

1.

A Few Basic Principles

We are entering the dimension
where we have control—
the inside.

What I love about The Work is that it allows you to go inside and find your own happiness, to experience what already exists within you, unchanging, immovable, ever-present, ever-waiting. No teacher is necessary. You are the teacher you've been waiting for. You are the one who can end your own suffering.

I often say, "Don't believe anything I say." I want you to discover what's true for you, not for me. Still, many people have found the following principles to be helpful for getting started in The Work.

Noticing When Your Thoughts Argue with Reality

The only time we suffer is when we believe a thought that argues with what is. When the mind is perfectly clear, what is is what we want.

Question 1: Is it true?

Sometimes it's immediately obvious that the statement you have written is simply not true. If the answer that comes to you is a clear no, then move on to question 3. Otherwise, let's look at some ways to examine question 1 further.

What's the Reality of It?

If your answer to question 1 is yes, ask yourself: What's the reality of this situation?

Let's investigate the statement "Paul shouldn't watch so much television." What's the reality of it? In your experience, does he watch a lot of television? Yes: The reality is that Paul watches between six and ten hours of television on most days. How do we know that Paul should watch so much television? He does. That's the reality of it; that's what is true. A dog barks, a cat meows, and Paul watches television. That's his job. It may not always be that way, but for now, that's the way it is. Your thought that Paul shouldn't watch so much television is just your way of mentally arguing with what is. It doesn't do you any good, and it doesn't change Paul; its only effect is to cause you stress. Once you clearly see the reality that he watches so much television, who knows what changes can develop in your life?

Reality, for me, is what is true. The truth is whatever is in front of you, whatever is really happening. Whether you like it or not, it's raining now. "It shouldn't be raining" is just a thought. In reality, there is no such thing as a "should" or a

"shouldn't." These are only thoughts that we impose onto reality. The mind is like a carpenter's level. When the bubble is off to one side—"It shouldn't be raining"—we can know that the mind is caught in its thinking. When the bubble is right in the middle—"It's raining"—we can know that the surface is level and the mind is accepting reality as it is. Without the "should" and "shouldn't," we can see reality as it is, and this leaves us free to act efficiently, clearly, and sanely. Asking "What's the reality of it?" can help bring the mind out of its story, back into the real world.

Whose Business Is It?

As I said earlier, I can find only three kinds of business in the universe: mine, yours, and God's (and for me, reality is God). Whose business are you in when you're thinking the thought that you've written? When you think that someone or something other than yourself needs to change, you're mentally out of your business. Of course you feel separate, lonely, and stressed. Paul's over there living his life in front of the television set, you're mentally over there living his life, and there's no one here for you. Then you blame your loneliness and frustration on him. Ask yourself, "Whose business is it how much television I watch? Whose business is it how much television Paul watches? And can I really know what's best for Paul in the long run?" "Paul should watch less television"—is it true? Whose business is it?

Question 2: Can you absolutely know that it's true?

If your answer to question 1 is yes, ask yourself, "Can I absolutely know that it's true?" In many cases, the statement *appears* to be true. Of course it does. Your concepts are based on a lifetime of uninvestigated beliefs.

After I woke up to reality in 1986, I noticed many times how people, in conversations, the media, and books, made statements such as "There isn't enough understanding in the world," "There's too much violence," "We should love one another more." These were stories I used to believe, too. They seemed sensitive, kind, and caring, but as I heard them, I noticed that believing them caused stress and that they didn't feel peaceful inside me.

For instance, when I heard the story "People should be more loving," the question would arise in me "Can I absolutely know that that's true? Can I really know for myself, within myself, that people should be more loving? Even if the whole world tells me so, is it really true?" And to my amazement, when I listened within myself, I saw that the world is what it is—nothing more, nothing less. Where reality is concerned, there *is* no "what should be." There is only what is, just the way it is, right now. The truth is prior to every story. And every story, prior to investigation, prevents us from seeing what's true.

