

Dr. Pinkie Feinstein

Emotional Transformation



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This book is an invitation to a Psycho-Creative journey. A journey into the hidden realms of our emotions, into the places where pain often resides, where difficulties seem to repeat themselves endlessly, and where we are tempted to lose hope. It is also a journey toward the possibility that precisely in those places, in the most unwanted experiences of life, lies the key to growth, healing, and creativity.

Emotional Transformation Practice:

With yourself: <https://youtu.be/xuc3FM-a57Q>

With a "cosmic time" video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P2G115aNK6Q>

About the Author

Dr. Pinkie Feinstein is a psychiatrist, author, and the founder of the **Psycho-Creative Approach**, a unique method that bridges the inner world of emotions with the outward power of creative expression. Over the past three decades, Dr. Feinstein has devoted his life to helping individuals transform emotional struggles into opportunities for growth, healing, and authentic living.

He is the author of numerous books, including *Self-Love – The Highest Commitment*, and has developed training programs in **intuitive painting**, **psycho-creative coaching**, and **emotional transformation practice**. His work combines clinical insight with creative tools, offering people concrete ways to meet themselves deeply, reduce destructive self-criticism, and cultivate love, resilience, and creative flow.

Dr. Feinstein leads the [Psycho-Creative World](#), where courses, workshops, and support groups help individuals and communities adopt transformation as a way of life. His teachings invite people not to fear their problems or emotional crises, but to embrace them as messengers of inner truth and as powerful openings for change.

Through his books, lectures, and international community, Dr. Feinstein continues to inspire thousands to live with greater courage, creativity, and compassion towards transforming pain into vitality and difficulties into paths of personal evolution.

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Introduction

Emotional Transformation is not a theory about emotions, it is a way of living with them. It proposes a fundamental shift in how we relate to our inner world: instead of trying to fight, suppress, or escape what we feel, we are invited to engage with it, to stay present with it, and to allow it to move through us into something new. Anger, fear, anxiety, depression, and even our most stubborn problems are no longer enemies to be eradicated, but raw material waiting to be transformed.

The practice you will find in these pages is simple in form, yet profound in its effect. It is built on five essential steps that anyone can learn, repeat, and integrate into daily life. Each step is a reminder that we have the capacity not only to endure what happens to us but to change the very relationship we have with ourselves. This is not about quick fixes or miraculous cures. It is about cultivating a deep partnership with your own psyche, one that allows your inner forces of healing and renewal to awaken and to guide you forward.

The chapters of this book unfold gradually, moving from the foundations of self-love and emotional awareness into practical guidance for working with anxiety, depression, and recurring problems. They show that transformation is not a one-time event but a practice, a daily ritual, a discipline of meeting ourselves with courage and honesty. Along the way, you will encounter stories, reflections, and practical exercises designed to help you embody these principles in your own life.

You may find that, as you read, the book itself becomes a kind of mirror. At times it will be encouraging; at other times it may confront you with truths you have long avoided. That is part of the process. Transformation is never about comfort alone, it is about growth. And growth requires us to look at what hurts, to hold it, and to discover the hidden power within it.

In the end, **Emotional Transformation** is about freedom. Freedom from the endless cycle of self-criticism, fear, and avoidance. Freedom to create, to love, to change, to live more fully. The very challenges you struggle with today may become the foundations of your strength tomorrow.

I invite you to enter this journey with openness and curiosity. Do not rush. Do not demand immediate results. Read, practice, return, and read again. Let the words resonate with your own story. Allow yourself the gift of discovering that your emotions are not obstacles in your way, they are the path itself.

Dr. Pinkie Feinstein

[The Psycho-Creative World](#)

Chapter 1: The Evil Within Which Good Is Hidden

We cannot truly seek the light within us without first acknowledging the darkness in which we reside.

This may well be the most challenging chapter in the entire process, and it is good that it appears right at the beginning, so we can make sure we are indeed ready to learn the art of Emotional Transformation.

Emotional Transformation represents one of the most essential tasks any mature human being must face in life. This is true regardless of what a person is dealing with at the present moment or what challenges may arise in the future. It is true regardless of social status, family situation, financial position, profession, or any other factor that seems to define one's place in life.

Emotional Transformation carries a message that is not easy to digest at first, but which gradually becomes the central key to healing the soul, the family, the community, and beyond. The message is not simple to grasp, particularly on an emotional level. Even if the principle seems logically acceptable, the emotional system will likely resist it strongly, at least in some of its applications and implications.

Over time, however, this message can bring about a profound shift in how a person perceives themselves in all their parts, and consequently, how they perceive others and the world around them in all its complexity. Depending on one's worldview, the message may provoke disagreement, inner conflict, or even anger until it is deeply understood. True comprehension will only emerge when more and more people experience Emotional Transformation firsthand, together with the healing and the changes it offers.

This is not the only message Emotional Transformation holds, but it is an excellent entry point to the journey. It invites the soul to rediscover its ability to face what is stuck, painful, complicated, and disturbing, in a more successful and life-giving way. It is also a message filled with optimism, shaping the path for those who choose to make Emotional Transformation a steady and regular part of their lives.

And the message is this: within evil, good is hidden.

How difficult it can be for us to grasp this, that within evil, good is hidden, and to walk as far as possible with such a notion. Evil exists all around us, in countless forms and expressions. There are people who commit terrible acts. There are circumstances in which harmful and tragic things occur. There are accidents and illnesses that bring misfortune. There is violence and cruelty, abuse in its many forms, corruption and exploitation. Evil shows itself on the roads, within families, in workplaces, in schools, and in almost every sphere of human life. Evil is, at this moment, an inseparable, though intolerable, part of the human experience.

When we step into the practice of Emotional Transformation, we are asked to go even further: to acknowledge something that is very difficult to accept, that within us too,

even if quietly and unrealized, lie potential islands of evil. Some people will refuse to accept this assumption. For them, it will be harder to benefit from Emotional Transformation. Such people still need to walk the path of deeper self-knowledge, to meet and befriend those “unpleasant” parts of themselves. Without this step, profound change in their lives will remain out of reach.

And how hard it is for us, to recognize that somewhere within, hidden in the quiet depths, exist potential elements that under certain conditions could express evil.

Equally difficult is the idea that within evil itself good is still present. That within every person who has harmed, destroyed, or acted in cruelty, there still exists, buried deep within their darkness, a spark of goodness. It waits quietly for its chance to return to the path of life that is right, rewarding, and wholesome.

We prefer, instead, to live by two assumptions.

The first is that evil is evil, irredeemable, and must be removed. All we can do is distance it from ourselves and from “the good and the normal,” the majority who do not intentionally harm or destroy. We think of thieves as thieves, murderers as murderers, and the corrupt as corrupt. Our task, so we believe, is to catch and punish them, to remove them from society or at least deter them from reoffending. In this way, we imagine we have cleansed ourselves of the evil within society and can feel safer, and of course, better, for we belong to the “good.”

The second assumption, closely tied to the first, is that we ourselves are free of the potential to harm others. We strive with all our might to stay “good.” We restrain ourselves, discipline ourselves, suppress impulses, seek therapy if necessary, and cultivate a highly sensitive conscience that sounds the alarm at the slightest deviation. We do everything possible to distance ourselves from even the possibility of evil.

But to learn Emotional Transformation, we need a shift of perspective, a deep restructuring of how we see good and evil, both within ourselves and in the world. This is not in order to lessen the responsibility of criminals or to excuse harm, but rather to free ourselves, to protect our own well-being, and to increase our capacity for emotional regulation and a higher quality of life.

One of the core principles that makes Emotional Transformation possible is this: within evil, good exists. Not vanished, but forgotten, compressed, twisted, hidden. Every difficult, harmful, or destructive human being was once a soft, innocent baby. Through circumstances and choices, they veered onto a path that harms themselves and others. But their beginning, far back in time, was rooted in goodness, and under different conditions it might have flourished into something life-affirming.

Why is this message so central to Emotional Transformation?

Because it holds the great promise of transformation itself: that in what is painful, harmful, frightening, distorted, ugly, humiliating, or destructive, there lies an original seed that lost its way. The negative expression carries energy, energy that fuels damage and destruction. Emotional Transformation takes that very energy and patiently redirects it back home, toward its original, life-affirming course.

Of course, not every negative expression can be transformed at any given moment. Transformation requires awareness, willingness, motivation, patience, persistence, and ongoing practice.

What we must grasp at this starting point, however, is that what became twisted or broken expresses itself in a way that can indeed be reshaped. There is no need to annihilate or “wipe out” the evil. What is evil is a distortion of structure, and distortion can be transformed. As long as we fight only its final expressions, we remain trapped in suffering. As long as we cannot at least consider that within evil, good is hidden, that a positive, life-supporting structure is waiting to be restored, we remain victims, menaced by forces we cannot shift.

Healers recognize pain as a sign that there is work to be done. Likewise, I propose we see what we call “evil,” whether outside ourselves or within, as a sign of healing work waiting to be carried out. This work unfolds, almost by itself, through Emotional Transformation. Much of it occurs unconsciously, beneath our awareness, without us fully understanding how. But we cannot even begin this path unless we open our hearts to the possibility that within evil, good is hidden, good we can reveal and bring into the light through the tools we will learn in this journey, if we so choose.

It must be emphasized: Emotional Transformation does not minimize the gravity of evil acts, nor does it mean excusing, forgiving, or understanding deliberate harm. Real evil requires boundaries, resistance, and protection.

And yet, from a broader perspective, as long as we do not face the quiet evil within us, acknowledge it and transform it, we will remain stuck in victimhood, endlessly defending ourselves from the evil we perceive in humanity.

In another light: only when a person can face their own inner potential for evil, and transmute that energy into something positive without denying the natural darkness in human nature, can they also face external evil more effectively. Then they can live more peacefully, even amidst forms of evil for which they have no other practical answer.

Chapter 2: The Seed of Human Potential for Change

Optimism is one of the most essential qualities in a person who is happier, more successful, more creative, and more adaptable. The optimistic person sees the possibility of a positive outcome, even when a negative outcome may come first or instead. The optimist perceives the chance, the sparks of light within the darkness, without denying that the darkness exists and may indeed be dangerous.

The optimist stands at the forefront of processes of change within society, a pioneer and a herald of tomorrow. Some dismiss optimistic people as “naïve” or “unrealistic,” but such criticism mostly arises from a lack of deep understanding of optimism itself, of the truth it contains and, above all, of its critical importance in shaping a healthier and more fulfilling life. A lack of optimism, coupled with overreliance on what people call a “realistic” or “practical” view, does not actually reflect greater contact with reality. Instead, it shows distance from the higher, creative part of human nature, the part that perceives the good possibility almost everywhere, the part that is aware of the seed of human potential for change.

In many contexts, mental health is defined as “the absence of significant problems.” In this view, if there is no prominent suffering, no severe anxiety, no major depression that cripples function, and no extreme complaints, one may conclude that the person is relatively healthy or balanced. A kind of industrial quiet, a sense of “no major issues,” is often what we crave.

But in a more advanced perspective, such as that of Emotional Transformation, this definition of mental health is at best shallow, and at worst fundamentally mistaken. From the perspective of Emotional Transformation, the human psyche is not truly healthy unless it expresses itself in development, growth, change, and overcoming old blocks and limitations. A healthy soul does not rest on its laurels, nor does it invest its energy primarily in maintaining a false quiet free of conflicts. A healthy soul brings its conflicts, its traumas, its blocks, and its pain to the surface, and works actively to heal them, transform them, and move beyond them into a better, richer, more satisfying, and more rewarding place.

More than that, any situation in which a person is not regularly engaged in productive work with what is stuck, painful, or threatening will eventually be revealed as unhealthy. Such a person may become increasingly pessimistic, rigid, fragile, and suffering, even if not always aware of it. For such a person, life itself appears more threatening, less friendly, and less inviting of refreshing change and liberation from long-standing burdens.

Even if you do not currently consider yourself an optimistic person, I invite you to hold space in your heart for the possibility that this may change. Open your mind to the possibility that optimism is a natural state to which you can return, once pessimism, developed within us as individuals and as a society out of ignorance and lack of tools, undergoes transformation.

Yes, optimism is indeed a kind of risk. One can be disappointed by it. It does not always work. The same is true for innocence. It often seems safer to give up on

innocence, to stop expecting good or pleasant things to happen, in order to avoid the pain of disillusionment. But optimism is a fascinating risk, reserved for those with enough adventure and vision to walk through failure and disappointment until they arrive, quietly but faithfully, at the transformative and exciting change their heart had already marked as possible.

If we add to the qualities of a truly healthy person, we must include the ability to take risks. The more risk a person can take, the more they experience life as open, flexible, and less threatening. The risk-taking person cultivates a sense of positive agency in life rather than passively waiting for life to dictate outcomes. Among the most important and meaningful risks a human being can take are optimism and innocence. A person who, despite the raging storm, can still see the sun's light and hear the birds that will sing again, is someone who suffers less from unwanted changes. Such a person perceives problems as challenges for transformation rather than as proof that life is hard and pessimism is the "realistic" path.

The seed of human potential for change, which I later describe as the Healthy Nature within the human being, is an essential part of who we are. It is responsible for countless positive changes that people undergo, both individually and collectively. It is the healthy core of the soul expressed whenever optimism, innocence, and the work of transforming pain and difficulty become a regular way of life.

This seed of potential is a wondrous part of the human psyche. It perceives reality as full of possibilities for growth and self-realization. It allows the individual to connect to their place in life in a way that brings greater joy, satisfaction, and fulfillment. But this part cannot be revealed, nor even fully perceived, as long as we remain trapped in our pessimism, or too afraid of being called "naïve" or "unrealistic."

Emotional Transformation reconnects us to this seed of human potential for change. Once activated, it does not push for one dramatic, inspirational breakthrough. Instead, it shapes a lifestyle in which change and renewal become a natural, ongoing part of daily living. The work required to awaken this potential will never truly end. Many forces seek to pull us away from it. Without consistent attention and practice, these forces not only block growth and transformation, but also hide from us the very knowledge that such growth is possible.

In a metaphorical, almost paradoxical way, we could say that the seed of human potential is not really so hidden, nor so far from human awareness as it may seem. All it takes is removing a few masks, drawing closer to one another, and looking calmly into another person's eyes, or our own in the mirror. Somewhere behind the masks, behind the face worn down by blows and bruises, when a person smiles broadly and you come close enough to look into their eyes, you can sense, even if only for a fleeting moment, the goodness inside, the goodness that always was and always will be.

Within evil lies good. And to reach that good, we must acknowledge the evil, even "befriend" it in a certain sense, without condoning or excusing the harm it may cause. For it is precisely there that transformation begins. From within the very difficulties we seek to escape arises the redemption we have been searching for in vain elsewhere.

At this early stage of learning Emotional Transformation, terms like “the seed of human potential” may sound foreign or meaningless. Life, after all, is not so simple, it is full of hardships, we may want to remind ourselves. Where, then, is this potential to be found amidst such struggles?

For now, it is enough to introduce the concept. As we practice Emotional Transformation, as unnecessary tension is gradually released, we will begin to sense the subtle stirrings of optimism. Slowly, in small drips, signs will appear that this potential is real. If you had no capacity to connect with this idea at all, you would not be here, now, reading these words. If your potential for change did not exist, we would not even be having this conversation. It is there, inside you, and together, we are on the right path to discover it, to activate it, and to let it become more present and more accessible in your life.

Chapter 3: Dismantling What Is, Without Knowing What Good Will Grow in Return

For Emotional Transformation to succeed, we need to find within ourselves some degree of adventurousness. Those who struggle too much with uncertainty about what comes next, or who need excessive control over the outcomes of their choices, may find it difficult to adopt Emotional Transformation as a way of life. To use this tool well, and to allow it to truly change our lives for the better, we must loosen our grip on the need to know what the change will look like, even when it is a positive, welcome, and deeply desired change.

The truth is that life here is far more fog than we care to admit. The “left-brain mind,” which tends to rule our lives somewhat dictatorially, constantly tries to paint our worldview in stark colors and to classify our experiences and the components of reality into very “logical,” templated definitions. For these reasons, our left brain will hide from us, as much as it can, the fact that we live with far greater uncertainty than we are willing to acknowledge. At first, recognizing this can feel embarrassing. Later, together with Emotional Transformation, this very fact can become part of the adventure, part of shaping a more creative and healthy outlook on life.

We truly do not know what will happen an hour from now. We can guess, more or less, but even then we will be far from accurate. We prefer to imagine that we have a sense of certain parts of the future, near and far, but this is a pleasant trick born of our anxiety in the face of the untidy, slippery truth: we do not know what awaits us. We don’t really know what will happen in an hour, let alone tomorrow, next week, or next year. We can certainly influence events toward what is healthier, more positive, and more enjoyable, but even that is not guaranteed, and certainly not the manner in which it will unfold.

The illusion of control is one of the modern person’s great problems. It narrows our options for growth and for creative, effective coping with ongoing challenges. This illusion, achieved in many ways, temporarily reduces our anxiety about the unpredictable future, but it does not change the future itself. The future was and remains unpredictable. For some, this fact is part of life’s adventurous, pleasantly surprising nature. For others, it is the foundation of their fears and their disbelief that good things can happen or that one can influence what will come.

Emotional Transformation will do you good. It will dismantle emotional clumps and melt outdated conventions. It will shake the need for mental walls and rattle the solid foundations upon which habits have rested, habits that no longer serve your higher good.

Emotional Transformation will do the work for you, but in ways you cannot anticipate in advance. It offers you a proposal, a “deal” that is not so easy to accept: “You will do the practice, and I, the transformational force within you, will dismantle what needs dismantling now. You will decide the time has come to move forward, and I, the natural current of your transformation, will lead you to the place and the path that are right for you, now.”

Emotional Transformation may, depending on how you look at it, cause you to part from things you have clung to for a long time, things you may find very hard to release right now. It will hold up a mirror with truths that are difficult to accept and digest, yet it is always a truth that blocks your further emotional healing and growth.

Emotional Transformation comes to dismantle what is sick, stuck, complicated, and limiting. But it can never comply with your expectations about what will happen as a result of this work. You will have to choose whether to trust that things will eventually arrive at a place that is right for you, or to be overly afraid that some of what will be dismantled are precisely those things you are unwilling to let go of.

As noted earlier, uncertainty is an inseparable part of our lives, a part we tend to ignore, yet one that, rightly seen, contains all the seeds of creation, creativity, change, and revolution. Within uncertainty live the possibilities of renewal, breakthrough, and the fulfillment of dreams. Only within uncertainty does the soul open to what was previously closed to it. Only within uncertainty do we have the space and working ground to grow what could not grow in the fields where we insisted on excessive certainty.

Emotional Transformation will work beautifully for you only if you are willing to work with it while acknowledging that it is not clear where it will lead. It will certainly lead to a better place, to changes you very much need. But how will this happen? Where, when, and in what manner? This cannot be known in advance, nor can the final outcomes or their “price” be controlled.

Are we ready for this adventure?

Are we mature enough to let sophisticated inner systems work on our behalf while we release the need to control the result or its features? Are we ready to redirect our need for control toward another place, the place where we commit to practice, to devote ourselves, and to walk forward with Emotional Transformation, even if along the way there will be moments that shake the familiar sense of firm ground on which we have grown accustomed to stand?

There is a reason we get stuck where we get stuck. There is a reason certain things go wrong again and again. This happens because significant pains lie behind them, pains that have led us to a kind of addiction to problems. Until we carry out a process of transformation with these problems, allowing the pain to come into the light, to express the difficulty contained within it, and then slowly to release, we will keep returning to the same loop, the same frustrations, the same disappointments.

We usually avoid entering this pain, as a form of self-protection. To avoid it, we try to control the outcomes of our actions, guarding against slipping into places that feel too hard to face. Such a strategy may indeed protect us from exposure to what hurts deep inside, but it does not give us the option to move into a new place, one that can only be reached by other means.

Here is the point at which we must trust the process, even without all the supporting documents in hand. A stance with some adventurousness is precisely what can help the soul dive into places it usually refuses to go. Adventurousness turns the entire

process into something more like play, challenge, and curiosity. It renews our permission to move toward the unknown, leaning on the tools of Emotional Transformation and a willingness to find change in whatever form it may reveal itself in the future.

Every time we practice Emotional Transformation, a small change occurs. These changes accumulate slowly, quietly, and build the future transition to a life that is healthier, lighter, and truer for the person. The main work of transformation is dismantling what we no longer need, including what we mistakenly leaned on and turned into a non-nourishing source, one that hooked us and kept us far from realizing what we could reach in this life.

We truly do not know what will happen an hour from now. I did not know what would happen when I began writing this chapter, and here I am at its end, feeling something I did not know I would feel. This is the truth, this is the reality in which we live. And by recognizing these qualities of life, we can bring about real changes, which are nothing other than the natural fruit of Emotional Transformation.

Chapter 4: In This Moment, My Life Returns to My Hands

One of the most important and dramatic principles of Emotional Transformation is that a person can find within themselves the strength to deal with their own problems.

In truth, this is not really new. After all, the only one who can truly address a person's problems is that person themselves. And yet, many times, the support of others is necessary to help someone reach the point where they feel and know that it is possible to turn an unpleasant situation into one they can live with, and even grow stronger and improved from it.

But in Emotional Transformation this message takes on special force. Emotional Transformation teaches us to recognize that the emotional burdens that weigh us down, disrupt our lives, and confuse us, can go through a kind of "recycling process." The energy hidden within those emotions, those sensations, and the memories tied to them can be redirected into a new, fruitful, and healing direction.

Put simply, we are not trying to erase the pain. We want to transform it. That means we want to learn how to use the very energy stored in pain, the same energy that makes us feel heavy, sluggish, and unbearably sad, the same energy that presses on us like a massive stone choking us. This energy, instead of crushing us, can be "transported," reactivated in a way that not only does not harm, but also generates change, unlocks what is stuck, and enhances our creative expression.

That is transformation: taking what already exists and, instead of feeling like victims who must "eliminate" it to feel better, we perform a kind of alchemy. The unpleasant, seemingly useless phenomenon is reworked into a force that drives positive change in life. This way we learn to fear pain less, to run away from it less, and instead to welcome it with understanding, even gratitude. We realize that its arrival signals: there is transformation to be done, otherwise we will not feel well.

Such Emotional Transformation, turning pain into a positive force, can only be done by the individual themselves. It is their transformation, their feelings, their pain, their worries, their personality structure. No one can do it for them, nor can any miracle pill do the work. Emotional Transformation gives a person one of the greatest gifts imaginable: the ability to move from suffering to empowered change, through courageous self-work. Work that is not overly complex or impossible, but that shifts a person from the role of victim of recurring problems into someone who takes life into their own hands, setting out on an endless journey of healing, change, and growth.

Life presents no shortage of events and situations that throw us into distress, times of stress, injury, insult, helplessness in the face of unpleasant inner or outer realities. No one escapes these aspects of life. No one avoids moments where certain issues feel impossible to face.

At times we ignore, suppress, or distance ourselves from complicated matters, complex relationships, or threatening pains. Sometimes we surrender, weak and

resigned. Other times, we fight again and again in the same ways, ways that never truly bring change, leaving us dissatisfied with the results.

As long as we have not undergone transformation, as long as we have not transmuted the power of the problem into a positive force, we cannot truly feel that we have healed, recovered, or completed our dealing with it. Without transformation, we remain threatened by the fear that an old problem will return to haunt us. Emotional Transformation leaves us with this liberating message: “Even if it returns, I now know how to use it in a helpful way. I am no longer so threatened by it, because the power is in my hands.”

The level of uncertainty in our lives is far higher than we usually admit. Unexpected surprises can happen at any moment. We cannot constantly be aware of this without becoming paralyzed with fear. On the other hand, denying it completely does not serve us either, nor does it help us feel capable of facing life’s surprises.

