

TRANSFORMING SUFFERING

Our emotional suffering is primarily a result of thwarted desires, needs and longing. When we don't get what we really want, we feel hurt, anger, or other sorts of emotional pain. But we don't necessarily make the linkage between the suffering itself, and the fact that we really wanted something that didn't happen.

This invaluable insight, so often misunderstood, can lead us to discover our needs and desires at our core. Instead of getting caught in a potentially endless cycle of suffering, we can actually learn from the suffering itself, what we want in life. Once we understand and allow ourselves to be guided by the wisdom inherent in becoming aware of our own desires and needs, we can connect to our intelligence and our truest sense of ourselves. From there, we can find our natural flow, instead of being thwarted and frustrated.

Suffering is almost always the byproduct of frustrated or blocked needs. Tracing our emotions back to their source can lead us to fulfill them when we stay with the suffering, but it's often difficult to remember that the suffering originated from a good desire or need. Instead, we fall into a negative thought process in which we're sinking, flailing, resisting or suffering, and we don't have a handle on how to get back to the positive longings that started the whole thing in the first place. We just can't get there when we are continuously reacting.

When we begin to identify suffering as being connected to some kind of a positive beginning, we will have a natural curiosity about ourselves, and our emotions. We can teach ourselves to ask, "What was the positive beginning of this"? What did we really want, most likely something that started as a good thing, but that left us suffering? We just don't realize the

simple fact that we are suffering because we want something that isn't happening and it is critical to learn how to return to the source.

This paper supports learning how suffering is designed to demonstrate how suffering can be eased in the world and in ourselves, when we can get in touch with and learn how to respond to our desires, and essential needs. We will define three foundational parts of ourselves. It is not the intention for meanings to conflict with the way one might already understand these words. Please substitute the words that are natural for you to represent the meanings that we are clarifying. For the purpose of this paper, we will refer to desires, needs and longings in the following way so they can be useful in the search to find these parts of yourself, and in doing so help discover the ways in which we lose ourselves.

Below are simple definitions and descriptions of desires, needs and longing:

DESIRES represent the satisfaction that most Westerners seek. There are two parts to desire: ordinary and harmful.

1. **ORDINARY DESIRES:** We may desire healthy amounts of attention, pleasure, comfort, beauty, security or success. We desire these things for ourselves and those we love. In the framework of the world, these inherently positive desires are often considered more by the economically fortunate, such as pleasure, vacations, nicer houses, nicer trips and overall more conveniences.

2. **HARMFUL DESIRES:** (also referred to as narcissistic desires) We may desire more than the usual amounts of pleasure, success, self-image, vacations and comfort of all kinds. We want what we want, when we want it. This kind of desire is blind and creates suffering for us while others suffer at our expense. Such blind desire seeks personal power, control and domination. Satisfying these desires can result in addictions, destructive use of power, and wanting things at

the expense of others such as an excessive desire for recognition that compels a person to rob others of that recognition.

NEEDS represent all that is necessary to support survival and a healthy sense of self.

Needs can also be divided into two categories: survival and healthy sense of self.

1. **NEEDS FOR SURVIVAL:** We need air, water, food, shelter and medical care.

2. **NEEDS FOR A HEALTHY SENSE OF SELF:** We need to belong, to be liked and loved, and be cared for and understood so we can feel good as we move through the world. Without developing a healthy ego structure to support us in meeting our needs, we will feel significantly inadequate, useless and worthless. Such feelings, when dominant, are intolerable for most people and usually lead to self-rejection and acting out in negative ways.

Physical Needs:

sleeping, shelter, warmth, safety, eating, drinking, health

Heart Needs and Wants: Safety, friendship, sexual intimacy, fulfillment, friendship, support, acceptance, belonging, love, respect, trust, honesty, humor, recognition, being valued, intelligence/learning, creativity, to be understood, to be desired, to grow, to be appreciated, autonomy, relaxation, achievement, mutuality, consistency, compassion, success, self-sufficiency, belonging, self-esteem, self-worth, to be known, to be seen, empathy, affection, to be needed, freedom, affection, joy, play, inspiration, meaning, purpose, companionship, consideration, intimacy, to grieve, authenticity, presence, courage, peace, strength, generosity, connection, security, support, kindness,