Now I could finally inquire of every potentially uncomfortable story, "Can I absolutely know that it's true?" And the

answer, like the question, was an experience: No. I would stand rooted in that answer—solitary, peaceful, free.

How could no be the right answer? Everyone I knew, and all the books, said that the answer should be yes. But I came to see that the truth is itself and will not be dictated to by anyone. In the presence of that inner no, I came to see that the world is always as it should be, whether I opposed it or not. And I came to embrace reality with all my heart. I love the world, without any conditions.

Let's play with the statement "I feel hurt because Paul is angry at me." You may have answered, "Yes, it's true. Paul is angry at me. His face is red, his neck is throbbing, and he is shouting at me." So there's the proof. But go inside again. Can you really know that it's you Paul is angry at? Can you really know what's going on inside someone else's mind? Can you know by someone's facial expression or body language what he is really thinking or feeling? Have you felt fear or anger, for example, and observed yourself point the finger of blame at the person nearest you? Can you absolutely know what another person is feeling, even when he tells you? Can you be certain that he is clear about his own thoughts and emotions? Have you ever been confused about whom or what you were angry at? Can you really know that it's true that Paul is angry at you?

To take it a step further, can you really know that you feel hurt because Paul is angry? Is Paul's anger actually *causing* your hurt? Might it be possible for you, in another frame of mind, to stand there in the full blast of Paul's anger and not experience it personally at all? What if you could simply listen, calmly and lovingly receiving whatever he says? After inquiry, that was my experience.

Suppose your statement is “Paul should stop smoking.” Of course he should! Everyone knows that smoking causes lung cancer. Now, go in deeper with the question. Can you really know that it’s true that Paul should stop smoking? Can you know that his life would be better or that he would live longer if he stopped smoking? Can you really know what is best for Paul on his life’s path? Can you know that if Paul stopped smoking, it would be best for him or you in the long run? And I’m not saying that it wouldn’t be. I’m just asking, “Paul should stop smoking”—can you absolutely know that it’s true?

If your answer is still yes, good. If you think that you can absolutely know that that’s true, it’s always fine to move on to question 3. Or if you feel a little stuck, you may want to try one or more of the following exercises.

When You Think That It’s True

Sometimes you may not feel comfortable with your yes to questions 1 and 2; they may make you feel that you’re grinding to a halt in your inquiry. You want to go deeper, but the statement you’ve written, or the thought that’s torturing you, appears to be an irrefutable fact. Here are some ways to coax your thoughts out into the open, to prompt new statements that can allow inquiry to go deeper.

And it means that _____

A powerful way of prompting yourself is to add “and it means that _____” to your original statement. Your suffering may be caused by a thought that interprets what happened, rather than

the thought you wrote down. This additional phrase prompts you to reveal your interpretation of the fact.

Let’s say you wrote, “I am angry at my father because he hit me.” Is it true? Yes: you *are* angry, and yes: he *did* hit you, many times, when you were a child. Try writing the statement with your added interpretation. “I am angry at my father because he hit me, and it means that _____.” Maybe you would finish this statement with “and it means that he doesn’t love me.”

Now that you know what your interpretation is, you can take it to inquiry. Write down the new statement, and apply all four questions and the turnaround. His hitting you means that he didn’t love you—can you absolutely know that that’s true? You may come to realize that it’s your interpretation of the fact that is causing you stress.

What do you think you would have?

Another way of prompting yourself is to read your original statement and ask yourself what you think you would have if reality were (in your opinion) fully cooperating with you. Suppose you wrote, “Paul should tell me that he loves me.” Your answer to “What do you think you would have?” might be that if Paul told you that he loves you, you would feel more secure. Write down this new statement—“I would feel more secure if Paul told me that he loves me”—and put it up against inquiry.

What’s the worst that could happen?

When your statement is about something that you think you don’t want, read it and imagine the worst outcome that reality could hand you. Imagine your worst fears lived out on paper. Be thorough. Take it to the limit.

