Love & Enlightenment

The Most Important 14 Pages You Will Ever Read In Your Life

How To Spot And Remove The Hidden Barrier That Keeps You From Health, Wealth And Happiness

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Zoom in with me on the moment my life changed radically for the better: I’m walking down a street in San Francisco, with my then-girlfriend, Jen. The year is 1973, I’m 28 years old, and she’s my third girlfriend since I arrived in California in 1971. Although we haven’t come right out and said it, we’re wondering if we should call it quits. We’ve been seeing each other for six months or so, and after the initial rush of sexual attraction subsided, we’ve been in a holding pattern. We’re not getting any closer but we haven’t split up and moved on. I’ve had the pretty much the same complaints about her all along, and she’s had hers about me. She’s too critical, of herself and me and everything else in the world. That’s my big complaint. Hers is that I’m emotionally distant and never talk about anything important, like my feelings.

As we walk along, making small-talk—carefully avoiding talking about what we really ought to be talking about—I’m carrying on a silent conversation in my head about why I always seem to get stuck with critical women who don’t really seem to care about me. I’m mentally muttering something like “Of all the three billion women in the world, why do I always seem to get stuck with the critical ones? Why do they always seem to seek me out?” As if by magic, Jen starts talking about what she doesn’t like about her job. It’s the same things she always doesn’t like about her job. I make mention that she’s complained about all this before. Then she starts telling me all the things that are wrong with me, including one of the big things, which is that I’m always complaining about her complaining. I’ve heard them all before, but she seems just as excited to tell me all the things that are wrong with me as the first few dozen times she told me. I tune her out, and begin wondering about how I managed to create this kind of situation in my life.

The Glimmer
A glimmer of something new flickers in the edge of my awareness: Could I somehow be doing something that attracts critical women to me? Up until this moment I’d always assumed it was their problem, that I was just an innocent bystander in a world of critical women. In other words, I’d always perceived myself as the victim of their critical natures. Now, this tiny flicker of awareness opens up a new doorway of possibility. Maybe it has something to do with me!

The Benign Jolt, The Blissful Aftermath
Suddenly I’m gifted with a rapid-fire series of insights. Where they come from I’ll never know. It’s like a bolt of enlightenment giving me a benign but unforgettable
jolt. I feel immense peace, clarity and zest stream into my body and mind as the realization settles into me.

Here’s the insight that brought me (and still brings me) that remarkable feeling of serenity and aliveness:

• The results I’m creating tell me what my true intentions are. The results are that for a long time I’ve had a series of relationships with women about whom I’ve complained of their criticalness.

• I have critical women in my life because I have an intention to have a critical woman in my life. That intention is obviously stronger than any intention I have to be in relationship with a loving, supportive woman.

• The intention has been entirely unconscious. (In fact, it’s been so hidden from me that if someone an hour before had asked, “Do you intend to have a critical woman in your life?” I would have argued to the contrary. I would have proclaimed self-righteously, “That’s utterly ridiculous. My intention is to have a loving, supportive woman in my life. I just keep getting stuck with women who are critical.”)

• I realize the sober truth: I’m getting exactly what I intend to get, and just because the intention is unconscious doesn’t mean it’s not my intention. I quickly extend this profoundly unsettling insight to two other things I complain about, my weight and my money supply.

• I’m overweight. That’s the result I’m producing; therefore I obviously have an unconscious intention to be fat. My intention to be fat is more powerful than my intention I have to be healthy.

• I’m poor. That’s the result I’m creating; therefore I obviously have an unconscious intention to be poor.

I can hear a little voice in my mind shrieking, “No, no, please don’t let that be true!” It’s so much easier to blame society for my poverty. It’s so much easier to portray myself as the victim of the fat-genes I inherited from my father. If I went to a meeting of fat people, I’d have a crowd around me if I started a conversation about inheriting fat-genes from my ancestors. If I went to a meeting of poor people, I’d get an enthusiastic response if I talked about how society and “the system” make us poor. However, I wonder about the reception I’d get if I said, “Hey, everybody, gather around! I want to lead a discussion on how we all have an intention to be fat!” How would my poor friends respond if I said, “I just discovered I have an intention to be poor! So do YOU!”
Would I get out alive?

Maybe, maybe not, but there was no arguing with the feeling of aliveness I was getting in my body. There was no arguing with the delicious feeling of serenity that was settling over my mind.

Suddenly everything seemed simple and easy to understand. It eliminated the need for any kind of complicated therapy process. It made life utterly simple. Whenever any problem arose, all I had to do was claim the unconscious intention to create that problem. All I had to do was find out where this old intention was rooted and replace it with a new conscious intention.

No matter how self-righteously I (or you or anyone else) might proclaim to the contrary, the results I’m creating are the only way to discover my true intentions. If you say your intention is to be sober but had three DUI’s last month, your intention is to drink. If you say your intention is to love and honor your mate but three of your last mates say they left you because you abused them, your true intention is not to honor and love them.

