

Katherine Woodward Thomas presents

# Evolving Love

21 Essential Skills to  
Grow Your Capacity to Love  
Yourself & Others

Featuring inspiring  
teachings from Love Out Loud

Digital Booklet by Katherine Woodward Thomas

# 21 Essential Skills for Happy, Healthy Love

featuring inspiring  
teachings from the

*Love Out Loud*

created by  
*New York Times* bestselling author,

Katherine Woodward Thomas

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# 7 Skills for Loving Yourself

## **1. ON LOVING YOURSELF**

Most of us know our relationships with others can never be better than the one we have with ourselves.

Yet how can we love ourselves in ways that can dissolve our loneliness, and transform it into a sweet, nourishing solitude?

Or that can disappear the hurts in our hearts, so we're no longer harming ourselves by ruminating on them over and over again?

How can we stop disrespecting our bodies, and start showing up in integrity with what we know to be good, healthy and wholesome ways of caring for ourselves?

**The relationship you  
have with you is the most  
precious one that you will ever have.  
And the best way to love yourself  
is to grow a kind, loving and  
mentoring connection between your  
strong, wise adult self and those tender,  
younger parts of you that may still be  
holding hurts & fears about your goodness,  
your power and your worthiness be loved.**

Learn to lovingly mentor these tender parts of you by dismantling the lies that may still be holding you hostage, like “I’m not good enough,” or “I can never have what I want.”

Notice and name them one by one. Say with ferocity, “What a minute! What’s really true about this idea?”

Push back! Stand up against them. Assert deeper truths.

*“I’m safe to be alone. I love my own company and value my solitude.”*

*“I forgive my mistakes. They’re a springboard for the wise and loving person I am today.”*

*“My body is the beautiful home to my grand and glorious spirit.”*

Buddha once said, “You can search the whole world over and never find anyone more deserving of love than you.”

**What loving words of truth, kindness  
& encouragement can you offer the  
beautiful person you saw  
in the mirror this morning?**



## Skill Number 1:

### Identifying & Challenging Your “False Love Identity”

We invite you to distinguish the erroneous beliefs and subsequent false identity you formed in your younger years in response to a disappointment and/or relational trauma you endured.

Take out your journal and write on the following questions:

What was a significant disappointment I endured in my childhood?

Where do I still feel that pain of that disappointment in my body?

What did I make this disappointment mean about me? (For example, that I’m all alone, that I’m not worthy, that I’m not wanted.)

What did I make this disappointment mean about my relationship with others? (For example, that no one shows up for me, or that others are worthier than me.)

How old is the part of me at the center of this story? (For example, “I’m really young, like 2 or 3.” Or “I’m 10.” Or “I’m a forming fetus in the womb.”)

*Please note:* The answer to this question need not be a fact, but more of a felt sense in your body. You may or may not recall exactly what was happening to you when you were younger.)

**Now challenge that belief!** Go back now to the meaning you made of that old disappointment. What’s an alternative interpretation of this experience?

In other words, how can you now see what happened with your adult eyes, rather than interpret the situation through the eyes of a child who was too young to understand what was happening with any level of complexity or sophistication? (For example, my parents were exhausted from working so much and had little attention to give. Or my mother was grieving the loss of a child and couldn’t tolerate opening her heart to me.)

## **Bonus Skill:**

### **Claiming Your “True Love Identity”**

We want to wake you up out of the trance of that disempowering story! To do that, you'll want to begin by connecting with your wise, adult self that is holding resilience, strength, wisdom and love. From there, lean in to mentor the younger you that's been stuck in the old story.

#### **1) Become still.**

I invite you to put everything to one side, close your eyes and take a nice deep breath as though you could breathe all the way down into your hips.

Drop your awareness down into your body and become aware of all of the feelings and sensations in your body, releasing any tension you might be holding.

#### **2) Connect with a deeper, wider center within.**

Connect with the part of you that is a wise, loving and mature adult. Breathe the energy of yourself as a strong, wise, developed and powerful adult all the way down into your hips, down into the earth and out to the edges of the room and beyond.

Place one hand on this deeper wider center within you, making sure that it is lower on your body than where the emotional center of your False Love Identity resides.

#### **3) Extend love to your younger self.**

Taking some nice, deep breaths, extending love to the part of you suffering inside of that old painful story. Extend a sense of presence and care from your powerful and loving adult self.

#### **4) Explain to your younger self what's really true.**

Take a wide-angle view on this limited story and begin challenging the conclusions you came to when you were too young to know any better.

Begin mentoring yourself to make more empowered and true meaning.

For example:

To address the false belief “I’m alone,” you might say: “Sweetheart, you’re not alone! I’m here with you! And the truth is, you came here to love and be loved. And you have the power to learn how to create happier, healthier connections that deepen over time.”

To address the false belief “others don’t care about me,” you might say: “Sweetheart, others might care about your feelings and needs if you took the risk to share them.”

Just speak words of wisdom and truth to the younger you, fiercely standing to correct his or her false conclusions.

### **5) Create your Self-Love Power Statements.**

From here, turn these mentoring conversations now into “Power Statements.” Statements of truth that deconstruct the false meaning you’ve been inside of.

Create statements of such profound truth that they literally wake you up out of the trance of the old beliefs.

For example, “I am more than worthy of receiving great love into my life. I need to do nothing to prove my value.”

“I came here to love and be loved. And I have the power to learn how to create happier, healthier connections that deepen over time.”

Write these statements down! Memorize them so that you are able to assert these truths the moment the younger self begins to make disempowered meaning of whatever is happening.

## **2. WHEN YOU MAKE A MISTAKE**

Though none of us like it when we screw things up, the truth is... we all do sometimes.

In order to grow from your failures, you'll want to cultivate unconditional self-love, such that you can be free to "tell on yourself" and honestly admit your unwholesome, mixed motives.

An inner foundation of self-acceptance, self-compassion and self-kindness will allow you to be humbled by your questionable choices and behavior, and be willing to make amends to yourself and others to try to make things right.

**It's the opposite**

**of toxic shame.**

**When we feel**

**overwhelmed by shame,**

**it's because we've not**

**yet cultivated a foundation**

**within of unconditional**

**self-love.**

When you've made a mistake, there's no merit in allowing yourself to indulge in shame. Because shame will only stop you from growing. In many ways, it's actually an excuse to not have to change.

Which means you'll be likely to make that same mistake again.

Just because you've made a mess, doesn't mean that your fundamental value as a person has changed. You are a miraculous work in progress, and you never need to defend yourself against seeing your flaws clearly.

You just need to see yourself clearly and hold yourself accountable for growing from the experience.

Simply do your best to clean things up and make things right.

The practice of unconditional self-love will allow you to look at your errors straight on, without sugar coating the consequences of your choices, so your mistakes become the springboard to the more humble, wise and trustworthy person you're becoming.

**You may not always  
like what you've done,  
but you can always  
love who you are.**

What mistakes are weighing on you, and what can you learn from your errors?

How can you take these lessons and use them to become a more loving, wise and wholehearted person?

## **Skill Number 2: Learning From Your Mistakes**

Take out your journal and write on the following questions:

What choices and decisions have I made in life that I regret most and why?

What good came from each of these choices?

What lesson(s) did I learn as a result of making these choices?

What choices am I facing today and how might I apply what I've learned to pay forward the wisdom I've gained?



### **3. ARE YOU A GOOD MOTHER TO YOURSELF?**

We tend to treat ourselves the way our primary caregiver (usually our mother) treated us when we were young.

