



## #GetBetter Mindset Guide Overview

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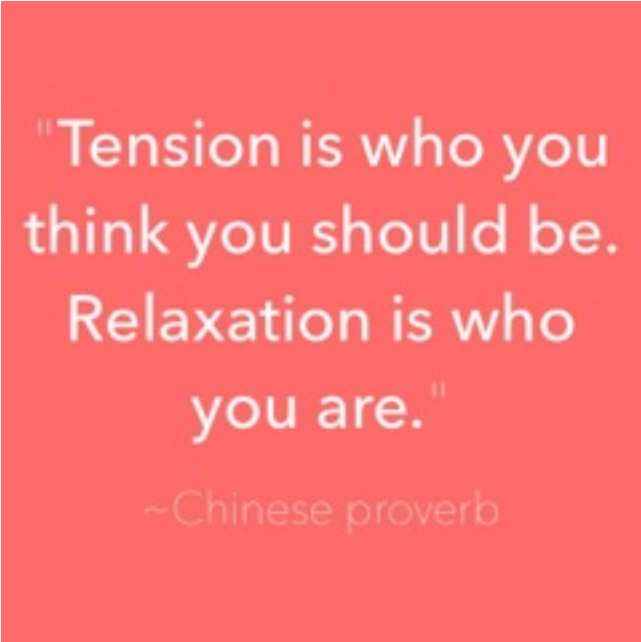
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"Tension is who you  
think you should be.  
Relaxation is who  
you are."

~Chinese proverb

## Part I. Intro and Perspective

**Your greatest tool is your perspective.**

It's more powerful than words, actions, other people's words or actions and it's certainly more important than outcomes.

Over the next 60 pages, you and I, we are going to go deep. Super deep. And it's going to be emotional, and scary, and liberating, and uncomfortable, and above all, amazing.

I am so happy to have you on board. But before we get started, I want to thank you for being here, for being open-minded enough to even be reading this right now, and commend you on your bravery in starting this journey into personal development and self-realization.

**You are already amazing.**

But sometimes we let our insecurities convince us otherwise.

It's normal to feel insecure. It's normal to be scared of losing people, things, jobs, etc. It's normal to worry about how relationships will shake out. It's normal to feel not-good-enough. We all feel that way in some capacity. It's human nature.

But sometimes, the insecurities and emotional turmoil (both inside and in our relationships) lead to misery. Never feeling good enough is miserable. Always feeling like you need to prove yourself is miserable. Not feeling like you can relax and be yourself is miserable. Walking on eggshells is miserable. Putting on a show constantly to garner attention is miserable. Allowing other people's words and actions to dictate our own sense of wellbeing is miserable. And guess what?

All of these things ... when you *really* get down to it ... when you *really* look at the bottom line ... when you take away all justifications, obligations, expectations ... ARE A CHOICE.

### **Feeling miserable is a choice.**

Feeling hurt, done wrong, betrayed, regretful ... is a choice.

We are never going to get away from interacting with people. So the idea that other people don't impact us is shortsighted, BUT they are there to help offer us the OPPORTUNITIES to learn and grow, to personally develop.

Which is why this guide is chock-full of examples, from my own life, some of my clients and hypothetical examples. Because you really can't practice this stuff without other people! They push our buttons, challenge us, help us feel the emotions: joy, pain, loss, fear, vulnerability, anger, sadness, etc.

And emotions are important. Because they are the triggers that help us understand where the work is. Stress and negative emotions are red flags.

They are not "bad" per se—emotions are always valid and true. They are what make us human. But for many people, negative emotions run their life: they get angry because someone cut them off in rush hour traffic, and they stay fuming until they get to work, only to find that a colleague screwed them over, then they're upset with that person, until they get a terse email that feels like an attack, then it's stress and frustration over that, and on and on. They live drama to drama, always being the one done wrong, always being on the defensive, always feeling threatened and (really subconsciously), not ever feeling good enough.

So many people live in the land of victimhood. I did for really my entire life until about 3 years ago. I couldn't even handle that someone might have something

negative to say about me. I could barely handle Jade telling me he was upset about something. I could hardly stand to have some upset at me, or thinking I wasn't being 100% amazing 100% of the time.

I'd defend to the death: "How can you not see that I'm doing everything I can?! Stop saying I'm bad!" When really what I meant (subconsciously) was, "How come this show I am constantly putting on to gain your approval is not working?!" and "How come I can never feel good enough?!"

Ha! Been there?

And so really, this is all to point out that no one "out there" can make you feel the way you want to feel inside. No can do this work for you. You can never, ever gather enough love, affirmation and approval from others to feel 100% secure in yourself if YOU yourself don't feel loved, affirmed and approved of all on you own.

So, perception.

It's a choice. And it's also your greatest weapon. How you choose to SEE the world is up to you. How you choose to SEE yourself is up to you.

If how you view the world is *not* a choice one makes, how do you explain that some people see the world as kind while others see it as hostile? Same world.

We choose in every second how to perceive ourselves, our circumstances, others' actions and others' words. And in that perception lies the key to personal freedom and happiness.

## Part II. Intro to Mental-Emotional Health

Gathering a deeper understanding of mental, emotional, and relational concepts is important (and will serve you) for many reasons:

- 1) Learning about yourself and how you interact with the world around you should be fun!
- 2) This process will give you unique insight into your own challenges and insecurities, as well as strengths. This can be an emotional rollercoaster,

simply because the main practice is being genuinely honest with yourself and owning your BS.

- 3) Once you understand your own insecurities and challenges, you are able to practice getting better and overcoming them. We will be talking about many different strategies to do this.
- 4) Once you master this stuff, you can feel happy and fulfilled without needing anything from anyone else. You are perfect in this moment, as you are (how awesome is that?!).

### *Setting the stage*

Over the next few sections, I will be introducing various different concepts, ideas and strategies. Some of them will be very concrete, while others will challenge you to go “out there” a little bit in terms of understanding the world at a deeper level and in doing so, bringing yourself to a higher consciousness. This has nothing to do with religion or spirituality, etc. It only has to do with your thoughts, emotions, perceptions and practice.

I will ask you to get out of your comfort zone and perhaps face down some demons you might be suppressing, and I will share examples from my own life.

**The payoff for all of this is extremely rewarding—living a richer life, full of possibilities for love, happiness, self-acceptance and personal success.**

The end goal of doing all of the introspection work is to achieve happiness. Not fleeting happiness in the moment, but a deep sense of personal fulfillment that does not waver based on day-to-day circumstances. The goal is to know strongly that you will be okay no matter what life throws at you. Your peace of mind will no longer depend on circumstances, other people or societal norms, but instead it will stand firmly on the work you’ve done on yourself.

### **A. Positive Psychology and Happiness**

Being happy is actually a science. Bet you didn’t know that 😊

The field of positive psychology has only been around for about 15 years, before which all of psychology studied people with dysfunction. All studies were illness-related. The field of *positive* psychology, on the other hand, studies what makes people happy, and how they can maintain that happiness over time.

One of my favorite things is reading about people (say, in the newspaper or in an article online) who, at the end of their life, give their “life lessons.” People in their 90s who list the few things that really matter, as they look back at their own life. This is one of my favorite things because “you don’t know what you don’t know.” Any of us can look at an 18-year-old girl and feel a sense of pity because of the angst, attitude or naivety that we ourselves remember having at that age, even though at 18, we thought we had it all figured out, didn’t we?? I am personally embarrassed by my teenage self! But the key is that we *didn’t know* at that age how immature or silly we were. We can only see it *in retrospect* (I am sure if you have kids, you know exactly what I am talking about).

But the same thing applies for older adults looking back on their time when they were our age. How do we know if we are doing things to boost our fulfillment or doing things that we will regret when we are 90?

We can often get caught up in the grind of the day ... needing to make money, support a family, get in shape, keep the house clean, bring/pick/take children to school/practice/events, returning email, zoning out on Facebook, a quick kiss to the spouse on the way out the door, etc.

We can’t help it. We are in “go mode,” and many of you are interested in this guide precisely *because* you’re someone who knows there’s more out there. However, how often do we practice the other stuff—the stuff that, when we’re 90, will be the stuff that mattered most? Probably not as often as we could. Doesn’t mean we need to change anything, but instead, just renew our sense of mindfulness and presence.

*In essence, the science of positive psychology encompasses 3 things:*

- 1) Understanding the bigger picture of happiness and then practicing behaviors that increase the likelihood that we’ll feel more fulfilled.
- 2) Understanding that we alone are the sole source of our own happiness, and that so long as we need someone/something to *make* us happy, our happiness will remain fleeting.
- 3) Happiness is a choice. It’s not a result of circumstances.

## B. 4 Types of People

In the book “Happier,” by Tal Ben-Shahar (Harvard professor and one of the pioneers of positive psychology as an education), he sets the stage by describing 4 different types of people and how they actualize around happiness (or unhappiness). I think this is a good place to start for our purposes because it addresses happiness from the perspective of past, present & future:

- 1) **The Rat Racer.** This person is just like the name sounds—always looking to the future to be happy. This is the if-then person: “As soon as I make ‘x’ dollars, then I can be happy.” Or “As soon as I weigh ‘x’ pounds, then I can feel comfortable in my skin,” etc.

I think all of us have a little bit of this in us, or else we wouldn’t be as driven as we are. But the dysfunction creeps in when someone who lives this way finds herself in perennial misery because she’s always looking to the next thing for fulfillment. Once they reach ‘x’ dollars, they want to get to ‘y’, and so on.

The idea is that the Rat Racer experiences fleeting happiness at the time of achievement, but cannot hold onto lasting happiness because they don’t ever experience a sense of fulfillment and GRATITUDE for what they *have* accomplished. This person is 100% future-oriented. They suffer from a concept called “arrival fallacy,” which is the *false* belief that reaching a valued destination can sustain happiness.

- 2) **The Hedonist.** This person is impulsive and only cares about the present. They seek pleasure and avoid pain. They do not plan for the future, nor set goals. They believe only in the here and now, immediate gratification, and will sacrifice future goals and aspirations to have their needs met right now. This is the person who may seek out a partner, and when the novelty wears off, they are on to the next person. The Hedonist is a slave to the present, and cannot be happy because pleasure in the moment is always short-lived. They cannot feel deep fulfillment because there’s no thought to the future. The Hedonist suffers from a concept called “floating moment fallacy,” which is the false belief that happiness can be sustained by an ongoing experience of momentary highs that are detached from a future purpose.

- 3) **The Nihilist.** These people are not only unhappy in the present, and they also have no hope for the future, using past experiences of misery to predict a grim future for themselves. In other words, this person lives in the past and uses examples from their past to predict their future. They have given up on happiness, and have *resigned* themselves to the belief that life has no meaning. They have resigned themselves to their present unhappiness and expect the same sort of life in the future, as evidenced by their past failures. The concept of “learned helplessness” applies here—it’s the belief that when we fail to attain a desired outcome, we extrapolate from that experience the belief that we have no control over our lives, and we despair.
- 4) **The Happy Person** 😊 So what does it take to be happy? The happiest people are those who can feel a deep sense of GRATITUDE and fulfillment *in the present*, while also striving for a greater future. In other words, they are able to enjoy the journey on their way to a destination that they deem valuable. It’s not simply a journey to anywhere, but a journey towards something deeply meaningful *to us*. Happiness is present AND hopeful/future-oriented.

It is important to understand these archetypes as they relate to time so that we can figure out where we sit on the continuum. Here’s a quick review:

- **Rat Racer:** Future
- **Hedonist:** Present
- **Nihilist:** Past
- **Happy:** Appreciation for past, fulfillment in working towards something in the present, hope for a meaningful future

Take a look at yourself. Where you do fall? There’s no right or wrong, it’s just gaining insight into you and boosting your potential for happiness.

### Are you a drifter?

I was, until about 7 years ago, more of a hedonist. Not a bad thing necessarily because I was always content in the moment, but I didn’t think much about the future.

