

*Stories, thoughts and snippets of life*

**on**

**Living**

**The 55 Concepts**

*A Guide to Conscious Living*



*By*

*The Author, Michael Cavallaro  
and Friends*

The 55 Concepts, A Guide to Conscious Living is a book by Michael Cavallaro available in paperback, e-book and audio format

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## Table of Contents

	<b>page</b>
Introduction	6
How my life got easier... <i>Catia Whitmore</i>	8
Anything that bothers you is your issue... <i>Michael Cavallaro</i>	10
People are your mirrors and teachers... <i>Nancy Baker</i>	12
You attract all things in your life... <i>Annmarie Serratore</i>	13
Be an observer, not a judge... <i>Nancy Baker</i>	15
You ruined my day! ... <i>Gail Kershner</i>	16
Be present... <i>Michael Cavallaro</i>	17
Famous people talk about the Concepts: What you believe you perceive	19
You must feel to heal – connect the head to heart... <i>Nancy Baker</i>	20
Be kind in all things... <i>Annmarie Serratore</i>	22
We only chase what we believe we don't have... <i>Mary Hearld</i>	23
What I saw in the mirror... <i>Keith Coleman</i>	25
What's bothering you?... <i>Nancy Baker</i>	26
We attract all things	27
You can only see what you know... <i>Annmarie Serratore</i>	28
There is no problem without a solution... <i>Barbara Ann Valinotti</i>	30
Learn to listen ... <i>Gina Shelton</i>	31
There is no blame, things just are ... <i>Nancy Baker</i>	32
We only chase what we believe we do not have ... <i>Michael Cavallaro</i>	33
Famous people talk about the Concepts: Anything that bothers you is your issue	35
Life is a projection of your beliefs .. <i>Nancy Baker</i>	36
Forgiveness ... <i>Annmarie Serratore</i>	37
What a difference a word can make ... <i>Gail Kershner</i>	38
Logical, reasonable and rational... <i>Michael Cavallaro</i>	39
You must feel to heal – connect the head and heart ... <i>Nancy Baker</i>	40
Be kind in all things ... <i>Annmarie Serratore</i>	41
The blame game	42

Own your behaviors... <i>Gina Shelton</i>	43
55 ways to eat crow... <i>Annmarie Serratore &amp; Friends</i>	44
Resistance – not me!!... <i>Nancy Baker</i>	47
People are your mirrors and teachers... <i>Michael Cavallaro</i>	49
Life is hard	50
Feel to heal ... <i>Gina Shelton</i>	51
Are you living in abundance or living in lack?	52
Intent of words... <i>Annmarie Serratore</i>	53
Feeling the present moment... <i>Michael Cavallaro</i>	55
Don't make your home your emotional litter box... <i>Gina Shelton</i>	56
Speak so others can understand... <i>Nancy Baker</i>	57
Name that Concept!	58
Beliefs create reality... <i>Michael Cavallaro</i>	61
The only person you can change is yourself... <i>Annmarie Serratore</i>	62
Accept people for who they are... <i>Nancy Baker</i>	63
Stories... <i>Michael Cavallaro</i>	64
How people are using the Concept cards	65
We attract all things... <i>Nancy Baker</i>	67
Drama explained... <i>Michael Cavallaro</i>	68
What I learned from the Concepts	69
3 Concepts for the holidays... <i>Nancy Baker</i>	70
Mirrors, another level... <i>Michael Cavallaro</i>	71
Almost 55 ways to make the Concepts a part of your everyday life	72
About us	74



## Introduction

Over the last 15 years people from all over the world have used the Concepts and found they worked to make life simpler, easier, and more joyful regardless of the culture or society. The Concepts are a straightforward way to understand how life on earth really works, a way to realize how humans react and respond and appreciate what our own lives are about.

Throughout time people have believed that others do things to them or are to blame for their problems. This has led to a world of unending war and discord within countries, families, as well as within individuals themselves. Great teachers have continually pointed that the answers were within while humanity continued to look without.

Often people heard the message that the answers were within but were without a blueprint or a plan of how to access these answers. [\*The 55 Concepts\*](#) give that blueprint.

Implementing *The 55 Concepts* is not always easy, you have to look at your part in creating what you don't like in your life and take responsibility for changing it ('*Own your behaviors,*' '*Eat crow to grow*'). Yet what one finds in this responsibility is truly the road to freedom and a life that begins to change in a way that you can't yet imagine.

In this e-book you'll find articles from an earlier blog, explanations from the author and shares from our readers. The stories here represent individual experiences using the Concepts. They have been gathered to enrich your experience of *The 55 Concepts*. Read this and enjoy it as our gift to you.

We offer this e-book freely and you are welcomed to share it with all (in complete form). But most importantly use *The 55 Concepts* in your own life. Make them part of who you are. Create the life you really want. The rewards are endless.

***Open to any page – it will be the right one for you!***

*You're encouraged to comment, ask questions or share your thoughts and experiences on our [Facebook Page!](#)*

## How my life got easier

The Concepts aren't new information. Some of these ideas have been around for a couple of thousand years, or more. What's different is that they're set up in a way that integrates very easily into modern life. They make living in this world much easier.



Even though I've been working on these for a while, I'm always learning new things with them. Sometimes just realizing what concepts are applicable to a situation helps me to view a problem from a different angle, making it easier to find a solution. Sometimes when I read them I find there really isn't a problem but a perception, and I don't need to put in any effort at all!

The Concepts are a good way for me to be conscious of where I need to grow by observing people in my life. I'm finding that all situations have something to teach me. And when I get particularly pig-headed, and I decide there's absolutely nothing for me to learn, that's where I get my biggest lessons.

Things don't bother me the way they used to. I don't get wrapped up in drama as quickly or as deeply, and when I do, I know there's something I need to investigate. I'm taking responsibility for my life, and finding I have the power to change things – and sometimes all the change that's needed is in my attitude.

The Concepts are teaching me to make better choices; and to be easier on myself when I mess up. Parenting is much easier. Making decisions is easier. There is less conflict in my life – with other people, and with myself.

A lot of the Concepts seem ridiculously simple. '*Be kind in all things.*' '*Be present.*' '*Keep no secrets.*' '*Learn to listen.*' But they're not just catchy phrases; they only work if you use them. And once you get used to using them, you find more meaning at deeper levels.



I always imagined myself as being kind. But when I started listening to myself, I found I wasn't. And as I practiced being kind in an obvious way, I found my thoughts and actions were not always consistent. I still have a long way to go on just this one Concept. But I am noticing: as I'm kind on a consistent basis, the people around me are kinder. I didn't have to do anything to change them. Everything can happen if I make changes in my own behaviors and thoughts.

This isn't about the theory of living a good life. It's about applying these Concepts to real life. Sometimes the information you see isn't pretty. If someone is rude to me, instead of getting angry about it, I ask myself, "Where am I being rude in my life?"

For me, I'm generally pretty kind to people I don't know. But I find I'm rude to the people I love the most - which is silly. (*'Don't make your home your emotional litter box.'*) It's something I still have to be conscious of practicing on a regular basis, especially when I don't feel like it. And even though I don't do it perfectly, there's a big difference in the level of cooperation in the household when I'm doing my best to be polite.

My life use to be a constant storm of busy-ness and putting out fires. Now I have much more room in my life. I can approach even busy days with more calmness, and they flow more easily. Situations that I used to look at as catastrophes, I can handle rationally.

It's helpful to keep track of changes you make. It doesn't have to be a big deal. Draw a Concept card every morning. Notice where you can apply it during the day. In the evening, jot down a sentence or two about what you noticed. Are there certain people or places that seem to offer more learning opportunities? How do your feelings about a situation change once you remember the Concept at hand? Can you feel any attitude shifts? Are there any Concepts that you resist using?

Use the Concepts regularly. They can make your life easier too.

~ *Catia Whitmore*

## Anything that bothers you is your issue

This concept should form the foundation of how you see the world. Anytime anything bothers you, annoys you, hurts you or frustrates you, you should immediately turn around and bring it right back to yourself. You are responsible for yourself and your reactions.



Even if someone does something to you, and you know that it is absolutely his or her fault, you need to figure out why it bothers you. For example, you are driving home from work one day when you are stopped at an intersection. The light turns green, but suddenly another car coming from the other direction runs the red light and comes flying through the intersection. You stomp on your brakes, barely avoiding an accident. You pull over to the side of the road, catch your breath and start seething. That guy was such a \*%#&# (fill in the blank), he was *so* not paying attention!

In this situation immediately refocus your attention from the person and bring it back to yourself. Even though the other driver almost caused an accident, you are the one who is bothered by it, which makes it your issue. You need to start looking at why the situation is affecting you in the way it is.

It is *never* about the other person, it is always about you and your reaction. In this example, you need to look at exactly what's bothering you about the situation. You realize that it's because you hate it when people don't pay attention when they're driving - it's dangerous and reckless. But the real question is: why does this bother you so much? Do you do it in your own life, even if in other ways? Were you taught that it's important to always pay attention or something bad will happen? Are you afraid that you will be a victim of someone who isn't paying attention? Where do you not pay attention?

By bringing it back to you, you are taking your life back into your own hands. If you are constantly blaming everyone around you, from the media to your parents, then you will never be

happy. But if you look at your role in everything that bothers you, you are empowered to make change. You can clear your beliefs and patterns surrounding this particular issue so it never bothers you again.

We're not condoning bad drivers or people cutting you off, we're simply trying to show that you can learn from every situation. You never have to be a victim to anyone, in any situation. You always have the power to think or feel differently, all you have to do is exercise the concept and take hold of your own life.

*~ Michael Cavallaro*

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*Anything that bothers you is your issue is the first Concept in [The 55 Concepts: A Guide to Conscious Living](#) by Michael Cavallaro. The 55 Concepts are practical tools to help you make real change. From resolving relationship issues to solving problems at work, you can easily apply the 55 Concepts to almost any situation, allowing you to sail through the blocks that used to hold you back.*

## People are your mirrors and teachers

Open your eyes and look around, there is a lesson to be learned from everyone around you. Whether your interactions are positive or negative, if you pay attention, you will see that people are your mirrors and teachers. But what does this really mean and how can you apply it to your everyday life?



If you want to make permanent change, you need to take the time to learn from others. Start by thinking of every person, from your father, your kids to the lady at the checkout counter, as a mirror. This means that they mirror your beliefs, behaviors and ways of being back to you. If they are doing something you notice, you are probably doing it in some way too.

Whenever you notice something that annoys you, frustrates you, makes you angry or even makes you excited about another person, ask yourself where you do it in your own life. Although you may not like what you see, the other person is probably a mirror.

For example, suppose that your friend Marsha is a big gossip. Every time you hang out, she complains about others and spreads news about everyone in town. This begins to annoy you more and more, especially as you realize that you hate her behavior. Eventually, you can't take it and start to complain about her actions to others. But if you look closely, you will see that you are doing the same thing she is doing. By complaining about Marsha, you are mirroring her behaviors.