If your mother was punishing, you may tend to be harsh and punitive toward yourself when you're less than perfect.

If your mother was negligent, you may chronically over give to others yet under feed yourself.

If your mother was self-absorbed, you may have a habit of being more present to the feelings and needs of others, than you are to yourself.

**You're not responsible for the  
poor parenting you may have  
received as a child.**

**Yet you are responsible  
for how you're  
perpetuating that legacy  
in how you choose to  
treat yourself today.**

Being a good mother to yourself means doing what needs to be done to properly care for yourself. Making sure you eat healthy, drink plenty of water, move your body and that your home is clean, comfortable and nourishing.

Good mothers also make sure you do your homework (i.e., take care of your business,) and that you have adequate time to play and rest (i.e., going out with friends and/or doing those things that make your heart sing.)

Yet being a good mother to yourself also means tending to your internal world.

Speaking to yourself in ways that are kind and soothing, especially if you've failed at something, or if you're feeling disappointed by what someone else did or didn't do.

It means talking to yourself in ways that are self-encouraging, and which build you up when times are hard and you're feeling discouraged.

Mentoring yourself with words of wisdom that can support you to make empowered meaning of everything you're going through.

Notice if you tend to treat yourself in the same negligent and abusive ways your own caregiver treated you when you were a child, particularly if they failed to give you what you really needed back then.

Then make the wise decision to learn how to be the good mother to yourself that you may never have had.

### **Skill Number 3:**

#### **Giving Yourself What Was Missing**

Write a list of what you didn't receive in your childhood. Use the following list as a guide to help you identify what was missing.

*Nurturing* (soothing you when you were disappointed, loving physical touch on a regular basis, loving-kindness for no particular reason)

*Basic Hygienic Care* (washing of body, doing laundry, caring for your teeth)

*Basic Life Skills* (managing a checkbook, paying the bills, upkeep of the car and home)

*Consistency and Dependability* (kept their word, you knew what you could count on, life had a predictable rhythm, were able to earn a living)

*Attention* (spending time with you for no particular reason, noticing and responding to your moods, listening to you, understanding things from your perspective)

*Encouragement of Your Talents* (recognizing them, validating them, supporting them to grow)

*Protection* (from the hostile behaviors of: abusive siblings, the outside world, one another)

*Being Cherished* (delighting in and appreciating you, taking joy in your presence in the world)

*Respect of Boundaries* (honoring your privacy, protecting your right to say no)

*Unconditional Love* (loving you without needing you to “perform” in return, loving you without imposing their unfulfilled needs onto you)

When you have written your list, write or say out loud the following to make a promise to yourself to begin providing each quality that was missing for you in your childhood.

I, \_\_\_\_\_ release and forgive \_\_\_\_\_ for failing to \_\_\_\_\_. I give up failing to \_\_\_\_\_ myself. I promise to do my absolute best to begin \_\_\_\_\_

myself from this day forward, and I claim \_\_\_\_\_ as mine fully and completely.

## **4. LOVING YOUR BODY**

Some of us live so much in our heads that we forget we even have bodies.

Others of us don't like our bodies so much and do all we can to just ignore them.

Then others of us are holding a tremendous amount of trauma in our bodies, and live with chronic physical tension-- like we're stuck on the in-breath and not really breathing very deeply at all.

**When we're not  
fully in our bodies,  
we are cutting off  
whole parts of  
ourselves.**

Our feelings.

Our intuitive knowing.

Our creativity.

Our wisdom.

Our sensuality.

All of these things live in our bodies.

Mind knowing is one thing.

Body knowing another.

**It's time to reclaim  
our love for our  
physical bodies.**

If you are reducing yours to the number on the morning scale, you're missing more than I can write about in a simple Love Out Loud message!

**Let's begin relating to our bodies  
as the miraculous creations that they are.**

**These sacred holy temples that are  
housing our grand and glorious spirits,  
and home to our big and beautiful hearts.**

Begin by feeling your feet.

Ask your feet how they want to move.

**Don't move them.**

**Let them move you.**

Do this with your ankles. Then your knees.

Let your hips tell you what song they want to dance to. Then play that music loud and strong.

Let your hips lead you around the room until your mind can finally get the rest it deserves.

Then follow with your butt, your belly, your chest, your shoulders, your arms, hands and fingers.

Everyone gets their turn to lead you for a change.

Make friends with this gorgeous Earth-suit that God made just for you.

Stop criticizing it and love it with your whole heart.

### **Skill Number 4:**

#### **Healing Your Relationship with Your Body**

Read through the instructions for this open-eye meditation once or twice and then do it from memory as best you can.

Take off all your clothes and sit or stand comfortably in front of a mirror with your hands relaxed and resting by your sides.

Take several deep breaths, relaxing your entire body as your lungs expand and release, expand and release.

Do a full body check for any tension you may be holding, beginning at the top of your head and moving down through the bottom of your feet.

Now, start with the top of your head. Notice any judgments you have about your hair or the size and shape of your head. For each judgment you find, talk to the part of your body that you have been judging.

Take the following three steps with each and every judgment you find:

1. Ask that part of your body to please forgive you for being so harsh and unloving toward it
2. Consider something you can truly appreciate about that part of your body
3. Thank that part of your body for something and mean it in your heart

Here's an example.

Judgment: "I hate how frizzy my hair is."

Step 1. "Please forgive me, hair, for telling you over and over how ugly you are."



Step 2. “I really appreciate how curly you are. I also like your color and texture.”

Step 3. “Thank you, hair, for being so full and wild when it rains.”

Go through your entire body, doing this process with each judgment you find. For those parts of your body you have no negative judgments about, simply do Steps 2 and 3.

## **5. WHEN IT'S ALL TOO MUCH TO BEAR**

There are times when our feelings are just too much to bear.

Disappointment, loneliness, hurt or fear weighs heavily upon us and somehow seems to set us apart from the land of the living.

Most of the time, we feel like we've got it handled. We bury ourselves in our work, have a glass of wine, or indulge in a little retail therapy to try to take the edge off.

Then there's times when we *don't* feel like we've got it handled.

Where the pain we're in feels bigger than we are, and we're on the brink of fragmentation.

Overwhelmed by anxiety to the point where we dread getting out of bed.

Our hearts broken so badly, we fear that we'll never put all the pieces together again.

**Rather than tough out  
these times, we instead  
can press the pause button  
and expand our inner container  
with a Buddhist practice  
known as Tonglen.**

In this moment, close your eyes and take a deep breath as though you could breathe all the way down into your hips.

Extend loving kindness to the part of you that's suffering.

**Ask yourself,**

**“Sweetheart, what are you feeling?”**

**Then name the feeling you're experiencing and**

**mirror it back to yourself by saying,**

**“I can see that you're**

**feeling \_\_\_\_ (sad, angry, hurt).”**

Next, do something counter-intuitive.

Take a deep breath and welcome that difficult feeling straight into your heart.

On your out-breath, then offer a blessing for yourself and all beings who are suffering with this horrible, painful feeling in this very moment along with you.

Do this one by one until you can begin to bear the feelings you're experiencing.

In this way, your suffering is transformed into compassion and a deepening of our shared humanity.

## **Skill Number 5:**

### **Witnessing Your Emotions with Love**

Practice naming and simply witnessing your emotions with a sense of unconditional self-acceptance and compassion. When we are willing to simply name and witness our difficult emotions, without needing to fix or

change them in any way, we increase our ability to respond to life from wisdom and without going into reactivity.

