

Jim Goulding



8-Steps to Therapy



## Cover

“Nice cover. What the \*&! does it mean?”



Good question. Thanks for asking.

Each item on the cover represents something.

The Sun: "The very moment we attempt the flattening out of the Sun's symbolic meanings for our own purposes - by declaring with surety that the Sun is this one single thing - it suddenly confounds us by becoming yet another unknown third thing."

-Carl Jung

## Jung the Triangle and Saturn

"The astrological elements are symbols for four different ways of relating to and understanding the world the individual lives in. Individuals mainly influenced by the element of fire relate to people and things in terms of the opportunities these might mean for themselves and their lives. Signs that belong to the same element lie in the aspect  *trine*, to one another. This creates a basis for harmony, approachability, and understanding. According to the trend in modern astrology toward Jungian psychoanalysis, one or more of these perceptionary elements are dominant in an individual, while the others are linked to the subconscious complex called the shadow, a person of the same sex characterized by despicable and contemptuous qualities. The *shadow* is often symbolized by Saturn, , in the birth chart.

## Uranus

"41a:36 • (The most common sign for the planet *Uranus*). This graph for Uranus is based on the letter H from the name of Sir William Herschel, who discovered this planet in 1781. The discovery of ♅ occurred at approximately the same time as the beginnings of one of the greatest upheavals in the present cycle of human civilization on our planet, the French Revolution. Before, the planetary system's outer limit, which had also marked the outer limit of the human life and the material existence, had been for many thousands of years ♄, *Saturn, Kronos*.

"Before the French Revolution it was taken for granted that there existed a higher class of human beings, the aristocracy, appointed by God to rule over the lower classes. The discovery of this planet came as a shock, and not only for astronomers and astrologers (the latter did not recover until the twentieth century in the West). Even today, astrologers in India refuse to acknowledge the existence of the three outer planets.

"As a result Uranus has come to symbolize *total and sudden change or upheaval, unpredictability, modern science, anarchy* and the *destruction of the established order*. The planet Uranus is encircled by half a dozen moons. It distinguishes itself from the other planets in our system by the fact that its rotational axis lies almost parallel with the sun's equatorial plane. It is the third largest planet after ♃ and ♄. Its volume would contain 50 earths, and it takes 84 years to orbit the sun.

"Physiologically ♅ rules the *electric impulses in the nervous system*. In mundane astrology Uranus rules over *astrologers, occultists, inventors*, and those who

are connected to *aviation, spacecraft, electronics*, and modern *scientific breakthroughs*. Such things as *computers, electronics, and space technology* are all ruled by this planet.

"The keywords for ♃ are:

1. *intuition, inspiration, "the sixth sense";*
2. *the breaking of old ideologies, ideas, and structures;*
3. *bohemians, hippies, dropouts, and anarchists;*
4. *revolution and humanism; and*
5. *energy that is directed toward attaining higher consciousness.*

The planet Uranus is also drawn ♃, and ♃.

The sign ♃ is sometimes used as a military sign to denote a *howitzer*, a heavy long-range gun or cannon."

### Saturn

"The planet Saturn was known already some 6,000 years ago and has, until the French Revolution at the end of the eighteenth century, represented the outermost boundary of the planetary system, and a measure when calculating long periods of time. The planet Saturn uses approximately 29 earth years to orbit the sun. Therefore a human lifespan can be said to be two, or at the very most three of this planet's orbits in the zodiac. Partly for this reason Saturn is associated with *Death* and the *Reaper*, the skeleton in black hood with a scythe who reaps men and women when their time is up.

"Astrologically Saturn has become a symbol for *implacable powers, restrictions impossible to overcome, relentless natural forces* and the *hard, fixed structures of the world of matter*.

"Saturn only brings sorrow and deprivation in those areas of a person's life that are based on illusions or unrealistic expectations. Saturn represents the unrelenting aspect of reality that forces the individual to abandon all ideas that are not based on a realistic perception of the material conditions of life.

"A child is protected by his or her parents from physical and psychological harm. But for self-fulfillment the child must at some time free himself from this protective shield, its parents. Astrologers suggest that the inner being, the self, in a similar way is protected by the personality, the psychological structure enveloping the self, spirit, inner being, or true individual. Through the imaginations, conceptions, and games of the personality, the inner being is protected until that protection is no longer needed and becomes a hindrance for self-fulfillment. Once this stage of development has been reached the outer shell must be broken. The position of Saturn in an individual's natal chart or horoscope reveals the way in which the protective shell will break, the price that has to be paid for the freedom necessary for further development, and the pain that has to be endured during the process of really becoming a grown-up, a kind of rebirth. If the implications of Saturn are ignored, the planet becomes precisely the symbol of deprivations, inhibitions, and hardship just mentioned.

"What Robert Hand (see the bibliography) has to say in this respect is most enlightening: 'Every time we do what is untrue to our nature, acting not from a real necessity but rather to fulfill what others may expect of us, we commit a crime against ourselves that is peculiarly Saturnine. We move a bit toward death, more of our potential becomes actual, and what is actual does not express what we are.'"

\* \* \*

“Thanks for the information and the explanation. Lots ‘n lots of information and lots ‘n lots of explanation and I still do not know what it means!”

Sorry.

The symbols on the cover represent what an individual, when in therapy must overcome.

For example, if we look at Saturn.

“Saturn has become a symbol for *implacable powers, restrictions impossible to overcome, relentless natural forces* and the *hard, fixed structures of the world of matter.*”

You can pertain this to the psychological state of someone entering therapy. They will need to overcome things once thought *impossible* to overcome. They will have to overcome that *implacable* part of the self. That part that is so rigid and ruthless it just can't let go of the old behaviors. They used those behaviors to survive, at one time. However they must let go of them now and travel to Uranus. That is the goal. Getting to Uranus.

They must understand that to reach the planet Uranus, the outer shell of their emotions, which they once used as a defense system, must be broken.

To get to the planet Uranus (Inner-peace), you will use all the keywords that represent this planet. Destruction of *the established order* (knocking down the walls of your defense mechanisms). Using your *intuition* and finding your *inspiration*. The breaking of *old ideologies, ideas, and structures* (the way you used to do things). *Revolutionizing* your emotions.

The triangle represents harmony, approachability, and understanding. In therapy you must apply all three and direct that application inward. In doing so, you will stop beating yourself up mentally and abusing yourself physically.

I used the Sun on the cover for several reasons. I worked with a Jungian therapist for a long time. Jung had a profound effect on me. His definition of the Sun, in my opinion, is a message. That message says, we can heal our emotional problems and come out the other side not needing to understand everything.

The two people, in the middle of the triangle, reaching for the star represent community. Only with others help can we truly heal. When I went through therapy, community played a huge role in my healing process.

The infinity sign means, 'never give up'.

"Now...was that so hard? Was all that information and explanation needed at the

beginning? Just give it to me like it is...simple-like.”

Well...now that you mention it, this book is simple. I like complex things. However, when it comes to self-help and understanding addictions I don't want to read a thesis. I promise that this book is not a thesis. I do have to sneak in something about Carl Jung though. But that's it, I swear.

### **Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961)**

Swiss psychiatrist, one of the founding fathers of modern depth psychology. Jung's most famous concept, the collective unconscious, has had a deep influence not only on psychology but also on philosophy and the arts. Jung's break with Sigmund Freud is one of the famous stories in the early history of psychoanalytic thought. More than Freud, Jung has inspired the New Age movement with his interest in occultism, Eastern religions, the *I Ching*, and mythology.

“That wasn't that bad. I mean—Jung is cool.”

Allrighty then, let's get to the book.

## Introduction

This book is fiction. However, it is based on some of the therapeutically experiences I went through from February, 1989 through September, 2002.

There are two main characters in this book, Jim and Michael.

Jim is loosely based on the chaotic emotional state I was in when I entered therapy in February 1989. The character named Michael is a compilation of all the different therapists I saw during my recovery.

When I began to write this book I wanted to convey several things. First, that once you enter therapy you must work at it. Many people choose to go to therapy thinking that that act alone will *cure* them. That is anything but the case. You must consistently take leaps of faith while in the therapeutic process.

Second, I wanted to introduce a method of steps. By using steps, any process becomes simpler and easier to manage. Last, I wanted to keep the book short. Many self-help books are too complicated these days. They stretch on and on hammering home

their points in paragraph after paragraph. Enough!  
I only need to be told once.

There's a rule of writing that states, 'Tell them your point, then tell it again [and] wrap it up by telling it to them again.' What is up with that? Please stop insulting my intelligence!

With that said, in this book, you'll read the message once. That's the beauty of it. One statement, one lesson, one thought and one thing to ponder. This will make it easier to go back and re-read certain parts that *hit home* for you. Also, it makes it easier for you to put the tools, I used to heal myself, into action. The bottom line is simplicity. (The most complicated thing in this book is probably the cover!)

As you read this book you may note an author that deeply influenced this book. James Redfield, author of the phenomenal book *The Celestine Prophecy*. If you haven't had the chance to read it, please make it the next one on your list. You will not be disappointed.

There are other books that have deeply influenced my life. I write about them in this book and recommend them as a tool in healing.

*Loving What Is*, by Byron Katie. Katie's book is, without a doubt, one of the best self-help books I've read. I cannot say enough about it. Also, *The*

*Power of the Subconscious Mind*, by Joseph  
Murphy, Ph.D., D.D.

I'd like to thank you, the reader, for taking the  
time to read my book. Please feel free to drop me  
an email any time. No question is too silly.

Email me at; [jamesg4us@yahoo.com](mailto:jamesg4us@yahoo.com)

Take care,  
Jim Goulding (Friday, May 02, 2003)  
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## Acknowledgements

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<http://www.rachelsimon.com>

Rachel has a great web site. If you have a question about punctuation or grammar, Rachel's site is the place to go. Not to mention that she's a *great* author!

### Anthony Peña, J.D.

*The Archetypes and the Collective*

*Unconscious* C.G. Jung

<http://astrology.about.com/library/weekly/aa062201a.htm>

<http://astrology.about.com/mbiopage.htm>

### SYMBOLS.com

"...is the online version of Carl G Liungman's book *Thought Signs* (IOS Press, ISBN 90 5199 197 5). The subtitle of the book is "The semiotics of Symbols---Western Non-pictorial Ideograms", which fairly describes its contents. An offline version, *SYMBOLS '98 Encyclopedia*, is also available at this web site. SYMBOLS.com is published by HME Media, Stockholm, Sweden."

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Diana, my wife. For being there for the last twenty-one-year's through thick and thin. How lucky I was to have found my soul mate at such an early age.

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# " 8-Steps to Therapy"

## Chapter 1

### The Bottom

In front of me sat a mirror full of cocaine, a glass of gin and a handgun. I had been up since Friday morning. I'd partied all night long. Diana was gone for the weekend. My friends had left and I was alone. I started to slide into a deep depression. The alcohol could no longer numb me. There was never enough cocaine. I had achieved everything I set out to do since entering the *Chicago Board of Trade* in September of 1989. I had the admiration of my family, friends and co-workers. I was worth \$2,000,000. I was on my way to making another \$1,000,000 in 1998 alone. I had traveled the world from Austria to Tahiti. I had raced my Ferrari, bought Rolexes, traveled thousands of miles in limousines, thrown wild parties and built the house of my dreams. I was 26-years-old. I had no desire to make it to my 27<sup>th</sup> birthday. So I picked up the gun and jammed it in my mouth.