DESIRES

Control, Power, Pleasure, Comfort, Domination, Influence, material things, winning, superiority, Specialness, Wealth, praise, sexual, judgment, blame, injure, compete, addictiveness, fame, glory, Excessive.....Recognition, Attention, Popularity, safety, , attractiveness, beauty, security, uniqueness, sexuality, success,

LONGINGS come from the deepest layers of our hearts. Fulfilling and complete unto themselves, they suggest an infinite expanse. From my vantage point, longing, in a sense, is prayer itself - - the longing for something that will hurt no one, benefit everyone and elevate our lives into our essential natures. For example, while we may need to be loved, we yearn to BE love. While we may need to be understood, we yearn to BE understanding. Essential qualities contained in the heart include faith, trust, compassion, innocence, peace, kindness, truthfulness and love. These are the same essential qualities for which we pray or we purify our intentions.

LONGINGS/STATES OF BEING:

courage, trust, tenderness, kindness, faith, love, support, confidence, ease, peace, relaxation, humor, innocence, lightness, warmth, sincerity, purity, grace, receptivity, bliss, appreciation, passion, compassion, unity, open, soft, empathy, intuition, forgiveness, acceptance, curiosity, value, wholesome, fulfillment, creativity, prayer, contentment, presence, inclusive, joy, inspiration, generosity, compassion, truth, awareness, understanding, fulfillment, strength, aliveness, acceptance, creativity, presence, generosity, healing, delight, silence

This involves surrendering one of the pure states mentioned above, which is the essence contained in all religions or spiritual teachings as we know them. In order to grasp the quality of these states of being it is helpful to look into your experience. What was it like when you were in your finest moments of generosity, courage, peace, humor, or love? These states of being are the fulfillment of life itself, and the deeper we have experienced these states and allow ourselves to reflect on them the more obvious it becomes that it is central to why we are alive. They become their own incentive, as it is evident that there is nothing lacking in those moments.

It is very healing to have an openness to see and experience desire, needs and longings inside ourselves. The cost of suppression is quite dear, as it will leave us in a state of suffering as a result of this incompleteness. All desires need not be acted upon as the circumstances that we are in will determine whether they are beneficial to us or not. All needs won't be fulfilled, but it is still helpful to know that an unsatisfied need can be the source of our pain. And certainly all

longings won't be met in our life, but again it is beneficial to be aware that this lack also causes pain.

It is crucial to understand that these levels between desire, needs and longings are often not black and white with firm boundaries. They are interconnected so we must pay attention to the gradations, as virtually all of us have overlapping desires, needs and longings. But no matter the gradations from one level to the next, I usually encourage people to *go for* their ordinary desires when they persist. Developmentally, if you suppress your desires, you won't be able to get what you need and you will most likely end up rejecting yourself.

When we study the evolution of our Western world, it seems that desire itself has overtaken both needs and longing. In essence, we have rejected our longings and as a culture have allowed our desires to move into excessive materialism where they've been stuck for a very long time. The all-too-human desire to "be somebody important," to endlessly want more... particularly prevalent in the West, has escalated our egocentric tendencies. The more we allow desire to dominate, the more important we believe we need to be.

For the radical segment of our Eastern counterparts who threaten our world, they seem to identify consciously with longings alone, rejecting desires and needs. While they see themselves as representations of the pure essence of God, their desires and needs are suppressed. That frequently results in rage. Their extreme identification with longing and the suppression of their needs has moved into a rage against desire and wants to kill it, which can easily lead to militaristic attitudes.

It is no surprise then, that these parts of the East and the West are at odds. One has largely rejected longing, the other has largely rejected desires and needs. Fundamentally, these opposing perspectives on some level feed the justification for war. In light of this, it becomes

easier to see the state of the world as a metaphor, for the state of our own internal wars and disconnection.

Many of us were raised to see the American dream itself as a fulfillment of desire, which in turn, appears to be the fulfillment of reality. But if we're fortunate enough to be able to satisfy even some of our desires, we can start to recognize that there is no lasting satisfaction. This can be disturbing because the Western world has taught us that satisfying desires for pleasure, comfort, and convenience will make us happy. We see beautiful, sexy people in the media, and we erroneously believe that living a certain lifestyle and obtaining a certain amount of success will make us happy. If you look at your lifestyle, you may see that many of your motivations are indeed driven by conditioning, and not what really feeds your heart.