**1. Still yourself.** Sit quietly for several minutes, and breathe deeply, as though you could breathe all the way down into your hips. Become aware of all of the feelings and sensations in your body. Notice where you are holding any tension, and as you find it, just letting it go.

With each breath, allow your awareness to drop deeper and wider until you connect with the part of you that knows you are being held and supported by a Force and Field of Life that loves you. Bask in the experience of being held and loved.

**2. Connect with your wise, adult self.** Connect with the part of you that is wise, resourceful, resilient, capable and strong, and breathe this sense of yourself as a loving, mature adult presence, extending the energy of this center down into the earth and out to the edges of the room.

**3. Extend a sense of presence & love to yourself.** With a sense of deep presence and care, turn your attention to the “you” in your body and extend a sense of safety and compassion to this part of yourself from the deeper and wider center of your wise, adult self.

**4. Witness & welcome your emotions one by one.** From a place of deep listening and care, ask yourself the following question, welcoming in with love whatever the response and mirroring it back with love.

Ask yourself:

*“What are you feeling”?*

Listen for a response from deep down within you. Be specific and clear with each response. For example, “I feel apprehensive.” “I feel hopeful.” “I feel violated.”

Welcome in that feeling, resisting nothing.

For each feeling, silently say to yourself with a sense of acceptance and compassion,

*“I can see that you’re feeling \_\_\_\_\_.”*

Notice the sensations in your body as you allow yourself to feel this feeling.

If the feeling is particularly unbearable and hard to hold, try welcoming the feeling on the in breath, and on the out breath, say a prayer for healing and release of all human beings throughout the world who are experiencing this very feeling in this very moment, including yourself.

Do this until that feeling becomes more bearable. Do this with all of the difficult emotions you're experiencing.

## **6. QUESTIONS THAT LEAD TO POSITIVE CHANGE**

When we first try to take responsibility for ourselves as the source of our own disappointing experiences in life and love, we'll often begin by asking questions that slide us straight to shame and self-hatred.

Yet shame based questions like, "Why can't I ever get it right?" or "How could I be so stupid?" won't ever lead to a breakthrough in your ability to create better relationships.

**I always have to remind people that**  
**"What the f\*\$%@ is wrong with me?"**  
**is not a question that will ever**  
**lead to positive change.**

To break free of your disappointing patterns, particularly ones of co-dependency, love addiction, narcissistic abuse, chronic aloneness or neglect, you'll want to start asking yourself empowering questions that'll inspire you to grow.

Questions like "How did I give my power away to them?," "What motivated me to do that?" and "What can I do now to reclaim my power moving forward?" will allow you to use the pain you're in as the fuel you'll need to make positive changes moving forward.

Yes, the other person may be messed up. But all dynamics are co-created. For every self-centered, narcissistic person, there's someone who chronically self-abandons and disappears themselves to try to win their favor. For every



judgmental and critical person, there's an insecure person desperately giving themselves away to try to gain their approval.

**It's time for you to create  
happier, healthier relationships.  
Your power to do this lies  
in asking really great questions.**

Look at what you're struggling with now.

See if you can find a question that can feed you the power to grow from the experience and to do things differently from now on.

### **Skill Number 6: Empowered Self Reflection**

This practice is about becoming aware of the automatic questions you tend to ask yourself when looking to understand yourself as the source of your experiences. With this awareness, we can then identify more empowering alternatives.

Take out your journal and write on the following:

- 1. Identify your painful pattern in love.** For example, No one ever asks me out, or I get involved with unavailable people, or I always wind up with narcissistic people.
- 2. Notice where in your body you feel the pain of the pattern.** Focus on the lowest place in your body where you can feel the energy of the emotion you feel when the pattern happens. For example, in the center of my solar plexus, or like a heaviness on my heart.
- 3. Make the automatic question you're asking conscious.** Breathe deeply into this part of your body, and notice the automatic inner conversation you

find yourself engaging around this situation over and over again. For example, “What’s wrong with me?” “Why can’t I ever get what I want?” “How can I be so stupid?”

Notice the lack of room for true evolution and growth in these disempowering questions.

#### **4. Create a more empowering question that could lead to growth.**

Stepping back from this inner conversation, come up with a question that could support you to grow in the area of love and relationships. For example, “What am I avoiding being responsible for in this situation?” “How does it serve me to be without a partner in life?” “What is the deeper truth about me and how can I align my actions and my choices regarding this situation with what is really true?”

## **7. HOW YOU TREAT YOURSELF TRAINS OTHERS**

If you want to better your relationships with others, begin with your relationship with yourself.

Because your relationship with yourself will always end up being mirrored back to you by others.

If you put yourself down, punish yourself for mistakes made or hold yourself back, you'll find others will as well.

And you may feel it's them who're devaluing and disrespecting you, not realizing it was you who set that dynamic up to begin with.

**Yet if you cultivate inner kindness,  
self-compassion and self-respect  
you'll usually find others  
soon following suit.**

When we duplicate old hurts from childhood in our relationships now, we feel victimized that these patterns are *so f\*\$%ing tenacious*, seemingly outside our control.

“How is it that my boyfriend is treating me as meanly as my angry father did?”

We feel cursed by this horrible unfairness that has again found its way to our doorstep. As though we had a mark upon our foreheads letting people we're a good target for abuse.

Yet, it's not rocket science how this happens to us again and again.

When treated badly by our own parents, grandparents or older siblings, most of us internalized their abuse by then starting to treat ourselves in ways similar.

Speaking to ourselves unkindly, critically or dismissively.

Treating ourselves as though we weren't worthy of our own respect.

It's this relationship with ourselves then that covertly trains others to treat us in much the same way. It happens outside of conscious awareness and in the unspoken.

**Love yourself therefore**

**first and foremost.**

**Putting yourself first**

**is not selfish--**

**it's actually**

**the right & responsible**

**thing to do.**

This is what learning to love yourself before you can love someone else means.

## **Skill Number 7:**

### **Tending to Your Needs**

The following is a partial list of some of our most basic needs in relationship with each other.

These needs are not only valid and appropriate, but actually healthy to have:

Acceptance

Affection

Appreciation

Autonomy

Belonging

Boundaries

Communication

Companionship

Compassion

Consideration

Consistency

Encouragement

Empathy

Forgiveness

Honesty

Inspiration

Integrity

Intimacy

Kindness

Mutuality

Nurturing

Presence

Respect  
Responsibility  
Responsiveness  
Safety  
Security  
Support  
Touch  
Trust  
Understanding  
Validation  
Values Compatibility

### **Take out your journal.**

#### **1. Identify what you need to feel well, safe, and happy in your relationships.**

Read through the list above of healthy needs and choose five to ten things you need to be well, happy and safe in your relationships. Feel free to add something that is not on the partial list above.

Write each one out as a full sentence. As you write, own your needs worthy of consideration.

Be specific, such as:

“I need to know that others are being honest and telling me the absolute truth.”

“I need others to listen to my feelings and needs and respond by doing their best to accommodate them.”

“I need others to respect my boundaries, particularly around important self-care practices like giving me the space to meditate.”

#### **2. Make a promise to give yourself what you need.**

Because our relationships with others can never be any better than our relationship with ourselves, I invite you to begin making the choice to start acknowledging and caring for your own needs.

Go through your list. One by one make, close your eyes, put your hand over your heart and promise yourself to start doing all you can to care for your own needs.

Do this by either speaking your promise out loud, or simply by saying it silently to yourself.

For example:

“I need to know that others are being honest and telling me the absolute truth,” becomes “I promise to start being completely honest with myself and telling myself the absolute truth.”

