

**FINDING PEACE OF MIND  
IN A "MAYBE" WORLD  
by Susan Jeffers, Ph.D.**

"Teacher, heal thyself!" Lately, I've been so confused and upset about the state of the world and the way our politicians are performing (or not performing!) their jobs. I ask myself, "How can they make such stupid decisions!?!". Whenever I find myself in such a state of upset, I remember to do what my daughter always tells me to do..."Mom, go read one of your books!" Good advice! And one of my books that always shows me one or more pathways to peace of mind is *Embracing Uncertainty*.

What did I find in *Embracing Uncertainty* this time that helps me deal with my upset about the state of the world? Chapter 2 is entitled "*The Power Of Maybe; The Value Of Doubt*". Ah, yes! It has to do with remembering the power of the word "MAYBE". And it is a powerful word, indeed! When you live in a MAYBE world, you are better able to control your upset when others act in a way that is different than you think it should be. Why? Because in a MAYBE world, you realize that...

**MAYBE I'M RIGHT, MAYBE I'M WRONG.**

"That's it, Susan!?" Yes, that's it. Trust me when I tell you that there is much peace in this awesome awareness. Even though I disagree with so much that is going on in the world today, when I remember that I live in a MAYBE world, I can relax, open my mind to hear both sides of the story...and I learn a lot. I keep reminding myself that...

**Maybe I'm right, maybe I'm wrong. Maybe they're right, maybe they're wrong. Nobody knows what the future holds. Nobody knows The Grand Design.**

When I adopt this MAYBE attitude, I am able to flow with the political news on the Internet, the bemoaning of my like-minded friends at dinner, the politically slanted media, and so on. This doesn't mean I necessarily will change my opinion on the issues of contention. And it doesn't mean I won't act in ways I believe will create a better world. But in all my actions to create a better world, I will act with the understanding that maybe I'm right, maybe I'm wrong. Maybe their way is better or maybe my way is better. Only time will tell.

It is important to understand that when we have strong belief systems, we create boundaries in our learning, boundaries in our friendships, boundaries in our own capacity to discover new ways of thinking. These boundaries are created by an attachment to a way of thinking as opposed to freedom of thought. Freedom of thought allows the kind of discovery that expands our world and allows us to become the best that we can be.

As I see it, uncertainty--a "maybe I'm right, maybe I'm wrong" way of seeing the world--gives us freedom to search for new ideas, new pathways, new directions. You may be surprised to learn that some of the greatest advocates for uncertainty are scientists. For example, Richard Feynman, who received the Nobel Prize for his work in quantum electro-dynamics, reported in his enlightening book, *The Meaning of It All*, that he was never certain. In fact, he totally embraced uncertainty. He believed that when we take on the attitude of doubt, we open the channel for new inventions. To say that we are sure, closes it. He said...

**I feel a responsibility as a scientist who knows the great value of a satisfactory philosophy of ignorance, and the progress made possible by such a philosophy, progress which is the fruit of freedom of thought.**

"**A satisfactory philosophy of ignorance.**" Isn't that a wonderful phrase? Feynman learned over the years that progress is the fruit of freedom of thought that is created by "a satisfactory philosophy of ignorance." Uncertainty allows freedom of thought; certainty cuts it off. He says we must be free to doubt.

Feynman isn't the only one to have reported a satisfactory philosophy of ignorance. Others throughout history have recognized the value of a state of doubt, of not-knowing. For example, the Dalai Lama is often heard to say three very valuable words which are...

## **I DON'T KNOW.**

Powerful words...**I DON'T KNOW.** We need only look around to see that the blind certainty (and as you just learned, certainty is definitely a form of blindness) that so many of us possess is responsible for creating tension and unrest in our lives instead of flow. In a world of discovery, instead of blind certainty, we can relax and let go of our need for things to be a certain way. Again, it is important to note that this does not mean we stop taking action to create what we think are positive changes in our lives and in our world, but it does mean that we let go of our certainty as to how it's *supposed to be* or how it *should* turn out. We let go because we don't really know The Grand Design. When we drop our attachment to any outcome, we start feeling that all-important **WONDER**. We start feeling curious about how it will turn out. The emotional hold that attachment creates melts away and we are free to engage with others in an open-minded and open-hearted way. Life gets bigger, easier and certainly more loving.