\* \* \*

Money, trips, cars and possessions were not enough. None of this could fulfill the black hole that resided in my soul. I had lived by the tenet, "If I make money I will be loved" for ten years, but I was coming to the realization that to truly be loved I had to first look to myself. Despite my material success, my life was actually in shambles. My body was in an all-out revolt. I was grossly over weight and drinking daily. Hangovers were becoming unbearable. I was snorting Mount Everest piles of cocaine on the weekends and taking amphetamines during the day to give me the energy to trade. I feared getting arrested every time I left my cocaine dealer's house. I was having panic attacks. Though we danced around the issues, I knew that my marriage was in trouble and probably over.

The trading pit had become my hellhole. I loathed going into the pit because of the bitching and whining of the local traders who traded their own money. I was overwhelmed by rage. I feared attacking someone physically - jumping on a local and beating him to within an inch of his life for all the abuse I'd received in the trading pit since 1994.

Nevertheless, the thought of confronting my problems was unbearable. My parents raised me to ignore sadness and to pull myself up by the bootstraps, so I was stuck in a viscous cycle. Yet at the same time something inside of me was waking up and sounding alarm bells. At first,

those alarm bells were just conflicting and confusing thoughts and feelings, driving me to the brink of insanity. I couldn't see a way out, other than death.

\* \* \*

Saturday, October 17, 1998 7 a.m.

As I looked at the mirror of cocaine and the gin and tonic sitting in front of me, I knew I had two choices. My eyes scanned the loaded .38 sitting on the counter. That was one choice. The other was to reach out for help and give up control, but that thought alone made me want to pick up the gun and pull the trigger. My mind raced between competing voices.

"Give up control? Ask for help? No way!" screamed one.

"Death is not the answer!" waged another.

"But I'm so sad." cried yet another.

"How can you be sad? Look what you have! You're so lucky!"

"Fuck it!" raged the killer.

"There must be another way," grieved another.

I snorted a line and took a drink hoping to stop the mental chaos. It didn't work.

I picked up the gun and pointed it at my temple, then put it in my mouth. Tears streamed down my cheeks. I looked out the window through my blurred vision to see the trees swaying in the October winds. I slammed my eyes shut and slid my finger to the trigger.

"Pull the trigger, and it will all be over!"

"PULL IT!! PULL IT!!!"

I gasped and blew the barrel of the gun out of my mouth in one big gust. I let out a cry from deep inside my soul and more tears came. The .38 dangled at the end of a limp arm.

After a moment I laid the gun down, picked up the phone and dialed my friend, Michael Brennan to ask for help. Even though I hadn't seen him in quite a long time, I dialed.

This call was the start – the first move to relinquish control – the first step to admitting I had a problem. This single step would lead me on the most incredible journey of my life. It would lead me into a world I had no idea even existed.

## Chapter 2

### Welcome

**A**ttempting suicide was my call for help. It's the desperate act of someone who doesn't know any other way to reach out. Death is *the* common bond between all human beings. It's enough to get someone's attention. I didn't really *want* to die.

I called the only person who I knew cared for me for who I was, not *what* I was. That person was Michael Brennan. He is the only person other than my blood-family who has truly been there from the beginning. I have known him since I was the age of two. He could have cared less if I was a millionaire and a member of the Chicago Board of Trade (CBOT). He could see through my bullshit in a second. I was Jim Goulding to him, period.

"I'm in bad shape Michael. Can you come out to my house?" I asked Michael, that Saturday morning.

"I'll be right there," he replied, without hesitation.

And show up, he did.

It was a beautiful Saturday morning in October. Chicago usually had cold, rainy, Scotland-type-Octobers. Not today. The breeze was gentle and

the sky sunny. Guilty sunny. The type of sun that ate at my gut and said, "You've been partying all night long. You'll miss out on me today, because you'll be sleeping it off. You should be ashamed of yourself!"

If there's one thing I can remember from those past days, it was the shame. This single emotion was my guide and parent for much of my life. It kept me in line, reigned me in, and told me when to talk and when to *shut-up*. It sat on mountains of anger, pushing the anger further and further down so it was indistinguishable from other emotions. Shame re-arranged my emotions like a brain surgeon. An evil brain surgeon. Working meticulously in the background day after day, silently re-wiring my internal circuits.

Michael came in. I was immediately taken back by the difference in the way he looked from the last time I saw him. I quickly put it out of my mind as the reality of my situation came crashing back into my body. I needn't say much. He could read me. The items on the counter spoke volumes – the glass, the gin, the cocaine spread on a mirror – and a gun.

He took the gun. I don't know what he did with it, but he took it. He put the gin away. He dumped the 'coke' down the drain. Michael had changed the atmosphere of my house by removing the three killers.

Then he let me talk and he listened. I yammered on and on about my feelings. Feelings that had been stuffed down deep inside my soul since I was a little boy. Feelings about my fears, anger, and mistrust of people. Michael listened.

I talked about the realization that I didn't trust anyone. I went on about feeling like I'd been constantly screwed over by people in general, though I couldn't pinpoint whom, or when, or even how. It was just a flood of feelings. I told of my misery at the CBOT and about the effort it took to stand in the trading pit day after day, listening to the verbal abuse. I talked about the stress of having employees at such a young age.

Michael listened and then it was his turn to talk.

"Jim, I want to tell you about something I've been doing the past year and a half. I know we haven't seen each other much lately and I'm sure I look physically different to you."

"You bet I noticed," I said. Wiping away some tears. "What did you do to yourself? You look like you lost 50-pounds."

"I didn't want to shove any of this down your throat. I know we've known each other for a long time, but I've been on a very personal journey and it's not something I share with many people, because they just seem disinterested. However I can see you're hurting bad. Bad enough to want to

die. So maybe I should share what I've been doing this past year-and-a-half," he finished.

"That may be a good idea Michael," I said, as I got up and invited him into my living room to sit on the couch.

He obliged and followed me in.

"The journey I chose to take is not for the faint of heart. It takes courage and the desire to live a different life than the one you are living now," Michael said.

"Anything is better than what I'm living now, Mike," I interjected.

"You say that now, Jim, because you're hurting. I'm not belittling you; in fact it's good that you are hurting. When someone gets to the amount of pain you are in now, they can either die or change.

"What I'm trying to relate is that my journey is painful also. However there is an end to my journey as opposed to your end. The end you were contemplating when I arrived," Mike finished.

My shame started to kick in. I lowered my head and tears found their way to my eyes. I quickly cut them off and told Mike that I was ready.

"Let's start with something gentle, Jim," he began. "What just happened with you a second ago?"

"What are you talking about?" I asked him, defensively.

"Just a second ago you bowed your head and seemed to contemplate something and you appeared to be very sad?" he asked and continued. "Then you seemed to swallow the sadness?"

"Well I don't know what I did!" I shot back.

"Jim, this isn't an accusation," Mike said speaking softly. "It's not a judgment about you. It's really just a question. Let's see if you can think about what went on inside yourself without judging yourself."

"Oh, ok. I think I can do that," I started. "If I think about it, I felt very sad, even overwhelmed. Everything was running around my brain and I just felt sad."

"Great! Excellent!" Mike exclaimed.

"Now I'm really confused?" I said. "Your happy I was sad?"

"No. I'm happy because of what you did; explaining your feelings is the first step. It's the beginning. Welcome," he smiled.

## Chapter 3

### Chaos

"So let me see if I have this right?" I asked Mike.  
"You're happy because I was able to describe my feelings to you?."

"That's exactly right, Jim."

"Ok. But I really don't understand?"

"Describing what is happening inside your body is the first step, Jim. It's the first key to taking control of your life and stop being controlled by outside forces."

"Tell me more!" I said, excitedly.

"That's enough for now. Sit with what we just went through. We don't want to move too fast, Jim. I'm more concerned with how you are going to get through the rest of the day without blowing your brains out."

"Oh, I'll be fine," I said, matter-of-factly.

"Jim, maybe I *should* add something else. I would like to start a new language with you. I know I said I didn't want to do more today, but I think we may need to."

"Ok."

"The answer you just gave me, when you said you'd be fine?"

"Yes."

"Let's categorize that as the, 'old way'. The way you used to do things. Because that's what I call a stock answer. It's *ingrained* in you to say you'll be fine. And basically you're not. Am I right?" Mike asked.

"Well, I think you have something there. Oh, man. I'm really feeling something here Mike." I said. "I don't know what this is, but I do know I don't like it."

"Stay with it, Jim. Trust yourself. Trust that you won't explode if you allow yourself to feel. Tell me what's going on inside of you."

"I feel like I did something wrong and I feel kinda sad."

"I would call that shame, Jim."

"Wow," I began, but without any enthusiasm, like the wind had been taken out of my sails. "I recognize this feeling, Mike. I've felt this many times before and I don't like it."

"That's fine, Jim. You don't have to like it. What I want you to understand is that it's only a feeling and you are *not* your feelings. Your feelings are apart of you, but that's it. They are just a part of

you. We'll get into this more later. For now, just stay with the emotions," Mike Finished.

"I'm still feeling shame, Mike."

"Excellent, Jim!" Mike shot back, "that's the way to describe what's going on inside of you!"

"Alright. Well...what do we do now? Should I just stay miserable? Or should we try to move on to the language thing?" I said, trying to recover from what seemed like 5 rounds with Mike Tyson.

"Ok. Let's try to move on to the language thing. That stock answer was the old way. Now let me ask my original question differently. How about this; what do you *need* to get through the day so you can survive these feelings you been having?" Mike queried.

"Wow, I don't know Mike?" I was stumped.

"Can I make a suggestion?"

"Sure."

"I would like you to call me in one hour to tell me how you're feeling. Is that ok with you?"

"Sure. Ok. I'll do that."

"Where's your wife, Diana anyway?" Mike asked

"She's out of town on a short 'girls' vacation."

"When does Diana get home from vacation?"

"In about 8-hours."

"Ok. Great. Then let's have you call me in one hour and then every two hours after that until she gets home. Ok with you?"

"I can do that, Mike. But I don't understand how that's going to help me? What are you going to say that's going to help me get through the next 8-hours? I'm don't mean to sound ungrateful. That's not the way I want to come across. I am just not sure about what you are asking."

"Jim, I'm really glad you asked. It's important to do that. Ask if you don't understand. The reason I want you to call me is so you're not alone the next 8-hours. I think that after I leave, you will have more feelings. The old thought patterns may creep in and you may find yourself wanting to stop those thoughts and feelings by going back to your old habits. You don't want that and I want to help you achieve that. So, let's break the old patterns by inserting new ones. The new pattern is that you

call me and tell me how you're doing. How you're feeling and what's going on inside your head. Do you follow me now? Did that explanation help?" he finished.

"Yes. That helped a lot. Thanks, Mike.

"What I did here, Jim, was simply ask for what you needed. It's basically asking what you need to be ok. Asking someone what they need can be very powerful. The idea is to get you to do it next time. Follow me?" Mike asked.

"Yes. Ok. I think I do. Ask for what I need instead of just pretending that everything is ok."

"Excellent, Jim. You got it and you can call that your first, of many, leaps of faith. Thank you for trusting me."

Mike got up from the couch and I walked over to shake his hand and thank him. He let me know that he was taking the gun, then left and headed home to await my call.

It only took five minutes after Mike left, for the thoughts to start up in my head. The thoughts began with shame and that led to depression. Soon I was back in what was beginning feel like a familiar black hole.

Depression is the wicked witch of the east. Always looming preparing to pop in at anytime unannounced. The fear of another onset of

depression is hard enough to live with, let alone the actual state I enter when it comes.

As depression sets in, a veil of darkness slides itself over my soul and pushes reality out of the way hijacking it to a secret location, taking with it all hope. Living without hope is next to impossible. As hope fades, the feeling of suicide enters my being and seemingly takes control. Nothing matters anymore. The world becomes black and white. Death is the only answer.