But when we discover that we still have needs and longings, we understand that satisfying desires doesn't touch a deeper part of ourselves - - the part of us that wants to be loved, cared for and nurtured, the part of us that needs to be able to receive affection, to be understood and seen. When any of our needs are fulfilled, a deeper part of our core can start to stir with a sense of well-being. We gain a sense of being whole. We start to understand ourselves because someone else understands us. When we are known, we can know ourselves. When this starts to deepen we can sense a deeper part of our nature. We sense that people are seeing the good in us and we can start to feel our own goodness. This richer quality of healthy needing reflects a quality of our hearts in the form of warmth, friendliness, caring, understanding and affection. Our needs being satisfied in a pure way can lead us into the state of being we received. When we are loved we can sense love more easily, when we are trusted we can taste the quality of trust. When we receive tenderness or peace we can get deeper and deeper glimpses of these qualities themselves. If we are fortunate, we are exposed to these qualities from the outside through time, depth of experience or simply naturally developing we can actually learn to be the

states of well-being from inside. This attainment is relatively rare, and beyond the scope of this paper, so we are simply addressing how to look at our suffering, and be able to use the awareness as a positive force for healing and fulfillment. We are looking to access our core needs whenever we are in a state of suffering.

This is not easy to do in ordinary life, as we have not been taught how to find our needs when we are hurting. If we do however, pay close attention, we can start to see a layer inside us that is incomplete. We can notice how reliant we are on external feedback, and we may come to discover that satisfying a need will not be enough to give us a lasting feeling of goodness in our core. It is challenging to stay this honest and aware. If we look straight into our hearts we can see that we will likely feel uneasy because when we're not being fed from the outside by our success, validation, or being loved by someone, we feel empty and frightened. This is completely normal, and requires real courage to face this hole inside us directly. This hole becomes more obvious when we encounter death, sickness, loss and tragedy. The satisfying of our needs gives us an increased chance to open to another layer of our hearts and souls.

This is a very fulfilling place that all of us would want to return to if we felt safe enough, and had satisfied enough of our desires and needs. However it is hard to stay this open for most of us. It is important not to try to get ahead of ourselves. Imagine you're hungry and you want to have dinner, but there's no food in your refrigerator. You have to start by getting the food and if you bypass that step, you can't cook it or eat it. Perhaps you want to go on vacation to the Caribbean but you refuse to fly or take a boat. You won't get there.

If there's enough awareness, life-experience and sensitivity, if you take your time to look inside, the upgrade of moving closer to our core automatically happens. It doesn't require much effort, but it does require sensitivity, awareness, sincerity and truthfulness. We all need an

education to discover what our desires, needs, and longings actually are. That is what we are going to do next.

FIVE-STEP CONTEMPLATION/INSIGHT PRACTICE

How do we know what our desires, needs and longing are in the moment? The practice below can assist us in making this discernment. Following the steps can be a great help in feeling grounded and guiding ourselves to what we need.

We define a practice as something we are capable of doing all the time, in which we are immersed each and every day until it becomes a lifestyle and a continuing part of existence. This practice can be used any time we want to focus on the goodness we are reaching for. This allows us to focus on what is needed rather than what we don't like.

STEP ONE: WE SUPPORT FEELING WHEREVER WE ARE IN A GIVEN MOMENT, RATHER THAN EXPRESSING OR SUPPRESSING IT.

This support is especially needed when the feeling is painful, shameful or any other state that we would normally reject. The bottom line is that there is absolutely no feeling or state of being that is unworthy of being felt. Absolutely none! We might support our feeling by telling ourselves something like, "It's okay that this is what you feel, even if you can't recognize what it is. This is a crucial part of living from your heart and nature. Have the courage to stay with what you're feeling."

STEP TWO: WE IDENTIFY THE FEELING

From the state of supporting and allowing the feeling, we identify the feeling state as clearly as possible. We recognize that although words can bring us closer to identifying the experience itself, they will never be the same as having the experience. To implement this step,

we set aside a period of time, perhaps several seconds or minutes, to do nothing but focus on listening to and clarifying our current state. We notice that we are emotionally sad, frightened or angry. This step is a highly useful tool to help bring to light that which we would normally keep hidden. We may notice a constellation of feelings. It is important to appreciate and acknowledge all that we are experiencing.

