



BEGINNING *within*

# BEGINNING WITHIN MASTER COURSE

## 4. SHOWING UP

*The easiest way to diffuse a situation is by showing your real self. The more we practice speaking truthfully, the more we internalize that exposing ourselves brings us closer to others, not further from them.*

Until now we have learned how important it is to simply become aware of why we act and respond the way we do. We then learned the powerful effect of finding the space between a stimulus and our response. We can find this space using the Checking In To Reality exercise. Practicing this exercise repeatedly we get us in the habit of slowing down our response until we have more clarity at which point we will usually choose a much healthier response. Today we're going to learn a few behaviors that we can improve on which will further assist us in learning to live life beginning within. Through repeated healthy behavior, our emotions follow suit, and we begin to feel our inherent worthiness from within.

## **Speaking Truthfully**

One behavior that will help us to get our worthiness from within is by practicing the art of speaking truthfully. I am specifically not saying speaking the truth because it is not always wise to speak all of our truths. Simply because something is true isn't a reason for us to share it. Certain things should remain private even if they're true. What we must do though is ensure that whenever we do speak, we speak truthfully. Speaking truthfully is the antidote to hiding. Speaking truthfully is the act of showing up simply as who we are, without trying in any way to make ourselves look any different. This is a scary thing to do being that we may still get our self-worth from the people and things outside of us. We may still feel that we will lose acceptance from others if we speak the truth and this may be true. Decent people value someone they can trust. There is no greater way to build trust than your ability to show up even when it reveals a flaw or failure. When I started deliberately speaking truthfully without any form of exaggeration or minimization or hiding of any sort, it was like experiencing a miracle before my eyes. It left no room for a fight, accusation, and drama. No justifying or proving myself. Just saying it the way it is.

I remember an incident when someone told me that I made a comment which really hurt their feelings. I could've justified my comment, defended why I made the comment or judge whether they should've gotten hurt by the comment. I didn't do either. I simply said, "I didn't realize that my comment hurt you. Had I known I would not have said it. I feel bad and I apologize.

Please forgive me.” No hiding. No covering up. No avoiding. I came right out and took full responsibility. He walked away elated and I walked away without any burden on my shoulder.

People often ask me how I am comfortable teaching classes when people can ask me so many questions and I may not know the answer. My response is simple. Those are the easiest questions to answer. I simply say, “I don’t know.” Not only does this not devalue me in the eyes of the students, it adds value to everything else I say. They know when I speak, I will only do so when I know what I’m talking about.

As we conduct ourselves more and more with the behaviors of one who gets their self-worth from within we will begin to see a transformation within ourselves. When someone asks me how many years of experience I have with something and I say 10 years when I only have 8 years of experience, or if I just left work which is a half hour from my home and I tell my wife I will be home in 15 minutes, these are subtle lies. Why do we do this? Because we always want to make things sound a little better than they are or to make ourselves sound a little better than we are. This is all a part of pandering to the world around us to buy their acceptance. We must get into the habit of speaking truthfully, even when it may not reflect well on us, to simply say things exactly the way they are without embellishing them or minimizing them in any way shape or form. When we begin to pay attention to how often we deliberately paint a picture which is slightly different than the reality, it is shocking. As you know yourself, people will embrace us more when we share truths which don’t reflect so well on us than when we hide and they can’t even get close to us. I will have a closer relationship with my spouse when I tell her I left the office at 6:30 pm, even though I promised to leave at 6 pm, than when I tell my spouse I’m stuck in traffic. My spouse knows that I don’t hide and always show up. That’s far more valuable than someone who always has excuses.