“I need others to listen to my feelings and needs and respond by doing their best to accommodate them,” becomes “I promise to turn towards and listen to my own feelings and needs, and respond by doing all I can to accommodate and tend to them.”

Write the promises you are making to yourself ten times each in your journal. As you write, feel it to be so in your heart.



# 7 Skills for Loving Your Life



## **1. HOW IS IT HAPPENING FOR YOU, NOT JUST TO YOU?**

When hardship hits, our knee jerk reaction is to assume that something's wrong.

We're being abandoned. Or punished. Or worse, we see it as evidence that we're uncared for and unloved.

We wonder if we deserve it.

If we did something to cause it.

Or we take it as proof that life's untrustworthy and unfair.

**Yet what if  
we allowed ourselves to wonder  
how whatever's happening  
is happening for us,  
rather than just to us?**

I invite you to relate this as a crazy, hard time as an opportunity to deepen into qualities we've been studying and reading about for a long, long time.

Qualities like forgiveness.

Generosity.

Flexibility and courage.

A chance to practice faith in the face of fear.

To rise into being a leader of love.

To practice gratitude, even now.

**Hardship has a way of  
harnessing the best of who we are,  
and provides opportunities for us  
to show up in our strength & in  
our power in unprecedented ways.**

You've been practicing for this moment for a while.

Developing your ability to turn within to bask in the inner riches of your soul.

Opening your heart so that your choices and actions can be led by love, not fear.

Learning to live intentionally so that you're not limited by what is, but driven by what could be, and by the stand you've taken for what "shall be so."

The spiritual reserves you've grown over the years, are far more valuable than the rolls of toilet paper or the stocked shelves that many have managed to hoard.

You're now a person of great wisdom and depth.

You've grown yourself into a spiritual giant.

Now is the time for you to stand in the truth of your power and strength.

## **Skill Number 8:**

### **Using Anger as the Fuel for Positive Change**

Take out your journal and answer the following:

#### **1) Who are you angry with?**

Write a list of three to five people you feel angry with or resentful towards and why. You may include yourself on this list.

#### **2) Identify empowered actions to take in response to anger.**

Now, one person at a time, go through the following questions:

- a. What boundary violation and/or loss of personal safety did you suffer that is causing you to feel angry? If it was someone else who violated your boundaries, how might you have allowed or even colluded with their bad behavior?
- b. What action is your anger wanting you to take to restore balance, wellbeing and integrity to this situation?
- c. What amends will you now commit to make moving forward? Who will you be in the face of this?

## **2. WHAT'S YOUR NEXT STEP?**

Deep in your heart, you feel compelled to birth something unique and beautiful into the world... a book, a baby, a body of poetry or a project that edifies.

Yet you may find yourself discouraged and confused because you've been running the numbers, looking at your thin list of contacts, or starting at the large gap between where you are now to where you want to be.

**Whenever Life whispers  
a possibility into the  
center of our souls, it's  
usually more than we can  
wrap ourselves around  
at the moment.**

It's usually more than others can see when they look at us. And something we aren't quite credentialed for at this point in time.

As the proverb goes...

**"The journey of a  
thousand miles begins  
with the first step."**

Sometimes we stop ourselves from moving forward because we can't see how it will all unfold.

We want to wait until we have evidence that our risk will pan out.

We hesitate and fail to take the action we intuitively know we should lest we fall flat on our faces and wind up with nothing to show for it.

Yet experience tells me that when Life's guiding us in a particular direction, we will only really know our next step. Life won't lay it all out at once.

It's a game of Marco Polo, where we only get one clue at a time. A clue we must act upon if we are hoping to navigate our way to the fulfillment of the possibilities we sense before us.

All things of true creativity and brilliance in our world came through someone foolish enough to stick their neck out to follow their inner knowing.

**What's your next step  
in the direction of  
your dreams?**

**Skill Number 9:  
Accessing Guidance from Life**

Today, I invite you to access a higher level of your own awareness through writing your own letter to God, whoever God is for you. You may wish to address this letter "Dear Life," "Universe," "God," "Higher Power," or "Higher Self." If you prefer, you can simply write a "Dear Wisdom" letter. For example, Dear God, Katherine here...."

Write about the situations in your life that are challenging for you. Start by sorting through some of the feelings you are having and then move into specific questions that you have. For example, "I'm feeling really alone right now.... "

End your letter with the following sentence: “Dear Life/Universe/God, please write through my pen. Thank you very much.” Then write a letter back to yourself from Life/ Universe/God. For example, “Can you please share with me how to best navigate what looks to me to be a no-win situation?”

Once finished, write a letter back to yourself from your Higher Power, accessing wisdom from your own deeper knowing about how to best see this situation and where to go from here.

Begin it by writing Dear \_\_\_\_\_ (your name) and continue by intuitively writing from the deepest, most inspired parts of yourself. For example, Dear Katherine, Allow this feeling of being so alone to help you grow a sense of compassion for those who feel this way often. Remember that not all situations can be so easily solved. Some must be lived with and allowed to grow you stronger.... Your next step right now is simply to anchor into a sense of faith that this too is for your benefit.....”

Notice how much more empowered you are once you allow yourself to see your situation from a higher perspective, and take action on your own intuitive guidance.

### **3. THE POWER OF OUR IMAGINATION**

Most of us are somewhat asleep to the magical powers we're holding to create what it is that we desire.

When we don't have what we want, we'll usually feel as though we're on the outside looking in. Irritated by what we don't have, as though powerless to create it.

If you have some hope, you may draw up a plan. Write down a goal, make a list of actions and start moving in that direction. Which is great if you want to build a house, get a master's degree or prepare a gourmet meal.

**Yet if you desire to create  
something you have  
no logical way  
of controlling such as  
finding true love,  
becoming a movie star,  
or ending world hunger....  
then you'll need to go straight  
to the power of your imagination  
to create a miracle.**

Each morning, before getting out of bed, imagine you're already in that happy relationship. Smell the sweetness of your lover's scent, hear the rhythm of their breathing and feel the warmth of their body against yours.

Close your eyes and hear the sound of an audience laughing as you imagine sitting in back of a dark theater on opening night, watching yourself up on the big screen and feeling how beloved you are by the hundreds of people sitting with you to watch your film debut.

Or in your minds eye see children laughing -- hundreds of them, thousands of them, even millions! Swimming in water holes, filling up classrooms, swinging on swings with smiles on their faces and food in their bellies. Imagine headlines in all major news outlets shouting the good news that for the first time in human history, no one died of hunger the day before. Feel the whole world celebrating the miracle of this accomplishment, and feel a sense of pride in your heart, knowing that you were one of the visionaries that made this possible.

**Allow your imagination to  
flood your body with the happiness  
and wellbeing you'll feel  
when your dream is realized and  
walk into the room  
with that possible future fulfilled.  
Let these feelings of joy and gratitude  
dance in your heart**



**throughout the day.**

Don't think *of* what you want.

Think *from* what you want instead.

## **Skill Number 10: Setting Your Intention**

To engage the following exercise, please read it through a couple of times, and then do it from memory as best you can:

### **1. Close Your eyes & relax your body.**

To begin, close your eyes and take a deep breath as though you could breathe all the way down into your hips. Become aware of all of the feelings and sensations in your body, noticing any tension. As you find it, just let it go.

### **2. Feel the future as though it were here now.**

As if God were in a good mood, and deciding it was His pleasure to give you anything and everything your heart desires, allow yourself to imagine having the kind of you love you long for. Imagine that the miracle has already happened, and you are now happily in love with a wonderful partner who is happily in love with you.