Although it may not feel good to look at this, if you take it as a learning experience, you'll learn a lot about yourself and will be able to grow and change from it. Start paying attention to where you complain about others. Ask yourself what it is you are seeing? Where do you do a similar (or opposite!) behavior? It's not always evident at first, and it may be subtle but if you keep looking you will uncover thoughts, beliefs and behaviors that may be holding you back in life. Change these and change your life!

*~ Nancy Baker*

## You attract all things in your life

This concept for me is a way to really see where I am at in my life. Once I accept that I am the creator of all my life experiences I can then see the areas I still need to “clean up”. With that being said I have a humorous tale of how *‘I attract all things’* in my own life!

I have a reputation in my home for shorting out cd players, electric appliances, lights, etc. I have since understood when these odd things occur I am not grounded internally and must look inside to shift that energy. *‘Be present’* is a good concept to start with when I am not grounded in my body. I have also had experiences with my car being *‘my mirror and teacher.’*



Last year I was blowing fuses in my car every week and I became a frequent flier at my local mechanic! For a month the mechanics were perplexed at this occurrence as they could find no underlying cause! HA! I knew what was occurring for sure! My car was reflecting to me that I was shorting out fuses on my inside. As I diffused those issues within me, lo and behold the car was able to be fixed.

At the present moment I am again experiencing my car to be my mirror and a reminder of how I attract all things! The check engine light is once more going on and off and once again my mechanics are unsure of why this is occurring! The car will be going in next week for further investigation as the computer they hooked up to it could not come to a clear conclusion! Ha!

They say it is possible it is a sensor issue due to something with the lack of oxygen in the fuel area. Whatever that means! For me when I hear that it is a direct reflection of what I am experiencing presently which is an aspect of me that is choking off the “oxygen” inside. I am looking at: where I am not “flowing” internally? Where do I feel I cannot “breathe”? What I am resisting? Interestingly, this week I have been experiencing these aspects in my body as well.

These are indications of areas I need to look at, shift out of and stop resisting. Time to ‘check engine’ in *me* before I burn something out.

All areas of your life are an indication of where you are. When you start using the concept ‘*you attract all things in your life*’ remember to look absolutely everywhere! For me my car has been such a wonderful mirror and teacher!

***What are you attracting in your life?***

***What does it have to teach you?***

***Share your insights on our [Facebook Page!](#)***

*~ Annmarie Serratore*



## Be an observer, not a judge

Ever pre-judge a situation?

Open your mouth

and insert foot?

That's what Jackie did when she started in on an employee about an unfinished project. She was frustrated and angry, her day wasn't going right anyway and when he walked in she let him have it.

She was more than a little embarrassed when he pointed out that the project had been on her desk since that morning. In her disarray she hadn't even seen it!

It's so much easier when we remember the Concept, "*Be and observer, not a judge.*" It lets us ask questions rather than make accusations. It eliminates the stories we make up in our heads (which are really what upset us anyway, not what happens).

So to eliminate those 'Boy was my face red' situations in your life remember: "*Be an observer, not a judge.*"

~ Nancy Baker

## You ruined my day!

Grandchildren are a wonderful avenue for experiencing and applying the Concepts. Several days ago I was babysitting my four year old grandson. After I picked him up we stopped at the grocery store before heading to my house for a swim.

While at the store I treated him to his favorite candy and a small pool toy. After we completed our shopping we went to the check out and, of course, another candy display. While I was placing the groceries on the conveyor belt my grandson spotted a lollipop he wanted. I told him that he already got candy and he would have to put the lollipop back. He pretended to do so but out of the corner of my eye I saw him put the lollipop under his shirt and proceed to walk away like nothing had happened.

I had him return the lollipop and explained that he had already gotten candy and a toy. Once again he tried to sneak the lollipop out under his shirt. We continued this scenario several more times and I told him that if he took the lollipop again he would have to return his other candy or toy. This time he put the lollipop in his mouth and I told him now we have to buy it. I proceeded to return his pool toy and he became very angry as we left the store.



When we got to the car he shouted at me, “Grammy you ruined my day!” I replied, “No, you ruined your day by not listening.” I wasn’t sure where that came from but it dawned on me at that moment my grandson was such a mirror for me and I flashed back to the countless times I blamed others for “ruining my day” when in actuality I was the one who set it up. It was my behavior that caused the problem. Thanks to the little mirror in my life I was reminded how important it is to “*Own my behaviors.*”

~ Gail Kershner



## Be present

“Being present” means being emotionally and consciously in the here and now. One reason for not “being present,” is that there is a conscious or unconscious fear. It may be fear of a particular situation, of being in this world, perceived faults or limitations, fear of being hurt, etc. Another reason for not being present can be a person’s focus on the past. They are so focused on the loss or grief of the past they miss the present also.

The exact reason is unique in each individual.

“Being present” is key to the individual’s overcoming other difficulties. If one is not “present,” there is no past to remember and no future to come. The past is recorded in the subconscious and can be accessed, but it is not remembered by the conscious mind because no one was there to be conscious of it

occurring. This is a contributing factor as to why people forget. Not being present is not being

consciously aware, therefore you will usually not be able to remember times when you are not present as you were not wholly there at the time of the experience.

“Being present” gives one a past they remember and something to build a future on. Many people live in the past or think of the future to avoid the present. Many people “check out” emotionally and detach to avoid the present. They have difficulty remembering what has just been said, because they are not present during a conversation.

Have you ever been in a conversation yet thinking about something else? Most people think of what they are going to say in response to someone while that person is still speaking. Well that time you spent thinking you were not listening! While you were not listening you were not present and dropped your connection with who you were speaking and consciously missed part of the communication. Do this several times in any communication and you begin to lose



understanding of what it is about. Being present creates less miscommunications and less hassles for you.

Not “Being present” also affects the energy system of the body, thereby affecting the chemistry in the brain which causes the physical proof in the brain. We propose it is not the other way around. We feel that the body left to its own devices is perfect and will heal itself. We feel that it is belief systems, emotional difficulties, and disruption of the body’s energy systems that are at the root of the problem. Drugs may temporarily override these symptoms but make no permanent change. The only permanent change comes from balancing the body’s energy system, changing belief structure and healing emotional wounds.

A way you may check your being present is check to see if you feel your feet and toes and then do you feel them touching the earth. When in conversations see how often your mind drifts to other subjects.

Below are several ways to get present, but remember that you will not stay present unless you change the beliefs and thought processes that cause you to not be present.

- Inhale deeply hold your breath for the count of 5 and the exhale and imagine your breath going out of your feet into the earth.
- Take off your shoes and wiggle your feet in the earth or sand while you do the above.
- Focus on what you are doing like you do when you are really interested in something.
- Focus on your body and the way it feels inside and the way things outside feel, like the heat of the sun, the wind, etc.

Conscious awareness of your body and breath are great reminders to be present

*~ Michael Cavallaro*

## Famous people talk about the Concept:

### What you believe you perceive

Our limited perspectives, our hopes and fears become the measure of life, and when circumstances don't fit our ideas, they become our difficulties.

~ *Ben Franklin*

We are disturbed not by what happens to us, but by our thoughts about what happens.

~ *Epictetus*



I have learned...from experience that the greatest part of our happiness or misery depends on our disposition and not our circumstances.

~ *Martha Washington*

It is not the place nor the condition, but the mind alone that can make anyone happy or miserable.

~ *L'Estrange*

Attitudes are more important than facts.

~ *Karl Menninger*

“We do not see things as they are; we see things as we are.”

~ *Anais Nin*

“Reality is merely an illusion, albeit a very persistent one.”

~ *Albert Einstein*

## You must feel to heal – connect the head and heart

I remember being a very young child and hearing my parents fight. It scared me and I didn't



know what to do. I stuffed my feelings of fear, insecurity, wondering if they still loved me, and what would happen to me if they left...

I kept the habit of stuffing my feelings as an adult. Told myself they weren't practical; I couldn't do anything about them anyway. I thought I was just ignoring them

and they were going away. Little did I know I was stuffing them into a very small place within where ulcers, tumors, migraines, depression and heart attacks were birthed.

*But what do I do with feelings I don't like????*

When I worked with [Michael Cavallaro](#) the first thing I learned to do was to bring those feelings to the surface and actually *feel* them. No, they didn't feel good, but they weren't as awful as I thought they were either, and it took a lot less energy to feel them than I had spent during my life fighting them off. I also learned that feeling them didn't mean I had to **do** anything about them. I could feel, angry, sad, scared, and desperate and just let the feeling come and go without taking action. (The Concept '*Be an observer, not a judge*' helped with this one).

Once I had them where I could see them I could begin to ask other questions. Were they '*Logical, reasonable and rational*' (another Concept)? Where did they come from? How did they start? What beliefs did I have that kept me attached to them? Did I want to keep them?

Through these beginnings and working with Michael who used these Concepts as a foundation for clearing beliefs and feelings that no longer served me I stopped stuffing my feelings. As I became more willing to feel all my feelings and release the ones that didn't work for me I found my life changing. It got easier, freer, I liked myself more. I found that by feeling my



feelings rather than stuffing them I became more whole and unafraid to face all that life had to offer – what joy!

~ *Nancy Baker*



## Be kind in all things

“Be kind to yourself first” is the first line of this Concept in the book, [The 55 Concepts](#), *A Guide to Conscious Living*, by author Michael Cavallaro. Powerful statement! I often forget and overlook this. My personal experience with this Concept is when I am “hard” on myself, in judgment of self, and speaking harshly to myself, I am not being kind to myself. This allows no space for me to grow and change. When I am in judgment of self,



I stay stuck in the same old same old. When I am aware and stop the judgment within (Concept: *Be an observer not a judge*), I am being kind to self. It is then I am able to see clearly the things I wish to change.

When I am feeling unkind to self then it is not possible for me to be kind to those around me. (Concept: *Be kind in all things*). If I am feeling frustrated inside how can I be in the energy of kindness to anyone on the outside?! It is my personal responsibility to be aware of unkindness to myself and change it, without judgment. When I am kind to myself I become an active force in my life. It is my responsibility to create the life I wish to have, and it starts with me being kind in all things.

~ Annmarie Serratore

## We only chase what we believe we do not have

This concept goes on to say, “Just because we believe we don’t have something and chase it, doesn’t mean that we don’t have it.”

I woke up this morning realizing some of the things I have been chasing:

- I chase beautiful people because I believe I am not beautiful.
- I chase the laughter of small children because I believe I lack the wonderment of a child.
- I chase people who can sing because I believe I cannot sing.
- I chase people who speak eloquently because I believe I do not express myself adequately.
- I chase people who can write fluently because I believe I lack the creativity of putting words together.



As I am writing this, my heart is gently laughing at what occurred today. When I looked in the mirror this morning, I didn’t like my sagging neck muscles, the wrinkles on my face, or my drooping eyelids. I took my hands pull my skin back toward the back of my head and thought about what I would look like if I chose to have my face lifted. I liked seeing my face looking 30ish again. Then I wonder even if having a face lift would cause me to feel beautiful. I remember at thirty I didn’t feel beautiful.

I was meeting a friend to go canoeing on the river which I have never done before. It was a gorgeous day with the sun shining, a soft breeze and not too hot. As we were canoeing up the river, I was in wonderment at what I was seeing. We pointed out to each other the herons, the

swans, a white egret, and the jumping fish. We commented on the architecture of some of the homes along the bank.