Here's another advantage to a MAYBE mind: Do you remember the wonderful story about the farmer in times gone by who, one day, discovered his horse had wandered off into the forest. The neighbors said to him, "How unlucky to have your horse wander off." His response was "Maybe it is; maybe it isn't." Two days later, the horse came back, bringing with him another horse he befriended in the wild. The neighbors kept saying, "How lucky to have two horses." The farmer's response was "Maybe it is; maybe it isn't." A few days later, the farmer's son broke his leg trying to tame the new horse. Again, the neighbors chimed in, "How unlucky it is that your son broke his leg." And again, the farmer responded "Maybe it is; maybe it isn't." The following day, soldiers came to the farm to recruit the farmer's son. Because of his broken leg, he could not be recruited. Of course, the neighbors were amazed and said, "How lucky it is that your son wasn't taken into the army". And you already know the farmer's response, "Maybe it is; maybe it isn't." You can see how this attitude of "not knowing" allowed him to beautifully handle the blessings as well as the upsets in life.

What we as human beings constantly forget is that we have mortal eyes. And while mortal eyes are truly a miracle, the reality is that they cannot see beyond the walls of a room. Ironically, when we close our eyes, our vision is a bit wider...but just a little bit. In our mind's eye, we can actually rise above the clouds. We can soar. We can imagine, picture, and pretend. But there is nothing in our human makeup that allows us to see The Grand Design. In my writings, I have described The Grand Design as "the larger dimension, the larger plan of the Universe that is beyond our grasp as an ordinary mortal to see or understand." We can guess, ponder, and surmise, but we'll never "know". And anyone who says they do know makes their world much smaller and much more frightening than it need be. With the power of the word MAYBE, you can't help but see how your world will absolutely, definitely, without a question of a doubt, become lighter, freer, and much more interesting...MAYBE!!!<

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Adapted from *Embracing Uncertainty*

## **WHAT WOULD MY HIGHER SELF SAY ABOUT THIS?** by Susan Jeffers, Ph.D.

You are not alone. Everyone has a down-time occasionally. We lose sleep as we obsessively think about a situation that upsets us greatly. We forget to notice the beauty of the day as we listen to the voice of our Lower Self driving us crazy. It is at just such a time that we need to ask ourselves "What would my Higher Self say about this?"

"Susan", you may be asking, "How do I know what the voice of the Higher Self sounds like?" That's easy. If it is a positive, loving, caring, creative and confident voice, it is the voice of the Higher Self. If it is the voice of anger, upset, gloom and doom, it is, of course, the voice of the Lower Self. Aren't you happy you have a choice between the two? And you definitely have that choice.

Let me give you an example: If your head is filled with gloom and doom as you obsess about having lost your job, you are definitely living in the arena of the Lower Self. It sounds like this...

"I can't believe my bad luck. A cutback and I'm the first to go. I'm really angry at my boss. I'm such a loser. I'll never find another job in this economy. How will I pay my bills? It looks really bad on my record that I lost this job." (And on and on and on in a self-defeating manner.)

It is at just such a time that you need to pose the question, "What would my Higher Self say about this?" And the peaceful and comforting answer from your Higher Self would sound like this...

"Not to worry. I am a creative and talented person who can always find another job. I trust that I will find exactly the kind of job that I need. I'm simply on the path to an exciting new adventure. My job does not define me. My life is rich and full. It's all happening perfectly." (And on and on and on in a life-enhancing manner.)

Just the other day, I was feeling very upset about a particular business issue of my own. I had lost sleep the night before as I obsessed about the situation at hand. When I got to my desk the following morning, my tired eyes focused on the little card that I had placed on my desk months earlier that says, "Susan, what would your Higher Self say about this?" (Yes, we ALL need reminders!)

