoor pool starts to call my name; time for a swim.

I dip into the 24 feet wide by 36 feet long, clam-shaped pool. It's pleasantly surrounded by humid air inside the glass-walled pool area. A purple strobe light submerged in the lukewarm water embraces my body, which I propel by gentle breast and back strokes for about ten laps. At this moment, it feels easier to accept being sixty.

After my invigorating swim, another idea is to meander over to the lodge room. From the ceiling, huge, rugged, log beams are stacked crisscross, like we did with a set of childhood Lincoln Logs. On the adjacent walls, hang paintings of the Coquille Indian Tribe by artist Peggy O'Neal. The painted images and titles take us back to simpler more ancient times with examples of "Canoe Carvers" and "Sharing Stories" or the "Gathering Place."

My eyes are also drawn to the central attraction of the room: the open, stone fire-pit. The yellow-orange flames dance with knife-sharp, hypnotic motion beneath a brown, octagon fire funnel.

Next idea, I sit for a while on a nearby couch. My spirit merges with the primitive but comforting extravaganza of clashing heat and light swords; mood is further relaxed by soft, melodic, flute and sea gull sounds piped in as background music.

I take a deep, slow breath. The senses take me on a meditation journey where time and space are suspended. There is only the immediate now filled with pulsating emotions of life, joy, love, and peace.

For untold moments, I let go; and remain in this life affirming state. Gradually, my eyes drift to the boardwalk in view through the glass doors and windows at the West side of the fire-pit room.

Last idea, it's time for a walk. I pace off the boardwalk, with more than four hundred strides; staying close to the wooden guard rails that frame the extended deck. Easy to imagine being on a cruise ship smoothly gliding through the calm, rippling sea.

A healthy looking sea gull is perched not more than fifteen feet away on a guard rail post. The air is salty fresh; the bay waters gently move as a living portrait constantly changing with geometric convex and concave designs.

As I continue my walk, it seems appropriate to silently affirm in my mind, "I am whole, healthy, prosperous, and free of all limitations." In this mental and spiritual silence I

become more aware that it's not so bad being sixty after all. And Mom, "I love you always."

CONCLUSION

If you felt your heart and spirit uplifted by these samples of Gary Eby's work, please consider getting on the waiting list for the release of his new book, *The Eby Way: Challenging, Releasing, Healing Your Painful Past*. All you need to do is send him an e-mail at glcoach@getresponse.com. As a bonus you will receive a 19 page download of his new book, and a five-part e-mail course regarding his Life Coaching system, which will help you make progress on any problem or concern.