STEP THREE: WHAT IS THE UNDERLYING NEED?

Once we have identified the feelings, we can identify the underlying desire, need or longing that is missing when the heart feels thwarted. We support such a discovery by asking ourselves, “What thwarted desire, need or longing led me to feel this? If I felt sad, what was the desire that would have made me happy? If I felt frightened what did I need that would have allowed me to feel safe or courageous? Among many others, the most common needs here are wanting to feel safe, feel loved, understood and supported.

STEP FOUR: WE FIND A WAY TO CARE FOR OURSELVES

Perhaps the most important and challenging of all, Step Four comes after we have identified our underlying need. We cultivate sincere questions like, “How can I take care of myself in the present and the near future?” It is deadly to focus on these questions in the abstract. Whether we are religious, spiritual or otherwise, we can open to our intuition and ask how to best support the need in our present circumstances. Often, this requires supporting the opposite of the original feeling. For example, if we are afraid, we can ask ourselves, “Where do I need to activate a sense of courage? How do I show it? What actions are courageous? How can I most effectively communicate with my partner? Would it be wiser to wait to express my need when I feel calmer? Will prayer or meditation be most helpful right now? How can I give myself the best chance to have what I really need?”

Remember that this step is about being in the present moment and having the right attitude to discover the best method to fulfill ourselves. We ask ourselves the essential questions to discover the actions and attitudes that will help us find our way: What do I need to do? What attitude do I want to focus on to help me? Is the state of my environment appropriate for pursuing the need now? Is the best method of communication to be more personal or less? Is this desire one that I need to let go of?

Step Four allows us to activate the insights that arise from these questions. Then we can integrate them in our daily lives with a change of approach concerning our actions, our words and our attitudes.

STEP FIVE: WE APPRECIATE OURSELVES

Here we encourage and appreciate ourselves for having acted on our needs intelligently. We tell ourselves in our own words something like, "I'm so grateful that I acted on what I needed sensitively, and that's my priority. I'm glad I was as courageous as I could be. With this deep breath, may I relax and trust that I did what was needed, no matter the outcome. I appreciate acting on my highest need. Responding in this way is who I really am and whom I long to be."

The five-step process above, in its essence, is clear, direct and uncomplicated. Simply put, when we identify each feeling without rejecting ourselves, we can contemplate the underlying need. Then we can ask the right questions to support the need, giving ourselves direct guidance about supporting our newly discovered core longing. We can appreciate and acknowledge our responses with clear statements to ourselves. Repeating this process over and over will provide a motivation that does not come primarily through mental understanding. With continued practice and sincere dedication to the five steps, we actually can focus on what we really want, rather than fight against what we don't like.

No one really likes it when we don't get what we want or when we feel obliged to do something we don't like. Most of us have a negative reaction to what we perceive as darkness. In other words, when we act out our emotions unconsciously in a mean-spirited way, we usually receive a mean-spirited re-action. Remember, this is about feeling our feelings *harmlessly*, not suppressing or acting out on them, so all feelings are acceptable and vital. The key is to become fascinated with our own feelings, rather than rejecting or dumping them on others. Only when it is desirable and fine with us to fully experience our true feelings, can we respond from a softer and stronger place.

Let's use a simple example to demonstrate the five-step process.

Step One: We agree to feel our feelings and spend several seconds or minutes breathing into their quality.

Step Two: We notice that the feeling is fear. We're determined to embrace it, not reject it.

Step Three: We discover the underlying need or longing that we have lost and replaced with fear. The underlying thwarted longing is almost always the opposite of the feeling itself. With fear, the underlying need could be courage or safety.

Step Four: We dedicate our attention to appreciating the process of feeling and reinforcing the underlying need in the present and the near future. In this case, we might focus on the action, response or tone needed to support courage and safety.

Step Five: We offer ourselves support for having the courage to get in touch with and responding to our needs. We say things like, "I appreciate that my courage led to these actions, responses and honesty with myself in areas where I previously ran from the truth. Now I have more faith and trust in myself."

