It's Your Life
Who's In Charge?
How to Become the Leader in Your Life

Neil Fiore, PhD
Psychologist, Coach & Author of
The Now Habit
&
Stop Stalling, Start Achieving

In this book you will:
➢ Discover how the 5 Qualities of Inner Peace will empower you to become the leader in your life.
➢ Discover who and what is running your life.
➢ Discover how to stop struggling from a lonely, isolated sense of self.
➢ Discover your true potential when self-sabotaging patterns are removed.
➢ Discover what you can achieve when every part of you is aligned with your higher goals and values.

It’s Your Life. Take Charge Now!
It’s Your Life – Who’s in Charge?  
How to Become the Leader in Your Life

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction: 1
   Are Your Problems, Thoughts, Emotions, and Ego Running Your Life?
   5 Signs That You Are Not in Charge of Your Life
   I Had to Learn These Methods the Hard Way
   Achieving Goals With Less Struggle and Greater Peace
   Stop Waiting for Your Old Self to Feel Confident
   Pre-Test to Measure Your Progress

PART I: Identifying Your Habits, Patterns, Beliefs, and Ineffective Coping Strategies

Chapter 1: How to Identify Ineffective Patterns 9
   Are You a Caterpillar or a Butterfly?
   Exercise: Get Your Fear Inoculation Shot
   Identify Your Typical Reactions Without Self-Criticism
   The Mental Rehearsal and Desensitization Process
   Exercise for Chapter 1: Mental Rehearsal

Chapter 2: Who’s In Charge, Your Ego or Your Self? 15
   Adapting to Life After the Garden of Eden
   Expanding Your Identity To Include The New Brain & Larger Self
   You Don’t Have to Struggle Beside Your Self
   The Essential Exercise
   Separated and Alone or Connected to a Larger Self?
   Is Your Past Controlling Your Present?
   Shifting Your Identity to Your Larger Self
   Committing to Your New Identity
   Exercise for Chapter 2: You are not alone

PART II: Putting Your Self in a Leadership Role

Chapter 3: How to Shift to a Leadership Role 24
   Advancing Beyond Your Ego’s Level of Coping
   The Power of Roles to Help Change Our Perspective
   The Actor’s Exercise: Changing Roles
   Accessing the Roles of the Self: Michael’s Story
   Exercise for Chapter 3: Choosing your role

© 2004 Neil Fiore, PhD. All rights reserved. www.neilfiore.com neil@neilfiore.com
1496 Solano Ave., Albany, CA 94706-2148 510-525-2673
# Chapter 4: The Voice of the Self

- How This Process Wakes Up Your Larger Self
- Catching Your Smaller Selves and Bringing Them Home
- Creating A Protective Atmosphere
- Chart: Linking Your Symptoms to Your Solutions
- Using the Voice of the Self
- Discovering Your Own Voice
- Exercise for Chapter 4: Speaking in the Healing Voice of the Self

# PART III: The Five Qualities of Inner Peace and the Problems They Replace

## Chapter 5: How the Five Qualities of Inner Peace Replace Five Major Problems

- It’s Your Life, Why Not Live In Peace?
- The Five Qualities Of Inner Peace
- Different Paths to Inner Peace
- Resolving Five Major Problems with the Five Qualities of Inner Peace
- Chart: Shifting to the Roles of Your Larger Self
- Letting Go of the Arrogant, Lonely Struggle of Ego
- Discovering a Self that Will Fight for Your Life – Ruth’s Story
- Exercise for Chapter Five: The Self’s Commitment

## Chapter 6: From Stress to Safety

- The Stress Response is Your Faithful Servant
- Managing Your Stress Response: Putting You In Charge Of How You Feel
  1. Preparing for Physical Danger: Send a message of Safety
  2. Signals of Psychological Threat: Send a message of worth and connection
  3. Responding to Images of the Past or Future: Send a message of presence
- Put Your Larger Self In Charge of Your Stress Response
- Exercise for Chapter 6: Rate Your Stress Level

## Chapter 7: From Inner Conflict to Choice

- Finding the Third Perspective of Adult Leadership
- Breaking Free from Conflict with External Authorities
- Shifting to the Role of Negotiator
- Breaking Free from Inner Conflict: “You Have To” or “I Choose To”
- Is Your Dance a Two-Step or a Three-Step?
- Exercise for Chapter 7: Acting from Choice