When Emotional Transformation becomes a practical, available tool, this uncertainty becomes far less disturbing. There is less need to ignore it, and less cause to be overly anxious about it. With this tool in our hands, unwelcome surprises are met with a more effective response, one that reduces the initial panic and allows us to step into direct work with the new situation, handling it far more successfully.

This is precisely where, without Emotional Transformation, we so quickly and helplessly slip back into victimhood, feeling powerless in the face of life’s unexpected blows. Emotional Transformation helps us exactly at this weakest point: in our emotional reactions that are often sudden, disproportionate, and maladaptive.

Crises will come, they always have, and always will. The path of life includes pain, loss, and failure. We cannot avoid making mistakes, going to the wrong places, making poor deals, or attaching ourselves to the wrong people. We are human, complex, and bound by our nature to sometimes act less than “perfectly.”

But when we learn to recognize what happened with courage rather than judgment, and when we transform the emotional turbulence arising from life’s frictions, we begin to discover how often new, fresh, creative responses emerge. Situations in which we have new answers grow in number, sophistication, and effectiveness. In this way, we take the reins of our lives, reducing our sense of victimhood, lessening the shock when unwanted events occur, and they will occur.

How does this change happen? What is really taking place behind the scenes of the psyche that allows us to take our lives back into our hands, through consistent practice of Emotional Transformation and through weaving this possibility more and more deeply into our daily living?

The most important thing to note, and to reflect upon, is the neutralizing of the anxiety component that colors every unpleasant, embarrassing, troubling, or worrying situation we encounter. Usually we get swept into the drama of the event, with all its stress and complications, without recognizing that what we are really experiencing in those moments is anxiety. Anxiety drives us, dictates our agenda, shapes our decisions, and pulls us into repeating the same mistakes again and again.

Emotional Transformation softens, first of all, a significant part of this anxious component, even when we were not fully aware of its presence, even when we never paused to consider the exaggerated drama we ourselves created.

Chapter 5: How Tempting It Is to Blame!

The suffering and blocked parts of the human soul, and of society around us, can be roughly divided into two categories, based on the repetition of the same mistake again and again, in ways that perpetuate personal problems, interpersonal conflicts, resentment, anger, bitterness, and a stifling of the ability to grow and flourish in every possible direction.

The first type is the tendency to blame the environment, life, family, and anyone else available for one's main problems, and often for everything.

The blaming person cannot see their own part in creating their reality. They are convinced that only when the world changes will their life improve. Such a mindset is often combined with deep pessimism and a lack of hope for healing or for the possibility of new growth. This person remains bitter, suspicious, and narrow in their ability to step outside the familiar frame of reference. Such a person is in dire need of transformation, one that will at least open them to the possibility that the power to improve things, even partially, actually lies in their own hands.

The second type tends to blame themselves excessively and without proportion. Self-blame is a form of addiction. It consists of repeated self-injury, a loss of perspective about personal responsibility for negative events, excessive self-criticism, and a life filled with fear and anxiety over mistakes, poor decisions, or failed initiatives. Such a person struggles to hold a compassionate, tolerant, supportive dialogue with themselves. Instead, they focus on highlighting what is wrong, often while making distorted comparisons to others who seem healthier, more successful, and better in every way the self-blaming person wishes to be.

This person needs transformation that gradually dismantles self-blame, releases them from inner imprisonment, and gives them the chance for self-forgiveness without endless contortions or conditions. They need help in resetting their proportions, understanding how life works, who is truly responsible when things go wrong, and why it is not only important but absolutely necessary to make mistakes from time to time. Without mistakes, there is no learning, no trying, no progress.

Of course, many people carry both tendencies. Often those who feel guilty project their feelings outward and lash at others with demands and accusations that cannot be met with any reasonable defense. Sometimes those who tend to blame others are actually reflecting a deeper dissatisfaction with themselves, dissatisfaction too painful for them to face directly, so it is channeled into seeing the world as irritating, negligent, harmful, or uncaring.

In the vocabulary of Emotional Transformation, blame is one of the most toxic and painful poisons human beings have created within themselves. Most people are not aware of the devastating consequences of overusing blame, whether directed outward or inward. They do not realize that blame, in any direction, is a kind of wound. It wounds the healthy, creative parts of the psyche. It is harm without real cause, and it carries absolutely no benefit.

We blame because it is easier to blame. We blame because we are caught in a kind of emotional laziness. We prefer to shift attention away from conflict and distress toward

the question of who is guilty, who can be held responsible for the “failure,” the accident, or the disappointment. All this instead of facing the fact that nothing in life can ever go exactly as planned, and that countless elements of uncertainty shape the outcomes of events and projects, regardless of what people did or did not do.

Furthermore, the human being, as a complex creature, highly influenced by conflicting emotions and relentless pressures, cannot avoid making mistakes. They cannot avoid missing the mark, even when giving their very best. What benefit is there in blaming someone for the fact that what they tried failed? For supposedly not planning correctly, or not foreseeing every possibility?

And here is the truth, as mentioned earlier: ultimately, both outward and inward blame are forms of emotional laziness. They are signs of being stuck at a low level of development, unable to contain life’s complexity, unable to accept that there will always be a gap between expectation and reality. The demand for perfect outcomes often reflects an anxious, obsessive mindset, one that makes a person suffer and feel pressured at nearly every moment. Why should we let such a mindset dictate our days, frighten us, narrow us, and distort our most creative and joyful options?

Emotional Transformation stands face to face with blame, in uncompromising confrontation. One of the highest and most important goals of anyone who takes up the art of Emotional Transformation is to reevaluate the place of blame in their life. It means gradually learning tools to reduce it, and realizing that blame carries no real benefit, only emotional damage, only harm to oneself and to others.

Yes, it is very tempting to blame. To seek a scapegoat, to think that if only that one guilty person had not erred, everything would have been better. Society imprisons criminals but rarely rehabilitates them properly. Society does not take real responsibility for them, does not see them as products of its own failures. Instead, it blames them, punishes them, and then leaves them broken and diminished, only to find reason again in the future to blame them once more, projecting onto them all the wrong that exists.

Who blames? It is the one who struggles to cope effectively. The one who does not yet understand that pain itself can undergo transformation, that the complexity of life can undergo transformation, that uncertainty and even disappointment can undergo transformation. Transformation brings us back to our senses when something does not work out. It helps us stay on the path of growth, a path that will always be full of mistakes and errors, but one that also promises new worlds, self-fulfillment, and encounters with true joy and deep, authentic happiness.

The moment we choose blame, we give up on the good that life has to offer. The moment we choose blame, whether directed inward, outward, or both, we shrink ourselves, we ignore our greatness, we deny our transformative power. We reduce ourselves to a narrow, limiting worldview that is neither wise nor creative.

No matter what happened, no matter what happens: any event that contains unpleasant or unsatisfying elements is an event worth practicing transformation around. Instead of sinking into blame, a swamp that is dangerously addictive and that makes us forget our real powers, we would rather do transformation with the difficult feelings,

including those tied to blame itself.

Turning to the practice of Emotional Transformation sends the message that we are facing toward a new life, with far less blame. Such a life is possible, it is practical, and it is precisely for this great change that we are here.

Chapter 6: Taking Responsibility with Pleasure, Joy, and Passion

Emotional Transformation offers us a rare and precious gift: the possibility of taking full responsibility for our lives, without the heavy, exhausting, and stressful connotations usually attached to the word “responsibility.” Here, responsibility is linked with pleasure, joy, and passion. For at its truest and deepest level, this is what responsibility in an adult’s life is meant to be: a force that brings growth, change, and development.

Victim consciousness is part of our existence today. This consciousness is rooted in experiences of helplessness during childhood, when we could not positively influence negative situations that hurt us or blocked our way to a better path. A part of our personality always carries the potential for such experiences of victimhood, the sense that we cannot influence for good what is happening around us, whether it affects us directly or belongs to the broader reality of the world.

Emotional Transformation does not demand that we grow up overnight. It does not ask us to stop being victims immediately, because such a thing is not possible, even if we promise ourselves a thousand times that from now on we are taking full responsibility for our lives. The place deep inside us, where we feel helpless and unable to cope with what is not right for us, cannot simply disappear through decision or choice.

There is work to be done, work that adds and heals, step by step. We should expect slow changes over time, not a dramatic revolution in which every trace of victim consciousness vanishes. Whoever expects that needs an update. Deep changes happen slowly, always through small steps, tiny victories, and continuous practice.

What Emotional Transformation gives us in this context is a unique opportunity to face, in a human and effective way, the victim parts within us, and they do exist, and will continue to exist. It invites us to see our weaknesses without turning away, without avoiding, without making excuses or special explanations. Emotional Transformation invites us to recognize them. To look courageously at the victim within, the helplessness within, the places where we collapse into hopelessness about our ability to deal creatively with what is.

Only in this way can we take responsibility for the process, rightly, joyfully, passionately. Only when we are mature and brave enough to admit that there are parts in us that are immature and frightened, can we then bring those parts into a process of transformation that will, slowly and steadily, change them at their core.

Our goal, of course, is to move away from victim consciousness and replace it with a consciousness that is creative, loving, and dynamic. Such a consciousness approaches challenges with more optimism, more flexibility, more originality, and more innovation. When we act in this way, we are no longer victims.

And yet, as long as we still are, in some places, there is no point in coming at ourselves with demands or reproach. These are simply parts of our personality that

still suffer, that still remember traumas, and that have not yet healed. We are here to transform those parts, to turn them into sources of strength and inspiration, not to ignore them or run from them. This is how Emotional Transformation works, and in no other way.

So right now, our main responsibility is to the process itself. To the path. Not to the results, not to the way change manifests. Our responsibility is to keep moving, keep practicing, keep bringing into the journey our truth, our pain, fears, worries, anxieties, helplessness, despair, pessimism. Everything. Truly everything. Emotional Transformation does not ask us to set anything aside “for later.”

It does not ask us to ignore something just because it seems “childish” or socially unacceptable. Emotional Transformation asks us to take the right kind of responsibility, the one born from our need for a better life, not from social or family pressure to “grow up” or “get over it.” We do not work in those terms here.

The real maturity we cultivate in this journey is not the kind that slams the door on childish parts and tries to move forward as if old wounds will heal by themselves. Nothing is forgotten. Nothing dissolves by itself. Nothing will sort itself out just because we let it sink into the basement of repressed memory. Everything remains active. Everything continues to influence our moods, our functioning, our decision-making, and our coping strategies. All of it leaves its mark and dictates, often, that we will miss opportunities again, avoid growth, and ignore the gifts the world offers us.

Until we carry out transformation on what is inside, including the unwanted parts that reflect victim consciousness, the final outcome of who we are, what we do, how we express ourselves, and how far we can go will be decisively affected. Even if we cannot see how, it will be fixed in place, difficult to change.

Here, in the journey of Emotional Transformation, one of the most exciting journeys a person can give themselves, we learn what true responsibility is. Responsibility that leads us to the right work, the right paths, the right choices.

As long as the word “responsibility” carries its wrong meaning, it delays us, harms us, and blocks us from the better things we could achieve.

Unhealthy responsibility puts too much emphasis on completing tasks dutifully, preferably without complaining or straying from expected norms.

Unhealthy responsibility tries to silence the childish parts of the self, to bury them, to render them illegitimate.

Unhealthy responsibility stifles creativity and vision, forcing a heavy seriousness that keeps us from the very healing, growth, and transformation we long for.

In truth, unhealthy responsibility is a form of irresponsibility, because it often harms more than it helps, frustrates more than it nourishes.

It is the responsibility society plants in us, expecting us to function as cogs in a machine, as human robots who avoid their pain and try to broadcast an appearance of “I’m fine, I’m managing, I’m living up to expectations for my age, status, and role.”

This false responsibility pulls us away from ourselves, away from the home within our heart.

The responsibility we take here, with pleasure, joy, and passion, comes to transform outdated patterns of responsibility. It replaces them with a responsibility that is real, one that focuses on what is inside us, not on what is “supposed” to be.

The victim islands within us are exactly what we now want to bring to the surface, to expose, so we can transform them. This is our true responsibility, and we take it with love and devotion. From here, we continue the process, we continue the practice, and we give ourselves patience and trust. And when the time is right, profound changes will simply happen.

Chapter 7: Every Persistent Difficulty Is Nothing but a Real Addiction

The reason certain problems do not disappear, despite countless attempts to change them, treat them, cope with them, or distance ourselves from them, is one: we are addicted to those problems. Addiction is the reason we fail to escape the web of difficulty and frustration woven by the stubborn problem that refuses to leave our lives.

It is not easy to acknowledge this fact. It is not easy to agree to the possibility that we, all of us, without exception, live with several addictions that run our lives. They remind us of their presence as soon as we wake up, reappear in many forms throughout the day, and return to our awareness as we fall asleep. Admitting this truth is difficult, and recognizing the addictive pattern within each persistent problem is even more challenging.

One reason it is hard to accept the idea of being addicted to problems is the way guilt and exaggerated responsibility get mixed into the picture. When we even consider the possibility that we may be addicted, we struggle to look at it with compassion and empathy. Instead, we scold ourselves, or feel pitiful, pathetic, like weak victims. If these are the concepts that rise in our minds when we hear the model of “addiction to problems,” it is no wonder we resist, deny, and fight against it with all our might.

But the truth remains: we are addicted to our problems. That is reality. Unless we acknowledge it and bring in the tools of Emotional Transformation to deal with our addictions, we will go on hoping that “someday” things will fix themselves, or we will keep telling ourselves that “soon” we will find the perfect solution, change the situation, and finally be free of this maddening, nagging struggle. Exactly as others are stuck in their own problems, trapped by addictions that pin them in place, unable to create a better reality.

Emotional Transformation can succeed more fully once we learn to identify the addictive components of our problems. As long as we deny the truth, as long as we flee from what truly runs our lives, as long as we are terrified to face the buried emotional pain that forced us to live under the shadow of addiction, we remain enslaved to our inner wounds, unable to lead ourselves into the new place we long for.

Why do we tend to get stuck with problems and become addicted to them? Why suffer in such a way, remaining in a lifestyle that denies us the freedom to release what burdens us?

Most likely because this is the psyche’s chosen method of coping with difficult emotions, traumatic memories, and unresolved tensions. The deep pain within us, much of it unconscious, gets externalized through addiction. It causes us to feel part of the original wound by repeatedly exposing us to the troubles of the problem we are addicted to.

In this way, the psyche relieves some of the pain it cannot process, diverting attention toward the addiction. This makes it harder to let go of addictions, because they serve a

deep protective need, shielding us from unbearable parts of our psychic history. They allow the release of some pressure without revealing the full truth behind the pain.

Thus, we tend, tragically, to compulsively revisit our problems, recycling them despite the suffering they cause. Even when, theoretically, we could resolve them once and for all, or at least reduce their presence, we return to zones of pain, error, frustration, anger, and conflict as if nothing had been learned. This repetition often feels stronger than our best intentions and promises to “avoid it next time.”

Some people are addicted to financial debt. Their lives move in circles of struggle with debt and the constant recreation of debt. They do not even notice how tightly they are bound to the persistence of the problem, even worsening it over time. They believe they are unlucky, or simply incapable. But they are not. They are addicted.

Others are addicted to anxiety or depression. They do not just “suffer” from a recognized emotional issue. What they usually do not realize is that they compulsively return to the problem and activate it, out of a deep need. The addict’s need to return to pain, to difficulty, to helplessness, to the inability to relax, to rejoice, to live with less worry and with a more satisfying life.

At this stage of the journey, the most important thing is to deepen our reflection on this possibility, this theory, this model. There is no need to rush to battle our addictions head-on. That will not work. These are addictions, and with addictions one must proceed with wisdom and creativity, not direct collision. Addiction holds great power because it protects us from core pains. Only when we provide the psyche with a true substitute does the addiction begin to weaken. Otherwise, despite all the effort, therapies, and workshops, nothing will move, except perhaps the replacement of one addiction with another.

So where does Emotional Transformation enter the picture?

It helps us, through repeated practice, to refresh the patterns of thought and feeling around the issues connected to the problem we are addicted to. Emotional Transformation teaches us, practice by practice, to view the drama from a slightly greater distance, less entangled and more emotionally free.

It helps us to break free from helplessness, to dissolve large chunks of accumulated tension, to soften the anxiety linked to the inner pain expressed through addiction, and to offer us a new perspective, a glimpse of a better future, the one that will come with liberation from the problem.

A core rule in practicing transformation is this: we deal with the stuck emotions themselves, instead of being swept automatically into the frustrating drama that drags us into self-harm, repeating in nearly identical patterns. Transformation helps us overcome the strongest elements of problem-addiction: frustration and helplessness. These feed the sense that we have no chance of improving our situation. With ongoing practice, this belief slowly breaks apart, as guilt diminishes and anxiety, along with automatic habitual responses, crumbles to fragments.

Over time, as practice continues, the space of Emotional Transformation becomes one in which we can process the very pains we once could not approach, the wounds that are the true roots of our addictions. As these begin to undergo the quiet, repeated emotional processing of Emotional Transformation, the need for addictions gradually weakens. Until, one day, we can part from them in peace, or in some cases, live with them at such a low level of influence that they are almost unnoticeable.

Chapter 8: The Crossroads of Healing and Illness: Transformation or Addiction

One of the most important features of human life, though we are not always ready to admit it or to celebrate it, is the possibility of choice. As conscious, developed beings, we have the ability at every moment to choose where to focus our attention, where to invest our energy, where to walk and where to pause, what to acquire and what to release, and much more.

Of course, our lives are woven with many limitations and necessities that narrow our field of choice. And yet, wherever we are, in any situation we face, one crucial rule always applies: we can choose. We stand at a crossroads, and the next step will be determined by our decision, our preference, the path we take in that moment.

In fact, one of the major factors that harms human beings and distances them from healing, change, and growth is a lack of awareness of just how many choices are available to them, and of how much power they have to decide differently and shift direction, right now, and in the next moment, and the one after that. Human beings possess far greater capacity for change and transition than they recognize, use, or allow themselves.

This lack of awareness, this blindness to the power of choice, begins to dissolve gradually through the work of Emotional Transformation. As we practice more and more, peeling away unnecessary tensions, exaggerated worries, exhausting anxieties, and the daily emotional residue that piles up, the psyche grows lighter and freer. It is then more available to function in its healthier state, one in which we initiate more, choose more, and influence more, instead of letting outside forces dictate so much of our reality.

Much of what feels heavy, painful, or oppressive in this moment is simply the result of choices we did not make, of steps we avoided, of not realizing that we could decide differently, of missing the crossroads where a change of direction was both right and possible.

And so, here and now, on this path that highlights the human ability to transform emotions, we wish to point to a critical and decisive crossroads in human life, both individually and collectively. A crossroads still hidden by ignorance and misunderstanding, but one whose meaning carries far-reaching consequences: The Crossroads of Healing and Illness: Transformation or Addiction.

Here is how it works: life brings us no shortage of challenges, difficulties, tensions, reasons for anger and worry, conflicts, disruptions, pains, and struggles. This fact will not change. What can change is how we perceive these unpleasant parts of life, and how we respond and deal with them.

At every moment we arrive at a crossroads with only two possible paths: Transformation or Addiction. We can choose to transform what burdens us, limits us, or disturbs us, or else we will suffer the results of becoming addicted to it. Plain and simple. No other options. Transformation or addiction.

The deepest human pains, the early traumas, the scars still hidden inside, all of these demand proper attention. If ignored, they continue to act behind the scenes, causing repeated destruction and difficulty that remain mysterious and misunderstood. A person cannot escape their past, or the suffering and helplessness that still live within. They are there, alive, beating, and will continue to brew trouble, unless they are transformed.

If a person does not choose transformation, if they do not transmute a painful emotional force into a creative, renewing energy, there is no alternative. They will fall into addiction, and their addiction will deepen over time. Why? Because when they came to the crossroads, they did not choose transformation. The path of addiction requires no choice, it unfolds on its own. If we do not transform emotional residue, we become addicted to it, through persistent problems that are nearly impossible to resolve.

Right now. In this very moment, we all stand at that crossroads. In the next moment, we can choose to transform what troubles us now, or remain stuck and addicted. When emotional energy does not flow properly, from the realm of feeling into the realm of expression, change, and creation, it stagnates and fuels addiction, making it all the harder to escape.

Emotional Transformation is an active choice. We can also choose to avoid it. That is a choice too. Practicing Emotional Transformation, writing intuitively, painting intuitively, dancing, walking by the sea, starting a small initiative for change, even a simple break from routine, these are all acts of choice. We can choose not to do such things, to surrender ourselves fully to our routines and daily obligations. We can. It is allowed. It is “legal.” But we must know where such a choice leads, and at what price. And the price is always tied to some form of addiction.

This message is not always easy to digest, because it shows us that there is work to do, work we are often too lazy to approach, because it demands that we confront what we would rather repress and forget. We are excellent at our usual duties, the routines everyone follows. We go to work, talk with familiar people, attend lectures or groups we enjoy, and do our best not to face our pain head-on. Why wake the demons? Why not just rest until there’s no choice?

Because we do have only two options: Transformation or Addiction.

And because so many of us lack the tools of transformation, or even the awareness of its critical need, the result is that most of us are addicts. We are stuck with our problems not because they are impossible to solve, but because we are addicted. We do not choose the step toward transformation. We avoid it, repress it, deny it, and then remain trapped in the frustrating cycle of addiction to the problem.

The relatively good news about this crucial crossroads is that the choice for transformation does not have to be made all the time, every hour, every moment, with constant effort. That would be impossible, exhausting, and ineffective.

Transformation happens through small acts: a practice of the Five Steps of Transformation, 10–20 minutes of creative expression, a half-hour walk outside,

listening to music, and so forth. In the rest of our time, the body and soul are already fueled to make more transformational choices as new crossroads arise. But without daily practice, without refreshing our capacity for transformation, we sink quickly into some form of addiction, often without realizing how it happened.

So are these disturbing news? Worrisome? Sad? Not necessarily. We can also see them as empowering news: our ability to choose is far greater than we imagine. And from that ability flows our power to positively influence our lives, to be less the victims of what happens beyond our control. We must learn to recognize more of these crossroads and choose transformation. It is not such a difficult or complicated act. The more we choose it, and we can always choose, the freer and lighter we become from the stuck-ness of addiction to problems.

So what is your crossroads right now?

Where might courage invite you to turn?

What is your transformational path, today?

Chapter 9: Yes, We Are Addicted. It Is Not Our Fault, But We Can Break Free.

As long as a person cannot recognize their addiction to problems, they will remain stuck with them. Emotional Transformation, which often pushes people into far-reaching change and at times may even seem like a miracle, becomes possible only when we can live with the fact that we are addicted. Only when we stop turning this fact into a reason for self-flagellation. Only when we can look in the mirror with courage, without averting our gaze, without dodging, and say quietly, with steady confidence: Yes, I am addicted.

The fact that we became addicted to our problems does not make us “guilty.” It hardly even makes us “responsible” for how we arrived at this state. Life circumstances leave us little choice. We are part of a vast human system, which at this moment operates according to codes that draw almost every individual into some form of problem-addiction. We cannot decide to escape it, to hide from it, or to decree: “This won’t happen to me.” It will happen. In fact, it already has.

As people mature and grow, the veils of illusion that distorted their emotional perception begin to fall away. With maturity, we know our resources and our options more accurately. We rely less on fantasies and wishes, and more on what is truly within our capacity to do or to receive. A developing person can recognize their weaknesses and limits, and from there, assess more realistically what can be changed, healed, or invested in. Such a person can also admit, without shame or apology, that they are addicted to certain problems, that these addictions reflect their weaknesses, and that this is the current state of things.

Our task now is to stop evading the truth. The difficult, painful, inconvenient truth. Without acknowledging it, countless opportunities slip past us unnoticed. Without this truth in our awareness, our perception of reality rests mostly on emotional illusions. This weakens our ability to cope, to change, and to move to a better place. Without the truth clear before us, we chase our own tails, trying in vain to improve our lives. The deeper truth continues to rule us, until we learn to face it.

