Avatar The Fifth Pillar Of Enlightenment

Compassion

The Forgiveness Option



A mini-course from The Seven Pillars of Enlightenment by Harry Palmer

AVATAR MINI-COURSES

The Avatar Mini-Courses are your opportunity to see and feel how empowering and easy the Avatar exercises really are. Take advantage of this chance to learn more about life and how you live it—experience a few of the Avatar exercises.

The Value Of A Debrief

Debriefing is an alignment technique. It is an oral or written response to three questions: 1) What did you start out to do? 2) What did you actually do? 3) What actually happened?

The value of a debrief is that, in clarifying your intentions and actions and their results, you are not relying on someone else's evaluation of your performance (job, project, task, etc.) and will realize whether or not the exercise is complete, correctly done, or appropriate for what you are attempting to accomplish. If your intention in doing the exercise is to remove an emotional block and what actually happens is that you are still blocked, then the exercise is either incomplete or done incorrectly or inappropriate for what you are trying to accomplish.

Attention Educators:
Star's Edge invites you to use this Avatar® Mini-Course as a teaching module for your students.

Mission Statement

The mission of Avatar in the world is to catalyze the integration of belief systems. When we perceive that the only difference between us is our beliefs and that beliefs can be created or discreated with ease, the right and wrong game will wind down, a co-create game will unfold, and world peace will ensue.

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Compassion

The Forgiveness Option





The Forgiveness Option Checklist

OBJECTIVE:

To explore and understand the consequences and the process of forgiveness.

EXPECTED RESULTS:

Freedom from guilt, sadness, or anger. Improved well-being, a freeing of creative energy.

INSTRUCTIONS:

Complete the checklist below.

1 Read: Forgiveness _____

2 Read: Burdens of Life Chart _____

3 Do Exercise 1: The Burdens of Life Worksheet _____

4 Read: Why We Didn't Stay _____

5 Read: Short List of The Benefits of Being a Victim _____

6 Read: The Choice of Forgiveness _____

7 Read: The Technology of Forgiveness _____

8 Read: Some Benefits of Forgiveness _____

9 Read: The Four-Step Forgiveness Process _____

10 Read: Step 1: End the Incident and Move to Safety _____

11 Do Exercise 2: The Burdens of Life Worksheet _____

12 Read: Step 2: Heal the Suffering Connected with the Wound _____

13 Read: A Master Course Talk _____

14 Do Exercise 3: Releasing Fixed Attention _____

15 Read: Step 3: Mastering Your Feelings About Your Abuser _____

16 Do Exercise 4: Compassion Exercise _____

17 Read: Step 4: Reconstruct Your Own Life _____

18 Do Exercise 5: Goal Setting _____

19 Mini-Course Debrief _____
On a separate piece of paper answer the following:
a. What did you start out to do on this mini-course?
b. What did you actually do?
c. What actually happened?

We invite you to e-mail your debrief to avatar@avatarhq.com or fax it to 407-788-1052 or mail it to Star's Edge International, 237 N Westmonte Dr, Altamonte Springs, FL 32714

Mini-Course

The Forgiveness Option

Instincts don't require you to make decisions. There is no weighing of consequences, no interests to consult, no regrets, and **no mistakes**. You don't have to stop and scratch or figure anything out. There is no karmic consequence. You just react: stimulus and response, fight or flee, eat or be eaten, survive or pass away. You may find this sort of instinctive existence attractive —at least until it comes your turn to be eaten.

In contrast, intelligent creatures have to make decisions and live with the consequence of those decisions. Intelligence means controlling emotions, or discovering the best option, or making choices based on potential consequences.

Making decisions is the essence of personal responsibility; it can feel like freedom or weigh you down with guilt, sadness, or anger. One of the toughest decisions that an intelligent creature ever has to make is the decision to forgive.