As I focused on this all-important question, I was prompted to do the following exercise: I sat down at my computer and first composed a scenario of my Lower Self speaking. It sounded something like this...

"I feel very angry about what he has done. I would really like to punch him in the face and sue him. I'm calling my lawyer tomorrow. I have lost my respect for him and realize for the first time that he has absolutely no integrity. Oh, I can't believe he did what he did!"

(Note that this is a mild version of what I actually wrote! The real version is unprintable!) As you can see, this was definitely a lose-sleep kind of attitude. I then asked myself the all-important question, "What would my Higher Self say about this?" I got a very different answer, indeed! I then typed into my computer the following words from my Higher Self...

"I trust that he did not do this intentionally. A lawsuit is not the answer. I respect his work and trust that we can lovingly reach an amicable solution that will correct the situation at hand. We will make it

a win-win situation for both of us. It's all happening perfectly. One step at a time, and it will all be handled beautifully."

Wow! Read these two versions again and you can see that the Higher Self offers much better solutions to any problems that may come up and definitely guarantees a better night's sleep! What I did next was to print out my Higher Self response and every time I started thinking about the troubling situation, I simply read it a few times to keep me in a positive, powerful and loving state of mind. Magic!

One of the suggestions that I offer in *Feel the Fear and Beyond*, is to create ten or more post-its or 3 x 5 cards, to put on your mirror, in your car, on your desk, in your diary, and anywhere else you will see them that says...WHAT WOULD MY HIGHER SELF SAY ABOUT THIS? Then when you find yourself in a Lower Self state of mind, you will be reminded to sit down and take a little time to write down a Higher Self way of seeing the situation.

To practice this valuable tool right now, think of something that you are worried about in your life and ask yourself what your Lower Self would say and then what your Higher Self would say.

I AM WORRIED ABOUT \_\_\_\_\_

What would my Lower Self say about it?

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What would my Higher Self say about it?

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A big difference, indeed! I trust you can now see that you can have choice in the way you think about upsetting events in your life. I guarantee the thinking of the Higher Self, the best of who you are, will always make you feel more positive, loving, safe, confident, caring and powerful. What a wonderful way to go through life!!!

This is just one of the many, many tools that are available to help you in your Journey through life. And these tools are meant to be used for a lifetime. Yes, every day of our lives can bring us difficult and frustrating and hurtful and scary experiences that can put us in the realm of discomfort and fear and give us sleepless nights. You can imagine the fear I felt when I was told that I had breast cancer many years ago. But because I had my precious bag of Spiritual tools, I was able to transform what could have felt like a tragedy into a triumph. No matter what life hands us, these Higher Self tools are there to remind us that "All is well. We will handle it all."

To begin filling your own bag of Spiritual tools

## **CHANGE YOUR THINKING... CHANGE YOUR LIFE**

Most of you know that I am a great believer in the power of affirmations, a wonderful form of inner talk. So many of you have already downloaded my free booklet *Why Affirmations Are So Powerful!* and the feedback has been fantastic. And with good reason.

In *Feel the Fear and Do It Anyway*®, which is now celebrating its 20th Anniversary, and in the many books I subsequently wrote, I talk about the power of **positive self-talk**...as did many educators before me. Quantum physics verifies this way of thinking as it shows us that creating a very positive inner energy that radiates out to the world can not only calm your mind and increase your overall happiness, *it can actually transform your life*. (I implore you to read *Shortcut to a Miracle* which is described in **Susan's Bookshelf** below.)

I know that fear and the everyday stresses inherent in our harried lives create much of the negativity in our minds. But what I am telling you here is that there is a way to overcome the detrimental thought patterns of the internal "Chatterbox" that tries to ruin the quality of our lives. I speak from experience. I was a very negative thinker in years past. I overcame this self-destructive pattern when I learned the techniques for moving myself from the weak and frightened part of who I am to the strong and courageous part of who I am. And, indeed, one of my favorite techniques is positive "inner talk".