We beached the canoe and ate at an outside café. I watched people of all ages and sizes talking and laughing and realized how much I was enjoying myself. As I left the restaurant, I saw a woman my age who had a face lift but there wasn't the joy in her eyes that I was feeling in my heart at that moment. With the realization that I was enjoying myself in spite of sagging skin, drooping eyelids and wrinkles, my heart started to sing a song that brought pleasure to me.

The concept also states that this chase is a coping mechanism to fulfill unrealized needs or desires. This way of being can never permanently change your life. Whatever is acquired is temporary. I had been exhausted lately trying to be 30 again, witty among my friends, and envying other people's talents.

Today I felt the energy of calmness and acceptance. Now I know that I still have the wonderment of a child, my heart sings songs that bring me pleasure, I feel beautiful when I am sharing life with friends or appreciating what the earth has to offer, and writing about this experience came easily.

*~ Mary Herald*

***What are you chasing?***



## What I saw in the mirror

My mirror yesterday was one of my tennis students. I had given this fellow some lessons last summer and knew he was very demanding. He's been trying to learn to hit topspin when he plays instead of just chopping the ball. I tried to explain the correct method, but I could intuit immediately that he was too angry to hear anything.



I began hitting him balls and he attacked them like he was enraged at each ball he hit. Of course, this just exacerbated his technique problems and the harder he hit the more he sprayed tennis balls all over creation. I tried to explain to him that he had to change his goals (like a good sport psychologist) from a performance goal to a learning goal, but to no avail, he kept on banging away like he was angry with the world.

When I stepped back from the situation after the lesson, I could see how many times I've focused on the outcome with such intensity (and many times anger) that I was fighting against getting to where I wanted to be. So next time I played myself I asked one of my college players to hit for a while and decided to try to enter into the experience with no investment in the outcome (i.e. how well I played) and it was one of the most enjoyable hours I've spent on the court in years. Now all I have to do is apply that lesson to the rest of my life.

*~ Keith Coleman*

## What's bothering you?



When I first heard the Concept, “*Anything that’s bothering you is your issue*” I was annoyed. I was sure that what bothered me was about the other person and if only they would change my life would be easier!

Slowly, very slowly, I began to see that I was doing what they were doing somewhere in my life and when I change it in my life “magic” happened and they either stopped doing it or it stopped bothering me. At first I used this new tool just to make this magic happen, just to make it stop bothering me.

Lately I’ve reached another level of understanding about that Concept. I’ve begun to believe that what’s bothering me in someone else is actually a message from my inner self that this is what I need to change in order to have the life I want. If complaining bothers me, where am I doing it? If not outwardly, how about in my head? If the coldness and lack of love in the world bothers me, where am I cold and lacking love? To others? To my environment? To myself?

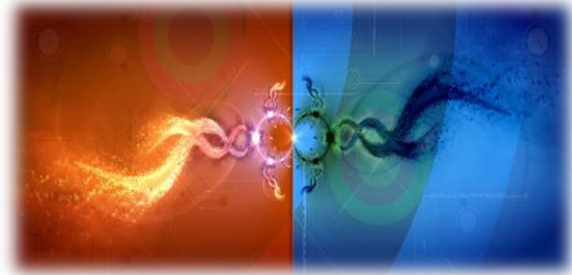
This level is much more gentle. I don’t judge the messengers (or shoot them!), I judge myself less (come on, it’s a process!), and I hear the message easier (maybe because without judgment I have less resistance, duh!).

Do you notice the same thing? Or maybe you have something that bothers you that you can’t figure out where you do it. Our [Facebook Page](#) is a great place to share it and learn something about yourself! Love to hear your comments!

~ Nancy Baker

## We attract all things

You attract what it is you really believe. What you are getting right now somewhere is what you believe. In order to change your beliefs you must first know what they are. Here are some of the beliefs students shared with us that kept them stuck getting what they didn't want.



One of the questions we asked them is what message did you get growing up about the things you want? Most of our beliefs are formed by the age of seven so messages we got when we were young are important.

Feel free to add yours on our [Facebook Page](#), make comments or ask questions!

I can't have what I want

I'm not good enough

Success is not for me

People in my family aren't happy/successful/fulfilled

I don't deserve to have what I want

You have to be dishonest to prosper

I don't have the education/experience/credentials to succeed

Prosperity takes hard work

Mom/Dad said \_\_\_\_\_ about money/love/success

*What are you attracting? What does it tell you about your beliefs?*

## You can only see what you know

This Concept is simple yet sometimes I overlook its simplicity! My experiences lately are of really “seeing” things occurring around me. From my work in the salon, everyday life, to the [facilitating](#) I am involved in; I can see and feel in others that which is also in me.



In this place, I realize if I see it in others then I am seeing what I know. It may be a behavior or a deeper issue. It is up to me to be honest with myself and look within. In this way I can uncover what I may not have seen or wanted to see. I have to do this as an observer and without judgment or I get tangled up in my resistance. It is like a detective’s work, find the facts and compute what is found to lead to the answers!

For example: as I observe the children on the playground at my son’s school I see lots of behaviors surfacing! Wonderful little mirrors they are here! Lately the theme I see is the kids interacting with anger and blame. You know, the ‘he did this’ and ‘she did that’ and ‘I am telling because I am mad or want it to stop.’

The feeling for me as I look deeper and go within is seeing the areas I am still in anger or blame. This, my friends, I know as victimhood. Yes, I have worked on this piece for many years and thought I was pretty clear! This would be the “duh” moments of “Oh, there is another layer to this issue!” It is the subtle areas I still need to look at. So yes, I still have victimhood inside. Yes, I still blame the outside world for what I feel, think and do.

Today for me it is more subtle, so I need to be ever conscious. That’s where using the Concept: “*You can only see that which you know*” comes in handy. In this place of consciousness I am able to see it, own it, change it! Only from here can I be a fully conscious creator who directs my life. I can’t do that while I think I’m a victim.

Take this Concept and play! See what you are “seeing” and reflect inside for where it is in you! *You can only see that which you know!* Also, at times we all get stuck! Assistance from a [Living](#)

[Concepts facilitator](#) can allow you to see more clearly. It can expedite the process when you are ‘in your stuff’ and make life all that much easier and more joyful.

~ *Annmarie Serratore*

## There is no problem without a solution



I find that this Concept helps me to put a problem aside for a bit and allow the solution to come to me. I used it with my 10 year old daughter yesterday. She did the wrong page for math homework and got a demerit for the mistake. A parent has to sign a slip acknowledging the demerit. She forgot the slip at school which would result in another demerit. She started to cry saying that if she earns three demerits in a marking period she would get a detention.

I thought of the Concept, “*There is a solution to every problem*” and shared it with her. “There is something we can do,” I said softly to her. She got quiet and then asked, “Could you drive me to school and sign the form?” Problem solved! This Concept cut through the emotion of the situation to allow a solution to bubble up.

~ *Barbara Ann Valinotti*

## Learn to listen

Sometimes the words seem to be so very simple but as we apply each Concept to our lives they unfold into more and more. "*Learn to listen.*" Three little words. I am sure that was something they told us in kindergarten right after share and raise your hand to go to the bathroom.



Many of us assume we listen -but do we? Listening involves really being in the moment. Really being there as the other person unfolds their story. I always called myself a good listener but usually I was jumping ahead to think of a witty or wise response. Often I found myself searching for a solution to the speaker's problem. It became all about me. The focus shifted to my identity of how I looked and what a sage knowing woman I was. Most of what the speaker was trying to share was lost or never heard in my attempt to be a swell listener. Really listening teaches us to stay in in the here and now.

Another level of listening involves listening past the words and listening with your heart. This encourages us to stay open and to feel what the other person is saying. Often the person uses words that say little but the sense and feeling behind them reveals so much.

Much greater understanding and communication is gained when listening occurs from this space. On occasion I find myself starting to have a knee jerk reaction to something a family member would say but now I pause and really listen leading to a much more peaceful existence. What might have been an altercation before just isn't-but then with the Concepts bouncing around all the time: "*Avoid yelling at all costs!*" and "*Anything that bothers you it's your issue*" who can fuss and fume!

~ Gina Shelton

## There is no blame, things just are

Watch what goes on in the world when people waste time blaming each other rather than fixing the problem. Not only doesn't anything get done but they totally miss and ignore their own contribution to the problem and if someone blames them they waste time defending themselves.

Both sides blame. Neither takes responsibility for their part. Nothing gets done.

You know what would happen if each just cleaned up their own part of the mess... where do you fit into this?



Where are you pointing the finger at someone else?

Where do you defend your own part in the problem?

Where do you choose to blame and defend rather than take responsibility and clean up your part?

The world won't change if you don't.

*~ Nancy Baker*

be the change  
you want to  
see in the  
world.

*Gandhi*



## We only chasing what we believe we do not have

Your judgment of the part of you or the creation or the experience that you have had is what keeps you from accepting it, and your judgment is just a rejection of it. That's all judgment is. Judgment is a rejection of the isness, of the beingness, of the wholeness.



I'm saying, "I'm not whole, that part isn't something I want. Or that *is* something I want." Both are something outside of you. Both are something that you have rejected. That's why it must be something you accept to be whole.

If you want your body to be functional and you take your heart out, and you still expect your body to function, that would be ridiculous. Well, that's what you're doing with all the pieces of you, or all the experiences you have had that you reject or judge and say, "They're not me. I don't like them. I don't want them. But I still want to be whole. I don't want to have my kidney or my liver because I don't like the way they look and they feel squishy so I have judged them, rejected them but I want my body to be function normally."

Well it's the same. All of your experiences are like a body part and every experience that you judge and reject; you are rejecting a part of you or a perceived part of you. And until you accept all of your experiences, all of your creations, and you accept them or love them back, you cannot be whole. You cannot be whole while they are outside of you. So people chase wholeness while they judge or reject things they have done or experienced. And that doesn't make any sense.

Back to the Concepts: '*You only chase what you believe you do not have.*' What you believe you do not have are the things you have rejected. And the experiences that you have rejected are the things you believe you do not have. I do not have wholeness, in a way. I have rejected. I am wrong so I take this part of me over there and say, "That's the wrong part of me. I will now chase a part that's right because I have judged something as wrong."

The judgment of wrongness means there's something I have to go get so I have to go get a rightness to fill the hole of the wrongness. So you are always chasing what you believe you do not have.

*~ Michael Cavallaro*

## Famous people talk about the Concept:

### Anything that bothers you is your issue

If thou art pained by any external thing, it is not this that disturbs thee, but thy own judgment about it.

~ *Marcus Aurelius*

One cannot overcome the enemy until one has rid oneself of that which they find despicable in the other.

~ *I Ching*

The thing we often hate most in others is something we have disowned in ourselves that we are not yet strong enough to face.

~ *Julia Cameron*

What we want to change in others is what we haven't loved in ourselves.