Forgiveness

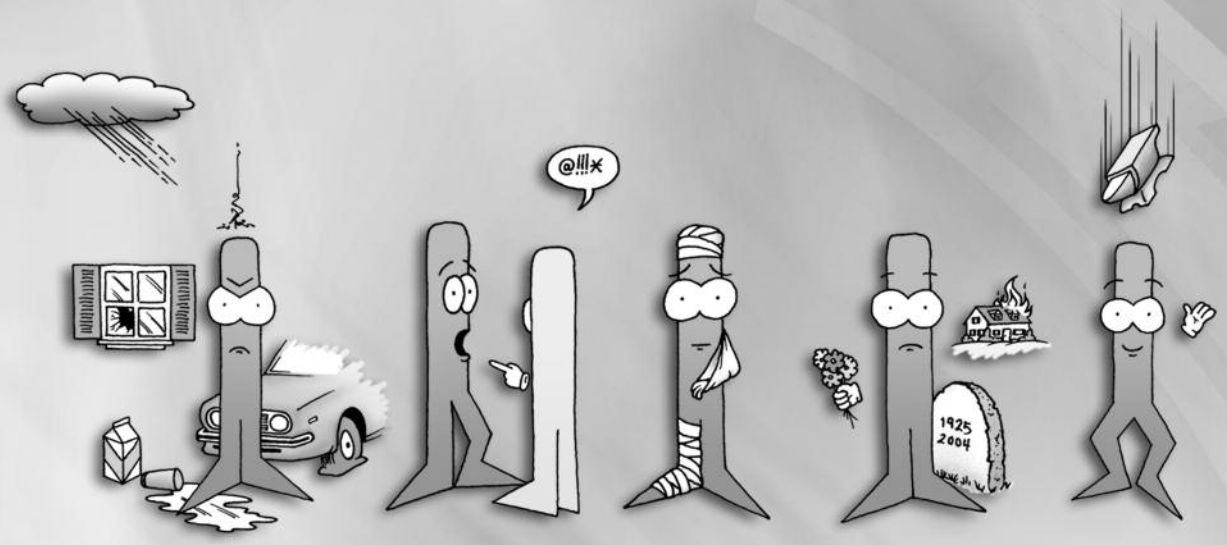
The world didn't start yesterday, and it won't end tomorrow. It moves inexorably forward; not a single day can be lived over. Mostly we drift with the flow of ill-conceived destinies—a mixture of demands from the past, expectations from others, and the weary inertia of our own fatigue. Many of the events that we encounter can neither be changed nor avoided; they have multiple causes that branch backward in time. What appear as free-will choices may only be the culmination of our indoctrination and preceding causes. On rare occasions, life offers us the opportunity to rise above the chains of causes and effects, and for a moment, as an Avatar source being, to determine the direction of future events. Forgiveness is such an opportunity.

There is no question that there is suffering in the world. The more precarious our living conditions become, the greater our vulnerability to suffering becomes. We are always subject to the possibilities of illness, injury, or premature death. These are the natural sufferings of life that we must endure, recover from, and take in stride. They are the price for playing the incarnation game.

An additional price that we must sometimes pay is the risk of being victimized by our fellow players. Sooner or later most of us know what it is like to be the victims of wrongful actions, mistakes, or evil intentions. The question is how do we deal with these events. Do we endure, recover, and take them in stride, just as we must do with natural sufferings, or do we deny, resist, and poison the rest of our life blaming someone for spoiling what might have been?

On rare occasions, life offers us the opportunity to rise above the chains of causes and effects, and for a moment, as an Avatar source being, to determine the direction of future events. Forgiveness is such an opportunity.

Burdens of Life Chart



	INCONVENIENCES	INSULTS	INJURIES	LOSSES	ILL-FATED CIRCUMSTANCES
DESCRIPTION	Minor annoyances or difficulties, delays, unnecessary extra work, lack of easy access to something, confusions	Rude, insensitive, or offensive remarks, verbal attacks on one's identity, disregard or disrespect	Physical, emotional, and/or psychological wounds, including betrayals, rejection, and public humiliations	Death of a loved one, loss of ability or function, loss of property, reputation, or relationship	Natural catastrophe, accidents, famine, war, disease
ESSENTIAL EFFORTS BEHIND BLAME	They are stupid.	They are wrong, conceited bigots and jealous.	They are victimizers, bullies, cheaters, and deceivers.	They are murderers, criminals, and liars.	God has forsaken me.
EXPECTATION THAT IS DISAPPOINTED	I deserve not to be delayed.	I deserve to be respected.	I deserve not to be hurt.	I deserve to have.	I deserve not to suffer.
TRADITIONAL FOLK COMFORTS	Take a deep breath and count to ten.	Sticks and stones will break your bones, but words will never hurt you.	Some good will come of it.	It could be worse.	Everything happens for a purpose.

EXERCISE 1: THE BURDENS OF LIFE WORKSHEET

Objective: To identify the events and people who have had a detrimental effect on your life.

Expected Results: Insights into cause and effect.

Instructions: You are looking for events, and the people who caused them, that still cause you an unpleasant emotional reaction or that stick your attention.

Fill in the following form with a brief description of what happened, who caused it, and your reaction.

Example for Exercise 1

1	2	3	4
What happened? /When?	Who caused it? / Who do you blame? / Why?	What was your reaction? / Resulting condition?	*(Note: You will be instructed how to fill in column 4 in exercise 2.)*
1. I was hit in the head with a baseball bat /When I was young	My brother / My mom and dad / for letting him hurt me whenever he wanted to	I went unconscious and woke up crying. / I still have a lump on my head and occasional headaches	
2.			
3.			

Why We Didn't Stay...

Begin Final Transmission...

Forgiveness is an offensive subject for you Earthlings. It is like a thief that threatens to rob you of your life savings of injustices, losses, unhealed wounds, grudges, old insults, and betrayals. Why do you save these things? Why does anybody save anything? It is because you find them useful, isn't it?



This savings account of all the bad things that have happened or been done to you is used to justify your blame and anger. It also justifies your species' favorite mottos: "It wasn't my fault," "I was wronged," and, "You owe me."

Your victim-misfortune accounts finance all sorts of petty vengeance and pay interest in bouts of self-pity. Any time one of you turns into a criminal, or a terrorist, or some sorrowful psychiatric candidate, it's fairly certain that your victim-misfortune account is overflowing.

