THE ART OF RELEASING
("Letting go of my negative beliefs and emotions")

Learning to let go of my thoughts and emotions is a process of exploring what certain
emotions are doing to me (and others) and for me, and then deciding whether I want to keep
the emotion or let it go. It is important to recognize that my ego does not want to let go of,
much less acknowledge, certain feelings. My ego has an investment in holding on and
maintaining a pretense. My ego wants to be right, and my ego would rather justify keeping my
feelings no matter how destructive they are to my peace of mind. No one is going to talk me
out of my feelings. But when I can fully evaluate what my negative thoughts and emotions are
doing to me and for me, then I (not my ego) can make the decision whether to let go. To fully
evaluate my emotions is to understand the only obstacle to letting go is fear. I am afraid of
what will happen or what will continue to happen. But when I look closely and honestly, what I
am afraid will happen is already happening.

The truth is I want peace of mind and the truth is that holding on to my negative
feelings is the source of my unhappiness. When I seek peace outside of myself, I am destined
to be continually upset. That is because my ego's "game" is simply "keep trying to change
things that you cannot change." My ego wants me to believe that my peace of mind is
"someday", in the future, when things/conditions/people/I change. My ego keeps saying, "I
can't be happy until..." My ego actually believes that holding on to my negative feelings is
what's going to create change "so keep working on the feelings but do not let them go." My
ego does not want me to recognize that my happiness is available to me right here and now
and is a function of letting go of my negative feelings.

There is certainly nothing "wrong" with striving or asking for what I want and to
establish positive conditions in my life, but the simple truth is that my happiness is not
dependent on it. In actual fact, if there is any one obstacle to having the things I truly want, it
is because I am not in touch with my own joy and happiness. My first order of business is
therefore "be happy" and all good things will follow.

To be happy is to be at peace within myself. Being at peace is learning to give up the
effort of trying to be something I am not. I am not an ego and I am not an image. I can never
be something that I am not. And trying to be something I am not translates into the effort of
trying to change others into something they are not. The "war" that seems to be occurring in
my relationship is a function of the war that is going on inside. Trying to "solve" the war by
trying to change the external conditions through attack, blame and control never works because
the source of the conflict is not outside. I will not settle the war or find peace with another
until I find peace within myself.

So, I needn't wait for the conditions of my life to change to be happy! I can get to the
source of my unhappiness and then learn to let it go. That source is my negative thoughts and
emotions.

So lets take a moment to identify certain thoughts and feelings and discover what they
are doing to you and for you as well as your fears of letting go. Go back to "My Emotions and
Thoughts" page where you considered your most troubling area and look at the highlighted
thoughts and emotions, especially the ones that are persistent. Read them to yourself a few
times and then respond to the following questions as honestly and as completely as you can. As
an alternative you can take any present emotion or situation which is troubling you.
# Identifying My Thoughts and Emotions

**Context:** In which area of my life do I seem to be troubled?

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In one or two sentences, what do I seem to be most troubled about?

______________________________________________________________

What is the name of the person involved, if any?

______________________________________________________________

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<th>What am I feeling?</th>
<th>What am I telling myself? What is my inner conversation? What do I believe is so? What do I say, “should” or “should not” be</th>
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1. **How long have I had these feelings and thoughts?** When can I first recall having these feelings?

2. **What behaviors do I act out when I have these feelings?** Do I try to control? Do I try to be “right”? Do I “justify” myself? Do I punish someone? Do I blame? Do I play being a “victim” Do I try to be “safe”? Do I try to “fix” someone? Do I “hide” or “pretend”? Do I avoid? Do I try to “dominate” someone?

3. **What is it doing to me to have these feelings and thoughts?** What is the *impact* on my life? how do these emotions affect me? Do these feelings help me or hurt me? Do these feelings bring me pain and misery or joy and happiness? Do these feelings bring me closer to what I want in life or do they hold me back? What is the *cost* of having these feelings?
4. While we don’t like to think that we are getting some payoff out of maintaining certain emotions, consider that there is something that you “get” or attempt to “get” out of having these feelings. **What is it doing for me to have these feelings?** What am I trying to get by having these emotions? Is it working?

5. **What is a possible difference it could make to my life if these feelings disappeared?** What would the disappearance of these feelings make available to me? Is there any fear in not having these feelings?

6. **Who do I say is responsible for these feelings?** What are my beliefs about who is responsible? And who is really responsible for these feelings. Who is choosing these emotions? Can I take responsibility for these feelings?

7. **How long do I really want to hang on to these feelings?** For the rest of my life? For a few more years? For a few more weeks? A few more days? A few more hours, minutes, seconds? Or, no longer?

8. **Is it possible for me to let go of my negative thoughts and feelings?**

9. **Am I willing to let go?**

10. **When?** (Be with the feelings until they are gone)

11. **Are they gone?** Completely? Am I willing to let go of my negative thoughts and feelings completely? Are they gone now?

12. **What am I feeling right now?** How am I seeing my situation now? How could I see my situation? Can I see my situation in a new light now?

13. Can I imagine never, ever having these feelings again? **Can I let go of any attachment that I must or will have these feelings again?**
14. Can I imagine always having these feelings? Can I let go of any fears of these feelings coming back?

15. If I could replace these feelings with a new possibility that would really make a difference in my life, what would I like to feel? How would I like to be? What is another way that I could see this situation? Or, is there another way I could think about this situation? If I could replace those negative feelings with a new possibility, what would I replace them with?

16. Am I willing to allow these new feelings into my awareness now?