Ask yourself:

*What does it taste like to have this love in my life?* See if you can taste the wine on your lover's lips kissing them.

*What does it sound like?* Imagine hearing your beloved singing in the shower.

*What does it smell like?* See if you can smell the scent of the fresh flowers they bought you today.

*What does it look like?* Imagine seeing a beautiful engagement or wedding ring on your finger.

*What does it feel like?* Imagine your beloved spooning you from behind in bed, lovingly kissing your back.

**3. Identify who you are in this future fulfilled.**

Sense into who you are in this future, and allow yourself to “try on” the Possible Self of your future. Let yourself linger in the emotions of being this version of yourself.

Now imagine yourself at work, as this version of yourself. Having lunch with a friend. Visiting with a family member. Notice how you show up differently from this place of being loved, supported, honored, valued, nourished, cared for and seen. Make the decision to begin showing up this way everywhere and with everyone starting now.

**4. Set an intention to manifest this future.**

Create an intention to manifest this future. State it in the affirmative. So rather than say what you won’t have any longer, declare to the Universe what shall be so. For example, “I will be happily partnered with an amazing man whom I respect, love and admire by Christmas of this year,” or “I will be in a committed relationship with the loving, sensual mother of my children by my birthday.”

You need not know how this future will happen, who it will happen with or when it will happen. You need only have the courage to put your stake in the ground and let the Universe know what it is that you are committed to creating at this point in your life.

Finish this sentence:

My intention is to manifest \_\_\_\_\_ (feel free to include descriptive adjectives here... big-hearted, loving, happy, sweet, sensual, etc.).

*NOTE:* By including a date by which your intention will manifest, you’re lighting a fire under yourself to get busy transforming now. If you hesitate doing so for fear of being disappointed, just remind yourself you already have your Ph.D. in surviving disappointment. Just gather your courage and go for the gold! The game isn’t so much to have a relationship by the date you set, as it is holding yourself accountable for being who you will need to be, in order for it to happen.

## **4. GENERATING THE FULFILLMENT OF YOUR VISION**

You may have a sense of the future you desire.

You want a beautiful relationship, happiness for your children and peace on Earth.

Yet what actions are you taking to generate that future?

**Don't just pray for  
what you want.  
Lean into that life.  
Begin doing all you can  
to weave that future  
into the manifest world.**

While teaching a Calling in “The One” workshop recently in China, a woman stood to share the vision of what she longed for.

A happy and trustworthy marriage with a man who told her the truth.

Her previous husband lied constantly, and had cheated on her many times. Though they'd been divorced for three years, she was so humiliated by his behavior and their subsequent divorce, she had not told anyone she'd gotten a divorce. Her parents, friends and co-workers all thought she was still married. Every time someone asked where he was, she said he was on a business trip.

How, she asked me, could she overcome this horrible experience to find a trustworthy man?

By giving up being a liar herself, I suggested.

Though he'd lied throughout their marriage, so had she. She'd lied to herself, pretending it wasn't happening. She was now lying by letting everyone think she was happy, just to save face.

If she wanted to create a marriage without lies, she must transform her relationship with truth now.

Tears streaming down her face and eyes wide with understanding, she committed herself there and then to begin telling the truth everywhere and to everyone.

**Look at the future  
you desire to create.**

**Are you living  
in integrity  
with that future?**

How can you generate the fulfillment of that future by who you choose to be today?

**Skill Number 11:  
Living in Integrity with Your Intention**

Take out your journal, and begin by writing down your intention. For example, "My intention is to meet my life partner by my birthday."

**Complete these sentences:**

My intention is:

I am in integrity with this future when I:

I am out of integrity with this future when I:

In the fulfillment of this intention, I desire to experience:

To generate this experience now, I can:

In the fulfillment of this intention, I desire to express:

To express this now, I can:

In the fulfillment of this intention, I desire to create:

To create this now, I can:

In the fulfillment of this intention, I desire to contribute:

To contribute this now, I can:

Be in action immediately to begin co-creating that possible future by showing up in ways that weave that possibility into the manifest world.

## **5. WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH WHAT'S BEEN DONE TO YOU?**

We've all been mistreated at one time or another. Rejected, devalued, humiliated or ripped off. Yet...

**it's not these disappointing**

**experiences that define us.**

**It's who we become**

**in response.**

When someone lets you down, you have a choice to make.

Who will you become in the face of that?

More closed, resigned, defended and calloused?

Or wiser, stronger, kinder and more mature?

People are complicated.

We don't always know why they do what they do.

Maybe they're scared. Maybe they're immature. Or maybe just confused.

In the 1970's a young woman named Veronica Shoffstall wrote the beautiful, wise poem "After a While."

In it she says...

*After a while, you learn that love doesn't mean leaning, and company  
doesn't mean security.*

*And you learn that kisses aren't contracts and presents aren't promises.*

*And you begin to accept your defeats with your head up, and your eyes open with the grace of a woman, not the grief of a child...*

We want to learn to respect the right others have to their perspective, even if those viewpoints hurt our feelings.

We want to learn to honor another's right to choose, even if that choice disappoints us.

Recognize their right to do what they need to do to take care of themselves, even if that means they're no longer taking care of us.

When someone hurts you, try to not make that mean anything about you.

Assume there are things you don't understand about who they are, what they're enduring, or needing at this point in their lives.

Wish them well and cultivate a forgiving heart, whether or not you think they deserve it.

Because above all...

**We want your heart  
to stay soft, open,  
light and free to love.**

## Skill Number 12:

### Making Empowered Meaning of Disappointments

To become unstoppable in manifesting the intentions you set, please engage the following exercise to help you make empowered meaning of any disappointments, obstacles, setbacks and delays you might experience along the way.

To practice, think of a recent disappointment you experienced, and allow yourself to connect with the emotions associated with what happened.

**1. Become aware of where you feel the emotions of the disappointment in your body.** Notice where you feel the emotions about the disappointment in your body. From a deeper, wider center within you, extend a sense of presence and support to the part of you experiencing those emotions. Welcome the difficult feelings in, naming them one at a time. For example, I can see I'm feeling sad, frightened, angry, hurt, dismayed, resigned, rejected, etc.

**2. Notice the automatic meaning you are making of the disappointment.** Notice the automatic interpretation you are making of the situation. What is the "I am/I am not" story present? Or the automatic old belief about your relationship with others, or about your relationship with Life that is being triggered? For example: I am not wanted; I am alone; No one cares about me; Life doesn't support me; I can never have what I want, etc.

**3. Notice how old this part of you is.** How old is the part of you that is inside of that meaning?

**4. Connect with a deeper, wider center within.** Open your eyes and shake it out. Take a deep breath and consciously connect with a deeper, wider center within you that is outside of the emotions you are feeling and able to see your situation from a larger perspective. Anchor into the part of you that is aware of your worthiness, resilience, strength, power, value and resourcefulness. From this center, extend a sense of care and support to the part of you feeling the emotions associated with your disappointment.

**5. Lovingly tell yourself what's really true.** Kindly but firmly remind yourself of the intention that you've set and help yourself to see why this breakdown might actually be a good thing. Identify the opportunity for growth inherent in the disappointment. For example: This is a great opportunity to speak my



truth, even if others don't want to hear it; This is a wonderful chance to love myself even when someone else is not loving me in the ways I'd hoped for.

See if you can make more empowered meaning of the disappointment, reassuring yourself that you are on the right path. Help yourself to remember that everyone experiences disappointments, setbacks and delays sometimes, and that these experiences are a natural part of a life well lived.