And what is this truth?

That every stuck issue in our life, every one, every recurring problem that troubles us again and again, is in fact connected to addiction. It does not matter what others did or are doing. It does not matter who started and who responded, who sinned and who suffered, who should be held accountable. None of these matter as long as we do not recognize that on our side, within us, there is an addiction to the problem. There is no alternative, no middle ground. Every problem that lingers, that causes pain, worry, or disturbance, is tied in some way to addiction.

The word addiction here describes a state the human psyche falls into under certain conditions, conditions none of us can fully escape. When we are addicted, we do not notice how we drag ourselves back into the same problem, again and again. When we are addicted, we cannot be creative in addressing it. When we are addicted, we feel

helpless, victimized, frustrated, even enraged. And often, we turn to blaming others involved in the situation.

In addition, we cannot understand why this problem “insists” on staying. Why does it not go away? Why does it return in new forms despite our best efforts to be rid of it? We may ask ourselves in despair.

The answer is simple, annoyingly simple. And rarely spoken. Rarely understood. We are addicted.

And anyone who is addicted struggles enormously to escape their problem, unless they undergo a process of detox, a process that gives the psyche a new chance, a transformational path, and a release from the deep-set habit that refuses to let go.

Why do we become addicted to problems? Because we need to. Until we do Emotional Transformation, we have no other choice.

Old pains, repressed traumas, hidden psychic wounds, all of these exist deep within us. They live and breathe, demanding their share from the unconscious mind. We cannot completely repress them or forget them. They remain. They act. They influence. The psyche needs mechanisms to help it survive with these inner wounds that weigh on us at all times.

And so, what does it do? What clever system has the human psyche developed? It developed addiction. A kind of sophisticated invention that helps us cope with deep pain, softening it, keeping it from overwhelming us fully, while still allowing a fraction of it to surface.

Addiction allows us to feel a manageable slice of our inner pain. The addiction itself hurts. The persistent problem itself hurts. But why suffer at all? So that we can hide from even deeper, more terrifying pains. Pains too threatening to face. Pains that remind us of what we would rather forget.

Thus the psyche arranges a kind of theater, a convincing drama in the form of a persistent problem in whatever area we are weakest, whether innate or acquired. This drama of ongoing difficulty and recurring frustration is nothing but a clever diversion. It lets us release a bit of pressure into consciousness, focus on the surface struggle, and get through another day without touching the real searing pain inside.

So what is detox? How do we break free from this cycle?

Only by giving our psyche better tools to handle its deeper pain. Until such a replacement is found, until the psyche is given a mechanism at least as effective as addiction for managing pain, it will not allow us to let go of our recurring problems.

This is where Emotional Transformation comes in. Through repeated practice, it offers the psyche new tools, tools that calm, dissolve, and eventually break down the stuck energy of old wounds. Transformation gives the psyche an alternative way of coping with pain, an alternative that does not trap us in endless cycles of addiction.

We must respect addiction for what it is, and acknowledge its hidden service. Addiction comes to help us. True, it helps in unpleasant ways. But without this defense mechanism, our condition might be far worse.

When we give ourselves enough experience of Emotional Transformation, we give ourselves the chance to enter processes of healing, bringing problems to a close, or at least reducing their grip.

And all of this can only begin once we admit our addictions. Once we see that it could not have been otherwise. Once we stop dodging the truth and choose to move into new ground, not out of illusion or escape, but out of clarity, courage, and renewal.

Chapter 10: How Difficult It Is to Stop and Look at the Problem, at All That Exists

This chapter, and the two that follow, focus on the first step of Emotional Transformation.

The process of Emotional Transformation is made of five repeating steps. Practiced consistently, they enable a person to redirect the stuck emotional energy behind their problems into channels of healing, renewal, and change.

The first step, the most challenging and, in many ways, the most important, is observing the problem.

Here we wish to step back from the drama and become, in a sense, observers of what is happening within us. To become the “fly on the wall,” seeing everything, yet not overly entangled in it, not overly influenced by its consequences or by the emotions tied to the problem.

In this first step, we aim to pause life for a moment, take a deep breath, step back from our usual impulses to react, and simply observe. Just watch. Just notice. Just allow ourselves to perceive the turmoil without being swept away by it. This does not mean striving for a false “objectivity,” for we can never be completely detached from our own issues. We will always be subjective, influenced by our opinions, needs, frustrations, addictions to problems, and by the many details that cloud our emotional landscape.

And yet, despite all this pain, annoyance, and entanglement, we still hold the capacity, as human beings, to shift our focus for a few moments into pure observation. To witness the anger, the confusion, the fatigue, the worry, and the fear. We can observe because we already possess this tool of observation within us. We simply do not always know how to use it, nor understand why it is so valuable. But the truth is, observation is nearly always possible, and it serves as a bridge between our current irritating state and a better one.

According to the practice of Emotional Transformation, observing the problem from a slight distance reduces the size of the drama, the anxieties tied to it, the storm of feelings, the sense of helplessness, and the feeling that life is running us rather than the other way around.

This action is not easy, because the addiction mechanism tied to persistent problems resists stopping to observe. Addiction pulls us into the depths of drama, into places where our ability to respond effectively is low, into places of helplessness, hopelessness, and overwhelming pain. Addiction wants to keep us small, frightened, blind to creative new ways forward.

And we must remember the heart of the matter, as stressed in the earlier chapters: our addiction to problems exists for a reason. It is the psyche’s way of shielding itself from excessive exposure to unconscious pain and unbearable wounds. Addiction keeps us at a “safe” distance from that pain, while simultaneously generating a more

manageable pain, the pain of the addiction, the pain of the current problem, meant to distract us from the deeper agony hidden below.

So when we observe the problem, even for a few minutes, softening our involvement in the drama, we begin to challenge this mechanism. We disrupt the status quo, the silent surrender to addiction. We challenge the very entanglement that was created to numb us with recycled noise of a stuck issue. That is why resistance arises. But if we feel that resistance, we can remind ourselves: this is the process of dismantling the addiction. The psyche will not easily consent, unless we offer it a better mechanism for handling the deeper wounds.

And how difficult it can be simply to stop. To step back. To stand aside without fleeing or denying. How difficult it is to just stand and look, without reacting, without voicing judgment, without complaining, without manipulating, distracting, or blurring the truth to make it more comfortable.

Imagine, for a moment, a world in which many people, when facing a problem, would first pause and observe, without reacting. Imagine not jumping out of the car to yell at the driver who cut us off. Imagine not snapping immediately at an insult. Imagine not running from criticism. Imagine not repeating the same behaviors we always resorted to when facing the same conflict.

Imagine the quiet of observation in the face of conflict. A silence not of repression or denial, but of courageous witnessing, of the storm of emotions, of the dramatic narrative we attach to events, of the urge to repeat past mistakes under the illusion that this time it will work.

Such an “utopian” shift could save us heartbreak, wasted emotional energy, and years of remaining trapped in addictive cycles. And yet, many cannot do this, not because they lack the ability, but because they never practiced it, never learned its value, and became too accustomed to obeying their addictions.

It is hard. It is not simple to do the simplest thing: to pause. To observe. To contain. To let things be without reacting in the usual ways. And yet it is essential for Emotional Transformation. It is what determines our chances of moving successfully through the next steps of the process.

And still, it is not difficult because we lack tools. Quite the opposite: we already hold all that we need. We are equipped to transform, to observe, to pause.

It is difficult because we grew used to another way. It is difficult because everyone around us acts differently. It is difficult because there is comfort in the lap of addiction, even when it unsettles us and drains our peace and joy. It is difficult because we cling to drama, even when it does us no good.

And this is the challenge that begins the surprising, inspiring process of change. This is the practice worth learning, training in, and improving: the practice of observation.

Observing for just a few minutes. Waiting. Breathing. Opening our eyes while gently calming ourselves. This is never the whole story. It will never fully separate us from the problem. But it is the beginning. And though it is not an easy beginning, it is a crucial one. Only when we recognize its difficulty and practice it consciously can we restore this vital capacity, make use of it, and begin to prepare ourselves for true change.

Chapter 11: The Art of Containment Begins Within Ourselves

Many people use the word containment, often without fully understanding what it really means or how it translates into behavior. Usually, the idea is that when we face a person we care about, someone whose behavior is difficult, problematic, restless, or disruptive, we can still give them space beside us, without losing our composure. In other words, we serve as a kind of container, meeting them with acceptance, patience, and non-judgment while they are in a storm of struggle or pain.

But if we do not know how to do this for ourselves, we will never truly know how to do it for others. The ability to contain others begins inside, with the ability to contain ourselves. It begins with our willingness to look at our own problems from a more compassionate and tolerant position, to ease up on the endless accusations we hurl at ourselves, to be with what is, with what hurts, with what does not work, without needing to form harsh judgments, without surrendering to frustration, and without drowning in “what ifs.”

The first step of Emotional Transformation, observing the problem, already includes, in large part, practicing self-containment. It means giving space within ourselves to ourselves: to our “nonsense,” to our weaknesses, our mistakes, our misunderstandings, our age, our worries, our anger, our poor choices, our unnecessary reactions, our family, and everything else that defines who we are and how we act.

Are we able to contain ourselves?

Can we make room inside for everything we are?

Can we quiet the habits of exaggerated self-criticism and relentless judgment?
Can we move away from guilt, from fear of “what will they say,” from regrets about not acting differently, or about being born into this family, in this country, in these circumstances?

Can we allow all aspects of ourselves, without exceptions or exclusions, to exist legitimately within us, without needing to hide?

Emotional Transformation begins on the surface, at the place where we notice what troubles us right now. It begins with the visible result of our unconscious processes, with the tip of the iceberg, the outcome of the hidden dynamics at play in the depths of our psyche.

For this tool to work well for us, for us to deal with problems in lighter, more effective, and more creative ways, we must first allow generous, unconditional space inside ourselves for everything that is already there. We must step slightly outside ourselves, or expand ourselves, so we can observe the dramas of our lives and contain them without fear, without hostility, without condemnation.

Self-containment can feel like a very difficult task. We are so used to guilt and anger toward ourselves. This habit, this relationship with ourselves, is hard to break. We

grow tired of ourselves, or we diminish our own value, because we cannot fully contain what lives within.

If we are in pain, can we also contain ourselves?

If we are angry, can we give that anger space, with patience and compassion, so it does not feel like a foreign invader we must push away?

If we are jealous, can we legitimize that experience, allow the inner storm, without condemning it or demanding it disappear immediately?

If we are hurt, insulted, or shaken, when someone crosses our boundaries or dismisses our values, can we then contain ourselves? Can we listen to the difficult emotions with patience and courage, without fleeing?

Self-containment is a kind of art, a skill to be practiced. We rehearse it in the first step of Emotional Transformation, striving to improve. We must remember: this is not an easy task. It is hard to step outside the drama. The drama is convincing, presented in ways that distort our perspective. Immersed in the chaos, it is very hard to step out, especially emotionally. In that state, self-containment feels impossible.

And yet, this is our higher task. This is why we study the practice of Emotional Transformation. Wherever we find it difficult to contain ourselves, we have not yet gained enough tools or experience to transform.

Inside self-containment lies a kind of quiet magic. It will never be perfect, but with time it can mature, offering us real improvements in quality of life and in our ability to face challenges.

We do not need to agree with or approve of everything we feel or think in order to contain ourselves. Suppose we feel a strong urge toward aggression. We will not clap for ourselves and say, "If I feel this way, it must be right, maybe even necessary to act on it." Of course not. We understand this is an emotional state pushing us to an extreme.

But we do want to contain it. To give it space. To forgive ourselves in advance for the fact that such impulses can pass through our mind. To avoid arguing with ourselves or sinking in disappointment about being "bad" or "unworthy." To observe it bravely, to acknowledge it, to tell ourselves: This too is part of me. This too needs a hug, containment, and love.

As long as we do not do this, we cannot break free. As long as we do not do this, we remain enslaved to negative emotions, running from them, denying them, while they continue to accumulate and eventually cause harm.

Long before we need others to contain us, we need self-containment. In fact, the containment of others will never comfort or help much if our inner "muscle" of self-containment is not active enough. Mature adults cannot outsource the management of their emotions to others, nor place responsibility for their inner storms onto those close to them.

On the path of Emotional Transformation, we learn to become our own best friend, our own devoted parent. From this position, we explore the skill of self-containment, the patience and tolerance to accept what is, exactly as it is. Because only through such acceptance can we prepare what exists within us for true change, the kind of change that only Emotional Transformation can bring.

Chapter 12: Stop Running Away, Stay Here with the Problem, Up Close

Wouldn't we all love to get rid of our problems, every single one of them? Wouldn't it be wonderful to say goodbye to all those headaches, conflicts, misunderstandings, annoying reactions, frustrations, and disappointments that keep repeating themselves?

Wouldn't it be nice to just throw them all into a trash bin somewhere and be free of everything that weighs us down, robbing us of the morning joy we long for? Why carry all these worries, all these burdens? Wouldn't "a life without problems" sound like the perfect dream?

And yet, doesn't it also sound completely unrealistic? Don't we find it hard to believe we could ever truly part ways with our problems once and for all, and shift our main focus entirely to growth, fulfillment, and realization of our wishes?

So if this vision is so appealing, and most people would agree that it is, why does it not happen? Why, despite our clear motivation and constant frustration, do so many of our problems remain stuck, unchanged, and unresolved?

One of the key reasons, something we encounter again and again in the first step of Emotional Transformation, is this: we keep running away from our problems. Without even realizing it, this is what we do. And this is why they never leave us.

It may sound strange at first. But is it really stranger than the fact that people carry the same problems for years, even decades, despite countless methods and opportunities to move past them? Isn't that the stranger thing?

This is one of the paradoxes born of our addiction to problems: we grow so used to them that we stop finding it odd that they linger for so long, unwelcome yet ever-present. We get accustomed to them until they become part of us, part of our mood, our thoughts, our reactions, our expectations of ourselves, the way we relate to others. We and our problems fuse into one body. So it feels almost natural to wake up to another day, side by side with the same problems as yesterday, and, we suspect, tomorrow too.

What is harder for us to accept is the idea that part of the reason these dramas continue is because we are playing a game of cat and mouse with them. We keep running away, escaping, numbing, and evading, so of course the problems keep chasing us. We don't want to take that responsibility, we'd rather imagine that we are unlucky, that life has conspired against us, that we are simply victims like so many others.

This is why step one, observing the problem, is so critical. Here we learn to stop turning our eyes away, to stop ignoring, to stop wasting our energy on complaints and resentment. Here we begin to face the truth: that our problems remain because we avoid the authentic pain at their roots, because we are addicted to them.

We run, and they follow.

We lull them into sleep, and they wake again at the worst possible time, like a baby we've finally rocked to rest, only to burst into tears the moment we tiptoe back to bed.

Much of the weight of our suffering comes from this very running away. We keep problems alive "on a low flame," pretending they are almost gone, almost solved, while in truth we avoid them, unless circumstances force us to confront them head-on.

Meanwhile, as we rest in the illusion of a little vacation from them, they grow. They entrench themselves. They feed and maintain their grip. The only way to truly address them is by beginning with an honest, direct gaze. By staying. By refusing to escape into excuses, debates, or distractions.

Emotional Transformation teaches us exactly this: to look, to see, to stay. Not to move away, not to dodge. To remain present with the problem. Right here. Right now.

Modern Western culture, with all its progress and sophistication, is a culture of restlessness. On the roads, drivers behave as if always in a state of emergency. Impatience and intolerance between people are everywhere. Anxiety disorders, depression, and chronic stress affect the majority of people. This culture worships speed, achievement, immediacy, and certainty. We live strapped into a harness of excessive expectations and pressures, constantly chasing after invisible goals.

We rarely pause. We rarely sit still. We rarely let ourselves breathe and look. We have forgotten how to stop. How to stay.

And what drives this frantic pace, this endless drama, this pressure?
You may already sense it: our flight from our problems.

Why not stop for ten minutes on the street, sit on a bench, and simply watch? Why must we always rush? Why must we always know the plan, the next step, the next achievement? Does it really serve us?

With all our sophistication, knowledge, and technology, we have forgotten something along the way: we have forgotten how to look directly at our wounds, our old injuries, our unhealed emotional holes. We have forgotten to stop and stay with them, to give them the honest attention of healing transformation.

And the shift does not need to begin in therapy. We can begin it ourselves, through the first step of Emotional Transformation. Every time we practice this step (and the steps that follow), we are teaching ourselves to pause life for a few moments, to face ourselves honestly, to stop escaping, and to finally give space to what is truly there.

That is why, on this journey, some of our problems will eventually fade. They will loosen their grip, crumble, and dissolve, because we chose, for once, to stop running.

Chapter 13: The Primary Obstacle to Transformation

The second step in emotional transformation, which at times may feel dramatic and even deeply unsettling, is the step in which we learn how to reduce excessive self-criticism in relation to a given problem.

Most of the time, we are not truly aware of the presence of this exaggerated self-criticism that influences us and dictates our daily experience. Most of the time, we are not truly aware of the price we pay for allowing this part of our personality to continue painting our thoughts and emotions in shades that darken our quality of life. And most of the time, we are also not aware that excessive self-criticism is not only something that exists but also something that can be reduced.

With regard to the process of emotional transformation, in which we want the energy locked inside problems, difficulties, and tangled issues to move to a new place and become energy that serves us, empowers us, and pushes us toward change and creation, self-criticism is considered the primary obstacle. It is the main blockage that prevents this process, which could otherwise happen almost automatically, from occurring smoothly. As long as there is a high level of self-criticism, the process is blocked and distorted. This is where we come into the picture, with increased awareness and focused work, both in front of the mirror and elsewhere, with the goal of reducing self-criticism around a given challenge, and more broadly, in the other aspects of our lives.

Excessive self-criticism causes things to get stuck in our consciousness, with no movement forward and no suitable, creative, or effective response. Excessive self-criticism makes us feel that something is fundamentally wrong with us whenever we face a problem that refuses to disappear. It does this by generating guilt, pangs of conscience, exaggerated regrets, self-flagellation, anger at ourselves, disappointment in ourselves, and fears of future mistakes.

Excessive self-criticism blinds us to the broader picture of what has happened and what is happening. It pulls our attention toward a narrow experience of pain and self-dissatisfaction, a perception that overshadows all other aspects connected to the issue. This perception profoundly influences how we think, how we react, how we speak, and how we behave, not only in relation to the specific matter at hand but also in other areas of life. Until we do intensive work with it, this exaggerated self-criticism will continue to rule our lives with an iron fist, preventing us from enjoying much of what life has to offer, diminishing our self-image far below its true worth, and most importantly, blocking the process of emotional transformation.

If we imagine, for a moment, that for emotional transformation to occur, the mental energy locked within a problem must pass along a certain path in order to change form and turn, metaphorically, from “lemons into lemonade,” then that path cannot be traveled as long as it encounters the wall of excessive self-criticism. That inner critic blocks the intention to change and keeps our focus firmly on what is wrong, on what is missing, on what is broken, instead of on what is, on what exists, and on the possibilities for healing and growth. It stands there like a barrier, like a fortress, not

allowing the healing movement, where pain and disharmony are replaced with release and creative possibility, to flow freely.

Many people remain stuck there. They never move forward to the beautiful and expansive places life could offer them. Worse still, they are not even aware of it. They are utterly imprisoned by what they themselves have created within: an internal “policeman,” impatient, humorless, and unimaginative, whose only job is to condemn, to scold, and to place on the person a burden of disproportionate responsibility for everything that has happened and everything that is happening.

Most likely, this inner voice develops early in childhood, when a child believes that the world revolves around them and that everything that happens is somehow connected to their own thoughts or behavior. This type of thinking is characteristic of children and is rooted in the way their brain functions during those years. Out of this mindset, when the child encounters situations they perceive as threatening to the continued satisfaction of their needs, they tend to take on blame for what has occurred. “Something must be wrong with me,” they think, if things aren’t working out, if someone hurts them, if they are ignored, if their needs go unmet, if no one listens when they want to say something.

That part of us, which develops in every person and eventually becomes a very determining and influential factor in the personality, has unfortunately become too legitimate and too common in how people speak to themselves and to each other. People often criticize themselves, belittle themselves, and speak harshly about themselves even in casual conversation. Sometimes they frame it as humor, making self-deprecating jokes about how “stupid” they are in some matter, saying they have “two left hands,” declaring there’s no way they could succeed in a dream they long for, or speaking with biting cynicism. All of these are nothing more than expressions of exaggerated self-criticism, reinforced by what is often assumed to be rational or logical thinking, when in fact it merely feeds the cycle of criticism and keeps it alive.

The opposite pole of excessive self-criticism is revealed when we succeed, even partially, in reducing its presence and influence. This opposite pole is expressed through qualities often attributed to the right hemisphere of the brain: humor, creativity, and openness.

When our self-criticism lessens, we are able to see what is happening with a broader perspective, and even laugh a little, even while the pain and difficulty remain. When our self-criticism lessens, we become more willing to take risks in order to address problems, more open to listen to our intuition, and less inclined to argue with our authentic emotions, even when those emotions are not “acceptable,” not “mature,” not “desirable,” or not “nice.”

The more our self-criticism diminishes, the more prepared we are to embrace change and step out of our fixed patterns of thinking. What once seemed “normal and acceptable” will receive a chance to be refreshed and rewritten. That is what happens when we free ourselves from the grip of exaggerated self-criticism.

Emotional transformation is, in a sense, a kind of miracle. When you experience it, it manifests as an emotional release and a profound shift of direction. To the outside

eye, it may appear impossible. To others, it may even serve as a source of wonder or inspiration.

But the deeper one goes into it, the more one practices this path, the more one experiences the extraordinary gifts it brings, the clearer it becomes that emotional transformation, more than it is a miracle, is in fact the natural and even automatic way the human psyche knows how to heal itself, to turn darkness into light, almost without our conscious involvement. The psyche knows how to do this. But we, as modern, sophisticated human beings, have built a massive obstacle in its way: the obstacle of criticism.

In this learning process, we are invited, at least for a while, to calm this part of us that thinks, calculates, organizes, and arranges our reality in repetitive ways. We want to create within ourselves an atmosphere of openness and readiness for changes we never imagined possible. This can only happen if we succeed in softening the intensity of our self-criticism, the exaggerated judgment that instills in us fear of change, fear of bold decisions, and fear of spontaneous, creative, less-calculated moves.

Emotional transformation happens through practice. The psyche knows how to do it, but it does so in its own way, behind the scenes. What we can do is loosen our grip, relax some of our control, soften our criticism, and give ourselves the privilege of practicing again and again, patiently, even when certain problems do not disappear quickly, despite our dedication to the process. We can give a voice to that inner part of us that still believes in growth, in renewal, in our capacity to move forward, with fewer interruptions from the internal critic who keeps trying, with seemingly logical arguments, to undermine our efforts.

Emotional transformation, with all its wonders and apparent miracles, truly will happen. It is already here. But for the dream to become reality, there is work to be done. And that work goes directly through reducing self-criticism.

Chapter 14: Getting to Know Self-Criticism in Depth

The second step in emotional transformation deals with one of the greatest challenges facing human beings, perhaps the greatest and most complex of them all: reducing excessive self-criticism.

Without reducing this criticism, the entire emotional system operates with very few positive resources at its disposal, limited and blocked by the weight of that inner critical voice. As long as we are too harsh on ourselves, the road to emotional transformation will remain too complicated, too cumbersome, and nearly impossible.

In order to reduce self-criticism, we must take several things into account:

We must develop alertness and sensitivity to the presence of our excessive self-criticism.