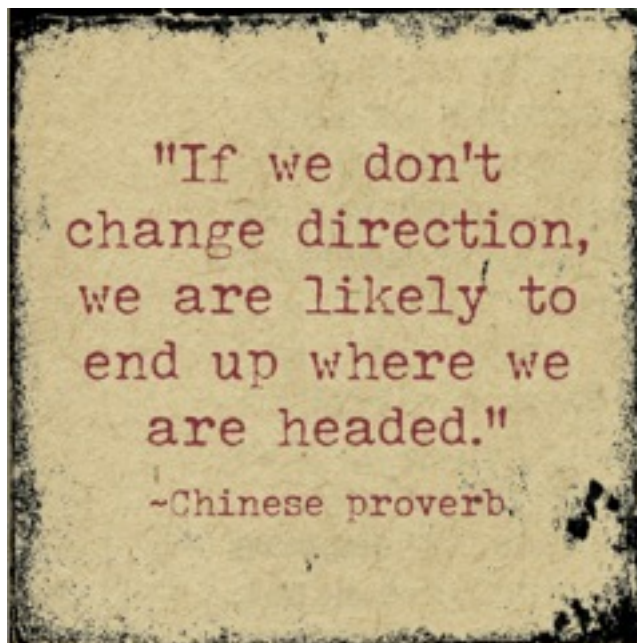
In a sense, I was drifting through life, doing things as they came up and not really directing my efforts. I think this is common and a symptom of the “comfortable life” that many people live. We are happy overall, but don’t have a very deep sense of personal fulfillment.



Many people will continue on like that forever, never claiming the path of true happiness (or even asking themselves what their true passion is), and some others will wake-up middle-aged and ask, "Is this all there is?" a.k.a. mid-life-crisis-style. Not a judgment, just a fact about us humans—we're so busy going, going, going, that oftentimes we don't ask ourselves if we are going in the direction that we *consciously chose*, or was the path chosen for us somewhere along the way without us even knowing?

**Question:** Are you an active decision-maker when it comes to the direction of your life? Or are you drifting?

I drifted through my college years and for about 3-4 years after college. I did what I did because that's what I was doing. I never asked the question, "Is there any more than this?" or "Where do I *really* want to go?" I never consciously choose to *direct* my path. I was a drifter.



So, if you have not already, I urge you to think these things though. This is a lot about finding and following your passion. When we are able to align our EFFORTS with our passion or purpose, it is the perfect match up for deep fulfillment.

**Activity:** Take out a piece of paper and write your answers to the following questions.

Remember, there is no “right” and “wrong” so resist the urge to judge yourself. This is all about gaining the insights. Without knowing where you are, how can you move somewhere new?

- If you had nothing to do all day, what would you do?
- How does what you do on a daily basis make you feel?
- Do you feel charged when you wake-up, excited for the day? Or do you dread what you have to do?
- Does every day feel like a weekend?
- Can you feasibly align your daily efforts with your higher purpose?
- If not, how can you begin infusing your daily efforts with things that make you feel fulfilled?
- If you could go back 10 years, would you have made the same decisions?
- If not, can you make different decisions now?
- Do you feel that you are an active player in your own game of life, or are you on the sidelines?
- Given what you now know about happiness, what is 1 thing you can do each day to cultivate a sense of fulfillment?

## Happiness is a choice

This is an important concept as we transition into the HOW of happiness. You might be saying, “Ok Jill, I know that in order to be happy, I need to feel fulfilled now *and* work towards something more...but HOW?”

Well, I thought you might ask that. And the answer is 2-fold:

- 1) **Make the choice to be happy right now and make the best of your circumstances**, i.e. find “the turn-around” or the lesson in even the biggest failures/struggles
- 2) **Actively begin CREATING your future by introspecting:**
  - What’s my passion?
  - What makes me feel fulfilled deeply?
  - What would I do for free because I just love it so much?
  - What do I want to accomplish personally in the next year?
  - Where do I see myself in 5 years? 10 years?

## A Paradigm Shift

Before we get into the next section, I want to talk about paradigms. As humans, we like fitting things into nice, neat boxes of understanding—also known as compartmentalizing. Not a bad thing, but often we do this to keep ourselves safe and give ourselves a handle on understanding the world around us.

However, sometimes when we create boxes of understanding (e.g. paradigms), they are hard to get out of, even when faced with new information that contradicts what we think. Holding on to what we think we know can, in the end, limit our potential.

It's not my job to tell you to do things differently or to tell you how to be. BUT, as part of the guide, my job *is* to challenge you. And part of challenging you is to challenge beliefs that may not be serving you or offer up alternative frameworks.

In this case, the frameworks I am offering up are born out of my own education on the topic of self-actualization as well as many years and experiences practicing. I am not saying I have all the answers, but what I have practiced and practiced and practiced is the ability to interact with the world in a way where I get actively CREATE my life, while enjoying, appreciating and learning from the present.

Your experience will most likely be different.

We each have our own journey, struggles and hoops to jump through. I will be sharing mine along the way, and also sharing the solutions that have worked for me. So, this is just to say that I will be offering up various frameworks over the next few months that may or may not resonate with you. That is fine. There is nothing you need to do, change or be. All I ask is that you keep an open mind and maintain awareness. There's no obligatory action steps; only insight.

## Be happy now

This a lot easier said than done, but once you own your happiness and understand you actually have a choice, it becomes quite simple.

### A couple quick points:

- 1) True happiness does not rely on others doing things to make us happy.
- 2) True happiness does not rely on things, like nice houses, cars, money, etc.

- 3) True happiness relies on what we DO to generate happiness & fulfillment inside of ourselves.

In our society, oftentimes we make our happiness about other people. Our kids make us happy (of course they do!), and our spouse/boyfriend makes us happy (which, of course he does!), but deep personal fulfillment means that you could be happy without these things too. That doesn't mean that we get rid of them, of course! It's just to ACKNOWLEDGE that we would be fine on our own. We *choose* to have them. We love and want our children, we wouldn't have it any other way. We love and want our spouses, we wouldn't want it any other way. BUT, if we are truly committed to personal happiness, it should not rely on them being there to do and say things to make us happy.

We CHOOSE for them to be there; they ENRICH our lives. They make us better. They teach us. They put a smile on our faces. They give us a *deeper sense* of purpose.

But my argument is that we innately have purpose on our own, too. We have inherent self-worth that cannot be taken from us, regardless of children, spouses, jobs, money, cars, family, friends, possessions, etc. Our natural state, alone, is enough to be happy.

Yet, life is beautiful in that we can supplement it (spouses, children, friends, possessions, etc) because those things *enrich* our sense of happiness. But they do not DEFINE our happiness. There is a subtle distinction here, and I wonder if you can get it? When we reach the point of true personal fulfillment, we can be stripped of everything and everyone, and still be "okay." Would we be sad? Of course! But we could exist, capturing our own passion and purpose regardless of who else is around.

It's at this point that I want to bring up the movie, Jerry McGuire, ha!

I love that movie (though admittedly I am not a huge Tom Cruise fan 😊)—I just love the underdog story. But, the one part that I have a really hard time with is the "You complete me" piece. Is it incredibly sweet? Yes! Does it make us swoon? Of course!

BUT, the flip side of that scene is that it subtly tells that story that we need someone else to make us happy, that without another person of our choosing (and of course that perfect person needs to choose us too!), somehow we are not okay or

“whole.” Maybe a better line would be something like, “You enrich my own inherent completeness.” ??? Doesn’t have the same feel though, does it? Ha, ha.

I might be getting too deep for you, but I challenge you to look at this through a different lens. What if you took the traditional story of two people “needing each other” and flipped it on its head? Can you go to a place in your mind where you understand that you can be happy on your own, but that you CHOOSE to have a spouse, boyfriend, children, etc. to enrich your already-fulfilled existence?

The point is this ... not to say that we should do anything differently, but just to understand that our happiness does not depend on anyone else. As soon as we believe that is does, we are always looking for someone else to say or do the right thing that will make us happy. Aaaaah! Can you see how this is a trap?

Perhaps we can cut out the middle man and just decide to be happy on our own? Our friends, family and loved ones are simply the cherry on top! When we make the switch to this mindset, the JOY and GRATITUDE that we feel as a result of having our family and friends in our lives can be appreciated more because we don’t RELY on it, but instead we cherish it!

**When we set up expectations for others, oftentimes we are left disappointed.**

Think about a time in your life that a loved one disappointed you. I have plenty. When we uphold the thought that other people need to do certain things so that we can be happy, we essentially surrender our control over our own happiness and give someone else the power to make us happy (or not).

However, we can never control others, can we? They will always do what they do, regardless of what we expect for them. That’s the truth. And who are we to say they should be different so that we can be happy? They should be exactly them. And we should decide out of our own volition to be happy or not. Relying on other people for our happiness is a setup.

I was caught up in this trap for years. And if you look around, I’m sure you see this all the time. Someone might have expectations for you that when you don’t meet them, leave the other person disappointed, sad, angry, etc.

**To rely on the actions of others for happiness is to give up all your power.**

When you allow for people to do for them, you are never surprised, nor disappointed. You don't NEED for them to do for you. If you really love someone, shouldn't you actually WANT them to do for themselves?

***An example from my own past:***

I tried for many years to control my boyfriend (at the time) or husband's love for me, by doing things I thought would make them happy. If I could just have the perfect body, then I could be loved. If I could just be smart enough or be driven enough, then who couldn't love me? If I could just be cool/fun/successful enough, then I could always be loved.

THIS WAS A HUGE TRAP.

So long as I relied on love from others to make me feel okay, I stayed locked in my own personal hell of being what I thought others wanted me to be. Whoa! This is relevant because when I realized I was acting out of fear of not being loved (or affirmed or told I was good, etc.), it opened up a whole new world to me. When I was acting out of fear of not being loved, not only was I unable to be myself freely, I was doing a disservice to my partner because he didn't truly know the real me. And I didn't either!!

This story is embarrassing to admit, though it has been years now, but I was relying on praise and affirmation from my significant other in order to feel happy and whole myself. I think this is really common. And not that there's anything "wrong" or "bad" about it, just that it kept me, in many ways miserable and not self-realized. Until that point, I didn't understand what it meant to be happy on my own.

My happiness was always relative to how well I was doing at playing my part. Was I being a good little wifey? Was I thin enough? Smart enough? Fun enough? Was I being what I needed to be in order to be loved? And if I was, then I was able to feel happy. ← This is the definition of relying on someone else to be happy, and I was doing it all my life, and I hardly even realized it.

As a result, I've had to relearn to be okay alone. Of course I still have Jade and my family, and I love them, but I've asked myself, "Would I be okay if it was just me?" And the answer is, after much practice and introspection into my insecurities, yes! Do I want that? No! But because my happiness no longer is *reliant* on others, I am

free to be myself and see where the chips fall (a very scary thing, which we'll talk about later in the section on self-trust). I feel liberated. I feel good. I feel happy.

This practice is really scary at first! But I've been practicing for a long time, choosing happiness regardless of what other people are doing/saying. It took time and a lot of introspection to find out what made me happy, and what I needed as an individual, outside of others or things.

This is all just insight and awareness. There is nothing that you need to do or change. Just think, reflect and be open to self-evaluation. This is the fun part of this mental-emotional journey—you get to know YOU so much better!

**It is all about letting people around you do what they do, and you being okay with it.**

Think about someone with whom you have tension, whether it's a parent, sibling, friend or significant other. This will be the starting point. BUT, for our purposes, in terms of relationships, a great overview of personal freedom is one of my fav books on personal emotional freedom, "The Four Agreements." I have summarized the four agreements below, but I urge you to read the book all the way through. It is a quick read, you can probably finish in a couple of hours.

### **C. Achieving Personal Freedom**

*What is personal freedom?*

Personal freedom is about being able to happy and content in the moment, regardless of what's going on around you. Mind you, this does not mean you are happy every second of every day, it just means that overall, you are deeply content. It is a FRAMEWORK through which you see the world. Some people use things like, "Everything happens for a reason" or something similar. In 'The Four Agreements,' Miguel Ruiz outlines his life lessons. I have practiced these for years, and they haven't let me down yet. It makes being positive so simple. There's an answer for everything.