Because this technique was so successful for me, I wanted to share it with you. As a result, I created **THE FEAR-LESS SERIES**, which was recently released for the first time on audio CD. **THE FEAR-LESS SERIES** includes *Inner Talk for a Confident Day*, *Inner Talk for a Love That Works* and *Inner Talk for Peace of Mind*. Trust me when I tell you that any time I feel the world is getting me down, I simply put one of these CDs into my CD player and in a very short time I can feel the stress or upset - or both - disappearing from my mind and my body. It's a heavenly feeling, indeed! As you listen to any one of these **Inner Talk** tapes, the same thing will happen to you.

Sample just a few of the inner thoughts and affirmations that you will hear on these CDs. As you read the following, notice how a sense of power, love and peace radiates from the words. Imagine listening to these words, which are accompanied by inspirational music, as you are dressing in the morning...driving to work...caring for your child...going to sleep at night...

From *Inner Talk for a Confident Day*

Right now I am choosing to create a beautiful day. I commit to focusing on all that is wonderful within and around me. I take special notice of all the blessings in my life - the sky, the trees, good friends, good food, a compliment, a helping hand, or whatever riches are put before me. Yes... **I am creating a beautiful day... I am creating a beautiful day... I am creating a beautiful day.**

I am getting in touch with the enormous power within me - power to grow, power to change, power to create joy and satisfaction in my life, power to act, power to move forward, power to love and be loved. I constantly remind myself...**I am powerful and I am loving... I am powerful and I am loved... I am powerful and I love it!**

I nod my head up and down instead of side to side. I let go of my resistance and allow in new possibilities. I relax my body and calmly survey each situation. I delight in the opportunity to taste all that life has to offer...the bitter along with the sweet...**I say "Yes!" to it all... I say "Yes!" to it all... I say "Yes!" to it all.**

From *From Inner Talk for a Love that Works*

I am your friend. I am on your side. I am sending you thoughts of love. I listen to and I hear what you have to say. I open my heart to receive. I accept all your actions as your desire to be loved. I see the beauty within you...**I am letting in your love... I am letting in your love... I am letting in your love.**

I thank you for listening and loving and caressing and cajoling and laughing and trying and hoping and caring and being and doing and buying and supporting and sharing and helping and nurturing and protecting and walking the walk and talking the talk. I thank you for being a part of my life...**Thank you... Thank you... Thank you.**

I let go of fairy tale expectations that set me up for disappointment. The only expectation I have of this relationship - or any relationship, whether it lasts one week, twenty-five years, or until death do us part - is that I will learn more about opening my heart and becoming a more loving person...**I am opening my heart to love... I am opening my heart to love... I am opening my heart to love.**

From *From Inner Talk for Peace of Mind*

I let go of my worry about money. I release all thoughts of scarcity. There is always enough. I am capable of creating everything I need. I move into the light and see the huge expanse of possibility...**Life is an exciting adventure... Life is an exciting adventure... Life is an exciting adventure.**

I ease up on myself. I need not rush. I let go and allow the river to carry me to new adventures. I obey the laws of Eternal Rhythm. There is plenty of time for me to do everything I need to do. I constantly remind myself...**There is plenty of time... There is plenty of time... There is plenty of time.**

I am at peace. All the weights are now being lifted from my shoulders. I feel calm. I feel free. I let in the loving Light of the Universe. I feel the warmth course throughout my body. I become the Light...**I touch the beauty of who I am... I touch the beauty of who I am... I touch the beauty of who I am.**

Imagine listening to such thoughts daily. Imagine the negative thoughts slowly being replaced with positive thoughts. Imagine seeing the world with the beauty of the best of who you are. That's what constant repetition of these CDs would allow to happen.

Amazingly, *and this is important*, you do not need to believe the words for them to have a powerful effect on your life. By just hearing them over and over again, they will become automatic in your thinking, hence moving you into a happier, healthier and more peaceful way of being. It makes sense, doesn't it? And let me let you in on a little secret. I have received feedback from a number of people that these CDs are perfect for calming their small children when nothing else is working. One stay-at-home dad told me that he plays it throughout the day and his child has miraculously transformed - as has he! Come to think of it, what better time to embrace all these thoughts of peace, power and love than when we are very young children? Well, those of you reading this are no longer young children, but, then again...*it's never too late to begin.*

## THE MIRROR OF LOVE

Let me introduce you to one of my favorite "Higher Purpose" exercises. Those of you who know my work are already familiar with it, as I have used it in a number of different contexts. *The Feel the Fear Guide to Lasting Love* expands the scope of this exercise and shows you how it will help you move from a position of fear and anger to one of power and love when it comes to your present or future relationship. And what is this life-changing exercise? It is...