Labeling the black hole of depression with describing words does it little justice. Trying to describe depression is as hopeless as the disease itself. It must be experienced to ever understand it.

I couldn't figure out why I had switched feelings so quickly since Mike had left. I was fine when he was here, now I was in hell.

I didn't make it to the hour I was supposed to wait to call Mike. I made it all of thirty-minutes. I picked up the phone and dialed, hoping he was there. He was.

"Hi, Mike," I began; trying to sound like everything was ok.

"Well, you made it longer than I thought you would," he laughed. But it was a genuine laugh, not condescending. However he did catch me off guard by saying that.

"You knew? You knew I'd call before the hour was up?" I laughed back at him.

"Oh, yeah. I'd say you're perfectly normal, Jim."

"Well that's good to know, I think?" I started to get confused. Feelings were surging through my body. It felt like...like...chaos.

## Chapter 4

### Chaos Brings Movement

"Tell me what's going on inside your body, Jim."

"I'm having tons and tons of feelings, Mike."

"Tell me more, Jim. Can you put a *name* to the feelings? Like, sadness, anger or fear? Try to name the feelings."

"Whew!" I sighed. "um...I'll try. Let's see. I feel overwhelmed. I feel sad, angry and I want a drink," I finished apprehensively, worried that if I said I wanted to drink, Mike would be furious with me.

"Good start, Jim. Say more."

"You aren't mad at me, Mike?" I inquired as I tensed all the muscles in my body, awaiting the coming verbal blow.

"Not in the least, Jim. I'm fine with you. As a matter of fact. I'm quite proud of you!"

"What? You're proud of me?" I said, as tears found their way to my eyes again. "I'm sad, Mike. Right now. Sad!" I blurted.

"Excellent. Why are you sad, Jim?"

"Because. Because, I uh...think...uh," I trailed.

"Hang in there, Jim," Mike encouraged.

"Ok. Let's see," I started, concentrating hard.  
"I'm sad because you aren't mad at me, I think?  
But, that's kind of weird."

"I would say that it's absolutely not weird. It's probably something you didn't hear a lot when you were growing up?" Mike said, compassionately.

"Oh. I get it. It's all my parents fault kind-of-thing," I stated, knowingly.

"Well, maybe, Jim. Save that for later. You said you think that you're sad because I wasn't mad at you, right?"

"Yes."

"That's probably a correct statement. Because you are not used to being on the receiving end of compassion?" Mike asked.

"I guess that's true."

"You stand in the trading pit all day and I'd say you probably do not receive compassion in the trading pit."

"Fuckin'-right-on there, Mike. The place is a hell hole!" I said angrily.

"And you may not have received a lot of compassion from your siblings and parents? Is that true?"

"Absolutely," I was starting to feel very angry. "I'm pissed about that!"

"Excellent awareness, Jim." he said, and continued. "So, I come along and I'm compassionate with you. I offer you understanding and that has to be quite different for you, yes?"

"Wow. Yes. That's true. Now I'm sad again. Shit! All of these feelings. I'm in feeling-chaos-hell! I don't like it," I finished, feeling frustrated.

"Jim, there's another way to look at that statement."

"How?"

"Chaos is the beginning of movement."

\* \* \*

"Ok. Let's see if I have this right. Chaos is the beginning of movement, even though it doesn't feel like that?" I asked.

"Yes. That's dead-on. Your movement can be defined as changing behavior. You are trying to move out of old thinking and behavioral habits.

You are trying to learn a new language and a new way of being. With that comes chaos or internal upheaval. Your body is a creature of habit. It will fight change. That's what you're feeling now," Mike explained.

"This is still confusing, Mike. Can you say more?"

"We are creatures of habit. We like things to be a certain way and we'll go to great lengths to keep things as they are. Change does not come easily. Would you agree with that simple statement; that change doesn't come easily for most people?"

"I guess? To be honest, I've never given it much thought."

"When you try to change your behaviors, Jim, and you try to do it abruptly, your body and your mind will fight back unless you begin to lay a foundation for change. Laying a foundation for change within yourself is similar to tearing down and building a house. You have to tear down the house to make way for the new one. The old house is a metaphor for old behaviors. Slowly we

tear it down. As we do this it will seem chaotic. The old structure was familiar and now that familiarity is going away. So, we begin planning for a new structure. Things begin to gradually change however there will be problems along the way. There will be chaos. What's great about this chaos is that it is telling you that everything is normal. Chaos is the beginning of movement. The movement is the tearing down of the old structure and the building up of the new structure.

"What's wonderful about this process is that as the feelings of chaos subside you'll begin to take control of the project. Let me give you a glimpse into what's in-store for you. Because I have a secret. A secret I do not share with many, like I said earlier. Do you want to know what it is?"

"Oh yeah! Please, share away!"

"I've been going to therapy for the last year-and-a-half, Jim. That's why you see the changes in my physique and in my attitude. Everything is different for me than it was a year-and-a-half ago. I view the world in a completely different light than the way I used to. Everything in my life has changed," Mike stated.

"Oh. Ok. Can you keep going? Tell me more? This sounds cool."

"Sure, I'll say more. Therapy is just one of many tools out there that a person can use to change their behaviors. Or to learn a whole new way to

live. There are many different therapies out there. And many different therapists. My secret is not just joining therapy, but knowing *how to use* therapy."

"How to use therapy?" I asked.

"Yes. Anyone can go to therapy. Anyone can find a therapist and sit on the proverbial couch answering questions posed from the therapist until, 'times-up!' Do you follow me?"

"Yeah, I'm following you."

"Jim, to make therapy work for you, you *must*, and I mean *must*, take many *leaps-of-faith*. Over and over again. Trusting in the therapist. Trusting in the process. Trusting in yourself."

"Ok. But aren't there tons of bad therapists out there? I've heard some horror stories."

"I think there are a lot more bad patients out there than bad therapists. Many patients seek a magic pill, if you will. They want the quick fix. Cure me by next week. You know what I mean?"

"Mike, I'm following you. You think there are many more bad patients than therapists because our society is such a, 'I want what I want and I want it know society'. Yes, I get it," I said.

"Jim, that's exactly what I'm saying. They are only doing a disservice to themselves by not truly

being *in* relationship with the therapist and trusting the therapist. Being in relationship with your therapist takes a great deal of trust. It takes a leap-of-faith. Not to say there aren't bad therapists out there. There are. Jim, I'd like to invite you to one of my therapy sessions so you can see what it's all about. What do you say?"

"Ok. I'd like that. When?"

"I have an appointment day after tomorrow at 3:30 in the afternoon. My therapist's name is Judith Palmer. I'll give you the address later."

"Cool. I'll be there," I said, very excitedly.

"How are you feeling, Jim?" Mike asked.

"Better. Thanks, Mike. It's hard for me to talk about my feelings like this. It's foreign to me."

"I bet it is, Jim. You're doing fine. Will you call me later today? I want to hear how you're doing."

"Sure. Thanks again, Mike."

We hung up and all of the thoughts and feelings started to flood my brain and body. My first thought was that this was chaos and chaos is the beginning of movement. Then I realized that my first thought wasn't about drinking and that was very different! So different I actually felt excitement. This excitement was raw, deeper, and almost childlike. Here I was, telling myself about

my feelings. That had to be good! At least I hoped  
it was?

## Chapter 5

### Individual Therapy

I'd made it through the day and only had to call Mike once more before my wife, Diana, got home from her vacation. When Diana did get home I explained everything to her. However I needed to call Mike after I talked to Diana. I was feeling upset about her reaction to my story. It almost seemed that she didn't care. There was no compassion! Yes! That was it! Just as Mike said it was. I was not receiving compassion from those around me! She was part of it!

Mike offered to give up his therapy appointment to me. I didn't quite understand what he meant. He explained that we'd both go to his scheduled therapy session and I could use the time to talk about Diana's reaction. I accepted and was now set to have my first individual therapy session, with Mike's support.

\* \* \*

It was a creeping winter day. October in Chicago brings brisk days that are anything but friendly. The winds whipped with warning of the coming cold months, although the sky was a crisp clear blue. I arrived at Mike's therapist's office five-minutes ahead of schedule, parked and headed into the her office. Inside, there was an outer waiting room with some chairs neatly lined

against the walls. I grabbed a magazine and sat.  
Mike showed up a few minutes later. He read the

apprehension on my face immediately and said only one word to me, '*breathe*'.

"I am breathing, Mike," I said.

"Let me explain. I want you to take a deep breath. By doing that, several things should happen. First, it will slow you down and stop the mental chaos. Second, it will bring you into the moment."

"What do you mean by bring me into the moment?" I asked.

"Breathing helps you stop the mental chaos by making you concentrate on one thing and one thing only. The here and the now. Your thoughts move towards your breath and away from the chaos of many different thoughts. It's actually a very simple form of meditation," he finished.

Before I could ask more about this subject the inner office door opened and a small woman stepped out to invite us in. She was about 5'2" tall and in great shape. She had a healthy hue about her skin and wore a wonderful smile. She introduced herself as, 'Judith Palmer'. I then realized she was Mike's therapist.

The three of us found our way into Judith's office. It was small with a couch, chair and a desk. One wall was completely made of glass and looked out onto Ogden Avenue in the town of Hinsdale, Illinois. The cars were shooting by outside as the

rush hour traffic got under way. Right then, I wished I was in a bar. Any bar, anywhere, any place, but here.

I sat next to Mike on the couch. We exchanged pleasantries then she began with a question posed to me.

"Jim, I'd like to go over a few things before we begin. There are some basic rules a therapist follows. After I'm done, please feel free to ask any question you'd like. First I want you to know that what is said here, stays here. Nothing you say or reveal to me will be revealed to anyone. It's important that you feel safe with me and feel safe to share whatever you want with me. If I take notes while you are talking, understand that those notes stay here and no one can look at them or take them. I believe that it's vital that you feel safe, if our relationship is going to work. It's also vital that you feel safe so you'll share your deepest feelings and thoughts with me. Otherwise, we are both wasting time. We'll get nowhere. Do you have any questions about what I said, Jim?"

"It's kinda of awkward talking to someone about my feelings and thoughts Judith. Especially someone I don't know!" I said while laughing nervously. "I do understand what you are saying though, everything stays here."

"Great. Now, what brings you here today, Jim?" asked Judith.

"Um...I think I have a question after all, Judith? What is it I'm supposed to do here?"

"Well, just talk about what's going on for you in your life at the moment. I think once you get talking and I give you a few responses you'll get the idea how this works."

"So you're saying that I kinda have to trust what's going to happen?" I asked.

"Yes, Jim. Trust the process. You are safe now."

I started by explaining what was happening in my life at the moment. I felt as though I was babbling and was incoherent. I started to sweat a bit and my breathing became labored. I was anything but comfortable. Judith then said *the* word to me, *Breath*.

I inhaled deeply and felt my thoughts calm down. I concentrated on the breath moving in my nose then down to my lungs. Then I exhaled. I felt much better. I don't know why, but I did. I continued talking.

"Judith, I am a mess. I don't think I can stop drinking and I am having panic attacks. My life seems to be a mess. A few nights ago I tried to kill myself and ended up calling, Mike, for help," I said.

"That must have not been easy, to call ?" Judith said to me, while glancing at Mike.

"No it wasn't. I kind of wish I'd just pulled the trigger. Because then I wouldn't be sitting here feeling like I'm going to throw-up!" I blurted out.

Then I felt shame about what I said.

"I'm sorry I said that. I don't know what's going on inside my head right now," I finished sadly, as I dropped my head and and cradled it in my hands.