*Why is "personal freedom" important?*

In and of itself, it is not important. It only becomes important if you want a solution for how to interact with the world in a way that allows for you to feel happy and not a victim.

THIS IS A CHOICE YOU WILL NEED TO MAKE.

When you choose to pursue personal freedom, you are giving up your victimhood. Many people operate out of the victim mentality 100% of the time (feeling as if things are being done "to them" or people are deliberately out to get them). There's no judgment here, it's just the reality of how we are often taught to interact in the world.

In fact, being a victim can make us feel good! At least in the moment. We're able to garner pity and have people commiserate with us. It feels good to be related to! It's nice to have someone agree that we have been done wrong.

The only problem with this way of operating is that it takes away our own power. It leaves us at the mercy of what others do, because we see no way out of our circumstances. It essentially takes away all solutions. It leaves us a victim of circumstances, helpless.

When you pursue personal freedom, however, you always have solutions. You always have the power to make a difference in your own life. You are able to *change your mindset* in order to change your circumstances. When you are operating from the victim mentality, your mindset is that you are helpless.

## What are the Four Agreements?

### **Agreement #1:** *Be Impeccable With Your Word*

This agreement has the longest description in the book. Here are my take-aways:

- 1) Don't say anything that you don't really and truly mean.
- 2) When you say "yes" when you really want to say "no," you are hurting yourself and also doing the other person a disservice because you end up resenting it in the end.
- 3) A kind and honest "no" is always better than a dishonest "yes."



- 4) Be aware of what you say and to whom. Your words (along with your mindset) are your most powerful creative force. What you say becomes your reality. Take care to say the right words.
- 5) Speak your truth and don't apologize. This doesn't mean you have to be cold or cruel. When spoken graciously, a true and honest word cannot be taken badly. Be kind, yet honest (I also recommend picking up 'Lying' by Sam Harris—an amazing quick read on the importance of honesty in relationships—encourages vulnerability, which grows connection)

### **Agreement #2: *Don't Take Anything Personally***

My take-aways:

- 1) When we make others' actions about us, we are being selfish! #LikeWhoa
- 2) When we make others' actions about us, we are constantly fearful to act and be ourselves. We are automatically on the defensive.
- 3) Not taking things personally is a major personal freedom technique. If you can learn and LIVE this agreement, it can change your whole outlook. You no longer feel as if you are walking on eggshells, you are just going about your life, as other people are going about their own. There are no issues. You can let go of the need to decipher hidden meanings and ulterior motives.
- 4) When we don't take things personally, we give others the benefit of the doubt and allow them to be themselves without judgment, which is a gift.
- 5) This helps us take criticism better. When presented with feedback, we can take it at face value and decide, more objectively, if the feedback is something that can help us and also if even if it can, if we want to take it. We don't need to take it. But we are also not threatened by it. Every single person is entitled to their opinion, and knowing that and hearing it doesn't mean we are somehow "bad" or "messing up." It just is what it is. Alone and without our subjective interpretation, it is benign.
- 6) Not taking things personally builds resilience. Ask any successful entrepreneur and they will cite resiliency as one of their most important attributes in business.

### **Agreement #3: *Don't Make Assumptions***

This agreement is closely linked to #2. When we don't take things personally, we automatically don't assume that people do what they do because of us. My take-aways for you:

- 1) People will do what they do. And that's perfect. And what they do will be because of themselves, not us.
- 2) We do others and ourselves a disservice by making assumptions. We may think we understand someone's motives (especially those closest to us because we know them so well, e.g. "intuition"), but it makes things worse to assume we know what is going on in another person's head. We really can't, no matter how close we are to them. And even if you suspect, give them the gift of time and patience to include you if it's applicable. And if they don't, then they don't. It's not your business.
- 3) If you want to be happy, you must take people at their word and at their action. Making assumptions or "meaning" out of things beyond words and actions set you up for disappointment and doesn't allow for other people to speak their own truth, in their own time.

I find this agreement particularly relevant with spousal and relationship stuff. I used to make assumptions all the time about what a certain action meant from Jade. I used to jump to conclusions that didn't serve the situation nor the relationship. When I made assumptions, I was acting out of my own insecurities, not actual facts.

Once I started practicing this agreement, I was able to take him at his word and give him the gift of the benefit of the doubt. I was able to freely let him express himself without me taking things out of context or attaching meaning to them. I was able to listen to the *actual* words without searching for some hidden meaning.

Since we both practice this, now our arguments/discussions have taken on a new meaning. We no longer have to defend and deflect, we can simply listen and work together to find a solution. Of course, there will always be emotions, but when you can ask yourself what you really want in that moment, it is easy to swallow your pride for the sake of the relationship and to come to a solution. Because isn't that what you both want? A resolution?

This can be tough, and man, does it take practice! But when the end result is both people being able to speak their truth without fear of assumptions, judgment, expectations or being chastised, it's worth it. Communication gets easier.

## Agreement #4: Always Do Your Best

This is probably my favorite agreement because it is completely subjective and unique to the individual. My “best” will be different than your “best” and that’s just fine. In fact, my best today might be different than my best tomorrow. Here are some take-aways:

- 1) This agreement is all about acceptance—accepting where you are and being okay with that. We have talked about this before at JillFit, and it bears repeating. Doesn’t mean your best won’t be better tomorrow, but you’re also just fine if it’s not.
- 2) This is also about being ok with others’ bests. Sometimes we assume to know what someone else’s potential is. We think, “Why aren’t they doing better?? Can’t they see they aren’t reaching their potential? Why can’t they just do x, y or z??” The answer is because they are doing the best they can do in this moment. Doesn’t mean they won’t do more tomorrow or next week, but what they are doing is what they *can* do right now. If someone cannot get out of bed today, we have to assume that that’s the best they can do, today. What other choice do we have? Shout, kick and cajole them out of bed? Not for us to do. Because the reality is that what is, is.

In a nutshell, there’s Ruiz’s framework for how to interact with people, our surroundings and events that come up. Some of this may resonate with you, some of it may not. The goal in all of this is happiness, personal freedom and being able to feel content just being you.

## Positivity > Negativity

Many people think positivity has to do with being all sunshine and roses all the time. That’s not the case. When you have a positive frame of mind *overall*, you are able to see possibilities and feel empowered to make a difference. Those who maintain a negative outlook EXPECT the worst, and in expecting, they actually CREATE the worst. This is a mindset and it’s something to practice.

Being positive does not mean we are happy every second. In fact, oftentimes we feel sad, angry, upset or irritated. But what the positive person will do is USE their emotions as CLUES to see the larger picture.

*A negative emotion becomes an OPPORTUNITY to learn, grow and find a lesson.*

Positive people are able to find “the turn-around” in everything. They ask, “How can I use this situation to learn or get better?” The negative person will say, “Well, it’s just as I expected. I never catch a break.” There is a difference in mindset.

Thinking positively about any and all situations regardless of how bad/good they are, allows us to see possibilities and feel empowered no matter what.



## Part III. Learning to Love What Is

And I am just going to jump right into it—no sugarcoating. If you are familiar with Byron Katie’s *The Work* or any of her books, you have already been exposed to many of these concepts. These topics can feel and sound brutal, honest and cold at times. But honestly, there is no judgment about it. It’s not good or bad. It’s simply a framework to view the world and to understand people and situations, and to help bring about peace within you.

Try it on. If it doesn’t feel right to you, no worries.

But what I can tell you from personal experience, is that embracing “what is” and giving up expectations for others (and even myself!) has made me happier than I could have ever dreamed. Things that used to bother me or make me upset, things I used to take offense to, simply don’t register on my radar anymore. It’s been a long

time since I've gotten caught up in other people's drama or have created drama myself (didn't even know I was creating drama until I was out of the vortex!).

I don't "defend" as much as I used to. I am not as overly sensitive anymore. I don't take everything personally. I am able to see situations more objectively, and give people the benefit of the doubt (including myself).

If you can use these techniques and experience similar outcomes, then I am certain you will be happier, more secure in your own skin, and more grateful for this crazy ride that life takes you on.

Ready? Let's go! 😊

## A. Acceptance and Responsibility

Often, we feel negative emotions as a result of the *discrepancy* between what we want (or expect) and what the actual reality is. This is what we call, The Expectation Gap. And in that gap can lie negative emotions, stress and misery.

For example, we expect to lose 10 lbs in the next 3 months because we think we *should* be able to. And then when 3 months rolls around and we haven't lost 10 lbs, we get mad at ourselves, think we suck and use the perceived failure as a way to strengthen the story that we can't ever lose weight, that we are undisciplined and weak, and we might as well give up for good.

Another example. We are in a marriage, and we expect certain things of our partner (most of this is unconscious, by the way). Thoughts like:

- If I cook, he will clean.
- Can't my partner see that I am running around like crazy, and step up to help me??
- Doesn't he realize how hard I'm working?
- Doesn't he know that with the kids, we split the work 50/50?
- Of course he won't not be interested in another woman. (Yikes—we'll get to this later 😊)
- We "found" each other. He's my soul mate. Now let's go ride off into the sunset!

## Speak!

First, let's not assume anything. We are grown-ups. If we want to be heard, we must speak the words, *out loud*. We can't assume anyone knows anything if we have not told them outright using language and words—not body language huffing and puffing around the house, not using the silent treatment, not saying, "I'm fine," when you're not. Implementing this hard and fast rule will save a lot of headache and heartache.

Just SAY what you mean, and ASK for what you want. Objectively. Honestly. Openly. The answer you receive, and how you CHOOSE to respond to it has to do with the second part of this section's theme—responsibility.

*Expectations are hard to manage because how do we live life without expectations for others?*

Well, the bottom line is that we don't. And that's fine. BUT, we can be *mindful* of when those expectations are not being met, and then *take responsibility* for our own feelings about that—disappointment, anger, frustration, etc—really, any negative emotion.

In that way, it's easy to figure out when we are upholding an expectation that is not being met, and we are not accepting "what is"—when we experience any negative emotion.

A light bulb should go off in your head at those times to alert you to the fact that something is not sitting right with us, and then we are able to examine it.

**Example:** You are driving around town at 11am, and there is a ton of traffic. This starts going through your mind: *Huh? WHY is there traffic now?? It's not rush hour. There's no construction. I have to get to my hair appointment, and now I am going to be LATE!! I can't believe there's traffic right now!? There's never traffic on this street!? What the??*

Here's the thing. Negative emotions are not bad, per se. They are natural. This is not about simply not acknowledging emotions. This is about deluding yourself or trying to "stuff" your feelings. This is about *using* those negative emotions to *clue you in* to when you are not accepting of what is actually happening in reality.

Because the reality is that there's traffic. Whether you understand why or not. Whether there is "supposed to" be or not. There is. And your frustration as to WHY there is, does not change the reality of what is.

At this point, you have 2 choices:

- 1) Seethe and get more and more angry, and anxious about being late to your hair appointment, so that when you eventually do get there, you can be assured that you will be in a bad mood. OR
- 2) Call the hair place, tell them that there's some unexpected traffic and you will be there as soon as you can. And then ... just be. Let go of the negative emotion, because THE TRAFFIC IS THERE REGARDLESS OF HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT IT. If you are mad, it's there. If you are confused, it's still there. If you are relaxed and start listening to an audio book, it's also still there. No amount of you being upset about the traffic influences how fast it goes.

You have no control over the traffic. Just as you really don't have any control over what other people do. Aaaaaah! Are you starting to feel a little uncomfortable about this? You might even be starting to get a little mad at this book! ☺ And that's fine. This is all about learning and discussion. Next ...

## B. Dealing with Expectations for Others (and Yourself!)



This is a toughie—accepting the notion that we have no control over what other people do or say.

But, I think if you *really* think about this, you'll see that it's actually fine because when someone is doing what *you* want them to do, but it's NOT what *they* want to do, do you really want them doing it? Something just for you?

It can be a nice gesture when our partner does something that they normally would not do because they think it will please us. BUT, another person cannot live a life doing things to please someone else when it is not also in line with what they themselves want to do. I know we all “get this” on an intellectual level (it's the idea of “living someone else's life” or “trying to live up to someone else's expectations for us), but to think about this in practice, the best place to look is in a relationship between a parent and a child.