### PICK UP THE MIRROR INSTEAD OF THE MAGNIFYING GLASS.

Hmm. I suspect that many of you might not like the sound of that initially. So let me explain the mirror and the magnifying glass as I am using them here...

The magnifying glass represents our symbolically pointing a finger and blaming our mate for our unhappiness. When we blame our mate we, by definition, add to the negativity that lies within the relationship. We also feel helpless because, when we think our happiness depends on someone else, we give away all our power. So not only does our relationship suffer, we personally suffer as well.

The mirror, on the other hand, is our antidote to blame. It represents our looking inward and taking responsibility not only for our actions, but also for our **REACTIONS**, to what is going on in the relationship. The mirror is our key to controlling our own happiness. Ultimately, whether we are in a relationship or not, it is by looking into the mirror that we are able to pick up our power and discover what we personally need to do in order to change what isn't working. Powerful, indeed!

I recently was teaching a young woman the "pick up the mirror" concept. The first thing out of her mouth was, "If anybody needs to pick up the mirror, it's my husband." Oops! I don't think she understood the concept of the mirror! Once again, it is a *guarantee* that throwing the blame and responsibility at our mate doesn't solve any relationship issues. I believe that our Higher Purpose in the relationship is to teach *ourselves* how to become more loving people. And the mirror is the perfect tool to help us to do that.

By the way, if your mirror tells you that it is your own fear, insecurity, lack of appreciation and the like that have created some or many of the difficulties in your relationship, *there is no reason to blame yourself*. Nor should you blame yourself if you don't have a relationship. For your own peace of mind, remember that we are all doing the best we can and there is *always* room for improvement. You are looking in the mirror solely for the purposes of learning and growing. Understand that...

*Self-awareness is the first step toward positive change.*

And your mirror is your primary tool for creating self-awareness. It removes all your denial and allows you to become honest with yourself. Looking inward, you are able to discover what you can do to keep love alive; looking outward, you won't find the answers you are seeking.

Your mirror does many other things as well. It helps move you from the Lower Self, the weakest part of who you are, to the Higher Self, the most powerful and loving part of who you are. I doubt that any of you reading this want to stay stuck in the weakest part of who you are!

When you pick up the mirror, you are ultimately able to find the healing light that shines within your being. When you pick up the mirror, you pick up your power. When you feel more powerful, your anger, pain and fear is diminished. When you feel more powerful, you act with integrity, compassion, caring, respect and kindness.

And there is a hidden benefit of the mirror: If you are having issues with your relationship, you are most likely having issues in other aspects of your life. As you use your mirror to work on healing your relationship, other aspects of your life will be healed as well.

Here is just one example of how the mirror is a great improvement over the magnifying glass and how it moves us to the most loving part of who we are...

***Looking through the magnifying glass, we blame:*** "I am angry because of his/her taking time away from me to spend time with his/her friends."

***Looking through the mirror, we take responsibility for our reactions,*** "Is my life so limited that I can't function without him/her for a few hours? It's time for me to take responsibility for creating more balance in my life so that I don't feel empty and needy when he/she is not around. One way I can do this is to widen my own circle of friends..."

You can see how the mirror shows us how to take responsibility for creating a win-win situation. Can the mirror save all relationships? Of course not. But even if the relationship ends, the rewards that come from looking into the mirror are always great. Sometimes it's good to move on. And it does require that we push through whatever fears we have about leaving. But even as we leave, we have to remember to take the mirror with us. It's meant to be used for a lifetime as we encounter troubling new situations in love...and in life.