## Chapter 8: From Self-Criticism to Focus

- Is Your Focus Ego-oriented or Task-oriented?
- Don’t Wait for Your Ego to Feel Confident
- Back to Basics: First, Identify Your Default Reactions
- To Be or Not to Be: Does this Action Contribute to, or Detract from, My Mission?
- Defining Your Mission; Focusing on Stronger Life Passion
- Exercise for Chapter 8: Focused in One Breath
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## Chapter 9: From Overwhelm to Presence

61

- At Peace in the Present or Beside Yourself in the Past or Future?
- Centering Exercise – Focused in 1 minute (12 breaths)
- Feeling Overwhelmed By Multiple Goals And Multiple Demands
- Exercise: “Now I am aware of . . .”
- From Overwhelmed, to Overview, to Overjoyed
- Exercise for Chapter 9: One Rapid, Focused Breath

## Chapter 10: From Struggle to Connection

69

- Letting Go of Lonely Struggle
- The Magic of Connection
- From Unity, To Separateness, To Connection To Everything
- Voice of the Self in the Role of Coach
- Exercise: Learning to Connect with the Larger Self
- You Are the Larger Self – Your Role is to Protect and Guide Your Lesser Parts
- The Voice of the Self in the Role of Coach
- Exercise for Chapter 10: Centering Within Your Larger Self

## PART IV: Success is a Team Effort: Aligning All Parts with Your Values

### Chapter 11: Convening Your “Committee Meeting”

78

- Getting Your Dictator to Cooperate
- Uniting All Parts
- It's a “Come As You Truly Are” Party
- How to Conduct a Committee Meeting
- The Power of the Third Chair Perspective
- Exercising Belief in Your Whole Self

### Chapter 12: Achieving Your Goals: A Cooperative Team Effort

85

- Review of the Four Steps to Taking Charge of Your Life
- How Quickly Can You Find Inner Peace?
- You Are the Larger Self (Most of the Time)
- Effective Goal Setting, or “When You Wish Upon a Star”
- What Happy, Successful People Do
- Exercise: Your 5-Year Plan
- Making It Work In Your Unique Version of Life
- Post-Test to Measure Your Progress

## Appendices:

94

- A. Tests to Measure Your Progress
- B. Journal for Progress
- C. Centering Exercise
- D. Stress Quiz
- E. I Accept You – Even Though You’re Not Perfect
- F. Acknowledgements

## Bibliography

100
INTRODUCTION

All the greatest and most important problems of life are fundamentally unsolvable; they only fade when confronted with a new and stronger life passion.

-- Carl G. Jung

This book will help ignite “a new and stronger life passion” that leads you to a vibrant sense of self that’s much more exciting than your former problems. This book does not attempt to delve into the causes of your old problems or to entirely remove them; but it will show you how to lower the volume on their voices by igniting a passion for taking charge of your life.

During my 25 years of experience as a Psychologist and 10 years as a Life Coach, I’ve discovered that focusing on past problems is not as rewarding – nor as rapid in achieving transformative change – as igniting a new passion for attaining inner peace and a more fulfilling life. We begin our process, however, by first identifying your problem areas and reactive patterns so you can quickly replace them with the action steps and qualities of effective self-leadership and inner peace.

Are Your Problems, Thoughts, and Emotions Running Your Life?

The subjective sense . . . of possessing . . . inner serenity . . . is, in fact, often accompanied by a feeling that there is something superior to the ego, something which is, as it were, directing the course of the individual’s development . . . .

-- Anthony Storr, The Integrity of the Personality

The “It’s Your Life Process” will help free you from obsolete patterns that are blocking your progress by showing you how to take charge of your life. You can make this process work for you without having to believe in any religious dogma or New Age philosophy. And yet, it’s meant to be compatible with, and an adjunct to, most forms of psychotherapy and spiritual or religious practices.

As both a Psychologist and a Life Coach, I’ve worked with thousands of clients who have enriched their lives by letting go of ego struggle and by connecting to something wiser than their ego and conscious intellect. The most important concept in this book is that:

Struggling from a limited, separated sense of identity is the major contributor to most of your problems and blocks to happiness and success.