Your statement might be, for example, “I’m heartbroken because my wife left me.” Now ask yourself, “What’s the worst that could happen?” Make a list of all the terrible events that you think might happen as a result of your present situation. After each frightening scenario that comes to mind, imagine what could happen next. And then what could happen? And then what? Be a frightened child. Don’t hold back.

When you’ve finished writing, start at the top of your list and apply the four questions and turnaround to each statement.

What’s the “should”?

A fourth useful prompt is to look for a “should” or “shouldn’t” version of your original statement. If your anger arises from the belief that reality should have been different, you might rewrite the statement “I am angry at my father because he hit me” as “My father shouldn’t have hit me.” This statement may be easier to investigate. With the first form of this statement—“My father hit me”—we know the answer, or we think we know it. “Is it true? Definitely yes.” We would stake our lives on it. With the rewritten form—“My father shouldn’t have hit me”—we are not so sure, and we’re more open to discovering another, deeper truth.

Where’s your proof?

Sometimes you’re convinced that your written statement is true and you believe that you can absolutely know that it’s true, but you haven’t looked at your “proof.” If you really want to know the truth, bring all your evidence into the open and put it to the test of inquiry. Here’s an example:

ORIGINAL STATEMENT: I AM SADDENED BY PAUL BECAUSE HE DOESN’T LOVE ME.

The proof that Paul doesn’t love me:

1. Sometimes he walks by me without speaking.
2. When I enter the room, he doesn’t look up.
3. He doesn’t acknowledge me. He continues to do what he is interested in.
4. He doesn’t call me by name.
5. I ask him to take out the trash, and he pretends not to hear me.
6. I tell him what time dinner is, and sometimes he doesn’t show up.
7. When we do talk, he seems distant, as though he has more important things to do.

Investigate each of your “proof of truth” statements, using all four questions and the turnaround, as in the following examples:

1. He sometimes walks by me without speaking. *That proves* that he doesn’t love me. Is it true? Can I absolutely know that it’s true? (Is it possible that he is mentally absorbed in something else?) Continue with all four questions and the turnaround.
2. When I enter the room, he doesn’t look up. *That proves* that he doesn’t love me. Is it true? Can I absolutely know that it means he doesn’t love me? Continue to test your proof with all four questions and the turnaround.

Test your whole list in this manner, and then return to your original inquiry: “I’m saddened by Paul because he doesn’t love me”—is it true?

Finding Your "Proof of Truth"

Think of a person in your life (past or present) who you think doesn't love you. Then make a list of your proof that it's true.

Now investigate each "proof of truth" statement you have written down, using all four questions and the turnaround.

Question 3: How do you react when you think that thought?

With this question, we begin to notice internal cause and effect. You can see that when you believe the thought, there is an uneasy feeling, a disturbance that can range from mild discomfort to fear or panic. Since you may have realized from question 1 that the thought isn't even true for you, you're looking at the power of a lie. Your nature is truth, and when you oppose it, you don't feel like yourself. Stress never feels as natural as peace does.

After the four questions found me, I would notice thoughts like "People should be more loving," and I would see that they caused a feeling of uneasiness. I noticed that prior to the thought, there was peace. My mind was quiet and serene. There was no stress, no disturbing physical reaction. This is who I am without my story. Then, in the stillness of awareness, I began to notice the feelings that came from believing or attaching to the thought. And in the stillness, I could see that if I were to believe

the thought, the result would be a feeling of unease and sadness. From there, it would go to "I should do something about this." From there, it would shift to guilt; I didn't have the slightest idea of how to make people be more loving, because I myself couldn't be any more loving than I in fact was. When I asked, "How do I react when I believe the thought that people should be more loving?" I saw that not only did I have an uncomfortable feeling (this was obvious), but I also reacted with mental pictures—of the wrongs I had once thought I'd suffered, of the terrible things I had once thought people had done to me, of my first husband's unkindness to our children and me—to prove that the thought was true. I flew off into a world that didn't exist. There I was, sitting in a chair with a cup of tea, and mentally I was living in the pictures of an illusory past. I became a character in the pages of a myth of suffering—the heroine of suffering, trapped in a world filled with injustice. I reacted by living in a stressed body, seeing everything through fearful eyes, a sleepwalker, someone in an endless nightmare. The remedy was simply to investigate.