"Jim, it's ok. I welcome your thoughts. No matter what you think about them. Therapy is about speaking your truth. And your truth right now is you're very uncomfortable at the moment. I understand that. I commend you for being here now and not choosing to be drinking somewhere. It's very courageous. Jim, I want you to know that I hear that your life is a mess and you're having panic attacks You also hear that you are confused. Is that what you said, Jim? Did I hear you correctly?" Judith said, as she leaned forward and put a caring hand on my knee.

"Yes. Yes. You've got it right Judith," I said, quietly.

Tears worked there way up the tear ducts again and settled in my eyes. I glanced at Mike and he immediately said, "What are you feeling, Jim?"

I cut the tears off, and said, "Nothing."

"Oh. That's interesting, I thought you were feeling sad?" he said

Judith observed the interchange between Mike and I.

"Well, I guess now that I think about it, I did feel sad," I glanced at Judith, waiting for her accusations. Waiting for her to say I was an idiot!

But that didn't happen. She was staring at me, with very caring eyes. I was feeling skeptical though.

"Why didn't you let yourself feel the sadness, Jim?" Judith inquired.

"I don't like that feeling Judith. I hate it as a matter of fact. I think I'd rather die than feel sad," I replied.

"That's interesting, Jim," Judith said. "Is that the way you were feeling the other night when you tried to kill yourself?"

I paused and the room fell absolutely silent. I felt the tension drape itself over the room. I took a breath. Then said, "Yes. That's what I was feeling."

"I think that's a very powerful statement. You wanted to die because you were feeling sad. What do you think about that?" Judith said.

"Well it's kind of silly isn't it? I mean wow. When I step back and look at it, it's pretty dumb. I'm such an idiot!" I said, while pounding my fist into my thigh.

Judith and Mike both spoke at once and Mike yielded to Judith.

"Would you mind if I commented on a few things you said, Jim?" Judith asked.

"No, please go ahead." I said, feeling mountains of shame and still wanting to head to the nearest bar.

"You said that you took a step back and looked at *it* ? Yes?"

"Yes I did."

"You just took a giant leap forward, Jim. You are smarter than you think. By taking a step back and looking at the situation you became what is called an, 'observer'. Or said another way, "working from your observing ego". I am really happy you did that," Judith said.

"Judith, may I offer an explanation to, Jim?" Michael asked.

"Please do," Judith offered.

"Jim, when you were observing the situation you actually stepped *out* of your feelings. You were no

longer entangled in your feelings. Once you became un-entangled with your feelings you were able to think objectively about what was going on. That is a very advanced therapy technique. Let me try to explain. You are putting your feelings aside and analyzing the situation. As if you weren't even a part of the problem. As if you were solving the problem for someone else," Mike said, and continued. "How easy is it for you to solve someone else's problem, Jim? Someone you are not emotionally involved with."

"Um...I don't know. What do you mean, Mike?"

"People have come to you with their problems over the years, Jim. They ask for your help or ask your opinion about a problem they are having. You've had people do this with you haven't you, Jim?"

"Oh, sure. Yes. Of course I have. Now I get it. But could you explain what you mean again? Explain what you were trying to say before?"

"Sure. So, say that someone asks for your opinion about a problem they are having. The odds are that you will probably be able to give them a very balanced assessment of the situation and give them a couple of healthy solutions to the problem. That's because you are in a pure state of thinking. Your emotions are 'out-to-lunch', so to speak. Your emotions are not involved in the problem solving process. That's usually a very good way to solve a problem. Judith and I are trying to get you

to do that with your own problems. Get it?" he finished.

"Wow. That's pretty cool. An observing ego. I could use that," I said, noticing that I was feeling calmer. I had been drawn into Mike's story. It seemed to bring a sense of calmness to me.

"Jim, you also said, 'I think it's pretty dumb'. Do you say things about yourself in that manner often? And, I'm not judging you, I'm trying to help," Judith asked.

"I don't know Judith," I said, suddenly feeling overwhelmed. "I just don't know"

"Well, maybe put it on the back burner for now and we will talk about it again," Judith said gently.

"Well guess what?" Mike asked, "time's up."

"Whoa there, Mike. We didn't get a chance to talk about my problem with Diana and her reaction?" I said, with some panic.

"Quite often in therapy, Jim, you end up talking about something different than what you intended on talking about. You get all set to talk about what you think is a big problem and when you get going in the therapy session you end up talking about something different. That's usually because the problem wasn't what you thought it was," Judith explained.

"So you think the problem isn't Diana?" I asked Judith.

"I'm not saying there aren't problems between the two of you, Jim. What I'm saying is, that it was probably more important for you to talk about what you talked about today, than it was to talk about Diana," Judith explained.

"Ok. Thanks Judith," I said.

"Jim, if you're interested in seeing me again, just give me a call and we'll set up an appointment," Judith said.

"Thanks Judith, I'll give it some thought."

Then Mike said, "Thanks for your help today, Judith. And thanks, Jim, for taking a leap of faith, today."

"No problem," I said smiling. "Let's hit it."

We left Judith's office and headed out to the parking lot. Mike put his arm around me and asked what I thought about the appointment.

"It wasn't bad," I replied, "I'm confused and a bit overwhelmed, but I think I liked it, Mike."

"Cool. Think about it and maybe even think about setting up an individual therapy appointment for yourself, ok?" he said.

"I'll think about it. Thanks again, Mike, I mean it."

We both hopped in our respective cars and drove our separate ways.

## Chapter 6

### The Journal

I was feeling. Feeling everything at once. Thoughts swirled and danced cruelly inside my head. I don't remember how I got home. I must have been on automatic pilot because the next thing I knew I was pulling into the garage.

I felt uneasy when I walked in the door and it didn't take long before I'd picked a fight with Diana. I took my anger and my uneasiness upstairs to my office and called Mike. It seemed the thing to do.

"Hey, Mike. Do you have a minute to talk?" I asked.

"Sure, Jim. What's up?"

"I don't know, Mike. I think I should have talked about Diana today. I'm really having a time-of-it with her. The minute I got home she was all over me."

"Bear with me for a minute, Jim. I have something for you to do. Think for a minute about how you were feeling before you came in the house. Think about what was going on inside your head and your body. Then tell me what you come up with," he finished.



I took a minute and thought about it. Then I did my best to tell Mike what I'd been feeling.

"I was feeling uneasy. I think I was feeling unsure, Mike."

"Ok, Jim. Hang in there with me. The word uneasy and the word unsure are not feelings. Try to put your words into feelings. Either mad, glad, sad, happy, sexual, shame or scared," Mike informed.

"Well...mmm...I would say angry. Yeah, I was feeling angry."

"I would agree, Jim. Then when you came into your house, what happened with Diana? What did she do to 'start in on you', as you put it?"

"How do you know I was feeling angry, Mike?"

"Uh? I'm sorry, Jim, you lost me," Mike said.

"I said, that I was feeling angry and you said that you agreed."

"I think that anger is a place that you are very familiar with, Jim. It sounds weird, but if you think about it, anger is a place that you go to when you are unsure what you are feeling. I know, because it's the same way with me. I know anger. It was my friend and companion for a long time. It helped me avoid other feelings that I *wasn't* comfortable with. Feelings like sadness."

"That is weird, Mike. I have to think about that for a while. Wow, that's kinda of a frightening statement."

"I hear you. Try not to blow it out of proportion though. We can talk about that later. Lets get back to what happened when you got home and what you were feeling."

"Uh. Well...um...I *was* feeling angry. You know what, Mike? I don't know exactly what I was angry about? If I do that 'stepping back' thing that you and Judith talked about and look at the situation, Diana was just giving me a piece of information. I guess I turned it into an argument. She was informing me about a dinner party coming up that she wanted us to go to. I got angry about it and don't know why?"

"Maybe you got angry because the party made you feel overwhelmed? You probably had other things on your mind and the last thing you wanted to talk about was a party. Especially when you are trying to give up booze," Mike offered.

"Man o' man, Mike. That may be it?"

"That's called being 'passive aggressive', Jim."

"Say what?"

"Passive aggressiveness is when someone is having a feeling that they really don't want to feel. So, they find a way to pass it off to someone else."

Like you did with Diana. Think about that and how many times you have done it. I know I did it all the time. Maybe I'd be feeling envy; jealousy or I just didn't like someone. I'd find a way to blame those uncomfortable feelings I was having, on them. When I got angry I'd often engineer a situation in which someone else would pay the consequence," he said.

"Yea. I guess you're right. I think I do it at work a lot. Try to blame others for my problems and pick fights with them," I said, contemplatively.

"It's normal, Jim. Something society seems to accept. But once I realized I was doing it, I became uncomfortable. It just didn't seem right anymore."

"Mike, this stuff is hard. There's so much!" I said, feeling overwhelmed.

"I think it would be wise to schedule your own therapy session with Judith. What do you say? You can sort some of this stuff out and you can do it slowly."

"You're right. I'll call her tomorrow. Thanks again for the millionth time, Mike. I really owe you."

"You don't owe me anything, Jim. It's my turn to give back. You'll do the same someday. I know it."

I hung up with Mike and went downstairs to apologize to my wife. She about fell off her chair! She was stunned at the turn-around.

"What happened to you?" she asked.

"I'm learning some new things," I said.

"Well whatever you're doing, please keep it up," she said smiling.

The next day after I got home from the CBOT, I called and made an appointment with Judith.

\* \* \*

I arrived at Judith's office on time and I sat down on her couch and tried to relax, to no avail. I felt as though I was going to jump out of my skin at any moment. I was having so many feelings and I couldn't contain them. I fidgeted and was extremely uncomfortable.

Thankfully Judith picked up on it and asked how I was feeling. However I tried to dodge the question, yet again, by saying I was fine. Judith pointed out that I looked very uncomfortable and I had to admit I was not in the best place at the moment. We both laughed at that, me, uneasily. I asked Judith what I could do to help contain myself, contain my feelings so I wouldn't feel like I was going to jump out of my skin all the time.

"My suggestion is to keep a journal," she replied.

"A journal about what?"

"A journal about your feelings and thoughts, Jim."

"When do I write in the journal?"

"Whenever you want, Jim. Just keep it simple. Get yourself a regular size notebook and keep it at home. Maybe you could buy a smaller one that you could keep in your back pocket, to take with you when you're not at home. Jot down what's going on for you, especially when you're having a lot of feelings. Then bring it here and we can talk about it," Judith finished.

"You're the boss, Judith. I'll give it a try."

"Good, Jim. Now what else is on your mind that you'd like to discuss?" Judith asked.

## Chapter 7

### Living With Your Feelings

I found other things to talk about with Judith at the therapy session. However we didn't get to everything I wanted to talk about. I told this to Judith and she explained that part of the therapy process is learning to slow down and live with your feelings.

She said, if I wanted to accomplish this, I needed 'emotional weight training'. She likened emotional weight training to lifting weights at the gym. When someone starts a weight training program, to beef-up their muscles, they begin by lifting a small amount of weight. They do this so they don't injure themselves. The same holds true with emotions.

As in a weight training program, she wanted to go slowly. She stated that I probably stopped my emotional growth when I started drinking heavily, at the age of 19. It was common for heavy drug and alcohol users to stop growing emotionally.

Basically Judith said that when someone starts to confront their emotions, all sorts of things happen. No one has the capacity to feel those emotions all at once. It would take time and I'd literally have to learn to *live* with these emotions. Slowly building

a 'container' for them, so I wasn't always feeling like I was going to jump out of my skin.

I had heard Mike use the 'container' metaphor before. Now Judith had mentioned it, so I thought it was important to learn more.