**6. Create a Power Statement about the disappointment.** Create a Power Statement that helps you to make empowered meaning of this disappointment. For example: All that's happening is I'm being given the chance to make a different choice and finally do right by myself; Life is protecting me by revealing who others really are, and what their motivations have been, so I can make wise and informed choices about how much of myself to invest in our relationship.

## **6. EVERYTHING HAPPENS FOR THE REASON YOU GIVE IT**

Sometimes things just happen.

Bad things. Scary things. Things that never in a million years should have happened.

To try to make sense of the senseless, we'll say, "Well, there must be a reason. Everything happens for a reason."

But sometimes that reason is ours to create.

Sometimes, our Herculean task is to make something beautiful out of something so ugly it makes our stomachs hurt. To weave a tapestry of golden goodness out of a bunch of crappy straw strewn messily around the room.

Many of the senseless ugly things that happen have little to do with our own personal lives.

School shootings and car accidents don't happen because someone did something that brought that experience upon themselves.

Many things are simply the consequence of someone else's bad choices and decisions that had nothing to do with those impacted. Except the fact that they were impacted.

That's the downside of us all being so deeply interwoven.

**For every heartbreaking,  
senseless thing that happens,  
we are challenged to find a way  
to make something wise, kind,**

**loving, tender and good of it.**

We're challenged to create a reason *why*.

**All acts of social justice  
in this world came from  
someone who took their outrage  
and transformed it into love.  
Someone took the shards  
of their shattered heart and  
wove it into a blanket of  
protection for a stranger.**

Things have happened to you that you did not deserve.

If you did some small thing that brought it on, then the punishment was way more than the crime.

When this happens to you or someone you love, don't lose your faith.

Remember, we light-workers are challenged to generate greater love in the world from all that happens, both the good and the bad.

### **Skill Number 13: Making the Bad into the Beautiful**

We can't always undo the damage that's been done but we can find a way to make something beautiful of it. The great Austrian psychiatrist, Viktor Frankl

once said, “In some ways suffering ceases to be suffering at the moment it finds a meaning.”

Take out your journal and answer the following questions:

What bad thing is causing me to lose faith in the overall goodness of Life?

Without understanding why this had to happen, what meaning could I give to this experience that will help to create something good from it? *For example, I will start marching for social justice, or I will now devote myself to the evolution of love in the world.*

What actions will I take to make something beautiful of this experience for myself and others?

## **7. DO YOU NEED TO DIVORCE GOD?**

You may have been raised in a family that taught you all about a loving God.

Or you may have found a spiritual path on your own.

Either way, most of the ideas we've inherited about the Divine are intertwined with the ideologies of past generations, and we're heirs to some pretty antiquated and unhealthy notions like original sin, traditional gender roles and the tendency of God to enjoy punishing those in whom He is displeased.

While we've up-leveled our original programming through meditation and spiritual study, much of those default ideas remain, hidden away in the deeper recesses of our psyches.

Automatically reappearing just when we're feeling most vulnerable, tender and afraid.

**Our relationship to the**

**Divine is revealed in the dark,**

**not the light.**

It's easy to believe in a loving, good God when everything's going your way.

Or feel confident in how deeply you're supported by Life when you have hope for the future.

It's where you go when it's *not* working out and everything's falling apart, that tells us most about your relationship with the Divine.

Where you go when you're reeling from an unexpected disappointment.

Or when something so totally unjust happens that you can barely breathe.

Where's God then? Abandoning you? Punishing you? Indifferent to you?

If within your heart your God isn't rock-solid on your side and has your back, then you might consider uncoupling from the punitive, mean God of your ancestors.

Instead...

**Cultivate a deeply stable connection  
with a Loving Presence  
that's strong enough to love you  
no matter what mistakes you make,  
is wise enough to guide and sustain you  
through the rough patches,  
and kind enough to forgive you  
before you even think to ask.**

That's a God worth marrying.

### **Skill Number 14:**

#### **Identity & Release Disempowering Beliefs About God**

Consider your beliefs about God (or Spirit, the Universe, or your Higher Power). Most likely, they are spiritual beliefs about the goodness of God, or about the Oneness of us all. Yet the beliefs we also want to become aware of are the ones that automatically come up in response to a disappointment.

Where do you go in response to a setback, an obstacle or a delay? That belief is not in your brain, but in your belly. It lives as a collapse into an old worldview. A conclusion you came to long, long ago that has to do with how trustworthy or not trustworthy your caregivers were when you were a child.

Many of us need to divorce the God we created when we were too young to know any better and awaken to a sense of empowered partnership with a force and field of Life greater than ourselves.

Take out your journal and answer the following questions:

What was a recent disappointment I experienced?

*Now imagine that experiencing is happening right now. Close your eyes and feel into your body. What feelings are you feeling? What assumptions about your relationship with Life are at the center of those feelings?*

What do I notice is the knee jerk experience I have in response to this experience as it relates to my relationship with Life? *For example, I'm being punished or I have to do twice as much for half the reward.*

What is my belief about Life when in the midst of a disappointment? (Note: Not my cognitive beliefs about God, but my actual lived experience.)

From this center, what ways do I then show up that create evidence for that story? *For example, I shut down and stop trying.*

What might be more true instead? *See if you can now create a power statement that affirms your relationship with the creative energies of Life and that feeds you inspiration and faith. For example, even when it*

*looks like things are not going my way, I am still supported by all of Life to realize my intention.*

Breathe this statement into your body, all the way down to your hips.

Repeat it several times until you feel it in your belly to be so.

Ask yourself, “What actions can I take from here to generate the future I’m committed to creating?”

Then act on your inspiration.



# 7 Skills for Loving Others

## **1. DO YOUR RELATIONSHIPS SUPPORT YOUR DHARMA?**

We all have a calling though not all of us are following it.

When we're not, there's usually a price to pay.

Chronic anxiety, a low-grade fever of depression, or a sense that the life you're living is somehow inauthentic, off-track and missing the mark.

Some of us stay stuck here for months, if not years. Living our lives a little left of center.

The thing that most keeps us trapped in this nebulous no-person's land is not a lack of desire for more.

More likely, it's having a field of relatedness that mirrors back to us a past version of who we've been, rather than supporting the emergence of who we are called to become.

**If you feel a yearning for more,**

**trust it.**

**Our desires are the roadmap**

**to the future that's wanting to emerge.**

Make sure you surround yourself with others who are stretching to realize their potentials as well.

So that the culture between you is one of encouragement, support and enthusiasm for what's possible.

Tell those closest to you what you care most deeply about and of the yearning deep within your heart.

Ask for their support.

Give them permission to hold you accountable for who you will need to become to fulfill upon this possible future.

Allow others to support the realization of your dharma.

It's the only way you'll actually be able to realize it.

**None of us are an island,  
and we need each other  
to reach for the pinnacle  
of our potential.**

There is support all around you. Have the courage to reach for it.

### **Skill Number 15:**

#### **Create Relationships that Support Your Higher Calling**

Are you in the habit of sharing your dreams and calling with those you're closest with? If not, let's have you begin.

List the 5 closest relationships you have. These are the people who know you best and whom you trust the most. One by one, go through your list and ask yourself the following questions:

Does this person know my deepest dreams callings that I hold sacred in my soul?

If not, why not? What has been in the way of me sharing more authentically who I am and what I'm up to?

What could I share or what requests could I make of this person that would allow them to show up to support me to realize my dreams?

What would I need to let go of in order to take this risk?