I love question 3. Once you answer it for yourself, once you see the cause and effect of a thought, all your suffering begins to unravel. You may not even realize it at first. You may not even know that you're making progress. But progress is none of your business. Just keep doing The Work. It will continue to take you deeper. The next time the problem you worked on appears, you may laugh in astonishment. You may not feel any stress; you may not even notice the thought at all.

Can you see a reason
to drop that thought?
(And please don't try to drop it.)

This is an additional question that I sometimes ask as a follow-up to question 3, because it can bring radical shifts in awareness. Along with the next additional question, it goes deeper into an awareness of internal cause and effect. "Can I see a reason to drop the thought? Yes, I can: I was at peace before the thought appeared, and after it appeared I felt contraction and stress."

It's important to realize that inquiry is about noticing, not about dropping the thought. That is not possible. If you think that I'm asking you to drop the thought, hear this: I am not! Inquiry is not about getting rid of thoughts; it's about realizing what's true for you, through awareness and unconditional self-love. Once you see the truth, the thought lets go of *you*, not the other way around.

Can you find one stress-free
reason to keep the thought?

Another question I sometimes ask is "Can you find one stress-free reason to keep the thought?" You may see lots of reasons, but they all cause stress, they all hurt. None of them is peaceful or valid, not if you're interested in putting an end to your suffering. If you find one that seems valid, ask yourself, "Is this

reason peaceful, or is it stressful? Does thinking that thought bring peace or stress into my life? And do I operate more efficiently, lovingly, and clearly when I am stressed or when I am free of stress?" (In my experience, all stress is inefficient.)

Question 4: Who would you be
without the thought?

This is a very powerful question. Picture yourself standing in the presence of the person you have written about when they're doing what you think they shouldn't be doing. Now, just for a minute or two, close your eyes, take a deep breath, and imagine who you would be if you couldn't think this thought. How would your life be different in the same situation without this thought? Keep your eyes closed and watch them without your story. What do you see? How do you feel about them without the story? Which do you prefer—with or without your story? Which feels kinder? Which feels more peaceful?

For many people, life without their story is literally unimaginable. They have no reference for it. So "I don't know" is a common answer to this question. Other people answer by saying, "I'd be free," "I'd be peaceful," "I'd be a more loving person." You could also say, "I'd be clear enough to understand the situation and act efficiently." Without our stories, we are not only able to act clearly and fearlessly; we are also a friend, a listener. We are people living happy lives. We are appreciation and gratitude that have become as natural as breath itself. Happiness is the natural state for someone who knows that

there's nothing to know and that we already have everything we need, right here now.

The answer to question 4 may leave us without an identity. This is very exciting. You're left with nothing and as nothing other than the reality of the moment: woman sitting in a chair, writing. This can be a little scary, since it leaves no illusion of a past or future. You might ask, "How do I live now? What do I do? Nothing is meaningful." And I would say, "With no past or future, you won't know how to live?—can you really know that that's true? 'You don't know what to do, and nothing is meaningful'—can you really know that that's true?" Write down your fears and walk yourself through inquiry again on these subtle, intricate concepts. The goal of inquiry is to bring us back to our right mind, so we can realize for ourselves that we live in paradise and haven't even noticed.

"Who would you be without the thought?" is the form of question 4 that I suggest if you're new to The Work. I invite people to phrase the question in another way as well: "Who or what would you be without the thought?" Sit with it. Let any thoughts or pictures come and go as you contemplate this form of the question. It can be an extremely rich experience. You may also want to play with the original form of question 4: "What would you be without the thought?" "Peace" is the answer that people often come to. And again I ask, "What would you be without even that thought?"