A Second Flash Of Illumination
Then another lightning-bolt of insight illuminated my mind. It answered a key question: How can I tell when an unconscious intention is running me?

The quickest way to find my unconscious intentions is to notice what I complain about repetitively.

I complained to many girlfriends about their constant criticism. I thought their criticalness was the problem. Only later did I discover that I had an unconscious intention to hook up with critical women. I complained about my weight—and my powerlessness to do anything about it—since I was a kid, only to discover that I had an unconscious intention to be fat.

I eventually developed an algorithm that I call The Rule Of Three: Anything about myself that I complain about three or more times is actually driven by an unconscious intention. The Rule Of Three brought me an incredible number of life-changing awarenesses. Sometimes those awarenesses were downright weird, but they were always useful. For example, I complained more than three times (probably more like 300 times!) about people lighting up cigarettes near me. One incident stands out in my memory, from the days before smoking was banned in airports. I was waiting for a plane in the Colorado Springs airport, and as was my custom, I had placed myself in the Non-Smoking area. In fact, I was standing under the sign that said Non-Smoking Area. A tall, thin woman walked over, stood right beside me and started rummaging through her purse. She pulled out a pack of cigarettes, shook one out and lit it up. Thinking perhaps she hadn’t seen the sign, I
said politely, “Excuse me, you can’t smoke here.” I pointed to the sign above our heads. She glared furiously at me and said “I’ll smoke anywhere I g****m please.” At this point I lost any urge to be polite. “No you can’t,” I said, “And if you don’t put it out I’ll go get a cop to explain it to you.” Here’s where it took a turn toward the weird. “You idiot,” she hissed. “My husband just died. Nobody’s going to tell me I can’t smoke.” This response was so bizarre and unexpected that all I could do was stand there, slack-jawed, in kind of a trance. I slunk away and stood somewhere else.

Later, I told this story to my wife, who pointed out something that changed my life. She said, “That’s your karma, isn’t it?” I didn’t understand what she meant. She said, “Well, think about why you might attract a situation like that.” I still didn’t get it. She continued, “Didn’t you spend your entire early existence with a woman who smoked incessantly because she was angry that her husband had just died?”

This observation stunned me. Could the power of unconscious intention be that strong? To understand why I was so stunned, I should explain that my father died a few weeks after conceiving me. My mother was naturally devastated by his death, and she also did not know yet that she was pregnant with me. According to the family stories, she lived mostly on coffee and cigarettes for several months after my father’s death, dropping from her normal weight of 120 pounds to under 90 pounds. Then, she finally realized she was pregnant. In other words, I spent my first few months of existence around a heavy smoker who was starving herself to death out of grief and anger about her husband’s death.

Could this early experience have set in motion such a powerful unconscious intention that years later it could still be causing me to draw a grief-stricken, angry woman into my vicinity to light up a cigarette? I’ll never know whether it was karma or coincidence, but it really doesn’t matter. I claimed the unconscious intention and released it. Since then I’ve had very few incidences when I’ve been forced to breathe anybody’s cigarette smoke.

Exactly the same conception-and-birth scenario accounted for my intention to attract critical women into my life. According to the family story, my mother refused to leave the house during her pregnancy because she was so ashamed. I have a sympathy card from one of her church-friends, begging her to leave the house and come back to church so her friends could help her. It’s highly likely that she beamed a steady stream of critical thoughts toward me and herself from the first day she knew about me. No wonder I would have an unconscious intention to be with a critical woman. Based on my early experience of life, that’s obviously the way I thought life had to be. It set in motion several decades of being surrounded by critical women. That’s the power of unconscious intention.
Now I realize it doesn’t have to be that way. I set a new intention: To create a loving relationship that’s completely loving and supportive, and completely free of criticism.

As I write this, it’s been 27 years of marriage to a magnificent, loving, supportive woman whom, believe it or not, I have never seen in a bad mood. It’s been more than a decade since anybody in our house has even said any kind of critical word to the other. That’s the power of conscious intention.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:**
- There is no blame, criticism, fault or shortcoming implied in this insight. Don’t blame yourself for having unconscious intentions. It’s not a fault, a flaw or anything negative. It just is, and the quicker we acknowledge it the quicker we get our peace of mind and zest for living back.

Instead of blaming yourself, make an innocent self-inquiry by wondering “How would I come to have an intention like that?”

Another way to ask that question is: “Given my background, where might I have picked up an unconscious intention like that?”

I have had literally thousands of conversations since then which contain some version of the following interchange.

  Client: Are you saying that I have an unconscious intention to (get sick a lot, have more than the normal number of accidents, fail repeatedly, or whatever the issue is)?
  Me: Yes. Given your background, where might you have picked up an intention like that?

Inevitably, the person makes the connection and sees exactly where the unconscious intention became glued into place. The first step in ungluing it is simply to acknowledge and claim it instead of arguing about it.

Then, your next move is to ask yourself:
What would I like instead?

Right after you claim an unconscious intention is the perfect time to put a new, conscious one into place. Read the case study in the next chapter to find out exactly how to do this.