She explained it this way. First visualize a container, any size, shape or form. Then imagine yourself putting your feelings into the container for safekeeping. When I came to a therapy session I could open the container and let the feelings out. If I wanted to talk with a close friend, like Mike, about these feelings I could do the same. The bottom line was, it's about practice. Practicing *holding* and *containing* your feelings until you found a way to release them constructively.

The therapy session was coming to an end. Judith finished up by asking me to consider joining her therapy group that met every Thursday night. There were nine people in the group. They would get together with Judith and each had a chance to work on their issues at these meetings. She encouraged me to think about it and then let her know what I thought the next time we got together. I promised her I'd think it over.

When I got home from her office I was feeling many different things. The most dominant, was depression. So I chose to journal my feelings instead of drinking my feelings away. As I began to journal, some questions started to pop-up in my head. Was I really *drinking* my feelings away? Did they disappear after I drank? Or was I just

pushing my emotions down? More importantly, did they eventually find their way back up? Is that why I had *fits* of anger or *raged-out* once in a while? I began to write.

After I finished writing I was awed by the calmness I was feeling. It's as if I had left my emotions on the paper. Then I realized that I had left them in my journal. This was such a freeing feeling and one that seemed to give me control. I was elated! What a powerful exercise! I made a mental note to let Judith know how journaling had helped me.

I was indeed living with my feelings. At least I thought I was. As soon as Diana came home we started discussing what I thought to be a trivial matter. I soon realized it wasn't trivial at all and felt an immense amount of anger building up inside. I felt as though I'd explode!

I ran to the fridge to grab a beer and stopped just before I opened it. I realized I was following an old behavioral pattern and if I was going to truly change then I'd have to do something else other than drink. I found myself back upstairs in my office journaling. I wrote every thought that came to mind no matter how much shame accompanied it. Because, in the end, it didn't matter what I wrote. What truly mattered was what I did with my feelings. How I acted on them. I was beginning to see that it was my decision how I behaved. If I chose to drink, then that was my

choice. If I chose to get angry and rant, that was my choice. If I chose to journal, that too was my choice.

I had believed that drinking and doing drugs was the way to release feelings. I believed that to my core. Now I was learning differently. After I wrote my feelings down I was able to go downstairs and talk with Diana about our earlier conversation, er...a...fight. She asked me if I was going to talk or yell? She wasn't interested in the yelling part. I told her that I had written in my journal and that helped calm me down, considerably. We talked about the so-called trivial issue we'd attempted to talk about before and amazingly, we solved the problem!

What truly amazed me was this new ability to contain, or live with, my angry feelings. When I expressed those feelings in the journal I felt I was doing them an honor. By recognizing them I was actually feeling them and then letting them go. By letting them go I was able to have a constructive conversation with my wife. Journaling helped me to step out of my feelings and *logically* approach our problem.

Part of me knew it wasn't going to be 'magically' better from here on out. I knew I'd have to practice living with my feelings and intense emotions. But it was a step forward. A very positive step. And I was ready to take some more steps. It was time to join that group Judith was talking about.

## Chapter 8

### Group

**M**y next individual therapy session with Judith was very productive and I told her I wanted to join that group she had mentioned. I had been thinking about it and concluded that it was a good step forward. Although, I told Judith there was a part of me that was uncomfortable with the idea.

She asked me what it was that made me so uncomfortable. I explained that I wasn't used to sharing my feelings with anyone let alone a group of people. Judith said she understood my apprehension, that it was common. Once I got started in the group she thought I'd do just fine. She said to come that next Thursday night at 7 pm, sharp.

Mike had also encouraged me to join the group. He was in it and that helped with my discomfort. Thursday night's meeting would forever become etched in my mind.

Group was held at Judith's house, in her basement. I found my way down to the basement. There were six people there, other than Judith. Five of them I didn't know, the sixth was Michael. There were four mattresses on the floor pushed up to the

walls, so the walls would act as backrests. A rug covered the floor and made the room quite

comfortable. I said some apprehensive hellos and found a spot next to Mike.

"Hi, Mike"

"Hi, Jim, how are you doing?"

"Well...I'm certainly glad you're a part of the group. It really helps my nervousness."

"I'm glad you're a part of the group also, Jim. I think it took a lot of courage," Mike said.

Then Judith came down the stairs and sat adjacent to Mike and me.

"Hi everyone," she opened, "welcome and please let me introduce our newest member, Jim Goulding. Jim, would you like to say something about yourself and why you decided to join the group?"

"Hi everyone," I said nervously, "my name is, Jim and I guess I'm here because I want to make some changes in my life. I'm twenty-six years-old. I'm a commodities broker at the Chicago Board of Trade where I've worked full time since I was seventeen-years-old. I'm the sixth child an Irish family from Oak Park. I don't know the deep-seeded reason's of why I entered therapy. I just know that I wasn't happy with my life. I've tried to change but to no avail. I've tried, dieting, working out and I've tried to quit drinking. I seem to go back to my old habits within weeks. What I do

know is that I drink alcohol everyday. I do drugs, like cocaine, on the weekends. I am drinking less since I entered therapy and haven't done any drugs. That's good, but I'm still not feeling healthy and I want to know what it's like 'on the other side'. What I mean by that is I want to know how the other half lives. The half that is sober. They have something I want, which is sobriety."

I found that as I talked I was very comfortable telling 'my story'. It's as if I belonged here and I was meant to do this. Heal, if you will. There was one thing that scared me though. I was worried that someone would jump on me verbally and really give it to me. I soon came to realize my fears were unfounded.

I continued talking, "Alcohol controls my life. I have thoughts such as, 'when will I start drinking' or "when I do start how much will I have and when will I stop"? It goes on and on. It controls my day and my night. I just feel so unhealthy. Above all I want that feeling to stop. So here I am, trying to get help. Thanks for having me and please go easy on me," I finished, with a plea for leniency.

"Jim, I'd like to welcome you and I personally admire your courage for facing your demons," Mike said.

One by one, the group members welcomed me and all seemed quite gracious. No one jumped on me and that fact calmed me down a bit.

Judith then asked that we go over the rules that involved being in group. Mike said he'd be glad to recite them.

He began, "In group therapy, confidentiality is *the* most important thing. You are never to talk about someone else's 'work' and name them. In fact you should never talk about what others do in-group, period. So we are clear, I want to clarify what the word, 'work' means and what 'naming' someone means. When someone 'works', it means they are emoting or talking about their feelings or working on issues that effect their life. When a group member does any of these things it is considered confidential. Everything stays here. Otherwise, members would not feel *safe* to *work* their feelings or issues.

"As far as naming goes, it's better to just not talk about other peoples work at all. Really, the only reason you would need to talk about someone else's work is because it had an effect on you in some way. Perhaps their work stirred feelings inside of you. If that happens, and it does happen quite often, the only people you should be talking to about those feelings are the people here in group or in therapy with Judith.

"If someone thinks someone else is talking about what they said or did in the *group meetings*, then they won't work and working on their issues is the reason they came in the first place. Furthermore you may not say that you know someone is in this group to anyone outside the group without permission from that person. Bottom line, no naming names. This is a place of confidentiality. The highest priority must be given to it. If you break this rule you're out. Period," Mike finished.

Judith said it was time to 'work'. I was feeling anxious to get rid of all my problems right then and there. I was feeling very bold and I stepped up to the plate having absolutely no idea what I was doing. I said to Judith, "I'll work!"

"Commendable, Jim. However why don't you watch some people first and get an idea how we do things here," She said, with compassion.

"Ok Judith thanks," I replied, still nervous and not wanting to feel anything but at the same time wanting to feel everything.

"Mike, what would you like to work on this evening?" Judith asked.

"Well...mmmm...I think I have a problem that I've been avoiding and I'm wondering if I should do the, '4-questions'? Mike debated, to no one in particular.

"Mike, I think you should go with your instincts and work your problem using the four questions. The four questions seem to have worked well for you in the past. Let's get started. What's the problem, Mike?" Judith asked.

## Chapter 9

### The Four Questions

"I'm very angry with my family. You know... my brothers, sisters, relatives and all. They *all* seem to have a mold for me. I feel judged all the time. When we get together everyone talks at once and tries to out-do each other with their latest accomplishments. I just wish they'd listen to me when I talk. The only way I seem to ever get their attention and love is when I slip into their predetermined mold," <sup>1</sup> Mike began.

"Is that all there is, Mike?" Judith inquired.

"Yeah, I think that's it, Judith."

"What do you want from your family, Mike?" Judith asked.

"I want my family to respect me for who I am. I want them to love me unconditionally and I want them to listen to me. I want them to stop judging me!" Mike said, with force.

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Four Questions' are the work of Byron Katie. She wrote the wonderful book, *Loving What Is*. Some of this chapter is pulled directly from her book . I changed the names. Katie calls the four questions, "The Work". Not to be confused with 'working' in group therapy.

"You said you want your family to stop judging you. Yes?" Judith asked.

"Yes."

"Do you know that that statement is true? That they judge you?"

"Absolutely yes. They do judge me."

"The world judges, Mike. Parents judge, siblings judge, bosses judge we all judge. We are a world of judges. That's just a fact of life. Once you accept the fact that you'll be judged, you'll be freer. Trying to stop others from judging is like trying to stop the world from spinning. So let me ask you another question, Mike. How do you feel when you think this thought, *'I want them to stop judging me' ?*"

"I just want them to stop. It's their problem, not mine. I'm not the one judging. They are the ones who judge. I really disagree with them and the things they think about me," Mike stated.

"Stay with the question, Mike. You see how the mind wanders and begins to make up a story to prove itself right? It wants to be right soooo bad! So let's get back to the question, 'how do you react when you think this thought?'" Judith nudged.

"I become angry and shut down. I become distant. I don't want to be with them."

"Excellent, Mike. You become angry, distant, shut down, and don't want to be with them. My next question is, 'Who would you be without these thoughts?'"

I was stunned. As I watched this interaction between Judith and Mike it's as if someone hit me upside the head and all the bells went off. I got what Judith was doing. I got it right then and there. It was such a simple question yet it was so powerful!

Mike continued, "I'd be present! I'd be more loving with my family and I'd stop judging them."

"Excellent, Mike. This will be my last question, 'Can you turn it around?' That statement? Can you turn the statement around to include you and not your family? For instance, could you say, 'I hate when I judge myself?'" Judith finished.

Again, the bells went off. I felt a tingling in my body. I felt lighter. This was so right. I was in the present moment and I was *getting it*.

"Ok, Judith. I want to respect *me* for who I am. I want to love *me* unconditionally and I want *me* to listen to *me*. I want *me* to stop judging myself!" Mike finished, rather elated, smiling.

"You got it, Mike. This had nothing to do with them and you've been making up stories in your head to support your own disbeliefs. I encourage you and everyone in this group to do this work on any of your problems. They all won't come as easily as this one did, but with a little help from someone else you can always get to the root of the problem, if you can handle the truth. Mike, has gotten very good at this process because he has practiced it many times."

"Just think of those four questions when you're struggling. There are some variations on the questions. I used a variation on the questions with, Mike. But the basic four questions are; 1. Is it true? 2. Do you know that it's absolutely true? 3. How do you react when you think that thought? 4. Who would you be without the thought? Then turn it around," Judith finished.

Group was enlightening that night and I would leave with a sense of power. A sense that I was slowly gaining control of my life. Overall, I was learning to take ownership of my feelings and I was receiving new tools that helped me cope with everyday situations. Group and the four questions were two new tools to add to the other

techniques I had learned. 'Breathing' and "stepping outside my feelings" to observe them. That tool box was getting bigger. I'd continue to build that tool box and choose from it wisely.

## Chapter 10

### Friends

I began to notice that the emptiness that had once been my soul was starting to fill up with enlightenment. These new tools were working. My life was changing and I was happier. But just when I thought I had it down pat, Michael was about to inform me that I still had a long way to go.