Maybe you won't like what you initially see in the mirror. (As I explain in my book, I certainly didn't!) I beg you to put aside your judgment. Again the mirror is not an instrument for self-blame; it is an instrument of self-awareness and ultimate healing. The mirror is there to show you the road to the best of who you are. It is there to help you recognize what you are doing to damage your relationship and it gives you the pathway to healing your inner hurts. It shows you when the negative past is leaking into your heart and messing up the present. It points out habitual responses that get in the way of love. We are all lovers-in-training and as we change these negative habits, we open the door to love. Trust me on that one! The mirror is an amazing tool, indeed!

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Adapted from ***The Feel the Fear Guide to Lasting Love***

You will learn much more about the mirror and many other tools for creating and keeping a beautiful love in *The Feel the Fear Guide to Lasting Love*. (Click here to order the "Real Love" package. See the sidebar for details)

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## **Susan's Bookshelf**

Each month I present a book from my bookshelf that I feel can help you in your journey through life. My hope is that it will make a difference in your life as well. To see earlier selections you may have missed, you can find a link to Susan's Bookshelf on the Home Page of [www.susanjeffers.com](http://www.susanjeffers.com). I will welcome you there.

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## **February Selection**

### ***Legacy of the Heart: The Spiritual Advantages of a Painful Childhood By Wayne Muller***

This book is for everyone who has ever been a child! That, of course, is all of us. Who hasn't felt pain as a child? This pain could be from illness, rejection, family difficulties, fear, neglect, or simply the difficulty in just growing up. Clearly what is important is for us all to let go of the victim mentality and not let the pain of the past run our lives today.

Wayne Muller has beautifully woven into the fabric of this book the teachings from Christian, Buddhist, Hebrew, Sufi, Hindu and Native American traditions, as well as voices from contemporary culture who write about the heart and the spirit...all meant to point us in the right direction.

His writing is lyrical and moving, such as when he points out that, "We take one feeling, one story about our childhood, and place it on the altar of our lives, holding it as a sacred truth, making it more true than anything else in the world. When hurt comes, we say, "Ah, there it is again: the real story of my life." And, Wayne provides us with many exercises and meditations to let go of this kind of thinking that keeps us locked in self-pity.

Wayne encourages us to stop looking for reasons in our past for our unhappiness today as he points out that suffering is, indeed, a part of life for all of us. He indicates that pain is only one moment among many others, and through many examples, he shows us how pain can be a great teacher of compassion for others and a force to strengthen us. He states that we shouldn't ask "why" in the "poor me" sense, but in the "what can I learn from this" sense. This latter question can actually make the suffering an enriching experience. This is a wonderful lesson...something I live and something I teach. Beautiful!

*Legacy of the Heart* is a wonderful read and a truly enlightening book.

## ENJOYING THE FEAST! by Susan Jeffers, Ph.D.

There are certain quotes that not only touch our hearts, they also wake us up and make us take notice. Certainly, the following quotation that I found in *The Path of the Warrior* by Chogyam Trungpa is one of them.

***"Look. This is your world! You can't not look. There is no other world. This is your world; it is your feast. You inherited this; you inherited these eyeballs; you inherited this world of color. Look at the greatness of the whole thing. Look! Don't hesitate-look! Open your eyes, don't blink, and look, look-look further."***

This wonderful quote is a gift. It hits us in the face with the realization that most of us are asleep when it comes to the "greatness of the whole thing." We are given so much but we appreciate so little.

Part of our lack of focus on the beauty of it all is the intrusion of the thinking mind. Of course, the thinking mind is a very valuable thing. For many of our needs, it serves us well. But there are those times when it seems as though it is trying to drive us crazy! In the Hindu tradition, this undisciplined mind is likened to a drunken monkey. In *Feel the Fear And Do It Anyway*®, I was kinder. I named this incessant voice, "the Chatterbox", and for good reason...it never stops chattering! And almost always, it is chattering about negative things! When the Chatterbox is rattling on, our head is too cluttered to take in the abundance all around us. And if we don't take in the abundance of the now, we become more and more fearful that life is passing us by...*and it is!*

Let me now give you an exercise that will help you empty your mind and allow you to be fully present in the "now" so life *won't* be passing you by. I invented this exercise while on a beautiful walk near my home in southern California. There was wonder all around me, but I couldn't take in any of it. My head was a swirl of clutter, which included thoughts of contracts, deadlines, decisions to be made, and on and on and on. At one point, I thankfully became conscious that the incessant clutter was preventing me from seeing or hearing or embracing all the wonder around me. Here I was taking a beautiful walk, but because of the clutter in my head, there was no room for the joy.