Whenever one of you grows bright enough to suggest forgiveness, the rest of you team up against him or her. You know they're out to bankrupt you. They threaten all your "How-I've-Suffered" stories. How cruel you think they are. Are these personal responsibility activists going to let all your abusers off the hook? Set the criminals free, while they blame you, the poor victim, for not forgiving?

Your economy could not survive widespread forgiving. Victims with grudges are big money. There are enormous profits in insurance policies, legal fees, medical fees, psychotherapy fees, alternative medicine fees, drug profits, security services, religious tithes, taxes, defense contractors and more. So anyone's recommendation to accept, forgive, and get on with life is not only threatening your cherished emotional dramas, but also running into vested interests that make billions and billions of dollars protecting your right to be victims.

Your cultural view is predominantly a love for retaliation and revenge. Watch the first 20 minutes of your action adventure movies, and you'll see the hero suffering some terrible form of victimization at the hands of a mutant--human abuser--the more terrible, the better his justification for spending the rest of the PG 13 movie (made for your teenagers with adult language and graphic violence) taking scorching retribution.

This is the model you offer your offspring. If someone hurts you, you get even. For the adults in charge there is a preemptive version: sometimes you have to get even first.

It's true that your courts and laws, as well as your physical resources, restrain most of you from taking the violent actions of your movie heroes. Still, you model your life on the first

20 minutes of the movie, exaggerating the misfortunes of your own life, then attempting to satisfy your desire for retribution in daydreams of mayhem and revenge. Daydreaming is only partially workable. In addition, most of you periodically let off little bursts of anger--slam a door, honk your horn, or give someone the finger.

Even this is not enough for some of you who fly airliners into buildings, blow away innocent people, or go on violent crime sprees.

It seems that the majority of your race believes forgiveness is a sign of weakness--something to console your mentally deficient religious practitioners. If someone seriously recommends forgiveness to you, they're accomplices after the fact or trying to pull something over on you.

You guard your victimhood with determination. If you lose that, what have you got left? Victimizer? How would you justify your righteous anger? It is obvious that righteous anger (is there any other kind?) makes you feel powerful. If you lose your power, someone will try to make you feel guilty. Your enemies are the personal responsibility activists; they blame the victim! To you, their suggestion to forgive is a disempowering attack. As long as they feel threatened by your superior ability to resist feeling,...

...Transmission Lost



Short List of The Benefits of Being a Victim

- No expectation of responsibility
- The right to sympathy and pity
- No personal accountability
- Deserve to be supported
- Don't have to dress up
- The right to blame
- Not at fault
- Owed

The Choice of Forgiveness

We are not implying that there aren't real victims in the world—there are. Trees fall on people, best friends are killed by drunken drivers, bullies and psychos steal and maim, nations make wars, resource exhaustion and pollution create suffering for everyone.

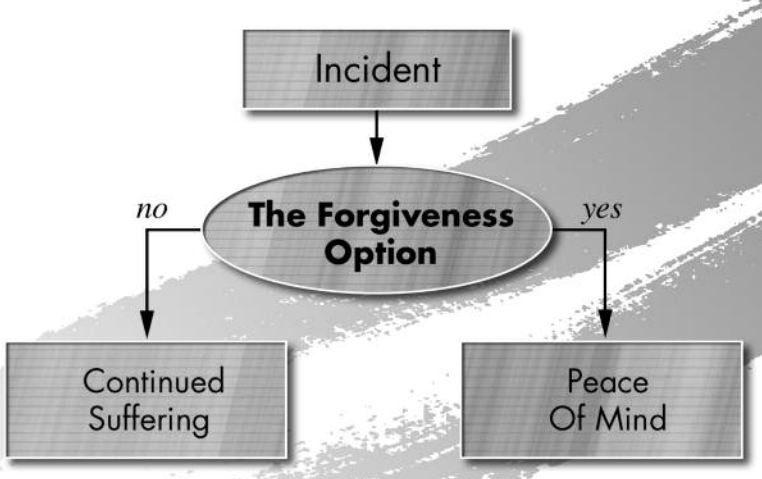
You should do what you can to prevent these, but when you can't prevent them, at least relieve victims' suffering and work to restore a safe environment. Roll up your sleeves on the spot and provide assistance. Do whatever it takes to restore order. That is the first thing you do. Then, once you get people through the crisis, you help them get over it. This may be the hardest part. Psychological closure on the event requires acceptance, forgiveness, and reconstruction; it does not require retaliation.

Our refusal to forgive hurts us, not them. Our refusal to forgive is a second injury that we do to ourselves after the initial wound.

With forgiveness processing, as with any treatment, the first questions that you have to ask are, "Do you want to get better?" and, "Are you willing to endure the discomfort connected with getting better?" Choice is God's gift to people. Acceptance, forgiveness, and moving on are gifts they give themselves.

The real situation is that we talk about the forgiveness process, but there is little practice of it. Forgiveness has become a lost art, a philosophical abstraction. It has degenerated into something that the other person should beg for. And unless he pays up, publicly apologizes, and suffers properly, we're not going to give him or her the satisfaction.