I have experienced this with my own parents, feeling like I *need* to be or do what I think they want me to be or do. And I'm sure you can relate.

**Example:** *“My parents don't approve of my life.”*

We feel that our parent(s) think we should be doing something that we are not doing. Whether it's a job we should have, or not have. A partner we should, or shouldn't have. A child we should, or shouldn't have, etc. Somehow we pick up what we believe is displeasure with some of our life choices.

First ask: *is this my problem?* I think the answer you will come to is no. You are happy with your life choices, are you not? If you are, then why should you be different for someone else (yes, even someone you love as much as a parent!)?

Aaaah, the desire to please! The desire to make them proud! The desire for their approval, etc. NORMAL STUFF. We all feel those things. Of course we want to make our parents proud, who wouldn't?

**But the bottom line is this:** If you did what they wanted you to be doing (or what you *felt* they wanted you to be doing), you would not be doing what YOU want to be doing.

Simple as that.

Your life, your choices.



YOU are the one who has to live with those choices.

AND, ask yourself this: Even if you made the concessions you think they want you to make, would *they* even be satisfied with that? Probably not. So then you end up with you not being happy, and them still not being pleased. Can we see how ridiculous this scenario is? 😊

I know because I have gone through all of this—tried to do things I felt would please my parents, at the expense of my own happiness. And it never worked for me because I was not doing what I wanted, and I still did not feel “approved of.” So I might as well cut to chase and just do what I want anyway because they will feel how they will feel. And ironically, they are now my biggest supporters! Crazy how that works. You own it first, and everyone else gets on board.

**Question:** *If we feel like someone wants us to do something different or be someone else, is that really our problem?*

And this goes both ways: when we have an expectation of how someone should act or what someone else should do, aren’t we putting them in the same situation that we ourselves do not want to be in—when we feel like others expect things *from us*?

A good clue for when we are holding others or situations to a desired expectation is when we use the term “should”: So-and-so *should* do this. They *should* know better!

We often do this to ourselves (usually most of all!): “I should be able to stay on this diet!” or “I should do that.” **In essence, we are “should”-ing all over ourselves!** We hold others to standards, and then we hold ourselves to standards. And when they are not met, we get upset, sad, disappointed, frustrated, angry, etc.

It’s normal. It’s common. But it’s also not fun, and with a little introspection and practice, it’s avoidable.

**Another example:** Several years back, I had a friend who was dealing with infertility. She and her husband had tried many avenues and still, after more than a year of trying, nothing.

I can never even begin to understand what that’s like. And I would never assume to know those feelings. She experienced quite a lot of negative emotions around the

whole process. It's understandable, of course it is! No one would've blamed her for her pain, anger and frustration. She was completely justified.

EXCEPT. The only concern is that the *stress* of the negative emotions not only crushed her happiness and wellbeing for that time, but it also deeply affected her relationship with her husband, interactions with other people, and quite possibly her chances at conception.

Her EXPECTATION of how things would go ("I get off the pill and get pregnant within a couple of months—besides, I am fit, healthy and young") left her disappointed, angry and bereft when that plan did not come to fruition. I'm not saying she shouldn't have felt the way she did. Of course she did, she didn't have a choice. But pregnancy isn't something we have all that much control over, unfortunately. But this gal justified her sadness and frustration by listing the reason why she SHOULD be pregnant by now: fit, young, always in good health, not too lean, not overweight, etc. And quite possibly the biggest justification: "Because I set a goal, work hard and expect a specific outcome." (She got pregnant naturally eventually! Ironically, it happened when she finally "gave up" in her mind).

Aaaaah! This is so, so tough! I would never tell someone to not allow themselves to *feel* the emotions of a situation. Besides, we have to honor our process. But your work doesn't end with this stressful emotions. Those are actually the clues indicating that you can do some more introspection, should you choose.

*Expectations are a nasty little thing, aren't they??*

We do this all the time in life—go to college, study hard, get a good grade. Work hard on our GPA, get a good job. Work hard to meet a great partner, maintain a great relationship, get married.

We are used to taking action and then expecting a certain outcome. And it works a lot of the time. This is the definition of control.

And in order to be successful, we need to take ownership of our life, take action and work toward something that we want. It's a rewarding process ... until ... it bites us in the ass. Which, in life, happens when we least expect it. Just when we feel like we are in control and "get it," life can and will surprise us.

At least this has been the case for me. And I think that if you examine any obstacle, challenge or failure you have experienced in your own life, you will see this to be the case. Things do not always work out the way they are “supposed to.”

**May I offer a different framework from which to examine these events? Could you see them as GIFTS? Lessons?**

This is you getting an education in the unexpected. This is you getting ready for when things don't go as planned so that we can have a framework from which to deal with them.

**This is the definition of gratitude:** examining every situation—good *and* bad—and seeing it as an education. A lesson to be learned, if we *choose* to see it that way. Plenty of people don't see a lesson, and don't care to see one. And that's fine. But, for our purposes—happiness—viewing life as a series of lessons can be quite liberating. It helps us make sense of the world and be ok with letting go, and just ... loving what is.

**Back to relationships.** Expectations for others can be tricky—whether we have them for others or we feel as if others have them for us. When others have expectations for us that are not in line with what we want to do, what can we *really* do about it?

**Example:** *We don't have the job that our parents think we should have. We feel disappointment and disapproval from them.*

**Solutions for dealing with this:**

The first option is of course what many people do, which is, try to live up to their expectations of us and please them in order to garner their approval. This is a game we can never win.

I have shared this on my blog—my parents' disapproval of my going into the fitness business. They thought I would end up a gym teacher and then my Wake Forest education would have been a waste.

Early on, right after college, I tried to justify my decision by concession, compromise: I would go to Physical Therapy school so that I could become a PT and have a job title that my parents would be proud to tell their friends. It was a worthy

profession and something they were comfortable with. "Fitness Professional," not so much.

I volunteered 3 hours a week at the hospital to gather hours for my PT application and I dreaded those 3 hours like nothing else. I was miserable, yet I forced myself to do it out of a sense of duty and the need to please my parents.

Yet when I was teaching, training and doing full-time fitness, I was passionate, alive and happier than I'd been. But I was trying to fit myself into a box that I hated, but thought my parents needed me to be in. For some people, doing physical therapy lights them up, they love it! And that is an indication that they are where they need to be. Just wasn't for me.

Well, you know how this ended up—I quit volunteering and dove into fitness with renewed gusto, told my parents I didn't know what I was going to do, but that I was happy where I was. Then I let the chips fall where they may. Lots of uncomfortable silences, them thinking I was taking steroids, lots of second guessing, silent treatment, etc. Was it uncomfortable as hell? Yes! But what could I do? I was happy! They were probably confused, disappointed and scared for me, understandably. It just wasn't my job to worry about that. I couldn't.

What I did start to do was get them on my team. It was subtle and sneaky! But it worked. I started talking about how excited and happy I was about all that I was doing. I started including them in the process. I started talking to them about my dreams, my hopes and my plans. I started affirming even their tiniest positive behaviors toward me. If they showed any interest in what I was doing, I told them how much it meant to me that they were interested. I started thanking them for supporting me. I started telling them how I could not be doing all that I am doing without the help they had given me.

All true stuff, but I also knew that the ultimate truth was that I'd be doing what I was doing regardless of their support. I was grateful to have even the smallest bit of support from them, but I no longer *expected* it.

And you know what happened?

They started being excited for me too! 😊 They started supporting me more. They started telling their friends about everything I was doing and showing them my magazine covers. They started showing me how proud they were. They were

actually proud of what I was doing, when just months before they were scared for me and probably disappointed at the path I was taking.

**The idea of changing who you are and what you want to please someone else is absurd.**

They don't have to live with your life; you do. Garner affirmation from others is fine, IF it is also in line with what you want to be doing, and WOULD be doing even if no one was looking or judging.

This is obviously the hardest with the people we are closest to.

Usually we don't care too much about how people we don't know see us. But it is human to want the people we love to approve of what we are doing, of course it is. We want to please them, and they us. We want to make people who we love happy. Of course we do. But, we need to find a way to do it that does not compromise our own happiness.

*Based on the example above, there are many ways to do this:*

- 1) Make them feel like part of the process, include them.
- 2) Show them gratitude for playing a role in your happiness.
- 3) Affirm any little bit of support they show so that they will do it more.
- 4) Be relentlessly positive. A positive attitude is contagious. Be excited, happy and alive doing what you love—be an example *to them* of how amazing life can be when you are passionate about what you're doing.
- 5) Don't defend. This is a toughie because it's our natural reaction when we feel like someone doesn't approve. We want to justify the many reasons why what we are doing is so good. Guess who we are really justifying it to when we do this? Ourselves!

**Remember that if we are truly secure in our decisions and path, we find that there's no reason to justify ourselves because there's nothing to prove—we would be doing what we're doing regardless of what others think. ← This is the ultimate in security and living your truth. Doing what you love regardless of what others may think. This is the ultimate goal.**

How do we handle it when we have expectations for what someone else *should* be doing?

**Going to go back to the earlier example:** “My husband should not be interested in another woman.”

This is probably every woman’s biggest fear, right? It’s devastating to think about. BUT, if a partner is interested in someone else, the reality is that they *are*, regardless of if they “should be” or not. At that point, there are choices to be made for both people in the relationship.

For those of you who are married or in relationships, you know that marriage is not a guarantee. In fact, there are *no* guarantees in life. This knowledge makes us uneasy (remember, we want certainty).

A marriage is an agreement between two people that they love each other and want to work to create a future together. It’s dynamic. It’s an incredible joy, but it can be hard work. There’s no downtime. You have to be consciously *choosing* to move forward *together*, communicating, *choosing* to continue to be there in that place, with that person, that day. The idea that we “find the one” and then we’re good to go is a fantasy. Finding someone to create a life with is an amazing thing, but it’s a conscious effort, there’s no going on break.

And if something changes in the relationship, then there are choices to be made. Each person can choose to stay and work on the relationship to continue moving forward together, or either person can choose to leave. Once again, it’s dynamic. There’s no “right” or “wrong”—it just is...*what is*.

*So, what do we do if someone is not doing what we want them to do, or what we expect of them?*

Ask this: “If I really love someone, don’t I want them to do exactly what they want to do, even if it doesn’t include me or make me happy?”

Think about that. Could you HONESTLY answer yes to that question? If you can, that is what we are talking about—allowing people to do exactly what they want to do. Wouldn’t that be the ultimate gift? Wouldn’t you want that same courtesy extended to you??

**So let’s start with this in mind:** Let’s assume that we *are* extended that same courtesy by others.

"But Jill! People don't extend the same courtesy!" You are right, but whose business is that? Not ours! (WHOA!)

### C. How to Stay in Your Own Business

**Byron Katie says that there are 3 types of business:**

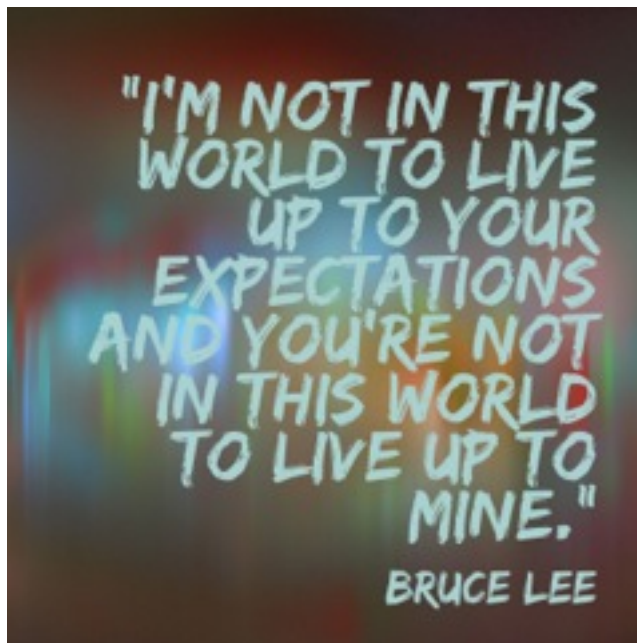
1. Mine
2. Yours
3. Gods (being things like natural disasters, etc—things out of any human's control)

When we are in someone else's business, we are mentally out of our own business. And when someone is upset at what we are doing, it is really none of their business.