It was a bright beautiful Saturday. The temperature was a crisp 40°. Mike and I went to Poor Phil's, a restaurant in Oak Park.

We found a table, ordered some food and sat to talk.

"Mike, I really am cruising along with therapy," I began. "How do you think I'm doing?"

"Jim, I think it's important that *you think* you're doing well. What I think is secondary. Follow me? I'm not trying to put you down. I'm asking you to look inside yourself for approval and not outside."

"Yeah, I understand where you're coming from. I respect your opinion. That's why I'm asking."

"I think you're doing great, Jim."

"Thanks, Mike. I wanted to talk about leaving therapy and getting on with my life. Are you up to talking about that?"

"Leaving therapy? Why do you want to leave, Jim?" Mike asked, gently.

"Well, I think I pretty much have this down. I'm getting better and I really want to get on with my life."

"I thought the same thing when I first started therapy, Jim," Mike smiled, as he picked up his coffee, and took a sip. Then continued, "I wanted the same thing. To 'get on with my life'. What I found after discussing it with Judith was that I had only just begun. So my question to you, Jim, is what is it you want to get on with? Have you ever considered that therapy is a part of your life now?" Mike asked.

"I don't know. I just kinda assumed that someone went to therapy and then stopped. They went to therapy to get 'cured'. Then they moved on."

"You mean get 'cured', like you would when you see a medical doctor?" Mike asked me.

"I guess that's what I mean?"

"That seems pretty logical, Jim. However, what I have come to learn is that therapy is not like seeing a medical doctor. Therapy is there to help you consistently grow and learn. That's not to say

you'll stay in therapy forever. But you'll find yourself staying within the community of therapy. That is, building relationships with the people you meet in therapy. They can become your new friends and consistently support you throughout your life. Your therapy community is there to support you through good times and bad times."

"I never thought about it that way, Mike. I pictured myself going back to my old friends and living life the same way except without the drugs and alcohol. Now I'm confused again," I said, feeling sad.

"It's difficult to go back to your old friends, Jim, if they haven't changed. They'll still be practicing the same old habits and behaviors. You'll be trying to live life without the addictions that numb you. You'll be 'feeling' life. You won't have as much in common with them anymore," Mike said.

"I'm sinking into sadness, Mike. I don't know if I want this? So many changes. This is too hard."

We sat quietly for a moment. Mike didn't say anything to me. He sat with me as I pondered my situation. I yearned for him to save me somehow. I wanted him to say something that would rescue me from my pain. But he didn't. He drank his coffee and peered out the window staring at the people and cars passing by. I started to sense that by not answering me he was speaking volumes. This was my issue and no one could save me but myself. There were choices to be made and I

Was the only one who could make them. Then, as if he sensed that I was getting it, he spoke.

"Jim, we will always seek people in our life to mirror exactly where we are and how we are behaving. If we want to become a dancer we will seek others who dance. If we want to drink alcohol we will seek others who do the same. It's that simple," Mike professed.

Again we fell silent. I chewed on Mike's words. I noticed the swirling of emotions within my body. It was confusion. It was a tug-of-war amongst feelings. Feelings that wanted to go one way then the other. A pulling of my soul. Go forward, one feeling said, go this way said another. Chaos. Well...I thought...at least I'm moving.

"Mike, what was it like for you when you decided to change and give up your old set of friends for another?" I asked.

"My mind took off in all sorts of directions creating an internal chaos. Once I decided to give up drugs and alcohol I knew I'd do what ever it took to stay off them. If that meant giving up my drinking buddies then fine. I went to them and explained that I was in dire straits physically and mentally. They seemed to understand as long as I made it about me and not them," he answered.

"What do you mean, make it about you and not them?"

"Well, I didn't go to them and say, 'You guys are driving me nuts because all you do is drink'. I didn't say that this was their fault and they should 'grow-up' and stop drinking. Don't get me wrong, there was part of me that wanted to blame them for my troubles. However, it wasn't about them wanting to change, it was about me wanting to change. When I approached it like that, all seemed fine. They understood that I wouldn't be around much and that was that. What I learned from that experience was it was as bad as I wanted to make it. I mean, if I wanted it to become an ugly separation then that's what would have happened. However I didn't want that. I wanted peace for myself and I meant them no harm," he finished.

"I have to think about this, Mike. I just don't know if I want to continue doing this. There's so much at stake. I need to think this through."

"Let me add something, Jim. I had many different feelings when I let my drinking buddies go. I brought that sadness to therapy and talked about it. I brought the feelings to group and talked about them. That helped me a lot. It helped to listen to the other group members and their stories that were similar to mine. That helped me understand that I was not alone. I basically had to find alternatives to my old behaviors. I chose to stop drinking and change my ways. With that action came feelings. Uncomfortable feelings. But that's why I entered therapy. Because I had to have some place to sort through my emotions.

"Jim, my hope is that you will think it through and let your mind decide, not your feelings. I'd also talk with Judith. Discuss it with her and see what she thinks. Bring it up in group and see what the group members think," Mike finished.

"Okay, thanks, Mike." I said, solemnly.

But I really wasn't listening. I just wanted to get out of there and stop the feelings I was having. Mike and I finished eating and then left.

We stepped out into the sunny afternoon. The sun felt good but it did nothing to clear the confusion I was feeling.

## Chapter 11

### We Are Exactly What We *Think We Are*

I spent the next few days thinking about what Mike and I had talked about. I also talked with Judith and worked on it in-group. It was difficult. Part of me just wanted to quit therapy and not have to deal with the feelings I was having. On the other hand, talking to everyone had helped. It helped ease my fears and sadness.

Today I was thinking about what it would be like to switch friends. It was quite an overwhelming thought. However, I knew I had to follow through if I wanted to stay sober.

Yet, one of the problems I was facing was *the way* I thought. My actual thought process. It's as if there was a battle going on inside my head between warring factions. One side liked therapy and the new tools, while the other wanted to drop all of this therapy shit and go back to the way I used to live. Then another thought would pop-up about something else. I wouldn't say it was chaos though. It was different. I'd say that it was more like a jumble of thoughts. Each thought was concise unto itself but it was hard for me to come to a conclusion about any of the thoughts in particular. I was flip flopping all

over the place. Yes I knew I was getting better, but I also knew I was stuck. I needed help making a decision. I needed to take a *leap-of-faith*.

So I called Mike.

"Hi, Mike. I was wondering if we could talk about the thoughts that are bouncing around my head. I've been pondering many different things the last few days and I need to sort through them."

"Sure, Jim. What's up?"

"Well, I guess I'm looking for a tool. Something that can help me with my thoughts. Er...um...you know, my thinking."

"Say more, Jim."

"Thoughts still bounce around my head all the time. Sometimes I don't feel like I'm even in control of my own thoughts, Mike. It's driving me nuts. I mean is there anything that can help me with these thoughts? Is there some way to change some of the thoughts? Do you follow me, Mike?"

"Keep going, Jim. You're doing fine, but I'd like to hear more about what's going on."

"Alright, let's see if I can be a little more concise. Mmmm. Well...it's as if I have these *old* thoughts and I want to change them but don't know how. Like maybe there's a tool out there that can help

me deal with my old thoughts and replace them with something better."

"Almost there, Jim. I think I'm following you but need a bit more information. What was it that brought you...er...a, let me say that a different way. How did you get to this place in your head? What was going on that got you so confused?"

"I have been thinking about leaving therapy and then I was thinking about leaving my drinking buddies. Not that I've been hanging with them much anyways. But, that lead me to trying to imagine life without my old friends and what my life would be like. Then other thoughts would pop in and out of my head at random. Thoughts about my *group* friendships and my friendship with you. Then the old patterns of *negative* thoughts come back wanting to go out and party. Yata, yata, yata. If you catch my drift?"

"Now I understand, Jim. There is a way to help you with all of this. There's another book you'll need to get. The book is called, *The Power of Your Subconscious Mind*, by Joseph Murphy. It will help you to understand how your thought patterns work and exactly how to begin to change them," Mike said.

"What is this book about, Mike? Can you give me a little information about it before I get it? How does it apply to my problem?" I asked.

"Sure, Jim, let me try and explain this. This book is a scientific approach to how the subconscious mind works. It covers many things about the subconscious, from forgiveness to removing fear to wealth. It also teaches just how powerful and untapped the subconscious is. The author goes into great detail explaining this. He begins by explaining the difference between the conscious and the subconscious minds. How the conscious mind acts as a filter for the subconscious. He paints a great picture using a theatre as an example. He states that we should picture the lobby of the theatre as the conscious mind and the actual place inside the theatre where we watch the movie, as the subconscious. A thought can't get to the seating area without going through the lobby. Hence, nothing can get inside your subconscious without going through your conscious mind first.

"He also says something else that is extremely important. Once your subconscious mind accepts an idea, it begins to execute it! For good or bad! Whether it's a healthy idea or not! Can you imagine if you could take control of such a system? Think of the things you could do? Now think of the things that are going on in your life right now, Jim. In some way, you believe in everything you do because you have convinced your subconscious that it was true"

"Whoa," I said dumbfounded, "that's mind-blowing!"

"Jim, we, as human beings, are exactly what we think we are. If I tell myself that I am a good-for-nothing-bum then I will become that. If I tell myself that I'm a drunk I will become a drunk. It's that simple. It's called a self-fulfilling-prophecy," Mike finished.

"I can see what your saying, Mike, but it can't be that simple. If I tell myself I'm a drunk, then I am? So if I tell myself I'm not a drunk, then I'm not? Seems to easy."

"We fight simplicity, Jim. Especially those of us who have problems with drinking alcohol. We fight all the answers so we can stay with the alcohol. We can't imagine life without it. Well...I'm saying to start practicing life without it by slowly and gently telling yourself you do not need it. The same holds true for any addiction. So yes, yes...it can be that simple."

"So, if I always tell myself that people drive their cars like idiots, then I will never find peace while driving? Or if I persistently tell myself that I am healthy and happy then I can become that person?" I asked.

"One of the exercises in the book guides you through a process to help get rid of your negative thoughts. You do this by replacing the bad thoughts with positive *autosuggestions*. Repeating them three times a day and truly believing them. A skeptic once told me that you can't 'wish' something away. For instance, if I use a positive

affirmation like, 'I'm not a drunk, I don't need alcohol', then I'm basically just trying to 'wish' the problem away. What *The Power of Your Subconscious Mind* is saying is different. How this book differs from just saying positive affirmations is that it teaches, scientifically, exactly how the mind works. It teaches how the mind accepts thoughts and turns them into beliefs. Beliefs that are acted on. Jim, this is very advanced book. I don't recommend it to people who are just entering therapy. I'm making an exception with you because I think you will grasp it's meaning. That doesn't mean it will work, for you, right away. It will take time and working with Judith." Mike said and continued. "One of the problems that will come up for you is when you begin to work on the exercises in the book. For example, if your working on a positive autosuggestion such as, 'I don't need alcohol', feelings and thoughts that you didn't want to face before, start to emerge. That's when you need to take those thoughts and feelings to therapy. Your body and mind are saying you need to talk about what is going on inside you. The time will come when you can say to yourself, 'I don't need alcohol' and it won't cause such inner chaos.

"I tried to do this type of work when I began therapy, Jim. I was gung-ho and dove into the work headfirst. I bought *The Power of Your Subconscious Mind* and starting to make up some

powerful autosuggestions to help overcome my addictions. Low-and-behold, feelings, and thoughts emerged. I talked to Judith about them and worked through them. I was able to go back to the book after a short period of time and the autosuggestions had new meanings. I was able to begin to start re-programming my brain and the negative thoughts began to disappear.