~ Dr. John F. DeMartini

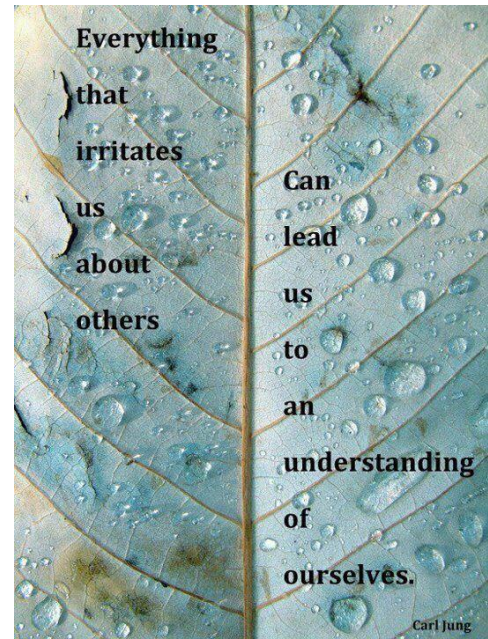
If you hate a person, you hate something in him that is part of yourself. What isn't part of ourselves doesn't disturb us.

~ *Hermann Hesse*

No one can bother you unless you agree with them.

~ *Alan Cohen*

The particular egoic patterns that you react to most strongly in others and misperceive as their identity tend to be the same patterns that are also in you, but that you are unable or unwilling to detect within yourself. In that sense, you have much to learn from your enemies. What is it in them that you find most upsetting, most disturbing? Their selfishness? Their greed? Their need for power and control? Their insincerity, dishonesty, propensity to violence, or whatever it may be? Anything that you resent and strongly react to in another is also in you. ~ *Eckart Tolle*



## Life is a projection of your beliefs

How are you seeing the world right now? Do you see fear? Scarcity? Chaos? Many do. Yet there are those who don't; those who don't buy in to what they hear on the news or see on the Internet. You can find groups of people who have chosen not to participate in the current economic panic. They're living their life without fear, without scarcity and without chaos. They are enjoying their lives and moving through their days without talking about the jobs being lost, prices or crime escalating. How do they do it?



*'Life is a projection of your beliefs.'* *'What you believe you perceive.'* If we believe that life is about fear, scarcity and chaos, then we not only see it everywhere, but we also project it so it continues. We talk about it, worry about, lose sleep over it. We do everything possible to keep it in front of us so we can keep attracting more of it.

Scientists at Rush University in Chicago discovered that the biggest impact on well-being came not from the situation people were in, but from people's own perceptions of their situation. Participants who said they felt lonely were 86% more likely to develop Alzheimer's disease than those who didn't, regardless of the actual size of their social network.

Want to change? You can start with something as simple as stopping your complaining (I said simple, not easy!) and move on to examining your beliefs so you can begin to change them. Believe the life you want is possible – it is.

*~ Nancy Baker*

## Forgiveness



For me, forgiveness is a process in itself and I work on this process using the Concepts to assist me. If someone is on my foot, I ask them to kindly get off. Then if I am bothered, I look at what that is within me. If I judge it, I am also judging myself and I work on forgiving myself. For me, forgiving self has been the most freeing practice and, in turn, I find it much more effortless when forgiving others.

Remembering the Concept, *'People don't do things to you, they do things for themselves,'* has assisted me in the understanding that what others do has absolutely nothing to do with me at all! And if it does bother me, then it is my issue. How freeing and a step to forgiveness. One last thought, since forgiveness has been a process of time and understanding self, I use the Concept, *'Be kind in all things'* here; being kind to myself and gentle on myself as I work on these issues.

~ Annmarie Serratore

## What a difference a word can make!

The Concepts have been so helpful in my work place. During an incident several months ago, I



learned how important communication can be. As a nurse part of my job is to obtain specimens from patients for testing. While most tests are processed in a laboratory, there are a few tests we run right in our clinic. Because of this we are required to have inspections or audits by a laboratory periodically.

During a recent audit we had a new surveyor to complete this task. As he worked through his assessment form he asked me what tests I *do*. When I replied stating all the tests I obtain, not run in the clinic, he requested to see my Quality Assurance Plan for each of these tests. Since 98% of the tests I *do* go out to the laboratory, a plan is not necessary for them, only the ones I perform in the clinic.

He continued to press me for these plans, reminding me that since I *do* these tests I need a plan. Otherwise, he told me I would be out of compliance and we would lose our accreditation and subsequently I would not have my job. We went round and round on this for about an hour and by that time I was so angry I wanted to blow a gasket. I know when I get this upset there is a definite problem and all of a sudden it dawned on me that the problem was in the word “*do*.” We were not communicating because my definition of the word “*do*,” as a nurse, is to obtain the specimens and his definition of the word “*do*,” as a lab technician, is to perform the tests.

Imagine a little two letter word like “*do*” causing so much stress. I explained my awareness to him and at once I began using the word “*obtain*” where I was saying “*do*” before. Likewise, he began using the word “*perform*” where he was saying “*do*.” When I began to “*Speak so others can understand*” we completed the audit in ten more minutes, received our certification and my gasket was spared.

~ Gail Kerschner

Where would communicating more clearly help you? Share it on [Facebook!](#)





## Logical, reasonable and rational

This is one of the 55 Concepts and can be applied to everything in your everyday life. This includes spirituality. To be logical reasonable and rational in your decisions in regards to your spiritual process. If it doesn't make sense and work well with your everyday life then maybe you should question whether it is the right spiritual process for you. If a particular spiritual process implies that others are going to hell, are not as good as you or are not favored like you are then maybe it is a process you should question. If it is one that tells you that you should rid yourself of material things, give everything away and follow some leader then maybe this is a process you should question.

True spirituality is following, understanding and feeling *your* spirit with your human mind and capabilities. By understanding and feeling your spirit along with well-developed human skills to interpret this understanding and feeling everything you do can and will make sense. Everything you do will be *logical reasonable and rational* and it will flow naturally into your life. In the beginning it will feel awkward and after your humanness has adjusted it will flow naturally. These three qualities together are what make this concept work. '*Logical reasonable and rational*' are tools to monitor that you and your life is in balance.

~ *Michael Cavallaro*

## You must feel to heal – connect the head and heart

The other day I was angry with someone. Rather than feel my anger I started to think of all the reasons I shouldn't be angry: "She couldn't help it." "I should be bigger than that." and on and on. Then I began looking at where I do what she did, after all "Anything that bothers you is your issue." I felt like I was working really hard at this.

Finally I remembered the Concept, "*You must feel to heal – connect the head and the heart.*" That was when I began to just let myself feel the anger.

Growing up we're often told, "It's not nice to feel that way." "Good children don't feel like that." "You don't really feel that way." Even when done with good intentions, these messages tell us that our feelings are wrong, that we shouldn't be feeling them. Add to that much that we hear today about attracting what you think about, we push our feelings down deeper and deeper and gloss them over with what we 'should' be feeling.



But to not feel our feelings is to dishonor and disown a part of ourselves. To not feel our feelings is to bury them and let them fester in the dark parts of ourselves until they explode in a burst of anger or eat us alive like a cancer.

Feeling our feelings doesn't mean to wallow in them or that we have to act on them. Feeling our feelings simply means we experience them. Once we feel them we can resolve what brought them up rather than ignore the issue.

Once I felt my anger I could see what caused it and work on that. It no longer felt hard. What was hard was keeping the feeling pushed down. If I remember what made it hard I'll remember to feel my feelings sooner next time.

~ Nancy Baker



## Be kind in all things



Kindness for me started on the outside. I was at one time not very kind to those around me and then felt guilty which lead to judgment of myself for not being kind. So I started with the acting kind on the outside. The way the Concept is written and described in the book was a start for me.

Then I started the practice of being kind to myself.

Through this process I have learned that when I judge myself, my thoughts, actions, feelings, and emotions, I was not being kind to myself. '*Be an observer not a judge.*'. When I am able to step aside and observe what is going on inside of me without the harsh judgment of self, I am able to see what it really is and then be clearer so I can change it. This for me is being kind to myself.

Another kind act to myself is allowing myself the time and space to process, to not be so hard on myself and to lighten up! Kindness for me is to not be so serious about everything and yet still participate in life and do what needs to be done. Also for me, kindness to myself has been a journey to enjoy this life experience, have fun and take time for myself to do what I like to do.

Sometimes I have to make myself take the time for me; for example I will take a long bath, sit on my deck and chill, watch a movie, etc. In the times I feel I have to make myself do these things I ask myself also why I am I not just allowing myself time, space, etc? Why am I being so hard on myself as this is not being kind to me?

This is then where I question everything, without judgment or harshness, to find my own answers inside. I have also found sharing with others can assist me to finding my answers. Sometimes we can be so wrapped up in our issues, which can cloud our logic, and it is beneficial to ask for assistance in this process.

~ Annmarie Serratore



## The blame game

Some blame quotes from the work of *Michael Cavallaro*:

“Blame is paralyzing. If you blame me I must defend myself, so neither of us get to the actual issue.”

“Blaming stops one from growing up. If I choose to believe everything is someone else’s fault I fail to learn how to handle myself and situations successfully.”

“Blame is a diversion from accepting that you are the creator of what you’ve got.”

*What would change in the world if we eliminated blame? What would change in you if you eliminated blame? Want to share or get feedback? You can get it on the [Facebook Page!](#)*



## Own your behaviors

Years ago when I read the concept "*Owning your behaviors is empowering*" I thought, "Yeah, yeah. I guess so." I didn't pay much attention to this Concept. Perhaps it was because I wasn't quite ready to own my behavior.

Owning my behaviors meant admitting I have them. It means admitting I am still running patterns to keep me away from me. I have to look at my behaviors and why I am still holding onto them. What am I getting out of them? Often behaviors allowed me to stay in victim blame mode. "Oh, I just can't help it - I've always been like this." keeping me stuck in the old. "I can't handle money - I have to work three jobs." Keeps me so busy I can stay far away from me. Poor me.

When I made the decision to "*Eat enough crow to grow*" I took responsibility for my behavior. To my surprise I did indeed find it to be freeing and empowering. When I owned it all as mine I realized it was mine to change. It's mine. I did it. I can create the life I want. I can release myself from victim mentality and choose freedom.

~ Gina Shelton

*"If you blame someone else for your problems then the control to change those problems forever remains in their hands. If you take responsibility for your problems, then the opportunity for change is in your hands."*

~ Michael Bloxton



## 55 ways to eat crow

Here is the scoop...The two of us have been eating a lot of crow lately as we work the Concepts and came up with this funny idea. How about a cookbook? "The 55 Ways To Eat Crow!" This is sooo funny I wrote a whole bunch as they would not stop coming...hahahaha

Ok here goes....