We've turned our forgiveness into a revenge fantasy. We fantasize that the other person needs it, and that we're not going to give it until we've humiliated and degraded him or her. It is delusional to believe that withholding our forgiveness gives us any kind of leverage over an abuser. Our refusal to forgive hurts us, not them. Our refusal to forgive is a second injury that we do to ourselves after the initial wound. Certain Eastern religions believe that if we do not forgive, we carve resentment so deep into our minds that it carries to our next life. Seen in this light, not forgiving is pretty crazy.



The Technology of Forgiveness

Beyond telling you that you should forgive, did anyone ever teach you **how** to forgive?

Recovering the technology of forgiveness begins with the realization that forgiveness is a series of steps that you take to restore your own peace of mind. It is self-healing. Whether or not it affects the other guy is up to him. Announcing to someone that you forgive him or her is a choreographed display of righteousness, and is not what forgiveness technology is about.

Not forgiving has consequences; it leads to victim consciousness and prolonged suffering; it is the root of future wrongdoing. If you were to sit abusers down and explore what is generating their motivation to do harm to others, you would find many grudges, old insults, betrayals, and injustices—all unforgiven—that they feel have given them the right to harm anyone they choose.

Forgiveness breaks the abused-right-to-abuse chain. Breaking this chain is not only a kindness you do for yourself; it is a favor you do for generations to come.

Some Benefits of Forgiveness

- Accelerated healing, both emotionally and physically
- Relief from stiffness and chronic pains
- Increase in physical strength
- Stress reduction
- Immune system booster
- Better digestion and bowel function
- More restful sleep
- Relief from depression and resentment
- Relief from self-sabotage
- More energy, more control (both physically and mentally)
- Longer life
- More positive outlook
- Increased happiness
- Faster reaction time
- Friendlier, more tolerant
- More successful
- Increased awareness and intelligence
- Ability to establish new relationships
- Peace of mind
- **A NEW LIFE!**

If your practice of forgiveness (or pretense of forgiveness) has not produced the above results, then it is time you learned to do it properly.

The Four-Step Forgiveness Process



End the incident and move to safety.

Heal the suffering connected with the wound.

Master your feelings about your abuser.

Reconstruct your own life.

Forgiveness is a process, which means that it can be divided into a series of choices, experiences, and realizations. Obviously, since people have recommended it for several thousand years—even built entire religions around it—it works. If it doesn't work for you, or if you are having difficulty with it, chances are you are doing something wrong.

Many people are emotionally trapped, struggling their lives away, in the middle of a win-lose, right vs. wrong, victim vs. victimizer game. How do they get above this game?

With the exception of trivial stuff like insults and inconveniences, it takes more than deciding to forgive to release the suffering of having been victimized. You must take four steps: 1) end the incident and move to safety, 2) heal the suffering connected with the wound, 3) master your feelings about your abuser, and 4) reconstruct your own life.

1. End the Incident and Move to Safety

If you are going to survive in today's society, it is wise to get trained, or train yourself, in effective defensive tactics. The primary purpose of a defensive tactic is to prevent or reduce exposure. That's it! Keep your head down. Take cover. Reduce the opportunities that a real or potential victimizer has to hurt you. Hang up the phone. Lock the door. Get out of the environment. Don't make yourself vulnerable to people you don't trust. Don't leave your possessions where they are likely to be stolen. Don't take short cuts through unfamiliar terrain. Take responsibility for your security and the security of those in your charge. Reduce your risks. Make yourself inaccessible to known threats. This is not paranoia; it is rational risk management.

If you have an opportunity to make an effective escape and you don't take it, you are responsible, at least partially, for the ensuing consequences.

Even with precautions, you will occasionally find yourself at the unwilling effect of someone's carelessness or bad intentions; you are subject to an event that leaves you emotionally and/or physically wounded. It happens.

Being wounded releases adrenaline and other regulating chemicals into the bloodstream that trigger survival responses. The heart speeds up, external capillaries in the skin swell, and breathing speeds up. Stomach and bowel functions are interrupted. Perceptions and mental impressions intensify. For some, the experience can become an addiction.

The memories that you record during these crisis moments are emotionally charged with fear and pain.

Your first rational consideration (and this may or may not be your instinctive response) is how to escape the danger and get to safety. Don't stick around if you are able, and legally justified, to leave. Escape and evade. Put as much distance and as many barriers between you and the danger as possible. This applies to abusive spouses and double-crossing friends as well as to armed assailants—get out of there. Evacuate the crisis area.

If someone intentionally or carelessly inflicts an emotional or physical wound on you, get away from him or her as a first action. The reason you break contact as a first step is to give yourself time to calm down and recover from shock. You have to catch your breath, stop any bleeding, and lower your emotional voltage in order to think and act deliberately. This step requires self-discipline and should not be confused with a lack of courage. (If the situation calls for it, this is the time you notify the authorities.)

If you have an opportunity to make an effective escape and you don't take it, you are responsible, at least partially, for the ensuing consequences. In any future forgiveness processing you will also need to forgive yourself for bad judgment. Should you ignore this step and decide to stand your ground and go toe to toe in some righteous bravado, victim and abuser no longer apply. The winner will be determined by the rules governing competitive endeavors, or a court of law, or effective firepower. If you voluntarily engage a perpetrator, the responsibility for consequence is your own.