The process I’ve outlined for you will show you how to connect to what British psychiatrist Anthony Storr calls “something superior to the ego.” Your ego (also referred to as “conscious mind,” “personality,” or “identity”) will learn to let go of its lonely, arrogant struggle by
connecting to this larger support system. This “something superior to the ego” is often referred to as the “Universe,” a “Higher Power,” “Essence,” “God,” “Inner Strength,” “Soul,” or “Spirit.” In keeping with this book’s non-sectarian approach, I will refer to this “something” as the “larger Self,” and by its roles, the “protective Self” and “leadership Self.”

The “larger Self” is your expanded identity, a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. The Self is the integration of your mind (conscious and unconscious), body (central nervous system and autonomic nervous system), and spirit, into a stronger, more robust whole. When all parts of you are truly integrated, your larger Self has the ability to access a deeper wisdom that far exceeds the narrow limits of your conscious mind, ego, or your current identity.

In the last ten years, my method of psychotherapy and coaching has evolved into one that helps my clients shift their identity to their stronger, larger Self, and away from their past, their story, or their symptoms of stress, anxiety, addiction, or their medical diagnoses. I refer to this method as the “It’s your Life Process.” By applying this process, my clients learn to communicate a message to the deepest parts of themselves that says:

I am more than my symptoms and my old problems. I am more than just my conscious mind and its struggles. I have expanded my identity to include the wisdom of my body, unconscious mind, and the support of Nature. My limited, ego identity will no longer have to struggle alone with its symptoms. I – from the perspective of my larger Self – will manage my life and connect all parts of me to a larger, wiser system of support.

Five Signs That You Are Not In Charge of Your Life

I’ve identified five major symptoms or problems areas that are reduced or resolved by applying the “It’s Your Life Process.” They are: stress and fear; inner conflict and procrastination; self-criticism and self-doubt; feeling overwhelmed; and struggle.

Within just a few chapters, you’ll be shifting your identity away from your symptoms and “default” reactions and into the role and voice of a leadership Self. From a new perspective, you’ll minimize or completely remove many of the blocks that have kept you from realizing your true potential.

Notice how many of the following symptoms describe your current behavior and negative internal dialogue. Identify the symptoms in yourself without self-criticism, but with an appreciation that you’ve taken the first step to freeing yourself of old, destructive patterns.

1. Stress, Fear, Anxiety, or Worry (Lacking the Self’s gift of Safety and Worth)

   Symptoms:
   - You frequently feel panicky and anxious, afraid that something awful will happen
   - Your ego and self-worth are always on the line – available to be judged by others – at work, in leisure activities, and in your relationships
You try to cope with anxiety by relying on a variety of addictive habits or crutches – such as overindulging in coffee, sweets, alcohol, and becoming dependent in your relationships.

Your fear leads you to attempt to control others and events in hopes of avoiding threats to your self-worth and disappointment.

You often find it difficult to sleep because your mind is racing with worries and anxiety.

**Negative Self-Talk:** “What if something goes wrong? What if they don’t like it. I couldn’t stand it if I fail. I lack confidence and am afraid of what others think about me, my appearance, and my work.”

2. **Inner Conflict, Indecisive, Procrastination (Lacking the Self’s sense of Choice)**

**Symptoms:**

- You work hard, but your fear of making a mistake and being criticized causes you to get stuck in procrastination and indecision.
- You use threats and criticism to try to motivate yourself, but it only makes things worse.
- You tell yourself, “You have to do it,” but then feel, “I don’t want to” – causing inner conflict that stalls your progress on achieving your goals.
- You delay calling your family and friends or clients and customers because you feel guilty and ashamed about having not followed through on your commitments to them.
- You resent anyone in authority – a parent, teacher, or boss – and resist doing any work you don’t want to do.

**Negative Self-Talk:** “I should, but I don't want to. I have to finish a very important project, must do it perfectly, and have no fun. I don't want to have to do this. I have no choice. I work best under pressure. I just want to get this over with.”

3. **Self-Criticism & Self-Blame (Lacking the Self’s Acceptance and Task-Oriented Focus)**

**Symptoms:**

- You believe that a part of you is “wimpy” and needs criticism, threats, and constant nagging.
- You feel that whatever you do, it’s never good enough for others or yourself, and you should’ve started earlier.
- You seldom accept yourself, and if then, it’s only when your performance is exceptional.
- You feel that some part of you makes things difficult and sabotages your success.