1. Sautéed crow...finely dice the crow and sauté in olive oil and garlic. Toss with an angel hair pasta.
2. Southern style crow....bread crow in egg and breadcrumbs and deep fry in oil until golden brown. Serve with a side of grits.
3. Slow Roasted Crow
4. Curry Crow
5. Cream of Crow Soup
6. Crow Stew
7. Corn Crows...like corn dogs!
8. Crockpot Crow
9. Breaded Crow
10. Famous Kentucky Crow
11. Smothered Crow
12. Grandma's Apple Crow's Nest
13. Deep Fried Coconut Crow
14. Crow Mountain Crème Pie

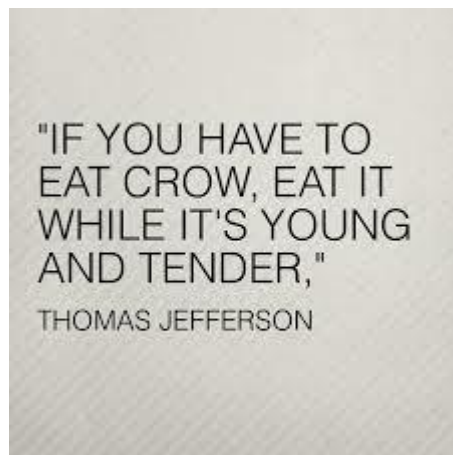
Found on the internet; great metaphor!  
As you read below relate it to looking at and owning your own judgments and imperfections. It fits!

*"Crows can be safely eaten. They are "edible" which means they provide nutrition and won't make you sick, but don't necessarily mean they taste good. Most of the flavor issues have more to do with how they're prepared than how they actually taste. They are actually not bad to eat.*

*Many won't eat crow because they eat carrion. However, they are actually among the safest of birds to eat for that reason. They, like vultures, have powerful digestive systems that kill bacteria and viruses in what they eat, so they don't communicate diseases that other birds may carry, or that their food had when it died."*



15. Boiled Crow
16. Crow Bean Roast
17. Crow Marsala....thinly slice crow and brown in pan. Add butter, mushrooms, garlic, olive oil, and marsala wine. Cook for 15 to 20 min on low heat. Serve with favorite pasta.
18. Crow Fajitas ...pan seared with onions and garlic. Wrap in tortilla wraps with your favorite mexican toppings.
19. Crow Kabob...put crow on sticks with favorite veggies and grill for 15 minutes
20. Crow Salad...add cooked crow to your favorite salad combo and top with dressing of your choice
21. Spaghetti and Crow....ground crow and mix with Italian seasonings. Fry in pan for 15 minutes and add to marinara sauce.
22. Filet Crow...Select choice of crow and grill for 10 to 15 minutes. Add seasoning if desired.



23. Crow in a Bucket
24. General Tso's Crow
25. Crow Lo Mein
26. Crow Fried Rice
27. Crowimisu..like tiramisu
28. Crowcake...like cheesecake
29. Crowchips cookies
30. Herb's Crow Hash
31. Crow Casserole

32. Crow and Mushroom Stew
33. Crow Chili
34. Crow Ribs
35. Crow Omlette...Scramble eggs with crow. Add cheese if so desired.
36. Crow Club...Add a generous amount of crow to your favorite toast with lettuce, tomato and mayo. Enjoy with a side of crow fries and crow slaw!
37. Philly Crow Steak...chipped crow, fry in pan with onions. Serve on a steak roll. Add cheese if you like.

38. Penne Crow...Cook crow to desired tenderness. Toss with penne and a light marinara sauce. Garnish with basil.
39. Crow Alfredo...Cooked crow tossed in fettuccine with a heavy cream sauce
40. Crow on the Barbie....Grill crow with an abundance of barbecue sauce.
41. Cajun Crow... add jalapeños, a spice mix with cayenne, paprika and chili powder.
42. Crow Pudding
43. Bacon Wrapped Crow
44. Country Crow Medallions from deboned breast of crow. Simmer with onions, bacon, turnips, celery, mustard, lemon juice, salt, pepper, bay leaves, juniper berries, marjoram, paprika, and oregano.
45. Crow in a blanket...like pigs in a blanket..hahaha
46. Crow Quiche
47. Jamaican Jerk Crow
48. Crow and Dumplings
49. Baked Crow Ziti
50. French Onion Crow Soup
51. Crow Enchiladas
52. Crow Nuggets
53. Roast Crow au jus
54. Crow Melt...like a patty melt
55. Crow Pie (who do you think those 4 and 20 blackbirds were?)

*Did you know that crow meat has a reputation for being an aphrodisiac?*

*\*Just in case you want to try the real thing many of these are actual recipes found on the internet!*

*~ Annmarie Serratore*



*& Friends*



## Resistance – not me!!

Ingrid shared on our [Facebook Page](#): “I was a bit embarrassed to realize that all my problems and people I didn’t like were a reflection of me. I didn’t want to accept that I had those ugly habits - lol.”

That’s what most of us do – resist - exactly why the Concepts help so much.

Resistance comes because we want to keep our façade up. We want the world to see us the way we choose it to see us. We don’t want it to look underneath at what is really there. We don’t want to lift the façade because we judge what is under it so harshly. “I am nothing/worthless/a fake.” “If people really knew me...”, “If I really looked at myself...” So we resist. We fight. We defend. We pretend. If it doesn’t work we’re angry, resentful, blaming. All in a desperate effort to hide who we think we really are.

The saddest part is that this part of us that we are locking up, resisting, ashamed of is not a monster. It is a beautiful, wise essence of our selves. A part that we believed to be judged or hurt so we judged and hurt it ourselves. We covered the door to our essence with falseness and lies and it is the tearing down of this wall that is painful; tearing down all the defenses that we have built up over a life time so we could hide.

Because deep inside something is crying. Dying. Some part of us we won’t allow to be real; refuse to let express who we really were, or what we are really feeling. Some part we leave locked in the dark basement of our being, ashamed of its very existence and working hard to pretend it’s not there.

Only in unlocking the door and letting that part of ourselves come to light do we find joy and peace. As we bring to light the layers of guilt and shame, the judging others because we don’t want to look at how we judge ourselves, the places where we ignore our own needs to get



approval, the pretending everything is all right and hiding our true feelings – sometimes even from ourselves, only then to we discover who we truly are.

Beyond all the judgments, when we accept that we are who we are, that we have done what we've done and what we've done is just what we've done – it's not us; then we can get to our essence. That beautiful part of ourselves that rests beyond all of the personality's cover ups, judgments and attempts to survive. That part of us that simply glows with beauty, light and love, – our essence. Who we truly are.

It's time to set ourselves free. Thanks for the reminder Ingrid.

*~ Nancy Baker*



## People are your mirrors and teachers

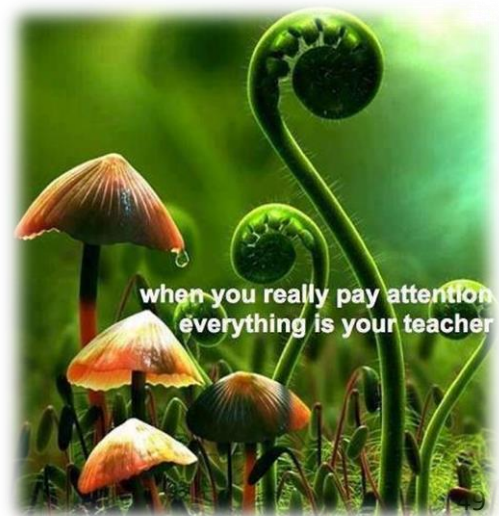
If you look at every person as your teacher, and look carefully to see what they have brought you to learn, life becomes a learning experience and a growth process rather than a difficult or unpleasant task.

When you are encountering an experience that is possibly unpleasant, remember always to ask this question, “What has this person brought me to learn? What are they trying to bring to my consciousness?” Or

this question, “Why have I brought this person to me in this way? What is it that I am to learn?” Whether you like what they have brought or not, it is to your benefit to look into it and receive the information and learn the lesson. Remember it is only unpleasant because you perceive it as unpleasant. What you tend to deny or not see is often what you need to learn the most.

And if these types of people or behaviors keep reoccurring in your life, it should be evident to you that you have not yet learned this lesson. These are good markers for you to make your life easier. Again if you look at everyone as your teacher and you learn what they have brought you to learn, you will find it much easier and much more pleasant to be around people rather than become frustrated or upset in any way, shape or form about their behavior and what they have done to you. In truth, it is what you are doing to yourself.

*~ Michael Cavallaro*



## Life is hard

We've all heard someone say "it's hard". We've said it ourselves.

When you say or hear someone say it's hard or life's hard it would be good to know what they are really saying. Let's also include in this genre, it's difficult, challenging, an obstacle etc.

We're not going to beat around the bush or mince words. We're going to get straight to the point. It is very simple and one sentence, it means: **I do not want to learn, expand or be conscious!**



When you or someone uses the phrase it's hard, the truth is you are making it hard. Most of what we say is hard isn't; it is all perception. What is common though, is that when you encounter something you are not experienced in, feel confident in or know about it you commonly perceived of as hard.

What this boils down to is – change. People have a tendency to dislike change. In truth change is expansion and expansion makes life easier. Becoming conscious is expansion. Becoming conscious and experienced makes you wise. When you find yourself experiencing life as hard in any way remember this: **You are at a moment of choice!**

Will you choose to become conscious?

Will you choose to become experienced?

Will you choose wisdom instead of fear?

The fear of change.

*Embrace change and you will automatically embrace life, effortlessly.*

## Feel to heal

My mother died last week. It was a beautiful June day - summer solstice. Daisies and butterfly bushes sent off a sweet aroma as dragonflies and butterflies danced on petals. Mom died unexpectedly after a brief illness and a surgical procedure that was supposed to be simple. A lot of different feelings bubbled inside me when we admitted Mom to inpatient hospice care. I couldn't believe she would never be home again. She was the matriarch - the glue of our family.

I surprised myself by staying at the hospice. I knew she wasn't staying here long and I wanted to be with her. I held her hand and brushed her hair and wet her mouth with chips of ice. She no longer interacted but she knew I was there - and I knew I was there.

Gentle social workers brought me information on grief and listened to my stories. Therapy dogs gave me furry hugs and someone made brownies. I sipped lukewarm coffee as I mindlessly thumbed through pamphlets. None of the words

registered until one phrase popped out. "Healing takes place when you allow yourself to feel." Wow. A Concept right when I needed it the most. It was then I realized that's why I was staying in the hospice center. I could just sit there and feel and be. The human side of me cried a lot as memories of Mom wove their way through my mind. Silly memories. Wonderful memories. I cried when I needed to.



Laughed. Smiled. Got mad. Cried some more. I opened my heart and felt it all.

It's only been a week but a sense of peace and joy surround me and flow through me. The love I feel from Mom and those around me is palpable. Enormous. It is like no love I ever felt before. I am grateful. Thanks Mom.

~ Gina Shelton

***You must feel to heal - connect the head and heart***

## Are you living in abundance or living in lack?



Take a listen to [this podcast](#) on the topic of abundance! Nancy Baker and Annmarie Serratore from The 55 Concepts, discuss this topic with Sam Forsberg and Paul Bailey from Action Podcast!

This was a fun podcast to do!