I do my thing, and you do your thing. I am not in this world to live up to your expectations, and you are not in this world to live up to mine. You are you and I am I, and if by chance we find each other, it's beautiful. If not, it can't be helped.
—Fritz Perls, Founder of Gestalt Therapy



Forgiveness is a process.

EXERCISE 2: BURDENS OF LIFE WORKSHEET (COLUMN 4)

Objective: To identify the events and people who have had a detrimental effect on your life, *and what you might have done to prevent the situation.*

Expected Results: Insights into rational risk management.

Instructions: Fill in column 4 with what you might have done to prevent the situation described in column 1.

Example for Exercise 2

1	2	3	4
What happened? / When?	Who caused it? / Who do you blame? / Why?	What was your reaction? / Resulting condition?	What I might have done to prevent the situation.
1. I was hit in the head with a baseball bat / When I was young	My brother / My mom and dad / for letting him hurt me whenever he wanted to	I went uncon-scious and woke up crying. / I still have a lump on my head and occasional headaches	I could have been more alert to the danger of antagonizing my brother.
2.			
3.			

2. Heal the Suffering Connected with the Wound

If a wound has **not** affected you deeply, time will quickly and mercifully heal it. However, if you have been traumatically wounded, the emotional pain may stay with you even after the physical wound has healed. Life continues around you, but part of your attention is stuck, via these high-voltage emotional memories, to a past event and the perpetrator that you consider caused you to suffer. You assume the identity of victim. The hate and bitterness you feel generate fantasies of revenge that rob you of peace of mind and self-respect. These fantasies create obsessive (and energy draining) beliefs that lead to self-sabotage. You may even, as some have done, ruin the rest of your life in a delusional attempt to punish your abuser.

The belief that the emotional pain is undeserved or unfair causes you to resist experiencing it. The computation amounts to, "I shouldn't have to experience **that**." So instead of accepting (*i.e.*, turning a "that" into a "this") and healing, the emotional pain is projected outward in resentment, blame, and anger. This blame and avoidance only delays the forgiveness process and produces further suffering.

You may even generalize the perpetrator of your injury into a class, *e.g.*, men, women, soldiers, authority figures, cult members, etc. This generalizing, caused by an unresolved emotional wounding, is the root of bigotry and, in extreme cases, mental illness.

Trust in the wisdom of the ages—it is better to accept and forgive. Experience your suffering willingly until you move beyond it. What you may find is that the lessons you learn from suffering become an enriching life experience.

The stages of healing are: a) accept and own the suffering, b) experience it willingly, and c) put it behind you.

Paradoxically, to suffer (*verb*) is the cure for suffering (*noun*). To suffer means to willingly feel the discomfort of an injury, a loss, or the emotions of a betrayal. It means to accept, to own, and endure all facets of the experience including resistances, emotions, and pains.

In the case of insults, rejections, and attacks on your reputation, you experience the result the abuser was intending to produce. The attitude is a courageous, "I accept!"

Suffering does not mean that you are going to forget an event; it just means that you will reduce the emotional voltage by massaging the memory of the event until it is equal to any other memory.

As long as you resist suffering an event, its memory can push your life around. When you accept and revisit the event, and own the suffering in all its detail, you recover source. The re-experience can be frightening, painful, and overwhelming with grief. This is OK. Quake in fear, let out a wail, or cry your eyes out. Roll on the floor, curl up under a blanket; it will pass. You are becoming real with your feelings of shame and helplessness. This is heroic stuff. Yes, it hurts, but be courageous. How long and how intensely you want to suffer is largely up to you. You can do it in a marathon session or shorter sessions stretching over several weeks. Somewhere in the depth of your misery, the dark clouds will suddenly clear, and you will recover source over your life. The only thing you can change about the past is how much you let it affect you. *(If you do this in a ReSurfacing or Avatar Course context, as a future preventative, address any transparent beliefs that might cause the crisis or injury to repeat, e.g., "I deserve to suffer.")*

In this step of the forgiveness process, you ignore the injurer and concentrate on the memory of the injury. You accept and fully re-experience the resisted feelings connected with it. You come to grips with *how it was* rather than focusing on *who did it* or *how it should have been*.

Recommended: This and That exercise from *ReSurfacing*, p. 96 (earlier in this book on p. 63)

The only thing you can change about the past is how much you let it affect you.

I imagine one of the reasons people cling to their hates so stubbornly is because they sense once hate is gone, they will be forced to deal with the pain.

—James Baldwin

A Master Course Talk by Harry Palmer

This article is excerpted from the book *Inside Avatar*.

I want to welcome all the new Masters to the Avatar network. I understand that there are Masters from 25 countries here.

The Avatar network is an alliance of individuals contributing to the creation of an enlightened planetary civilization. We are allies in one of the most ambitious undertakings ever attempted. We are peaceably transforming competitive, national societies into an enlightened planetary civilization. It is a challenging task.

When you clean away the mental rubble from all the activities motivated by personal advantage or competitive struggles, you will find this as a collective goal of the human species—the creation of an enlightened planetary civilization. It calls forth the best motivation in all of us.