However, We ALLOW it to become their business when we feel obligated or guilty or feel as if we *need* to do something to make someone else happy. We are then out of our business and doing something because we need approval or affirmation. How can we tend to our own needs or live our own truth when we are acting out of fear of disapproval or disappointment?

If someone disapproves of us in some way, *it's not our problem*. Yikes!

You with me? 😊



*So what can we do when we have an expectation, it is not met, and we are left with negative emotions?*

The first thing is to acknowledge the emotion, but not judge it. There's no "I shouldn't be feeling this way" etc. because the truth is that you DO feel that way. It's fine. It is what it is. This is not about suppressing emotions; it's about being clued into the "why" behind them.

When you get more practiced at this, you begin to feel less and less *negative* emotion over time because things simply don't bother you the way they used to. It's as if you are just okay with whatever happens (i.e. "loving what is"). You learn to let go, and this stuff becomes effortless. You are no longer a slave to having to please others or garner affirmation.

So, any negative emotion should act as a light bulb for us, to *clue us in* to the existence of our expectation.

**Then:**

- 1) Notice the emotion
- 2) Name it (disappointment, anger, frustration, sadness, insecurity, etc.)
- 3) Let it go/turn it around

Let's focus on #3—how do you turn it around??

For many people, they never get to #3 because they stay in #2. The focus on how angry/sad/disappointed they are, and then go around telling others how bad it is so they can feel related to. This continues until the next thing happens and another negative emotion takes over. There's an overall feeling that life is out to get you. How disempowering is that?

But once you're tuned into this new way of thinking, you're free to CHOOSE your response to any negative emotion. You can choose to seethe and play the victim (no judgment) OR you can turn it around and liberate yourself.

What will you choose?



## D. Awareness – Stress is Your Cue to Introspect

**Here is a 4-step process to help you turn it around** (created by my spiritual coach, Julius and my sister-in-law Dr. Jillian Teta):

- 1) **Awareness:** ANY negative emotion (annoyance, impatience, crying, fear, anger) is a signal that you are out of alignment. Recognition of this is the crucial first step.
- 2) **Realization:** Understand that this emotion has come from you; you are its creator. Remember that this is your choice – you can always choose a different emotion or attitude.
- 3) **CHOOSE a different way** – turn your emotion around (yes, you can!) using any of the following:
  - Gratitude – can you see how this situation might be a lesson for you? A gift?
  - Re-affirmation of your goals (Ask, what do I *really* want?)
  - Give the benefit of the doubt (other people aren't doing things specifically to offend you or disappoint you. They are just being themselves. Don't take things personally)
  - Find the silver lining – look for the bright spots
  - Look at "The Alternative" (which is being miserable). It's worse! This reframing offers instant insight.
- 4) **Practice** the above 3 steps forever 😊

This is about making a difference choice than you have previously made. If you want things to change, YOU must change how to interact with things; same with people (remember my parents—they were not going to change so I changed how I interacted with *them*).

People don't change. YOU change how you interact with them.

**Example:** "*My husband should understand how much stress I am under and begin taking on some of the kid/house work.*"

By now, you should have many tools to deal with this situation:

- 1) You can first realize that you need to express yourself *using words* instead of hoping he just *knows* or being mad at him because he doesn't (and should!)

- 2) Then, when you tell him what you'd like from him, he may still be unable or unwilling to help. This is stating your preferences, which of course, you should do. But there's still no guaranteeing he'll do it, *want* to do it or even *can* do it, even if he understands.
- 3) At this point, you have a few choices. First, you can give him the benefit of the doubt. He isn't used to doing that extra work, so he has to practice and get better at it. You can either nag him over and over again OR you can positively affirm it when he does something—anything—that helps. If he picks up the kids from school one day, show real appreciation for that. In the grand scheme of things, picking up the kids once is not a big deal, but you can use it as the jumping off point to help him understand what you need, and positively affirm it. He will usually, without even realizing it, start to do it more. Not because you are nagging, but because you show *gratitude* for it.

So even though many times our initial response is to be like, FINALLY!! Instead, we give him the benefit of the doubt and show gratitude for even the smallest gesture. Besides, in order for him to do more of the things you appreciate, he needs to feel like it matters not only to you, but to him somehow. Because if he does it only to please you, that will not last in the long run. This is the definition of compromise, and is of course, important in a loving relationship when you are working toward a shared future together. You help him understand what you need in a way that is non-threatening, and he is able to adjust more easily, if he can.

- 4) Another choice if he cannot help or is unwilling to help is to understand that it's not about you. He is not *not* helping to spite you. He's not helping because he's not used to helping and has a hard time with it—in other words, *he is being him*. He literally can't so it (as much as he really *really* wants to!).

In this case, it's time to ask yourself, "Can I help him be more of what I need (#3) using positive affirmation OR can I be ok with him not helping, ever? I love him and I want him to be *him*, not necessarily my idea of who he should be."

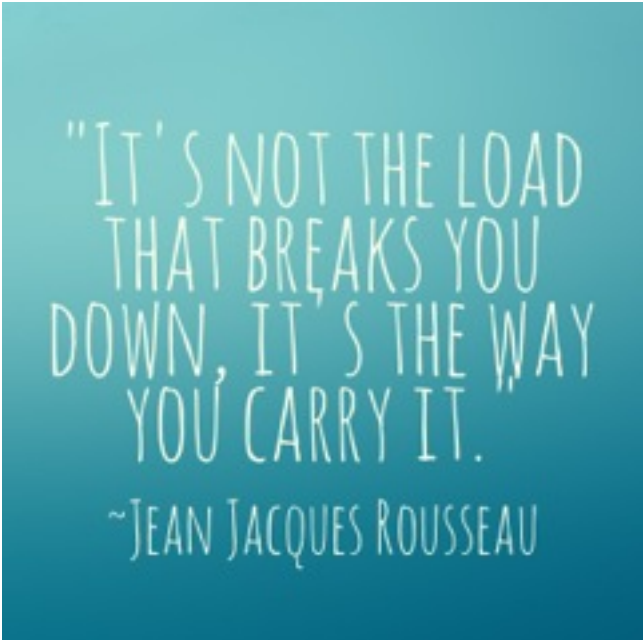
Ooooo, this is a toughie! At least you will not be reliant on him to help? You are then free to figure out how you can make it work for you. This goes both ways—you need to do what you need to do for you, too.

Think on this. Try it on. It might not be for you. But that's fine. This is just a framework. Some of this may resonate with you, other pieces not. That's perfectly fine.

**For me, the goal is always happiness and contentment.**

When I am caught up in drama, I am not happy. When I am reliant on someone else for my happiness, I am miserable. When I feel insecure and not good enough, I am a crazy person. Negative emotions and insecurities can hijack our ability to think straight, be rational and especially, be happy.

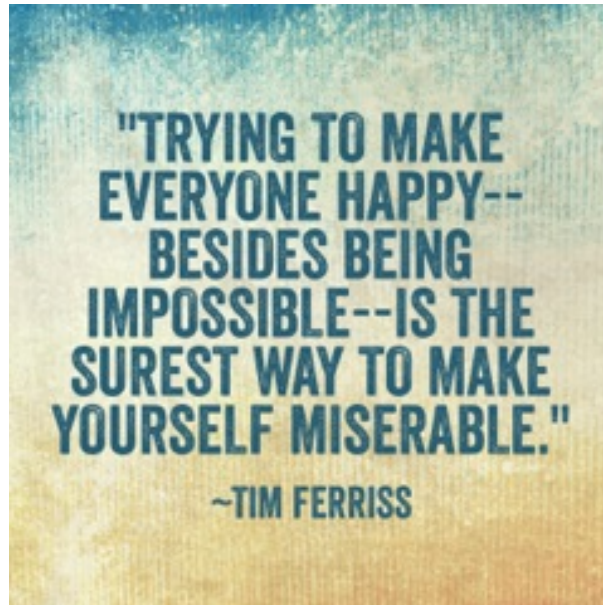
Everyone deals with tragedy. Everyone deals with obstacles. Everyone deals with negative emotions. Everyone deals with failures. No one's unluckier than anyone else. It's not the hand we get dealt, but how we choose to interact with the hand. Attitude is always a choice:

A rectangular graphic with a teal-to-blue gradient background. It contains a quote in a light-colored, hand-drawn style font. The quote is: "IT'S NOT THE LOAD THAT BREAKS YOU DOWN, IT'S THE WAY YOU CARRY IT." Below the quote, in a smaller font, is the attribution: ~JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU.

"IT'S NOT THE LOAD  
THAT BREAKS YOU  
DOWN, IT'S THE WAY  
YOU CARRY IT."

~JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU

## Part IV. Learn to Fail, Stop Trying to Please Others & Get Uncomfortable



Nowhere is the drive for perfection stronger than in the physique world. It's certainly why I got into competing and fitness modeling to begin with. To have the perfect body, or at least *my* perfect body. It is fine to want to have a great physique, obviously at JillFit we help people do it all the time, but you get into trouble when 2 things happen:

- 1) "The perfect body" is subjective and our sense of perfection changes as we progress.

For example, you start by saying, if I can get to 120 lbs., I will be happy. Then you get to 120 lbs. and find that you are a little flabbier than you wanted, so you say, Ok, now if I could just tighten this skin, I will be happy. Maybe you work really hard and tighten it up a bit, and then you find that now your upper body is too lean compared to your lower body. So then you say, if I could just lean up my bottom half and lose an inch from my thighs, then I'd be good. And on and on and on.

And meanwhile, you are still not happy because you are always on to the next thing. This is an extreme example but I see this all the time in physique competitors. They can be sitting at 10% body fat and still have qualms about their glutes, hips or shoulders. CHASING PEFECTION IS A TRAP.

2) You have now pinned your self-worth on your body.

You have a hard time seeing that you are any good without being as lean, small, toned, fit as you “should” be. If you wake up and feel thin, you give yourself permission to be okay that day. If you wake up after a night of indulging, you can’t possibly give yourself permission to be happy because you are in remorse-mode and don’t deserve to be happy.

Personally, I feel it is important to be fit and healthy. But I don’t believe in pinning my self-worth on a number. It’s dangerous. I have been there and was in my own personal hell for years because of it.

If you’ve read the JillFit blog, you know that in retrospect, I attribute my getting into physique pursuits a result of needing affirmation and needing to be loved, adored, whatever. My biggest insecurity is/was that I was unlovable. I use the past tense because I have worked a lot of this out on my own and with Julius over the last few years and I don’t live by the rules I used to anymore.

Much of this need to be loved and be affirmed has merely evaporated as a result of my gradual mindset shift. Things that used to really upset me seemingly all the time simply don’t come up anymore—a result of practicing a new way of being, of questioning my feelings of not-good-enough (NGE).

I wanted to delve into the idea of “perfectionism” in this guide because so many JillFit readers identify with the need to be perfect. Me included. (And just for the record, to me, you all are already perfect—just as you should be, right now, without any adjustments or add-ons 😊). On the whole, you are driven, passionate, intelligent, beautiful and have excelled in life. But I get emails from readers all the time who say that they “don’t think they’re living up to your potential.” They felt like they *should* be doing much more. This is perfectly okay, of course, except when we are unhappy with anything less than perfect.

So let’s get this out of the way right away:

**Perfection is a myth. And the pursuit of perfection only leaves us feeling less-than, unworthy and operating from a place of lack. #NoThanks!**

When we are operating from a place of needing to be perfect, we are essentially turning off any potential for growth. Why? Because perfection doesn’t learn and grow; only mess-ups, risk-taking, mistakes and obstacles can do that. Struggles force our hand. They give us the opportunity to become better, present to us the

CHOICE—we can choose to grow, learn and become more powerful in the world OR just say “I suck” and wallow in self-pity. I know which choice I’d make. You?

Not only does imperfection make us human, it makes us stronger. It is through challenges that we achieve!