So how do we go about speaking truthfully? After we go through the Checking In To Reality exercise in any given situation we have the opportunity to choose to speak truthfully. In our example of the plate, once the husband gets in touch with reality that the plate is dirty, he simply chooses to say, “thank you for pointing that out, I’ll rewash it.” An even more admirable

way of speaking truthfully is if we've already responded defensively. After the event, he took some time to do the Checking In To Reality exercise and got in touch with the reality. By coming back the next day and acknowledging that yesterday he was offended by her comment entirely because of his own insecurity and letting his wife know that his initial response truthfully had nothing to do with what she said. By acknowledging that our behavior was because of our own issue and not as we implied, because of them, builds tremendous trust in the relationship. It demonstrates how truthful you are, how you don't hide and how responsible you can be.

## **Responsibility**

Going through the Checking In To Reality exercise is one of the highest forms of responsibility. Responsibility is one of the most fundamental characteristics that belongs to a person who begins within. I first want to tell you what responsibility does not mean. Taking responsibility does not mean it's your fault. It does not mean saying that I am responsible in the sense that, "It is my fault." Very often other people will do things or say things which are entirely their fault. However, there is no use or benefit focusing on who is at fault. What we do receive great benefit focusing on is asking ourselves a very responsible question and that is, "What can I do about the current situation?" This is true for every single situation which we find ourselves in. Even when your spouse deliberately says something hurtful to you, taking responsibility means asking yourself "How can I add productively to the conversation?" In this scenario of the dishwashing, the responsible approach is to ask myself why I am getting upset and then going through the process of event/judgment/feeling/space/reaction. Instead of focusing on what everyone else should have done or should be doing, all of which are out of your control, you do what responsible people do. You take control in the one area of your life which you do control and that is what you can do about the situation.

Rabbi Yisrael Lau, former chief Rabbi of Israel, related a part of a conversation he had in 1974. He was then a rabbi in a small synagogue outside of Tel Aviv and came to Brooklyn to visit the Lubavitcher Rebbe. In the middle of their conversation, the Rebbe asked him what Jews are

saying these days in Israel (it was right after the 1973 Yom Kippur war). Rabbi Lau replied that Jews are asking each other: “*Vos vet zein*”? “What will be?”

The Rebbe grasped Rabbi Lau’s arm, and vehemently said: “*Yiden fregen nit vos vet zein; ze fregen: vos geit men ton!*” “One should not ask what will be; they ask, ‘What are we going to do!’”

The Rebbe was emphasizing that asking “What will be” is the question of a victim. “What are we going to do” is a proactive question. When you are at war, the last thing you want to hear is your commander-in-chief questioning, “What are we going to do?” You want to hear that we have a plan, a direction, a strategy – and we are forging ahead!

This reminds us that a victim's question is, “what’s going to be?” It’s a question that comes from disempowerment and resignation. A liberated persons question is, “what am I going to do?” You see, people who live their lives beginning within are not busy telling everyone else what they should do. You cannot control what other people do. They ask what am I going to do with an emphasis on I. If you’re wondering about our obligation to influence others and motivate others to do things, we will deal with that in the last module of this course.

## **Owning Our Emotions**

Responsibility leads us to another point which is most fundamental and in and of itself very transformative. Have you ever heard someone say, “They make me feel?” Have you ever said, “You always make me feel”? These expressions, where we express that other people make us feel, indicate that I have no control over my feelings and they are in the control of others. Many people truly believe this. They will say, “When you say insulting things to me it hurts my feelings.” It implies that there is nothing I can do about that. Those are words which hurt me.

This is completely untrue. If the very same words were said by someone who isn’t important to you, the words wouldn’t hurt. Clearly, it isn’t the words that hurt, it’s the meaning we attach to the words.

Here are two examples I heard from Greg Baer, author of *Real Love*, which really drives home this point. You may remember them from the very beginning of the course. Imagine you only had two dollars left to your name. That's all you had. Someone comes and steals your last two dollars from you. You might feel furious. For heaven's sake, it's your last two dollars. Now imagine that you had twenty million dollars and someone steals two dollars from you. Would you feel furious? No. What are two dollars when you have twenty million? Nothing. What we see is that the taking of the two dollars is not what makes us angry. If it did, we would be angry even when we have twenty million. What makes us angry is our own emptiness of money. When we have no money, all that we had was just taken from us. When we barely have a sense of worthiness, your insult takes away the little bit I have and in my fear, I become emotional. This is because of what's going on with me, not with what you said, had I been full of worthiness, your comment would not have hurt me at all.