Excessive self-criticism takes on many confusing forms, including self-doubt, excessive hesitation, exaggerated assumptions that we cannot do something, dismissing our fantasies, desires, and wishes as unimportant, anger at ourselves, harsh self-punishment, disproportionate disappointment over mistakes or failures, excessive pessimism, fear of taking risks, avoidance of creativity, resistance to spontaneity or playfulness, and aversion to change. And this is only a partial list. The better we become at identifying the moments when excessive self-criticism is present and influencing us, the better we can act to reduce it. In most cases, people are not even aware that they are under the spell of an inner critic that harms them.

We must generate a direct dialogue with the critic inside us and challenge the truth of its words the very moment we identify it.

The main destructive power of the critic comes from the fact that its messages are usually received in quiet submission, almost unconsciously. We are simply used to hearing its “scoldings” or warnings as if they were absolute truth.

As a rule, excessive self-criticism has an agenda, it has goals. It is here to block our spontaneous expression, to minimize our creative expression, to enforce rigid conservatism, to prevent us from leaping into new places, and to keep us exactly where we are without progressing anywhere better. Self-criticism is fueled by a deep fear of growth and change, and it serves that fear through many faces and tactics: manipulation, pressure, threats, guilt, fear of making mistakes, self-punishment, and more. At this stage of the process, we want to sharpen our second tool, self-awareness. We want to hone our vision and refine our inner radar so it can quickly and clearly say: “Right now, my self-criticism is weighing on me, influencing me, and interfering with me.”

To do this, we must first assume that we are under self-criticism far more often than we realize. Parts of this criticism operate in unconscious layers, and we may find ourselves under its limiting influence for a while before even noticing what is happening. It is wise to assume this is the case, that even right now, as you listen to

me or read these words, some degree of unnecessary, constricting self-criticism is operating within you, filtering the information you are receiving.

Second, we can state with a high level of confidence that a large portion of the problems in our lives, especially those that do not leave us, or that keep coming back again and again, are the product of excessive self-criticism. In a way that is at first hard to grasp, and that may sound counterintuitive, self-criticism is one of the reasons we remain stuck in our problems, preserving them rather than freeing ourselves from them. Although the critic scolds us relentlessly for not solving our problems, it simultaneously creates a hostile, discouraging atmosphere that not only fails to help us deal with unresolved issues but actually deepens our entrapment in them.

Think of a child who is trying to build a tower of blocks. When the tower collapses, someone comes and scolds him harshly, saying he is bad at building towers. That is how self-criticism works. Instead of providing a supportive environment that encourages him to try again, instead of comforting him when something doesn't work, the criticism cuts his spirit, drains away hope, and undermines one of the most important dynamics of life: trial and error, learning through experience, building confidence through small successes, and granting ourselves the legitimacy to search, experiment, and discover. That same child, after being dismissed in this way, may develop the belief that he is incapable or defective. Instead of improving over time, enjoying both the building and even the collapse of the tower, he will form a sense of helplessness, of lacking ability, and will stop trying, telling himself he has "two left hands" or no talent for building, creating, or anything else.

We should remember a kind of rule of thumb that almost always applies:

When we don't feel good about ourselves, when things feel rough and grinding, when there is too much friction and everything seems dull, unpleasant, or stuck, then most likely we are under a massive, unrestrained influence of our excessive self-criticism.

In such moments, instead of tormenting ourselves with despair over how heavy or dreary life feels, we can remind ourselves that what is really happening is simple: our critic has dropped by for a visit and decided not to leave. It has chosen to stay and restrict our freedom of action and our capacity for change. When we know that this is the real drama taking place, we can face it more effectively. If, at that very moment, we choose an action that enables emotional transformation, while recognizing that we are under the sway of our critic, there is a good chance that the situation will improve more easily than expected. We may even feel it was a kind of magic. That is how transformation works.

We must keep in mind that excessive self-criticism tends to express itself in ways that sound extremely reasonable, realistic, and convincing.

It makes us believe that what it says is reality, that there is no other option, and that the idea we are "not good enough" is the only truth. The emotional manipulation of the critic often convinces us that its words are accurate facts rather than the distorted messages of a harsh inner voice. It cloaks itself in the language of "realism" and "common sense," while in fact, it only perpetuates pain.

In such moments, we tend to feel that the suffering we experience is deserved, that we must be guilty, unworthy, wrong, or simply not enough. This is exactly the illusion that excessive self-criticism wants us to believe, and sadly, most of the time it succeeds. Emotional transformation practice, on the other hand, can shake that illusion, restore perspective, and grant us much-needed self-credit and compassion. We perform transformation on the critic itself, and this is one of the only real moves that can release us from the trap it so easily drags us into.

The truth is, most of us, almost everywhere and almost all the time, are doing the best we can. And we do not always have to be “doing.” Sometimes non-doing is the wisest act. Yet our critic will label such moments as laziness or wasted time. It makes us feel that we should have done more, done differently, or done better. But that is not true. And it is not possible. At each moment, we are what we are capable of being.

We will not improve because of the painful voice of criticism. We will improve because of love, because of transformation, and because of the courage to change. That is what we must tell the critic next time it arrives. And in doing so, we begin to strengthen the inner muscles that can stand up to it with dignity and effectiveness.

Chapter 15: Reducing Self-Criticism Here and Now

Anyone who seeks a better, healthier, more meaningful life has no choice but to internalize the following message and carry it with them throughout their entire life. Missing this message means an inability to set real change in motion, and a sense of stuck-ness in almost every issue that poses a problem, along with remaining at a relatively low level of awareness about almost everything we encounter in life.

This is an essential message, one that is worth keeping close every day, a steady source of inspiration for our motivation to practice Emotional Transformation or any inner work we do for ourselves.

The message centers on the constant, constricting presence of excessive self-criticism, present wherever we go, in every thought we think, in every insight, in every dialogue, in every contact, in every action. In short, everywhere. Everywhere we go, exaggerated self-criticism walks with us, very close, distorting our perception of reality and saturating it with worries, pressures, fears, and, at times, different shades of shame, guilt, and anxiety.

We are affected by our excessive self-criticism in ways we can never fully grasp, because we usually carry a self-assessment that contains an illusion of control, certainty, and the sense that we are “managing things,” supposedly out of free choice and sound judgment.

But the real situation is not so friendly. We are not that free, and we are not that able to choose or to cope while making full use of the diverse mental resources we actually possess. We are managed, to a significant degree, by an inner voice we have grown used to, because it wakes up with us in the morning and accompanies us to sleep at night. Even if we wake in the middle of the night for a few minutes and regain our bearings, we may notice, with some amazement, that our self-criticism has also revived, returned to full function, and is quick to scold us or to convince us that something is wrong with us.

The task before us, then, the life task that can only be carried out alongside other tasks and tools of Emotional Transformation and additional awareness and change processes, is to reduce excessive self-criticism here and now. Here and immediately, as much as possible. At this very moment, as these words enter your awareness, your self-criticism is also present, watching, involved, supervising. It is here, it is nearby, and it is influencing how we absorb information, how we accept it or resist it, and, most importantly, what we do with it next. Your self-criticism is with you right now. What do you intend to do about that?

Many people report positive, encouraging changes that occur as a result of repeated Emotional Transformation practice. A significant part of the practice’s beneficial effects is surely due to the way it helps reduce excessive self-criticism, and not only during the second step, which directly focuses on this theme.

Every transformation practice sets in motion an inner process that strives to lessen the influence of the critic, if only for a few minutes. When practice is repeated, this effect

accumulates, and the change we achieve becomes more substantial, more noticeable, and clearer.

Yet long before we ask ourselves what else we can do about the overactive critic that shadows our lives, we must dwell longer on understanding and awareness. Without a solid grasp of the situation, without recognizing the critic's influence at the very moments it is actually shaping us, without acknowledging its impact right now in any hint of cynicism, fear, or impulse to flee, we will struggle with this great challenge, the very challenge Emotional Transformation aims to change at its root.

Here is how it works: the psyche has many capacities, diverse, creative, and effective tools not only for coping better with daily challenges (which is merely survival), but also for cultivating life and raising it to a far higher level than the one we currently experience.

The fulfillment of dreams is not so complicated once the psyche's natural forces come into their automatic operation. Many things remain difficult, even "impossible," as long as we are not connected to this inborn capacity we humans possess, even if we are not fully aware of it.

These capacities will remain elusive and out of reach as long as we are overly influenced by excessive self-criticism, which narrows our vision and constricts our range of action. We fail, we head in the wrong directions, we repeat the same mistakes, we hinder others from growing and coping, and we construct around ourselves a life-frame that is unsupportive, ungenerous, and unnourishing, as long as we do not properly address our overactive critic. This is worth knowing. This is worth investigating. This is where most of our self-work resources should go.

It is not that something in us is defective or missing. On the contrary: we are equipped with an abundance of tools and abilities. We are not lacking at all. We are far more developed than we notice in daily life, and only because our excessive self-criticism prevents us from seeing the fuller, more authentic picture.

Our greatness and beauty are well concealed, replaced by a self-image that is lower than it should be, a sense of incapacity, of lacking talent, of lacking the strength to initiate the changes we yearn for, changes that feel too far, too complicated, too hard. Others, we tell ourselves, will do it better and faster. But this is not true. It is only the deception of our exaggerated critic, born of our fears, a critic that will gradually dissolve the more we persist on this journey, the more we look it in the eye, the more we place its reduction as an immediate and top priority.

And thus, for your own good, let it be so:

When people ask you in the near future, "How are you?" or "What are you up to these days?" the right, beneficial answer might include something like: "I am currently in a determined process of reducing my excessive self-criticism."

I assume that sounds a little strange. Have we ever met someone who declared publicly that this is their mission, the purpose of their life, the thing they are focusing on today? Probably not.

Why? Because awareness of the decisive role of excessive criticism is not high enough. People try to break free from addictions and do not succeed, simply because their excessive self-criticism will not release them, without their even realizing that this is the reason for their repeated and frustrating failure.

Once the reduction of self-criticism becomes a central task, one we wish to remind ourselves of from now on and for good, two central things will occur:

We will come to understand far better how our psyche truly works, and we will achieve gains and improvements in that field that will necessarily enhance our quality of life from every angle we can name.

We will learn to forgive ourselves We will learn to stop the stream of negative thoughts and to refuse them, firmly. We will learn to reduce self-harm and self-condemnation. We will defend ourselves more often, and we will permit others far less to speak to us in critical or unpleasant ways.

Emotional Transformation, a moving process with immediate features as well as long-term ones that manifest in significant shifts, can take place in any person. It is part of our life program. Attempts to force change by sheer will almost never succeed. Changes that occur naturally and creatively, while we reduce the critic's grip, are the more reasonable and the truer path.

So from this moment on, I suggest you make the reduction of excessive self-criticism one of the main things that interest and occupy you. When we arrive at that place, the range of possible changes grows larger, becomes more accessible, and, of course, easier.

Chapter 16: The Womb in Which Transformation Ripens

The third step in Emotional Transformation is the cultivation of self-love. On the journey of shifting our relationship to a problem, turning it into something we can more easily face, and of reactivating the natural forces of transformation within us, we pass through a kind of “central station.” This third step, right in the middle of the five, is no coincidence: it comes exactly two steps after the beginning and two steps before the completion.

Self-love represents the place where the heart comes into play, preparing the conditions for what so often seemed impossible to change or redirect. What we usually fail to grasp is just how critical this component is in facing challenges, and how nothing significant can truly improve without it.

When we are caught inside a problem, when we are embroiled in conflict, when things feel like they are closing in, annoying, frustrating, discouraging, or frightening, the last thing we think of is love. And even less so, self-love.

The drama of the problem pulls us into a whirlwind of repetitive thoughts, automatic reactions identical to those we have had in the past, and emotional upheavals that wrap us in the heavy experience of its presence in our lives. We live the problem, present it, breathe it, obey its old rules like dutiful soldiers. At such moments, the last thing that comes to mind is to summon love into the atmosphere. We don't feel as though we have any choice. The problem runs the show, and we are convinced there is no alternative but to be swept away again into the same places it has always carried us before.

Try noticing this, in yourself or in others. When someone is in the thick of it, in the storm, in the difficulty: how possible is it to pause and think in terms of love? To consider love, precisely then, in the middle of the inner and outer noise?

It seems irrelevant. It seems inappropriate. It seems like evading the issue. It seems naïve, “silly,” or absurd to stop the machinery of drama and instead give ourselves attention imbued with compassion, patience, empathy, and tenderness.

What does that have to do with anything? we ask ourselves. Is this really important right now, of all times, when we are so troubled? Wouldn't it be wiser to delay such soft concerns until the storm passes?

These are the very questions our addiction to drama raises to keep us from ever changing the storyline. All the over-attention we give the problem, while pushing aside tools that could shorten or dissolve it, is itself a distraction, a true escape from authentic confrontation. Focusing on self-love in the midst of pain and conflict is in fact the braver, more effective path to change. But this is hard to perceive while we are in the heart of the storm, drafted once again into the repetitive drama.

Anyone who embarks on Emotional Transformation is seeking exactly this: to alter the script, to disrupt the expected course, to interrupt the painful cycle that has

returned again and again despite countless attempts to settle it. Such a person does not take too seriously the inner protests against introducing something soft and compassionate into the charged emotional environment. On the contrary, they dare to activate their most healing muscle: the strong and nurturing womb of self-love.

And here is how it works: Change must ripen. It needs growth conditions, a greenhouse, a safe and nourishing space in which it can take shape. We are not naturally accustomed to change. We are conditioned to sameness, to the problems recurring in exactly the same form. This is what exists, and this is what will continue, unless we interrupt and reorganize the internal methods and tools we live by in our emotional world. For this, we need an inner environment that is supportive, patient, and embracing: one that accepts everything with a smile, with understanding, that integrates what has been, and prepares us for what is new, healthier, lighter.

This is precisely the role of self-love in Emotional Transformation: to serve as the womb. To provide the special conditions that allow natural change to occur. We cannot predict what form that change will take, we only know it will be for the better. But what we can control, what we can summon, is this crucial component, self-love, the ingredient that ensures the change we long for, even if we do not yet know it fully, will actually take place and will move our lives to a new place.

The third step helps us notice our typical way of veering off course when real healing or release from destructive habits is available. It exposes the enormous waste of energy that is so characteristic of us when we collide, again, with the same old issue that feels exhausting even to think about.

The error we repeat is our internal consent to fall into inner combat, inner war, inner agitation. We see a problem, and we go to battle. We rush into drama. We think in terms of doing, or we collapse in despair because we don't know what to do. In such moments we fail to notice that before asking "what should I do?" long before reacting emotionally or practically in the same way we always have, we must soften what is happening inside. We must calm and reorganize the feelings, bring them to a gentler place, before any action can bear fruit. Otherwise, all we do will only be a repetition of the same errors, for which we will later reproach ourselves.

Self-love is here to ensure that miracles happen. And yes, we should use the word "miracle" without embarrassment or hesitation. Love itself is a miracle, and we can activate this miracle through practice. Miracles happen. Conflicts can suddenly end. Lifelong battles, which are nothing but the expression of trapped emotional energy, can dissolve, vanish, transform. These miracles are part of life, but we must travel through the path that shifts our stance from waging war against the problem to holding it with compassion and understanding, so that we can welcome the miracles.

This is the way of self-love. Without it, all the effort, treatments, attempts, and advice will bear little fruit. Without ripening the change in the womb of self-love, it will not grow strong, stable, and lasting. Without self-love we may experience illusions of victory against difficulty, only to discover, with disappointment, that true change has not taken root, we are still triggered by the same cues, still reacting in the same ways.

So here we stop the wheels of drama, and we breathe love into ourselves. This is the practice of the third step. We do not rush to action or reaction until we have reestablished warmth and kindness toward ourselves. From that place, reachable especially through repeated practice, we can move on to the next steps, the ones that ultimately carry us into a new life.

Chapter 17: Passive Self-Love and Active Self-Love

Self-love, the central force that allows Emotional Transformation to take place, whether through pathways we can recognize or behind the hidden scenes of the psyche, is a gift, a potential always available to us as human beings. We can learn to activate it more, to use it more, to embody it more, and to enjoy its power more, in direct proportion to what we do, think, learn, feel, and choose in relation to ourselves, both in our higher moments and in our lowest ones.

And beyond its role as one of the most crucial tools for Emotional Transformation, self-love is also a direct result of it. It is a reward, a sweet fruit given to us as we apply the process of Emotional Transformation in our lives. Self-love is what enables us to change, but it is also what grows stronger as a result of that very change. It leads us home, to the place where we can finally love ourselves more fully. This is how the cycle works: what helps us grow is also what expands in us once we have learned to grow.

To strengthen our capacity for self-love, to make it more present in our lives so that the vision of transformation becomes reality, we need to understand the two main faces of self-love. These are not opposites but two halves of a whole. Self-love has to come alive in both, alternately or simultaneously, in order to be real, meaningful, and powerful in supporting Emotional Transformation.

The two faces are: passive (inner) self-love and active (outer) self-love. Both are equally essential, neither can replace the other. Together, they form the complete practice.

Passive Self-Love

Passive self-love is not truly passive in the sense of being inert, but its expression takes place in quieter, inner realms, which makes it different in nature from its more outward-facing twin. Passive self-love refers to the relationship we maintain with ourselves, the maternal gentleness we can give ourselves, self-compassion, self-support, and the inner dialogue enriched with words of comfort, affirmation, and hope.

It is the quiet, internal experience of love that we can return to in everyday moments, while walking, driving, traveling, or simply daydreaming. It is like the love we might feel toward a baby, a dear friend, or even a small animal if we are animal lovers. This love is a part of us, but we often lose connection with it. We may forget for long stretches that such a positive emotional stance toward ourselves even exists.

Passive self-love is a matter of focus and attention. It is a matter of responsibility and commitment: to bring our consciousness back, deliberately, to a place of warmth, respect, and care, directed toward ourselves first of all. Left unchecked, our attention easily drifts into negative or empty spaces filled with worry, fear, or an excessive need to please others at our own expense. The skill of passive self-love is the courageous act of bringing the focus inward, back to compassion, back to trust, back to supportive inner presence.

And importantly: passive self-love is also the outcome of active self-love practices. Every external action aimed at increasing self-love has no real value unless it eventually translates into a more loving, affirming inner experience. Love is always a felt experience, it is something we absorb into our being. The problem is not that love is scarce, but that we have learned to believe we only deserve it occasionally, and in limited amounts. That limiting belief can be changed, through a steady process of Emotional Transformation.

Active Self-Love

Active, outer self-love involves concrete actions, initiatives, and gestures we take to make self-love a tangible part of our daily life. It is not enough to simply think about it, to agree with its importance, or to promise ourselves we will attend to it “someday.” None of these count. Love must be expressed now. A person needs love in the present, before anything else. In fact, self-love is the very foundation required for doing everything else in life in the right spirit. Without it, everything becomes more limited, more difficult, more complicated, and more painful.

Active self-love tells us that we have things to do, changes to make, and directions to move in. It reminds us that we can reshape reality by cultivating love for ourselves through action.

The most basic practice, simple, even trivial at first glance, yet profoundly challenging for many, is this: smile at yourself in the mirror.

In a healthy world, this would be automatic. Always, unconditionally. No matter our mood, our feelings about ourselves, or the circumstances of our lives, when we meet our own eyes in the mirror, the natural thing should be to greet ourselves with a smile. After all, we are looking at the single most important person in our life. How can we meet them with a serious, suspicious, judgmental, or blank face?

From there, active self-love continues in countless gestures that improve our days, anything that is “for us,” that reflects greater consideration of our needs, wishes, and desires. Sometimes this means changing routines: pausing to rest instead of pouring energy into something that drains us, giving ourselves a small gift, or finally doing something we have long wished for but always postponed.

It can also mean learning to say no. Refusing situations or roles that are not nourishing, comfortable, or aligned with us. We have been conditioned to act “because we don’t want to disappoint others.” But every time we agree to something that does not serve us, we wound ourselves, weaken ourselves, and drift away from authenticity, while pretending to be “good,” “responsible,” or “mature.” In truth, we are being dishonest with ourselves.

Thanks to self-love, we gradually learn to protect ourselves more, to keep harmful influences out of our inner space, and to tell ourselves: The reason I am doing this, the reason I am making this decision, is simple, because I love myself. And with this, we begin lying to ourselves less.

The Whole: Only when passive and active self-love are woven together does this vital muscle awaken fully and integrate into our life. Together, they guarantee that self-love becomes an inseparable part of our being, and with it, the process of Emotional Transformation can continue with strength and safety. They ensure that blessed changes, long awaited, will indeed unfold along the path.

Chapter 18: Concluding the Inner Phase of Transformation and Moving into the Outer Phase

Within the process of Emotional Transformation, self-love functions as a bridge between the inner phase of change and the outer phase of change, between the quiet work of preparation within us and the outward, embodied work of expression and realization.

Just as the previous chapter described self-love as having both inner and outer aspects, so too Emotional Transformation, like every process in life, contains an inner, silent, deep component and an outer, expressive, action-oriented component. The inner component prepares, ripens, and balances, the outer component demonstrates, manifests, and applies what has matured within us into practical life.

A Brief Recap of the Journey So Far

Step One: Observation. Stopping the drama. Stopping automatic reactions. Pausing the emotional reflexes and simply looking at what is present. Containing what exists and treating it as something we can watch from the side, as though we are in a movie theatre watching the film of our own life. We remain partly involved, yet not completely swept away by the emotions that normally dictate our reactions and our interpretations. This step is profoundly internal, a regulation of our inner response before judgment or conclusions arise.

Step Two: Reducing Excessive Self-Criticism. This step is also inward-facing. It clears away unnecessary self-condemnation, the inner “policeman” who lectures us with impossible demands and punishes us harshly whenever something does not unfold according to its imagined rules. In this step we learn to stop the barrage of negative noise that has no true justification and no benefit for real growth. We begin to restructure the emotional field inside us so that less destructive pressure falls upon us. This is the groundwork for real change, because nothing lasting will move forward as long as self-criticism dominates.

Step Three: Self-Love. Self-love is the “central station,” the midpoint of the process, a bridge between the first two steps of inner preparation and the last two steps of outer implementation. It is the womb in which transformation ripens, the condition that allows new life to grow. Without self-love, no amount of effort or determination will hold, the change will collapse back into repetition.

Step Four (coming next): Cultivating Desire for Change and Creation. Here attention begins to turn outward, to life, to possibilities, to the future. It is the stirring of passion, curiosity, and motivation to step into what is possible. This is where the energy of the problem begins to shift into energy of creativity.

Step Five: Action. This final step is fully external: to go out, to act, to create, to move without further delay. The energy gathered and refined in the first four steps is now ready to be expressed in the world.

Self-Love as the Bridge

Between the first two steps (inner preparation) and the last two steps (outer expression), self-love stands as the vital bridge. Its role is not only to help us feel kinder toward ourselves, but to serve as the connector between two worlds that rarely communicate, the quiet inner world and the loud outer one.

Without this bridge, people often stumble. Moving from contemplation into real-world change is not easy. Once we start acting, the rules of the game shift: it feels binding, risky, and exposing. As long as we have not acted, everything remains theoretical, an inner debate, a safe rehearsal. But once we step forward, we enter risk, adventure, and the discomfort of disrupting the familiar.

This is why people often attempt shortcuts: trying to “force” change by willpower or discipline, fueled by frustration with the current state. But these efforts rarely succeed. No true change can endure unless self-love provides the emotional safety net that allows us to cross the threshold.

Why Preparatory Work Is Essential

When people fail to attend carefully to the first three steps, observation, reducing self-criticism, and cultivating self-love, their attempts at change collapse. They find themselves back in the same frustration, in the same drama, disappointed again that nothing held. The seed of transformation remains just that, a seed, a potential, an idea, because the soil was never properly prepared.

This is why the process insists: first, pause and look. Then, reduce the inner violence of judgment. Then, surround yourself with compassion and self-love. Only then does readiness begin to stir.

