

Summaries

Chapter One: Becoming a Conflict Resolution Master

All conflict can be resolved but to do so we have to transform ourselves. This transformation is possible through a consistent application of some specific practices or disciplines. These disciplines develop in us the ability both to focus clearly on our perceptions and choices and to surrender fully to the outcome.

The central feature of each of these practices is that they move us ever closer to the core of who we are. They connect us more and more to our essential Self. As we come to know ourselves we discover a set of choices we each make which constructs who we are. These choices are the focus of our attention, the locus of our identity, and the lens or perspective through which we observe our experience.

Conflicts can easily be overwhelming because they can be quite complex. One aspect of this complexity is that what we experience as a conflict is both the condition which is arising for us and the response we hope to make. This response is to invoke a strategy which will create an event which will establish certain qualities we are missing. When we settle on a strategy before we are clear about the desired qualities we are likely to select a strategy which gets us the opposite of what we need.

Further, these desired qualities appear in different domains or realms of our experience.

- In the Personal Realm the focus of our attention is in the physical experience of having enough time, or food, or shelter to meet our needs. When the need is met, the conflict goes away.
- In the Interpersonal Realm the focus of our attention is on the qualities of our relationships. When the need is met, our relationships are restored and strengthened.
- In the Intrapersonal Realm the focus of our attention is on our internal experience of our feelings, hopes, dreams, fears, and so on. When the need is met, we are clear about who we are and what we are doing.
- And in the Transpersonal Realm the focus of our attention is on our place in the grand scheme of creation and our awareness of the suffering of others. When the need is met, we see our role in perspective and we appreciate the essential harmony of the universe.

There is great personal, relational, and social benefit to becoming skilled at identifying or naming the issues which arise for us in each of these realms, addressing the problems we find there, and making the changes such that we are able to construct what we need. These skills are worth cultivating. Doing this requires discipline. We must have a clear intention about what we are trying to create, pay keen attention to whatever arises,

engage the disciplines over and over, and do so within the framework of the guidance we get from learned others and from our own interior wisdom.

The ten disciplines we will learn are both about becoming more mindful and becoming more skilled at addressing specific common circumstances. The first two disciplines have to do with noticing what is bothering us as a way to attend to what we need, and to noticing how we relate to our own strong feelings like anger as a way to be fully aware of our emotions without letting the emotions make our choices for us.

When we and those around us have what we need we experience a sense of peace and wholeness we call shalom. When we or those around us are not getting what we need we have a troubled feeling we will call esuba. If we ignore the esuba it will not go away but it will grow and become more troublesome. When we attend to the source of the esuba and create what we need, the esuba dissolves and the shalom is restored.

Chapter Two: Mapping Our Reality

We are meaning makers. We make sense of the world by giving meaning to events and circumstances. This meaning is a form of conceptual map. We don't all have the same map for understanding the world in which we live. When we are operating off of a different map than those around us, we will find ourselves in conflict with them.

Repairing our relationships will require that we use the best possible maps. There are many maps we will introduce in this book. They all have to do with developing a perspective or a lens with which to see and to make sense of what is arising for us so that we can make the best possible choice so as to create what we need.

But there are no perfect maps. All maps are by their very nature a rough approximation of reality. Thus we must be careful to understand the limitations of our maps. Sometimes we become so attached to a familiar map that we insist that it is more real than the experience it is supposed to explain. When we cling to the map rather than the reality we are creating a cognitive distortion. We all do this from time to time and we can't see our own distortions. We have to be able to get external feedback to be able to see what we are doing.

To be able to attract that external view we can use the third discipline to cultivate critical feedback. This requires that we be able to acknowledge that others may have a different perspective than our own and that there may be value to us to know how their perspective is valid for them. We will have to develop the skill of knowing and trusting our own perspectives well enough that we can set them aside and genuinely hear the perspectives of the other with openness and appreciation. This skill is essential for resolving conflicts in the Interpersonal Realm.

One particular type of map we make great use of is the ability to make a distinction between two similar things. There are five distinctions which are crucial to our ability to address relational conflicts. There is another distinction, between expectations and standards, which helps us to see that the conflicts we may think we have with others are actually conflicts we are having with ourselves which we are projecting onto others.

Chapter Three: What Makes it so Hard to Change?

As we work to break down the complicated business of resolving conflicts into a set of simple steps it is easy to get fooled into thinking this process is easy. Simple is not the same as easy. This is very hard to do and is hard for some very good reasons. If we forget those reasons we can easily get discouraged when we discover this is harder than we thought.