**Negative Self-Talk** on what’s wrong with you – “Why did you spill the milk?” – rather than on what it takes to just do the job – “How can we clean it up? When do we start?”
Negative Self-Talk: “What's wrong with me? Why can’t I do this? You should be stronger and try harder. You’ll never succeed at this rate.”

4. Overwhelmed with projects and goals (Lacking Self’s Peace in the Present Moment)

Symptoms:
- You try to do it all and don’t know when to ask for help or to acknowledge that the workload or personal responsibilities are too much
- You spend an inordinate amount of time trying to maximize your possibilities; and then try to control people and events to insure success
- You have a Smorgasbord approach to life – buying every new gadget and fade – with a tendency to gobble lots of objects, food, and people rather than savoring a few
- You find it hard to stay focused on one project and are often late or rushing because there are so many things you want to accomplish
- You repeatedly over-schedule your day and feel trapped with too many tasks and obligations

Negative Self-Talk: “I don't know where to start. I want to do it all but there’s too much to do. I'm overwhelmed, burnt out, and exhausted.”

5. Struggling from a limited identity (Lacking Connection with a larger Self)

Symptoms:
- You feel you must do everything on your own; there’s no one else to support you; no one you can trust to do it as well as you
- You’re desperately searching and striving for peace, joy, and fulfillment in something or someone, but can’t seem to find it
- You feel exhausted and burnt out and escape by watching TV, surfing the internet, talking on the phone
- You work long hours, seldom relax, and then binge on junk food, alcohol, cigarettes, and distractions, but seldom feel renewed or satisfied
- You remind yourself to be tough – “I don’t need anybody” – but at times long to surrender to someone or something more powerful than yourself

Negative Self-Talk: “I have to try harder, but I feel burnt out. I’m tired of working so hard and getting no where. But I can’t see any other way but to just keep trying to get by, propping myself up with whatever drug or distraction is available.”

If you identify with all of the symptoms associated with one problem area or more than 15 of
the 25 total symptoms, then you definitely need to read this book. By first identifying your symptoms and negative inner dialogue, you’re preparing to transform your life by shifting to the larger Self and the five qualities that replace those symptoms (in Part III). Better still, you can start today to apply this process to enhance your life and expand your sense of self to include more of your resources and potential.

I Had to Learn This Process the Hard Way

You can benefit from a process that I had to learn the hard way – to save my life and bring me the inner peace necessary to survive several crises. When I faced life-threatening situations in Vietnam, it was connecting to a larger sense of self that kept me sane. It helped me at age 32 when my doctor said: “You have a ten-percent chance of living one year. The cancer has already spread to your left lung.” And, maintaining the perspective of my larger Self helped me more recently adjust my life to a year of rehabilitation after a near-fatal car accident.

The concepts and exercises contained in It’s Your Life saw me through the shock of my cancer diagnosis, allowed me to seek second and third opinions, and helped me decide which of the various treatments would give me the best chance of beating the odds.

By learning to observe my fears from a center of acceptance and inner peace, I was able to choose and commit to an experimental chemotherapy protocol that is largely responsible for saving my life. This same center of peace kept me working on the book that tells that story, The Road Back to Health: Coping with the Emotional Aspects of Cancer, and searching for the right publisher, after 20 others rejected it.

I couldn’t have survived these experiences, or worked with such passion and persistence, if I relied on my conscious mind and ego alone. Repeatedly, overwhelming and lonely struggle was transformed into an integrated team effort as my ego learned to surrender to the support of my larger Self.

With each challenge life presents you – illness, the loss of a loved one, financial difficulties – you have a chance to break free of your everyday ego’s narrow perspective and discover your true potential and deeper resources. This book is dedicated to giving you the tools to make these transformative changes in your life without having to learn it the hard way.

Achieving Goals With Less Struggle and Greater Peace

By applying the exercises and tools in this book, most of my clients have attained a greater sense of inner peace while at the same time achieving their most important goals. Following these methods, one of my clients, the owner of her own business, doubled her income while working fewer hours. Another client, a man who weighed 380 lbs., lost 110 lbs. in one
year, without ever feeling as if he were on a diet. Another was able to stop smoking before his
daughter’s wedding, while another was able to use these methods to pass the State Bar Exam on
her tenth try. One man overcame a lifetime of aggressive, Type-A behavior and became, in his
words, “like a Buddha in rush hour traffic.” Another conquered procrastination and finally
mailed off five years of back taxes.