The Turnaround

The turnaround is a very powerful part of The Work. It's the part where you take what you have written about others and

see if it is as true or truer when it applies to you. As long as you think that the cause of your problem is "out there"—as long as you think that anyone or anything else is responsible for your suffering—the situation is hopeless. It means that you are forever in the role of the victim, that you're suffering in paradise. So bring the truth home to yourself and begin to set yourself free. Inquiry combined with the turnaround is the fast track to self-realization.

For example, the statement "Paul is unkind" turns around to "I am unkind." Go inside and find the situations in your life where this seems true for you. Have you also been unkind to Paul? (Look at your answers to the question "How do you react when you think the thought 'Paul is unkind'? How do you treat him?") Aren't you being unkind in the moment when you are seeing Paul as unkind? Experience what it feels like when you believe that Paul is unkind. Your body may tense, your heart may speed up, you may feel flushed—is that kind to yourself? You may get judgmental and defensive—how does that feel inside you? Those reactions are the results of your uninvestigated thinking.

When Paul insults you, for example, how many times do you replay that scene in your mind? Who is more unkind—Paul (who insulted you once today) or you (who multiplied his insult over and over again in your mind)? Consider this: Were your feelings the result of Paul's action itself or your own judgments about it? If Paul insulted you and you didn't know about it, would you suffer? Be still for a moment. Go deep. Stay vigilantly in your own mental business as you sit with this.

The Three Types of Turnaround

There are three ways to do the turnaround. A judgment can be turned around to yourself, to the other, and to the opposite. There are many possible combinations of these three to play with. The point is not to find the most turnarounds, but to find the ones that set you free from the nightmare you're innocently attached to. Turn the original statement around any way you want to until you find the turnarounds that penetrate the deepest.

Let's play with the statement "Paul should appreciate me."

First, turn it around to yourself:

I should appreciate myself. (It's my job, not his.)

Next, turn it around to the other:

I should appreciate Paul. (If I believe it's so easy for Paul to appreciate me, can I appreciate Paul? Can I live it?)

Then turn it around to the opposite:

Paul shouldn't appreciate me. (That's reality, sometimes. Paul shouldn't appreciate me, unless he does.)

Be willing to go inside with each turnaround, and ask if it's as true as or truer than the original statement. How does it apply to you in your life? Own it. If that seems difficult for you, add the word "sometimes" to the turnaround. Can you own that it's true *sometimes*, even if only in the moment that you're thinking that it's true about the other?

Now list three examples in your life where the turnarounds

are true. For example, name three ways you haven't appreciated yourself. Name three ways you haven't appreciated Paul. Name three ways that Paul has appreciated you. This completes the turnarounds.

I suggest that you always use the four questions before applying the turnaround. You may be tempted to take a shortcut and skip to the turnaround without putting your statement up against inquiry first. This is not an effective way of using the turnaround. Without the questions first, the turnarounds can feel harsh and shameful; the feeling of judgment turned back onto yourself can be brutal if it occurs prior to thorough self-education, and the four questions give you this education. They end the ignorance of what you believe to be true, and the turnaround in the last position feels gentle and makes sense. By asking the four questions first and going inside for the answers, you'll make it possible to experience the turnarounds as revelations rather than mental gymnastics.

The Work is not about shame and blame. It's not about proving that you are the one in the wrong or forcing yourself to believe that someone else is in the right. The power of the turnaround lies in the discovery that everything you think you see on the outside is really a projection of your own mind. Everything is a mirror image of your own thinking. Once you have learned to go in for your own answers and opened yourself up to the turnarounds, you'll experience this for yourself. In discovering the innocence of the person you judged, you'll come to recognize your own innocence.

