

# Paul Solomon Lectures

## Emotions

### **YOU ARE NOT THE TARGET**

If you had attended one of the great mystery schools of ancient times, an early lesson presented by your teacher would have been to try to deliberately upset you.

It may have happened something like this: Your teacher is shaking hands with a visitor while you are standing beside him. Both the teacher and the visitor are ignoring you. You keep wondering why they are treating you so rudely. As long as you continued to feel this vulnerability your teacher would keep putting you into situations where you felt ignored or embarrassed.

These situations would continue until you realized that you feel the way you choose to feel, not because any external set of circumstances caused you to react with anger, hurt, rejection, or pain. Does that sound familiar to you even now? Do you feel the way you choose to feel?

All of this may be just theory at first. You listen and say, "That sounds nice. I would like to construct a new way of thinking, a new way of acting, a new way of believing, but it is such a lot of work"

You are right. Taking charge of your life does require a lot of work and a lot of discipline. You will have to watch what is happening to you and how you are reacting. You will have to analyze where you are a victim and discover how not to be one.

### **YOU ARE NOT ALONE**

You are not alone. You have the unfailing help of an inner teacher. Now this may not be true. It cannot be proven empirically. It can work experientially if you live with a belief that it is true. You can try this little experiment and see if it is true for you. It can work experientially if you live with a belief that it is true. You can try this little experiment and see if it is true for you.

Begin each morning feeling that nobody will come into your life by accident. There is an inner teacher who is involved in every moment of your life and he will put each person whom you meet in your life for a reason. Some will be catalysts to which you have the choice of responding to as a victim or a master. For example you meet some disagreeable individual. You tell yourself you COULD be agreeable, but look how this other person is acting. Already, you are responding with feelings you don't want to have. Such a person can ruin your day.

You have a choice. You can, instead, regard him as someone whom your teacher has brought into your life for a purpose. You are not going to give him any power over you. Perhaps you should even be grateful to him for going through all that unreasonable behavior to enable you to learn and grow. He must feel miserable or he wouldn't act this way. Probably you really should thank him for undergoing all of this misery just to allow you to discover a new and better response. If you can think in this manner, you will appreciate every single experience of your life.

When you begin to use the Nine-Step Process, you will begin to realize that everything that happens in your life that produces an emotion is, in fact, an opportunity to learn. If you turn every one of these experiences into lessons, then you will be able to abort the emotion before you feel it and that is even better than processing the emotion through the Nine Steps after you feel it. If you meet the same old

lessons with the same frustrations every day, then you are patterning these frustrations into the very cells of your body.

Your cells are being recreated constantly, both from the foods you eat and from your attitudes, thoughts, and emotions. Cells created during periods of imbalance, frustration and stress undoubtedly build ill health into the body. As long as you demand your right to be angry and to produce conflicts, you are demanding your right to build illness into your body.

If you learn to be a master instead of a victim, learn to think and act in a new way, you will build health and wholeness into your body.

### **A GIFT OR A THREAT?**

When a person expresses anger and directs it to you, think of it as an opportunity rather than an attack.

It is a challenge. It may require that you take one little step at a time. Overcome one thing, then another. It will take some work. You are going to have to remind yourself at the beginning of the day, every day, "I am in school today. That is the very purpose of this day." Then, at noon, stop again, and say, "I am in school today. There is a teacher in charge of what I am experiencing all afternoon. And if I am on my toes, I am going to watch everyone who comes into my sphere of existence. Everyone who comes into my realm of consciousness is a potential lesson-bearer in my life".

And the second someone starts to do something outrageous or unkind, recognize the lesson. If it is something that requires that he be in an absolute rage, red-faced, smoke coming out of his ears, then you know that the poor guy is really going through some discomfort while he is yelling at you. Instead of being incensed that he would dare say such a thing to you, you can look at him and think, "You poor guy, having to go through all of that because I need this lesson." You will experience (instead of outrage), compassion, caring, or at least interest in what is going on.

There is just no sense in reacting the way you are used to reacting. If somebody, for example, hurls an insult about you or your family, there is one of two things happening. He may not believe it at all and he may be trying to hurt your feelings and make you angry. If that is what he is doing, then that poor fellow has a problem and that is all you need to notice. Why should you care what he says when he doesn't even believe that it is so? Are you going to let this poor, unstable character have control of the way that you feel? How ridiculous! It is just inappropriate.

The other possibility is that he really believes this insulting thing and you fly off the handle, lose your temper and react to him. Then what has that served? Probably, it will reinforce his belief.