More important than the goals they achieved is *how easily* they achieved them once
they connected with a center of inner peace. By letting go of a limited sense of identity and
connecting with a “larger Self,” my clients discovered how to complete doctoral dissertations
and books, overcome fear to produce their first musical CDs, and sing in the Paris Opera.
Younger clients have learned to cope with attention deficit disorder (A.D.D.) to graduate high
school and enter college.

Ordinary people confronting a wide variety of challenges have found that facing them
from the perspective of a “larger Self,” as I instruct in this book, has freed them from old,
destructive patterns of behavior and set them rapidly on their way to aligning their actions with
their higher values and goals.

What were the steps these people followed in order to achieve their goals and fulfill
their dreams? In essence, they all did the same four things:

1) They decided they didn’t want to wait for some part of them to feel confident,
motivated, and completely knowledgeable before they confronted the issues and projects that
prevented them from experiencing their full potential [Chapters 1 and 2]

2) They learned to access and accept the support of something larger and wiser than
their ego and conscious mind rather than try to achieve their goals with only a limited part of
their total capacities. [Chapters 3 and 4]

3) They applied the Five Qualities of Inner Peace and the mental toughness techniques
used by athletes to maximize their focus on top priorities and higher values [Chapters 5 – 10]

4) They put an end to self-sabotage by integrating all parts of themselves into a
cooperative team [Chapters 11 and 12] capable of working in alignment with their goals and
higher values.

These four action steps can lead you to an expanded sense of who you are and bring
you sustainable inner peace. The exercises in each chapter will help you integrate new skills
into your life that will connect you to more of your inner resources; awaken your true, larger
Self; and will bring more joy, ease, and inner peace into your life.

Only you can make this book a practical guide for living a more joyful and satisfying
life with greater inner peace and less stress. To accomplish these goals you’ll need to
experiment with, apply, and *use* these concepts and exercises in your personal and work life.
Soon, the smaller, fearful parts of you will no longer be in charge of your life. You won’t have to wait for them to feel accepted, confident, or motivated before you can start achieving your goals. Finally, you – as a stronger, larger Self – will be in charge.

In Part I – Identifying Your Habits, Defenses, and Beliefs – you’ll learn to recognize the specific words, feelings, and physical sensations that make up your instinctual and learned reactions to life’s pressures. With the help of the “Stress Inoculation” exercises in Part I, you’ll build your skill at noticing your automatic or reactive habits before they can pull you into hours and days of emotional upset. You’ll learn how to break through fear and self-doubt, and start the process of replacing out-dated patterns with healthier alternatives that lead to greater inner peace and less stress.

You’ll learn, in Part II – Put Your Robust Self in a Leadership Role – how to shift to a new perspective and role that awakens your leadership strengths. You’ll find that playing a protective role and gaining a leader’s perspective frees you from your ego’s struggles, fears, and feelings of being overwhelmed. With a new point of view, you’ll be free of past struggles and be empowered to direct your attention toward current challenges, opportunities, and goals.

You’ll discover in Part III – Reclaim Your Joyful Self: Achieve the Five Qualities of Inner Peace – the five qualities of Inner Peace – Safety, Choice, Focus, Presence, and Connection – which will enable you to live in Inner Peace with access to resources that far exceed those of your ego and conscious mind trying to act alone. Learning to make these five qualities a part of your daily commitment to yourself, will quickly shift you from old, fear-based patterns to a stronger and more expansive sense of self. Living from a larger sense of self means that the five major problem areas – stress, inner conflict, self-criticism, feeling overwhelmed, and unnecessary struggle – will be minimized, while joy, focus, inner strength, and your ability to deepen your intimate relationships will be maximized.

In Part IV – Success is a Team Effort: Align Your Actions with Your Higher Values – you’ll use Self-Leadership Skills to acknowledge the concerns of all aspects of yourself and forge them into a team that’s focused on achieving your goals. You’ll find that self-sabotage, procrastination, and ambivalence are virtually eliminated when you take charge of your inner team. Goal achievement becomes more rapid and almost effortless when you show up in the role of chairperson to align all parts with your higher vision and values. Finally, there’ll be a strong leader in your life and it will be you showing up as your stronger, larger Self!