When that readiness matures, it feels like a bubbling excitement inside, a ferment of possibility. It shows up in small acts: another smile in the mirror, another gesture of forgiveness toward ourselves, another deep breath of kindness as we simply accept what is here. These practices may look small, but together they signal that the inner field is ripening.

At this point, we are ready. Ready to cross into the next stage, the outer stage, where transformation leaves theory behind and begins to shape our lived reality.

Chapter 19: “Warming Up the Engines” Toward Change

The fourth step of Emotional Transformation focuses on cultivating passion for change and creation. In the language of Emotional Transformation, there is no real difference between an act of change and an act of creativity. Change itself is a creative movement of life. Creative expression is, without exception, an act of change.

Our goal remains one and only one: Emotional Transformation, redirecting the stuck energy of a problem into a positive, liberating expression. It is vital to keep this in mind so we do not confuse the process with its by-products. Change and creative expression may indeed be exciting and inspiring, but they are not the end goal. They are the signs of progress, not the essence of it. The essence is always the same: healing what has been stuck, freeing the heart from what weighs upon it.

This distinction is not easy to internalize. Naturally, we will be fascinated and even exhilarated by the birth of change or creative output. But if we focus too heavily on the outcome, on “the change” or “the creation,” we risk losing sight of the deeper work. Overemphasis on results can even interfere with the process and force us into repeated cycles of Emotional Transformation, because we forgot the true purpose.

Facing Our Inner Resistance

Here, in Step Four, the stage that perhaps stirs the most resistance, we want to “warm up the engines” for change. We want to awaken dormant forces, to stir what has long lain inactive. For change or creative expression to manifest (as the natural release of a problem’s energy into new meaning), we must generate within ourselves a mindset that can withstand and soften the inevitable resistances. And resistances will come, without exception. We cannot avoid them, nor should we try.

It is therefore crucial to recognize the ways our psyche protects its problems. The inner system guards them fiercely, refusing to let them go easily. We may consciously long for change, yet unconsciously resist it. We may consciously want freedom from our problems, yet subconsciously cling to them. The mind will insist the situation is absurd, that it makes no sense to hold onto suffering, but the psyche has its own plans. Until the right conditions mature, it will not let go. In fact, it may even tighten its grip.

Why? Because problems serve a deep role. They act as guardians against deeper, more unbearable pains that lie beneath. Thus, our resistance to healing is not illogical, it is protective. Recognizing this paradox is a sign of true maturity. To grow in the right way, we must stop denying and dismissing this truth: we are not quick to abandon our problems.

This is why frustration, anger, resolutions, promises, or sheer willpower cannot dissolve them. Problems are not “waiting to be kicked out.” They hold a function, and until the psyche is offered a better alternative, they will remain. Emotional Transformation provides that alternative. It transforms the energy locked in the problem, giving the psyche a new mechanism of protection that can take over the old function. Only then will the psyche let the problem release without struggle.

The Role of Passion

Once we understand this, we can approach the process with empathy and patience. Resistance softens when met with compassion. Only then can true change emerge. Because transformation must eventually show up as change. Without visible, concrete shifts, without results we can describe and recognize, there is no real transformation, no matter how serene or satisfied we may claim to feel. Transformation always makes itself known in action and outcome.

To prepare ourselves for this, symbolically and practically, we need one of the greatest powers available to human beings: passion. Passion is the force that pushes us through resistance. It fuels us beyond cynicism, beyond excessive self-criticism, beyond fear. It reignites our spark when enthusiasm has dimmed.

When passion is active, resistance loses its grip. Excuses evaporate. Fear shrinks. Where there is passion, movement follows almost effortlessly.

Thus, Step Four is about cultivating passion for change and creation. Cultivation means awakening what already exists within us but has grown faint, timid, or suppressed. Passion is a natural ability of the soul, but it has often been blocked by years of conditioning, fear, and negative influence.

We must remind ourselves: passion for change exists in us already. Passion for creation is also innate. Both are natural drives, but they must be reawakened and invited back.

A problem dissolves more easily when we approach it creatively, when we allow new responses, fresh perspectives, and imaginative solutions. Creativity opens doors that logic and repetition cannot. Passion and creativity together form the breakthrough energy that transforms problems into freedom.

Rediscovering the Fire

Passion is essential in every domain of life. Life without passion is life without life, no true purpose, no genuine reason to rise in the morning. Many of our problems grew in the barren places where we had forgotten passion, where we lost excitement, joy of change, and the thrill of adventure in creativity.

Step Four, then, is about warming up the engines. It is about reintroducing fire into the system. Through repeated practice of Emotional Transformation, passion gradually returns. With it, change and renewal become easier, more natural, more practical.

Here, we move from the inner, quiet preparation into the outer, expressive momentum. This is the stage that carries us from the silence of reflection into the vitality of new creation. This is where transformation begins to show itself in the world.

Chapter 20: Passion as Self-Generated Life Force

There are people who, in order to feel excitement, vitality, and alertness, rely on stimulants. Often, these are individuals in high positions who struggle to cope with the pressures of daily life. They become dependent on substances that give them, temporarily, an artificial surge of energy, energy that helps them maintain focus and experience what they interpret as moments of joy, power, and accomplishment.

But these stimulants, most commonly tied in one way or another to cocaine, do not create anything new. They simply hijack the body's existing systems, forcing them into overdrive, stimulating the same pathways that naturally respond when adrenaline is released in healthy, organic ways. Because they are out of sync with the body and psyche, and imposed in dosages far removed from what is natural, they eventually destabilize and harm the very people who sought strength from them.

Similarly, there are people addicted to thrills, sometimes through extreme risks or dangerous pursuits. They crave drama, intense confrontation with fear, or vicarious immersion in extreme situations. Through these highs, they momentarily feel alive, powerful, even euphoric. But again, this is not what human beings truly need, nor is it the path to transformation, healing, or growth. On the contrary: thrill-seeking, stimulant use, and risky addictions are all ways of avoiding the inner pain, the depression, and the lack of meaning within. They recycle crises in order to generate fleeting sensations of importance and power.

The Inner Drug: Passion

Why bring this up here, in the midst of Emotional Transformation? Because the process requires us to recognize and reclaim a very different kind of "drug": the inner, healthy stimulant called passion. This is the force we must awaken in ourselves. This is the natural life energy we must learn to generate, not by consuming substances or chasing extremes, but by connecting with the innate passion within us.

This passion is exactly what people are searching for when they turn to their addictions. But in Step Four of Emotional Transformation, we learn to contact it directly, to kindle it responsibly, and to let it fuel real change.

After the first three steps, observation, reducing self-criticism, and self-love, we reach a new stage. Up until now, the work has been quieter, more inward, more reflective. But here, in Step Four, we must shift gears. We are called to produce from within ourselves this natural stimulant, this passion, which has always been there. The very fact that external stimulants can affect us proves that we are built to generate such passion naturally.

Where Many People Get Stuck

This is the point where many people falter. It is where theory ends, where daydreams and promises dissolve. This is the moment where the engines must actually be warmed, where energy must rise, where initiative must appear. Here, we must go beyond talking, reading, or fantasizing about change. We must act.

And acting requires passion. Without passion, the leap never happens. Without passion, people remain among the many who long for change but never ignite it. They attend workshops, read inspiring books, share motivational posts, but do not take the courageous steps that shift reality.

Look around, and you will see: most people lack the level of passion required for deep transformation. They want change, but not enough to take bold decisions, to leap into adventures of growth, to follow the quiet whisper of their heart insisting that they must move forward into a better life.

Passion Is Already Within Us

The good news: passion is not something we need to import. It is already present, lying dormant within the psyche. It is part of the design of being human. It is there right now, waiting. But access is blocked, by the barriers we ourselves have built, individually and collectively, as a culture.

Our task is to remove these barriers, to reclaim what has always been ours. This is our responsibility as people committed to Emotional Transformation: to awaken our natural passion, to pierce through the walls that hide it, and to restore ourselves to the power of this inner life-force.

Refocusing on the Work

Let us pause here, in the middle of discussing Step Four, and return to the heart of the process. Take a moment to face, honestly and bravely, one of the significant problems in your life, a problem that feels heavy, painful, and perhaps even impossible to change. That problem is the very reason we are here. It is the raw material of transformation. It is the invitation to grow.

Every stubborn problem draws vast amounts of our energy and attention. It may sink into the unconscious for a while, but it always returns, because it has not yet been transformed. Until the conflict, the pain, and the inner collision are transmuted into energy of creation and growth, the problem will not leave. It is here to demand our evolution.

So ask yourself: can you bring to mind such a problem, and remind yourself that your higher task is nothing less than transformation, and that it must begin exactly there, in that painful place?

Passion as the Flame

This is why passion is indispensable. Without a flame, nothing cooks. Without heat, nothing changes state. Without passion, no transformation can move.

Step Four is about fanning that flame, even if at first you don't know where it is or what it looks like. Even if you cannot feel it yet, you must trust that it exists and can be awakened. Practice seeking it, calling it forth, experimenting with it.

Passion is natural. Passion for change is legitimate. Passion is our right. And when we ignite it, when we nurture it, transformation accelerates. Change stops being abstract and becomes real.

So in this stage, the focus is simple: find the passion, kindle it, and let it warm the engines of your life.

Chapter 21: Change or Creation, Similar Aspects of the Healing Action

Step Four of Emotional Transformation invites us to cultivate passion in one of two directions: toward creative expression or toward change. Both options are equally valid, equally healing, and both serve to complete the flow of the transformation process in the right way. At this stage, the focus is not yet on direct, practical action, but on warming the engines, on cultivating the healthy, inner passion that prepares us for the external application that comes in Step Five.

For anyone walking the path of Emotional Transformation, it is ideal to explore both directions: sometimes leaning toward creative expression, other times toward change. Dividing our attention between them enriches the process.

The Path of Creative Expression

When we speak of “creation” or “creativity” here, we mean the movement of the same inner energy that began in a problem, a difficulty, or a conflict, and directing it outward toward a form of expression. This may take the shape of artistic endeavors, painting, writing, sculpture, dance, or any activity where invention and “making something new” are central. Even cooking with imagination, planning a creative trip, or designing a playful event can serve as valid outlets.

When choosing artistic expression as the focus, it is important to keep the flow of transformation light and unburdened. We do not want creativity here to be heavy with expectations or seriousness. We want it to be spontaneous, intuitive, playful, and forgiving of imperfections. The process, not the product, is what matters. The aim is to channel energy and emotion into movement, not to produce something perfect or flawless.

We must remember: Emotional Transformation unfolds by itself, inspired by the work we do with its five steps. The steps are not the transformation itself but rather the ways of activating the inner mechanism that already exists in us. We cannot predict in advance what the transformation will look like. We can only trust that it will take us somewhere better.

Therefore, we treat creative acts not as ultimate goals but as tools, as mediums through which energy can flow from stuck-ness to expression. Whether it is a poem scribbled in the moment, a quick sketch, a free-form dance in your living room, or shaping clay without a plan, these are all ways of letting the problem’s energy move into a healthier direction.

In cultivating passion for creativity, focus on forms that bring freedom, humor, improvisation, and playfulness. This helps bypass fears, judgments, and the inner critic. It shifts the emphasis away from “success” and toward joy, release, and quality of life.

The Path of Change

The second option is passion for change. Here, too, we need the same lightness of

spirit, the same focus on the act rather than the outcome. The important part is taking the psyche into action, moving it from passivity and stuck-ness into motion.

When we focus on change, the point is not necessarily the scale or permanence of the outcome. The value lies in movement itself. A change is a symbolic act that says: “Things do not have to remain as they are. I can do something different.” It can be small, a rearrangement of furniture, finally fixing something around the house, reaching out to someone you’ve avoided, or tackling a minor task that has been delayed.

The deeper meaning is that every act of change represents liberation from the frozen energy of the problem. It signals to the psyche that stuck-ness is not eternal, that new directions are always possible. The emphasis, again, is not on “success” but on reminding the self that movement exists.

Creation and Change as Equals

For Emotional Transformation, there is no essential difference between creation and change. Both convert the energy of the problem into something new. Both keep us from drowning in stagnation. Both allow the psyche to experience itself as alive, moving, inventive.

This is why Step Four is not about choosing the “better” path but about cultivating the passion that fuels either path. Passion dissolves hesitation, fear, and criticism. Passion reconnects us with curiosity and courage. Passion awakens the readiness to do something different.

Transformation, Not Erasure

It is crucial to recall: a problem does not simply disappear. Its energy cannot be erased or denied. Just as in physics, energy cannot be destroyed, it can only change form. Similarly, in the emotional and psychological realms, the energy of a problem must be transformed.

When we try to suppress or erase a problem through denial, distraction, or magical solutions, we find ourselves back at square one. The issue returns, often with added frustration. But when we channel the energy of the problem into creativity or change, it becomes the very fuel for growth. Anger, for example, can turn into the power to take action. Fear can become caution that helps us move wisely. Sadness can become depth that nourishes art.

Every emotion, every conflict, holds within it the raw material of transformation.

The Reminder of Step Four

Step Four is our reminder that we can take the energy of pain and redirect it. Whether we paint, dance, write, or reorganize a small part of our lives, whether we repair something in our environment or initiate a fresh start in a relationship, each act is part of the healing action.

Creation and change are not opposites. They are twin pathways through which transformation manifests. Both whisper the same message to the psyche: “Where you are now is temporary. There are always new directions. Life can move again.”

By cultivating passion for creation or change, we provide the psyche with the space, permission, and encouragement it needs to perform one of the highest forms of healing available to human beings, transformation itself.

Chapter 22: Just Do It. Move Forward

The fifth step of Emotional Transformation, the smallest, simplest, and often the most intimidating step, is **implementation of the transformation**.

Implementation means there comes a moment when the energy we have cultivated must finally be moved outward. At this point, it is no longer a matter of preference or theory. Without action, everything we have done in the earlier steps risks remaining abstract. Without action, there is no transformation. Without action, we sink back into the same swamp of problems that we have always known.

Step Five is the shift to **doing**. The body moves, the hands type, the feet walk, the call is made, the decision is taken.

Any Action Will Do

In this step, we commit to **doing something**, anything, that produces a change, however small or seemingly insignificant. It might relate directly to the problem we have been working with, or it might not. It does not matter. Transformation will find its way.

Time and again, experience shows that while we may bring one particular problem to the process, it is often another problem altogether that dissolves first. Transformation has its own wisdom. Our task is not to control but to allow.

The rational, “left-brain” mind wants to know, plan, and predict. It seeks to track every detail of the process. But its capacity to grasp the workings of the psyche during transformation is limited. What matters is humility and trust: **we do the steps, the psyche does the rest**.

This is why Step Five should be carried out in the easiest, simplest, most immediate way possible.

Symbols and Simple Gestures

The psyche loves symbols, and it responds powerfully to small, symbolic actions. Throwing out old clothes that have sat in the closet for years can be just as healing as making a major life decision. Taking a short walk when you normally would not, stepping outside the office for a breath of fresh air, calling someone you have neglected, or blocking someone who is causing harm, each of these is a symbolic act of change.

None of these are trivial. Each says to the psyche: *“We are moving now. We are no longer stuck.”*

The key is not drama. The key is **movement**. A tiny step forward is infinitely more valuable than endless debate about what step would be “best.” Even tearing up an unnecessary paper on your desk and tossing it into the bin can, if it comes after the four preparatory steps, activate the forces of transformation.

The essential thing is progress. Action. Forward motion.

Overcoming the Resistance

We must not forget: the psyche is full of resistance to change. We are masters at preserving our problems, at clinging to them, at sabotaging our own opportunities for freedom. This is why Step Five calls for speed and lightness. Do not overthink. Do not plan. Do not analyze.

Just act. It really doesn't matter where or how. Let this energy become physical in all ways you decide at that moment.

Action itself demonstrates to the resistance that it does not have the final say. It creates an atmosphere of capability, a mood of possibility, a breeze that carries transformation further than we can imagine.

Creative Expression as Action

Step Five can also be fulfilled through **creative expression**. Instead of, or in addition to, making a change in daily life, you might write a quick poem, even one without rhyme. You might doodle, paint, or sketch without pressure to make it beautiful. You might dance in your living room, play music spontaneously, sing loudly, or splash color onto a wall just because you feel like it.

The point is not artistic merit. The point is immediacy, truth, and release. If you feel angry, let the painting be wild. If you feel sad, let the drawing carry that sadness. Express what is present, now. Expression itself is the medicine.

This is not the time for "serious" art, not the time for the perfect painting to hang in the living room. This is the time for authenticity. For release. For play.

The Closing of the Circle

Step Five is not grand or spectacular. It is not meant to impress. Its purpose is to **close the circle**, to let the energy that once fueled a problem flow outward into something new.

By doing so, we create the conditions for Emotional Transformation to fully operate. We learn to act quickly, lightly, and without hesitation. And these small acts, repeated, generate waves of change, sometimes in ways we could never have foreseen.

In the end, Step Five reminds us: transformation is not just an inner shift or a pleasant feeling. It is always accompanied by visible change, by action, by a release into life.

So move. Do something. Anything. Right now. That is Step Five.

Chapter 23: The Importance of Humility in These Moments

I do not always speak in praise of humility. Too often the word has been used to pressure people into making themselves small, into not asking much of life, not aspiring to greatness, not daring to hope for big things. Misused, “humility” keeps people from developing their potential, from reaching for the unique paths their soul longs to take.

Sometimes it is right to stand out. Sometimes it is right to ask for the very best that life can give. Sometimes it is wonderful to say, “*I am wonderful.*” Sometimes it is powerful to think, “*I am magnificent.*” There is nothing un-humble about this. In fact, it is an act of courageous self-love, a declaration that one deserves the maximum of what life has to offer.

But the humility we need on the path of Emotional Transformation is of a different kind. It is the humility that allows us to take **Step Five** without resistance, the humility of simply doing something small, right now, without demanding that it be dramatic, impressive, or perfect.

This simple humility can, paradoxically, lead us to the most dramatic and life-changing breakthroughs of all. It is the bread and butter of growth, whether modest or grand.

Fear of Change

The main obstacle that keeps people from taking necessary steps is not that change is too difficult. In fact, many changes that would free us from long-standing problems are not difficult at all. What holds us back is **anxiety**.

Anxiety distorts our perception of what a change requires. It makes us believe the mountain is higher than it is, the road longer, the work harder. Beneath this anxiety lies fear of the unknown—a fear of leaving the familiar for what has not yet taken shape. At its root, it is a kind of **fear of abandonment**: abandoning what we know for what we cannot yet see.

And so we imagine that change must be a dramatic, exhausting, heroic ordeal. We expect pain, endless struggle, and monumental effort. This is an illusion, an illusion that Emotional Transformation seeks to dissolve, especially through the practice of Step Five.

The Humility of Small Steps

Every mountain is climbed step by step, with pauses for rest. Reaching the summit is not a heroic leap but the quiet repetition of modest actions. True transformation is the same.

Here is the humility we need: the humility to accept that small, ordinary steps are enough. The humility to do what is simple, light, and immediately possible, instead of waiting for the perfect moment or the grand gesture.

This humility dismantles the anxiety of change. It teaches us that transformation is not blocked by lack of strength, but by distorted expectations. The simple truth is that we only ever need to take the next small step.

Step Five as a Daily Practice

Step Five is the invitation to make a **tiny change or a simple act of creation**. Without it, everything else remains potential, imagined, abstract, unmanifest. Action grounds the energy of transformation.

Throwing out one piece of clutter, making one phone call, writing one honest line, taking one breath outside of routine, these modest acts carry more power than we imagine. They remind the psyche that change is real, possible, and already underway.

And when we repeat such acts, again and again, the small steps accumulate into critical mass. What once seemed impossible becomes inevitable.

Humility as a Lifestyle

Step Five teaches us that humility is not weakness. It is the quiet strength of repeating small actions, again and again, until they carry us to places we once thought unreachable.

Even after great transformations have occurred, humility remains essential. For the path does not end with one victory. It continues with daily gestures, simple, symbolic, accessible actions, that keep the energy of life flowing forward.

This humility is not about lowering ourselves. It is about honoring the truth that transformation lives in small movements, not grand dramas. It is about recognizing that **the way itself is the transformation**.

The world around us whispers fear, encourages addiction to problems, feeds us exaggerated self-criticism, and nurtures anxiety about change. But the deeper truth is clear: transformation does not depend on heroic leaps. It depends on **humble persistence**, the willingness to take one small step, then another, then another.

This is the humility that drives the chariot of Emotional Transformation. Once it begins to move, no force can stop it.

Chapter 24: The Outcome Matters Less, Movement and Progress Are the True Achievement

Step Five, more than any of the other steps, reveals to us the **dynamic nature** of Emotional Transformation.

We may begin this journey with a burning desire to dissolve a heavy, long-standing problem. We may ache for relief from a burden that has haunted us for years, longing for the day when it is finally behind us. Our attention is drawn toward that goal, toward the imagined freedom of being “*after the story*,” “*after the nightmare*,” “*after the weight*.”

And indeed, change will come. When we heal ourselves, what has been stuck begins to shift, to loosen, to flow. What was rigid becomes pliable, what was heavy begins to move. Transformation is precisely this movement from stagnation to release.

But here lies the essential message of Step Five: **movement itself is the achievement**. Progress, not outcome, is the true victory.

Movement Is the Medicine

This means that even if a particular painful subject remains unresolved, the very fact that we are in the process, that we are moving, is already a sign that we are in a better place than before. Tomorrow, we will move a little more. The day after, more still.

The deeper magic of the process is not in a single result, but in the continuity of movement. The danger is the all-too-common trap of focusing on *results*, on the “final fix”, and forgetting that the **flow itself is the healing**.

In nature, biology, and the human body, one principle always holds: what is alive moves, grows, changes, evolves, adapts. What is sick stagnates, freezes, hardens, resists flow. Emotional Transformation is not only about dissolving a problem, it is about cultivating the deeper state of continuous movement.

The Cycle Continues

Step Five tells us: “*Get up and do something. Move.*”

Do it today, and tomorrow return to Step One. Look again at the problem. Then to Step Two, reducing self-criticism. Then to Step Three, nurturing self-love. Then Step Four, igniting passion. And then back to Step Five, moving outward again.

This is the living cycle of Emotional Transformation, a never-ending rhythm of breaking down emotional residue and allowing life energy to circulate freely.

The Smallest Act Is Enough

What matters is not how it looks, or how impressive it is. What matters is that it happens, that it moves.

No one will hand you a certificate for practicing Emotional Transformation. No one will celebrate when you quietly throw out the broken chair that sat in your kitchen for five months. No one will be impressed when you spend ten minutes at the mirror, practicing self-love.

But your psyche will. Deep inside, it will cheer, reward, and quietly dissolve another wall, another misunderstanding, another fragment of dissonance that no longer serves you.

This is why Step Five is not about grandeur. It is about forward motion. **Any motion.**

Living in the Flow

Movement is life. Movement is health. Movement is freedom from addiction to pain, to drama, to complication. Every time we reach Step Five, the invitation is the same: *“What now? What can be shifted, quickly, simply, right this moment?”*

There is no such thing as a final result. The true outcome is the ongoing rhythm of small, brave progressions. Not earthshaking, not headline-worthy, but real. The real enemy is stagnation; the real salvation is movement.

Somewhere ahead lie outcomes you cannot yet imagine. You will not see them until their time arrives. Much of your future depends on what you do now, on your choices, your decisions, and above all on your willingness to keep moving.

Step Five is here to free you from over-control, from the illusion of designing the perfect future. It anchors you in the present, reminding you that with a small step now, the future will ripen by itself.

Trusting the Process

Yes, there may still be self-criticism nagging at you.

Yes, life may feel heavy, disappointing, or wearying.

Yes, sometimes you wish there were a button you could press to escape from it all.