Here's a second example. Imagine you're sitting next to your future spouse and you put your arm around their shoulder. How would they feel about such an embrace? Typically, they'd feel wonderful. There's nothing like a loving embrace from someone you love. Now, what would happen if they just returned from the beach with a bad sunburn and without knowing, you give them the same embrace. They'll jump back and scream. Why are they screaming? Not because your embrace hurts but because they are in pain. When someone is in pain the smallest thing sets them off. They screamed because of their own sunburn, their own issue. Likewise, when someone throws an insult at me, if I'm sunburn, meaning, I'm hypersensitive because I lack worthiness, I will feel hurt. The hurt is coming from my sunburn, not their insult. If I have a strong sense of worthiness and I'm not hypersensitive, I will hear the insult without being hurt by it. If events caused anger, we'd all respond to the same event in the exact same way. There isn't a single event where all people will respond equally.

If events caused anger, we'd all respond to the same event in the exact same way. There isn't a single event where all people will respond equally. So you can see that we, in making our worthiness contingent upon others, are choosing to hurt ourselves. This is the height of true

responsibility. Acknowledging that every feeling that I have is in my control and not in someone else's.

Let's go back to the analogy we discussed in the last module. Did you ever see a child get their parent angry? The parent may say, "Oh, this child makes my life miserable." This is enormously empowering for the child which is why when we get angry at our children, we are actually encouraging this behavior. The reason for this is because the child instinctively knows that he now holds the reins to his parent's emotions. If he does one thing his parents will be happy and if he does another his parents will be upset. That's a very powerful and even seductive feeling for a child to have. And who handed over the reins of the parent's emotions to the child? The parent did! By the parent letting their child change their emotional state, they are making themselves the victim of the child. Once again, this is analogous to putting a dog leash around your neck and start walking you around. It's handing over your power entirely to another person. In English, we call this irresponsible. Why? Because you are giving up your ability to choose how you would like to respond to a situation and instead are letting someone else determine that for you.

So as you can see, the height of responsibility is when we begin to own our feelings and emotions. This is not easy at all which is why it's hard to find many people who are examples of this. However, the more we go through the exercise of event/judgment/feelings/space/reaction we actually begin to take control of our emotions once again. And this is one of the most liberating experiences a human being can have. Just imagine the toxic family member that always pushes the buttons of others and predictably gets the reaction they are looking for because everyone becomes their victim. Now imagine the next time they push your buttons after you have begun taking responsibility for your emotions. They push your button and you sit there calmly. You remind yourself that toxic people say toxic things. You remind yourself that your worthiness surely doesn't come from them and you remind yourself that what they're saying doesn't define the reality or the truth. After you do this a number of times with the same person they will actually stop trying to push your buttons.

They will learn that it is futile. In fact, through your responsibility, you will have helped not only yourself but also them. This is a perfect example of how by transforming ourselves we transform the world around us.

Let's summarize what we've learned in this module. There are three behaviors we must be mindful of if we want to experience peace as well as maximize the power invested within us. The first is speaking truthfully. Meaningful relationships depend on the vulnerability of showing our true selves. What we discover in the process is that speaking truthfully prevents a tremendous amount of the toxicity we have in our relationships. The second is taking responsibility in every situation we are in. We must always ask, "What can I do about this," even when the other person was wrong. This also prevents lots of toxicity because we don't spend our time on what should've happened but rather and making the right things happen now. The third is owning our emotions. This means realizing that no one makes us feel other than we ourselves. Our internal processing system is what creates our feelings. Using the Checking In To Reality exercise is the path to owning our emotions. This very clearly knocks out an enormous amount of useless emotional pain that we would otherwise carry.