## Intent of Words

This theme for me is about communication. How well do I communicate, or not so well? I have found that communication is an issue in our world. It reflects all of our inabilities to understand each other fully. One of the Concepts, from the book, [The 55 Concepts](#), A Guide to Conscious Living I like around this is: *“It’s not what you say, it’s how you say it and what you intend.”*

It is the tone of my voice and what I intend the message to feel like. I must consciously choose words that mean what I want to say and express myself to be understood. The feeling people get from me behind my words will determine if people listen or understand me. I must *“Be present,”* another Concept, in order to do this! I must be aware. I must *“connect my head and my heart”* to express myself.

People in general have  
Some people believe cursing is  
intent and feeling behind the  
observed. When I was  
time ago I wanted to see  
And he was amazing! After his  
NBC recorded him and his  
called “vulgar” words. I find it  
My perception of the whole  
Shaun White and his coach,  
joy, and a childlike fun! NBC  
article I read the writer had stated that NBC should be apologizing for the network showing it,  
not the people who were having the conversations as they were being themselves. I ponder why  
anyone needs to feel like they have to apologize at all. The intent I felt behind the exchange of  
Shaun White and his coach was innocent and fun! They were in the moment of enjoyment of  
themselves and their experience! I felt the energy behind the words and was not focusing on the



different meanings of words.  
bad. Some don’t, but it is the  
words that must be felt and  
watching the Olympics some  
Shaun White on the half-pipe!  
run and when he won the gold,  
coach exchanging what they  
interesting this has made news.  
exchange that occurred with  
Bud Keene, was of excitement,  
apologized for it and in an

words themselves which involved some “cursing”. I am sure we all have our own beliefs and hang-ups about many words, including what we perceive as “curse” words.

What do you perceive about “curse” words? What words do you believe are “bad?” Do you examine your intent when communicating? Do you speak in a language the person can understand? Are you present within yourself when you are communicating? All can open us to exploring new possibilities in our communication!

*~ Annmarie Serratore*

## Feeling the present moment

Being present is about feeling your life. Awareness, consciousness is a sense of feeling - not kinesthetic feeling, but it includes kinesthetic feeling. Feeling your life in each and every split nanosecond is being present.



And when you are present, you know everything you experienced. You do not need to capture it with your mind, remember it, or think about it. In the worst case scenario, the experience is recorded, you do not remember it with your mind and if somebody wants you to recall an event they can say something that triggers you to remember the experience and then all of the information comes by itself. You don't need to think about it. Thinking is not awareness. Thinking is a process used by awareness or consciousness in the human world.

*~ Michael Cavallaro*



## Don't make your home your emotional litter box

The Concepts have become entwined in every aspect of my life. When an issue arises a Concept is right there to assist me in seeing what I need to see. Using the Concepts helps guide me to me. The one Concept I always remember is "*Don't make your home your emotional litter box.*" This may be because I always used the analogy of a litter box as the antithesis of keeping my house clean or it may just be the blunt simplicity of the statement – not sure which, but I always liked it.

Initially I interpreted the concept as, "Don't come home from work and spew all over the family" which ironically was exactly what I did. I worked long hard hours and when I came home and I expected to be taken care of. All my energy and zeal was used for people outside the home. I got my identity and sense of importance from work so work got my best. Home and family got what was left.



As I read the Concept now I see it has even more layers to it. The idea of using your home as an emotional litter box implies leading a split life. If I am one way outside the home and another way at home then I am fragmented. I am not whole. If I am being the real me I am me everywhere and that me has no need to spew on others. The need to spew insinuates blame and judgment and is a red flag that I have chosen to jump into my patterns.

Another facet of this Concept - more obvious now that I live alone - is not to make myself an emotional litter box. This means to be true to me. Be open, real, kind; don't get tied up in the outside forsaking what's inside me. The words are so simple yet so powerful and every time I read them they say something more!

~ Gina Shelton



## Speak so others can understand

I ordered curtains the other day and looked forward to getting them and putting them up. I was disappointed when they arrived. They were 108" long. I needed 108" wide.

The tag in the store hadn't specified long or wide. I made the assumption it was wide, they made the assumption I was curtain-wise and would know it was long. When I mentioned it to the sales clerk and suggested they put "long" on the sign next to the measurement she brushed off my comment, with a look similar to the one I am sure is on my face when I read the directions on a hair dryer that says, "Don't use this in the shower." Like, "Who wouldn't know that???"

We assume people have the same experiences we have. We assume they speak the same language we do. Those assumptions make for a lot of confusion in the world. No, not everybody knows the "right" way to write a report, the "right" wine with fish, the "right" way to respond to a criticism or even the "right" way to load the dishwasher. Actually, there is no "right" way, there's just the way you think it should be done or the way people in your world do things. Then when people are different we judge them as "wrong."

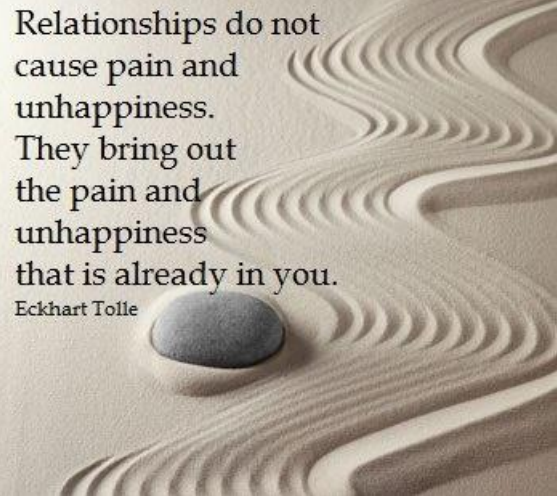
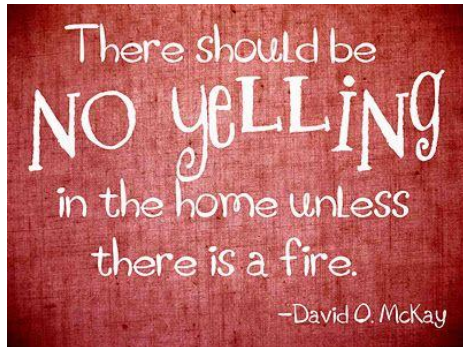


First step in speaking so others understand is to listen to them. Learn how they speak and how they interpret words. To say it's a "balmy" day tells an American it's pleasantly warm, but a Brit hears that it's an insane day. Same word, different interpretation. Be clear in how you speak; and it never hurts to ask if you're understood.

~ Nancy Baker

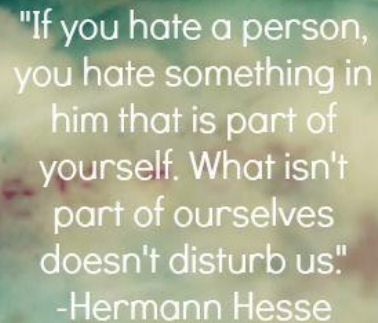
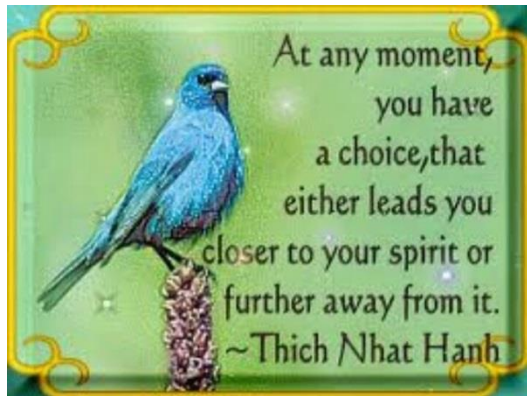
## Name that Concept!

Can you name the concept that matches the quote?



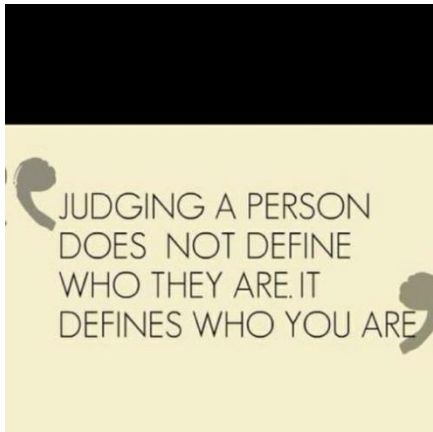
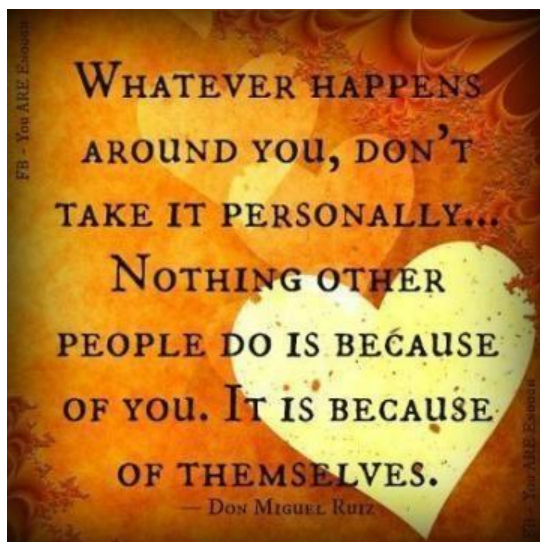
Relationships do not cause pain and unhappiness. They bring out the pain and unhappiness that is already in you.

Eckhart Tolle

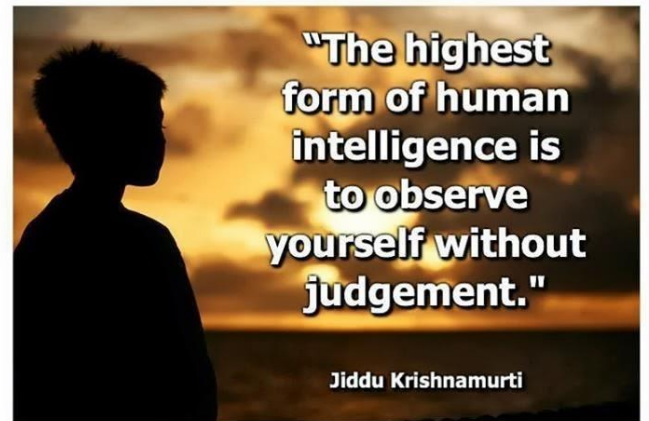
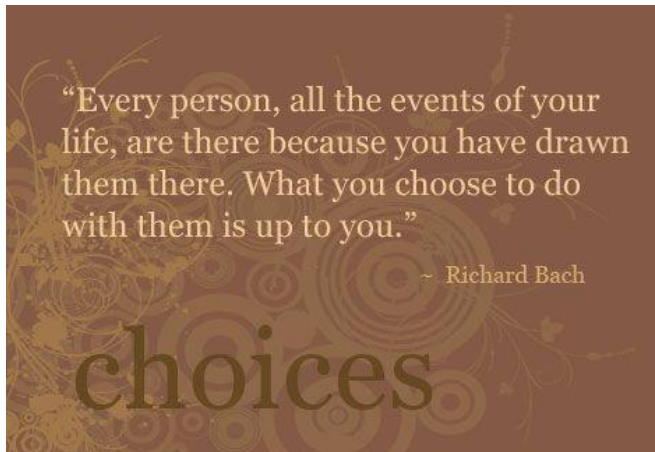
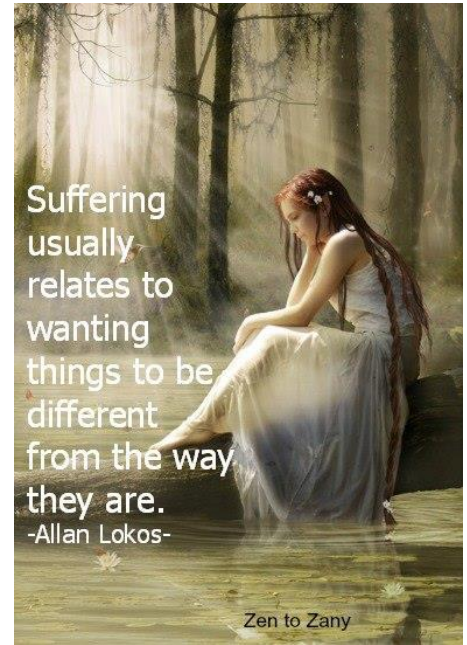
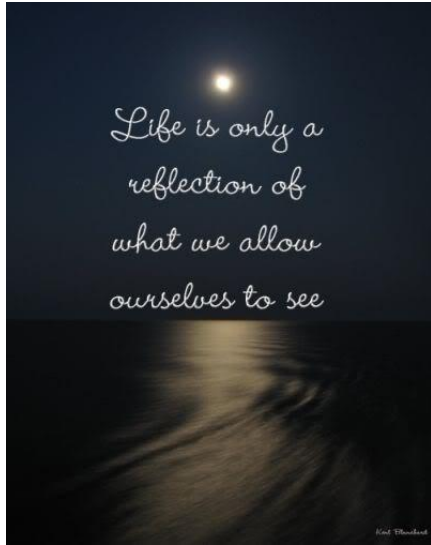