The central reason this is hard is that, even though we know we can't change others, we don't stop trying to change them and we don't see what we are doing as an attempt to make them change. We assume this is the only thing we can do. It is not. There are many things we can do but the effective ones all have to do with changing ourselves. Nevertheless, we don't have faith in our own ability to change. We don't think we can, we don't see why we should, and we don't see that it will help.

Additionally, we live in a culture which has already told us how we are to act and it will be very hard for us to challenge those cultural expectations. We already know that we shouldn't let things bother us, shouldn't be selfish, and shouldn't admit if we screw up. But what actually helps is to notice whatever is bothering us, act on our own behalf, and become accountable for the consequences of our choices.

In the micro-culture of our most intimate relationships these forces are amplified by an intense wish to make the relationship work at the expense of our own integrity and authenticity. We choose for the relationship and abandon ourselves, thus sabotaging the relationship.

Even as it comes to the relationships we construct with ourselves, we find it very hard to act in ways that create what we need. As it turns out, there are a series of seven things we need to have in place for ourselves before we are willing and able to change how we have been acting.

It is very hard to change what we are in the habit of doing. But it is possible. It becomes more possible the more we make the interior changes of adjusting the focus of our attention, the locus of our identity, and the perspective through which we are looking. These perspectives are maps for making meaning and we want to have the best possible maps.

Chapter Four: Transformation and the Orders of Self

In order to become more masterful at the skill of resolving conflicts we will continue to move toward our own centers in each of the four realms. As we do that we will notice that some of what arises in our awareness are simply perceptions of what is, and some are choices we have made or may make. But this distinction is tricky. As I make different choices I may notice different perceptions arising. What is in my control and what is not? As I bring more and more attention to bear on my perceptions and my choices, I notice myself becoming more aware and more masterful.

As there are perceptions and choices in each of the four realms, there are eight distinct States of Mind from which we can approach our experience. Indeed all of these are available to us all the time, but some are easier to come to than others. As we explore these eight loci for our identity we discover that they actually arise in a developmental sequence. We have to have mastered skills at an earlier level to be able to rise to the higher one. Thus these are not just States of Mind, but are a developmental sequence we are calling the Orders of Self.

This map for our self-awareness has a great many uses which we will return to in the rest of the book but we want to notice a couple of important aspects of it. While it appears to be a set of discrete steps, in reality it is more like a series of waves. We are never only at a single stage but always in the midst of a sea of waves, each giving energy and direction to the choices we are making.

As we move our awareness to more and more complex perspectives we find we are able to take into our circle of concern not just those close to us who are like us but increasingly diverse people and ideas. We are centered in this circle of concern and we are in communities which have a set of shared perspectives. These perspectives tend to hold us in their sway and it is hard to rise to a higher level of development than the center of gravity in the groups of which we are a part.

Even as we struggle to move to ever higher and more complex perspectives we must not forget to move deeper and deeper at each of the more fundamental levels. Mastery at the earlier levels is essential to our own wellbeing and to stability at the higher levels.

Transformation to higher and more complex perspectives is something which takes great energy and effort especially as we move above the center of gravity of the communities of which we are a part. This energy for transformation comes from the problems which arise out of the perspectives we are currently using which not only fail to solve the problems we face, in some instances they are the cause of the problem. It is our efforts to solve those problems, to resolve those conflicts, which carry us to a higher

and more complex perspective. It is through the resolution of conflict that transformation occurs.

Chapter Five: The Structure of Relationships: Power and Agreements

Our most fertile ground for transformation is in the conflicts which arise in our most significant relationships. For that reason we are giving special attention to those relationships. Relationships are constructed out of the expectations and agreements we have with others. While many conflicts are about the events that happen in the relationship, some are about the structure of the relationship itself.

For a relationship to be stable it has to be just. Oppressive relationships are inherently unstable. Justice requires that the rights and the responsibilities of the parties are balanced. If one party carries more responsibilities than rights, they are being oppressed. If one party carries more rights than responsibilities they are privileged, may see themselves as entitled, and are oppressing someone.

The understandings which construct our relationships are about the distribution of power. Power is simply the ability to have an effect. We have three kinds of power. *Power over* is something everyone has, is easy to understand and use, and can be used to abuse others. *Power with* requires an agreement with others but is more powerful than *power over*. *Empowerment* is personally very effective but doesn't have much traction in relationship building.