Sometimes you may not find the turnaround in your behavior or actions. If that's the case, look for it in your thinking. For example, the turnaround for "Paul should stop smoking" is "I should stop smoking." Perhaps you have never smoked a single

cigarette in your life. It may be that where you are smoking is in your mind. Over and over, you smoke with anger and frustration as you picture Paul smelling up your house with cigarette smoke. Do you mentally smoke more times in a day than Paul does? Your prescription for peace, then, is for you to stop smoking in your mind and to stop being so smoking angry about Paul's smoking.

Another suggestion is to substitute something else for the word *smoking*. Maybe you've never smoked, but is there something that you use in the same way that you think Paul uses cigarettes—food, drugs, credit cards, or relationships? Your turnaround could be “I should stop using credit cards to make myself feel better.” Be willing to take the advice that you're giving him, the advice that shows you how to live in your own business.

The Turnarounds in Action

Self-realization is not complete until it lives as action. Live the turnarounds. When you see how you have been preaching to others, go back and make amends, and let them know how difficult it is for you to do what you wanted them to do. Let them know the ways that you manipulated and conned them, how you got angry, used sex, used money, and used guilt to get what you wanted.

I wasn't always able to live the advice that I so generously held out for others to live. When I realized this, I found myself on equal ground with the people I had judged. I saw that my philosophy wasn't so easy for any of us to live. I saw that we're all doing the best we can. This is how a lifetime of humility begins.

Reporting is another powerful way I found to manifest self-realization. In the first year after I woke up to reality, I often went to the people I had been judging and shared my turnarounds and realizations. I reported only what I had discovered about my part in whatever difficulty I was experiencing. (Under no circumstances did I talk about *their* part.) I did this so that I could hear it in the presence of at least two witnesses—the other person and myself. I gave it, and I received it. If, for example, your statement was “He lied to me,” one turnaround would be “I lied to him.” Now you list as many of your lies as you can remember and report them to that person, never in any way mentioning his lies to you. His lies are his business. You are doing this for your own freedom. Humility is the true resting place.

When I wanted to move even faster and more freely, I found that apologizing and making heartfelt amends was a wonderful shortcut. “To make amends” means to right the perceived wrong. What I call “living amends” is more far-reaching. It applies not only to one particular incident but to all future incidents of that kind. When I realized through inquiry that I had hurt someone in my past, I stopped hurting anyone. If, even after this, I hurt someone, I told them immediately why I did it, what I was afraid of losing, or what I wanted to get from them; and I began again, always with a clean slate. This is a powerful way to live freely.

A heartfelt apology is a way to undo an error and begin again on an equal and guiltless basis. Apologize and make amends for your own sake. It's all about your own peace. What good is it to be a talking saint? We've got an earth full of them. Peace is who you already are, without a story. Can you just live it?

Go through your list of examples of how the turnaround is

true for you, and underline each statement where you feel that you harmed someone in any way. (Your list of answers to question 3—"How do you react, how do you treat them, when you believe that thought?"—could keep you very busy with reporting and apologizing.) Make amends to yourself by making amends to others. Give back in equal measure what you believe you took at their expense.

Honest, nonmanipulative reporting, coupled with living amends, brings real intimacy to otherwise impossible relationships. If any people on your Worksheet are dead, make living amends through the rest of us. Give us what you would have given them, for your own sake.

I knew a man who was very serious about his freedom. He had been a junkie and a thief, had broken into many houses, and had been very good at what he did. After he had been doing *The Work* for a while, he made a list of everyone he had ever stolen from and what he had taken, as exactly as he could remember. When he finished the list, there were dozens of people and houses on it. And then he began to turn it around. He knew he would end up in jail, and yet he had to do what was right for him. He went house by house and knocked on each door. He was African-American, and some of the places he returned to were not very comfortable for him, because he had beliefs about prejudice. But he just kept working with them and knocking on the doors. When people answered, he would tell them who he was and what he had stolen, then he would apologize and say, "How can I make this right? I'll do whatever it takes." And no one ever called the police. They would say things like, "Okay, fix my car" or "Paint my house." And he would do the job with pleasure and then put a check

mark by their name on his list. And every stroke of the paintbrush, he said, was God, God, God.