"If you hate a person, you hate something in him that is part of yourself. What isn't part of ourselves doesn't disturb us."

-Hermann Hesse



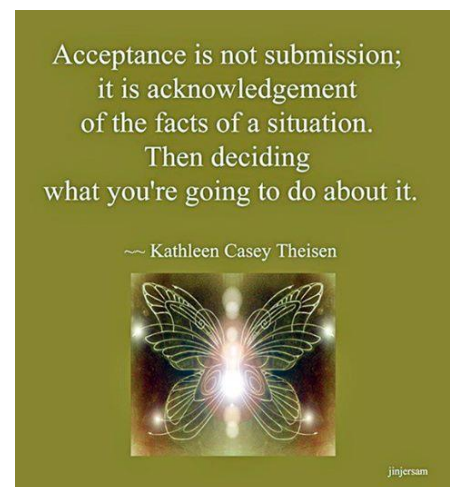
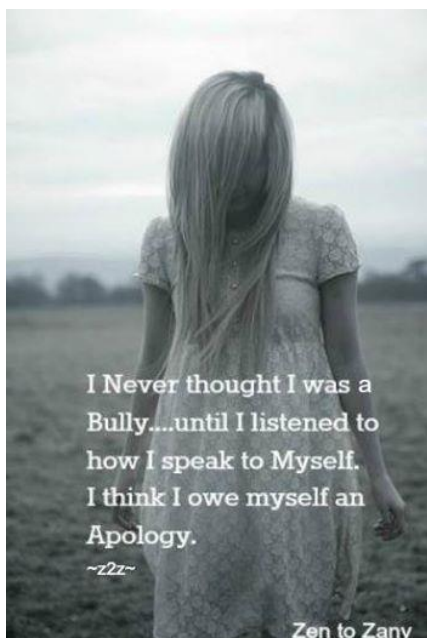
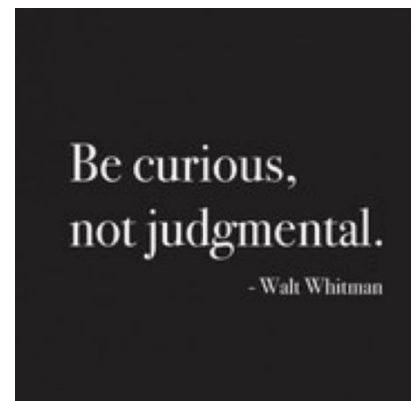
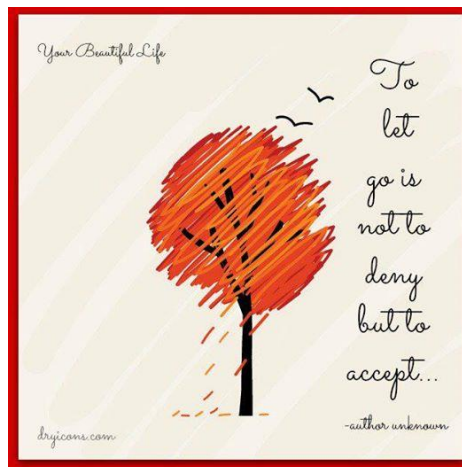
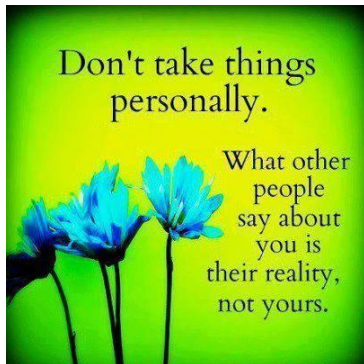
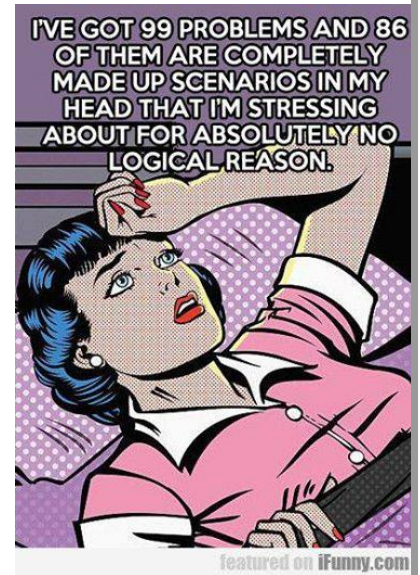
JUDGING A PERSON DOES NOT DEFINE WHO THEY ARE. IT DEFINES WHO YOU ARE.







What screws us up most in life is the picture in our head of how it's supposed to be.



## Beliefs create realities

It's empowering to know that you have the power to create. So create what you want, not what you know, unless that is your heart's desire. Create the life that fills your soul. The gift of creation is your birthright, so create. Everything can be changed!

What you believe consciously or unconsciously and the combination of both is the reality in which you live.

When you see something and know it to be true, ask yourself what and why is it you believe this. Do you believe in suffering, cruelty, or financial security? These are just a few things that people believe in. Being conscious and aware of it gives you the freedom of choice. You created these beliefs, so you can change them if you wish.

It is empowering to know you have the power to create. And since you have created these beliefs, you created what you want, what you know, and unless it is your life's purpose from a soul level, it has been simply created from your beliefs. Live the life of your dreams; do not just dream. The gift of creation is yours. It is your birthright. So now go out and create.

*~ Michael Cavallaro*



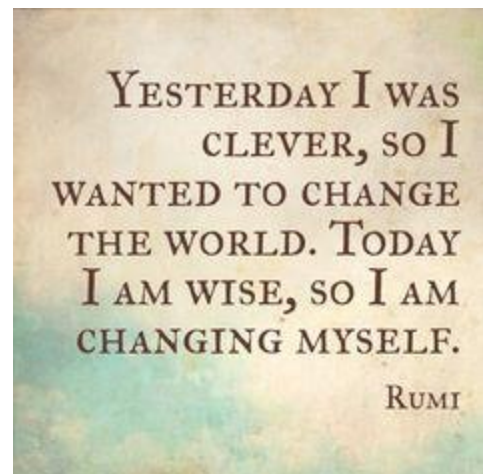
## The only person you can change is yourself

Presently I am going through a lot in my life and looking to the outside world for my answers, I remembered the Concept: *'The only person you can change is yourself!'* This Concept redirects me back to look to my inner world for my answers.

When I am only focusing on what is going on outside of me, then I am not able to change me. As simple as this Concept may sound, I have personally experienced how easy it is to overlook and believe I get it. The question for me is "Am I living the Concepts?" When I am living them I flow. When I am not living them I experience life as a struggle. Hence the Concepts, *'Beliefs create realities,' 'You can only see that which you know,' and 'Life is a projection of your beliefs.'* These Concepts tie in for me in changing myself.

So I then look at what I perceive is going on in my life. What beliefs do I still hold on to, such as life is hard? Believing life is hard will create the hard both internally and externally. Life will show up as I believe it to be. I personally have experienced what inside change can create, joy and ease. I have also experienced what holding on to the beliefs can create, the hardness and unhappiness. The choice then becomes mine on which experience I choose to have. I am the creator of my life and the only person I can change is myself.

~ Annmarie Serratore





## Accept people for who they are

If you know they gossip – don't tell them your secrets.

If you know they procrastinate – don't give them the project you have a tight deadline for.

If you know they never remember to bring home the milk – get it yourself.

If you find yourself saying, “Why do you always do this to me???” It's because they've told you over and over again who they are but you weren't listening...

You'll save yourself a lot of grief if you “accept people for who they are.”

Try it and share your results on [Facebook!](#)

~ *Nancy Baker*

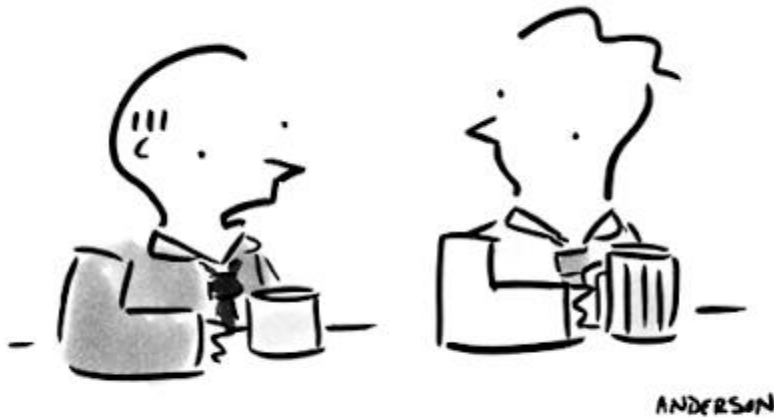
## Stories

Beliefs can be thoughts based on past experiences. Stories are when we project how we would feel in a given situation onto another person even though we do not know that they would feel the same way. For example, "I would be embarrassed in that situation." So we assume that everyone else would be embarrassed too even when this is not a fact. Your emotions are about you. Anything that bothers you or distresses you is about you. Don't assume that everyone experiences emotions like you. This is what you would want for yourself; it is not about the other person.

~ *Michael Cavallaro*

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"My therapist says not only am I projecting my feelings, but they're in HD."



## How people are using the Concept cards

I use the concept cards by pulling a certain card out and focusing on it for the day/week....whatever time frame I'm working with.