"Let me finish by saying, I'm talking about training yourself, training your mind to truly believe in something. And you must believe it to your core. But remember, something will happen during this process. You'll ultimately manifest a great deal of self-doubt while trying to believe in yourself. Like I said, bring that self-doubt to therapy. When I went through this process it took a lot of practice. I had many doubts and disbeliefs. I brought those to therapy and discussed them. I discussed where they might have come from and why I chose to believe that about myself. Then I worked on letting them go and choosing to believe something different about myself. Healthy things. Good things. It worked," Mike finished.

"Once again, Mike, you've given me so much great information. And once again I need to sit back and digest some of this. I'll call you in a few days when I get a handle on this," I finished.

"Okay, Jim. Think this stuff through and don't forget to pick up that book!" Mike said, and hung up.

My head was swirling. The tools, that Mike has been giving me, are awesome. How often in the past did I not have tools to work with? How many times when I was young and had voiced my thoughts or my worries had I been told to; 'get over it!' or "grow up!" or 'What's your problem! Can't you do anything right!' These statements were very negative messages. Those messages are *engrained* in my mind. However, now I had some healthy tools to help make the necessary changes I craved.

## Chapter 12

### We Are What We Eat

I picked up the book, *The Power of Your Subconscious Mind*, by Joseph Murphy, Ph.D., D.D. I devoured it. My thought process started to change, but only with practice.

The exercises in the book are so simple. They seem so easy to execute. However, that wasn't the case once I began to *apply* the exercises. In fact, things got worse! The mental chatter grew and I became more confused.

But, I didn't drink or do drugs. I had convinced myself that it was only a 'part of the process', and I should hang in there. That's exactly what I did.

Thoughts and feelings would arise from this mental chatter. Thoughts and feelings that needed to be solved. I took those thoughts and feelings to my therapy sessions with Judith and I brought them to group therapy. Slowly the problems became solvable. Just talking about them helped!

Things were gelling. Things were coming together within my mind. Everything actually began to make sense. Especially when it came to the subject of alcohol and drugs. It now made sense to me that I was an alcoholic. It made sense to me

that I had done drugs. By using alcohol and drugs,  
I was running from my feelings, I was running

from the shame that drinking and doing drugs caused. It was a viscous circle. Now the circle was losing its form. It was breaking apart.

I kept practicing trying to change my thought process. When the mental chatter came I acknowledged it and tried to move on.

Acknowledging it and moving on, was a way to quiet the chatter. I'd literally say to myself, "Yes I hear that you're there. You have a lot to say, however you are not helping me. It's time to let you go."

If I had a problem with a particular thought, I'd bring it to group. I wouldn't allow myself to play the problem, in my head, all day long like a *looping* tape recorder. I just put it aside until it was time for a therapy session. I was actually shelving my problems. "Putting them in a drawer", as Judith would say.

\* \* \*

Time marched forward. Summer had arrived. The cold winds of the Chicago winter and soft brisk winds of spring were swept away and replaced by the gentler winds of summer warmth.

I had plenty of tools and I had settled into the therapy routine. Week after week I consistently practiced using the tools. It wasn't easy though. I was applying many new tools in my life too overcome drug and alcohol addiction. I was trying to overcome the negative thought process that had engrained itself in my mind. I was learning to live

with my feelings. I was learning to carry them with me and *hold* them, without judgments. Everything was changing. My behaviors, my thought process, my life. Slowly though. That slowness was not easy to live with. However, it was better than the way I used to live.

I was at home reading when the phone rang. It was Mike.

"Hey, Jim. How are you doing?" He began.

"Hi, Mike. Actually I'm doing great!" I exclaimed. "Things are really starting to come together. Though it's not easy."

"No, it's not easy, Jim. I'm sincerely happy for you though. Way to *hang-in* with this process. You've come a long way in a very short time," Mike stated.

"Thanks, Mike."

"The reason I called, was to see if you're ready to learn something new? I don't want to overwhelm you so please feel free to say no."

I thought for a minute.

"Hello?" Mike inquired, "anyone there?"

"Oh yeah! I'm here, Mike," I said, laughing. "I was just thinking."

"You mean you were actually thinking it over and not reacting! This is definitely progress, Jim!" he finished.

"Yes. Yes it is. I'm not reacting as much as I used to. I'm trying to think things through before just popping out a 'yes' or 'no'. I've thought about your offer and I will have to say, 'yes', I'm ready to learn some more."

"Great. I wanted to talk about the physical changes you have seen on my body. The weight that I lost and the general physical healthiness I achieved. I was hoping to share something I did to help achieve this. Then you can try some of it and judge for yourself whether you think it's useful," Mike said.

"Share away. I'm all ears."

"I lost weight and kept it off by changing my diet. What took me by surprise was how much better I felt physically. That's not all. My energy level skyrocketed. But you know what the best thing was? All those little aches and pain's I had went away!" Mike shared.

"Like what?"

"Well, headaches for one. I just don't get them anymore. Also my joints would ache sometimes.

It was annoying. Plus my back wasn't in the best shape. It hurt. But that's all in the past. Now I just don't get those aches and pains anymore. Not to mention that I sleep better. I'm able to workout without fatigue and I feel so much better, period. What about you, Jim? Do you get those little aches and pains?"

"Come to think of it. I do have a zillion aches and pains. Headaches too. I just thought that came with getting older."

"I thought the same thing. I'd say to myself, 'You're just getting older'. What I learned was that it didn't have to be that way. The question I had to ask myself was why was I eating so poorly? I knew I was, but I did nothing about it year after year. I was exactly what I ate. Fast food. 'Hurried food', as I like to say. I never spent time planning my meals or actually giving myself the time to sit down and enjoy food. Eating was more a burden than a necessity and my body looked like it. My body showed itself to the world as a product of what I thought about myself. I didn't like myself too much. Now I think differently of myself and my body shows it," Mike finished.

"You're basically saying we are what we eat? I've heard that many times before but never let it sink in. I was too busy to give it much thought," I said.

"I was too busy, Jim. Busy stuffing my feelings. Busy not paying attention to what I truly needed,

which was overall health. When I took the time to stop and think about my diet and truly look at the products I was putting into my body I was amazed at how poorly I treated myself. Then it hit me like a rock falling from the sky and landing right on my noggin. BOOM. I treated myself that way because I didn't like myself. Think about, Jim. Think about this hard."

"Ok. I'm thinking. Er...uh...what am I thinking about?" I laughed.

"Well. Let me see if I can say it differently. I'll speak of a fictitious person. This person does not like himself but he doesn't know it. Perhaps he thinks things like, 'Yeah, I'm an idiot' or 'Why can't I ever get it right?' He basically puts himself *down* all the time. Chastises himself. It becomes a habit. Wherever he had learned to do this or behave like this isn't important at the moment. What I want you to understand is that he thinks he is worthless and has become comfortable in this belief."

"Alright, I'm following you, Mike."

"This person may eat for comfort also. When he's stressed out or feels angry or perhaps sad, he eats to try to *comfort* himself. It's his *alcohol*. He eats with the thought that it will calm him down and just like alcohol; it works, but has some major side effects. Especially if the person is addictive. This person lives the lie that he is worthless. In turn, he feeds himself a steady diet of bad food to

go along with the bad thoughts. His body becomes his thoughts. He literally is what he eats!"

The light bulb went off in my head. I was silent for a second after Mike finished.

"Whoa," I said.

"You got it, didn't you, Jim?"

"Yes. I got it. We are a product of our thoughts."

*"Bingo!"*

## Chapter 13

### 8-Steps to Therapy

**T**he doorbell rang. I answered it and let Mike in. The fall wind invited itself in also. We exchanged hellos and I lead Mike into the living room. We both sat.

"This visit is different than the one I had here a year ago, Jim. Wouldn't you agree?" Mike asked.

"If you had told me, last year, that I would have been sitting here feeling and looking like I do now, I would have laughed. I wouldn't have believed you," I answered with a smile and continued. "It's hard for me to believe the progress I've made over the last year. My life is changing for the better every day. I had no idea that these tools you've shared with me were out there. I'm so lucky to have you as a friend, Mike. I'm lucky to have found Judith and the group."

"I am so happy for you, Jim. You have come a long way and I too am lucky to have you as a friend. I only supplied the tools and you did all the work with them. You executed the plan. Without taking those leaps-of-faith, that we talked about, then none of this would have been possible. I am only too happy to give back, because I was in your position a few years back and someone stepped up to the plate for me. They taught me

these secrets of therapy and how to use therapy in the correct manner."

"As you know, I've completely given up drinking, Mike. I don't do drugs anymore. I've lost 30 pounds and feel so much better physically and mentally. Granted, it's hard work. But what I have come to realize is that being unhealthy is harder work. It took so much effort! That may sound weird but it's the truth," I finished.

"Not weird at all, Jim. It speaks volumes. I would like to use that as a matter of fact. Use it as a tool! What you've said is very profound, 'It takes more effort to be unhealthy!' May I use that statement?"

"By all means!" I laughed. I was feeling so good.

"Alright! I'm using it then!" Mike joined in the laughter.

"Mike, I'm glad you could make it today. I had something I needed to talk to you about and would like to see what you think about a situation that just popped up in my life," I began. Mike nodded and I continued. "I received a phone call yesterday from a friend of mine. The call wasn't too dissimilar from the call I made to you last year. My friend is struggling with his addictions and has given up on life. I want to share what you shared with me, so I want to go over what we have talked about in the last year to make sure I have it right before advising my friend."

"Ok, that sounds fine. Do you have a pencil and paper to write some of this stuff down?" Mike asked.

"Right here," I leaned and picked up the materials from the table next to me. "You know something, Mike? I have the feeling that when we put this to paper it will be a very simple process. What gets me though is how complicated my brain wants to make it."

"Exactly. It is a very simple process. Our old thought patterns refuse to believe that, though."

"Ok, let's do it," I said, as I put pencil to paper. "There are two books that you recommended. *Loving What Is*, by Byron Katie and *The Power of the Subconscious Mind*, by Joseph Murphy. It seems that you gave these to me in a specific order also?" I inquired.

"I did give them to you in a specific order, Jim. Exactly the way you just read them off as a matter of fact. The reason being that each book walks you through a different level of the process. Each one is a different level of healing. It made more sense, to me, to use the books in that order. For example, trying to start the healing process with the book, *The Power of the Subconscious Mind*, didn't make sense. It's too advanced and will only increase the internal chaos someone is experiencing in the beginning of the process. Although we know that chaos is good, they'll have trouble resolving emotional problems in the

infancy of healing if they try to begin with this book. It's like a very difficult piano piece. You wouldn't start out trying to play a difficult piano piece if you were just beginning to learn how to play the piano?" Mike said, and continued. "Let me state this in a different way, Jim. I think the books are just *one* key to the process. We need to add some things. I would write the process like this.

"First, find a therapist. You must work at the therapy. You have to be willing to have faith in the process and the therapist. You must share everything with the therapist or you will end up hurting yourself. Remember that anyone can just sit on the couch and agree with the therapist. If you're scared to talk about something, then talk about the fear you are feeling. The fear of bringing up the problem. Then see if you can ease into the problem. Trust the therapist to listen and guide you. That's what they are there for. They are also there to help you deal with your feelings and teach you how to live with them. If you don't tell the therapist what you are feeling, then you'll never get anywhere.

"Second. Journal. Start writing down your feelings as often as you can. It's a way to practice tolerating your feelings. Learning to tolerate your feelings stops you from *acting* on them. The journal also provides a *container* for your feelings. Learning how to contain your feelings is paramount in the healing process. In the end,

you'll find yourself thinking problems through, instead of trying to solve them immediately."