If this person does know my deepest dreams and desires, what requests have I made of them that has allowed them to support me?

What more could I share with them, or what other requests could I make that would allow this person to get even more on the inside of this with me?

Take a risk today to be even more open and vulnerable by sharing and asking for support.

## **2. HOLDING YOUR POWER WITH A "TOXIC" PERSON**

You can't always just get rid of someone who's playing power trips with you, or trying to manipulate you into doing what they want you to do, even when it's bad for you.

Sometimes the people we have these habitually toxic dynamics with (your "toxic ties") are in our own family, or someone we have to work with in order to earn a good living.

What tends to happen in these relationships is that we find ourselves in double binds over and over again. "If I do this, I'll be betraying myself but if I don't, then I'll be punished."

It feels like we can't win.

So, we may gather our courage and share our feelings, hoping this person will become more reasonable and back off a bit.

Which sometimes works.

Yet often doesn't.

Then we may resign ourselves to giving up our power in order to restore peace between us.

Slicing off a little piece of our soul in the process.

**How can we stop giving our power away  
to those who're manipulative  
and insisting upon our submission?**

To set a boundary, you must be willing to lose something.

The other person's approval.

The status they provide.

Or seeing them as the source of your financial wellbeing in life.

**Whatever the hook,  
you have to hurl it into the ocean.**

Remember, the Universe is vast and It holds endless avenues for love, approval, belonging, and financial wellbeing.

**This person is not your source.  
And it's not your job to do for them  
what they're unwilling to do for themselves.**

Give your loyalty first and foremost to yourself. Have the courage to set boundaries that will bring greater health to the connection.

**Never again give your power over to  
someone with a lesser consciousness than you.**

### **Skill Number 16:**

#### **Waking Up from the F.O.G. (Fear, Obligation & Guilt)**

Take out your journal and answer the following questions.

What relationship(s), if any, do I suspect may qualify as a "toxic tie"? (i.e. What relationship(s) is characterized by fear, obligation or guilt?)

Choose one of these relationships to work on today by completing the following questions. When you can, return to this list and complete the following questions with everyone you've listed.

What fear(s) are dominating me in this relationship?

What obligations do I feel compelled to fulfill?

In what ways am I allowing myself to be manipulated through feelings of guilt and shame?

What does this relationship reflect in my relationship to myself?

What truth could I tell that would increase health and wellness in this relationship?

What boundaries could I set that would increase health and wellness in this relationship?

What can I give up in order to restore my own sense of personal power? (For example, avoiding having that person be angry with me, doing for that person what he won't do for himself, etc.)

What will I need to give up to set this boundary and/or speak this truth?

By when will I have the courage to create greater health in the connection by either setting a boundary and/or speaking my truth?

### **3. ARE OTHERS RESPONSIBLE FOR HOW YOU FEEL?**

I once had a boyfriend who drove me crazy with his unwillingness to be responsible for the impact his behavior had on me.

He'd do things that would drive anyone a bit mad, like show up an hour late, or withhold his affections for weeks at a time, or tell me about his attraction to other women.

When I tried to tell him how badly these things made me feel, he'd respond by saying, "I'm not responsible for your feelings."

Which made me even more crazy.

Because of course he was dead wrong!

Truthfully though, in a way, he was right too.

Here's how I've come to make sense of it.

He was wrong to assume his behavior had nothing to do with how I felt, because it left me alone in that relationship.

And he was wrong to dismiss my feelings, as it undermined our ability to grow emotional safety between us.

**Yet where he was right,  
is that he wasn't actually  
responsible for what I  
made his behavior mean.**

That I wasn't valuable. Or good enough. Or worthy of his affections.



That I'd never be loved the ways I needed to be.

That I couldn't ever have what I wanted.

That was never his to fix.

The fact that I stayed for as long as I did, was because his behavior was mirroring my long-held toxic beliefs.

I was just shadow boxing with myself.

When we interpret what's happening through the lens of old unhealed hurts, we can't work it out with the person in front of us.

When hurt ask yourself, "What am I making this mean?"

**Separate your feelings  
from the meaning  
you're making.**

Only then can you set boundaries.

And, when appropriate, lessen your investment in the relationship.

**Skill Number 17:  
Making More True Meaning of Your Resentments**

Take out your journal and make a list of people you resent, particularly those you've been connected to romantically.

**Who do I resent?** (Make a list.)

Now go through your list and choose the person who feels the "hottest" to you. For that person, journal your responses for each of the following

questions. When you have the time, return to this list and complete the following questions with everyone on your resentment list.

What do I resent this person for?

**What am I making their behavior (actions or words) mean about me?**

How old is the part of me making that meaning?

What might be more true about these assumptions?

Anchored in a deeper truth, how might I respond to this person from an empowered interpretation of what's happening between us?

## **4. GENERATIVE TRUTH TELLING**

Yesterday someone asked me how important it is to be completely honest in a relationship.

I answered their question with a question.

**“What are you committed to  
generating with your truth telling?”**

I believe in telling the truth in our intimate relationships.

Yet I'm also aware that sometimes we tell the truth like a slap in the face.

With mixed motives that are confusing and unclear.

We speak “truth” to hurt, in response to how hurt we feel.

To gain the upper hand by putting the other person down and making them doubt themselves.

To show someone how they're wrong, and prove how right we are.

Conscious relationships don't encourage truth for truth's sake.

I don't really need to hear that my lover thinks my ankles are too thick.

He doesn't need to hear that I think another man is sexier than he is.

**Truth without love  
is a form of violence.**

By all means, tell the truth. Yet be mindful of what you're generating with your truth-telling.

Tell the truth about how awesome your beloved is and how grateful you are for their devotion, support and love.

Share honestly about what you care most about in life, and what you deeply desire to create in this lifetime.

Be authentic in holding each other accountable for keeping your commitments in service to strengthening your relationship.

Share your unwholesome, self-serving motives for why you did what you did, and ask for forgiveness.

Speak up when your loved one is out of integrity with the highest and the best they have within them.

**Truth telling is a tool we  
use to build each other up,  
and to grow each connection  
happier and healthier.**

Give up the right to ever use truth as a weapon.

Protect the love you share.

**Skill Number 18:  
Telling the Truth with Love**

Take out your journal and write on the following questions. Don't censor yourself. Just write whatever comes to mind when you read the question.

What's upsetting me that I've not yet expressed to the person I'm upset with?

What is this costing me and/or our relationship?

How might I share this upset and in a way that could allow our connection to deepen?

What vulnerabilities have I been withholding, and from who?

What is this costing me and/or our relationship?

How might I share my vulnerabilities more authentically and in a way that could allow our connection to deepen?

What complaints have I been making lately about someone who matters to me?

What is this costing me and/or our relationship?

What request could I make of this person instead and in a way that could allow our connection to deepen?

Where have I been failing to ask for what I want and need from another?

What is this costing me and/or our relationship?

How might I share what I want or need more directly, and in a way that could allow our connection to deepen?

### **Bonus Skill: Sharing the Truth with Others**

Do at least one thing today that either (1) reveals your true feelings to someone that you've been hiding or withholding from, (2) transforms a complaint into a request, or (3) has you let go of magical thinking where you are hoping that someone can read your mind, and instead, ask more directly for what you want or need.

## **5. CAN OTHERS DEPEND ON YOU?**

According to the brilliant Sue Johnson, bestselling author of *Hold Me Tight*, the most important question we ask each other is...

**“Are you there for me?”**

Hundreds of studies demonstrate that positive, loving connections are what shelter us all from the storms of life, and keep us feeling balanced, safe, well and whole.