There are different basic forms of relationship. Fiduciary relationships are those in which one person or party has the right to make certain decisions because of a responsibility for the welfare of another. Mutual relationships are those in which each party has the same rights and responsibilities. And reciprocal relationships are those in which power is balanced by a set of agreements in which one party's rights are balanced by the responsibilities of the other.

For most of human history the primary relationship of marriage was either a solely fiduciary relationship in which the wife was the property of the husband or a reciprocal relationship in which wives and husbands had different but carefully prescribed roles and rights. It is only in very recent history that we have tried to have marriages be mutual relationships. This is an experiment. It is not surprising we haven't yet mastered how to do it in a way that is both intimate and stable. Intimacy and stability come from the skill of developing and repairing durable agreements. It is these agreements which form the content of the relationship.

Chapter Six: Abuse and Systems of Oppression

Addressing creatively the conflicts which arise in our most significant relationships depends upon our ability to understand the nature of the relationship in which the conflict appears. From time to time we will each act in ways which harm the other. Whether by conscious choice or by inadvertent slip, we will make choices which harm others even as we are just trying to get what we need. As we or those around us make these choices esuba is generated in the relationship.

If we are to build healthier relationships we will first have to stop doing the things which harm the relationship. We will have to end the abuse. We will have to put out the fire. Ending abuse can be done by taking away any of the three components of the abuse. We can take away opportunity by removing proximity. We can take away permission by addressing our anxieties in a more effective manner and by confronting our cognitive distortions. We can shift our motivation so that, rather than trying to change others to get what we want, we can change ourselves to construct what we need.

Removing proximity is quick but expensive. It is the first option we are likely to choose but it should be the last one we should rely on. Removing permission is slippery. It is worth exploring how we give ourselves permission to abuse others and how we give them permission to abuse us, but even when we know, we may not be able to get a grip on the causes and thus on a solution. Removing the motivation to abuse requires that we find a better way to get what we need. We discover that abuse is not actually constructing what we need, so when we find what we need and how to get it we have found a way of being which is durable and satisfying and we find less and less reason to abuse or to tolerate the abuse of others.

The abuse we do or have done to us may arise as an isolated event or it may be a part of a pattern of circumstances which construct a system of oppression. There are many systems of oppression with which we are complicit without ever really knowing that we are a part of the problem. It will take a conscious effort on our part to remove ourselves from participation in the oppressive structures.

This structure of oppression may even be expressed within our most intimate relationships. Thus there are events which are expressions of abuse, but there are also ways in which relationships may be constructed which institutionalize the harm. When we unilaterally claim the right to make choices which meet our needs at the expense of others, no matter how we justify it, we are being oppressive to them and we are not actually constructing what we need.

Being accountable is a way of clearing away the rubble from a damaged relationship and building a firmer foundation to build on anew. Accountability is the ability to share an accounting of what is actually happening in the relationship. This is somewhat different

in a fiduciary relationship than in a mutual one. In a fiduciary or reciprocal relationship we are accountable to each other. In a mutual relationship we are accountable with each other.

Just as we benefit from seeing the other's perspective, so can we benefit from identifying where our own perspective is coming from. Am I looking at my experience from the perspective of a victim, or as one who is tough and won't let myself be hurt? Can I see how others are being affected by these events and respond in ways that genuinely help improve the qualities in the relationship? Or am I actually making things worse?

Being accountable depends upon seeing what is actually going on. We only see from our own perspective. To gather more data we are going to need to see from the other's perspective and to see particularly what they may be seeing about us. We will benefit from being open to critical feedback from others recognizing that not all feedback is of equal value and just because it is describing a different perspective from our own doesn't mean it is wrong or that our own perspective is wrong. They are not right and wrong...just different.

Chapter Seven: Becoming Assertive

If we are to resolve conflicts we will have to address them. We are shy about this because much of what we have tried only seems to make things worse. If we are to address a conflict we will have to know its name. We will have to know what to call it. A common name for a conflict is that it is a difference we don't like. When others are not as we want them to be or we are not as they want us to be, we are experiencing a conflict.

As we have noted, conflicts can be complex. A part of the complexity is that when the other is not as I want the other to be, there is always a resource based component to the conflict (not enough time, or money, or attention) but there is also an identity based component (who are we to each other) and a process based component (how will we deal with this).

Some conflicts are more intense than others. Low intensity conflicts are easy. It is the high intensity conflicts which are hard to resolve. The intensity is a function of both how attached the parties are to the issues or circumstances and how well aligned are the perspectives the parties bring to the event. The more attached are the parties and the more divergent are the perspectives the more intensity the conflict will hold.