When you complete your course tomorrow, know that you take with you the support and love of everyone at Star's Edge. We are bonded in a powerful moral alliance.

• • • • •

I say that I don't usually talk at Master Courses—what I really mean to say is that I don't plan to talk at Master Courses. So if it's okay with you, I'll address a question that has been asked at Wizards. How do you handle the losses and sadnesses of life?

There is an old saying, "Make the most of all that comes and the least of all that goes." Have you heard that? If you embrace just this idea, without understanding living deliberately, you are simply engaging in surrender. Surrender is not a bad thing when practiced at the right time, but surrendering all the time is not the way of an Avatar who has also mastered the art of steering his or her own life. Learning when to steer and when to surrender is the artistry of living.

How do you handle the losses and sadnesses of life?

So we reserve this advice, "Make the most of all that comes and the least of all that goes" for those events that you cannot predict or alter and must to some degree surrender your lives to, for example, natural calamities, threats of violence, accidents. You can continue to live deliberately by surrendering deliberately to such events. Surrender is deliberately choosing not to resist. When you resist, events push you around and exhaust your energy. You experience overwhelm and discouragement. When you surrender, the events wash over you without wiping you out.

Life is comings and goings. Last week you came here. Tomorrow you go home. Tomorrow is coming. Today is going.

My mother used to express her frustration by saying, "I don't know whether I'm coming or going." That is the feeling of being in an event that is not running the way you would like it to run. It's often a signal to relax and gather yourself. Prioritize importance.

Is your life coming or going? There are thoughts coming into your mind. There are thoughts going out of your mind. There is air coming into your lungs. There is air going out of your lungs. Breathing is simply the coming and going of air. The breath carries many lessons.

You have to let go of the air before you can have another coming of air.

When I first learned to scuba dive, I wasn't so sure about letting go of that lung full of air. Would there be another lung full there when I needed it? Maybe the regulator wouldn't work. Maybe the air tank was empty. Maybe, maybe, maybe. Have you ever noticed how many maybes are attracted by fear?

You're fifty feet under water and you've got a lung full of air. If you had to, you could probably make it to the surface. It's called blow and go. But if you breathe out, you've got no lung full of air, nothing to blow and go with. Here's the lesson. You have to trust your own evaluation or someone else's evaluation of the workability of your equipment. You have to trust that after the letting go of your air, there will be another coming in of air.

Life is comings and goings.

Let's look at loss. Loss is making the most of what is going. That means placing the most importance on what is going. That is the heart of sadness. If you always make the least of what is coming and the most of what is going, that is suffering.

Look closer at loss. What do you have to lose? What do you really own that you could lose? What belongs to you that you could lose? Your money? Your health? Your life? Are these yours, or are they just temporarily on loan to you to appreciate between the moment of coming and the moment of going. Let's look at this very carefully.



What did you come into the world with? Were you born with a wallet full of money? So any money that came to you was destined to be followed by a going. Anything that is following its natural course, will you think of it as loss when it passes by you? Or will you just appreciate its coming and going? Loss follows gain as surely as night follows day.

Let's look even closer. The body that you are born with, is it really yours? It came from the elements of your mother—it was her carbon and phosphorous and calcium that came to you. It is on loan to you for your appreciation—just as it was on loan to her and her mother and all mothers before—the elements necessary for biological life, flowing in a stream, coming and going.





When you clean away the mental rubble from all the activities motivated by personal advantage or competitive struggles, you will find this as a collective goal of the human species—the creation of an enlightened planetary civilization.

How can you lose something when nothing was yours to begin with? It's all comings and goings. Smiles and tears parade for your appreciation.

Is your attention on what is coming or what is going?

Between coming and going is a scale of temporary ownership. At the top of this scale are appreciation and gratitude. At the other end of the scale are resistance and protection, clinging.

How easy do the comings and goings of life pass through you? The answer is determined by how much the flow of life is obstructed by your self-definition and your beliefs. The more solid you are, the bumpier the ride. Some people fail to appreciate, because their attention is exhausted in the desperation to hold on and protect. They extend the period of their temporary ownership. But since they are more worried than appreciative, what have they extended? Their own suffering.

Are you reluctant to let go of that breath of air? Will the next one be coming? If you are not enjoying the one you have, why would you want another? Hold your breath for awhile. Determine if you are growing happier or more desperate.

How do you make the most of what comes and the least of what goes?

The first step is by being yourself. When you are being yourself, what arrives is exactly the right thing, and what departs is the right thing. When you grieve too long for a loved one, you are probably being the loved one, not yourself. True self, regardless of how it fragments or what shell or mind it occupies, is ever present. It observes the comings and goings from a perspective that is motionless and eternally present.





When you try to be like someone else, you are not respecting your own uniqueness. To be like someone else, you would have to occupy their standpoint in life to experience their comings and goings—in which case you have disregarded the purpose of your own life. You lose the purpose for why you were being you in the first place. When you are being someone else, what comes to you is not what came to them—so you are disappointed before you even begin.

God, source of sources—whatever you want to call it—created everyone and





everything unique. God didn't make any copies. It is amazing. We are each absolutely unique. That God, or whatever, didn't create five billion exact copies says something about the intention behind creation. To explore diversity. Comings and goings.