~ *Sandy Carter*

I asked myself "What keeps me from changing?" and pulled the card "Issues are either brought with us unconsciously from the past and then reinforced, or are created in the present." Then I asked it the opposite, positive way "What will help me change?" and pulled the card "Enlightenment comes in small doses, often overlooked." That was the clincher for me. I don't think I ever believed pulling a card could really work before that.

~ *Theresa Hamilton*

Oh I use them by just pulling them out when needed! I do still enjoy using them and love delving into them.

~ *Paula Gregorowicz*

I keep the cards on my bedside table and then at times I pick one out of the stack and read it. I look for times during the day that I can incorporate the concept into my thoughts.

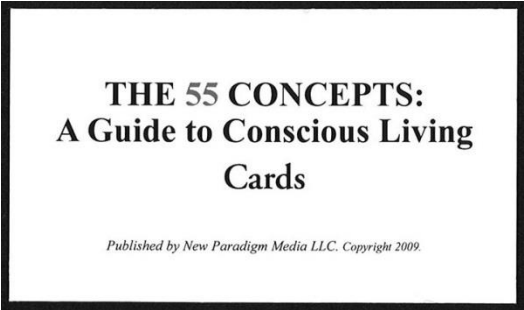
~ *Marie Kania*

I use them with my clients. They pull one and we talk about what it means in their life.

~ *Ted Peters*

I pick out three cards in the morning pertaining to whatever issue I may be working on that morning. I also keep my cards in a bowl and randomly pick a card throughout the day. Also, I like to read the concepts when I pick them because I see something I didn't see before.

~ *Barb Wallace*



**THE 55 CONCEPTS:  
A Guide to Conscious Living  
Cards**

Published by New Paradigm Media LLC. Copyright 2009.

Once I had a couple of friends over and we all picked a card and read the page to each other. It was actually really fun and so surprisingly relevant!

*~ Teresa Hamilton*

I hold the cards and ask which card do I need to learn or sit with and then pick a card. Or sometimes I will ask a question and then pick a card. I put the card on an easel by my bed. This is what I do most with the cards.

*~ Barbara Ann Valainotti*

I give them away at the end of my class and let people know they always get the right one for them – and they do.

*~ Gerry Yergey*

I pull one each morning, read the page in the book and then watch for how it shows up during the day.

*~ Ann Mason*

## We attract all things

So what are you attracting into your life?

Is it something you want? Something you don't want?

What's going on for you?

What does it have to teach you?

What does it tell you about yourself?

When we can be non-judgmental about what we attract (Concept: '*Be an observer, not a judge*') we can see how we contribute to it AND ONLY THEN do we have the power to change it. As long as we think it's just something that happens to us or as long as we think there is something wrong with us for having attracted it we are victims of it and can't change a thing.

SO..... what are you attracting? What does it have to teach you?

~ *Nancy Baker*



## Drama explained

Drama is when you use feelings to avoid your feeling. Feelings are experiencing the emotions that you have been through or stored away on their way out.

When you start to come alive and feel within, all of the feelings that you have stored and all of the emotions you have stored are going to be re-experienced on their way out.

And that is a normal process. When you are stirring up emotions or feelings to avoid the real feeling and keep them within you that is drama. *Drama avoids reality.* Drama avoids your real feelings.



~ *Michael Cavallaro*

## What I learned from the Concepts



People keep telling us what they've gained from using the Concepts. Here are a few of their comments.

- ❖ “You have no idea how much the 55 concepts have meant to me. During most difficult times, I am able to handle stress so much better than pre-55 concepts. My good friend says that I am so much more ‘together’ and relaxed despite havoc all around me.”
  
- ❖ “I am totally responsible for the quality of my life, as well as my beliefs, issues, behaviors, thoughts. I don't have to be a victim of life – but a co-creator. Being aware of my beliefs is critical – and beliefs can be changed! Making the Concepts a part of my daily life is empowering.”
  
- ❖ “As soon as something unpleasant creeps into my relationships, I cling to my lifesaver 55 concept book and cards. I remember to be kind in all things, especially towards myself. I remember that if it sticks, it is my issue. I delve deep to see what my issue really is. I remember that perception steers beliefs, and beliefs steer reality. My reality is not the same as another's reality. I could go on and on, if you know what I mean. Thank you.”
  
- ❖ “One thing that will stay with me is the ability to more consistently “pause” before passing judgment to get to personal discovery and development. The habit of stopping to notice that whatever is bugging me is really my issue and getting to the root of that issue is invaluable. Also, the fact that perfect isn't it, it is a patient journey was great.”

Feel free to ask questions or share anything you've learned about the concepts too on the [Facebook Page!](#)

## 3 Concepts for the Holidays

**3 Concepts that will make your holidays more pleasant are:**

- Hurt is not getting what you want
- The only person you can change is yourself
- Accept people as they are



Part of what makes holidays difficult are our expectations.

Many of us have this fantasy of Norman Rockwell holidays

where everything happens perfectly, people arrive on time, the dinner's served hot, everyone loves what's cooked, babies are cheerful, children are well behaved, people are happy and get along delightfully with each other... a perfect recipe for hurt and disappointment.

We might give our partner and children warning on how to not act in their usual manner and then are disappointed when they act like themselves. We wish Uncle George would stop teasing, and Aunt Sarah would stop criticizing and neither is any more likely to happen this year than it has in any other.

Instead, if we realize that things may not turn out just like we want them but what really needs to change is our expectations and not others, you then actually have a chance of enjoying yourselves. By using these 3 concepts for the holidays and by changing you and your expectations this year might prove to be a more pleasant experience for you!

This practice is about you becoming the creator of your own experience. You have the ability to create the experience not just be subject to whatever happens.

*~ Nancy Baker*

[The 55 Concepts Book](https://michaelcavallaro.com/shop/) audio and more are available at <https://michaelcavallaro.com/shop/>.

Makes a great holiday gift. *lots of helpful hints and exercises. Don't miss it!*

## Mirrors, another level

Stare into any mirror long enough, the mirror will disappear, and all that will be left is you. Even the you that you thought you were will disappear; and all that will be left is truth. But if you're afraid to stare into the mirror, you deny your truth. So people who are afraid to look at their issues, afraid to look deeply into things are people who are afraid to face their own truth.

Stare into the mirror and the only thing left will be you facing yourself. Too many people are afraid to face themselves because there are too many reflections or too many mirrors that they have left behind with things that they have done, seen, experienced, and then judged that they don't want to look at the mirror and have to feel the judgment that they have reflected onto themselves once again. And the fear of their own judgment of their own mirrors and reflections of their own behaviors creates the denial of seeing themselves and becoming their own truth. So they are always seeing false mirror, false gods, never being themselves or their true essence.

Being afraid to face your own judgments of your own experiences, all the dramas that you have created is the denial of self. It is the rejection of self. Being able to stare in all of your own mirrors, this means to be able to look at all of the things you have ever created, done, or experienced and see them neutrally, without judgment, allows you to begin to see yourself and experience your own truth.

If you turn away from your own experiences and refuse to look in these mirrors, you only create other reflections of the same mirrors endlessly. We would call these repeated patterns. Stare into the mirror of your experiences until it disappears. View it in neutrality without judgment and you will find your own inner peace.

With the metaphor of the mirrors, we can also look at the truth will set you free. When you can see into those mirrors, with neutrality until they disappear that becomes your truth, which then sets you free of all of the mirrors and all of the false reflections. You are now free to be, to be your divine self; free from the self-created illusions of judgment, free from the limitations of a mirror, free to create anything.

*~ Michael Cavallaro*

## 55 ways to make the Concepts a part of your everyday life

*From our students and readers...*

1. Form a group to discuss and share
2. Share them with a friend, partner or your children
3. Journal
4. Pull a card each morning and see how it shows up in your life that day
5. Ask a question – pull a card – there's your answer
  
6. Use them as your screen saver
7. Send one to yourself in an email
8. Have a friend send you one each day and you send her one
9. Tape a card to computer monitor
10. Break them down into related groups of cards
  
11. Put one on your bathroom mirror
12. Put one on the refrigerator
13. Try the dashboard
14. Put them on an artist easel or in an business card holder where you'll see them each day
15. Translate the Concepts into another language
  
16. Focus on one each week
17. Memorize them
18. Make a song about them
19. Look for them in quotes and journaling
20. Watch a movie, listen to a song and write down all the Concepts that fit
  
21. Go through the book with a friend
22. Make them with art, calligraphy, embroidery
23. Use all cards on one situation
24. Look at the Concepts that you don't like or don't think apply



25. Listen to the audio version of the Concepts
  
26. Get a tattoo
27. Send yourself a cell phone message
28. Put a Concept on your answer machine
29. Use as an e-mail tagline
30. Put cards in Christmas cards/bills
  
31. Use them as place cards for Thanksgiving or meals
32. Put a ribbon on the cards and use them as ornaments for tree
33. If you're a gardener: laminate them onto a popsicle stick, and plant them in the garden
34. Practice a new one each day
35. Carry the book in your purse
  
36. Write them on note cards
37. If you had two sets of cards set them up a memory card game
38. State a situation, then go through every card and seeing how it applies
39. For people that enjoy artistic pursuits, you can physically embellish each card
40. Or create a drawing, painting, graphic design, scrapbook page, or the like for each concept
  
41. Have a friend tell about a situation, see how many concepts could apply
42. Teach the first three to your children and make a game of seeing where they apply. (May have to add '*Be an observer, not a judge!*')
43. Make a chart with the Concepts down the side and the days of the month across the top, see which ones apply each day
44. Participate on the [Facebook Page](#) with questions, comments and ideas!

*Can you add the last 11?*

*Join us on [Facebook](#) and share your ideas!*

## About us

[Living Concepts](#) LLC processes have been evolving since 1975. As more and more people experienced the new sense of joy and clarity in their life that came from using the processes and shared their experiences with others it became necessary to create a formal organization. Thus 10 years ago Living Concepts, LLC was created to meet the growing requests and needs of those who wanted to understand life better, navigate it more successfully and expand their sense of what is possible.

[The 55 Concepts](#) are the foundation of this process. Hundreds of people have learned through the book, classes, [online free articles, audios and videos](#) how to better understand how life works and how to make life easier and more joyful.

### **So if you are tired of:**

- Feeling guilty, anxious, or have unexplained fear
- Feeling sluggish in body
- Not understanding why people do the things they do at home or in the workplace
- Not understanding your partner's behavior
- Repeating the same patterns in your life over and over

### **Maybe you want:**

- A partner, a healthy partner that is just perfect for you
- Something different than the routine of your life
- To figure out why you're here

Regardless of who you are or what stage of life, here's an opportunity for you to not only think outside the box, but to actually be outside the box!

## Parting thoughts

- If you have a story or comment on how you use the Concepts or what happened when you did, we'd love to hear it! Send it to [info@livingconcepts1.com](mailto:info@livingconcepts1.com) or add it to our [Facebook Page](#). If it is right for the next edition of this book you'll be sent a free copy with your story in it.
- [Click here](#) for free audios and videos.
- Email us [info@livingconcepts1.com](mailto:info@livingconcepts1.com) to schedule a complimentary session with one of our facilitators to sample our method and see if this process is your next step in creating the life you want.

*Enjoy!*