It is fairly easy to hold to our center when the intensity of the conflict is low. The more we are stressed by the conflict the harder it becomes to act in a manner that is calm and creative. It will help to have a clear sense of what we are trying to do and what we are

trying to avoid. It will help if we have the intention of being assertive and have a clear sense of what that looks like, and what it doesn't look like.

We tend to approach conflicts the same way in the same relationships. We tend to either deny our responsibility, or we tend to take on responsibility for things we cannot change. We tend to either try to get others to do what we want, or we tend to abandon our own interests and just comply with the other's wishes. Assertiveness is none of these.

Being assertive means being very clear about what it is that we are responding to and then identifying how we are being affected and what qualities would be better for us when this event happens. This sounds very simple, and indeed it is, but it is not easy. When we can do this we discover how very powerful we are in constructing what we need. But it takes many repetitions to master this. Fortunately we will have lots of opportunities to practice.

These problematic events tend to happen over and over again in our most significant relationships. When we can identify the pattern and get very clear about how we would like to address the pattern, then we can practice every time it arises. This requires that we become able to master a set of skills. When we put these together we get the Framework for Creative Conflict Resolution, which is Discipline #9. This discipline is built upon a series of skills will be introducing in the next few chapters.

As we master these skills we will become less and less reactive to the conflicts and more and more responsive to them. We will be more likely to do the things that move us more toward what we need, and less likely to do the things that get us the opposite of what we need.

In nearly every case, though, we will have to be able to speak to the other about what is arising in our relationship. We will have to say that we don't like what is happening and to do so in a way that the other can hear our concern. This is an essential part of being assertive, but often when we complain, we either do it badly or the other doesn't listen or both. For that reason we want to be careful about how we use the language of complaint. We want to try to reflect on the qualities of the relationship (concern) rather than the qualities of the other's choices (criticism) or the nature of who they are (contempt) or to say that they have no intrinsic worth (control).

As we practice the skills we will discover that we are developing a more complex but more effective way of addressing conflicts. We will become less reliant on 2° [Personal-material: choice] strategies and more on 4° [Interpersonal-relational: choice] strategies. We will be less concerned with changing the other and more with changing the relationship by changing our own choices. We will discover that while this is more difficult, it is also more effective.

It is just this shift which is at the heart of the conflict resolution strategy known as non-violence. While we tend to think of the tools of non-violence being used in addressing problems of social oppression, as we have seen, we also experience oppression in our most intimate relationships and the approach is equally valid and effective there. It is about developing the capacity to see the conflict from a more complex perspective and then acting from that perspective in a manner which is more effective at creating what everyone needs.

Chapter Eight: Interior Awareness: Why we want to know what we are feeling and what to do about it when we do

When we are getting what we need we are healthy. We are able to monitor our wellbeing by paying attention to our feelings. We like the feelings we have when we are getting what we need. We don't like the feelings we have when we are not getting what we need. But those feelings we don't like are crucial to our wellbeing because they alert us to problems. If we don't know what we are feeling, we don't know when we are being harmed.

Feelings are data about what is happening to us and a source of energy for addressing those problems. The trick is to know what the feelings are telling us and be able to harness the energy to act in our own behalf. The energy in our feelings is not like finite kinetic energy but is a manifestation of the boundless energy of creation.

As we go inside our own awareness and attend to our feelings we discover they can be quite complex. When we are stewing about something we can tease apart the sensations, thoughts, emotions, and wishes. As we become more aware of our sensations and emotions we build intuition. As we become more facile with our thoughts and wishes we foster our imagination.

While we would rather have the feelings which come from safety and satisfaction, we need the feelings which derive from hurt so that we can act to protect and heal ourselves. These "bad" feelings are crucial to restoring our wellbeing.

Some feelings are a complex mixture of sensations, emotions, thoughts, and wishes. When these complex feelings are infused with a high level of energy we refer to them as passions. We observe that anger and desire are in a sense opposites—we feel anger when we are hurt by another's choices and we feel desire when we are made safe and satisfied by the other's choices—but they can easily arise in the same relationship and even be present at the same time.

Anger is particularly problematic because we are so afraid of it that we often let it control us instead of being able to use its energy appropriately. The Anger Workout is

designed to help us become so comfortable with our anger that it becomes a tool for creating what we need instead of an invitation to disaster.