And still, you take Step Five. Not because you are rewarded instantly, not because the results are visible right away, but because you are on the path. Because deep down, you know that somehow, somewhere, the sun will rise, and transformation will work its quiet magic. And the more you do it the more you witness it. The more you witness it the more you decide to repeat it. The more you repeat it the more it will happen.

A small change, a simple motion—and forward. Always forward.

Chapter 25: Meeting Yourself, Calming Down, and Doing the Daily Work

This chapter, and the two that follow, will deal with the routine practice of Emotional Transformation. There are two primary ways of practicing: one is done in front of the mirror, and the other is through a video that invites the viewer into a kind of dialogue with me, guiding them through the five steps of Emotional Transformation.

Emotional Transformation is a beautiful idea. More than that, it is an inspiring idea. The possibility of turning the bad into good, the painful into vibrant, the stuck into flowing, and even the criminal into someone who mends his ways and becomes a positive and contributing person to his environment. Emotional Transformation is one of the most promising and fascinating paths imaginable for human beings. It is a path that can help someone turn an enemy into a friend, turn hardship into opportunity, turn hostility into a strong connection. Yes—these are all possible forms of transformation. And in this approach we are not focusing on destroying or eradicating the bad, but on turning it back into what it essentially is at its root—good.

It is not simple to focus on the path of transformation. The pains and obstacles that life places before us weaken us and confuse us. Many times, all we want, and understandably so, is just some rest and relief, a break from the turmoil, the pressures, the guilt, and the overwhelming roles that have entered our lives without us asking for them. Sometimes our strongest wish is simply a cry for pause, a holiday, a release from burden and complications. We are not necessarily interested in turning difficulty into something beneficial. We just want the difficulty to end, and *then* we'll think about what comes next. No one can blame us for this. Life often collides with us, and all we ask is that it stop hitting us so hard.

But experience teaches us that whatever does not move through the process of transformation will not hold for long. When the root of the “bad” still exists, we might cut back the twisted branches that sprout from it and enjoy a temporary period of relief, but as long as the root remains alive, it will return. It will sprout again. And it will meet us exactly where we least expect it, exactly in the places where we are weakest, and exactly in the places where it hurts most.

The root of the bad cannot simply be uprooted. We cannot just decide to stop being angry and so it will be. That will not happen. We cannot simply decide to stop hating, and that will happen. That, too, will not happen. There is a kind of “debt” there, a kind of emotional energy that we must face properly. We must look at it closely and understand that it is us, it is who we are. It is parts of us that have been lost, parts of us that it is our task to bring back home, to integrate, and to allow to reconnect with the positive forces that are already alive within us. We must lead those negative forces, through a path that is neither short nor simple, toward the possibility of becoming positive and healthy. And this path is one and only one: the path of transformation. This is the path we are learning here. This is the path we are practicing, internalizing, and exploring in this journey.

And why do we need a *routine* practice of Emotional Transformation?

Because the work of transformation that is required must break through what we know as the routine of our daily lives. Our daily routine is so full of pressures and stresses that even if we are not always aware of them, even if we manage to catch rare moments of calm, they still surround us. This is not dependent only on us. We live in a certain kind of environment, an environment that is overflowing with fear, hatred, crime, wars, arbitrary harm done by one person to another, lack of tolerance, lack of love, lack of compassion, diseases of many kinds, addictions, and endless reasons for worry. Within this environment we live. We wake up to it in the morning, we encounter it throughout the day, and we go to sleep carrying it with us. It even appears in our dreams.

We do not know another reality, and no matter how much awareness we develop, no matter how many workshops we attend or how many therapies we go through, we will still find ourselves in this relatively sick environment, still influenced daily by the tensions it generates. More than that, we are even part of what is happening. We are part of the problems themselves, part of the drama from which we are hurt and will continue to be hurt, whether we like it or not.

We need a tool that can take us out of what is familiar, that forces us to act differently, that is accessible, easy to use, that makes us confront ourselves, and that gives our inner wise systems the opportunity to function. That is why the practice method of Emotional Transformation was developed. And anyone who practices it regularly will enjoy not only relief in facing the challenges of everyday life but also a steady push toward meaningful, long-term changes.

The practice of transformation first and foremost causes us to *meet ourselves*. And how not simple it is for us to meet ourselves. So not simple that we are not even aware of how much we avoid it. In principle, we are constantly living in a state of escape from ourselves without realizing it. Quiet anxieties and ancient pains dictate to us a lifestyle full of avoidance, avoidance of facing ourselves and avoidance of honestly seeing our emotions. We have learned to repress, to deny, to look away, to buy time with less pain. We have learned to juggle our daily lives so that we will meet less and less of what is really going on inside.

Some people go to therapy precisely for this. They know that there, during that one hour, they will have a genuine opportunity to meet themselves—an opportunity that does not exist as part of their normal day-to-day life.

The primary goal of routine practice of Emotional Transformation is this: *meeting yourself*. The practice allows us to enter immediately into a meeting with ourselves, a meeting that neutralizes criticism, preconceived opinions, pressures, anxieties, and all the other barriers that separate us from ourselves. The practice gives us a special time of intimate conversation with ourselves and with our truth. Without this meeting, no transformation will occur. Without reopening our eyes to what we have neglected and forgotten, transformation will not take place.

After we agree to this meeting, we often learn that the practice of Emotional Transformation calms us down, at least to some extent. A part of the illusion of stress and pressure, which normally fills our daily lives, dissipates for a few minutes, and in

its place arises self-work, work that releases and dissolves what can be dealt with in that very moment.

Often, relaxation does not come only from activities related to calm and serenity, such as yoga, meditation, walking, sex, swimming, or any other beneficial practice. Many times, in order to truly relax, we need an opportunity for transformation, an authentic meeting with our emotions, and the work of breaking down what is painful, worrisome, and stressful within them. As long as we do not meet directly, through daily work, with our emotions, they will continue to weigh on us, no matter how much physical or mental activity we engage in.

We have work to do. It is a kind of commitment worth adopting into our lives. This is daily work that takes about six to eight minutes in mirror practice, and about eighteen minutes in video practice. The practice is not especially difficult, and it does not require unusual conditions, except for a little intimacy with ourselves. Many times it will be worthwhile to do the practice in a neutral mood, or even in a state of discomfort. There is no ideal state for practicing Emotional Transformation. Sometimes it is good to do it when we are satisfied and content. Sometimes it is good when we are tired, sometimes when we are angry, and also when we are loving and happy.

This is our work. Without the practice, the soul cannot free up resources for Emotional Transformation. And once again, I must remind you: it is the quiet and inner forces within us that carry out the transformation, not the practice itself. The role of the practice is simply to *allow* the transformation to occur. Our role, humble as it may sound...

Chapter 26: A Small Addition to Routine, A Big Change Ahead!

In many ways, we can say that a person's routine is the most important part of their life. Whether it is a gray, dull routine without sparkle or change, or a lively and less predictable routine, routine is one of the main things that determines how a person lives, what they can achieve, what they can change, their relationships with themselves and with others, their state of mind, their health, and almost everything else we can think of.

We rise every morning into a routine. A large portion of what will happen to us today, tomorrow, and the next day is tied to the routine we know, the one that gives us a relative sense of stability, certainty, and framework. Some people dismiss this phenomenon in human life, seeing routine as a kind of weakness, or as an inability to cultivate a more spontaneous, ever-changing lifestyle. This view can be understood to some extent, but even a life full of change and surprises can be good and fulfilling if it is integrated within an existing routine.

Routine is a kind of skeleton. It is the carriage on which we travel through the journey of life. The routine we have right now is the routine we have grown used to, the one we are currently capable of sustaining. It is very likely that we could make certain changes in this routine and then gradually move into a slightly different routine, one that, in time, we would also come to defend passionately against anything or anyone trying to disturb its stability. Routine is the home of life, the place that gives us security and direction, the more predictable component within a life that is already full of uncertainty, far beyond what we can ever fully comprehend or admit.

Emotional Transformation will never seek to undermine the importance of routine. On the contrary, it cannot do so, given the great power and immense importance of routine. All Emotional Transformation seeks to do is upgrade the routine, turning it into one that empowers the person more fully, one that helps them deal more effectively with their problems. Emotional Transformation will help a person take a fresh look at their routine, refresh it, make new decisions related to it, and ultimately commit to a kind of routine that reflects the changes that are truly important for them to make. But perhaps what is even more important is that Emotional Transformation itself becomes an inseparable part of a healthier daily routine.

The practice of Emotional Transformation must become part of your routine if you wish to truly realize the promise of transformation in your life. We are talking about no more than six minutes of practice in front of the mirror, or about eighteen to twenty minutes with the video, enough to turn the wheels of Emotional Transformation in your awareness. Only when this practice becomes an inseparable part of your routine, something you are committed to and will not give up, can we realistically expect transformation to take place in your life. As long as your routine does not include it, as long as your routine is essentially a routine of avoiding meeting yourself, nothing will happen, and no significant change will find the platform it needs in order to enter your life.

It is important to point this out: the life you know right now, with everything it has and everything it lacks, with all its residues and conflicts from the past, with family, friends, and work relationships, with all that is familiar to you today, is held together firmly by mechanisms of routine whose purpose is to preserve the existing state of things.

You wake up in the morning in order to preserve everything, to hold everything in place, to ensure that nothing changes. You may not be aware of this, and you may like to think that you are inclined toward change and progress, but in principle—unless you introduce into your routine a tool that directs itself toward transformation, the main resources of your daily life will, whether you notice it or not, be recruited into the continuation and maintenance of the very same problems. This is part of the sense of security that routine provides. It is, admittedly, a low-quality kind of security, but it is still a form of reassurance: the inner knowledge that we can rely on routine to preserve the existing reality as much as possible. And we do need that reassurance.

Haven't you, from time to time, felt frustration about a particular problem that seems to "insist" on staying in your life, even though you have declared thousands of times your honest wish and intention to put an end to it, once and for all? How infuriating that can be—sometimes even discouraging. Perhaps you believe you have done everything possible, and yet the problem resurfaces. Again and again. Why do things sometimes seem to go exactly against you?

Well, all of this happens because that is how your routine has been built, without your noticing it. You got up every morning to preserve what exists, and you did not realize that you were doing this. You did everything you could to prevent that issue from undergoing transformation, and then you cried out in despair that nothing changes and that you are doomed to live with this matter forever. Ugh. Why must things be this way?

Because that is what your routine dictates. That is the only reason. Your routine collaborates with your addiction to your problem, stabilizing your life, just as routine usually does, around the exact state of things as they are. If you get angry at this phenomenon, it will not change. Routine is stronger than your anger. If you declare that starting tomorrow you will make unprecedented changes, you will see that after a while you abandon some of them, because they do not fit into your routine. Routine is stronger than that. Routine is deeply rooted in your life, as it is in the life of every other human being. A different method is required to lead ourselves to change. And that method is one that works *with* our tendency to create routine, one that leverages routine toward transformation, one that uses the power of routine in order to... change routine itself.

From here, we can understand the difficulty of integrating the practice of Emotional Transformation into our existing routine. Routine resists tampering with its inner agreements and its established habits. Routine seeks to protect us from any breach of its boundaries. We do not know where a change in routine might lead. What we have now is familiar enough. Why expose ourselves to even more uncertainty than already exists?

Because a routine without Emotional Transformation practice is a kind of constant decline. Yes, it may be stable and predictable, but it is a downward trend.

A routine without Emotional Transformation practice means the daily accumulation of stress and an exaggerated wearing down, so constant that we might not even notice it. A routine without Emotional Transformation forces a person to remain stuck with whatever they have in the present and does not prepare itself for inner upgrading, for a future state in which the routine evolves into a newer, healthier kind of routine. A routine without Emotional Transformation does not prevent change from happening in the future, it simply ensures that the changes that do come will more likely be negative, painful, and harmful ones. If we do not change our lives for the better, they will eventually change for the worse. That is how it works.

It is our task to slightly disrupt the stability of routine, but in small doses, so that routine does not quite notice it. The role of transformation practice is to awaken us from the emotional slumber we impose on ourselves every day, a slumber that happens automatically because it is easier for us to move away from our pains as much as possible and to imagine our lives as a little more distant from them. But those pains never truly disappear and never really go to sleep. They continue to feed our problems, renew our conflicts, and eventually lead us into exhaustion and emotional burnout.

You have a routine. Everyone has a routine. That routine needs a force that will lift it out of itself, stir it up a little, and lead it into a state where it can evolve into a new, healthier, and more delightful routine. And for this, you must dedicate some time to the practice of Emotional Transformation. That's all.

Long live the new routine!!!

Chapter 27: Practicing Emotional Transformation Day by Day

Emotional Transformation is one of those things a person would do well to weave into their routine as an inseparable part of it. We could even say it's very advisable to do so. The word "advisable" points to the crucial fact that Emotional Transformation is first and foremost a choice, a decision, a step a person takes for their own sake, out of their own will and initiative. By the same token, they can refrain from it, because that's how we're built: we choose a large portion of the story of our lives, but we are often not sufficiently aware of this or of our tremendous power.

Emotional Transformation is worth practicing every day, regardless of what is or isn't happening. It's worth practicing when you're in a good mood, and just as much when you're not. It's worth practicing when life is heavy and when you're feeling light and flowing. In any case, we need a daily transformational encounter with ourselves, because in any case we are accumulating tensions, and in any case the emotional system needs that reminder and that special activation which properly connects our "inside" with our "outside," allowing the authentic, true story, one that perhaps doesn't get enough stage time in our regular routine, to be expressed freely and then to turn naturally into some form of action, change, or creation.

Emotional Transformation is a kind of ritual. And we need our daily rituals, those that always revolve around self-care and self-healing, because, without noticing, we take part in other rituals as part of our normal routine, rituals that don't necessarily ensure we pay attention to self-nourishment, self-acceptance, self-love, our passion, and our capacity to make change or create immediately and without delays, hesitations, or fears.

It's your decision. It's your choice: to challenge the status quo and shake a bit what you take to be "your reality," through a practice that returns you to better inner harmony and a correct inside–outside flow of energy, or to let things stay more or less as they are, as they will be. The recommendation here is to turn this practice into a daily ritual that offers two options:

Emotional Transformation practice in front of the mirror.

Emotional Transformation practice with me, via video.

Practicing Emotional Transformation in front of the mirror is a shorter process (about 6–10 minutes), in which you apply the five steps in front of the mirror, as explained here in several ways and according to the following guidelines. Each step lasts roughly 1–2 minutes:

Step One: Self-sharing out loud about "what's going on with me right now." As authentic and direct as possible. Give voice to what's going on, what is present now, what's pleasant and what's not, what's troubling and what's trivial... everything fits, everything is right. You can focus on a single topic, whether negative or positive, or you can wander, whatever you like. Keep telling the mirror what's happening with you in this moment until you feel you've finished saying what needed saying.

Step Two: Reducing self-criticism. Make declarations out loud, even if they sound completely artificial, that you accept yourself exactly as you are right now; that you currently have no criticism of yourself; that you have no judgment of yourself; that you have no complaints about yourself, about who you are, about your decisions, about what's working and what isn't, about everything. Declare that everything that is "you" is okay and welcomed. You can add statements of self-support and self-backing, as well as self-appreciation and self-gratitude for your efforts, choices, and actions. Be wholly supportive and for yourself without reservation, even if, as noted, it sounds artificial. Emphasize this: if it does sound artificial, that means you need it very much, because you've forgotten to support yourself to the point of doubting your right to receive that support.

Step Three: Increasing self-love. Declare out loud, statements that might seem "exaggerated" or "disproportionate," the love you have for yourself. Direct expressions such as "I love you" (to yourself), in any wording that feels natural, are welcome. You can also express love toward specific matters: "I love the way you speak," "I love how you handled that situation," and even offer love to yourself regarding things that aren't working well: "I love you together with this problem...", "I love you even though this is still hard for us." Allow every imaginable form of loving expression to come out, out loud, and even overdo it. The exaggeration helps us bypass blocks and fears and connect to self-love more directly; that's why it's good to exaggerate here.

Step Four: Cultivating passion for change or creation. Again, free, unlimited rein for your desires. Voice the passions you have in as many ways and forms as you can. Bring forth as many passions as are present right now, both small and large, practical and impractical. Allow the "passion muscle" to move, and allow imagination to carry you as far as possible with your desires. We need our expressed passions so that the mental, and even bodily, energy required to carry out Step Five can gather within us. Try to focus on positive passions, not those tied to addictions, but those tied to full and deep delight, to what nourishes, fills, gladdens, expands, and moves you.

Step Five: Name possibilities for action at the very end of the ritual. What can I do right now that will have some measure of change, initiative, or creation in it? Which delayed things can I now give a push and actually carry out when I finish the practice? Do I feel like creating something right now, drawing, writing, dancing? Do I feel like tidying something at home or in the business, right now?

Energy has accumulated within us during this practice, and now it rises and asks to be realized in action. This is the essence of transformation: turning the inner story into some deed that does not have to be directly connected to the problem named in Step One, only into a move toward some action that enacts some change in the existing reality, even the smallest one.

Practicing Emotional Transformation with the video works a little differently and produces a slightly different experience. It's recommended to try this a few times and then decide whether you prefer practicing more with the mirror or with the video. Of course, you can alternate, sometimes one technique, sometimes the other; it's entirely your choice. With the video there is a special situation called "cosmic time," which allows the psyche to express itself from a somewhat calmer and deeper place.

So you have two options for a daily Emotional Transformation practice. More important than choosing between them is to practice one of them daily, to make it part of the routine, part of your self-nurturing tools, part of your self-care tools, part of your self-protection tools, part of your tools for dismantling what is unnecessary and making room for expressions that nourish more, satisfy more, and fulfill more of your creative impulses and your healthy need for change and growth.

Chapter 28: Legitimizing Depression: The Psyche Is Allowed, and Even Needs, to Crash from Time to Time

This chapter, and the two that follow it, will focus on one of the most important and common challenges of Emotional Transformation, depression. Depression in its many forms, like the broad spectrum of emotional low states, is far more common among people than we usually acknowledge. In fact, there is no person who has not had to face some form of depression from time to time. There is enormous ignorance about this subject, as well as deep misunderstanding regarding the possible ways of dealing with it and even of drawing benefit from it, using it as a push toward growth and change.

Except for extreme cases, those that fall outside the use of Emotional Transformation tools and that require significant medical intervention, and those are the rarer ones, depression should be seen as a kind of natural shift that the psyche initiates in order to protect itself, to rebalance, and to allow healing and reorganization processes to take place.

Depression can appear as a reaction to a sharp change, whether positive or negative, that arrived unexpectedly. In such cases, depression plays the role of helping the person adjust to the sudden transition from one mode of life to another. It does not necessarily mean that something bad or unpleasant has happened. Rather, it reflects that a significant change has occurred, one for which the person is not yet prepared, one they cannot simply brush aside and continue as before. Depression then allows the person to pause for a while, to rest emotionally, to slow down the pace, and to reorganize internally in preparation for a healthier engagement with a reality that can no longer return to how it once was.

Depression can also appear as a reaction to a prolonged period of stress and pressure, or any emotionally overloaded time, during which the person, often without noticing, neglected themselves and their needs and devoted too many resources to one specific struggle, far beyond what the psyche can normally supply as routine emotional resources. The role of depression in such a case is to “ground” the person, to make it impossible for them to argue or resist, to force them to stop the relentless race, to withdraw from an intensity that exceeded all reasonable limits, and to turn inward so they can finally listen to what they had been unable to hear for far too long. Here too, depression serves as a balancing and healing agent, a role that most people fail to recognize, because of the maladaptive responses to depression and the frustration with the inability to function as usual.

Depression can also serve as a tool the psyche uses to force a person to connect more deeply with their pain and to stop running from it through countless distractions, overwork, interpersonal dramas, and so on. In such a case, depression comes to remind the person that there are inner wounds that demand attention, wounds more important than anything else, and that ignoring them is more dangerous than neglecting ordinary daily matters as a result of depression’s presence.

There are many additional possible causes for why a person collapses emotionally, enters a slower, more melancholic mood, functions less than before, shows less enthusiasm for what once excited them, becomes less social, less sexual, and less vital. As stated, in most cases this state is designed to allow the person to undergo a healing process they must go through, one they will avoid as long as possible, unless depression pulls them into it. Depression is a no-choice choice: it happens because the psyche finds no other regular, more subtle way to force the person to resynchronize and listen more carefully to what is happening inside.

Of course, many people will not understand the message that depression is trying to send. They will see depression as a new problem, as an issue that must be ended as quickly as possible, or even as something to fight against or to ignore. Many people will feel ashamed of being in a low state. Many will feel ashamed that their partner or family member is in such a state. They themselves may experience anxiety and helplessness in reaction, and therefore will be unable to provide the support or guidance that the depressed person needs.

The transformation of depression means a kind of cooperation with what is happening: working with the emotional–physical complex that accompanies depression and guiding the person toward the positive change that depression itself is seeking to bring about. Moreover, transforming depression gives the person a new perspective on the condition, reduces anxiety about its possible return in the future, provides effective tools for coping when it reappears, and thus helps shorten the episode and ease the suffering it involves.

The absence of Emotional Transformation tools leads to inner conflict: the person is disappointed in themselves for their inability to function, anxious about the changes depression brings, and trapped in failed attempts to escape the state too soon, or through methods that only worsen it instead of improving it.

In order to use Emotional Transformation tools during depression, the first step is to acknowledge that this state is legitimate. That it is okay, from time to time, to sink into depression, just as it is okay to come down with the flu or with a migraine. The body is connected to the psyche, and together they influence and are influenced. They respond to what happens and also guide the person according to the emotional energy available at that particular time. As long as we cannot give legitimacy to a state of depression, one that is not extremely severe, we will not be able to do anything positive with it. First, we must embrace the state and allow it to exist. This is a huge and not-simple step.

Some will worry that legitimizing depression will make a person lazy, or strip them of the motivation to come out of it. They are, of course, mistaken. Others will fear that legitimizing depression will make it longer or more severe. Again, this is a fundamental error. In fact, it is exactly the opposite. Those who express such concerns fail to recognize the wisdom of the psyche and the deep logic behind depression's appearance. Such people are usually afraid of looking closely at emotions and are convinced that a person's primary, or even sole, task is to function "normally," to manage, to overcome, and never to fall into any state of incapacity.

But the correct way to approach depression begins with listening to it, with surrendering to it. The psyche is asking for time to express pain and even to cry “for no reason.” It needs this. The person must allow themselves to do this, even if there is no clear reason why tears are suddenly flowing. The psyche asks the body to stop, and not for nothing. It does this to save the person from themselves and from their current lifestyle. It is trying to extend a hand, to pull them out of an unhealthy state into which they have fallen. And in order for it to succeed in this mission, we must cooperate with depression, at first, and not resist what it brings, even if that means some things will be delayed for a while. There is no choice. The psyche has identified a situation that requires immediate and strong intervention, and it is wise to listen to it. It is wise to listen to depression.

As long as we maintain such a relationship with our mood fluctuations, we will be able to draw much greater benefit from them and remain in healthier connection with them. Otherwise, we will be chronically busy running away from ourselves, and also running away from wonderful people who are more faithful to their feelings than we are. Of course, Emotional Transformation will not be possible if we are terrified of depression. It will wait until we have matured and developed to the point where temporary emotional lows no longer frighten us.

For now, the task before us is the task of legitimacy. And it is not a simple task. Around us there will always be people who are confused by depression, who want to run from any association with it, and who pressure us, directly or indirectly, to “get better quickly” and to return to being who we were before.

We, those who want deeper and more meaningful lives, will prefer to stop, to listen, to explore the situation, to acknowledge what is happening now, and to look back at the recent period to try and guess what is really unfolding here. In such moments we will be gentler with ourselves, more tolerant of the dip in energy, and ready to work with the tools of Emotional Transformation without pressure for immediate results. Depression is here to help us, and we must choose to accept this help rather than reject it, as many others will. The moment this becomes our attitude, good things will begin to grow even out of depression, even out of pain and incapacity.