Whenever you get down about a struggle or find yourself doing negative self-talk or chastising yourself, just remember this: “You are not being punished, you are being taught.” (taken from The Daily Love). When you can find a lesson in every hardship and see a potential for growth in every hard time, life truly becomes an adventure where nothing is impossible.

### A. Perfectionists vs. Optimalists

I read the book ‘Be Happy’ by Tal Ben-Shahar a few years back, and it was life-changing because before it, I didn’t even know I was a perfectionist. And I was!

When I first read about the Perfectionist, I realized that I had been operating exactly like that for many years. At first, I got really angry with my parents. I blamed them for always expecting perfection. They always held me to such a high standard and when I didn’t perform as was required, I felt I was chastised and reprimanded. I was deep into victim mode here 😊 But it was such an easy out for me—blaming my parents for not “allowing me” to fail—I was an adult at this point, and regardless of what happened during my formative years, I needed to own up to how I operate now and how I will choose to live in the future.

I decided right then to stop being a victim and to stop blaming them. I gave them the benefit of the doubt, understanding that they are fine. In fact, they’re perfect. They are them. Which is absolutely perfect. Past the age of 18, I feel it’s absurd to blame our parents for our struggles. You have the option to choose a new way every single moment.

One of the biggest personal insights for me was that I was TERRIFIED of messing up! I couldn’t even let my mind *go* to a place of failure. It was in a very vulnerable place in my life when I started reading “Happier.” I had been confronted with a very challenging situation that affected me but was completed out of my control. I hated that there was nothing I could do to change it. I felt helpless.

At this point, since I knew I couldn’t change the situation, I started looking for another way to see the world. I was looking for a framework that would allow me to “be okay” when things didn’t go the way they were supposed to. Looking back, I

realize now that I truly cannot expect anything nor predict anything.

The only thing I can truly control is my perception. So I started there. I read 'Being Happy' and decided that I had an obligation to my adult self to change things moving forward—take a different tactic when it came to interacting with people and challenges that come up.

Beforehand, I was ignoring challenges, pretending they weren't there. If I looked the other way enough, I rationalized, they would simply disappear! And the truth was that, they were growing even bigger precisely *because* I kept ignoring them.

Now, I've learned to look struggle right in the face. I love hardships because I know they make me stronger. I know that when I am struggling, I am getting better and I will be more successful because of them. It still sucks. It's never feels awesome, but the alternative is staying small and scared (more on this in a bit).

**The Perfectionist:** someone who tries everything to control outcomes.

When we expect that everything will go smoothly and "as planned," we are caught off guard when they don't. When challenges come up, we have no tools to deal with them because we have always shied away from them!

My coach, Julius is a big believer in the idea that the lesson you are meant to learn will continue to hit you over the head, harder and harder and HARDER until you stand up and pay attention. We can practice ignoring the smacks on the head for a while, but eventually we continue getting the same message to the point where we have to face it.

How many of you have experienced this? One thing to pay attention to is sentiments like, "WHY does this always happen to me?" OR "Everyone in my life is like this!" ←THESE are clues into the common denominator: you.

My coach calls this our "theme," and each person's theme (or lesson) manifests differently, but essentially it's a manifestation of some kind of not-good-enough or insecurity. We all have it. But most people aren't aware of theirs, how it appears, nor how to deal with it when it comes out. But once you confront your theme and work it, the impact of it diminishes.

***"Pain is not absolute. Your experience of pain changes relative to how you react to it. When you move toward it, pain shrinks. When you move away from it, pain grows. When you flee from it, pain pursues you like a monster in a dream. If you confront the monster, it goes away."*** –Taken from "The Tools" book by Phil Stutz



& Barry Michaels

The above quote is what I am talking about. Looking obstacles straight in the eye and dealing with them allows for you to move past them faster. The more you resist, the more they follow you into your next phase, wherever you go next.

Lessons ebb and flow. You may have many lessons in your life or only 1 or 2 biggies. Most people never confront their stuff. It's a choice that, I'd argue, literally stifles your ability to succeed and be happy. But if you make the choice to accept so-called "imperfections" (the scary stuff!) as they come up, and learn from them, you can achieve much more.

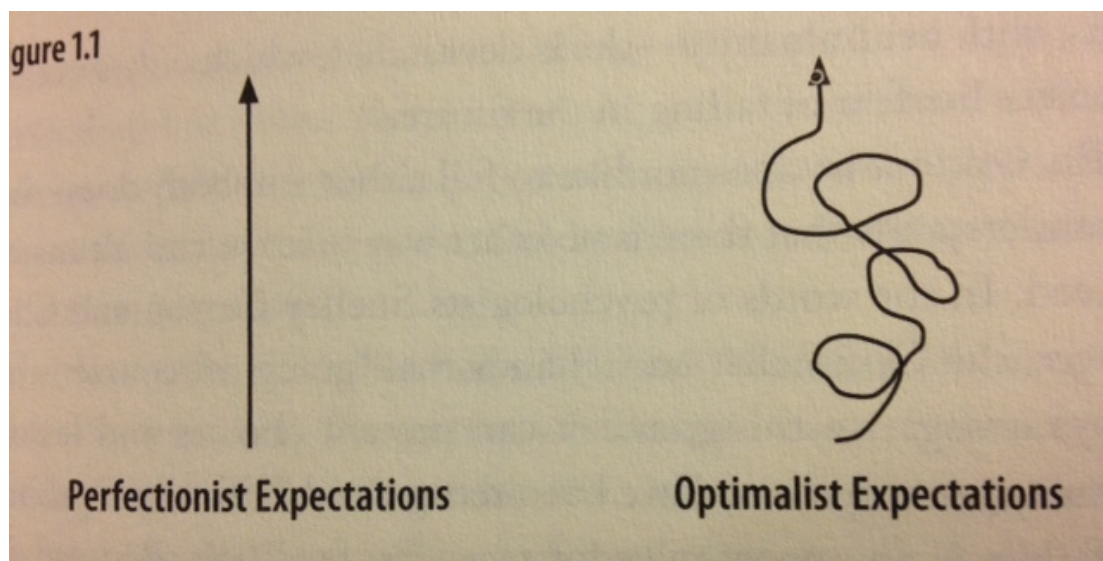
**Now for Optimalists** (a term coined by Ben-Shahar): a personality & practice that allows for errors and embraces challenges. When we do this, we can experience deep happiness and self-security.

The main difference between Perfectionists and Optimalists has to do with expectations.

Perfectionists expect...well, perfection. And when life inevitably doesn't unfold perfectly, they are left disappointed (in themselves and others), guilty and unhappy.

On the other hand, Optimalists *expect* for things to come up. They understand the mentality of "3 steps forward, 2 steps back." They *expect* that life will have ups and downs, and they're ready for them. They know they can handle them because they actively take them on, rather than ignoring them.

**Here's my favorite illustration from the book:**





Being afraid of failure is our natural inclination. When we expect perfection, we fear failure. But when we *expect* things will come up, we can use failure as feedback.

**When we see failure as feedback, life becomes a whole lot kinder!**

The struggles, the obstacles, the insecurities are all FEEDBACK for us to examine “our stuff” more closely. It’s a red flag for us to delve in more deeply at that moment, even though it is in those moments that we want to run away, ignore it or blame others.

*One key way to know if you are expecting perfection is if you find yourself defending.*

People who are attached to perfection will always defend why something might not be going perfectly. They may deflect blame or make excuses. They fear that the fault might lie with them. They fear that they may have to take responsibility and look at things differently or change somehow.

Failure is organically linked with change. Failures are inevitable. So in those moments, we have the opportunity to grow and change, or not. Love these quotes from Jade:

*“If you are afraid of failure, you are afraid of change.”*

*“A note on resilience: Those who truly desire change can't wait to get knocked down because they know growth comes from getting back up.”*

In terms of expectations, I go with this: *Be open to outcomes, but not attached to them.*

## **B. RESILIENCY is Your Greatest Skill**

Ask any successful entrepreneur and they will tell you that what sets them apart from those who have not succeeded is their resilience. In fact, most successful people have failed *more* than next person, but what all successful people have is the ability to pick themselves back up after a big blunder, mistake or circumstantial disaster. They don’t let their “history of blunders” determine or predict their future successes, like many of us automatically do. In fact, they know that they are now MORE likely to succeed having experience failure and learned from it, so why not try again.

Over the last 8 years, at times Jade and I have talked about what we would do if our businesses failed or went under. Not out of the question, as any small business

hangs by a thread during a down-economy, but I remember so clearly Jade saying, “I would go back to work, work my ass off to save up the money to try again.” It is this kind of tenacity and resiliency that can take anyone, literally ANYONE from mediocre to successful. The only true failure comes as a result of giving up hope.

Our failures can absolutely take us to better places. I am sure many of you have experienced situations that were very painful during, but for which you are grateful after. I would go so far as to say that this concept doesn’t just apply to some situations—it applies to ALL situations.

### There’s an opportunity in every challenge.

For example, many people who have gone through a divorce get this—they might be sad, angry, upset, etc., about the marriage not working out, and of course there’s the guilt and shame of failure, but ultimately they learned from the experience and should they marry again, they are in a much better place. The situation itself has taught them about relationships, communication, etc, and most importantly, about themselves. They usually say that they wouldn’t have had it any other way, despite all the pain and emotion.

Ask anyone on the latter side of a challenge and most will say they are grateful for it because it taught them a valuable lesson about themselves or about life. It made them see something they couldn’t see before. It opened their eyes to a new way of thinking or of being. If we think about it this way, how can we ever be afraid of a failure?

I would go so far as to say we should *look forward* to failure and *wish* for challenges! Why? Because when we encounter pain and are able to go through it, we open ourselves up to new, bigger possibilities.

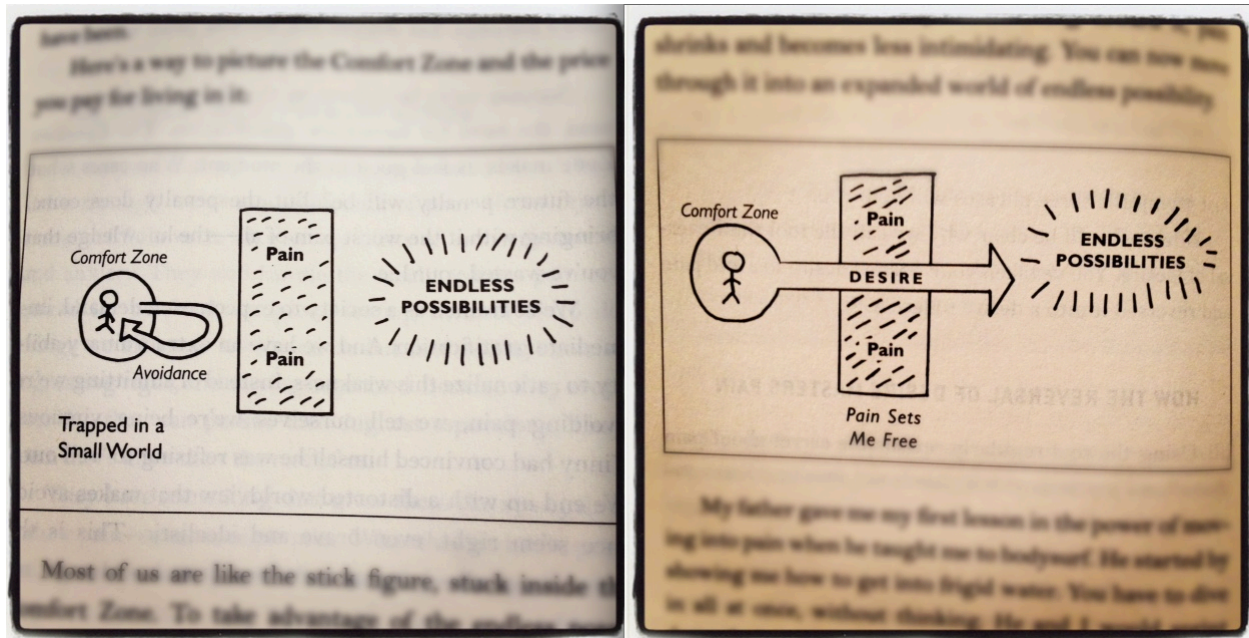
### Shrinking the Enormity of Failure

In the book, ‘The Tools’ by Phil Stutz & Barry Michaels, the authors talk about a concept called *Reversal of Desire*.