"Whoa. Hold on their, Mike. I have to get my tape recorder. There's just too much good information here and I want to get all of it. I can't write this fast!" I exclaimed, and got up to get my tape-recorder. I returned with it and hit the record button. "Alright! Let's continue, Mike-you were saying?"

"Third. Buy the first book we talked about, *Loving What Is*, by Byron Katie. This book will ease you into accepting things for what they are. Accepting things for what they are will help you gradually accept the changes that you'll have to make as you work your way through the first stages of therapy. The book will help you come to terms with your close relationships with others in your life and help you to stop blaming others for your problems. Lets not forget the four questions. They are very powerful because they're simple and always seek the truth.

"Fourth. Join group therapy. Remember that it certainly doesn't have to be '*group therapy*' like we are in. It can be A.A. It can be an organization within a church or a group of people from a hospital that meets to discuss a specific medical problem. The idea behind this is to find people who are going through what *you* are going through. Community is one of the most powerful things on the planet. The benefit being, you'll realize that you are not alone. I truly believe this

is the most important thing in the whole process of healing.

"Fifth. Leaps-of-faith. As I said before, you must take leaps-of-faith in therapy or you'll never get anywhere. Over and over again. Trusting the therapist. Trusting in the process. Trusting in yourself. You are only doing a disservice to yourself by not truly being *in* relationship with the therapist and trusting the therapist. Being in relationship with your therapist takes a great deal of trust. It takes a leap-of-faith.

"Sixth. Buy the book, *The Power of the Subconscious Mind*, by Joseph Murphy. By the time you get to this book you will have had a lot of practice tolerating your emotions. Tolerating your emotions is key to begin working with this book. You must be able to identify the emotions you are feeling before you can change your thought patterns. Your *thinking* must lead your emotions. Not the other way around. Once you have command of your emotions you can begin to change anything in your life. *Anything*. Remember that one of the things the book, teaches is just how powerful and untapped the subconscious is and how the conscious mind acts as a filter for the subconscious. Maybe you can use the theater metaphor also, when you're trying to describe the subconscious and the conscious mind.

"Seventh. Food. Changing your diet will help alleviate your physical annoyances and more. Remember that you are eating poorly because of

your thoughts. Change the thoughts and you can change your diet. You are exactly what you eat. There are thousands of books out there to help you along in the process. Let me add this, Jim. The best advice I ever received about food was so simple. That advice was, 'Look at the ingredients in the food you buy. If you don't know what the ingredient is, then don't buy it'. That will take you to healthier place very quickly.

"Eight. Practice. Nothing can be achieved if you do not practice. It doesn't matter if you're learning how to play a musical instrument, studying to be a doctor, learning how to drive a car or trying to learn how to fix computers. You must practice to be adept at any of these things. The same holds true for changing your behaviors and going to therapy. The first seven steps in this process must be practiced. Only then can you become the master of your emotions. Only then can you truly be free of addictions.

"The eighth step in this process, Jim, is vital. For example, lets look at Step-2, 'Journaling' and see how this step is practiced. You'll have to take time to sit down and journal. There will be mental resistance in the beginning because it's hard to change behavior patterns without some sort of struggle but the act of sitting and journaling is creating new behavior patterns. After doing it

three or four times you will have become used to it. To become used to it, you had to practice it.

"This is true for all the steps. Each step is a piece of the puzzle. Each step will bring you one step closer to inner peace. Each step is a world unto itself and should be practiced that way. One-step-at-a-time. While practicing each step you are not looking back and you are not looking forward, you are in the moment. There is no past or future. Only the present.

"Jim, I want to touch base a little bit more about what I just said. About being in the moment. I heard the statement, 'live in the moment' said many times over the last few years. Only now is it *truly* sinking in. The only reason that it is sinking in is because I practiced it. Practicing and living in the moment go hand in hand. They are almost one and the same. It was when I chose to live in the moment and let go of the 'should-have's' of the past and the fears of the future that I was able to stop the craziness. The craziness of my thoughts and feelings. The thoughts and feelings that seemed to have a life of their own, with me just sitting there, having no control in how these thoughts and feelings manifested themselves. Once I made the conscious choice to live in the moment, I began to gain control over my thoughts and emotions.

"I want to add something else here. The pain of therapy. When therapy gets difficult it's easy to give up. I wanted to quit therapy many times

when it got hard. It was important to me to talk about that in therapy. After talking about it in therapy, I always found an answer to why I wanted to quit. It usually had to do with me not wanting to feel something. Be it fear or anger. Whatever. It was usually tied to feelings. Well, that's about it, Jim. What do you think? Can you help this friend of yours? Do you think the 8-steps I outlined here will help?"

"Amazing, Mike," I said, taking a deep breath in and slowly exhaling. I noticed that I had been sitting there listening to Mike in a state of awe, holding my breath. I was on the edge of my seat. "I am a bit amazed at this. Listening to you put it all together like you did. Listing the eight steps helped solidify what I've been doing over the past year. I feel like I took another step today by listening to you. Everything is even more cohesive than before. To answer your question, I do think I can help my friend. Thanks, Mike."

"No problem, Jim. That's what this is all about. Helping yourself so you can help others. Only when we choose to help ourselves can we then help others in a constructive way."

"Mike, I certainly know that I have a long way to go. I don't believe that in just one year I've totally gotten rid of my old behavioral patterns. However I am in such a better place than I was, a *much better* place! For that, I'm grateful. There's also a very powerful thing happening to me. I have the

chance to help someone else. That is incredibly powerful. I have to practice believing that I have the ability!"

"Exactly, Jim. Practice. I know we didn't talk a lot about the notion of practicing, but I think you've got it."

Mike got up from the couch to head out. I turned off the recorder and followed him to the front door.

"I've definitely got it and I will pass it along to my friend. Mike, I want to thank you again for everything and you know I'll be calling you soon for more advice!"

"Anytime, Jim. Although, I believe that the calls may be fewer and farther between," Mike said, as he walked out the door.

I sat on the stairs and watched Mike drive away. I began to think about where I'd been and where I was now. The improvement was drastic. I no longer felt helpless and desperate. I felt in control of my destiny. Then, I gently brought myself back to the moment. It was a beautiful fall day. Sunny. The trees were shedding their leaves and the street was quiet. I was breathing in the air one breath at a time. I rose and walked into the house. Taking, *one-step-at-a-time*.

*End*

## Afterward

In the end, this was a joyous book to write. It represents the *hope* that comes from within me. Writing this book was an exercise in finding my hope. I lost it somewhere a few years back.

Lately, hope seems to elude me. Hope is essential to survive. When I lose it, my life becomes meaningless. After finishing this book, I realized that I had found *it* again. Perhaps it was the relationship between Michael and Jim? Or, it could have been watching Jim recover from his addictions again. (I write 'again' because my first book is a full-blown memoir about recovering from my addictions.) Whatever the reason for hope resurfacing, I am grateful.

It took 3-days to write the first nine chapters of this book. It took a month to finish the whole thing. This book flowed out of me like someone was channeling it to me. I'm a fast writer, but a month? Perhaps it was divine intervention? I'm not a religious man but it made me stop and think, 'Where did this all come from so quickly?' (The editing went on for six-months. If you're listening, maybe I could just pump it out perfect next time!)

What I do know is that I couldn't have written this book if I wasn't sober and free of drugs. As I

wrote earlier about losing hope, I tend to lose my gratefulness for my sobriety also. Writing this book is a testament to sobriety. It's no wonder I found my gratefulness again after finishing the book.

You may ask if I use the books that I recommend in *8-Steps to Therapy*? Absolutely. I truly believe in *Loving What Is* and *The Power of the Subconscious Mind*. I wouldn't have included them in this book if I didn't believe in them and use them personally. Both books aided in not only my recovery but they continue to affect me on a daily basis. That's because I go back to them, time and time again for refreshers. As Michael would say "practice, practice, practice".

Lastly I'd like to thank you for reading my book. I appreciate your confidence in my ability to entertain and teach.

Feel free to email me anytime at [jamesg4us@yahoo.com](mailto:jamesg4us@yahoo.com).

No question is too silly.

See you in the next book!

Take care,

Jim Goulding (Sunday, April 27, 2003)

## From the Pits to the Pits

This is the title of my first book. You'll find more information on the book below and on my web site, [www.jamesgoulding.com](http://www.jamesgoulding.com).

Abstract.

'From the Pits to the Pits', chronicles the sixteen-year journey of a 17-year-old boy entering the Chicago Board of Trade (CBOT) as a runner and working his way through the ranks to become a million-dollar broker. All the while believing that money and possessions are the secret to happiness ignoring the emptiness that lies in his soul that can only be filled by coming to grips with his dysfunctional relationship with his Father.

Soon the author finds himself addicted to drugs and alcohol, which causes his body to go into complete revolt. However the author continues to fill his life with exotic vacations, wild parties, Ferrari's and endless limousine rental's. "Part I", culminates in 1989 while the author is worth over \$2,000,000 and had thought this would bring happiness yet it has done just the opposite. His marriage is ruined and he is unsatisfied with money and possessions so he attempts suicide.

"Part II", of the book follows the author's journey into the world of intensive psychotherapy, the reconciliation of his marriage and drug and alcohol rehabilitation. The book ends in

September 1995 exactly 16 years after he began at the Chicago Board of Trade.

## Reviews and Testimonials on From the Pits to the Pits

.... I thought your book was just great! I finished the book [in] two days and loved it so much because I was able to relate to so many things in the book.

—Paul Nowak, Student

I finished reading your book today and all I can say is wow.... your book was different, very different. To my surprise, the cover was an actual synopsis and not just a snag line to get you interested... thank you very much for writing this book. It is by far my favorite piece of writing and I think I will keep it forever and will try to show others it as well.

—Nate Capone, Student

I was on vacation last week in Michigan and read your book in 3 sittings. I enjoyed the read very much and it did make me think. Trading is a very tough business and it gave me some appreciation that other people have gone through similar times as I have.

—Bradley J. Rathe, Director of Research, Rotella Capital Management

"...the book itself is an emotional rollercoaster and a very good account of one man's struggle to discover his own failings and come to terms with them - often very, very painfully. The first third is the ride to riches at the CBOT via Refco and various other brokerages, to reaching the T-Bond pit and making his first several million. A lot of drugs and booze flows on the way and gradually it begins to upset Goulding's equilibrium. ....this book will take you through the house of horrors roller coaster and despite being in the first person throughout, and knowing the author had survived, there are many abysses where it seems as if the author is finally going to drop through the hole and never be seen again.

—Patrick Young, Erivativesreview.com

"In the high stakes world of life- Jimmy Goulding & his book are both winners!"

—John Savel, Commodities Trader, Chicago Board of Trade

"Jim's willingness and ability to enter into and transcend the pain and suffering of family crises and separation, social temptations and seductions, economic challenge, success, adversity and loss, and emotional emptiness and enlightenment are an inspiration to the faint of heart."

—Rob Ahrens, Licensed Clinical Social Worker

"From the Pits to the Pits is a powerful story filled with honesty and humor. Hopeful and

inspiring, Jim's book shows that instead of being victims of our past, we can make peace with it and learn to take control of our future."

—Nanci Greene, Teacher

"A useful account of one mans struggle with success, failure, family and addiction."

—Dave Duerkop, Broker, Chicago Board of Trade

## About the Author

Jim Goulding is a commodity trader at the Chicago Board of Trade in Chicago, IL. He's 41-years-old. He lives in Elmhurst, IL, with his wife Diana and their daughter, Haley Dara. Jim and Diana have been married for 20-years. Haley is 6-years-old.