Chapter 29: Moving Through the Five Steps with Depression

Depression is not a phenomenon that we should aim to end all at once. In fact, the motivation to “end” a given emotional state usually only traps us inside the problem and keeps that emotional state stuck, rather than allowing it to go through the natural process it must undergo on its way to release.

The practice of Emotional Transformation is designed to help us relate in the right, healthier way to our emotions and to the complex states we reach, such as depression, for example, and to avoid entangling ourselves further by refusing to deal with them properly.

Our aspiration, when it comes to depression, is to make a transformation with it. This means that we want to connect with the fundamental force that created the depression, to listen to it, to acknowledge it from as courageous a stance as possible, and ultimately to reach a point where this episode turns into an important lesson, one that significantly contributes to personal growth and to improved tools for dealing with existing problems. In other words, we want to transform depression into an opportunity for positive change, something that can happen and should happen when we work correctly with major emotional shifts of this kind.

It is important to repeat: the option of transformation is not just the “nicer” option available to us. The option of Emotional Transformation is the only way to change our relationship with our emotional world and to bring us to recognize the fact that there is pain within us, and that this pain has a natural dynamic that we cannot, and should not, try to suppress.

Every other path leaves depression as a threatening state, one we will always try to prevent from recurring, and one we will always fear the possibility of falling into again, a place we forbid ourselves from being. Emotional Transformation connects periods of depression into the ongoing flow of life from a positive, even pragmatic, perspective: it turns depression into a beneficial period, one that serves as a lifeline for a psyche that has become entangled with itself in the challenging conditions of our lives.

And so, we want to go through the five steps of Emotional Transformation with depression, in order to increase the chances that we will train our psyche to work better with the inevitable shifts it must go through.

Step One: Observation.

Observation of depression means stopping as many of our usual emotional reactions to this state as possible, and minimizing the interpretations or explanations we might want to give it. What we seek now is simply to observe the depression: to observe the pain, to observe the sadness, to observe the drop in energy, the need for sleep, the loss or increase of appetite, the despair, the hopelessness. To be with it and to look at it. To be spectators from the side at the theater of depression that we have staged for ourselves, without ever realizing it.

This can be very challenging, perhaps the most difficult step in the transformation of depression. It requires pulling back slightly from the very present and very convincing drama, without rushing to present ourselves as either great heroes who quickly “overcome” depression, or as helpless victims who can do absolutely nothing about it. We only want to observe. To stop and to observe. Not to run anywhere, not to hurry to do anything, not to search for the right cure. Just to observe and, if we are practicing, to share our experience out loud, in front of the mirror or in front of the video: to describe what is, exactly as it is. To be with it, to be with ourselves, as we are. As simple, and as difficult, as that.

Step Two: Reducing Excessive Self-Criticism.

The second step is to reduce the excessive self-criticism that always accompanies states of emotional difficulty, and certainly accompanies depression. In fact, a large portion of the depressive state and the great difficulties attached to it arise directly from the excessive self-criticism that comes with the natural drop in mood and energy that depression brings. The intolerance we feel toward the fact that we cannot function as before, that we cannot be as pleasant as usual, can easily become the main problem, one that overshadows life even more than the depression itself.

Dissatisfaction, self-disappointment, the inability to cultivate understanding and empathy toward our condition, self-condemnation and self-anger, all of these make depression far more difficult, even unbearable, and prevent us from being able to work with it and transform it into something better.

So reducing self-criticism, which we practice every time, operates on two levels: first, it activates the transformation process; and second, it prevents depression from swelling into an exaggerated and truly unnecessary dimension, one that escalates quickly because of the additional weight of harsh self-criticism.

At this stage, we want to focus on self-forgiveness, self-support, and quieting the negative voices that arise alongside the natural changes of depressive days. As long as we remain too critical of ourselves, we are in effect resisting healing, resisting improvement, resisting transformation. This is hard to see in the moment, because the voice of criticism sounds so loud, so convincing, so powerful. That is why we study it here and now, when we are not in deep depression, so that when the time comes, we can remember and do everything in our power to reduce this unnecessary, destructive element during depression.

Step Three: Strengthening Self-Love.

The third step of Emotional Transformation, strengthening self-love, is essential in coping with depression and in turning it into a process that nourishes the psyche instead of one that fixates on suffering and difficulty. The more we can, even a little, love ourselves, embrace ourselves, and hold ourselves during a depressive period, the more possible it becomes to grant ourselves days of grace in such times: a small vacation from pressure and ordinary demands, a safe internal space where we can grieve, without even knowing for what, or cry, even if it is crying that bursts forth on its own.

Self-love gives us the protective, allowing, understanding womb in which we can let temporary depression exist quietly and without interference, until, quite naturally, it completes its function, fades, and is replaced by a new zest for life.

Step Four: Cultivating Desire for Change or Creation.

The fourth step of Emotional Transformation, cultivating desire for change or creation, represents the ignition of the psyche's engines for moving out of depression. Depression and desire are absolute opposites. When desire is absent, a foundation for depression is laid. When desire flows and is felt, depression has no ability to take hold in human consciousness.

By cultivating desire, the ability to yearn, we remind the psyche how it knows to live in a healthy, natural way, far from depression. Nothing will happen until the necessary time for depression has run its course, but at a certain point we will need a gentle push outward, once the conditions are ripe. That push will come from the messages of Step Four, which stirs up the energy so needed to break out of the bubble, reorganize, and rediscover taste in life, including even a renewed perspective on the depression itself.

Step Five: Implementing Transformation through Small Change or Creative Action.

The fifth step, applying transformation through a small change or a creative act, reflects the continuation of life, the continuation of movement, the continuation of growth-work that a person does when they begin to emerge from what has held them stuck. A small change is all that is required. A slight improvement in the depressive state is all that is needed. Not a grand drama, not a sudden leap into celebrations and parties supposedly marking dramatic recovery.

The correct way to end such an episode is quietly, thoughtfully, with retrospection about what has happened, along with an understanding that depression will return again someday, when the psyche has no other option. For now, we want to focus our attention on small changes, careful recovery, tiny steps that allow us to reconnect with ourselves and to no longer fear depression.

Chapter 30: Harnessing the Power of Depression for Fundamental Change

The essence of Emotional Transformation, and the deeply moving miracle it contains, is the transmutation of difficulty into advantage, the turning of a problem into a force that improves life, empowers it, elevates it, and refines it. From this perspective, anyone who adheres to the principles of transformation and adopts them deeply into their life learns to see a problem as an unparalleled opportunity and as a clear marker life gives us, pointing to where the possibility for fundamental change lies and toward the most important direction in which it is worth investing attention in order to grow, develop, and heal what is.

It is not easy, emotionally, to grasp this idea. A present problem, especially one that hurts too much or that frustrates because it has been constant or recurring for many years, mainly brings us discomfort and nuisance. The primary thing we want to do with a problem is to bury it, erase it, escape it, or at least obtain from it a vacation for as long as possible.

But Emotional Transformation asks us to act in a way that is the opposite of our inclination. It asks us to linger with what hurts and irritates, to focus on it, to work with it, to not let go of it, and to move into it. We can't blame ourselves for resisting such a move. It is quite natural that we would want to keep our distance from what disrupts our quality of life and pains us. Why should we chew over and engage these matters, when they are essentially sources of anger, frustration, and enduring pain?

Probably because there is truly no other way. Any direct battle with a problem, while constantly trying to wipe it off the face of the earth, will not succeed. A problem has a reason to be here, and etched in each person's emotional DNA are the specific problems, the unique challenges, through which the most desirable change can be generated. As long as we do not learn to work with our problems, they will continue to harass us. There really is no other way to create a fundamental shift in our relationship to problems except through transformation, through turning them into opportunity and into energy that leads life to a better place. It is not easy to do this, but it is far more complicated not to do it. That is the equation of our existence here, and the sooner we internalize this fact, the more tools we will find to help us do the right thing.

Depression is a phenomenon of great force. That heaviness we feel, the slowing of life, the narrowing of enthusiasm, the dimming of vitality, is nothing but power. Power moving in the wrong direction. Power working against us instead of for us, power that inflates sadness, dejection, pessimism, and despair beyond what they are meant to be. It is power, the power of the psyche. The psyche is able to generate depression within itself only because it possesses such power, such a possibility, such an option.

As has been said many times here, Emotional Transformation occurs at a slow pace and behind the scenes. We can express an intention to act in service of transformation, and we can help our psyche reorganize its forces, including those that produce depression, and channel them to a place that serves us better. The fundamental change will happen behind the scenes and is not exactly in our hands. It will happen on its

own when adequate readiness is in place. What we can do is provide the conditions necessary for such a change to begin moving on its own, and this is what we are exploring, seeking, and practicing here.

Depression speaks the language of pain. Depression forces a person to feel pain and does not allow them to slip away from this deeply troubling experience. Depression pulls a person, forcibly, into their feminine energy, in an exaggerated way, and traps them there, without the person knowing how to act or how to exit the closed loop they've entered when that is the state of things.

To do transformation, we must begin precisely at the uncomfortable spot. We must identify it, recognize it, and assume that within it lies energy for rescue, for extracting ourselves from the tangle, and crucial codes for healing problematic domains in our lives, matters we have neglected and allowed to remain as they are, mainly because we did not have the strength and tools to treat them differently.

Therefore, we begin with the pain itself. The pain of depression bears a deep and quiet message. It is not present for nothing, and it does not stand out during depression for nothing. It is trying to tell us the story that is hard for us to hear. It is trying to remind us of a truth from which we have always fled. It is trying to shake us free from existing perceptions and the wrong habits we have formed around certain issues that are not functioning in the level of harmony we require.

We must focus on the pain. Observe it. Join with it and connect to it. We must learn to play with the pain, to create with it, to speak to it, to narrate it, to investigate it, to experience it without criticism or alarm, to be with it quietly and courageously. This pain is trying to tell us something. What is it that we refuse to acknowledge, or struggle to listen to, that depression is trying to make us handle differently? Is it related to family life? To our work? To the way we relate to ourselves? To things we keep turning a blind eye to, the things that are proceeding in a way that is not right for us? What is the pain trying to say? Where is it constantly trying to point us, yet we refuse to notice?

The pain of depression comes to tell us about issues we learned, over the years, to deny and to deprive of the attention they deserve. It is a kind of truth that we cannot blur, even though we imagine we can keep living "as usual" and ignore it. In the end, a negative shift like depression expresses what we tried to ignore, the truth we cannot truly escape. Depression will wait for us at every corner to which we flee and will remind us of what is inside.

So we have no choice but to stop the race and look at the messages coming to us from body and psyche, through depression. As the intensity of the depression, so the potential intensity of the change. Depression is trying to tell us that it is not the main issue, but rather what can be made from it, what can be learned from it, what can be changed the moment we work with it, stop fearing it, and listen to it.

To begin befriending depression and to approach the place where its forces begin to serve us, we must seek, and also find, the channels of transformational practice that relate to it. Perhaps we will want to paint through our depression? Perhaps we will want to write through our depression? Perhaps we will make a surprising, far-reaching decision through our depression? Perhaps we will decide to end something that we

should have ended long ago, leveraging the very energy of the depression that has descended upon us? Perhaps through depression we will finally be able to say the “No!” we must say, or perhaps, through depression, we will at last agree to say the “Yes” we have so feared to say to ourselves?

Tai Chi fighters contend with their opponent by exploiting the opponent’s energy. The attacking opponent comes with momentum toward the Tai Chi fighter, and the fighter makes the correct movement so that the opponent’s own motion causes his fall. The fighter does not need to exert himself much, but he must watch his opponent’s movement carefully, listen to it, know it, and ultimately use it correctly. If he tries to fight head-on, with force, he will lose his real advantage and may be defeated.

So it is with depression. Depression is a movement of energy acting against us, especially when we resist it and refuse to observe it. It is possible to create with depression, particularly in moments when it is not too deep. It is possible to express oneself with depression, sometimes in ways we feared to express ourselves earlier. Depression can be seen as an opportunity, despite, and perhaps because of, the pain that accompanies it. It is the pain of truth, the pain of our long-standing self-deceptions. We can work with these, and in fact there is no other option. It does not always succeed immediately. So we continue to practice Emotional Transformation, and if we persist and keep seeking, the transformation of depression will, indeed, come.

Chapter 31: Listening to Anxiety Without Running Away and Without Acting Immediately

This chapter, and the two that follow, will focus on one of the most significant and essential roles of Emotional Transformation: providing us with practical, effective, and accessible tools for better coping with the anxieties that visit us, whether those we notice more clearly, or those that hover in the background and influence us without our giving them much thought.

Before we enter into the specific ways in which Emotional Transformation may assist those whose anxieties are a more prominent burden, it is essential to first recognize the profound work that takes place, even without our awareness, through Emotional Transformation on the anxieties we all carry.

What usually escapes our attention is that in every conflict, there is anxiety. Within every problem, anxiety is mixed in. The anxiety that invisibly threads itself into every stuck or entangled issue is one of the most important reasons we struggle to release ourselves from matters that long ago we would have gladly seen vanish from our lives.

When the element of anxiety is absent, a problem quickly becomes a smaller matter, an obstacle or simply a minor disturbance that we perceive as something manageable, even if it continues to trouble us now and then. Without anxiety, we are more willing to look directly at disharmony and to propose ways to repair it or change it. What prevents us from doing the right thing, most often without our awareness, is the component of anxiety that accompanies the problem.

Did you know that repetitive worries are nothing more than anxiety? We call it “worry,” but it is usually a form of anxiety. When fear of something is not accompanied by anxiety, our ability to perceive it and deal with it is far better. What makes all our worries particularly oppressive and burdensome is anxiety, the sense of helplessness that is partly real and partly exaggerated, because it is tangled with anxiety.

We humans have a tendency to repeat our mistakes. We almost seem addicted to harmful, destructive, self-sabotaging actions. We try not to, we make efforts, we promise ourselves, and yet we find ourselves once again in situations where it is hard to admit that we’ve repeated the very pattern we swore so many times would disappear from our lives.

And what caused us to relapse into these unnecessary and painful patterns? What preserved our semi-addictive state in matters we had long ago decided should no longer constitute such a persistent, annoying problem? The answer is simple: anxiety.

Without realizing it, we are driven to hurt ourselves, again and again, because of anxieties that prevent us from choosing differently. Emotional eating is not simply a matter of lack of willpower, it is an expression of anxiety. Outbursts of anger are not merely a matter of “losing control,” they are a clear manifestation of anxiety. And so it is with countless other behaviors we would be glad to release forever. It is difficult

to do so until we address the anxiety component that so powerfully governs us, unseen, sitting at the root of the problem, feeding it, stirring it, and fixing it in place.

And to complete the picture on this matter, it is necessary to note, and even to warn: there is no need to understand or to think deeply about the sources of anxiety, its causes, or exactly what it is trying to warn us against. When we are practicing Emotional Transformation, we focus on one thing only: reducing anxiety to a minimum, whatever its source. We will not help ourselves by burdening our mind with analyzing the “logic” of our anxieties. Not only will this not work, it will not help, and it will even distract us from the main thing: Emotional Transformation. We are not doing psychological therapy here. We are on a journey to undermine the supremacy of our problems. And for that, all we need to do is acknowledge that anxieties are part of the story, and that anxieties are part of what we are going to work with here, using the tools of Emotional Transformation.

And what is the most encouraging news?

That every practice session we do reduces some of the anxieties we carry, whether around the current problem or other urgent matters. The anxieties that gradually dissolve through repeated daily practice stop being such a heavy burden and barrier to change. Those same anxieties, which previously hid from us what was most important around our problems, will fade in their influence, and in their place new insights will appear, along with fresh motivation to try more creative and courageous directions on the way to resolving difficulties.

This is how it works: more practice → fewer daily anxieties and worries. A large portion of what constitutes a problem is a kind of complex woven of shame and the need to hide. We feel uncomfortable with our problems. Practice allows us to release these emotional charges immediately, so they do not continue racing around our minds nonstop. It gives us a supportive, positive space that helps us stop holding onto the difficulty, and thereby stops reinforcing the anxiety connected with it. Instead, it turns what once oppressed us into a sense of flow and into an easy and available form of expression.

It is important to pause and dwell on this contribution of Emotional Transformation, before we dive into the hard core of what is more obviously anxiety. Day by day, we live and move with anxieties, worries, and pressures. Thanks to repeated practice, and supported by additional tools, these problematic elements of our consciousness shrink, freeing us to focus on healing and growth. This is one of the greatest contributions of Emotional Transformation, and perhaps the greatest of all.

And now, having clarified this, we can go deeper into coping with what is more clearly recognizable as threatening anxiety, those moments when we find ourselves truly unable to function or to cope because of an exaggerated fear that cannot be reasoned with, a fear that is nothing but anxiety.

Anxiety is perceived by the psyche as an emergency, as a state that demands flight or survival battle. In such a state, adrenaline floods our veins rapidly. Automatic systems are activated, the heart races, the mouth dries, and the body screams from within.

But what do we know to do in that moment? Not much. Our inner noise remains, and we are stuck with it, feeling threatened and helpless. We are under attack by anxiety, and we have no tools or responses to this rapid chain of emotional events. It becomes stronger than us. It damages our quality of life. It disrupts decision-making processes. It drags us into unwanted reactions. It makes us weak and powerless.

So what can we do? What does this path suggest we do to help ourselves in such situations?

First and foremost: listen to the anxiety without running away, and without acting immediately. Stop everything. Observe. Decide to do nothing. Stay with the situation as it is. Rest with it. Do not hurry anywhere.

One of the reasons anxiety troubles us so much is the internal pressure bound up with the nagging question: “What should I do now? What should I do?” While in anxiety, we cannot truly answer that question, because we are in anxiety. That question only intensifies the anxiety, prolongs it, and disrupts our ability to deal with it in a more effective, proper way.

Instead, we want to listen to it, as if we are tuning into a radio program. Listen without asking ourselves what to do. And if possible, without fleeing the situation or the space we are in at that moment. If we feel we must leave and take some distance, then we may do so, but even then we will try to pause somewhere, to be with ourselves. This is not the time for hurried action. This is the time to be with the anxiety. To feel it. To embrace it. The time for action will come later and will complete the transformation. But in order for that to happen, and for it to happen in the right way, our first step must be to pause. Do nothing. Be with this inner noise. And from there, we will later be able to move toward change.

And so it will be.

Chapter 32: Going Through the Five Steps with Anxiety

We will never be able to get rid of our anxieties completely. But we can certainly create change in the way we live with them, cope with them, reduce their influence, and, under the inspiration of Emotional Transformation, turn them from a state that mainly disturbs and disrupts our quality of life into a force and an energy that empowers us and allows us to live a more meaningful and satisfying life.

As long as we do not progress in how we manage our anxieties, we remain essentially limited in our ability to realize our desires, as well as in our ability to create transformation in any other matter. This is why it is so essential to linger on this subject, to give it our attention, and to improve our tools for working with it.

The Five Steps of Emotional Transformation are not only a clear and practical platform for carrying out this task, but also a way of internalizing the very capacity to transform anxieties, even without going through the entire process each time anew. In other words: the more we apply the transformation steps to our anxieties, the more we train the psyche to perform this action automatically, without our noticing, or more quickly than we are used to recovering from anxiety. Over time, we are likely to find ourselves entering a state of anxiety and then, surprisingly, exiting it more easily, less frightened, less confused.

Step One – Observation

As emphasized in the previous chapter, in order to transform anxiety we must do what we usually avoid doing, nothing. The anxiety has arrived, bringing with it a disturbing, unsettling, disruptive message that shakes up the normal flow of life. This already happened. It is here. We are inside it. We cannot run from it. We cannot ignore it. Anxiety is here.

What we must train ourselves to do, so different from the instinctual impulse, is simply to observe, and to allow the internal noise to exist as it is, without reacting and without letting it dictate our decisions, our reactions, our words, our actions, or our thoughts. What we must learn to do, and it is not simple, is to stop, to look, to listen, to be with it in a passive way, but one that is containing, tolerant, and patient. Anxiety has a natural tendency to subside, especially if we do not rush to react to it. We want to look it in the eye with courage and get to know it deeply.

The heart may be pounding. Thoughts may be racing, painting images of catastrophe. Still, we will observe. That is what we will do. Observe while sharing with ourselves, in words, what we are seeing and feeling, just as we do in Step One. This is already a very big step, one that allows all the following steps to arrive and contribute their unique part.

Step Two – Reducing Self-Criticism Around the Anxiety

It is hard to believe, and even harder to describe, how much excessive self-criticism cements anxiety, amplifies it, disrupts our ways of coping with it, and makes the situation worse in every respect.

In moments of anxiety we are not only forced to cope with the emotional-physical storm that overwhelms us, we are also attacked from within by our own intolerance, our lack of legitimacy for the fact that we are experiencing anxiety.

In many ways, anxiety broadcasts inward a message of helplessness. And who wants to be helpless? Who is willing to accept that for the next minutes they cannot do much about the situation, that it is stronger than them, that all they can do is wait patiently until it passes by itself? This helplessness is often unacceptable to the self-critical voice that serves parts of the ego which refuse to acknowledge that we have weaknesses, places where we lose our way, places where a small child within us cries out for help and struggles to receive it.

So the excessive self-criticism scolds us, pressures us, and makes the anxiety much worse than the anxiety itself. It convinces us that there is something broken and faulty in us merely because we are suffering from anxiety. It strikes at our self-image and at our ability to manage this emotional emergency properly. It is completely unnecessary in such moments.

Thus in Step Two we direct our attention to the fact that self-criticism may arise and make things worse. In this step, we act consciously and decisively to reduce it, to stop it, to postpone it until later, and even to respond assertively to its exaggerated messages, messages that themselves create more anxiety and helplessness.

It is important to remember that we can reduce the level of inner criticism, because as long as we are unaware of it, it runs wild unchecked, and it pushes the possibility of transformation further and further away. Only by accepting ourselves exactly as we are in that very moment can we begin to move forward.

Step Three – Increasing Self-Love

In the midst of anxiety, self-love is one of the things most lacking. In anxiety we usually feel more alone, less understood, less accepted. In anxiety we are temporarily drained of our strength, our vitality, our natural flow, our optimism, and our creative flexibility to deal with what is happening. For a while we may experience a kind of emotional paralysis.

What can help reduce the scope and consequences of this difficulty is increasing self-love, even if it is hard at that moment, even if it seems to have little effect. We can still try: smile at ourselves in the mirror, if possible. Say to ourselves words of love, compassion, and support, if possible. Give ourselves relief, rest, and protection from the disturbances of the environment, out of self-love. Repeat to ourselves, even aloud: It's okay. This will pass. This is only anxiety. Right now, I love myself even more.

Imagine that in such moments you are a frightened child who lost their way home. Now imagine that a kind, loving fairy arrives, takes your hand gently and firmly, and

leads you slowly, through the territories of uncertainty, back to what is familiar, safe, and comfortable.

This is the experience you can give yourself, through self-love practices in Step Three.

Step Four – Cultivating Passion for Change or Creation

This step begins to move the energy of anxiety into a new direction. Anxiety is a state where adrenaline is flooding the blood. It is adrenaline that creates the sense of immediacy, danger, the impulse to flee or fight. But that very same adrenaline can become the fuel of expression, creation, and change, if we direct it.

Now, even if the anxiety is still present, we search within for a passion, for change or for creation. It does not matter what it is or in what form. We seek something, and we speak to ourselves about it. We cultivate passion toward some direction in our consciousness. We let the passion grow and build. The more we practice this, the more the adrenaline is steered toward a healthier, more life-giving place, further away from the anxiety that unsettles us.

Step Five – Taking Action

Here we complete the transformation. We move outward. We exit the paralysis. We step out of the situation. We step away from what is habitual, and we go to another place. We change something. We create something. We move something.