I have a son, Ross, who has been doing *The Work* for a long time. Eight or nine years ago, I noticed that, as we shopped, he would sometimes say, "Wait for me, Mom, I'll be right back," and leave me for ten minutes or so. On one occasion, I watched him through the store window choose a shirt, take it to the cashier, and pay for it. Then he went back to the shelf, looked around to make sure that no one was watching, put the shirt back, and walked out of the store. I asked him what he was doing. He said, "A while ago, I stole things from five or six stores. It was horrible, Mom. Now when I see a store where I stole something, I walk in, find an item like the one I stole, pay for it, and put it back. I tried turning myself in. I'd say, 'Here's the money for what I stole, and if you want to prosecute, it's okay with me.' And they'd get confused, they'd call in the manager, and the manager wouldn't know what to do with the money, he'd tell me that it was too complicated for the computers. And if they called the police, the police would say that you have to be caught in the act. So they'd end up telling me that there was nothing they could do. But I really needed to turn it around. So I found this way. It works for me."

Ross also likes to play with an exercise that I recommend, which is to do a kind act and not get found out; if you're found out, the act doesn't count, and you start over. I have seen him at amusement parks watch children who don't seem to have enough money. He'll pull out a bill from his wallet, stoop down in front of the child, pretend to pick it up from the ground, and hand it to him, saying, "You dropped this, dude," then quickly

walk away without ever looking back. He's an amazing teacher of how to practice the turnaround through living amends.

It's generous to yourself to bring this practice into everyday life. And the results are nothing short of miraculous.

The Turnaround for Number 6

The turnaround for statement number 6 on the Judge-Your-Neighbor Worksheet is a bit different from the others. We change "I don't ever want to . . ." to "I am willing to . . ." and "I look forward to . . ." For example, "I don't ever want to argue with Paul again" turns around to "I am willing to argue with Paul again" and "I look forward to arguing with Paul again."

This turnaround is about embracing all of life. Saying—and meaning—"I am willing to . . ." creates openness, creativity, and flexibility. Any resistance that you may have is softened, allowing you to lighten up rather than keep hopelessly applying willpower or force to eradicate the situation from your life. Saying and meaning "I look forward to . . ." actively opens you to life as it unfolds.

For example, "I don't ever want to live with Paul if he doesn't change" turns around to "I am willing to live with Paul if he doesn't change" and "I look forward to living with Paul if he doesn't change." You may as well look forward to it—you could find yourself living with him, if only in your mind. (I have worked with people still bitter even though their mate has been dead for twenty years.) Whether you live with him or not, you will probably have this thought again, and you may feel the resulting stress and depression. Look forward to these feelings; they're reminders that it's time to wake yourself up.

Uncomfortable feelings will bring you right back to The Work. This doesn't mean that you have to live with Paul. It just means that you're no longer closing yourself off from reality. Willingness opens the door to all of life's possibilities.

Here are two more examples from our sample Worksheet.

ORIGINAL STATEMENT, NUMBER 6: I REFUSE TO WATCH PAUL RUIN HIS HEALTH.

Turnarounds: I am willing to watch Paul ruin his health.

I look forward to watching Paul ruin his health.

ORIGINAL STATEMENT, NUMBER 6: I DON'T EVER WANT TO BE IGNORED BY PAUL AGAIN.

Turnarounds: I am willing to be ignored by Paul again.

I look forward to being ignored by Paul again.

It's good to acknowledge that the same feelings or situation may happen again, if only in your thoughts. When you realize that suffering and discomfort are the call to inquiry, you may actually begin to look forward to uncomfortable feelings. You may even experience them as friends coming to show you what you have not yet investigated thoroughly enough. It's no longer necessary to wait for people or situations to change in order to experience peace and harmony. The Work is the direct way to orchestrate your own happiness.