What is the appropriate response? If he really believes this thing then you should, from a point of security and confidence, disencumber him of that misperception by either informing him or demonstrating to him otherwise. And if he doesn't believe it, but is only trying to make you angry, then all you have to do is to demonstrate to him that he does not have that ability. It is that simple. In either case you have decided not to be a victim, but a cause, a master of the situation.

### **YOU ARE NOT THE TARGET**

Of one thing you can be certain. You are not the target. When people are being unkind, mean, selfish, don't believe that you are the target of what they are doing. Don't be so selfish and egotistical to think that you are what matters. It is their pain that matters and that is what they are lashing out at.

People who think they are the target get to take the abuse. If you realize that what they are putting out has nothing to do with you and that they are just putting out a message that they are hurting, then you can be supportive.

You don't have to take it personally. When a child is screaming, "I hate you," It does not mean that at all. It means that he is not sure that you love him., A child will never scream, "I hate you," at a person who is unimportant to him. He is asking you, "Do you approve of me?" "Am I alright?" "Do you love me?"

Just about everybody in the world is asking those same questions, and often they do it in the same convoluted, negative, self-sabotaging way as the little child.

### **TESTS OF ALRIGHTNESS**

Nearly all of the people in the world are trying to make sure they are alright and one of the ways they test their alrightness is to ask somebody else.

The most obvious people to ask first are your parents. You try to get your parents to tell you that you are alright. Little children want to know if people find them attractive, intelligent, talented? They start thinking, almost from birth, "If people don't think I'm alright, it will be terrible." It's the part that says, "It would be terrible if they don't," that hurts you. It's nice to know if they do, but the truth is it's not terrible if the don't. You can live with it and not be upset by it, if you choose to. Maybe your parents don't appreciate you. Maybe they don't think you're intelligent or talented or beautiful.

And, maybe, even if they do believe all of those wonderful things about you, they only think it because it will make them more appreciated and it has nothing to do with you. That can really be a shock to find out, but it probably is true. When mommy thinks her little Johnny is the most brilliant child in the school, what she wants is to believe that that means she is the best mother in the school. That's why she wants Johnny to be so talented. It doesn't have anything to do with Johnny. It has to do with her own ego and her own self-need.

Mothers and fathers probably don' consciously recognize their motivation. This selfishness comes from everybody's need to feel alright and to get positive feedback from everybody else. If other people appreciate you, then that means you are wonderful. Right?

No, it doesn't. It means that other people are not sure that they are alright. They think that you are a powerful person and if they appreciate you, then you will give appreciation back to them. Their attention is on themselves. You ultimately learn that when you are standing around wondering what people are thinking of you, they are wondering what you are thinking of them. You find out. They're not thinking anything about you, they are thinking about themselves.

Everybody on the face of this earth is concerned with survival. You have to be in order to survive, and for that reason you think of yourself. When you give other people the ability to decide whether you are worth while or not, you set yourself up to experience hurt and rejection because others will agree you are worthwhile only as long as they think that it's going to make them look better. The second that it doesn't appear to be in their own best interest to be supportive of you will suddenly change their message.

## **YOU ARE WORTHWHILE**

The conclusion is obvious. You are worthwhile. If you happen to be religious, then the only evidence you need for the fact that you are worthwhile is the fact that you are alive. How did you get here if God didn't believe that you are worth living! When you look at it from that angle it seems unbelievable that you could ever think you are not.

How did this convoluted thinking begin? By people wanting to be more powerful than they are. "You not only want to feel good about yourself; you want me to feel good about you, whether I like it or not. And I don't matter. How I feel about myself doesn't matter. It's how I feel about you that matters. So you want all of your attention and mine, too."

That's the fall in the Garden of Eden. You are trying to be as God and one of the ways that you can be as God is to make me dead and you alive. The only thing is that once I am dead, and you are alive, you realize that you are the only living person in a desert of dead people. When you realize that is not what you want you will start making me alive again. You will want to be a living person among living people.

You, in fact, want to be an appreciated person among living people. You, in fact, want to be an appreciated person among appreciated people. You don't want to be a wonderful person among a bunch of people who are so unappreciative of themselves that they are worthless. You don't want to be around worthless people. You want to be around worthwhile people who know that they are worthwhile because they are people who contribute. As soon as you realize that, you will get over your selfishness. It is only after you learn to appreciate yourself that you will appreciate me. You won't be afraid to appreciate me because you won't make it a contest. And if I do make it contest, you will be confident that you are not the target.

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