I then asked myself a number of very important questions, "What would happen if I could get rid of all the clutter swirling around my head. What if I could let it all simply float down like swirling snowflakes? Would that help?" So, as I walked, I imagined the swirling clutter as "snow" settling down until my head was totally clear...totally empty. Relief, indeed!

But there was more than just relief. All of a sudden, I was able to embrace the glorious scene around me...the expanse of ocean, the magnificent weather, the color of the flowers, the striking cloud formations, the smell of eucalyptus, the palm trees "waving to me" in the breeze, the people running, walking, skateboarding, biking, enjoying the day. Instead of being removed from the scene, as one usually is with clutter in the mind, I became a part of it all. My mind became filled with the beauty...and gratitude welled up in my heart. What had I done to create this miracle of vision? It was very easy. I simply made room for my head to take in what was happening all around me.

The image that came to mind was one of those "snow domes", the little glass balls that you can shake up until they are filled with flakes that look like snow. When you stop shaking the dome, little by little, the specks float to the bottom until the glass ball is clear. With a clear-as-glass mind, we are able to embrace the "now". I suggest that you try this little exercise the next time your mind is taking you away from the present. As you become conscious of the Chatterbox trying to drive you crazy, just imagine your head as a glass ball filled with flecks of unwanted thoughts. Then imagine these flecks slowly settling down until your mind is clear and you can be in the moment. Here are a few examples:

You are watching a good movie, but your mind is cluttered with thoughts of all you have to do at the office tomorrow to prepare for a meeting taking place next week. A good example of life passing you by! Let these thoughts float down so that you can actually enjoy the movie!

You are taking a beautiful warm bath, but your mind is on the problems one of your kids is having at school. Let the thoughts float down and let in the awareness of the warm water soothing your body, the

scent of the beautiful bath salts you have sprinkled in the water, and just focus on the blessed moment of peace. You will deal with your child's problems better in a peaceful state of mind.

These simple examples show how you can actually transform your experiences as you clear your head and allow yourself to be more vibrantly present.

I know that these examples may seem frivolous and that many of us live in very difficult circumstances. It is important for us all to know *that the more difficult the circumstance in our lives, the more valuable is this little tool*. No matter what our lives look like, there are ALWAYS things to appreciate. I worked with the poor in New York City for many years and they taught me a lot about how important gratitude was for healing the hurts and being a force for good. They showed me that when the mind is able to focus on the good, the bad doesn't seem so bad any more. An added advantage is that when the mind is cleared of the negative clutter, we are better able to change and heal what isn't working within and around us.

Given all of the above, you may want to buy yourself one of those little glass balls to jog your memory as to how important an uncluttered mind is. How quickly we forget! I thank my friends Trevor and Sue for buying me one years ago...I enjoy looking up from my desk and seeing it there. I shake it up often to remind me how clutter blocks my vision and how clarity not only opens my eyes to the beauty all around me, it allows me to feel more at peace and helps me to actually "get into this world" in a more meaningful and wonderful way.

So don't let life pass you by. In spite of what may be happening, from this moment forward, let your eyes focus on the beauty that is there. Always remember the wonderful words of Chogyam Trungpa..."Look at the greatness of the whole thing!" Wow!!!

© 2008 Susan Jeffers, Ph.D. Adapted from *Embracing Uncertainty*

For many more exercises to help you better appreciate the beauty in your life, *no matter how good or bad things may seem*, read *Embracing Uncertainty*. And if members of your family seem to be stuck in the "moan and groan" society, this book will clearly help.