We allow the energy of anxiety to express itself and to release itself through an action that, on the surface, may seem unrelated to the anxiety. The body was filled with energy during the anxiety. That energy must be discharged and released.

The more we apply the Five Steps of Emotional Transformation to anxiety, the more we discover over time that anxiety remains a part of life, but no longer such a hard or threatening part.

In the next chapter, we will highlight even more what happens in Steps Four and Five, because their combination is usually both the greatest challenge and the greatest gift that anxiety can be transformed into.

Chapter 33: Leveraging Adrenaline in the Right Direction

For those who haven't experienced the passage from a state of anxiety to a state of harnessing the energy embedded in it for change and creative expression, this can at first sound foreign and even impractical. In anxiety there seems to be nothing in us but an unpleasant pressure, a sense of danger, incapacity, difficulty, and of course weakness and helplessness. How could anything good even be imagined from such a place?

To begin understanding the shift that can be made, from real anxiety to a transformation that expresses itself in actions which enlist anxiety's energy, we need to focus on the agent responsible for all the chaos that accompanies anxiety, and also the agent that can be responsible for the good we can extract from it: the hormone adrenaline. Everyone has heard of this hormone, but most do not really know its modes of action or how to work with it, precisely where the problem begins.

Before we continue, we should place things in their proper context: we arrive at the possibility of channeling the forces of anxiety toward change and creative expression, the very thing Steps 4 and 5 train us to do, only on the foundation of the first three steps, which allow us to reach a state where something new can be done with anxiety (and with every other problem which, as already noted, also contains, in one way or another, a meaningful contribution of anxiety and its various expressions).

This means that to work properly with adrenaline, we must practice quiet observation of anxiety and internalize that capacity (Step 1). We must also practice reducing the self-criticism we have during an anxious episode or after it passes, this is very important (Step 2). And finally, we must practice and internalize the tool of self-love during anxiety, before it and after it, so that we establish within ourselves a warm, supportive, optimistic relationship even with the fact that we sometimes suffer from anxiety, or its other forms such as worry, pressure, emotional hunger, hunger for other addictions, obsessive thinking, compulsive need for rituals and for preserving the status quo, fear of change, fear of rejection, fear of failure, and more (Step 3).

Here is a small note for anyone who has yet to internalize this: anxieties truly accompany every human life and live in every person's awareness. The difference between people lies in how aware they are of this and in their ways of coping with it.

Built on the foundations of those first three steps, which focus more on inner work and on the underlying relationship a person has with themselves, we can look at adrenaline and begin to plan a new reality in which it is mobilized more for our higher needs than against them.

Adrenaline is often linked to extreme states: to fight and combat as much as to flight and escape. It supplies physical energy to the heart and muscles so they can work vigorously and swiftly, and it heightens concentration to support the task at hand. Adrenaline is tied to thrill, to the hunt, to the extreme, to taking risks, to excitement, and even to falling in love.

When we're anxious, we are in a negative kind of arousal. Anxiety stages an inner drama around some topic or other; like any drama, it exaggerates reality and creates a distorted picture of what is happening and of its implications. That distortion makes us want to flee or fight, needlessly, and for this, adrenaline is recruited. It intensifies the sense of urgency, speeds the heart, and over-focuses us on the matter at hand while neglecting many other important aspects of our life at that very moment.

But that very adrenaline is not actually used either for fighting or for fleeing. It ends up coursing through the body, generating a "do or die" feeling without our doing anything with it. This is precisely what leaves us with such an unpleasant experience during anxiety. We are paralyzed and helpless in a state where we were, ostensibly, meant to fight or to run.

Fortunately, that same adrenaline, at its higher expression, can and should be channeled into free, original creative work, where we allow the inner drama to find expression in a kind of liberated doing. People who experience manic surges, in which adrenaline is present at a high level, sometimes bring their state to abundant, dazzling creation that would seemingly have been impossible otherwise.

The same adrenaline that was meant to equip us quickly with escape routes or survival power in a fight can also supply us, quickly and amply, with channels of expression, if we grant it (and ourselves) the option to act in ways that produce change or that give rise to creative expression that feels pleasant and fitting to us in that moment.

It is worth emphasizing: we have at least two healthy options for using the adrenaline that is already flowing through our veins during anxiety, change or creation. Sometimes the circumstances allow us to take up a creative act, drawing, writing, dancing, sculpting, cooking, or anything else where we create ex nihilo, invent, express, and release energy by bringing something into being. Sometimes that is not so feasible; yet making some change, however small, is almost always possible.

So at times the use of adrenaline might be taking the car to be washed right now, precisely during the anxiety. Or deciding that we are finally fixing some stuck thing this very moment, anxiety and all. Miraculously, many tasks toward which we were previously a bit lazy, slow, or blocked become more flowing and easier thanks to the extra adrenaline the anxiety has produced for us, in abundance.

In Step 4 we learn to cultivate passion for change or creation, thus preparing ourselves to put adrenaline to its proper use. In Step 5 we learn to go out and implement without delay, even if it's something small and not particularly significant, so long as it involves some measure of change, some exertion of energy to address something stuck or cumbersome.

The combination of these two steps, built on the infrastructure of the first three, enables us to do what at first sounds like science fiction: to turn the distress of anxiety not only into something we can move toward, but into a kind of advantage. Yes, anxiety becomes a kind of power, a lever, a booster that pushes us to do what, in other circumstances, we might neglect or fail to implement.

Here we must stress what is easy to miss: transforming anxiety into work of change or creation is not merely a good idea or one option among many for dealing with anxiety's problematic consequences. It is, in fact, the only way a person can extricate themselves from their anxiety and recast it, in their consciousness, as something not merely less threatening but as an integral part of daily life, a building block in processes of growth and development, a force that empowers us and grants opportunities precisely where it is hard for us to progress and move.

There was anxiety, and there will be anxiety, this has been clarified already. The difference between the one who suffers from it more and the one who suffers from it less lies in the ability to transform it, to turn it into an engine that carries us forward rather than a vise that tightens around us and blocks us from life's good things. Transformation won't always be possible; we won't always be ready for change or creation. Sometimes we won't notice we're anxious, and sometimes anxiety will take a form or an intensity that won't allow us to complete the transformation with ease. At times we'll need help, from a friend, a therapist, or a group, to face some of our anxieties. That is perfectly fine.

But whenever we can, and whenever we are ready, first with the smaller anxieties, we can begin to practice this possibility. Instead of suffering so much and even becoming addicted to anxieties, we gain a path for taking what is already within us and making something better from it, without having to run from our truth or pretend anxieties don't exist. When this miracle happens, life moves to a place that is so much better.

Chapter 34: Looking at the Problem and Remembering That It Plays a Crucial Role in Personal Growth

This chapter, together with the two that follow, closes this book. They therefore focus mainly on the message and the place that Emotional Transformation holds in human life.

Emotional Transformation exists first and foremost because we, human beings, have problems. It is designed to give us the most important explanation regarding the existence of our problems, as well as the most fitting way to relate to them and to deal with them in a way that serves us at the highest level.

From the perspective of Emotional Transformation, and also according to many parallel worldviews, the problems in our lives have a valid and important reason to exist. Those very problems we would be so delighted to eliminate with the wave of a hand; those recurring conflicts that irritate, frustrate, confuse, and even harm us, those we long to banish once and for all, are seen, in the approach of Emotional Transformation, as things we actually need, even if we resist them. Indeed, that is usually what we do with problems: we resist their message and their guidance toward a healthier and more fulfilling life.

According to Emotional Transformation, problems are signals. They are indicators showing us precisely where we need to focus our emotional work in order to heal the psyche and free it from the limitations it has created for itself over the years. Problems are our “now.” That means they remind us and direct us toward the very places that require our attention in the present moment. As long as we do not respond appropriately and neglect the work that must be done with our problems, they will reappear, weigh upon us again, and even increase the pain and difficulty associated with them.

Problems come to show us, with precision, what we would rather not see or confront in the right way. They also show us where we are not yet sufficiently developed to resolve what has become stuck and what is no longer needed. Problems explain to us our limitations, those very limitations we cannot simply accept but must instead work on, improve, and even release. Otherwise, they would not be presented to us again and again through our current difficulties.

And what do we usually do with problems? We fight them. We get angry at them. We form negative opinions about them. We neglect them. We try to hand them off to someone else. We ignore them, hide from them, invest resources in doing anything that avoids dealing with them, complain about them, cry over them, and end up staying with them, essentially in the same place. In the end, what happens is that we become addicted to them and stop believing life could even exist without them. They become our companions, our partners, relationships of love and hate (mostly hate, it must be said, but we are even capable of falling in love with our problems...). And the very last thing we consider doing, or feel able to do, is truly finding the way to part with them in such a way that they will not quickly return.

So what is the way to part from our problems? What leads them to the right place, the place of transformation?

First: the attitude. An attitude that accepts the fact that problems are no more than signals pointing us toward a better place. It begins with an attitude that cultivates curiosity and courage to ask: What is inside this problem that is meant to provide me with benefit, with pathways of healing and growth? It begins with an attitude that halts the automatic flood of reactions to a problem and instead takes responsibility for the fact that we sustain and feed our problems, and we can also lead them to a new place, if only we give them the proper attention.

For this to happen, we must recognize our victim tendency. This is the tendency that separates us from transforming our problems. As long as we feel that problems “happen to us,” and every person feels that way at times, it is harder for us to see them as gestures and as gifts. We then experience them as a kind of assault, as a kind of injustice against us, rather than as guides trying to show us where we are mistaken and what path we have missed on the way to the life we so deeply want to live.

The change we want to reach is the recognition that we are not really victims of our problems. Perhaps someone helped spark them, but the main responsibility lies with us. And more than that, the recognition that their recurring appearance is an invitation to work, an invitation to inner inquiry, an invitation to love, an invitation to transformation.

These things can never be taken for granted. This must be remembered and repeated again and again. Although it seems “mature” and “enlightened” to be “not a victim” and to take full responsibility for our problems, we have, and will always have, those same vulnerabilities, those same pains, those same childhood fragments that pull us to feel like victims of reality. This does not mean such thinking must dominate us. But it does mean that this part exists and must be located, identified, brought into awareness, and included in the work, the work of transformation.

And what does Emotional Transformation actually do? As already noted, parts of the magic of this process remain unknown, because they happen in the realms of the unconscious, and it is best they remain there. What we can say now is that Emotional Transformation is a kind of truth, a kind of force that allows the psyche to reorganize itself into its natural strengths, the very forces that know how to turn a problem into creative expression and into change.

How does Emotional Transformation become possible and available to our unconscious? How can it be safely brought inside, bypassing all the resistances that await within? How do we bring the psyche into a state where it will indeed do the right work despite its habit of getting stuck in helplessness?

Emotional Transformation becomes possible and available mainly through the pathway of our problems. We direct the tools, the five steps of transformation, toward a problem we have identified, and only then does an important inner occurrence begin, one that leads not only to change in those specific problems, in time, but also to a chain of further changes, which expand our ability to face many other challenges.

Many of us have already encountered this phenomenon elsewhere: thanks to a particular problem, we seek help. We go to therapy, to counseling, to guidance. Thanks to a problem, we invest ourselves, spend money, read books, attend workshops, form connections, and discover a whole new world. Thanks to our problems.

That is how it works, and that is how it is meant to be. But the condition for all of this, the condition that determines what will happen, a condition that cannot be bypassed, is the recognition that this is the nature of problems: they serve as our best indicators, sometimes our only indicators, of the path we must choose right now, at this very moment. The way we look at problems and learn to see them as tools meant to provide us with opportunity, and not merely as irritations we wish would vanish from our lives.

All of this does not come to minimize the pain involved in those problems. On the contrary. We are not meant to now become great heroes who see every problem as a small hurdle we will soon leap over with grace and courage. Problems truly are not simple; they do cause us heartache and sometimes damage. Problems are indeed problems, as their very name says.

We cannot succeed in the work of transformation if we belittle them or try to skim over or bypass them while ignoring the feelings or difficulties they involve. Problems are problems. They are sources of frustration, of misunderstanding, of repetitions of what got stuck back in our childhood landscapes. They are more important than to be brushed aside. They are our most precious assets. And it is with these, precisely, that we learn to work here, on the journey of Emotional Transformation.

Chapter 35: Going Through the Five Steps With the Problem

One of the important changes Emotional Transformation is meant to bring about lies in the very way we relate to a problem. The way we relate, inwardly, to anything that exists within us largely determines how that thing will affect us and our ability to deal with it, work with it, respond to it, and derive benefit from it.

One of the greatest pitfalls most of us fall into, from time to time, is the illusion of a problem's complexity, not necessarily because of its nature or what it entails, but mainly because of an incorrect attitude toward it: an attitude that contains an excessive degree of anxiety, a sense of inability to cope, despair, a failure to understand what truly resides in the problem, and more. So long as our attitude toward the problem is overly tainted by preconceived notions and a fair amount of pessimism, the problem inflates and becomes a task far more complicated than it needs to be.

When we internalize Emotional Transformation, our initial attitude to a problem can gradually change. We must learn how to teach ourselves one simple, basic principle which will not always serve as a magic solution but will, in many cases, provide a pathway that allows us to feel there is light at the end of the tunnel and that we can recruit a bit more optimism for a road we will have no choice but to walk anyway.

When we manage, whether deliberately or more spontaneously, at the sight of a problem, to tell ourselves: "Hey, here's another topic for transformation," instead of getting caught up in excessive worry, agitating thoughts, and restlessness, then we set out on the journey of facing the problem from a much better place. It is no longer quite so much a "problem." It is an invitation to transformation. Life has created for us a painful and troubling signal which is indeed unpleasant, yet still remains what it is, a signal, a signpost indicating where Emotional Transformation is now required.

When, in this way, our problems become our transformation challenges, the overall odds of change alter beyond recognition. This does not mean we won't need help of one kind or another, that we won't need counseling, therapy, guidance, or a struggle. It doesn't say anything, in fact, except this: it adds a new approach, one that moves us from a stance rife with a sense of victimhood to one in which our helplessness is relatively reduced, accompanied by the feeling that there is work we can do, there are tools, and there is a method, all of which are aimed at a single destination: transformation.

More than that: beyond teaching ourselves that whatever hurts is nothing but a call to transformational work, we may, over time, also change our overall opinion about our problems.

Let's imagine this together.

People can be roughly divided into two types: one type consists of those who think problems are something to worry about, evidence that life is harder and more complicated. The second type consists of those who understand that problems are part

of life's means to improve itself, to heal itself, and to invite us to do the right thing to bring reality to a better place.

Those of the first type will rise in the morning to another day of harder struggle and fewer successes. They will find it difficult to develop a vision of a better life and will always live in the ominous shadow of problems that, in their minds, only become more complicated.

Those of the second type will feel their pains and will at times experience despair and pessimism, but at some point they will execute a transformation within themselves and remember that problems are nothing but challenges, and that the reason for their presence is to spur them into taking action that changes reality.

So let's imagine a world increasingly filled with people of the second type, those who hold, in their consciousness, the possibility of transformation, those who encounter a problem and soon turn it into a fascinating journey of self-learning and turning lemons into lemonade. This is not just a figure of speech or a slogan, it is the truth. The lemon itself may be tasty; we only need to relate to it correctly and know in advance that something good can emerge from it, in order for us to make lemonade.

This is the great change Emotional Transformation offers you and the whole world: not to ignore problems and not to try to eliminate them at once, but to work with them, profit from them, learn who we are through them, and meet our hidden truth thanks to them, and only thanks to them.

To increase the likelihood that this is how things will unfold, let us recall the five steps of transformation, to which we can bring any problem, and by means of which, after repeated practice and with the aid of anything else that can help, we can reach a state in which it becomes possible to effect change in the problem and thanks to the problem.

Step One, the most important and critical of all, the quietest and most modest step: observe the problem. Halt the torrent of internal reactions, the prejudices, the emotional reflexes, the need to do something, the need to respond and defend. Stop everything and observe. Observe the problem quietly, as if in meditation or on an evening stroll along the beach. Observe the problem quietly and do not tell yourself anything. Be with it. As crucial and decisive as that is. Something within us will try to urge us to run and react. Worry will try to pull us back into feeling helpless and tense, but we will stop. We will observe. And keep observing. Then, within the practice, we will share, in our own words, what we see, as much as possible, quietly.

Step Two reminds us of what we always forget: that we suffer from excessive self-criticism around the problem, that deep inside we feel that something in us is probably not okay in this matter, that perhaps we missed, erred, failed, or simply neglected. We do not need this criticism now. We want to stop it, cease it, reject it outright. It does not help us and it greatly interferes with transformation. We must be clear and firm with it, because it has a tendency to return and pester once we stop restraining it. Pay attention to it.

Step Three is to do what we tend to forget, especially when confronting a problem that annoys, troubles, and recurs: to love ourselves. Problems tend to distance us from ourselves. We must bring ourselves back to our center, to our heart; otherwise, the problem will become for us only a source of suffering, rather than a source of work and change that accompanies the inevitable pain that comes with the problem. Self-love nourishes the transformation process and helps us cultivate the compassion and empathy that are so sorely lacking toward ourselves when there is a problem steeped in worry, difficulty, and a sense that things are stuck. So let's smile at the mirror while looking the problem straight in the eye, without flinching.

Step Four is to cultivate desire for change and for creation, in relation to the problem and also in general. The more our positive desire, the one that leads to change and creative expression, pulses within us, the more our entire outlook on problems shifts and becomes one that seeks to do and to experiment, and less one that retreats and entrenches itself in worry and distress.

Step Five is simply to get up and do something. Change something; start or stop something. Create something. Begin or finish something. Initiate something, close something, connect with someone, or make a spontaneous decision about something you've always dreamed of doing. Make something. Sign up for something. Set life in motion. This will be our response to the existence of the problem. What we do need not be connected to that problem. The problem will release itself when we are ripe for it. Right now, we are changing our attitude, turning a problem into a challenge, passing through the first four steps and concluding with an act that lets us redefine our relationship with the problem: from a source of difficulty and clumsiness into a pent-up force thanks to which we rose, took action, and changed our life. Now.

Chapter 36: Don't Press and Don't Demand, Every Problem Has Its Own Transformation Duration

This is the concluding chapter of this book, but it is certainly not the end of this journey, the wondrous journey of Emotional Transformation. The 36 chapters of this book form a foundation for a way it is recommended to adopt as much as possible. The tools of Emotional Transformation express a principled and very essential stance regarding how we perceive our problems and difficulties, and, subsequently, how we turn them into the ideal substrate for development, healing, and growth. It is possible and worthwhile to read the chapters again and again, to listen repeatedly, to make the practice of Emotional Transformation part of your routine, and to join, as suits you, some support group focused on one form or another of Emotional Transformation.

And here is the place and time to put all of this into the right proportions. There are problems of many kinds, and it is good that we remain aware of this and respond accordingly. There are more temporary and localized problems for which Emotional Transformation will allow us to cope much better and even help bring them to an end and to stop the suffering they entail. There are other problems, deeper and broader, where the ability to change and move things is more limited. Such problems, by their very nature, are destined to accompany us for a long period, in any case. The main question is how we will live together with them during this period and, later on, how we will learn to extract benefit and a framework for growth and development from the pain and difficulty they entail, and how we will reduce the degree of suffering and grief involved.

We cannot dictate in advance how a problem will change, certainly not the speed and timing. We cannot manage the course of transformation. We can only enable it as much as we can. As explained earlier, most of the work happens behind the scenes. The psyche possesses self-healing capacities to which we do not have direct access. The psyche has marvelous engines of growth over which we cannot fully control. All we can do is learn how to stop interfering with the psyche in doing its right work, and how to create within us the right atmosphere that invites transformation processes to occur almost by themselves.

When we pressure ourselves and demand that issues which are not yet resolved receive a quicker solution, even though that is not truly possible, we broadcast a message of despair and misunderstanding. Some of the inner relationships within a person, especially those connected with excessive self-criticism, will, from time to time, generate an atmosphere of impatience, pessimism, and impotence regarding the possibility of changing a particular issue in the future. Usually, in such a state, we are in a kind of denial of what is really happening, and instead of facing the truth directly, we surrender to frustration, pressure, and impatience, none of which has anything to do with genuine work toward change and the softening of one difficulty or another.

Every person lives with their problems, which are part of what colors their life, guides their path, and marks the possible trails of their development. Our problems are part of the imprint and part of the emotional DNA with which we live, even if that is not so easy for us to understand or accept. It is very easy to get swept into self-anger or anger at life because of the problems, or, alternatively, to surrender to an attitude of

burying our head in the sand and ignoring the necessity to face the problem and do whatever work it calls on us to do.

Any such work, any correct response to states of difficulty and to a problem, must lead to transformation; must lead to a change that will not be expressed only in an improvement of the problem's particulars but will also contain within it personal development and self-improvement in a variety of areas. This is why problems are here, and any engagement with them that fails to deliver results indicating personal growth derived from the emotional journey they entail, is engagement that lacks several vital and necessary components on the path to treating a problem in the right way.

Today, right now, at this very moment, there are surely several matters that worry you. There are a few things you would be glad to see in a more comfortable, more flowing, happier, and more fitting place for you. In several areas, life does not exactly smile at you and does not grant you discounts or relief. These are your growth paths, whether you notice them or not.

Our problems are a kind of tough instructors who are going nowhere, who are not deterred by any negative opinion about them, and who are not afraid of a long and difficult road. The problems are here to stay and to ensure that certain things will happen in your life, regardless. What remains up to your choice, and depends on your degree of dedication to Emotional Transformation, is the way you respond to these problems and the changes your life will undergo thanks to them.

Therefore, even if we very much want to vent some steam and pressure, it is recommended not to press, not to demand immediate results, and not to be tempted by external pressures that pull us off the path and drag us into needless worries or hasty decisions that align with one social trend or another.

No one can take from you your path and the journey you must undergo with your problems. No one can be there, in the places where only you have the ability and the possibility to respond, decide, act, and influence that matter. Your problems are your assets.

Guard the right to pass through the grade levels they entail; guard the right to undergo, thanks to them, a transformation that leads to personal growth. No one can do it for you; no one will truly understand what is happening within you; no one can grasp the depths of the emotional experience bound up with the challenges your life has placed before you.

We are on a journey in order to be on a journey. We move from station to station, from challenge to challenge, seeking rest and inheritance, seeking to arrive home, unaware that our home is here and now, right here, within the journey itself. There is no other possibility for us, and any other way of perceiving this reality only increases the alienation and the illusion regarding what can be gained from this journey.

Our home is here, within the journey. And as we go, this home can become more refined, more comfortable and nourishing, more joyful and satisfying. But it will always be the same home that exists today. We are not going anywhere else. We are

here to experience what we are experiencing right now. We are here to answer the call of transformation that turns us from victims into those who deal creatively with life's gifts.

There are certainly some people around you for whom the notion of Emotional Transformation is strange and odd. Many new concepts are entering both personal and societal consciousness in these years, and there are those who need more time on this earth before they are ready to change their perception of reality to one that sees sparks of light within darkness, and that interprets emotional pain as an opportunity for growth and development.

It is not your role to convince them of something they are not ready to receive. All you need to do is demonstrate, through your own inner work, that interesting changes really can happen thanks to working with problems. The only gift available to you for such people is the gift of inspiration. Do your part; perhaps they will wish to as well.

For me, writing books is a clear act of transformation. The person I was at the beginning of each book is no longer the same person by its end. I suggest that you, too, seek tirelessly those tools and modes of expression that allow you to undergo change and development as you work with them.

Every person has what life offers them to move them toward their next step. Anyone who seeks a better life ought to know these tools, or engage in the search for them, through trial and error, until the path that helps them undergo transformation is revealed and discovered.

I invite you back to Chapter 1. The journey of transformation is a way of life. Without pressure, without demands, keep moving, and from time to time notice a new gift that life grants to those who turn their problems into a courageous path toward breathtaking, thrilling growth and development.