Under normal circumstances, if we encounter adversity or resistance, we tend to use avoidance and retreat back to our safety zone. *Reversal of Desire* is all about moving *through* adversity or pain of a situation, effectively shrinking its impact.

*When we confront pain, it shrinks.*

When we look failures straight in the eye, they become more manageable. Below is a nice pictorial from 'The Tools.' The first illustration represents what most people do (avoidance). The second illustration demonstrates how moving through painful situations through confrontation allows for us to realize greater possibilities.



Can be summed up like this:

Moving toward discomfort → failure → pain → learning/growing → success → repeat

An example that comes up in my Best of You Coaching Club a lot: *Starting a blog.*

At first, we get great feedback from our family and friends. They are excited for us, and love everything we write. Then, people we don't know start following our blog. And some may not have such complimentary things to say. You may have personal experience with "haters" or trolls.

At JillFit, I get this a lot—usually it's a questioning of my science or background, and other times it's blatantly calling me judgmental, condescending or self-important or "too good." I blogged about how I handle it here. I can understand how someone who doesn't know me might get that impression. But, what can I really do? All I can do is listen with empathy. I can't change anyone's mind and the idea that I need to justify or defend myself only feeds my insecurity and avoids the situation. Remember: when I am defending, I am deflecting. I am not taking responsibility.

So, I have a choice at this point. I can a) decide I suck and take down my blog, effectively agreeing with the person who said I am no good and shrinking back to

my comfort zone of not doing anything more. Or I can b) Continue to put out my truth, stay within my integrity and let the chips fall where they may. People who like the blog will read it. People who don't will hate for a little while, and then leave. It's all good. I think you know which choice I made 😊

One of my favorite quotes from Tim Ferriss about trolls and others who will try to belittle your efforts is this:

*"It doesn't matter how many people don't get it. What matters is how many people do."*

Something to keep in mind when you feel the need to justify yourself. Once you see that everyone is simply doing their best (even when it comes off nasty and cruel!), it's easier to give them the benefit of the doubt and let things go.

### **TOOL: Practical Pessimism**

Another very important insight from Tim is a concept called Practical Pessimism. It's a framework for business, career, relationships, etc., where you always immediately look at the worst-case scenario.

Sounds rather grumpy, yes? But there's a difference between *being aware* of worst-case scenario and *expecting* worst-case scenario. The latter is what the Nihilist does. They believe that they will never be happy and expect that the future holds nothing better. However, when you use Practical Pessimism, you are fully aware of what the worst-case scenario is, and that awareness gives your strength to move forward.

Sounds counterintuitive, doesn't it?

**Essentially, practical pessimism gives you permission to take bigger risks because you are fully aware of what might happen. And you know you can handle it.**

Whereas some people expect worst-case scenario and thus never try anything new or more because they can't possibly imagine succeeding, practical pessimism is actually a usable tool that allows us to go further than we thought possible.

Practical pessimism is all about possibilities. Think of the worst-case scenario, the worst thing that could happen in a given situation. Once you have that situation in your mind, ask yourself, "If that came to pass, could you handle it? Could you manage?" And the answer is always yes! Would it be easy? Probably not. Comfy? Nope. But you'd be just fine.

## How You Do It

To practice Practical Pessimism, take time to identify your greatest fears about any undertaking. Develop a scenario for how you would deal with the fear if it became reality. Expose yourself to negative emotions, *experience* those emotions—fear, embarrassment, anger, lack of finances, etc., *in your mind*.

This teaches you to act despite these emotions. This actually BOOSTS your confidence because you preemptively confront your potential failures. You'll have shown your inner critic that no matter what happens, you'll be okay. There's nothing wrong with preparing for the worst—it's anticipating it that's can be a detriment.

**Use negative visualization:** Define your fears instead of your goals. Don't avoid what you fear, define it.

But by preemptively exposing ourselves to the underlying emotions we are afraid of, we find that failures or poor outcomes are not nearly as disastrous as we imagine them to in our heads before examination.

Ultimately, Practical Pessimism allows us to be HUMAN. Besides, happiness is not about being happy in every moment. In fact, if we were trying to push happiness on ourselves 'round the clock and feel guilty for having negative feelings, I would say that we might have some deep feeling of unhappiness that we're trying to ignore or push aside.

## C. Breaking the Need to People-Please

When we force happiness on ourselves and others while not truly *feeling* that way, we are out of our integrity. This happens a lot when we try to please others, to the detriment of our own happiness. Obsessing over making sure other people have their needs met is ... you guessed it ... being out of our business. Can we really EVER take care of someone else's needs?

Byron Katie says, "A dishonest yes is a no to ourselves" and not only is it not fair to you to say "yes" when you really want to say no, but it is actually *not fair to the other person* either because we end up resenting it and them in the end.

How is that good for anyone involved?

And just because you're not happy all the time does not mean you are not a positive person. Don't get this mixed up: A positive person is not happy in every moment. Things come up (like a flat tire) that make us upset, disappointed, angry, hurt, etc. It

is important to feel those emotions in those moments.

However, the difference is that someone in a generally positive mindset does not see the incident as defining his or her state of mind (e.g. “*Of course* I’m the one to get a flat tire, I have the worst life everrrr!” aka the Nihilist).

On the contrary, a positive person will feel anger in the moment, but then use understanding to get beyond it: “Ugh, this sucks. I hate flat tires. Oh well, I guess I need to get it taken care of. Hopefully my boss will be understanding of my coming in late to work. At least that tire won’t get flat for a while once I get a new one on there.” See the difference? There is a *turn-around to positive*, even if it is a very small positive—a silver lining moment.

Helping people is valuable—but only if it also is in line with what you want to do for you. It’s in the giving that we receive. But the giving needs to be from a place of genuine caring, and not because we need affirmation that we are good or worthy.

If we please others so that they’ll give us warm fuzzies, then it is not coming from a place of altruism, it’s coming from a place of insecurity. If we need credit for helping others or recognition, then it is not truly giving. When we practice people-pleasing, we are really practicing garnering affirmation. We use affirmation from others to know we are okay.

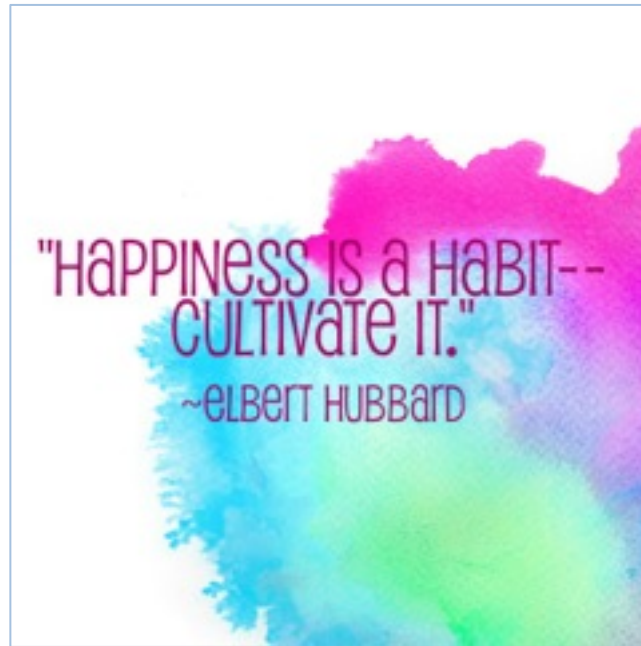
*The only problem with this is that it is never enough.*

We can never get enough affirmation to feel secure if we are always looking to get it from others. The only way to start truly feeling happy, content and secure is to give yourself the love you need. Stop looking and searching “out there” to quell your fears or insecurity.

This is the reason I always ask my competitors if they are competing to get affirmation from others or to truly do something for themselves. The former can never be remedied, even by coming in first place, because there’s always another, bigger show to win or other people to beat.

But when you compete or do something *for yourself*, it doesn’t matter what place you take because you are secure in knowing that the process itself was for you, only—to challenge yourself, to test your own limits, and to ultimately get to *know yourself* better. A truly honest contest prep can be a tool for introspection if done for the right reasons. However, it can also be a tool to exacerbate insecurities if done for the wrong reasons. So always ask yourself the question: WHY?

Finally, and as always, this stuff is a practice. It's impossible to completely master because then we'd be perfect, and well, that simply doesn't exist. ☺ So, remember this:



## Part V. Self-Trust to Liberate Yourself

Much of the content in this guide so far has been older JillFit content. Still relevant but this section is completely fresh and has been on my mind the last 6 months or so. And that is ... SELF-TRUST. I am still working through a lot of this section myself and I want to share it with you. I consider these parts the final frontier in personal freedom.

### A. Dealing with Resentment, Bitterness, Passive-Aggressive Behavior

What is self-trust and why should I care?

**Here's the thing with trust:** it's the opposite of control.

On control: You are now this far into the guide so hopefully at this point, you understand that we can never control outcomes. We can never control other people. We can never control "what will happen." We can only control our perception. And even THAT is a practice.



If you're like most people, that feels super scary, because not knowing what's going to happen or not being able to take certain steps to assure certain outcomes leaves us on shaky ground. And all of that is a fact.

**But is there a small, teensy weensy part of you that feels liberated by this?**

For me, not having to control outcomes actually feels free. In a sense, I get to sit back, do my best and let the chips fall. And sometimes, those chips fall in scary, uncertain places and when they do, I deal with them. And how do I know I can deal with them? I trust myself.

I spent a lot of time saying that I "didn't trust" certain people. If I felt "hurt" by someone, I'd say, "I don't trust them." If I felt betrayed or take advantage of, I'd say, "I don't trust that person." That's all fine and well, except that really, it boils down to: *I don't trust myself.*

Here's what I mean: If I say, I don't trust so-and-so because "they did this to me," really what they did was just a result of them being them. Yes, I had emotions around it. Yes, it felt painful in the moment, but again, people do what they do. And they always will. And once I have that insight, I don't need to trust them or not. I only need to trust MYSELF to handle whatever situations occur, with this person or with whomever, in whatever situations arise.

**When I trust MYSELF, what other people do or say doesn't matter because I am emotionally strong and competent on my own.**

Doesn't mean that things don't sting. You certainly don't become a cold, uncaring person. IN FACT, when you allow people to be who they are, don't you actually have MORE space to love and support them? Because in being able to give them the benefit of the doubt, you can see that they are human, just like you. They are doing their best, just like you. They are acting from their own insecurities, just like you.

And in this way, you don't need to take anything personally. And when you don't throw your emotions into the mix, you are able to hold space *for them* emotionally.

One thing that tends to happen when you start practicing this way of seeing the world is that at first, it feels kind of cold or uncaring. It feels like detachment, when really it's what I would consider **clarity**. When you get clear, not only do you *not*



have to take things personally, but you now have SO MUCH MORE EMOTIONAL SPACE to be there for others.

**Here's an example:** Say your partner is really stressed about work. He comes home after a long day and mentions something about the house being messy, which is now adding to his stress.

At this point, we have 2 choices:

1) We can take this personally since we were home and we make up the idea that it's technically our job to keep the house clean and because it isn't, we are now somehow "bad" and we messed up (this is all actualized subconsciously BTW), but what we consciously DO in this moment is defend and deflect: "Well, I had SUCH a busy day and I swear it was clean earlier today but then the kids came home and I'm stressed too you know, and it doesn't look all that bad ..." (the insecure, defensive choice)

OR

2) Look around and agree that yes, it's pretty messy. And then tell him that you love him and ask what he thinks you can do to help and support him. THAT'S IT! (the loving, *open*, unattached choice)

Did that just blow your mind? It did mine! 😊

#2 in this scenario would be a more "clear" choice because remember, him saying the house was a mess is not a direct insult on you. He didn't expressly say that you are a shitty wife and he wants to divorce you. He was simply making an observation, that, if you really looked at, you'd probably agree with!