Shifting the focus from feelings to needs can transform a one-dimensional fear into a courageous response in our lives. But it does not always come easily. We have to practice since

we've spent most of our lives hiding our thwarted needs. When we practice enough, eventually we'll get the knack of feeding the positive, rather than allowing continuous thoughts to spring from our fear. This will help us support the healing instead of stewing in the belief that suffering is our natural state.

Let's consider a situation where you're angry with your boss for pressuring, judging, or acting in an authoritarian manner towards you. The five-step process will serve as follows:

Step One: Give yourself permission to feel the full force of your feelings, promising not to reject them or yourself.

Step Two: Identify the anger and hurt.

Step Three: Ask yourself, "What is the thwarted need that led to this hurt and anger?" Let yourself discover your need for respect, kindness and acceptance.

Step Four: Ask yourself, "How can I give myself the best chance to get what I truly need from my boss? How can I reinforce him to treat me more kindly and with less pressure? How can I respond in my feelings and words that will increase the likelihood of his being more accepting? Is it silence on my part or a gentle conversation?" We then take the action and respond in the ways that our contemplation leads us.

Step Five: Support yourself in whatever you have decided. If you chose silence because your boss was in an abusive mood, tell yourself in your own words, "I'm so trusting that you followed your wisdom and remained silent." If you chose to speak up, appreciate your bravery by saying to yourself, "I love this courage to speak my truth. I want this to be a continuing reflection of who I am."

There is a great deal of subtlety in the above exercise because we often have numerous needs that were thwarted at the same time. We must assess which ones have the best chance of being supported, given the exact conditions we face because no two situations are exactly the

same. If your boss is receptive, a direct approach is optimal. If he isn't, it's better to avoid confrontation. This demonstrates the importance of being present so you can notice the people around you, your environment and your current internal state. Then you can respond intelligently and accept conditions the way they are.

We often get confused with the ideas of honesty and authenticity. It's circumstantial whether it's a good practice to be as direct as possible. For example, if you're facing an angry gorilla that is challenging you, honesty just isn't going to work. In this case, it would be wiser to cultivate a state of relaxation. The same is true for our own emotional states.

Let's look at this example.

ELENA

A friend of mine, Elena, called recently to say that she had gotten into an altercation with her sister on the phone. It seems that Elena wanted her nephew, Steve, to stay away from his father, since the man had been abusive and had recently abandoned his family. Elena wanted her sister to try to convince Steve that meeting with his abusive father was a bad idea. But Elena's approach had been aggressive and demanding because she was being led by her anger. As a result, her sister withdrew.

I asked Elena if she were willing to really feel her feelings? She said, yes. (STEP ONE) When I asked her how she would describe her strongest feeling, she said it was anger. (STEP TWO). Then I asked what her underlying need was. When she took a few moments to look, she saw that she needed to keep her nephew safe and to help her sister heal from the break up. (STEP THREE).

"Now that you see that you acted out your anger, what do you want to do about the situation?" I asked Elena.

“I want to call my sister and apologize.” (STEP FOUR) Elena told her sister, “I’m sorry for being so aggressive. I see now that my tone and attitude did nothing positive for you or me or Steve. It didn’t serve anyone.”

Her sister was so relieved and appreciative; she lightened up and forgave her instantly. Elena felt better and they carried on the discussion from a deeper place of intimacy and caring. They were in their hearts, they felt loving toward each other and they each appreciated themselves and each other for finding a gentler way to communicate. (STEP FIVE)

If we are angry, it’s almost always better to avoid a spontaneous confrontation because that creates resistance and struggles. We can see how essential it is to be present with our hearts, to notice the people involved and to be aware of our environment and ourselves. Then we have a better chance to respond intelligently and accept conditions the way they are.

The following two case studies will show clients in present time contemplation, as they utilize the five steps to reach their hearts.

ANN

Ann was concerned about her friend, Lorraine, who was battling a tendency toward self-destructiveness. Ann wanted to help her friend, and it was apparent, partly by Ann’s obvious level of upset and partly from what she said, that she and Lorraine had been very close friends for a long time. There was obvious love and caring beneath her outer irritation and I saw that the relationship meant a great deal to Ann. We decided to implement the five-step process to see what true feelings were being thwarted in her heart.