So, when we miss each other by not being present, either physically or emotionally, in a time of great need, the consequences of that mis-attunement can be huge.

We can feel what psychologists call “emotionally deregulated.”

Or all over the map with melancholy, angry moods and overwhelmingly difficult feelings that can drag us around every which way.

**When there’s a sense of  
disconnection between  
ourselves and a loved one,  
what follows is a sense of  
emotional homelessness  
for us both.**

We can become dislocated in the world, with no relational ground upon which to stand.

This is why it's easier for those who leave their long-term relationships, than those who're left. Because the ones who leave have had time to build relational homes elsewhere, so they're not as unhinged as the ones who didn't see it coming.

**The inner confidence that  
we can count on others and  
that they can count on us is  
what makes our lives beautiful.**

It's not that we now have to avoid ever disappointing each other again. That won't happen. Misconnections are a normal part of all relationships.

**It's that we need to  
become better at recognizing  
when we've let someone down,  
and better at repairing  
those mis-attunements.**

When you miss a moment—you failed to understand someone's feelings, or you weren't there when it mattered, don't defend yourself.

Own it.

Apologize.

Empathize and repair.

Restore the sense that you are someone that person can count on.

## Skill Number 19:

### Recreating Emotional Safety After Hurting Someone's Feelings

When you've hurt someone you care about, you're not a bad person. You're just human. Good relationships are not about not making mistakes. Yet they are about knowing how to repair mistakes when they happen.

1. **Listen deeply.** When you've hurt someone, invite them to share with you their experience. Rather than defend against what they are saying, slow down to truly hear what they are telling you. You may not agree with their perspective. You may even think they are projecting onto you old unfinished business from their past that you have nothing to do with! Listen anyway.
2. **Mirror back their experience.** Then mirror back what you are hearing them say, making sure to articulate what they might be feeling. For example, "Wow, it sounds like me forgetting to invite you to that event really hurt your feelings and caused you to feel left out."

Check with your friend to see if you failed to catch something they wanted you to understand about their pain. For example, "Did I get that right? Is there anything else?"

3. **Let your friend know that you feel their pain.** Let your heart be touched by the pain they are in, even if you don't believe you caused it. You don't have to agree with your friend's perspective, but you do need to empathize with it.
4. **Make amends.** Let your friend know you won't do that again or that you'll be more thoughtful moving forward, now that you understand their tenderness around this area. In this way, you restore trust between you and make the field of your friendship whole again.



## **6. ARE YOU ALIGNING WITH OTHERS' STRENGTHS OR WEAKNESSES?**

Compassion is a good thing.

Yet when it's confused with enabling it's not.

If others are married to their limiting beliefs, and dimming down what's possible in their lives, are you to be held hostage to that small perspective of who they are?

Need you begin organizing around these false ideas as well?

Where do we draw the line when it comes to protecting others from feeling threatened? Particularly when it comes to how much we let ourselves shine and be happy about all the wonderful things we've got going on, while they stay committed to misery?

Sometimes we organize around the weakest parts of others by dimming down in their presence. We think we're helping them. Yet, what we're basically doing is saying we don't believe they have the capacity to grow and be happy and prosperous themselves.

**Don't ever organize  
around the most lost,  
wounded, confused and  
undeveloped parts of others.  
  
It only confirms that  
identity for them.**

**Instead, assume people  
are well enough to hear the truth,  
adjust to the boundaries you set  
and rise to the occasion of being  
happy for you when you  
come into good fortune.**

Speak up to people, not down.

They may need you to model what it is to be well.

When someone makes excuses for why their lives don't work and never will, just be kind. That's where they are right now.

But don't *believe* it.

Instead, hold the high watch for them.

Imagine them opening their heart, smiling, laughing, dancing and having fun.

Imagine them succeeding in ways that have them feeling deeply proud of who they are.

Then just be your happy, healthy self. Invite them into your joy.

Someday, they may thank you for it.

## Skill Number 20:

### Relating to Others from the Truth of Who They Are

Begin to listen for and notice the deeper assumptions of others, particularly those you care about.

For example, if you notice that your friend has a habit of getting worked up and highly reactive when an obstacle appears or something difficult shows up, rather than judge them or become reactive in response to their reactivity, see if you can just be curious instead.

What might they be assuming is true about obstacles and difficulties? *For example, they might assume that obstacles, setbacks and delays are evidence that something terrible is happening, or that there is no hope for things working out.*

*Use this as a moment to practice compassion for your friend, and remember that the words cure and curious share the same root. If you can be curious about the underlying assumptions your friend is thinking from rather than reactive or judgmental, you may be able to help them to wake up from that old trance and create a different relationship with whatever it is that's triggering them.*

## **7. YOUR WORDS BUILD WORLDS**

The words we speak will either create love or destroy it.

It happens in an instant.

Before we've even had time to think about what's flying out of our mouths.

Yet think we must.

Because....

**The words we choose  
will either feed a  
relationship with possibilities,  
depth, strength and vitality,  
or they will undermine  
and weaken the connection.  
Language is not passive.**

In a moment of upset, you and your friend find yourselves at a crossroads.

Will your connection deepen or will it become more distant as a result of this tension?

How you navigate that moment will determine the quality of that connection moving forward.

The word "Abracadabra" is used throughout the world to represent the creation of magic.

It is thought to derive from the Aramaic phrase meaning...

**I create what I speak.  
To the best of our ability,  
we want to speak in ways  
that are creating  
the future we desire.**

Speaking generatively, rather than reactively.

I know. Easier said than done.

Yet, try to remember. You *al/ways* have a choice to respond in a more generative way.

Rather than react to what's happening, or even report on what you think is happening, both of which usually have a decidedly negative slant--"You're being such an idiot," or "There you go being over reactive again," instead...take a deep breath, and affirm how much you care about the other person.

Validate their perspective.

Declare the future you're committed to—lasting love that will deepen over time, or something similar.

Not just in spite of this breakdown. But in some ways because of it.

Because it's given you the opportunity to understand one another even more deeply.

Choose your words carefully.

They're the building blocks of all great relationships.

## **Skill Number 21:**

### **Speaking Generatively**

Speaking generatively means that we speak with the end in mind. We use words to move us forward towards a desired future, and not simply to express every little thought that comes into our heads or to blurt out every little emotion.

When you find yourself at a crossroads with someone, press the pause button before speaking. Consider these two questions:

What is the future I'm hoping for in this relationship?

What are the words I can choose to help inspire that future?

Then take a deep breath, and speak in ways that have the potential to keep you both on track towards the future you desire.

## ABOUT KATHERINE



**Katherine Woodward Thomas**, M.A., MFT is the New York Times Bestselling Author of ***Calling in “The One:” 7 Weeks to Attract the Love of Your Life*** and ***Conscious Uncoupling: 5 Steps to Living Happily Even After***, which inspired the conscious breakup of Gwyneth Paltrow and Chris Martin, and launched a movement towards kinder, more honorable breakups and divorce.

Katherine is an award-winning licensed marriage and family therapist, and teacher to hundreds of thousands in her virtual and in-person learning communities, as well as a featured teacher on the internally-renowned online transformational learning giant, Mindvalley. To date, she’s trained and certified hundreds to be *Calling in “The One”* Coaches and *Conscious Uncoupling* Coaches.

She is also a Billboard Charting jazz singer whose album, *Lucky in Love* that was co-written and co-produced with the Brothers Koren went to #1 on the iTunes jazz charts in 2019.