If you don't completely understand this, come to Wizards.

I want to share a neat piece of technology from Buddhism. Some Buddhists believe that they can clear themselves of definition and restore awareness and appreciation of their own comings and goings by sincerely sending a blessing into the world. The solidity of who and what they were defining themselves as is transformed into a blessing.

Would you like to try? The traditional Buddhist blessing is, "May you be free of pain and sorrow and find peace and enlightenment."

Send this blessing out to the world once for each of your fingers. Each time you utter it, see if you can send it with more sincerity and be more reflective of your own uniqueness. Send it out in whatever language is comfortable for you.

• • • • •

Is there purpose, reason, to this fevered coming and going of life?

The Wizard folds his hands and looks thoughtful. "Perhaps."

"What? Tell me, Wizard."

"I cannot say exactly, for the purposes vary. But in each of your individual moments of coming and going, there is a connection that you make with others, a relationship of trust, a nod to something undefined and shared. That something knows. It is nourished by the flickering of your life. It grows toward the moment of its own birth."

May you travel the paths of life swiftly, honestly, and valiantly. Live boldly.



Each time the bell is rung, all who hear it receive the blessing: "May you be free of pain and sorrow and find peace and enlightenment."

EXERCISE 3: RELEASING FIXED ATTENTION

Repeatedly extending attention into and retracting attention from an area where attention is fixed will eventually recover the fixed attention from that area. Usually the recovery happens abruptly and is accompanied by one or more of the following results:

- a sudden insight into the area
- the appearance of a solution
- the disappearance of the area altogether
- relief from pain
- discharge of an upset or an emotional release
- discharge of a past trauma
- a change in viewpoint (a reordering of importance)

Some areas may be so fixed or emotionally charged that you cannot immediately extend attention to them (unconscious memories) or retract attention from them (danger). These situations are addressed and remedied in the creation exercises of Section II Avatar materials.

Objective: To desensitize sensitive areas by removing fixed attention.

Expected Results: Physical and emotional healing.

Instructions: Pick one of the events from Column 1 of your Burdens of Life Worksheet and alternate between the following:

1) describe what happened from beginning to end in detail, paying particular attention to any resistance, emotions, or pain connected with what happened, then

2) describe something in your surroundings until your attention frees up from what happened in the past. Repeat this process back and forth until one or more of the results occur.

3. Mastering Your Feelings About Your Abuser

Who are you really to the person who injured you? What do you think was going on in their mind? Are they not subject to the same conditions of old age, disease, loss, and death that afflict all creatures? Maybe you still harbor enough resentment toward them to find this a comforting thought, but the sobering reality is that you are in the same situation. You may think you know the cause of your suffering, but at very most, you know only a few links in the chain.

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

Beneath the anger and resentment directed toward your abuser is an unbearable sadness. Their actions have reminded you of all the negative actions in the world, including your own. They have brought suffering to your door. They have opened a crack of awareness on your own guilt. How do you close it off? By blaming them for your feelings. Blaming is a refusal to take responsibility for the fact that all humans

inflict suffering, either consciously or unconsciously. Blaming is an excuse for not examining your own failures (column 4 on your Burdens of Life Worksheet). Blaming grows from guilt. The hardest forgiveness to grant anyone is the forgiveness you secretly need to grant yourself.

Unawareness is the price we pay for pointing our finger in blame. This is the same unawareness that permits the insensitivity of our abusers. If they knew the suffering they were causing and the consequence of evil being drawn to evil, they would reform immediately and beg for forgiveness. But they don't know, and they protect themselves from this knowledge with unawareness—as do we.

What hurts us the most, after our own suffering of pain and loss is done, is the awareness of how deep and wide is the suffering of the world. Blaming is an expression of helplessness; it is an effort to focus on one event so the great sorrow afflicting all living things remains hidden. Not to see this great sorrow is the payoff for playing the victim/victimizer game. Too much awareness is a fear that both we and our victimizers share.

Is it not hypocrisy to honor the Buddha for bringing us the word lesson (an intellectual gift), life is suffering? Or to honor God for teaching us lessons through suffering? And then blame the idiot, perpetrator, abuser, betrayer, or victimizer who brings us the same gift as a world lesson (experiential)? Who is the better teacher? Should we bow to one and punish the other? Is it possible to conceive that all things are working out for the best? Is it possible to conceive that there is really nothing to condemn or forgive? Ever?

Mastering your feeling about your abuser is about compassion. This does not mean that you will not take strategic actions to protect yourself or others in the future, but it does mean that you will not take angry or vengeful actions for events in the past. You give up all desire to harm him, or her, or them, for whatever reason. You interrupt the flow of suffering by accepting that an unwelcome change may have occurred to you, but you will accept and suffer it for the sake of the world and not inflict it on another.

Let vengeance go; let life-source handle it. You are not responsible for another's accountability. You forfeit the right of vengeance in favor of self-forgiveness, in favor of freedom from guilt, and in favor of the joy of reconstructing a satisfying, worthwhile life. It is a good deal!

If we could read the secret history of our enemies, we would find in each person's life sorrow and suffering enough to disarm all hostility.

—Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Notes

Forgiveness is a personal event and does not necessarily include reconciliation or pardon. You may forgive someone without any desire to ever share time with him or her again.

Reconciliation is a transaction with another person. It has its own conditions of atonement and mediation and should not be confused with forgiveness. Pardon is different as well and is governed by legal authorities.

EXERCISE 4: COMPASSION EXERCISE

Honesty with yourself leads to compassion for others.

Objective: To increase the amount of compassion in the world.

Love is an expression of the willingness to create space in which something is allowed to change. —Harry Palmer, Love Precious Humanity

Expected Result: A personal sense of peace.

Instructions: Pick a person from column 2 of your Burdens of Life Worksheet and run the following five steps on them. Repeat with each person named in column 2.

Step 1 With attention on the person, repeat to yourself: "Just like me, this person is seeking some happiness for his/her life."
Step 2 With attention on the person, repeat to yourself: "Just like me, this person is trying to avoid suffering in his/her life."
Step 3 With attention on the person, repeat to yourself: "Just like me, this person has known sadness, loneliness, and despair."
Step 4 With attention on the person, repeat to yourself: "Just like me, this person is seeking to fulfill his/her needs."
Step 5 With attention on the person, repeat to yourself: "Just like me, this person is learning about life."

4. *Reconstruct Your Own Life*

Reconstructing your own life means getting back on track or even setting a new direction.

Imagining something else relieves the misery of imagining what might have been. The best way to remove suffering from your life is to act with the intention to reduce the suffering of other sentient creatures. The final step of forgiveness is realizing that continuing the hurt costs far more than forgiving and moving on to a new day. It is better to focus on the future than the past.

It is better to focus on the future than the past.

One realization that you may want to carry with you is that since you have the choice of whether or not to forgive, you also have the choice of whether or not to take offense. Not choosing to be offended is proactive forgiveness. One of the beauties of forgiveness is that the more people in the past whom you forgive, the fewer people there are in the present who seem offensive. Also releasing old injuries cuts down on the reactive dramas of life and leaves your attention free to concentrate on reconstructing the life you prefer.

The first and last person you need to forgive is yourself. It helps to remember that you always did, for one reason or another, what you felt you had to do at the time. Maybe you need to make amends, but it is up to you. Times change, and so have you.

If someone is trying to run a persistent guilt trip on you, or is playing the you-owe-me game, don't be offended; just send them a copy of this mini-course.

EXERCISE 5: GOAL SETTING

Objective: To determine Right-For-You Goals

Expected Result: A life plan that you can move forward with.

Instructions:

Step 1: Make a list of goals that you are already pursuing or have thought about pursuing.
(Use the list on p. 125 of *ReSurfacing* to stimulate goals.)

For the expanded version of this exercise see ReSurfacing, p. 125.

Step 2: Rate the goals (1 to 10) you are most interested in according to the following seven criteria. The goals with the highest scores are your Right-For-You goals.

1. The goal invites your attention and interest. Thinking about it renews your strength.

2. Pursuit of the goal produces something of value to you.

3. The goal offers benefits to others equal to your own.

4. The goal presents an opportunity for self development (greater competence, understanding, or responsibility).

5. The goal is in alignment with a broader group goal and a still broader humankind goal.

6. The goal allows personal creativity and some degree of self management.

7. The goal presents the opportunity for personal recognition and some receipt of others' admiration.



The Avatar Master Course
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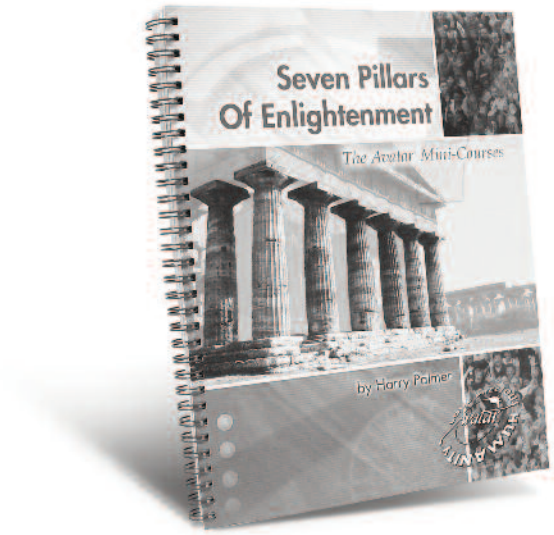
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Who is Harry Palmer?

Writer, teacher, lecturer, scientist, programmer, environmentalist, businessman, spiritual leader, explorer – Harry Palmer is truly a Renaissance man. For more than 30 years, Harry has played a prominent role in the consciousness-evolvement field. His bestseller, *Living Deliberately* (currently available in 19 languages), describing his personal discovery of enlightenment, launched the highly regarded worldwide workshop called *The Avatar Course*. His lofty aim, to contribute to the creation of an enlightened planetary civilization, has been adopted by tens of thousands.

Palmer's underlying purpose is to teach people effective techniques for improving their lives according to their own self-generated blueprint.

Today, few who fair-mindedly study Harry Palmer's work can doubt the profound effect that his writings are having on the collective consciousness of the world.

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