Since Ann had arrived in a state of agitation, I encouraged her to embark on STEP ONE in which she agreed to experience and support her true feelings, whatever they were. This took courage and dedication as Ann relaxed palpably when she became determined to discover, *not to reject*, the truth about her feelings, whatever they were.

In STEP TWO, Ann identified her feelings as frustration and anger. I suggested she appreciate those feelings so she might become interested in her own condition. She could tell herself, “I’m fine with this anger. I’m fine that I’m furious, enraged and intolerant.” At first, she said that her anger made her feel like she was against her friend and that was painful. She told me she had railed aggressively at Lorraine, saying, “I can’t support what you’re doing when your drinking puts you in danger.” Lorraine was furious at being attacked and had withdrawn, so Ann wanted to find another place from which to respond. Now she was developing an interest in her own state of being because she saw that her anger was not the problem. Acting it out was coming between herself and her friend. Her decision to learn to co-exist with her anger and intolerance rather than reject it, led her to the next step.

I encouraged Ann to look beneath the anger, and ask what need was being thwarted that left her feeling angry. She did so and she didn’t reject herself. Instead, she deepened her inquiry to realize that she really wanted to reach her friend’s sensibility. A glow came into her face as she started to see her anger as an ally and guide, rather than an enemy. STEP THREE encouraged Ann to say with great passion, “I really want to shake up Lorraine and help her. More importantly, I want her to help herself.” She visibly shifted from being agitated and tense to looking passionate and alive. She was noticeably softer because she could feel her own good intentions. She said with tears in her eyes, “I’m relieved I can feel my heart again. It was awful feeling like I hated Lorraine. I’m glad I can see that the source of my anger was the frustrated desire to be of help.”

In STEP FOUR, I asked Ann what she thought was her best chance to reach Lorraine to help minimize her friend’s resistance. After some thought, she said, “I don’t think confronting her destructive behavior is the way to go. I’d rather ask her how she’s doing emotionally.” Ann understood that Lorraine had felt judged by her. “I need to build more trust,” she told me. “I

need to show her that I care. She'll run away if she feels like I'm trying to 'fix' her. She'll know that was coming from my impatience. I have to earn back her good will."

In STEP FIVE, I asked Ann, "How will you encourage yourself to stay focused on expressing yourself from a positive and patient place?" She said, "Recognizing that I am coming from a positive place, I trust my own sincerity. That is how I can be most effective and really help my friend to help herself. I love that I was able to do it."

SUZANNE

For a final look at the five-step process in this chapter, meet a friend of mine, Suzanne. Notice how the five-step process takes a few unexpected dips and turns but ends up complete.

In the seventies, Suzanne, an attorney, offered her services to a commercial law firm that did pro bono work for start-up inner city businesses. I was a communication consultant brought in to assist the board of the non-profit division, and I could see frustration writhing all over Suzanne's face when she was around Arthur, the CEO of the non-profit segment.

That afternoon, when we were about to go into a meeting, I stopped Suzanne. "Are you interested in talking about what's going on with you?" I asked.

"What do you mean?" she said.

"Well," I told her, "you seemed really uncomfortable when Arthur was around."

Relieved that I had noticed and was interested in caring for her, Suzanne said, "Thank you so much for asking. I would love to talk about it." This was the beginning of STEP ONE.

I looked at her quietly, prepared to listen.

"I'm so bottled up and frustrated," she began, "because when I agreed to work with the pro bono division, I was promised a lot of help. I made an agreement at the time to take half of my usual salary, assuming I'd be working part time.

“But during the last year and a half, I’ve been working up to eighty hours a week. I’ve asked over and over again for extra support, which I never got. Now we’re about to have a meeting to set the agenda for the coming year and I’m so freaked out and pissed off, I don’t think I want to work with these people any more. I don’t know if this is my frustration talking or not, but, basically, that’s how I feel right now.” That was STEP TWO.

Suzanne was literally shaking with frustration, and I told her how much I appreciated her trust. “I can’t believe you’re actually letting me in this deeply.” My encouragement inspired her to want to go in further. I said to her, “What did you really want that didn’t happen? More importantly, what do you really want in this meeting? If you go in there and express your frustration, you’re very likely going to get resistance and it will probably fall apart. Do you know what you actually want?”