Desire can also be a source for the creative impulse or it can be a passion which inspires destructive choices. Passions contain so much energy that we must be careful with them so that we use them well. In general, good emotional hygiene depends upon knowing what we are feeling, clearly identifying the source of the feelings, and being able then to act in ways that create what we need without doing so in a way that is at the expense of others or in anyway depends on them changing.

Anxiety is the sensation we have when we are having mixed emotions about a confusing circumstance and can't settle on what we want. Sometimes we aggravate our own anxiety by trying too much *doing* and not enough *being*. In any case we are not going to resolve our anxiety until we know what is causing it. Discipline #4 is designed to help us identify what we are anxious about so we can begin to address it.

Discipline #5 helps us to focus on the tension between how we want to care for ourselves and what we then actually do. Recognizing we have nothing more important to do than to care for ourselves and yet we routinely abandon our own wellbeing helps us discover our own internal conflict about what we are to do.

Chapter Nine: Childhood Trauma and Adult Healing

We often flinch in the face of conflict especially when we don't think we can respond to it creatively and most especially when we have tried to address it before and we feel stuck. This feeling of being stuck now is often connected to and in some sense caused by having been stuck in the past.

When we are stuck and can't move, either physically or emotionally or cognitively, we experience trauma. We are always trying to make sense of what is happening to us, to know how to feel about it, and what to do about it to create what we need. When we can't do any of these we are traumatized. This may not be something those around us can see when it is happening to us. We may be having these thoughts and emotions only within us and so others may not be able to validate our experience.

We all carry within us the effects of past trauma and we are all likely to re-experience the traumas when current circumstances arise which resonate with the traumas of our past. While this is disorienting and even painful when it happens to us, it is an opportunity for us to address a current difficulty and in the process heal a past wound.

This healing is available to us in all of our relationships but it is most available in the relationships we have with those we are closest to. Our most intimate relationships are a crucible for burning off the junk from our past but are thus also the context for our greatest turmoil. Our intimate partners can be mentors and they can be tor-mentors.

To be able to use these relationships for healing we have to be able to talk to each other about the relationship while we manage our own anxiety and address our own issues. For us to be able to do this we each must have some skill at making each of the five crucial distinctions. As we become able to do this we will be able to construct conversations in which we can each work toward our own healing as we identify and address our own responsibility for the problems which occur in our relationship.

As we construct the space in the relationship to do this work we are creating a radical sort of mutual accountability. This is not about blame but about the ability to keenly know how we are affecting each other and how we are being affected and being able to create a shared understanding of the relationship we both need and be able to trust that we will both work to create it.

Chapter Ten: Knowing What We Need

Everything that grows does so through stages of development. One of the things which grows is our capacity to meet our own needs. We also grow in our capacity to know what we need. Our ability to create what we need is much stronger when we know what we need. When we don't know what we need we are much more likely to act in ways which are abusive to others to meet our needs. We sometimes assume others can meet our needs and we become demanding and controlling when they don't.

We use the word *need* to refer to the strategies we might choose (I just need to...), to the events we hope to construct (I need for you to...), or the qualities we hope to evoke (I need...). While we will benefit from paying attention to all three kinds of needs, we should be very wary of choosing a strategy before we are clear about the qualities we are seeking to create. Indeed, the conflicts we encounter around what seem to be competing needs are conflicts about strategies or events, not about the optimal qualities. We all need the same qualities.

To help us determine what qualities we missing when conflicts arise we can use a variety of maps for what we need. We here present three such maps though there are many more.

From the perspective of a single individual in relation to a complex world there are things we need to take into ourselves and things we need to keep out. There are things we need to let out and things we need to keep in. When we do this well we have good boundaries. When we are hurt we know that there is a problem with our boundaries and we may decide to adjust them. If we do a good job of maintaining our boundaries we have health.

From the perspective of a person in a relationship with one other person there are qualities that the relationship will need if we are to be able to function optimally. We need to know the other and know that the other knows us. We need to feel the respect of the other and know that we value them. And we need to be able to pay attention to what is going on with them and act in a manner which is consistent with their interests and to know they we do the same for us. When we can know, respect, and care for each other we will create trust.

From the perspective of our role as part of a complex system like a family, organization or community there are qualities the system needs to manifest to preserve the wellbeing of the system and all of its parts. Each part must have a sense of what is going on with the other parts, the system must be able to create or gather and distribute the resources that all of the parts of the system need, and the parts of the system must have a mechanism for addressing conflicts when there are not enough resources to meet the needs of each part. When we can be conscious, competent, and can resolve conflict we will create justice.