Pre-Test to Measure Your Progress

To measure your progress over the course of this dynamic process, you can record your current levels of stress, joy, inner peace, and feelings of connection to deeper resources on the
scales below. In the last chapter, you’ll find a “post-test” to use as a comparison with your current levels and to show you how much you’ve progressed in lowering stress and attaining a greater sense of inner peace by taking charge of your life. An additional form is in the appendix, should you wish to track your progress more frequently.

Imagine that these scales are thermometers to record your current levels of stress, joy, inner peace, and connection.

1. Stress
Circle the number that indicates where your average level of stress has been for the past week.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>None</th>
<th>The Most Ever</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Joy
Circle the number that indicates where your average level of joy has been for the past week.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>None</th>
<th>The Most Ever</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Inner Peace
Circle the number that indicates where your average level of inner peace has been for the past week.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>None</th>
<th>The Most Ever</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Connection
Circle the number that indicates where your average level of feeling connected to something larger than yourself has been for the past week.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>None</th>
<th>The Most Ever</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B

JOURNAL FOR SUCCESSFUL CHANGE

For one week, at least once a day, record when you become awareness of a troublesome symptom. Without trying to change anything – and without criticizing yourself – simply notice and record the thoughts, images, physical sensations, and emotions that are bothersome, negative, ineffective, or just plain annoying. Note where the main problem areas of fear, indecision, self-criticism, self-doubt, and struggle lead you when they're allowed to go unchallenged for more than a minute or two. These are your “default” or conditioned reactions. What will replace them?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Symptom</th>
<th>Physical/Emotional &amp; Verbal Reactions</th>
<th>Behavior/Feelings/Attitude</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX C: Centering Exercise
Neil Fiore, PhD

Centering is a one-minute, 12-breath exercise that transitions your mind from fretting about the past and future to being focused in the present – where your body must be. Centering in the present clears your mind of regrets about the past and worries about anticipated problems in the so-called future.

As you withdraw your thoughts from these imagined times and problems, you release yourself from guilt about the past and worry about the future. You experience a stress-free vacation in the present. Whenever you experience moments of the joyful abandon in play, the easy flow of creativity, or a state of concentration that leads to effortless optimal performance, you are practicing a form of “centering.” Use this exercise each time you start a project. Within just a week or two your body and mind will learn to naturally let go of tension and focus on working efficiently and optimally.

Read the following to yourself or tape record it and play it each time you start a project.

1. Begin by taking three slow breaths, in three parts: #1 Inhale, #2 Hold your breath and muscle tension, and, #3 Exhale slowly, floating down into the chair. With each exhalation – let go of the last telephone call or commute and float down into the chair. Exhale and let go of any unnecessary muscle tension and let the chair hold you.

   Let go of all thoughts and images about work from the past. Clear your mind and your body of all concerns about what “should have” or “shouldn't have” happened in the past. Let go of old burdens. Let go of trying to fix your old problems. Take a vacation from trying to fix other people. Let each exhalation become a signal to just let go of the past.

   Say to yourself as you exhale: “I release my mind and body from the past.”

2. With your next three breaths, let go of all images and thoughts about what you think may happen in the future – all the “what ifs.” With each exhalation, clear your muscles, your heart, and your mind of the work of trying to control the so-called future.

   Say to yourself as you exhale: “I release my mind and body from the future.”

3. With your next three breaths, say: “I’m choosing to be in this present moment, in front of this work.” I let go of trying to control any other time or striving to be any particular way. I notice how little effort it takes to simply breath comfortably and accept the just right level of energy to focus on this moment and this task – in the only moment there is, now.

   Say to yourself as you exhale: “I bring my mind into the present.”

4. For the next few minutes, there is nothing much for my conscious mind to worry about within this sanctuary. You are safe from the past and the future. I just allow the natural processes of my mind and body to provide me with focused concentration. I access my inner genius and its creative resources.

   Say to yourself as you exhale: “I am centered within my larger, wiser, stronger Self.”

5. With your next three breaths count up from 1 to 3: One, becoming more adequately alert with each breath; Two, curious and interested about going rapidly from not-knowing to knowing; and, Three, eager to begin, curious and interested about how much I will accomplish in such a short period of time.