“Yes, I do,” she said, still sounding angry. “What I really want is to get the support I was promised and I want a remuneration schedule that’s commensurate with the amount of work I’m doing. I want the trust and goodwill that was there at the beginning, to be re-established.” That was STEP THREE.

“What’s your sense of how you’re expressing that?” I asked her. “What are you feeling?”

“I’m still frustrated as hell.”

“Is there a possibility you could feel your sincerity and your genuine love for this work and this vision?” I asked. “Can you say what you just told me but this time, try expressing it through what your heart really longs and yearns for?”

I noticed that Suzanne was kind of shocked and disoriented by my question. But she intuitively understood what I was asking.

“Thank you,” she said, “for asking me that question.” Now she pretended to be sitting with Arthur. “I’d love to be able to make this work with you, Arthur,” she practiced. “I’d love to

find a financial agreement that would be fair, and I'd like to have enough staff support that I could work a lot less. I have a fiancée and I want to be able to enjoy my life, and I also want to work hard and be dedicated." She said this with tenderness, strength and sincerity.

"How do you feel?" I asked.

"I feel liberated. I know what I want to do and how I want to say it." That was STEP FOUR.

"How do you feel about yourself?"

"I love it when I can talk from this place," she told me. "I feel good finding my real strength and focus. It's been so long since I've been able to feel where I really am and who I really am. This is why I went into this project in the first place, and this is the way I still want it to be, and I'm so glad that I can feel this part of me again. This is who I am, this is the spirit that motivates me to live my life." That was STEP FIVE. But it wasn't over.

A few days later, a meeting occurred with Suzanne, Arthur, a woman named Priscilla and me. Priscilla was extraordinary in that she was not only a brilliant mind but she was all heart. Suzanne had all the best intentions when the meeting began, but her frustration and agitation took over as she began to rail at Arthur. We were back to **STEP TWO** in our process since Suzanne had forgotten her intention to come from her heart. She had forgotten to look beneath the feelings to see what her needs were when she said, "Arthur, this is what Priscilla and I want."

The more she dumped her anger and frustration on Arthur, the more I saw Priscilla cringing. I asked Suzanne, "Can I check something out here? Priscilla, please correct me if I'm wrong, but I think Suzanne is speaking for you and you haven't committed yet. You might have given the impression that you'll go along with Suzanne because you want to please her. Is that true?"

She nodded and became teary.

I said to Suzanne, “Priscilla is a pure heart person. She doesn’t want to be in the middle of conflict. So she can’t possibly say ‘yes’ to this unless she can feel you being in your heart, Suzanne. She needs some sense of security that this is who you are, this is who you want to be, and that you want to be in a state of goodwill so the environment is friendly and peaceful.”

Priscilla began to cry. “I can’t believe you’re saying exactly what’s in my mind,” she told me. “I had no idea I felt that, but I do.”

Suzanne went into a state of embarrassment, a sweet kind of innocence from understanding that she had lost her heart. “I want what you want, Priscilla,” she said, and then relaxed. That was STEP THREE.

Everyone in the room let go and I asked if they could feel the difference.

“Yes,” said Priscilla. “This is exactly where I need this to be.”

Suzanne added, “This is where I want it to be, too. I’m so sorry I’ve been throwing this aggression off on you, Arthur. I can see that no one wants to be in the middle of this kind of conflict.”

The meeting continued as we discussed ways to implement the things that were not working so everyone could be satisfied in the end. When it was over, Suzanne stood up and began to walk toward the door when she burst out in hysterical laughter. She screamed and shook her body several times jumping up and down, just to vent the previous frustration and to acknowledge that she was free from his anger. It showed that she had really shed her feelings of frustration and we all laughed hysterically with her. STEP FOUR.

Suzanne said she was overjoyed that she was feeling her heart, innocence and longing. “This is what life is about,” she said. “Now I can act from a place of authenticity.” She prayed that she could remember this place and return there as often as possible. STEP FIVE.

As with any practice, we need to repeat this five-step process over and over until it becomes second nature. Then we have a kind of blueprint to work with our desires, needs and longings that will serve us in our lives. Remember that staying alert to each step can be interesting and fascinating, especially when we find ourselves reverting like Suzanne did. We don't want to allow critical judgment to dominate here. It's all about reaching our core needs and easing suffering. Any way we accomplish this is inspirational.