Knowing what we need allows us to repair any damage we may have done to others when we blame them for what we don't have, and frees us to act in ways which genuinely meet our needs. It supports our ability to create health, trust, and justice.

Chapter Eleven: Strategies: The Practical Disciplines

We know that gaining the skills to be masterful at conflict resolution will help us create whatever we and those around us need and thus is worth the effort. We have discovered practices which enhance our ability to be mindful of the need for resolution and now have turned to some practical disciplines which we can use as a map for getting to the resolution we desire.

We have noticed that there are patterns of conflicts which arise for us and we know they will continue to arise so we prepare for the next time by anticipating when it will appear, creating a clear image of how we want to deal with the pattern and then doing our best to implement our plan, and then evaluating both the plan and the implementation and preparing for the next time. We have resolved to do this over and over each time learning and growing and improving how we show up for the conflict.

We have noticed that at times we have made choices which were harmful to others which we regret. While we hope we never make those choices again, we also know we never meant to make those choices in the past. We will have to explore deeply what was going on with us when we made the choice so we can be as sure as possible that we won't again make that choice or one like it. We identify what the choice was, how the choice

impacted others and our relationships with others, what was going on with us at the time which gave us permission or otherwise prompted us to act badly, and then find or develop a specific strategy for addressing each of the patterns which contributed to the bad choice.

We know we can just leave some damaged relationships but others are worth restoring. To do so we will have to be able to both apologize and forgive. We will have to be clear about the choice which did the damage and who it was that made the choice. We will have to be clear about the consequences to the other when the choice was ours or to ourselves when the choice was someone else's. We will have to be committed to cleaning up the mess made by the choice, whether to us or to another, and then be sure we have done or are doing everything we can to address the patterns which supported the choice or which may have arisen from it.

We see conflicts arising continually in all of our relationships but especially notice them in the ones which are most significant to us. We notice the patterns which are most troubling to us and we identify the events which are elements of the pattern. We become able to clearly name the event such that others know what we are referring to and agree that this is something which happens. We clarify for ourselves how these events affect us and what we need and then come to a strategy which will move us toward what we need which in no way depends on others changing.

We become able to engage others in dialogue about our patterns of conflict and clarify with them the nature of our relationship when these events arise. We are able to affirm how we each see the events and to hear how we are each impacted by the events and then we are able to agree on what we both need and to form agreements about what we will each do to construct what we both need. When the agreements are not kept, we return to them and repair them as we are committed to our common wellbeing.



The key to using any move in a martial art is to learn it so well that your body knows it, not just your mind. When in a given situation, you simply respond. You have repeated the move so many times that your action is an impulse, not a conscious choice.

If you practice these disciplines over and over, you will find that you begin to see the world through a different perspective and that you naturally act differently as conflicts arise. You will no longer be afraid of them. Or perhaps you will still be afraid but you will also have the confidence to know that you can address them productively. You can use these disciplines to create what you need confident that you are creating what those around you need as well.

Chapter Twelve: Technologies for Transformation

Among the many abilities which grow as we mature is the ability to guide others in their ability to do the things we know how to do. We can be a guide to them to the extent that they want our guidance and to the extent that we can model for them what it is like to be a seeker.

There are stages or waves in the development of the relationship between guide and seeker. First the two must have enough of a resonance that the seeker can feel that the guide is able to identify with the seeker's experience. This requires compassion on the part of the guide and is itself a skill which can be learned and which grows through practice.

Second the guide must be able to determine what is the place in which the seeker is stuck which, when given careful attention, will best help the seeker get unstuck. There are likely many growing edges for the seeker. The guide's job is to help find the one the seeker will benefit most from addressing first. This may be hard for the guide to see because the guide may so closely identify with the seeker that it is the guide's growing edge which gets identified.

And third, the guide must be able to model for the seeker the solution to the problem. The guide has to be able to show the seeker a way of being which, when emulated by the seeker results in a resolution of the seeker's problem. At this point guides can get very frustrated and try to push the seeker into resolution instead of trusting the process. Transformation is natural and normal and will happen as conditions are right. You can't push the river.

As much as we may desire transformation for those we love, we cannot make them change. And the more we try, the more resistant they are likely to become. If instead we see the problem as our own and seek to address the problem we each have when those we care for are not able to "get it" we model for them what it means to be a seeker. We become more and more able to create what we need, and in the process, to create what they need.