   All rights reserved. Permission is granted to reproduce, copy or distribute so long as this copyright notice and the information below are attached:

© 2004 Neil Fiore, PhD. All rights reserved. www.neilfiore.com neil@neilfiore.com 1496 Solano Ave., Albany, CA 94706-2148 510-525-2673
APPENDIX D: STRESS QUIZ

This is a quick and informal check of life conditions that may be causing you stress.
Assign each question a number from 0 to 5:

never          sometimes        frequently
0       1    2  3  4  5

1. ____  I have a lot on my mind that worries me - at work, at home, or both.
2. ____  I never shut off my beeper or cell phone.
3. ____  My family makes too many demands on me.
4. ____  I don't have enough time for leisure and my personal needs.
5. ____  There is a great deal of time pressure at work.
6. ____  I have difficulty expressing how I feel about situations or people.
7. ____  I have trouble focusing on a task.
8. ____  I have difficulty communicating with my family, boss, or co-workers.
9. ____  I handle most things alone, with little support from family, friends, or co-workers.

10.____  I do not have enough say in decisions that affect me.
11.____  My personal needs are in conflict with my organization or family.
12.____  People or circumstances keep me from doing what I want to do.
13.____  I am often fatigued.
14.____  People or things often irritate me.
15.____  There is considerable illness in my life - of my own or my family.

16.____  I have financial concerns and frequently worry about my financial security.
17.____  My life is one crisis after another.
18.____  I regularly have headaches (three times a week = a 5).
19.____  I have muscle tension in my shoulders, neck, or back.
20.____  I have stomach pains, indigestion, or other digestive problems.

21.____  I take aspirin, indigestion medication, sleeping pills, tranquilizers, etc., regularly.
22.____  I have a tendency to overeat, especially sweets.
23.____  I regularly have a drink to "wind down."
24.____  I drink a great deal of coffee or other caffeine drinks.
25.____  I am not satisfied with my sex life.
26.____  Family, friends, people at work tell me I drink too much.
27.____  Most of my time is spent sitting -- I get little exercise.
28.____  I smoke or use tobacco.
29.____  I have unrealistically high standards for myself.
30.____  I would like to make changes in my life but don't know how.

_______ TOTAL

under 40: You're in great shape!
41 - 70: Average – you could lower your stress level
71 - 90: Near dangerous levels. Make changes.
91 + : Act now to reduce stress!
APPENDIX E. I Accept You – Even Though You’re Not Perfect

TALKING TO YOURSELF FROM YOUR AWAKENED, LARGER SELF
Neil Fiore, PhD

Supportive statements made by you in the role of the protective, larger Self to the frightened and overwhelmed parts of yourself can be helpful in:

- Creating inner peace through a connection with something larger and wiser than your ego
- Making the transition to a new, robust self-image
- Gaining support and strength to cope with changing situations and relationships
- Reducing stress and anxiety
- Awakening and empowering your larger, stronger Self by shifting to a protective role

Self-statements are more powerful than typical affirmations because You are dis-identifying from your small self and speaking to that part of you – an inner child, your body, or the worrying part of your mind – in the second person.

Example: “Regardless of what happens in my life, you are always worthwhile with me.”

Regardless of what happens in life, you are always worthwhile.

Regardless of whether you win or lose, you deserve love, pleasure, and freedom from self-criticism.

Regardless of what you can or cannot do, you are always worthwhile.

Regardless of what happens to you, you deserve to be treated with human dignity and respect.

Regardless of who stays or who goes, I am on my side. I will never abandon you.

Regardless of how healthy or ill you become, I appreciate the effort, wisdom, and protection given me by you my body and my spirit.

Regardless of how negative or intense your emotions become, I acknowledge their validity for you and I accept and love you completely.

Regardless of how uncomfortable others are with you, your feelings, or your body, I will always accept you and remain at peace with you.

Regardless of what happens in life, I accept and love you completely.

Regardless of your problems and imperfections, I accept and love you completely. You’re perfectly human.

Based on Dr. Neil Fiore’s book, with foreword by Norman Cousins, The Road Back to Health: Coping with the Emotional Aspects of Cancer. [Celestial Arts, 1-800-841-book]