Remember, when we don't attach meaning and emotions to statements, most are benign. We don't have to try and guess a hidden meanings and ulterior motives. It's always preferable to TAKE PEOPLE AT THEIR WORD.

**Which brings me to passive-aggressive behavior.**

We do it. Other people do it, and when they do, we feel it.

Passive-aggressive behavior is one form of NOT trusting oneself. When we act that

way, it's a copout. It's a way for us to try to subtly get across our dissatisfaction or disapproval to someone else without *actually* owning it. It's a crutch. And it's useless for everyone involved. It's manipulative and seeks to use guilt and feelings of inadequacy to hint that someone else should change.

Instead, could we just straight-up *own* our dissatisfaction, put it out there, thereby staying within our integrity and just also *owning* the consequences? Even if there's pain and discomfort? Even if letting the chips fall is scary? Could we just release our attachment to the outcome?

So hard. But the alternative is continuing the game where we don't speak our truth because we are scared of having to deal with the other person's emotions, so we acquiesce, say yes when we mean no, lie, omit the truth, censor and edit until we get to the point where: a) we feel like the other person is placated and b) we are now resentful and miserable.

### **Self-trust is everything. It's the final frontier.**

I notice that when I don't trust myself to speak 100% my truth, I am taking away the *opportunity* for those around me to deal with that truth. I notice that I edit, or censor or say things simply to keep the peace, rather than speaking my truth and then letting the chips fall. I don't trust MYSELF to handle where those chips might land.

I think growing up, we're taught that conflict is bad and uncomfortable and means that we are somehow not good or we are messing up. Besides, we don't like when people show negative emotions toward us. We want to control their reactions and smooth things over as fast as possible (but can we ever control someone else's emotions?).

And with SELF-trust comes the ability to say my truth exactly as it is, own that truth and let those around me respond however they're going to respond. Yikes! It's super-scary!! But isn't it the only way to form real, deeper connections with people?

Brene Brown talks a lot about vulnerability in her book, 'Daring Greatly.' The idea behind making yourself vulnerable—aka speaking your truth, showing yourself completely and then allowing other people's responses to be what they'll be—is that vulnerability is what the deepest relationships are built on.

Think about if your partner knew every single weird, gross, freaky, dark, ugly, scary thing about you AND STILL wanted to be with you? How liberating would that be??

Now this feels like a risk, doesn't it? Because, what if they don't like it? What if they think I'm not worth the hassle? What if they reject me? What if they don't like what they see?

YES! This is scary!

But what's the alternative? The alternative is forming and growing a relationship on half-truths, modifications, putting on a constant show of who we think we need to be for the other person. Ultimately, the alternative is forming a relationship that isn't based on the truth. And how deep can a relationship like that be? How long can a relationship like that last?

I'm not judging, and geez, I don't have it all figured out! This part, like I said, is what I consider the final frontier. SELF-TRUST is the final puzzle piece that once you practice and master, you can know that everything is going to be okay no matter what. Because you are free to be you, and you are now even more accepting of others.

**What better gift than to give others permission to be human? Isn't that what we all want?**

And instead of waiting for others to give it, self-trust is all about YOU taking it. Owning it. Living it. Unapologetically authentic.

Now don't confuse this with that I call "bomb dropping." Bomb dropping is when you're just like, "Here I am, screw you!" That's not actually taking responsibility because innate in that statement is still the idea that the other person needs to change. It's almost a challenge to the other person: "See if you can handle me, you asshole!" When in actuality, self-trust isn't about anyone else. It's just a way of being in the world, not throwing the gauntlet down for others, or to test others.

Self-trust is all about owning your truth in the world, being 100% authentic and this can be done in a very sweet, kind way. You'll never be able to control other people's reactions but that's the whole point--it's not about them.

**Finally, on resentment:**

It's such a juicy emotion!

And here's my bottom line on it:

- 1) I feel resentful whenever I'm not getting my needs met.
- 2) And ironically, I'm the only one who can meet my needs.

So while I'm waiting for Jade to deliver, or my parents to "get it" or my friends to take initiative to call me, all the while I can and **SHOULD** do what I need to do for *me* to feel more satisfied, fulfilled and happy.

I can certainly sit around wishing (and even telling) these other people how I want to be treated and what I'd like for them to do or how to be, but ultimately, they are them. They do what they do, they act how they act.

Can they change? Maybe, but they certainly won't change easily and for good if I'm the one instigating. My ever-brilliant sister-in-law, Jillian always says that you can always share your feelings with another person, but ultimately you can never coerce or get them to change if a) they don't want to, b) they like how they are and it's working for them and c) they literally just *can't* change. They are doing their best and they're good. *I* am the one suffering. And so, the **ONLY** option for me, in those moments is to do what I need to do for me.

**A simple hypothetical example:** *I want my husband to take out the recycling bin to the street to be picked up.*

He knows I'd like him to do it, and he tries his best to remember and do it. But he doesn't do it all the time, and he simply doesn't think about it as much as I do, and can't he see how this is such a small thing and why can't he just do it??? I can work myself into a tizzy thinking, "He should take out the recycling bin" and remind him and let him know just how much I would *love* for him to do this so I don't have to worry about it. And, look, I'm worrying about it anyway!

SO. I have 2 options in this moment (because badgering him to take out the recycling literally is not working and won't work because he doesn't care to do it, and he doesn't do it, and we can also question the idea that he even *should* do it)  
← There's that WORD again! 😊

Option #1 - I take out the recycling bin myself. I say that my desired outcome is for the bin to be on the sidewalk so if I just do it, it's done and I can move on.

Option #2 - Leave him and find a husband that loves to take out the recycling bin and never forgets.

Why are these my only 2 options???

Because any other option leaves me miserable and resentful of him. #2 may seem harsh (and it's obviously extreme) but when we are talking "bottom line" on this stuff, then your choice simply comes down to a) doing things yourself that you want done so that you won't be waiting on someone else and b) accepting the person you're with as they come, and if you can't, then you move on.

There's no judgment around any of it. It's just "what is."

This stuff is really hard. And it's the people who work through these things that are the freest. It's not easy, and it's not always comfy and cushy. But the alternative is not taking control of your own happiness and personal sense of fulfillment. When you see things this way, the only choice left is to work on yourself.

(I guess technically a third option would be to find a workaround, like hire someone to take out the recycling bin 😊 This is Jade's and my compromise on cleaning the house!)

## **B. Perspective: The World Is Your Mirror**

In this final section, I want to address another topic that is on my mind lately: your world as a mirror.

I am always reminded of this. When I look "out there" and find things that are "wrong" with other people, really I am seeing my own insecurities reflected back to me.

Here's an example:

I have a friend whose husband is a huge trigger for me. And so I know that there's some really good, juicy stuff there FOR ME to work out. So I use the judge-your-neighbor worksheet from Byron Katie

([http://www.thework.com/downloads/worksheets/JudgeYourNeighbor\\_Worksheet.pdf](http://www.thework.com/downloads/worksheets/JudgeYourNeighbor_Worksheet.pdf)) and I let myself judge the hell out of him first:

- He shouldn't be so selfish.
- He shouldn't be so controlling of her.
- He should realize how lucky he is.
- He should be more considerate of people

Katie has a tool called The Turn Around, where essentially you take your “should” statements and turn them around to see if there are any alternatives or as true or truer for you. I did The Turn-Around with the above statements and found these statements that were actually truer for me:

- *I shouldn't be so selfish (this is a huge sensitivity of mine and I've been called it before—coincidence that I "see" it in others? Nope.)*
- *I shouldn't be so controlling of her (Of course! It's none of my business and yet I'm trying to make it my business: "She should leave him." Hmm, really?)*
- *I should realize how lucky I am (Of course I should! Gratitude is a game-changer.)*
- *I shouldn't be so inconsiderate of people (again, another sensitivity of mine)*

*The places where stress/defense shows up is where the work is!*

If someone walking down the street called me a child molester, it wouldn't even register because I know with 100% certainty, I am not. But if someone calls me selfish or inconsiderate, all a sudden I get an emotional hit. I *feel* the stress of that. And I want to defend! And of course, that's where my not-good-enough (NGE, theme, lesson, etc) is.

### **Quick review of how to turn it around and choose another perspective:**

- 1) Awareness:** This is consciousness of the stress and knowing that something's there for me to work on if I so choose (I'm playing the victim role here)
- 2) Responsibility:** Realize the stress and tension is coming from me (any negative response), I brought it upon myself ("people," "out there," "everyone," "he/she/they," etc are triggers FOR ME, not the cause)
- 3) CHOOSE a different actionable tool:** gratitude, benefit of the doubt, seeing the other person's NGE, using The Alternative, finding the bright spot, etc.
- 4) Practice:** Using all those amazing opportunities that are in full supply to us always to practice this process. It's not easy, but it's simple.

When I get upset about my friend's marriage, in that moment, I am playing the victim. I am *wanting* things to be different than they are. I am at war with reality. And in that moment, I am the only one stressed about it! I am the miserable one. And I am reflecting back to myself my own NGE, he's just doing his job to show me.

Phew. Are you with me? 😊 If you're like me, you probably feel like this stuff is a bit scary, a bit liberating, a bit uncomfortable, a whole lot true and a whole lot of work. IT'S ALL THOSE THINGS.

But once you begin practicing, it gets easier and it becomes the most rewarding thing you can do for your own personal development, self-realization and wellbeing. You are immensely brave for even reading this. For even opening up your mind to this. To even potentially thinking of beginning down this path.

**YOU ARE COURAGEOUS.**

You are doing something most people never do. And that's look at their on BS. Own it, choose a different way and then practice. I am in awe of you. Thank you!

## Part VI. Conclusion and Tools Round Up

At this point, you might be thinking, Gee, this is all fine and great, but HOW do I DO this stuff? What ACTIONS can I take to move forward?

Well, first, I want you to caution you. Don't take all this stuff and make it just one more think you suck at 😊 This is a process. And wherever you go with it is perfect and whatever you do (or don't do) with it is also perfect. So watch out for the self-judgment.

And I'll give you a little hint: I have been practicing, really digging, for the last 3 years and though I've completely done a 180, my triggers, sensitivities, insecurities and lessons still pop up at time, granted much less but still.

The good news is that your "theme" is just that—and the more you practice this new perception of the world, the easier it becomes to spot. I see my shit from a mile away now. I'm like, "Oh, here is it again!"

**Awareness** is almost instantaneous, assuming **responsibility** is also fairly quick, using one of **my tools** is a little more work, and of course, the **practice** goes on forever.

And I don't know that it ever goes away completely, but the good news is that even the smallest amount of work done in this realm can make a huge difference in your day-to-day reality.

**Remember, everything—EVERYTHING—comes down to your perception. You choose how to perceive people, events, yourself. You choose how you interpret people's words, actions or motives. You can always choose to make assumptions or you can choose to take people at this word (remember, self-trust?) 😊**

### **Review:**

4-Step Process of WHAT TO DO any time you experience any kind of negative stress (remember, stress is your cue to work):

- 1) **Awareness:** This is consciousness of the stress and knowing that something's there for me to work on if I so choose (I'm playing the victim role here)
- 2) **Responsibility:** Realize the stress and tension is coming from me (any negative response), I brought it upon myself ("people," "out there," "everyone," "he/she/they," etc. are triggers FOR ME, not the cause)
- 3) **CHOOSE a different actionable tool:** find gratitude, give the benefit of the doubt, use self-compassion (giving *yourself* the BOD), realize that other people are operating from their own insecurities too! (NGE), using The Alternative, finding the bright spots, etc.
- 4) **Practice:** Using all those amazing opportunities that are in full supply to us always to practice this process. It's not easy, but it's simple.

That's it! It's simple. But it's not easy.

Remember, you get to decide how far you go down this path. There's no "right" way or "wrong" way, zero judgment, only insights and learning.



Opportunities for learning are everywhere. Look to your spouse, parents, close friends, people online. People are pushing your buttons everywhere, giving you priceless opportunities to practice this stuff. Lessons are everywhere.

And if you *choose* to see it that way, wow, how lucky are you?!

**Your perception is everything.**

Love,  
Jill